

HOLY SEE

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Democratic Institutions

Mr. Chairman,

The Holy See appreciates the opportunity to participate in the OSCE Human Implementation Meeting, and wishes to affirm the efforts of this body and its affiliated organizations and institutions on behalf of the cause of democracy and human rights. In doing so, the Holy See wishes to reiterate its conviction that authentic democracy is possible only in a state ruled by law, and on the basis of a correct conception of the human person and the inherent dignity with which each person is endowed. It requires that the necessary conditions be present for the advancement both of the individual through education and formation in true ideals, and of the “subjectivity” of society through the creation of structures of participation and shared responsibility.

In the noble pursuit of democracy, however, it is critical to resist the tendency to claim that agnosticism and skeptical relativism are the philosophy and basic attitude which correspond to the democratic forms of political life. Often times, those who are convinced that they know the truth and firmly adhere to it are considered unreliable from a democratic point of view, since they do not accept that truth is necessarily determined by the majority, or that it is subject to variation according to different political trends.

The Holy See would like to also reiterate its belief that, if there is no ultimate truth to guide and direct political activity, then ideas and convictions can easily be manipulated for reasons of power. As history demonstrates, a democracy without values can easily turn into open or thinly disguised totalitarianism.

Moreover, authentic democracy and its structures include efforts to develop and support a revenue base to support global public goods, including the environment, treaties to uphold human rights, the enhancement of participation and representation in policies by means of citizens’ organization and other local, regional, and multilateral networks—all of which serve to implement the common good.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, the principle of subsidiarity implies that “civil society is the soil in which the seeds of human sociality grow.” The subsidiarity of local communities and associations is necessary to the common good of participatory government. Precisely because of the social embeddedness of human dignity, the Holy See has consistently linked human rights with responsibility, and recognizes that government still has a responsibility to reign in or modify subsidiary action that is detrimental to the good of the whole or injurious to the welfare of some members.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.