



Intervention by Bürgerbewegung Pax Europa

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

Working Session 17

Combating racism, xenophobia, intolerance and discrimination

Warsaw, September 20, 2018

Let's talk about hate, tolerance, xenophobia... Using free speech, not censorship

I am Elisabeth Sabaditsch-Wolff, representing Bürgerbewegung Pax Europa.

One of the questions raised by the Annotated Agenda is whether any progress has been made in establishing specialized bodies and strategies to address racism, xenophobia, intolerance and discrimination. Pax Europa believes there is no need for any further specialized bodies; instead, we should be refrain from criminalizing speech based on feelings.

The introduction of hate crimes and hate speech laws, both of which describe a feeling and are used to demonize a person holding a dissenting opinion, have had a chilling effect felt all across the OSCE region west of Vienna. Moreover, to this day there is a lack of measurement or detection as to what legally constitutes a bias

motive. Pointing fingers by collecting hate crime incidents has thus far not been successful; rather, it has led to what is known in totalitarian societies as "snitching".

Even more worrying, hate speech prosecutions as a result of perceived intolerance or discrimination have always targeted the majority population, a population not considered worth protecting. Aren't we supposed to be inclusive? If so, why is one part of the population protected, while the other is targeted by the threat of prosecution? Is it perhaps because political dissent is not a protected characteristic? Is it acceptable to discriminate against a non-protected class, but unacceptable to discriminate against a protected class, as is often the case? Why?

We can only defeat Evil -- any Evil -- by telling the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Not by compromising the truth, but by seeking the truth, and speaking it and writing it.

BPE recommends:

- That pS remove speech restriction known as hate speech laws, deal with crimes according to the law, without singling out an emotion.
- That pS introduce a clear, unambiguous official standard for separating unacceptable discrimination from acceptable discrimination.