



**Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting
PROMOTION OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION:
RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND OSCE COMMITMENTS**

EMISCO Recommendation

03 July 2014

EMISCO has been partner of ODIHR for many years. In our cooperation with this important organization, we have arranged many events on European level such as training program for Muslim NGOs against hate crime, side events in human dimension implementation meetings and OSCE officials have been invited as guest speakers in our conferences in European Parliament, Council of Europe, UNESCO and United Nations. We have also regularly took part and contributed during HDIM in Warsaw.

Our latest cooperation is arranging a roundtable on the Topic of "How to combat cyber hate crimes while respecting freedom of expression: the challenge of countering anti-Muslim hatred on the Internet" where Mrs Dunja Mijatovic, OSCE representative on Freedom of Expression was the main speaker.

In the afternoon session on the Right of Freedom of Expression, EMISCO and its partner organizations from Europe took active part in bringing civil society concerns and worries about the increasing islamophobic rhetoric and how Freedom of Expression is grossly exploited by mainstream and social media, political establishment and even academics to demonize Muslim communities in the worst possible way.

We support United Nation and OSCE's position that freedom of expression is a necessary condition for the realization of the principles of transparency and accountability that are, in turn, essential for the promotion and protection of human rights. We don't want to challenge the right to Freedom of Expression which is necessary for the promotion of Fundamental Rights, but we need to point out how Muslim communities are constantly harassed, demonized and made into an enemy in many European countries specially in the west of Vienna by the same journalists who wants to have freedom of expression as monopoly.

At EMISCO's roundtable Muslim NGOs discussed issues which are been talked about among 44 million Muslims in Europe. We wish to bring some of the important conclusion from this side event as recommendation to OSCE's consideration.

- We recommend that OSCE should henceforth replace the official term intolerance against Muslims to islamophobia which is been used and accepted by many intergovernmental organizations like UN, Council of Europe, OIC and EU.

- OSCE should make a clear distinction between freedom of expression for the common person as well as journalistic community to criticize the state authorities, decision-makers and power elite in any country and open propaganda directly towards powerless ethnic and religious minorities, especially Muslim communities by the mainstream and social media.

EMISCO

11 rue Horace F-67200 Strasbourg
Tél : +32 475 80 50 50
www.emisco.eu - contact@emisco.eu

- OSCE should raise-awareness among the journalistic community while they ask for the protection of their rights, they should make sure that they do not trample on the rights of Muslim communities.
- Many OSCE Participant countries has laws which protect hate speech against Jewish and LGBT communities. EMISCO and its partners support this legislative protection. We want that Muslim communities are also covered by the same legislative framework.
- OSCE must be aware that this constant islamophobic discourse has already poisoned mutual integration in many societies in the West of Vienna. To counter this trend, Council of Europe has nominated 21st September as Day against Islamophobia. To highlight this form of prejudice, OSCE could join the Council of Europe to strengthen this initiative.

EMISCO, ThinkOut, IGMG, Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association, Islamic Community in Austria, Austrian Muslim Initiative and ABTTF joined this statement.

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