



OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Tolerance and non-discrimination session 13
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2014 is the fifteth years of the Turkish presence in Belgium and this has been commemorated with the support of the Belgian authorities through different cultural and associative events. Belgian Turkish community are grateful to them for this particular attention.

In Belgium as other European countries, our task is to remain vigilant towards hateful drift, racism, xenophobia and discrimination. The terrifying news on terrorists in Middle East attack the whole Humanity on behalf of Islam, must incite us to be more vigilant. This current event reinforce some prejudice which persist to undermine our societies as well as the reinforcement of far-right politics like Vlams Belang. The Muslim Community is getting more vulnerable than before. The discrimination of Muslims and Islamophobia should not be normalized under the pretext of terrorism contrary to its revendications; terrorism owns neither religion or ethnicity.

Nowadays, we notice that hate crimes towards the places of worship no matter who commits them have become more and more frequent. Recent attacks which targetted mosques, synagogue or Jewish museum in Brussel are some striking examples. Needless to say, it is not acceptable to tolerate or let these facts without legal pursuit. I would like to bring to your attention another example among others in which two young people had been judged in the framework of racist acts, aiming three mosques respectively as: Sledderlo Yunus Emre, Winterslag Fatih and Kolderbos Yıldırım in Genk. The case has ended with excuses towards the leader of the mosque (Imam). Though, these unacceptable acts should have been pursued by the Center for Equal Opportunity and Antiracism Movement (CKGR), assumed as hate acts of Islamophobia. Belgian government with all its power and means to combat against hate crimes should take more concrete measures, in order to avoid the deterioration of the situation. Islam is one of the religions recognized officially in 1974 and acquired the right of free practice of religion, and open its own places of worship. Following the reorganization of the Executive Committee of Muslims in Belgium, we hope that there will be more efficient struggle against hate crimes.

A poster campaign in which Anke van Dermeersch, ex member of the political party Vlams Belang and president of Vrouwen Tegen Islamering (VTL) Women Against Islamization) appear in mini skirt. Considering this reflection, some traits displaying a level of value judgement related to the length of skirt, and from granted "Conform to Quran" (till the foot) to the lapidation (above the leg) unfortunately demonstrate one more time that Islamophobia has been normalized in our societies.

In this context, we formulate the following suggestions:

- We call the Kingdom of Belgium as other Participating States to refuse the institutionalised Islamophobia that may exist in the public space.
- Personal Representative on islamophobia should take more strong position in close cooperation with ODIHR.
- We call the Belgian Government to take the necessary measures to counter all hate acts towards the cultural and religious minorities, with the help of strict measures, training programmes and interculturality. As such, White Paper about the intercultural dialogue of the Council of Europe and different tasks of OSCE just like those on the Principal Directors for Trainers should serve as a basis of references.
- Personal Representatives should express their opinions within the framework of OSCE principles and ODIHR Guidelines without specific ideological and political preferences. In that way, OSCE and ODIHR are available to provide assistance for usine correct key language and support.
- Finally, we call the next Serbian Presidency of the OSCE, to reinforce the ways of ODIHR so that they could better prevent the attacks experienced by the religious minorities within Participating States like in Belgium. We keep on underlining that to ensure equal participation of all communities in the OSCE area, the ODIHR should promote and facilitate more participation of Muslim NGOs towards its activities & events.

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