

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

Warsaw, October 3, Session 16, Humanitarian issues and other commitments II

Statement of the Delegation of Armenia

As delivered by

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Mr. Moderator,

My delegation has already aligned itself with the statement of the European Union on issues related to the protection and promotion of human rights of Roma and Sinti and now we would like to share our practice and views on various humanitarian issues including migration, refugees and other displaced population.

Armenia continued to make consistent efforts in managing migration through better internal planning and cooperation with the international partners.

Armenia acceded to almost all international instruments on the rights of migrants and finally just few days ago we signed the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

The issues of refugees continue to be high on the agenda of the Government and recently it acquires a new dimension given the increasing flow of the Syrian Armenians to Armenia.

According to our estimates more than 10 thousand Syrian citizens of the Armenian descent arrived to Armenia. In order to assist them the Government of Armenia set up an interdepartmental commission led by the Minister of Diaspora which addresses their accommodation, educational, health care and employment needs. To this end the Armenian Government closely cooperates with international, Diaspora organizations and private sector.

It is premature to present our definitive successes here. However, the inclusive process of involving various stakeholders including Syrian Armenian refugees themselves gives us hope that we will be able to create favorable conditions for Syrian Armenians to make their informed choices for future.

The emerging new crises always tend to distract attention and resources from addressing other situations including protracted ones. However, the housing of the 1172 families experiencing more than two decades years of the protracted displacement remains on the agenda of the Government.

As in all other cases with displaced population their human rights come first for the Armenian Government in seeking durable solutions. After more than two decades it is clear that only durable solution for this category of displaced population is the local integration and the Government is committed to promote the policy in this regard.

Now let me turn to the role of the OSCE in addressing issues of the displacement. It is clear that the OSCE is not a humanitarian but rather political and security organization. Unlike UNHCR and other UN actors, it would not be able to provide depoliticized global framework for addressing human rights of refugees and other displaced population including their various financial, employment, education, health needs.

At the same time, it should be mentioned that the OSCE and its participating states can provide necessary political support to the UNHCR and the relevant UN Human Rights Council Special procedures or at least do not impede their access to the certain territories with the displaced population. Unfortunately there are cases such as Nagorno-Karabakh where tens of thousand displaced persons are deprived of the international protection due to restrictions imposed on the activities of the international organizations by one participating state which is acting in violation of the Maastricht Ministerial Council commitments where participating states clearly stated the absolute need to refrain from any discriminatory practices towards IDPs. The failure to meet previous commitments does not help in developing displacement related cooperation in the OSCE region. The principle of the universality of the protection of the human and humanitarian rights should apply under all circumstances.

At the end let me put forward a recommendation.

To fully cooperate with the UNHCR and UN HRC Special Procedures by providing unhindered access to all territories of the OSCE region including Nagorno-Karabakh

Thank you.