

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting  
WORKING SESSION 13

Specifically selected topic: Combating hate crimes and ensuring effective protection against discrimination (continued)

As delivered by

Mr. Davit Knyazyan, Deputy Head of the Permanent Delegation of Armenia to the OSCE

Ms. Moderator,

Many thanks to distinguished introducers for interesting presentations. We agree with many of their points. Indeed, it is difficult for governments alone to effectively address such complex issue as combating hate crimes. Complex issue requires complex approach with involvement of civil society and international actors. This goes without saying that governments bear primary responsibility for addressing this challenge.

We would like to focus more on prevention aspects of combating hate crimes. To exterminate that illness from our societies, we need to start combating hate crimes from schools and universities. Education and remembrance of past crimes against humanity, including genocides is an OSCE commitment embedded in Ljubljana MC decision 10/05, and we should strive to strengthen implementation of this commitment.

Governments and political figures should denounce racist and xenophobic discourse, including targeting certain ethnic and religious groups as tool to gain political advantage. Regrettably, it is the case in some OSCE participating States.

As introducers rightly mentioned, participating States should empower their civil society to monitor the cases of hate speech and hate crimes.

Participating States should convey clear political message in favour of diversity and pluralism, extend support at state level to projects aimed at promoting confidence, trust and reconciliation between peoples.

We need to encourage people-to-people contacts, including youth exchanges to promote ideas of peace and tolerance and fight prejudices and stereotypes.

Participating States should ensure that the fight against terrorism must never become a pretext for misuse of criminal prosecutions or for other repressive measures against individuals on account of their ethnic origin.

Thank You.

## **Reply to Turkey and Azerbaijan**

Ms. Moderator,

We didn't intend to take the floor, but the statements of distinguished Delegations of Turkey and Azerbaijan prompted us to make some comments.

Constructive dialogue should be sincere. Anti-Armenian racist discourse is a common feature of Turkish political life. The anti-Armenian prejudice is so ingrained in the Turkish politics, that describing someone as Armenian is considered to be an insult. Many politicians, including President R.Erdogan openly made statements, insulting Armenians and claiming that being Armenian is shame.

In reply to the Delegation of Azerbaijan we would like to quote one of the recommendations of the Council of Europe European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, addressed to Azerbaijan: "ECRI urges the Azerbaijani authorities to work actively to improve the climate of opinion concerning Armenians coming under Azerbaijan's jurisdiction. It underlines that all the political parties must take a firm stance against all forms of racism, discrimination and xenophobia and convey a clear political message in favour of diversity and pluralism; they must also avoid addressing issues of relevance to the Armenians in a negative light".

We are not aware of the nature of activities of the Azerbaijani delegate, but his statement, in which he labeled a whole nation as terrorists, identifies that those activities are contrary to the recommendations of the ECRI.

Thank You.