



Représentation du Royaume de Belgique
auprès de l'OSCE

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Belgian intervention session 4:
"Freedom of Movement"

Mr. Chairperson,

When discussing human rights and fundamental freedoms it is important not to lose sight of the broader picture. Many of these rights and freedoms we discuss are linked and mutually reinforcing. This is also true for freedom of movement.

The Helsinki Final Act sets out the basic aim of Freedom of Movement, namely to develop contacts between people, which is an important element in the strengthening of friendly relations and trust among peoples. It is indeed by sharing information and hearing different points of view that we are able to better understand each other and establish close relationships.

Travelling is of course just one way of getting to know different cultures and being exposed to new ideas. For many people it are mostly the media that influence and shape to a great extent what they think and know about the immediate reality surrounding them and about parts and peoples of the world they have no immediate experience of. The internet provides citizens with an unprecedented opportunity to engage in inter-cultural people-to-people contacts.

It is therefore crucial that people have access to all forms of media, including the internet, and that these media are free and can report without interference, and regardless of frontiers, on what is going on in the world, and that they can voice their opinions and beliefs.

So Freedom of Movement and Freedom of Media have a common goal, namely creating understanding and trust through the exchange of information. This free flow of information is crucial for the maintenance and development of free societies and flourishing cultures.