



**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR TACAN İLDEM
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY
2015 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Opening Plenary Session
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Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I would like to begin by expressing our thanks and appreciation to the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights for its efforts in organizing this year's Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, together with an expression of gratitude to our hosts, the Polish authorities, for their traditional generous hospitality.

The substantial body of human dimension commitments produced by the OSCE over the past decades forms an integral part of our Organization's comprehensive security concept. They reflect the key role of human rights for our common security and stability. The yearly HDIM, as the most important event in our human dimension calendar, provides an invaluable opportunity to review the implementation of these commitments across the entire OSCE region. The HDIM's great value also stems from the indispensable participation of civil society alongside the representatives of the participating States, giving all stakeholders the opportunity to voice their concerns and make recommendations.

As in 2014, the current HDIM is being held against the backdrop of the ongoing crisis in and around Ukraine. Regrettably, various human rights assessment missions as well as our own OSCE institutions continue to ascertain numerous and grave human rights violations in eastern Ukraine and in illegally occupied Crimea. This underlines the importance of soberly assessing the implementation of our human dimension commitments.

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished Participants,

Turkey fully supports the focus on the implementation of existing commitments in the human dimension which the Serbian Chairmanship shares with its predecessor. It is our hope and expectation that the determined efforts of the Chairmanship will lead to the adoption of valuable human dimension deliverables at the Belgrade Ministerial Council, notwithstanding the challenges posed by the crisis in and around Ukraine.



While upholding our commitments in such crucial areas as human rights, fundamental freedoms, democratization and the rule of law, Turkey continues to attach particular importance to addressing the alarming rise of racism, xenophobia, intolerance and discrimination in the OSCE region. We are convinced that this area requires our Organization's urgent and increased attention. Those considered to be different or “other”, whether on the basis of their ethnic background, their religious beliefs or other reasons, are frequently subjected to harassment and violence, and their human rights and fundamental freedoms are thus violated. Islamophobia is a particularly worrying phenomenon in this context. The current refugee crisis is exacerbating the already grave situation on the ground and having further negative repercussions on the perception of migrants.

Mr. Chairperson, in your introductory remarks you referred to the number of refugees moving towards the OSCE participating States, probably focusing only on the recent wave of population movement from countries like Syria towards Member States of the European Union. Nevertheless, I wish to take this opportunity to remind the participants of this meeting that my country has been dealing with this problem for the last five years, since the outbreak of the civil war in Syria, with all the social and financial burdens that it imposes on us. According to the UNHCR, Turkey is right now the biggest refugee-hosting country in the world. The number of Syrians who have fled to Turkey exceeds two million people.

Let me assure you that this problem is not going to go away unless we address its root causes. We need to tackle the economic, political, social instabilities and conflicts in our neighboring geographies, by supporting peace processes, promoting peaceful settlement of disputes, while stepping up humanitarian aid and development investments. My country remains ready and available to cooperate with all stakeholders to this end.

Mr. Chairperson,

We must all do more to strengthen the implementation of our commitments in the field of tolerance and non-discrimination if we are to have a realistic chance of eradicating the rising threat, without approaching the human dimension selectively or by setting up artificial hierarchies. As with the three dimensions themselves, all human dimension areas are also fundamentally and equally important. Fundamental freedoms and tolerance and non-discrimination are a prominent example in this regard, and must be given equal consideration and effort. Human rights and fundamental freedoms cannot, after all, thrive in an environment marred by prejudice, bigotry, hatred and bias-motivated violence. In this connection we



welcome the incoming German Chairmanship's intention to prioritize the area of tolerance and non-discrimination. We also appreciate that this year's HDIM includes a special day on "combating hate crimes and ensuring effective protection against discrimination".

At this point I would also like to emphasize our firm commitment to the goals of improving the rights of women, ensuring their full and equal participation in all spheres of life, strengthening their status in society and eradicating violence against them.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our hope that the discussions of the next two weeks will provide us with fresh insights on how to address worrying trends and alarming recent developments, along with valuable recommendations which will help us chart the path ahead. Looking forward to fruitful and constructive discussions in all the working sessions as well as the various side events, I wish the participants of the HDIM every success.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

