



STATEMENT OF THE HOLY SEE
2018 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Working Session 12/13: Rights of migrants
Warsaw, 18 September 2018

Mr./Madam Moderator,

OSCE commitments dealing with migrants – adopted by consensus by all participating States – are found in all three dimensions of comprehensive security: the Security Dimension has commitments concerning combating and preventing smuggling of migrants; the Economic and Environmental Dimension has commitments on “migrant workers”; and the Human Dimension has commitments that call for the full respect for human rights of all, including migrants, and that highlight the need to combat and prevent the discrimination and intolerance due to xenophobia and racism faced by migrants, as well as commitments on integration.¹

The Delegation of the Holy See takes this opportunity to offer the following comments on the more specific third dimension commitments.

The OSCE commitments on the intolerance and discrimination faced by migrants highlight a crucial and fundamental point related to human rights, namely

¹ Cf. MC Brussel 2006, *Ministerial Statement on Migration*, n. 5; MC Sofia 2004, *Annex to Dec. 12/04 - Tolerance and the Fight against Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination*; MC Athens 2009, *Dec. 5/09 – Migration Management*, n. 1.

that they are universal in nature. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights – which this year celebrates its 70th anniversary – affirms that “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”.²

The racism and xenophobia suffered by migrants reflect, however, a reality that not only misunderstands human rights; such racism and xenophobia present migrants as enemies, and a threat, as hostile aliens *per se*. The colour of their skin, their national, cultural or religious background – often caricatured – becomes the reason to cause harm, ostracize or vilify others. This is the exact opposite of the kind of integration that is needed – both by the host society and the migrants - an integration that would alleviate tensions leading to violence.

On the integration of migrants, the participating States have highlighted the need to promote “integration with respect for cultural and religious diversity”.³ Such an approach gives voice to the desire to see an integration that is beneficial, both to migrants and to their host society. It “concerns the opportunities for intercultural enrichment brought about by the presence of migrants and refugees. Integration is not ‘an assimilation that leads migrants to suppress or to forget their own cultural identity. Rather, contact with others leads to discovering their «secret», to being open to them in order to welcome their valid aspects and thus contribute to knowing each

² *Universal Declaration on Human Rights*, art. 2.

³ MC Brussel 2006, *Ministerial Statement on Migration*, n. 5.

one better. This is a lengthy process that aims to shape societies and cultures, making them more and more a reflection of the multi-faceted gifts of God to human beings'.⁴

True integration entails “reciprocal rights and duties. Those who welcome are called to promote integral human development, while those who are welcomed must necessarily conform to the rules of the country offering them hospitality, with respect for its identity and values”.⁵

The Delegation of the Holy See wishes to make the following recommendations:

- that participating States further consider how to implement the existing OSCE commitments on migrants;
- that ODIHR in its future work on issues facing migrants give due attention to respect for the cultural and religious diversity of migrants.

Thank you, Mr./Madam Moderator.

⁴ Pope Francis, *Message for the 104th World Day of Migrants and Refugees*, 14 January 2018.

⁵ Pope Francis, *Address to the members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See*, 8 January 2018.