



PORTUGAL 2007
Portugal 2007- Presidency of the European Union



S. PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF PORTUGAL
R. TO THE OSCE

HDIM.DEL/393/07 Rev.1
04 October 2007

OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING 2007

EU Statement for the Working Session 15:

Discussion of human dimension activities **(with special emphasis on project work)**

3rd October, Warsaw

Mr Chairman,

The EU continues to attach the greatest importance to the OSCE's human dimension activities. We welcome the key role of the organization's institutions and field missions to this effect, not least when it comes to all the efforts that are made to draft programme proposals, to put these in place and to implement a wide spectrum of project activities. All participating States have an interest in, and a responsibility to assist, in the implementation of such projects and programmes – either through facilitating project implementation on the ground and/or through the contribution of financial, or other, resources. As resources are limited, it goes without saying that co-ordination and co-operation with other relevant national and international organizations are imperative. For the same reason, efforts should be made to give priority to programme activities in those areas which are subject to serious, persistent and flagrant breaches of commitments in specific participating States. Freedom of Assembly and Association and protection of human rights defenders are issues that come to mind in this regard.

The promotion of free and fair elections is perhaps the activity with which the OSCE is most associated in the public mind and will continue to be accorded the highest priority by the EU. This applies to both election assistance and election observation. The OSCE has established a deservedly high reputation for its standards in this field, and participating

States should be vigilant against any attempts to retreat from agreed commitments and widely accepted standards. ODIHR is acknowledged to be a pre-eminent election monitoring agency and to have developed a credible and comprehensive methodology that is also used by European Union Election Observation Missions. We should, of course, continue to take account of and adapt to changes in election technologies. We must also be alert for opportunities to strengthen and improve existing commitments or to adopt new commitments in the light of experience. We would like to underline, however, that this should be done without undermining the existing acquis. The EU recalls the importance it attaches to continued cooperation between the ODIHR and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly on the basis of the 1997 Cooperation Agreement, as well as with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the European Parliament.

Promoting tolerance and non-discrimination has become an integral part of OSCE programmes and activities. The recent conference on tolerance and non-discrimination in Bucharest reminded us all of the challenges that we face in eradicating intolerance and discrimination across the OSCE, and of the need for greater focus on practical approaches. We consider that the ODIHR has developed valuable expertise – in legislative review, law enforcement training, data collection and analysis, and in the development of teaching materials – and can play a major role in assisting participating States. The EU believes that there should be no thematic hierarchy in the OSCE tolerance agenda. All forms should be addressed, including intolerance and discrimination on grounds of sex, sexual orientation, age and disability.

Promotion of gender equality throughout the OSCE area, and the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all areas of OSCE activity, continue to be high priorities for the EU. It is important that all OSCE structures continue to promote the implementation of the Gender Action Plan and that senior management, under the committed leadership of the Secretary General, Heads of Institutions and Missions, exercise leadership in this regard. Such demonstrated commitment will be regarded as an important performance indicator by the EU. Implementation is not just for the devoted, individual staff member or the gender focal point to achieve. We call on all staff at all levels to contribute to this effort. In line with Ministerial Council Decisions 14/05 and 19/06 we reaffirm the need to improve the gender balance of OSCE staff at various levels.

The EU applauds the efforts to develop projects and programs in the human dimension, such as on the promotion of women's participation in political and public life and on preventing and combating violence against women. The EU would also like to encourage efforts within the political-military and the economic-environmental dimensions. A project like the training modules for the CPC borders team in the political-military dimension serves as a good example.

The EU welcomes the dedicated work of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. Trafficking in human beings continues to be a matter of great concern throughout the OSCE area, in countries of origin, transit and destination. To effectively combat trafficking in human beings, cooperation and commitment by all participating States is needed, as well as coordination and cooperation with other relevant parts of the OSCE and international organizations. The collection, analysis and use of statistics, mechanisms for the support, assistance and reintegration of victims, combating bonded labour and the sexual exploitation of women as well as children, and measures to combat the demand for victims of trafficking are all important issues to the EU.

The EU continues to speak in favour of further improvements of the format of the HDIM, so as to further enhance its effectiveness in advancing implementation of commitments by participating States.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, EFTA country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.