



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE HOLY SEE
TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY
AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

**STATEMENT BY MONSIGNOR MICHAEL W. BANACH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HOLY SEE,
AT THE 912th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL
17 MAY 2012**

RE: REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

Mister Chairman,

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the well-known position of the Holy See that the topic of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation does not belong to the area of competence of the OSCE and its agenda. There is no consensus among participating States on this issue, even if some are trying to force the Organization to deal with it.

Furthermore, my Delegation would like to call attention to a disturbing trend in some of these social debates. People are being attacked for taking positions that do not support sexual behaviour between people of the same sex. When they express peacefully their moral beliefs or beliefs about human nature, which may also be expressions of religious convictions, or state opinions about scientific claims, they are stigmatised, and worse, they are vilified and persecuted. These attacks contradict the fundamental principles of the OSCE and are violations of fundamental human rights, *inter alia* the right to freedom of religion, and cannot be justified under any circumstances.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.