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OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting Warsaw, 19 - 30 September 2016

Working session 18: Discussion of human dimension activities (with special emphasis on project work)

Mr. Moderator,

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union.

I would like to begin my statement by acknowledging that the background to our activities in the human dimension has been changing over the past few years.

In some participating States we are further away than before from full respect for fundamental freedoms, including media freedom. In other participating States, democratic institutions are strong but many people are sceptical about the capacity of public institutions to provide effective responses to their concerns. In several parts of the OSCE region we see random acts of violence and dangerous examples of intolerance.

At this year's HDIM we have paid particular attention to the UN's Covenants. The OSCE, with its comprehensive approach and as a regional security organisation in the sense of Chapter VIII of the Charter, is well-placed to understand that respect for human rights and accountable democratic government are the path to socially cohesive secure societies with which citizens – which means all of us here - will identify.

Each of the independent OSCE institutions has its own contribution to make to justice and peace. As we are meeting in Warsaw, the European Union wishes, in particular, to thank Michael Link and his team for their commitment and creativity in the face of challenging circumstances. The role of ODIHR will become more important in the years ahead. The right decisions in Hamburg later this year can underpin the role of ODIHR.

In the light of these considerations we make the following five recommendations to participating States and the Executive Structures:



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1. Participating States should take advantage of the services offered by OSCE Executive Structures in enhancing the implementation of commitments, including by facilitating visits and monitoring missions by the institutions; EU Member States have benefited greatly from such assistance on a range of issues, and we will continue to do so.
2. Participating States should ensure the timely adoption of the OSCE Unified Budget, in order to ensure that Executive Structures can properly plan their activities in good time.
3. Executive Structures should continue to coordinate closely with each other and with other relevant international actors, such as the Council of Europe and the UN, to learn from each other's experiences, avoid duplication and bolster the impact of activities.
4. When designing projects and activities, Executive Structures should foster close collaboration with civil society and increase their participation in the implementation phase.
5. Executive Structures should continue to improve the evaluation of their projects, including by using key performance indicators.

The EU strongly supports the mandates of ODIHR, RFoM and HCNM. ODIHR's activities across its entire mandate are essential to promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms in the OSCE region. Its election work, in particular, is rightly prized as the international gold standard against which all others rate their own observation methodologies. The RFoM has been consistent in highlighting failures in implementing our media freedom commitments, in stressing the dangers posed to journalists, and addressing new challenges to the independent role of the media. We welcome the scrutiny that the RFoM sometimes gives to our own countries, including disinformation and propaganda for war. The HCNM continues to play a vital role in identifying and addressing short term triggers of inter-ethnic tension as well as long term structural concerns.



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Overall, the European Union strongly supports OSCE field activities, including the many OSCE field presences, which are essential in assisting participating states with the implementation of the OSCE commitments.

Project work is an important way – though not the only way - for OSCE Executive Structures to engage with participating States and to assist them to implement our commonly-agreed commitments. In particular, we would like to highlight the valuable work of the OSCE Executive Structures in response to the crisis in and around Ukraine. ODIHR has an important project to strengthen dialogue among civil society and key government stakeholders in Ukraine on human dimension issues. The RFoM has done innovative work on journalism in situations of conflict, engaging participants from Ukraine and Russia. The HCNM provides valuable expertise to the Ukrainian authorities. The Project Coordinator's Office in Ukraine assists the Ukrainian authorities in a number of ways, seeking to foster democratic reforms. And of course, confidence-building is part of the mandate of the SMM and contributes to creating a safe and secure environment for the monitors.

Finally, I would like to underline the important role of the Human Dimension Committee (HDC), this year under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Pehrman of Finland. In some areas, such as the rights of persons with disabilities, the HDC has increased OSCE dialogue in recent months. In other areas, such as freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, the HDC has deepened our understanding of the issues in a potentially fruitful way.

At the HDC, EU Member States have provided concrete examples of how they have turned OSCE recommendations into concrete action. We encourage other participating States to provide such voluntary reports.

The preamble to the Universal Declaration describes respect for human rights as the 'foundation of freedom, justice, and peace.' That, Mr. Moderator, is the spirit in which the European Union approaches the work of the Third Dimension.

Thank you.

The Candidate Countries TURKEY, the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate



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BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA and ANDORRA align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.