## Bahá'í International Community Brussels Office

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## Contribution of the Bahá'í International Community (BIC) to the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) Human Dimension Implementation meeting 2015

## **Workshop 14 on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination**

The Bahá'í International Community believes that the questions of discrimination, racism and intolerance need to be viewed in their broader context. They are essentially manifestations of a tendency to narrowly identify with certain social, cultural, physical or other such characteristics and placing them at the centre of our understanding of self. In order to help prevent such narrow identifications, we need to search for ways to strengthen the collective awareness of humanity's underlying oneness and to broaden the understanding of our primary over-arching human identity. This is not to dismiss the diversity of our secondary identities, which are a source of strength and wealth. Rather, we need to learn to focus on our primary identity in a manner that simultaneously values the many secondary aspects of human diversity. In this way, instead of constantly reemphasising and affirming the legitimacy of secondary identities, we believe that it would be more effective, as institutions, policy makers, religious leaders or civil society to strive to cultivate patterns of thought, speech and action that reinforce our primary. human identity. The Bahá'í International community therefore encourages the OSCE to explore how educational processes and capacity-building endeavours can reinforce the collective awareness of humanity's oneness, especially among the youth and younger generations.