



Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting

Upholding the Principles of Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, including in the Promotion and Protection of Freedom of Religion or Belief

**1 – 2 April 2019
Hofburg, Vienna**

ANNOTATED AGENDA

BACKGROUND

OSCE participating States have committed to take effective measures to prevent and respond to hate crimes and other manifestations of intolerance and discrimination. As early as 1990, participating States agreed in the Copenhagen Document that they will “take effective measures (...) to promote understanding and tolerance, particularly in the field of education (...)” Subsequent OSCE Ministerial Council Decisions adopted at Porto (2002), Maastricht (2003), Sofia (2004), Ljubljana (2005), Brussels (2006), Madrid (2007) and Athens (2009) have underscored and strengthened this commitment. In these decisions, OSCE participating States have strongly condemned racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, intolerance and discrimination against Muslims, Christians and members of other religions, as well as persecution on religious and ideological grounds. Participating States have acknowledged the specificity of different forms of intolerance, while at the same time recognizing the importance of taking a comprehensive approach and addressing crosscutting issues in order to effectively combat all forms of discrimination (e.g. MC.DEC/10/07). They committed to combat these phenomena, including combatting hate crime, while respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief.

Commitments to implement the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, and fostering mutual respect and understanding to assist implementation of the commitments are among the original tenets of the OSCE. The 1975 Helsinki Final Act states that “the participating States will respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion” and that “the participating States recognize the universal significance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for which is an essential factor for the peace, justice and well-being necessary to ensure the development of friendly relations and co-operation among themselves as among all States.” The 1989 Concluding Document of the Vienna Meeting, the 1990 Document of the Copenhagen Meeting, the 1990 Charter of Paris for a New Europe, the 1994 Budapest Document, the 1999 Charter for European Security, recent Ministerial Council Decisions adopted in Porto (2006), Maastricht (2003), Sofia (2004), Ljubljana (2005), Brussels (2006), Madrid (2007), Helsinki (2008), Athens (2009), and Kyiv (2013) have reiterated the importance of these commitments and their ongoing relevance to the OSCE’s comprehensive concept of security.

As listed a number of long-standing and recent developments in the OSCE region have underscored the importance of issues related to tolerance and non-discrimination, particularly as concerns the need to counter intolerance and discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief. These challenges include fears that some religions or beliefs pose a danger to national identity and peaceful coexistence, tensions developing around migratory processes and security concerns, as well as persistent misconceptions about the nature and role of religion in society.

Hate crimes and hate incidents against particular groups and religious or belief communities in the OSCE region in recent years have been a cause of concern. The investigation and prosecution of hate crimes and incidents, and the need to counter organized hate groups who incite or use violence present particular challenges for OSCE participating States. Additionally, under-reporting by victims and under-recording by law enforcement of hate crimes continues to be a cause of concern as it contributes to a climate of hate, fear and mistrust, and represents a dangerous confluence of phenomena connected to racism, xenophobia and intolerance that could eventually, if left unchecked, be used to justify acts of violence.

OSCE participating States have called for the development of comprehensive domestic education policies and strategies. They have also called for awareness-raising measures to promote a greater understanding of and respect for different cultures, ethnicities, religions or beliefs, to prevent intolerance and discrimination, including against Christians, Jews, Muslims and members of other religions, and to promote remembrance and education about the Holocaust (e.g. MC.DEC/13/06).

OSCE participating States have also long recognized the inherent challenges and dangers connected to racist, xenophobic and discriminatory public discourse, and “hate speech” that manifests itself also as hate on the internet. Ministerial Council Decision 9/09 cites the need for participating States to address hate on the internet (“cyberhate”) – while acknowledging the challenge for participating States of ensuring freedom of expression. Ministerial Council Decision 13/06 deplures racist, xenophobic and discriminatory public discourse, and stresses that political representatives can play a positive role in the overall promotion of mutual respect and understanding and have a significant impact in defusing tensions within societies, by speaking out against hate-motivated acts and incidents and by recognizing the positive contributions that all individuals can make to a harmonious pluralistic society.

This SHDM will assess the progress made by participating States in implementing OSCE commitments to address all forms of discrimination, including racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, intolerance against Muslims, Christians and members of other religious or belief communities. The SHDM will also focus on the differing impact that such intolerance has on women and men.

The meeting will serve as a platform to present good practices that show how governments, intergovernmental organizations, educational experts, religious or belief communities and civil society can prevent and respond to intolerance and create an appreciation for diversity through a variety of initiatives and tools, including education policies and awareness raising strategies.

The objectives of this SHDM are to:

1. Review and evaluate current challenges facing participating States in the implementation of commitments in the area of tolerance and non-discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief.
2. Present good practices aimed at combatting all forms of intolerance and discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, promoting mutual respect and understanding, including in the area of legislation, education, coalition building and dialogue between state/public authorities, civil society and religious or belief communities. Special attention will be dedicated to the manner in which the manifestations of racism and intolerance are gendered, namely how they affect women and men differently.
3. Identify recommendations for the OSCE participating States on combatting intolerance and promoting mutual respect and understanding as well as to consolidate the role of the OSCE and its institutions in this field.

DAY 1, 1 APRIL 2019

15.00 – 16.00

OPENING SESSION

Opening remarks
Introductory addresses
Technical information

16.00 – 18.00

SESSION I: Root Causes and Consequences of Racism and Discrimination in Connection to Religion or Belief: Implementing the OSCE's Comprehensive Approach while Addressing the Particular Needs of Marginalized Groups

OSCE participating States recognize that manifestations of racism and intolerance in the form of discrimination or hate crime threaten the security of individuals, communities and societies and may give rise to wider scale conflict and violence that undermine international stability and security. OSCE participating States strongly condemn racial and ethnic hatred, xenophobia, and discrimination against Christians, Jews, Muslims and members of other religions or belief, and have committed to combat these phenomena in all their forms (Copenhagen Document 1990). In recognition of this, since 2003, OSCE participating States have established a normative framework of Ministerial Council decisions to reflect their commitments to address these phenomena (MC.DEC 4/03). The participating States further reinforced this commitment in subsequent MC Decisions, namely 12/04, 10/05, 13/06, 10/07, and 9/09. Ministerial Council Decision No. 9/09 contains a comprehensive set of commitments to prevent and counter hate crimes, through strengthening legislation, collecting reliable data, building the capacity of actors in criminal justice systems, assisting civil society, and considering drawing on resources developed by ODIHR.

OSCE participating States have made commitments to combat hate crimes, and in particular to collect data on hate crimes, to consider enacting or strengthening legislation prohibiting discrimination and hate crimes, and to ensure that officials have the necessary skills to address the issue properly. Information provided to ODIHR for its annual hate crime report highlights major concerns such as discriminatory discourse and “hate speech,” which are used to portray diverse individuals and groups as causes of economic instability, antisocial and criminal activity, or as terrorist threats to society.

The purpose of this session is to provide an overview of the underlying root causes and consequences of racism, intolerance and discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, particularly in relation how manifestations of racism and intolerance affect women and men differently.

The session will especially focus on the implementation of a comprehensive approach, while taking into account specificities of marginalized groups throughout the OSCE area as well as how it manifests differently for women, men, girls and boys.

Questions for discussion include:

- What are the current manifestations of racism, intolerance and discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the OSCE area? How can hate crimes or patterns of discrimination against protected or marginalized groups lead to an environment conducive to wider scale conflict and violence that undermine international stability and security? How can these risk factors affect women and men differently?
- How do hatred, racism, intolerance and discrimination differently affect various marginalised group and communities? How can we build a comprehensive approach, which also takes into account specificities of diverse communities and individuals?
- What type of national data collection mechanisms exist to collect information about incidents of intolerance, racism, discrimination, including hate crimes?

18.00

Reception hosted by the Slovak Chairmanship

DAY 2, 2 APRIL 2019

10.30 – 12.30

SESSION II: Security of Communities and Support to Victims: Good Practices of Addressing Discrimination, Hate and Violence against Christians, Jews, Muslims and other Religious or Belief Communities

OSCE participating States have been encountering and combatting the problem of racism, hatred, intolerance and discrimination for a long time. Many religious or belief communities report, despite the efforts of participating States to prevent and respond to hatred and hostility, that racism, intolerance and discrimination continue to exist in various forms, including discriminatory practices, hate crime and “hate speech”, physical threats and assaults, desecration of burial sites and vandalism. Growing instances of violations of freedom of religion or belief as well as of related human rights threaten internal and regional stability and security and limit the potential of religious or belief communities to become positive agents/contributors for/to establishing social cohesion and peace.

Data gathered from ODIHR’s annual hate crime reporting indicates that many religious or belief communities experience structural or individual discrimination throughout the OSCE region. These range from acts of discrimination and intolerance to egregious hate crimes and violence against certain groups and individuals. This is cause for concern and state authorities, such as law enforcement and prosecutors, need to be equipped with the skills, understanding and knowledge to respond to and/or prevent these incidents from occurring. Worryingly, despite being victims of hate crimes and hate incidents, many victims do not report these incidents to law enforcement or the authorities for a variety of reasons. Consequently, under-reporting of hate crimes and incidents motivated by bias continues to be an issue authorities must address.

The purpose of this session is to highlight existing good practices related to addressing of discrimination, hate and violence against Christians, Jews, Muslims and other religious or belief communities especially in terms of security of communities and support to individual victims throughout the OSCE area. Special attention will be dedicated to how different manifestations of racism and intolerance effect women and men.

Questions for discussion include:

- What is the effect of current policies and practices, including awareness raising, addressing hate crimes targeting religious or belief communities, their property and places of worship, homes, cultural centers, schools, and other public spaces across the OSCE region? Which security measures are in place to protect the communities? Are the needs of both men and women taken into account when devising such policies and activities?
- What strategies aimed at combatting racism, discrimination and intolerance in connection to religion or belief are being realized through official policies in the OSCE region? What are the lessons learned in this regard?
- What challenges related to underreporting and under-recording of hate crimes and incidents do religious or belief communities experience? Are there differences in relation to men and women? How can participating States and other actors such as

civil society and other international organizations assist in order to remove barriers to reporting, responding to and preventing such hate crimes?

14.30 – 16.30	<u>SESSION III: The Role of Educational Programs and Civil Society Initiatives as a Means to Address Negative Stereotyping and Stigmatization and Promote Mutual Respect and Understanding: State Responses, Coalition Building, Community Resilience</u>
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OSCE Ministerial Council decisions acknowledge the need to address the root causes of racism, discrimination and tensions which may give rise to instability, insecurity, wider conflict and violence. The OSCE commitments also highlight the obligation of full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms such as the freedom of opinion and expression, the freedoms of peaceful assembly and association, and freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief. In order to effectively do so, the decisions call upon participating States to develop educational programmes to foster a greater understanding of and respect for different cultures, ethnicities, religions or beliefs (MC.DEC/13/06). They also call upon participating States to raise public awareness of the existence and unacceptability of intolerance and discrimination (MC.DEC/10/05), and the importance of a continued and strengthened interfaith and intercultural dialogue to promote greater tolerance, respect and mutual understanding (MC.DEC/4/03).

Participating States have tasked ODIHR to “support the ability of civil society and the development of partnerships to address racism, xenophobia, discrimination or related intolerance, including against Muslims, and anti-Semitism” (Annex to MC.DEC/12/04). Education and awareness raising as well as vibrant and thriving civil society can help addressing discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, and further tolerance and mutual understanding in societies and assist in prevention and responding to hate, violence and racism. Participating States have also acknowledged that discrimination can be prevented by promoting and facilitating open and transparent interfaith and intercultural dialogue and partnerships towards tolerance, respect and mutual understanding (Annex to MC.DEC/12/04).

This session will therefore focus on the role of educational programs, civil society initiatives and interfaith/interreligious partnerships as a means to address negative stereotyping and stigmatization in relation to racism, intolerance as well as sexism and promote mutual respect and understanding.

Questions for discussion include:

- What role do education and awareness-raising campaigns play in preventing and combatting intolerance and discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, including hate crimes, “hate speech” and other manifestations of hatred and intolerance? What role do interfaith and interreligious dialogue and partnerships play in this regard?
- What can participating States do to develop inclusive policies and awareness-raising programmes that promote tolerance and mutual understanding? How can these policies include an intersectional approach which also takes into account the gendered aspects of racism and intolerance (e.g. data disaggregation by gender, etc.).

- What are good practices in the civil society in relation to combating hatred, racism and intolerance on the grounds of religion or belief and building joint responses and coalitions to support victims and fight hatred? In what way do they include gender-targeted approaches?

16.30 – 17.30

CLOSING SESSION

Rapports from the working sessions

Comments from the floor

Closing remarks

17.30

Closing of the meeting

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