



STATEMENT BY BÜRGERBEWEGUNG PAX EUROPA

OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting

PROMOTION OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION: RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND OSCE COMMITMENTS

Session 2

Vienna, July 4, 2014

Pax Europa concurs with the assessment in the Annotated Agenda that

“laws [have been passed] in the OSCE participating States that aim to limit the exercise of fundamental freedoms or encourage self-censorship. [...] The [...] extent of restrictions is a cause for concern.”

In this context, we note that the words “self-censorship” and “self-regulation” are cause for concern for NGOs such as Pax Europa. Censorship and regulation were part of the genetic make-up of states east of Vienna prior to the end of Communist dictatorship, where dissent was prohibited and prosecuted. This ushers in the return of totalitarian notions through “self-regulation” measures more than two decades after the division of Europe was ended.

Pax Europa is gravely concerned about the coercive power of the State, that is, OSCE participating States, working its limitations on speech through notions of “self-censorship” or ethical standards that are thinly veiled enforcement mechanisms.

Prior restraints on speech and publication are the most serious and least tolerable infringements on freedom of expression. Thus, if freedom of expression is limited by not saying anything offensive, then there really is no freedom of expression.

Most worryingly, Sweden appears to be taking the lead by introducing a law which will criminalize anti-immigration internet speech. (see sources at the end)

Pax Europa calls for upholding of free speech and reminds ODIHR and participating States that free speech is a zero sum game: either OSCE participating States are committed to it or they are not.

Source:

<http://www.thenewamerican.com/world-news/europe/item/18116-new-swedish-law-criminalizes-anti-immigration-internet-speech>