



Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting

PREVENTION OF RACISM, XENOPHOBIA AND HATE CRIMES THROUGH EDUCATIONAL AND AWARENESS- RAISING INITIATIVES

**10–11 November 2011
Hofburg, Vienna**

ANNOTATED AGENDA

Forty-five years after the adoption of the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, racism and xenophobia still threaten the security of individuals and social cohesion across the OSCE region. ODIHR's annual report *Hate Crimes in the OSCE Region – Incidents and Responses* shows that minorities are the victims of hate crimes in the OSCE region.

Recognizing that racism and xenophobia may give rise to wider-scale conflicts and violence, the OSCE has adopted a comprehensive normative framework to prevent and respond to this phenomenon. Enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act, OSCE commitments have since been expanded, in particular in the 1990 Charter of Paris for a New Europe and in OSCE Ministerial Council Decisions adopted at Porto (2002), Maastricht (2003), Sofia (2004), Ljubljana (2005), Brussels (2006) and Athens (2009). Acknowledging that it is their primary responsibility to address this issue, the OSCE participating States have pledged to “address the root causes of intolerance and discrimination by encouraging the development of comprehensive domestic education policies and strategies as well as through increased awareness-raising measures that promote a greater understanding of and respect for different cultures, ethnicities” (MC Decision 13/06).

As contemporary global economic crisis has the potential to fuel racism and xenophobia, it is timely to take stock of existing educational and awareness-raising policies and measures with a view to assessing their effectiveness and to exploring new strategies.

This SHDM will:

- Explore contemporary forms of racist and xenophobic intolerance, and in particular hate crimes, and examine their impact on societies;
- Identify effective educational and awareness-raising approaches to address racism and xenophobia;

- Present best practices from governments, international organizations and civil society to prevent racism and xenophobia and promote mutual respect and understanding with a view to replicating these initiatives.

15:00 – 16.00 Opening Session

16.00 – 18.00 Session I: Challenges and Perspectives for the Prevention of Racism and Xenophobia

The first session will provide an opportunity to discuss the extent and the nature of contemporary forms of racism and xenophobia. Three major challenges can be identified in the fight against racism and xenophobia. First, the global economic crisis has resulted in a serious slowdown in world economic growth. The considerable increase in unemployment rates has intensified social anxieties, thus creating the context for a rise in xenophobic and racist attitudes towards migrants and visible minorities. This is reflected in the proliferation of intolerant discourse in the public space by mainstream political parties and the increased number of public manifestations and marches “against” specific groups, in particular Roma and Sinti.

Second, international migration has reached an unprecedented scale resulting in increasingly diverse societies in most countries of the OSCE region. The presence of migrants has led to a perception that ‘newcomers’ are to be blamed for a depressed economy resulting in the frequent expression of xenophobic and racist discourse and responses, including the development of state policies that do not comply with international human rights standards. Third, ten years after the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, counter-terrorism policies, in particular the increasing use of racial profiling in the law enforcement and security sectors, have led to an increasingly negative perception and representation of visible minorities. The demonization and stigmatization of some ethnic and religious groups remain problematic.

The objective of this session will be to assess how these challenges affect efforts to combat racism and xenophobia. The discussion will also focus on responses developed by OSCE participating States to address these issues, particularly in times of economic crisis, when available resources are scarce.

Questions to be discussed

- What are the contemporary manifestations of racism and xenophobia? Which groups are targeted by this phenomenon?
- What are the strategies to address racism and xenophobia? Which actors are best placed to design and implement these strategies?
- What are the challenges to effective prevention of violent manifestations of prejudice and intolerance?

- What additional steps need to be taken to prevent racism and xenophobia? To what extent would the adoption of additional commitments to prevent racism, xenophobia and hate crimes be useful?
- How can OSCE institutions and field operations better support participating States in implementing their commitments on tolerance and non-discrimination?

Day 2

10.00 – 12.00 **Session II: Challenges in Combating Hate Crimes, Racism and Xenophobia: Role of Awareness-Raising Initiatives and Public Discourse**

Awareness-raising initiatives on racism and xenophobia aim to bring positive and sustainable change to societies by promoting universally respected values. Their initiators show leadership in condemning racism and xenophobia and reject generalizations or stereotypes of individual and different groups. This is most often realized through organization of media campaigns, youth camps, neighbourhood encounters, open door days, marches, public discussions.

Initiatives to combat racism and xenophobia in schools and in professional settings will be successful only if they are complemented by awareness-raising initiatives in the public domain. A broad range of actors - public officials at a national and a local level, civil society groups including professional associations, sports clubs, charities and grassroots organizations, church and religious leaders and sports or music celebrities - have initiated campaigns to affect change in attitudes and social behaviour. While these activities are numerous, it is necessary to assess whether their effectiveness could be improved with increased co-operation among all actors and with the involvement of victim groups.

During this session, diverse initiatives will be discussed and participants will have the opportunity to identify best practices as well as lessons learned in order to analyze how to increase their potential.

Questions to be discussed

- What are effective awareness-raising initiatives in the OSCE region? How can we use lessons learned and design more effective awareness-raising initiatives? What are the roles of parents, communities, civil society organisations in this process?
- How can high-level public events, including sporting events such as EURO 2012 and the Olympic Games be used to raise awareness about racism and xenophobia and hate crimes?
- How can media and internet-based social networks be used to disseminate information and raise awareness about combating racism, xenophobia and intolerance in society?

- How can the OSCE and other international organizations (UN, CoE, IOM) support participating States in implementing their commitments in the field of education with a view to promoting mutual respect and understanding?

12.00 – 14.00 Lunch

14.00 – 16.00 Session III: Education for Tolerance and Mutual Respect and Understanding: Good Practices from IGOs, Governments and Civil Society

There is a great variety of educational approaches developed to prevent racism and xenophobia and to foster mutual respect and understanding. Human rights education, diversity education, intercultural and multicultural education or citizenship education are only some models which apply diverse methods and use different components. These initiatives range from curriculum development and the introduction of new teaching styles to greater parental and community involvement in school activities. Despite differing methodologies used to develop these programmes, they all, at their roots, aim at promoting human rights principles and values.

The session will give the opportunity to participants to share experiences and best practices in this area. The discussion will focus on the effectiveness and sustainability of the programmes with a view to identifying the most effective approaches. Models which include partnerships between relevant actors such as government authorities, civil society and international organizations will be carefully discussed in order to identify programmes that can offer cost-effective solutions.

Questions to be discussed

- What kind of educational programmes aimed at tackling racism and xenophobia exist in the OSCE region? What are the impacts of these initiatives? How can we use lessons learned and replicate successful practices?
- What educational tools are available for practitioners and public officials that emphasize their obligations to respond to manifestations of racism and xenophobia? How can professional standards and codes of conduct for state officials be further strengthened?
- What role do governments, IGOs, civil society and community-based entities (community centres, religious institutions, etc.) play in combating racism and xenophobia? How can co-operation between various actors be further enhanced?
- How can OSCE participating States be supported in their efforts to design and implement educational programmes?

16.00 – 16.30

Break

16.30 – 17.30

Closing Session

Reports by the Moderators of the Working Sessions

17.30

Closing of the meeting