

OSCE - 2006 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting Warsaw, Oct. 2006

Working Session 14 - Tolerance and non-discrimination II

Statement of the autochthonous national minorities in Germany

1. International Conference Against the Dissemination of Hatred on the Internet

The Minority Council of the four autochthonous national minorities in Germany is emphatic on the concern of the Central Council for German Sinti and Romanies to step-up international efforts against the dissemination of hatred and racism on the Internet and to define new cross-national fight measures. The Federal Government is therefore asked to hold an international conference in Berlin against rightist extremist hate propaganda with participation of the media and provider industry in order to promote appropriate measures and clear-up unsolved questions of principle.

2. Involvement of the Federal Government concerning costs of the minority school system

In order to ensure their cultural reproduction, national minorities - like the majority of the population, too - must rely on the supporting mediation of knowledge and values that is provided by elementary educational institutions (schools etc.). In this area, the starting positions of the four national minorities vary very much. The additional costs related to minority issues (additional subject, creation of teaching material in the language of minorities, long ways to school etc.) which are linked to an education with equal opportunities confront the federal states responsible for education with in part enormous financial difficulties. The associations of the national minorities have therefore argued to make federal grants accessible to the minority school system in the context of the federalism reform. However, the federalism reform adopted by the German Bundestag has worsened the problem instead of solving it. Now, federal grants cannot even be allowed for the construction of schools.

3. Equal Treatment Act

The implementation of the European guidelines for protection against discrimination into national law has finally occurred in the middle of 2006 in the shape of the Equal Treatment Act. However, the adopted law does not grant any right to sue on behalf of the victims to acknowledged representations of national minorities (as anti-discrimination organisations) as required by guideline 2000/43/EG of June 29, 2000 (19). For an actual realisation of anti-discrimination measures the Minority Council regards it as necessary to allow organisations the right to sue in order to provide effective aid to victims of discrimination.