



RC.DEL/25/10
1 October 2010

ENGLISH only

EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Review Conference Warsaw, 1 October 2010

EU Statement – Session 2: Fundamental Freedoms I (2)

Dear Mrs. Moderator

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union.

In December, Heads of State and Government will meet in Astana for an OSCE Summit, the first such gathering in 11 years. Coinciding as it does with the 35th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, the Summit provides an important opportunity to revitalise the organisation.

The Summit should have a substantial agenda, with the Corfu Process central to discussions. The EU believes it essential that the Corfu Process address ways in which participating States can both re-affirm existing commitments in the Human Dimension and improve their implementation. Full compliance with OSCE norms, principles and commitments, with an emphasis on human rights, fundamental freedoms, is the best way to ensure that the organisation's comprehensive approach to security across all three dimensions can be safeguarded.

Within its Human Dimension, the OSCE has established institutions with the autonomy and expertise to assist participating States in adhering to their OSCE commitments, as well as to monitor and report on their compliance.

The Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) does essential work in areas such as democratisation, human rights protection, election observation, rule of law and tolerance and non-discrimination. It provides new democracies with invaluable advice and assistance in establishing national electoral and human rights institutions. ODIHR's election observation work has also assisted participating States in adhering to democratic norms. The EU would like to reiterate its support for ODIHR's observation methodology. However, there is still room for improving follow-up on ODIHR's election observation reports' recommendations. The EU pays tribute to the excellent stewardship of the organisation by Ambassador Janez Lenarčič. The EU would like to reaffirm its unwavering support for the work of the ODIHR and Ambassador Lenarčič in helping States to implement Human Dimension commitments.

ODIHR's Focal Point for Human Rights Defenders and National Human Rights Institutions undertakes important work in monitoring the situation of human rights defenders and enhancing their capacity to protect and promote human rights. Although highlighted by the EU at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting last year, the situation for human rights defenders in some participating States still continues to be of grave concern. The EU has drawn attention to a number of cases at the Permanent Council and will continue to do so.

The EU has also sought to prioritise freedom of expression and freedom of the media, including internet-based media. Over the last year, we continue to see attacks on journalists in the OSCE region. These attacks are an affront to the freedoms essential to democracy.

The office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media has existed since 1997 and the EU calls on all participating States to continue to support this institution. Dunja Mijatovic became OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media in March 2010. Ms Mijatovic continues the important work of her predecessor, Miklos Haraszti, in drawing attention to and addressing attacks against journalists and promoting freedom of expression in the region as a whole. Nevertheless, the protection and promotion of freedom of expression is an area where the OSCE and participating States should enhance their efforts. We need to take urgent measures to respond to the negative developments on media freedom and do more to strengthen the protections for journalists and other human rights defenders. We should also support the potential inherent in new technologies for the enhancement of freedom of expression and the media.

Too often ethnic differences are exploited to orchestrate violence against minorities. The EU greatly appreciates the efforts of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, Knut Vollebaek, to identify and seek early resolution of ethnic tensions that may threaten peace and stability in the OSCE region. His work in drawing attention to the major unrest in southern Kyrgyzstan this year has been particularly useful. There is a continuing

need, however, for participating States to take further measures to alleviate tensions related to national minorities within participating States.

Trafficking in human beings affects almost all participating States whether as countries of origin, countries of transit, or countries of destination. It is a complex human rights challenge with a cross-dimensional impact on the OSCE's comprehensive security policy. Dr. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro was appointed Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in January this year. The EU is confident that Dr. Giammarinaro will continue the relentless efforts of her predecessor, Eva Biaudet, in highlighting and addressing the grave human rights violation that trafficking represents.

The EU would also like to express its appreciation for the work of the OSCE's missions and field operations, which, together with the institutions, and based on cooperation with the host countries, make significant contributions to improving the human rights situation in the OSCE region.

As a regional security organisation, the OSCE is unique in making the protection of human rights an integral part of its comprehensive concept of security. However, participating States have yet to achieve complete compliance with their Human Dimension commitments. We all have a common responsibility to redouble our efforts in this regard. The EU reiterates its call on all participating States to assist projects and programmes within this field, whether through facilitating project implementation on the ground or through making appropriate material contributions.

In conclusion, the EU would like to make the following specific recommendations to the Review Conference:

- The OSCE Summit should set out a mandate for revitalising the organisation and its future work which includes strengthening the autonomy and integrity of the organisation's institutions;
- Participating States should explore ways to enhance support for implementation of Human Dimension commitments, including through peer, thematic and national review, or through Human Dimension events;
- The EU urges all participating States to engage in more systematic follow-up on ODIHR's election observation reports' recommendations;
- Cooperation with international organisations, in particular with the UN and Council of Europe should be enhanced;
- The adaptation and reinforcement of commitments in specific areas of the Human Dimension, including freedom of the media, freedom of assembly and the protection of those who promote human rights.

Thank you for your attention.

The candidate countries TURKEY, CROATIA*, the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA* and ICELAND**, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries

ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO and SERBIA, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA and ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

*Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

** Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and the European Economic Area.