



United States Mission to the OSCE

Point of Order: NGO Access to the Review Conference

As delivered by Dr. Michael Haltzel
OSCE Review Conference
October 18, 2010

Mr. Chairman,

My government would like to raise a point of order.

We continue to be concerned that the OSCE rule on NGO participation is not being implemented properly for this Review Conference, neither in Warsaw nor in Vienna. According to the provisions of Chapter IV, paragraph 16 of the Helsinki Document (1992), participation of NGOs can only be denied to “persons or organizations which resort to the use of violence or publicly condone terrorism or the use of violence.” This rule is clearly referred to in PC.DEC/952, which lays out the modalities for this Review Conference.

One NGO representative, Nurmuhamet Hanamov, has still not yet been allowed to register for this Review Conference on the basis of an objection by the Government of Turkmenistan, sent to the Secretary General before he even attempted to register – a process that does not conform to the Secretary General’s NGO registration procedure outlined in RC.INF/3/10. Another NGO representative on the Turkmen list, Farid Tuhbatullin, requested registration as of October 14 and should also be allowed to attend. While these individuals have been the subject of proceedings in Turkmenistan, both reside legally in Austria, and the charges against them have not been recognized outside of Turkmenistan, least of which by OSCE Rapporteur Prof. Emmanuel Decaux in his report dated 12 March 2003 (ODIHR .GAL/15/03). Mr. Tuhbatullin has even received a pardon from the Government of Turkmenistan. We also note that our host, the Government of Austria, clearly had no reason for the exclusion of either from residence in this country.

Turkmenistan objected to these same two NGO representatives in previous years, and each time its objections were denied. Indeed, both have attended numerous previous OSCE meetings. No new information has been presented to suggest any reason to reconsider Turkmenistan's request.

Mr. Chairman, the United States believes, in the strongest possible terms, that it is unacceptable that one government have the ability to unilaterally deny NGO representation on any basis other than that which we as an organization have previously agreed. Such action is injurious to the OSCE as an organization and as a community of values.

Finally, we continue to note that failure to resolve this issue will cast a shadow on the Astana Summit, and all of us want the Astana summit to be a success.

We ask that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.