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HUMAN DIMENSION SESSIONS OF THE 2010 REVIEW CONFERENCE

Recommendations – Working Session 5 - Intolerance against Migrants
(Astana, 26 –28 November 2010)

Astana, 27 November 2010

COJEP International is glad to make some recommendations from the Civil Society side regarding the session 5 of the Human Dimension sessions of the 2010 Review Conference.

Concerned with the high number of hate crimes against Muslim migrants and minorities took place across Europe and North America, we call for participating States to adopt more comprehensive and effective commitments to combat Islamophobia. We firmly condemn the desecration of the memorial erected in honour of Marwa El-Sherbini who was brutally murder in a court in Germany in 2009.

Here are our recommendations:

- OSCE should organize a High Level Conference on Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, in follow-up to the Spanish Chairmanship's Conference on this issue which took place in 2007.
- We express our hope that based on the discussions and recommendations that would come out form such a meeting, OSCE adopts a comprehensive Ministerial Council Decision in order to combat this new from of racism and xenophobia, which has been in rise during our decade.
- We also invite the upcoming Lithuanian Chairmanship of OSCE to organize a Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Respect and Mutual Comprehension Education with a special focus on challenging intolerance and discrimination against Muslims through education;
- We appreciate and support the activities of ODIHR and CiO's Personal Representatives to combat hate crimes and encourage them further to also focus on institutionalized forms of bias as manifested by direct or indirect discriminatory state policies and practices against certain groups.
- In this regard, participating States should remove any immigration and naturalization policies and practices which directly or indirectly discriminate against Muslims.
- OSCE should make more efforts to address the root causes of hate crimes, by raising awareness about how certain international policies may cause the increase of Islamophobia.
- We encourage all participating States to develop and to vigorously implement action plans to combat intolerance and discrimination against Muslims, in consultation and co-operation with the ODIHR, other relevant international organizations, non-governmental organizations and specialized national bodies dealing with this issue especially during the preparation of their integration policies.
- OSCE should increase awareness and sensitivity about gendered Islamophobia, as it is very often manifested in restrictions on the appearance of Muslim women and girls.
- We would like to underline that Islamophobia is not a misunderstanding of Islam or Muslims; it is a form of racism and xenophobia built on cultural differences. Therefore, it can be countered only by raising awareness of Islamophobia, not by providing Information on Islam or Muslims.
- To this end, as we highlighted in Warsaw, today it is vital to have a consensus on the definition of Islamophobia. We worked on this issue and we proposed a draft of definition in last October. This proposal has been supported by many NGO's. This definition has objective to have a more effective implementation of international commitments in this field. We hope to have the adhesion of intergovernmental organizations and participating States to this definition.