



United States Mission to the OSCE

**Working Session 10:
Fundamental freedoms II, including:
Freedom of movement;
Treatment of citizens of other States;
Migrant workers – the integration of legal migrants**

As prepared for delivery by David J. Kramer, U.S. Head of Delegation
OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Warsaw, September 28, 2015

The United States remains concerned that the right to leave and return to one's country eludes many citizens in the OSCE region. Several OSCE participating States inhibit external and internal movement through exit visa regimes and other mechanisms that frequently target activists, human rights defenders and political opposition figures. These participating States interfere with the exercise of other rights of their own citizens, such as the freedoms of expression and association, thus limiting their ability to engage with the international community. We urge participating States to cease such restrictions and uphold their commitments in this area.

Freedom of movement remains a challenge in Ukraine, as Russian-backed separatists continue to block genuine humanitarian workers, who are lawfully in the country, from reaching people living in the territories under so-called separatist control. We condemn the recent decision by Russia-backed separatist leaders in Luhansk to expel UN agencies and all international nongovernmental organizations providing humanitarian assistance in the area. This will endanger many lives and is contrary to the Minsk agreements. In addition, Russian occupation authorities in Crimea blocked Tatar leaders from leaving Crimea to prevent their attendance at the World Congress of Crimean Tatars in Istanbul in early August. Similar concerns extend to Russian "borderization" of the administrative boundary lines in the Russian-occupied territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia. This borderization separates Georgian residents from their communities and threaten their livelihoods.

International groups have reported that authorities in Turkmenistan have told individual travelers they are permanently denied permission to depart the country. Since the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) in 2014, Azerbaijan increasingly restricted the travel of peaceful activists and journalists, including Meydan TV journalists and a prospective participant in an OSCE regional conference, blogger Mehman Huseynov.

At last year's HDIM, many delegations mentioned with deep concern alarming spikes in racist, xenophobic, and discriminatory acts in the OSCE region targeted at members of minority populations, including migrants. Regrettably, virulent anti-migrant campaigns in some European countries have not only presented obstacles to finding constructive solutions to the ongoing refugee and migration crisis but in some cases, have also fueled violence. While we recognize every country's right to protect its borders and to control immigration, any approach to the crisis should focus on saving and protecting lives, ensuring that human rights are respected, and promoting orderly and humane migration policies. Over the longer term, all participating States

must find ways to ensure that our increasingly diverse societies are inclusive and promote the dignity and human rights of all.

Our American success would simply not be possible without the generations of immigrants who have come to our shores from every corner of the globe. They have helped us build our economy, and made America the economic engine of the world. In the United States, legal migrants make up 30% of our small business owners, a quarter of professionals, and contribute close to \$800 billion to our economy annually. Regretfully, some divisive public discourse continues. In response, local, state and federal government agencies continue to develop and improve tools to combat intolerance and discrimination. The European Union's UPSTREAM project, "Welcoming Cities" initiatives, Migration Integration Policy Index, and other efforts offer insight into city, state, and national policies across sectors that can assist EU member states to proactively address increasing demographic shifts, in part fueled by migration.

Public officials throughout the OSCE region must speak out against xenophobia and refrain from fanning the flames of hate. Those who commit hate crimes against migrants and violate labor laws must be prosecuted. More programs and protections are needed in Russia to assist hundreds of thousands of labor migrants from Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, in addition to government support inside those countries for migrants returning from Russia.

With hate crimes towards African and Muslim migrants on the rise in the OSCE region, we commend ODIHR's efforts to collect hate crimes data and work with affected communities, with a special focus on women and youth. The European Union's Agency for Fundamental Rights and the European Network Against Racism have also published policy recommendations for governments of the OSCE region that commemorates the UN designated International Decade for People of African Descent.