



**REPUBLIC OF CROATIA**

**WORKING SESSION 3**

**STATEMENT**

**ON ODIHR REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN THE OSCE REGION**

Croatia welcomes ODIHR Report on Challenges and Good practices in respect of human rights defenders in OSCE Region as a valuable assessment of major challenges faced by the human rights defenders as well as of good practices aimed at their protection.

The Report attempts to identify trends and patterns threatening the rights and activities of the human rights defenders in OSCE Region on the basis of the set of concrete examples. We understand that the individual cases mentioned in this Report serve only as an illustration of trends and patterns that could apply on the Region as a whole and are not intended to serve as an assessment of the country's commitment in this respect.

This is the reason why Croatia has not aligned itself to the statement by the EU, although we subscribe to majority of its substantial points. We regret that, in expressing its deep concern over the alarming trends and patterns of violations of rights of human rights defenders across the region, the EU has chosen to randomly spell out the illustrations from only some, exclusively non EU, countries – including Croatia.

In this respect, we would like to stress that Croatia is mentioned in ODIHR report in few footnotes that refer to isolated incidents. There is nothing in these cases that would indicate the systematic character of violations or authority negligence, even less the existence of pattern. There is nothing as well to indicate that the incidents of the kind are increasing in the Republic of Croatia, what would justify the qualification of 'alarming'.

On the contrary, Croatia has established appropriate judiciary and policy control mechanisms, including through the Antidiscrimination Law and Criminal Law that are already addressing

some of the cases in question. Croatia will continue to actively fight internally towards the eradication of the incidents similar to ones mentioned in the Report and to attach great importance to the protection of human rights defenders, both on national and international level.