

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2009

Warsaw, Poland

Tolerance and Non-discrimination session: 5 October 2009



As you must have read the news concerning hate crimes targeted towards Muslim communities. Cojep International has arranged a special roundtable on this particular subject today. The roundtable has on its Agenda, to inform, analyze and assess views on this subject.

Faced with these terrible events which have resulted in loss of human lives, politicians and media have not leaved up to their responsibility but have tried to downplay the situation by minimizing the importance of the situation and the facts.

The recommendations of COJEP International for this session are as follows:

- 1) Policymakers should not only respond strongly by condemning in the strongest terms the hate crimes, but also calling upon the institutions to perform their role effectively.
- 2) The media have an important role in informing the public that is why it needs to deal objectively with hate crimes against Muslims and avoid propaganda approaches that promote prejudices against Muslim Communities.
- 3) The police authorities must keep statistic on hate crimes targeted against Muslim communities. The police should also seek a better cooperation with Muslim communities to encourage its members to launch complaints when targeted. We call on participating States of the OSCE to benefit from the expertise and educational work of the ODIHR and we emphasize that States from the west of Vienna must be more open to cooperate with ODIHR in this area. We appeal to member states to have a look at the latest ODIHR report on hate crimes. We find it very disturbing that out of 56 participating countries, only 2 states have provided concrete information on hate crimes against Muslim communities.
- 4) At the same time, we wish to point out the fact that it is important to build the capacity of civil society so that it can adequately manage such issues. The extensive training in Russian language by ODIHR should also be implemented in other languages like German and French for the benefit of large Muslim communities in these 2 countries. Our organization is willing to engage with ODIHR for the success of this vital initiative.
- 5) Education and Training are 2 essential tools to combat old and new forms of intolerance and hate crimes. In this regard, the draft guideline for educators prepared by ODIHR should be completely supported by all participating States of the OSCE.
- 6) Cojep International appreciates the work done by the new special representatives of the OSCE Chairmanship and specifically requests the representative working with the issue of intolerance and discrimination against Muslim communities, to increase awareness on hate crimes. This issue is not only Islam specific, but is the responsibility of Human Rights and implies recognition by States of the existence of this problem. It is unacceptable that hierarchy of different forms of intolerance within our societies exists. We must deal with this issue on urgent basis.
- 7) Cojep International call upon the personal representative of the Chairman in Office of the OSCE dealing with intolerance and discrimination against Muslims to make state visits to assess the situation of Muslim communities with the various local and national representatives. The last violent incident which took place in Germany leads us to recommend the first visit to be in this country. We know that the German authorities have the means and the will to collaborate effectively to set an example in the fight against such hate crimes. A visit to Greece, Bulgaria, Denmark and Italy seems equally necessary in the near future to assess the situation of ethnic and religious minorities in these member states of European Union.
- 8) Finally, we call the next Kazakh presidency of OSCE to take account of the hate crime issues as well as intolerance and increasing discrimination against Muslim communities. In light of the alarming situation, we recommend a special meeting to be held next year to assess the overall living conditions of Muslims and follow its progress closely.

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