

**OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION
IMPLEMENTATION MEETING
Warsaw, 28 September to 9 October 2009**

**Working session 10: Tolerance and non-discrimination
Review of the implementation of commitments, promotion of
mutual respect and understanding
Monday, 5 October 2009**

S T A T E M E N T

by the Delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria

Mr. Moderator,

Bulgaria fully aligns itself with the statement of the UK on behalf of the European Union which has been earlier. In our national capacity we would like to make the following comments:

Bulgaria attaches significance to the implementation of the OSCE commitments on tolerance and non-discrimination, particularly to the implementation of those commitments related to the promotion of respect for ethnic diversity. Noting with regret that in times of crises bias-motivated violence and crimes including violence and crimes inspired by ethnic affiliation and nationality tend substantially to increase in Europe, we welcome the positive outcome of the 2009 OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Hate Crimes – Effective implementation of Legislation.

It is our understanding that closely related to the bias-motivated crimes is the hate speech – the extensive oral or written use of offensive and disparaging language towards a person or group of people based on their social status, ethnic affiliation, nationality or any other distinction that might be interpreted by the offenders as vulnerability or weakness. Hate speech is also the incitement and the inspiration of racism, xenophobia and all other known forms of intolerance through the powerful means of modern media and information technologies. Bulgaria believes that such practices do not conform to the OSCE values and objectives.

Along these lines Bulgaria remains concerned about the growing number of cases of ethnic intolerance and hate speech, including *vis-à-vis* other peoples and countries, in the OSCE area, notably in some parts of the Western Balkans.

We sincerely regret that in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia hate speech and hate speech practices against people with deferent self-consciousness, particularly with Bulgarian self-consciousness, and *vis-à-vis* neighboring states are not isolated cases. An ample example of this approach is the recent issue of the Macedonian Encyclopedia, publication of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts. The Macedonian Encyclopedia pretends to be a scientific publication. In reality it contains an outdated language and ideological postulates from the Cold war era, which do not promote good neighborly relations and do not contribute to the abolition of the hate speech in the country. In this context Bulgaria acknowledges the recent withdrawal of the Macedonian Encyclopedia from circulation. It would be recommendable that the Macedonian authorities exert further efforts to discourage and abolish hate speech.

With a view of the urgency and seriousness of the phenomenon of hate speech in some parts of Europe we are of the view that the OSCE could more actively engage in addressing it.

Thank you, Mr. Moderator!