

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2018**Statement by the Republic of Bulgaria****Working Session 6: Tolerance and non-discrimination I, including combating anti-Semitism, combating intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief, including against Christians, Muslims and members of other religions**

Mr./Madam Chairperson,

Bulgaria fully aligns itself with the statement made by France on behalf of the EU. At the same time, allow me to make a few remarks also in my national capacity and to present recent progress made by my country in the field of tolerance and non-discrimination.

During the last twelve months the authorities of the Republic of Bulgaria have continued to pursue a consistent policy aiming at prevention and elimination of all forms of discrimination and promoting mutual understanding and tolerance, including by making use of the OSCE expertise.

Together with ODIHR Bulgaria is implementing a project called "Building a Comprehensive Criminal Justice Response to Hate Crime". Under this project a series of pilot training courses were carried out and a Manual on joint hate crime training for police and prosecutors was launched in June this year. The project is seen as instrumental in addressing deficiencies in effectively countering incidents of hate crime targeting Roma and other minorities groups (including based on religion), as well as anti-Roma attitudes which remain a serious concern.

In response to a request by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the customization and application of OSCE/ODIHR's Practical Guide on "Understanding anti-Semitic Hate Crimes and Addressing the Security Needs of Jewish Communities", an ODIHR needs assessment mission was in Bulgaria to inform the customization. The Bulgarian customized version will be launched in November this year.

Taking full advantage of OSCE's wider mandate to assist the participating states in implementing their commitments, Bulgaria requested assistance from ODIHR to review the Bulgarian Criminal Code, primarily provisions

pertaining to anti-discrimination, hate crime and hate speech and racism and their compliance with international commitments and standards.

On 18 October 2017, Bulgaria adopted the IHRA working definition on Antisemitism. On the same day the Government appointed the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs as a national coordinator on combating anti-Semitism.

During the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU in the first half of 2018, Bulgaria put a specific priority on the fundamental human rights such as freedom of speech and expression, freedom of religion and belief, enhancing the ethnic and religious tolerance and combating Anti-Semitism. The main Presidency event dedicated to Anti-Semitism took place in May 2018 in cooperation with Yad Vashem, FRA and ODIHR.

In conclusion, I would like to reconfirm Bulgaria's strong commitment to the prevention and elimination of any forms of discrimination. We will continue to rely on the unique expertise and support of the OSCE and in particular of ODIHR which we highly value.

Thank you!