

**UK statement to the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting**  
**PREVENTION OF RACISM, XENOPHOBIA AND HATE CRIMES THROUGH**  
**EDUCATIONAL AND AWARENESS- RAISING INITIATIVES**

**10 November 2011 Hofburg, Vienna**

Thank you Madam Moderator.

Firstly let me thank the Lithuanian Chairmanship and ODIHR for organizing this event and register the importance that the United Kingdom places on reducing the harm caused by hate crime including racism.

We have just heard a moving testimony from Mrs Lawrence which shows the real human tragedy that such crime causes to a family. But we also know that such crimes have an impact on the wider community and in the case of Stephen's tragic death, a nation.

Because of ongoing legal proceedings in UK courts, it is inappropriate for me to mention details of Stephen's murder. However, it is important that to state the significant impact that his tragic death had on the criminal justice system in particular.

The failings of the criminal justice system to provide an adequate response to Mrs Lawrence and her family were exposed in a public inquiry which reported in 1999. The Inquiry came about because of the tireless lobbying of Mr and Mrs Lawrence and their supporters. The United Kingdom has a huge debt of gratitude to Mrs Lawrence whose steely determination to ensure that others do not suffer in the same way has brought around huge change in the way agencies respond to racist and other hate crime.

Since 1999 a whole range of improvements have been put in place, from legislative changes to the way in which the police interact with victims and their families. A cornerstone of the legislative response was the introduction in 2003 of enhanced sentencing in cases where the courts are satisfied that crime was motivated by racial or other hostility. We saw the positive impact of this change in the trial of a similar, and equally tragic, murder: that of Anthony Walker in 2005. The court was convinced that the

offenders were motivated by racism and transparently outlined that the sentence was to be enhanced because of this. Anthony's mother has stated that this was the clearest indication to her, other victims and, importantly, offenders that the State does not tolerate racist crime.

Whilst our efforts to combat racism may never fully succeed, Mrs Lawrence shows us why we can never let up in our efforts to do so. The UK Government is committed to increasing the reporting of hate crime and further improving our responses and we are currently developing a new cross-government hate crime action plan which will outline key activities to tackle and respond to hate crime, including racial hatred through the rest of this parliamentary period.

Equality is essential in any modern State and it is unacceptable that any individual might be targeted by the police because of their race rather than their actions. Stop and search is an important tool for the police but it is essential that powers are used fairly, with the support of the community and to protect the public from criminal activity. Through programmes such as 'Next Steps' we are committed to supporting forces to identify and tackle the drivers behind apparent disproportionate use of these powers and to enable local people and the Equality and Human Rights Commission to challenge those who can not demonstrate fair public service.

Madam Moderator, you are aware that the UK example, and in particular the lessons of the public inquiry, has been used in the training of law enforcement colleagues across the OSCE region. Mrs Lawrence showed us in the UK why we should never become complacent about racism and we would hope that the influence she has had in the UK can be replicated in other OSCE States.

Thank you.