



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2012 Warsaw, 5 October 2012

EU statement – Closing session

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union at this closing session of the 2012 OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting.

At the outset, we wish to reiterate the importance we attach to the fulfilment of human dimension commitments, for which the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting is instrumental. Our discussions these two weeks, reviewing the implementation of these commitments, have highlighted some good responses and recommendations to the challenges facing all of us but have also shown that much remains to be done.

The lack of media freedom in some participating States continues to be alarming; certain OSCE participating States continue to violate freedom of assembly and association; human rights defenders continue to be harassed and imprisoned; cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and punishment have been reported; two participating States maintain the death penalty and carry out this cruel and undignified punishment; elections are not always free, fair and transparent; gender equality is still elusive; the situation of many Roma and Sinti remains dire; the independent functioning of national human rights institutions is at times obstructed; intolerance and discrimination against several groups, including LGBT, persist across the OSCE area.

The EU would like to invite the Irish Chairmanship-in-Office to address some of the most egregious violations by tabling concrete proposals for adoption at the upcoming meeting of the Ministerial Council in Dublin. We consider that restrictions to and violations of fundamental freedoms should be addressed as a matter of priority, also because they have the ability to adversely affect human security, rendering them more relevant to the work of the OSCE.

We want to thank once again the civil society for its dedicated participation in the HDIM and its contribution to our work and restate our belief that its input provides valuable insight that might not be available to us through other channels. It is our firm position that the open and free participation of representatives of non-governmental organisations in OSCE Human Dimension events must be preserved.

We encourage participating States that have been the subject of criticism at this HDIM, as our own Member States will do, to make good use of the recommendations and to follow-up, seeking the expertise and assistance offered by OSCE institutions and field missions if necessary. The only way to make tangible progress is to take concrete steps aimed at better implementation of commitments. This is why the representation of all participating States at these meetings is indispensable.

In this context, we express our regret that the delegation of Turkmenistan decided not to participate in the meeting, thus missing a valuable opportunity for an open and frank dialogue with other participating States and civil society.

Participating States have been involved in an effort to review human dimension events. Let me state the EU's firm objective to ensure that these events are effective and that their modalities enable them to be such. The review of these events should not adversely affect their capacity to review our human dimension commitments.

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to recall that the European Union Special Representative on Human Rights, at our opening statement at this year's Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, alluded to the Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy adopted by the European Union last June. This Strategy outlines actions that the EU will pursue in the promotion and protection of human rights. I would also recall that the European Union highlighted, in the same statement, those areas it would like to focus on in the human dimension of the OSCE.

Regarding OSCE human dimension events and activities in 2013, the European Union would like to suggest that they focus on the following topics:

1. Media freedom and freedom of expression, including the safety of journalists,
2. Freedom of assembly and association, and
3. Freedom of religion or belief. □

In conclusion, the EU wishes to thank again Ambassador Janez Lenarčič and his team for the excellent preparation of HDIM, the moderators, keynote speakers, rapporteurs and interpreters.

The Acceding Country Croatia*, the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland+ and Serbia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA country Liechtenstein, member of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Andorra and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

** Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.