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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE HOLY SEE

STATEMENT BY MONSIGNOR RICHARD A. GYHRA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HOLY SEE
AT THE 1583rd MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

29 October 2026

Report by the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Mr. Chairman,

My Delegation joins others in extending a warm welcome to Ms. Maria Telalian, Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), on her return to the Permanent Council, and would like to thank her for her presentation.

Madam Director,

The Holy See appreciates the work of ODIHR in fulfilling its mandate as an OSCE executive structure to support and assist participating States in implementing their human dimension commitments, which were agreed upon by consensus.

My Delegation would like to acknowledge ODIHR's efforts in preparing and organising the Warsaw Human Dimension Conference (WHDC). However, it is also worth reiterating the importance of convening the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM). This meeting provides a unique and valuable opportunity for all participating States to review the implementation of their human dimension commitments in a spirit of cooperation and constructive dialogue.

In this regard, further reflection on the reasons why *consensus* on the convening of the HDIM has remained elusive for quite some time, unlike other mandated OSCE meetings, could help identify ways to move forward. As emphasised in Warsaw, it is particularly important in the context of the human dimension to focus on what unites us and seek common ground, rather than pursuing divisive issues or approaches. My Delegation therefore encourages continued efforts to overcome the current impasse and restore this important forum through consensus.

Furthermore, my Delegation welcomes the greater attention given to freedom of religion or belief at this year's WHDC, as reflected both in the annotated agenda and

in the introductory remarks delivered during the relevant session. However, the quantity and quality of civil society contributions on this topic highlight the importance of maintaining freedom of religion or belief firmly as a distinct item on the OSCE agenda, rather than incorporating it into the broader discourse on tolerance and non-discrimination.

My Delegation welcomes ODIHR's continued efforts to disseminate the practical guide "*Understanding Anti-Christian Hate Crimes and Addressing the Security Needs of Christian Communities*"[1] and to raise awareness of its contents. Alongside the corresponding guides addressing the security needs of Jewish[2] and Muslim[3] communities, this publication reflects an approach that recognizes the specific characteristics of various forms of intolerance, while promoting a comprehensive response[4].

Consistent with this approach, and as my Delegation already stated in Warsaw, the Holy See calls on the OSCE executive structures and participating States to pursue initiatives aimed at combating intolerance and discrimination against Christians, Jews, Muslims and members of other religions, avoiding partial or selective approaches and ensuring that each receives equal attention.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, my Delegation would like to reiterate its appreciation of Director Telalian's leadership and work, and to reaffirm its readiness to engage in constructive dialogue and to continue cooperating with ODIHR on matters of mutual interest.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[1] https://www.osce.org/odihr/594847.
[2] https://www.osce.org/odihr/317166.
[3] https://www.osce.org/odihr/muslim-security-guide.
[4] Cf. MC.DEC/10/07.