



STATEMENT OF THE HOLY SEE

2018 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

Working Session 17: Combating racism, xenophobia, intolerance and discrimination

Warsaw, 20 September 2018

Mr./Mme Moderator,

Since the Dipoli consultations in 1973, the Holy See has always insisted – and continues to insist – on the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion, as an essential factor for peace, justice and welfare, necessary to ensure the development of friendly relations and cooperation between the participating States. Its participation in the OSCE and its active presence and engagement in the human dimension are expressions of the Holy See's continued desire to affirm and defend the inherent dignity of every human person, from which derive all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Therefore, the Holy See deploras hate crimes, acts of intolerance, discrimination and violence against any human person, and has repeatedly and decisively condemned violence against people and every sign of unjust discrimination. In fact, the Catholic Church, at every moment of history and in ever new ways, is challenged by the message of love committed to her by her Divine Founder, Jesus Christ. It is a love that sees the individual man or woman in need, and does not allow itself to be distracted by other considerations. Such was the attitude of the Good Samaritan in the Gospel: he brought help to the wounded stranger, abandoned at the side of the road and ignored by passers-by.

Our Delegation has to note with profound concern and consternation that in the whole OSCE area – both East and West of Vienna – many persons and

communities continue to be subject to threats or acts of hostility or violence because of their racial, ethnic or religious identity, or become victims of other acts of intolerance and discrimination. Acts of intolerance and discrimination pose a threat to social cohesion within the participating States, affecting not only the victim, but also the wider community.

However, the participating States consciously and correctly agreed by consensus to limit the OSCE's specific interest in the area of tolerance and non-discrimination to those phenomena that could threaten the security and stability of the Region.¹ The reason for this circumscribed scope of the OSCE's interest was not a desire to ignore certain groups, but rather to reflect the Organization's decision to address in common those particular phenomena that might erode confidence between States and trigger violence and conflict on a wider-scale, putting in danger the peaceful relations among the States.

Therefore, the Holy See remains confident that, in accordance with its nature as a security organization, the OSCE, while condemning all hate crimes and acts of violent intolerance and unjust discrimination, will develop a specific response to those phenomena that can undermine the peace and stability of the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian Region, remaining necessarily within the realm of the commitments consensually agreed upon by the Participating States. Our Delegation continues to stress that the OSCE and its Institutions should focus on existing commitments, in line with the Organization's origin and nature, rather than delay the implementation of all commitments by attempting to cover too much ground. Unfocused attention to other concerns, even if legitimate, serves only to distract the efforts of the OSCE, as well as to forestall effective and timely measures to address the original commitments, many of which have yet to be implemented.

Thank you, Mr./Mme Moderator!

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Cfr. US Delegation to the OSCE, HDIM 2008, Session 10 (6 October 2008), HDIM.DEL/346/08.