

Chairmanship: Sweden

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
(1332nd Plenary Meeting)**

1. Date: Friday, 20 August 2021 (via video teleconference)

Opened: 12 p.m.

Closed: 12.25 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador U. Funered

3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 1: UPDATE BY THE CHAIRPERSONSHIP ON THE
HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING

Chairperson (Annex 1), United Kingdom, Slovenia-European Union, United States of America (PC.DEL/1290/21), Switzerland (PC.DEL/1289/21 OSCE+), Canada (Annex 2), Norway (PC.DEL/1292/21), Turkey

Agenda item 2: REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

None

Agenda item 3: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

4. Next meeting:

To be announced



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1332
20 August 2021
Annex 1

Original: ENGLISH

1332nd Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1332, Agenda item 1

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRPERSON

Distinguished colleagues,

We are now four weeks into what should have been summer recess for us all. As you are also all aware, we decided to postpone the start of recess to ensure no effort was spared for us to finally reach consensus on the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM), the Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC) and the Unified Budget.

While we have finally reached consensus on both the Annual Security Review Conference and the Unified Budget this week, there is unfortunately still no consensus on the three specific Permanent Council decisions for Europe's largest annual human rights conference, the HDIM. It is the Chairperson's perception that there is a consensus minus one to adopt these decisions. The HDIM is a meeting of paramount importance not only to us but also to the OSCE as this meeting is the main annual event in the third dimension.

I would like to recall that we introduced our proposals for the three specifically selected topics half a year ago. Our proposals were well-received. Only one delegation expressed the view that one of the three proposed topics, "Democratic elections" was unacceptable to them and proposed replacing it with "Economic, social and cultural rights". The same delegation also insisted on amending the other two proposed topics on "Freedom of expression" and "Hate crime", which has been done.

Since then we have kept all delegations updated during the Human Dimension Committee meetings. We have convened several meetings of the Preparatory Committee, allowing every delegation to express their positions, and their views on the positions of others. Additionally, we have conducted extensive consultations at both the expert level and during the political dialogues. From the beginning we have made two points clear.

First, we have repeatedly expressed our readiness to both consider and also accommodate any proposal that could lead us sooner and faster to consensus. Also, if that meant giving up our own priorities. The results can be seen when comparing our initial proposals with the latest revised drafts of the HDIM decisions. The changes reflect a readiness and flexibility of many to make concessions to accommodate the very few. And let me here also add, the working sessions that have not been changed, should not be seen as

anyone making any concession on these. They are more or less standing working sessions where the titles and subtitles have all been agreed to multiple times in the past.

Second, we have also repeatedly made clear that in case any delegation should wish to have even additional consultations we would be more than happy to do so. Our door has always been open, for everyone. But bringing an ever-changing list of demands to the table and insisting these must be fulfilled and in accordance with their own unilateral approach in order to let the decisions pass, is not consultation. Its ransom.

Although we have all committed to adopt the agenda at the latest four months before the meeting takes place, we continued the discussions until 23 July, when recess was planned to have started. Regrettably, one delegation was still unable or unwilling to join consensus then. It reiterated its position that it was not about them joining the other 56, it was the other 56 that needed to accommodate at least three preconditions of the one delegation, all three precedent setting. One week later, on 30 July, we had yet another Preparatory Committee meeting where it was once again clear that the same delegation could not join consensus.

For three more weeks, the Swedish Chairpersonship has continued consultations with the hope that “where there’s a will, there’s a way”. This will is still not there.

It is the responsibility of all of us to engage in good faith for timely adoption of decisions in order to help facilitate the planning, preparation and organization of our mandated meetings and the work of our Organization.

It’s just over a decade ago in Astana that our ministers last reaffirmed “that all OSCE principles and commitments, without exception, apply equally to each participating State, and we emphasize that we are accountable to our citizens and responsible to each other for their full implementation.”

The very purpose of the HDIM is precisely expressed in that Summit commitment, to be accountable to our citizens and responsible to each other.

Dear colleagues, the HDIM is organized by Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and in order for them to be able to conduct this meeting, they need time, they need predictability and they need guidance from the Permanent Council. We have all committed to adopt the agenda minimum four months in advance for a reason.

It is therefore with great sadness that despite our efforts, and then some into what should have been recess, one delegation is still not ready or willing to join the rest of us in consensus and adopt these already long overdue decisions and provide Permanent Council guidance for the organization of this year’s HDIM.

In conclusion, I would once more express my regret that after all effort and despite our very clear OSCE principles and commitments, there is still no consensus on the three draft decisions for the HDIM and I have as of now, no indication that this position would be changed. For those advocating the necessity for reform of the OSCE in general, and the human dimension in particular, they need not look much further.

We have all recognized that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law is at the core of the OSCE comprehensive concept of security.

We have also all agreed that our implementation of commitments in this regard will be discussed at HDIM. We therefore urge that one delegation who is not yet ready or willing to consensus on the three decisions to join the rest of us.

Thank you, please note that this statement will be attached to the journal of the day.



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**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF CANADA**

Madam Chairperson,

Thank you for this update on the status of the Permanent Council decisions on the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM).

I would like to make the following three points:

1. The 1992 Helsinki Summit makes it exceedingly clear that a HDIM must take place every year. Permanent Council Decision No. 476 (PC.DEC/476) simply provides instructions on how the HDIM is to be organized by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. There is no provision in our commitments for not holding a HDIM. Last year we took an exceptional Permanent Council decision (Decision No. 1376), in extraordinary circumstances, not to hold the HDIM.
2. Within the OSCE we repeatedly speak to the principle of consensus, but we have seen in recent years that this principle has become increasingly abused. Consensus in the OSCE should be about co-operatively and collaboratively reaching shared decisions that reflect the best possible outcome for the participating States as a whole. It cannot become hostage to the narrow self-interests of any one participating State.
3. Lengthy negotiations on the specifically selected topics and agenda have taken place, in good faith for months. The specifically selected topics are not what we would have chosen, as many concessions and accommodations have been made. That is the nature of compromise. Nonetheless, Canada and the overwhelming majority of participating States have been ready to join consensus on these decisions for a month.

Madam Chairperson,

This week we have reached consensus and adopted decisions on the Annual Security Review Conference and the Unified Budget. It is well past time that the HDIM decisions are adopted by the Permanent Council. Our understanding, further reinforced today, is that there is only one delegation unwilling to join consensus on these Permanent Council decisions. It is time that they did so, and we call upon them to remove their objections and join consensus.

Thank you, and I would ask that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.