



## STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR TACAN İLDEM PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY 929<sup>th</sup> Permanent Council, 8 November 2012

In Response to Ambassador Janez Lenarcic, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODHIR)

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.

I join the previous speakers in warmly welcoming Ambassador Lenarcic to the Permanent Council. I wish to thank him for his lucid and insightful report on this year's Human Dimension Implementation Meeting.

The importance of this yearly review of the implementation of our human dimension commitments cannot be stressed enough. The HDIM provides a valuable opportunity for representatives of civil society to exchange views with participating States, and we have welcomed the active participation of both at this year's meeting. The large number of side events further enriched the review exercise.

As a general assessment, all in all, as was also evident from Ambassador Lenarcic's summary of the highlights of the HDIM, various sessions once more reflected the wide gap between participating States' commitments on the one hand, and their implementation on the other.

As Ambassador Lenarcic has aptly stressed, this year's meeting also underscored the general requirement for improving the conduct of the HDIM. As we have stressed in the past, some organizational adjustments are clearly necessary if HDIM is to remain a useful and attractive forum with a high quality of discussion. This year, as in previous years, we regret to have observed that minimal time slots were allotted to individual speakers in sessions with the highest levels of participation allowing rather a limited interaction. Surely this is among the matters which require immediate attention. It is our hope in this regard that the ongoing review of modalities of human dimension activities will produce satisfactory results.

The meeting further demonstrated the need to focus on some pressing matters in the area of tolerance and non-discrimination. As we stated in the opening session of the meeting, racism, xenophobia and discrimination based on religion continue to be issues of grave concern in the OSCE area. Just how serious the situation on the ground has become was amply demonstrated by the statements of many NGOs that took part in the relevant HDIM sessions. The examples given by civil society leave no room for doubt that those perceived to be "foreigners" or "others", in particular Muslims, Jews, Roma and Sinti and others, suffer discrimination on a widespread and daily basis in many participating States. As NGO representatives stated, in

many cases this is fueled by intolerant public discourse, including populist rhetoric by politicians and biased portrayals by the media.

In view of these undeniable and highly disturbing facts, it goes without saying that our Organization needs to do more. As we have stressed on various occasions, we believe that a greater involvement by ODIHR is necessary to address this issue. We are confident that Ambasssador Lenarcic will do his utmost in the area of xenophobia and its manifestations. In continuing its close cooperation with ODIHR, my country will also be earnestly following the matter.

In this vein, we are also convinced that, as a follow-up to the HDIM, the adoption of the draft decision on strengthening efforts to combat racism and xenophobia will be instrumental in bolstering our political resolve in a period when it is sorely needed.

Thank you Mr Chairperson.