

HDIM 2013

Working session 17: Discussion of human dimension activities (with special emphasis on project work)

Rapporteur: Anna Koikkalainen, First Secretary, Permanent Delegation of Finland to the OSCE

The working session focused on human dimension activities, in particular on project work conducted by various OSCE structures.

The Moderator Beatriz Balbin, First Deputy Director of ODIHR opened the session. She explained that projects are one of the many tools used by the OSCE/ODIHR to achieve its goals. Projects are often also a way of remaining engaged with various counterparts.

The first Introducer Laura Vai, Head of Programming and Evaluation Support Unit of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre contextualized the discussion, describing the ongoing efforts to further strengthen project work. Projects should stem from a coherent strategy with a multi-year vision, in line with the goals set by the participating States. Effectiveness, efficiency and accountability are key guiding principles. The cross-dimensional impact of human dimension projects will be increasingly emphasized. Ms. Vai underscored that the project work of the OSCE should provide added value.

The second Introducer Luc Lietaer, Project Co-ordinator of ODIHR described the continuous efforts of the Office to further improve its project management practices. Furthermore, he overviewed ODIHR's main priorities for the near future as follows:

- In the field of elections, a clear priority is maintaining the Fund for Enhancing the Diversification of ODIHR Election Observation Missions;
- ODIHR provides human rights training and capacity-building and develops policy tools to enhance the capacity of state and non-state actors to implement and monitor human dimension commitments;
- The programme on Human Rights and Anti-Terrorism aims to promote and strengthen participating States' compliance with international human rights standards in preventing and combating terrorism;
- The Freedom of Association Guidelines Project is an important new activity;
- Trial monitoring project in Georgia will be continued;
- As for the Programme for Combating Hate Crime, ODIHR strives to implement all components in the same participating States, conduct training against hate crime for law enforcement in two new countries per year, provide ongoing assistance as well as raise awareness;
- ODIHR contact point for Roma and Sinti will focus on the empowerment of Roma and Sinti women and youth. ODIHR is also implementing a large regional project on Best Practices for Roma Integration;
- Upon request, ODIHR will offer support to the OSCE Mediterranean Partners in the areas of democratic governance, legislative assistance, elections, women's political participation, human rights as well as tolerance and non-discrimination.

Two examples of ODIHR's project work were discussed in more detail. Benjamin Moreau, Chief of Rule of Law Unit briefed on trial monitoring activities, in particular on the ongoing project in Georgia. Judith Kiers, project manager of Best practices for Roma integration described the

activities to increase the participation of Roma in local decision making, improve housing conditions, fight discrimination as well as enhance regional co-operation.

Ana Karlsreiter, Senior Adviser in the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media provided an overview of the project work of the Office, focusing especially on Internet freedom.

Five representatives of the OSCE field operations presented examples of their project activities and discussed project management practices. Rene Bebeau, Senior Project Officer at the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine described activities such as supporting the electoral process in Ukraine and combatting human trafficking. Mia Lausevic, Senior Political Assistant spoke about the project work of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro in promoting non-discrimination, rule of law and gender equality. Jo Faafeng, Senior Judicial Officer described the assistance to judicial reform provided by the OSCE Presence in Albania. Sanja Popovic, Legal Officer at the Legislative Review Section of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo presented the project on promoting inter-faith dialogue. Lisa Tilney, Chief of Rule of Law Unit at the OSCE Mission to Skopje explained the Mission's activities designed to address hate crimes.

In the following interventions a number of speakers stressed their strong support for OSCE human dimension activities as well as institutions. One delegation commended in particular ODIHR's trial monitoring project. ODIHR's election observation work and its methodology were praised in two interventions. One delegation called for more geographically balanced electoral monitoring. Two delegations called on OSCE to continue co-operation with civil society. The need for the OSCE to co-ordinate its activities with other regional or international organizations was mentioned by a number of speakers. One delegation called for more transparency. One speaker stressed the need to focus on issues where the gap between commitments and implementation is the widest. One delegation called on the OSCE to focus more on freedom of movement, mentioning furthermore the need to combat aggressive forms of nationalism.

The following recommendations were made:

- ODIHR's independence should be preserved;
- ODIHR should focus on core activities and pay particular attention to areas where the most serious violations of commitments exist;
- OSCE institutions, field operations and participating States are encouraged to extend the participation of civil society in human dimension activities and develop programmes to strengthen the protection of civil society, including human rights defenders;
- OSCE should work on issues that bridge diversities;
- OSCE needs to enhance co-operation with other international organizations to avoid duplication and to create synergy;
- A common system of rules for various electoral processes should be developed;
- Participating States need to assist the implementation of projects in the human dimension by facilitation on ground, financial or other material resources;
- Participating States should take account of and properly follow upon recommendations made by the OSCE institutions and field operations.