



Talking points on the freedom of movement and national minorities integration

HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING

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- Commitments regarding freedom of movement and cross-border human contacts figured prominently in the OSCE Helsinki process with the overarching aim to overcome the divisions in the OSCE region. Many participating States, inter alia, initiated dialogue to facilitate the liberalization of cross-border travel, easing of visa processing formalities, and consider possibilities for the reciprocal abolition of entry visas. But the scope of commitments and basic operative principles of freedom of movement have been thoroughly scrutinized and sometimes implemented rather in different ways.

- The results of recent developments revealed new challenges that OSCE participating States currently face with. The growing mixed migration, increased flow of asylum seekers and refugees raise legitimate concerns of participating States. According to information, provided by international experts during the 1st SHDM at the beginning of this year, the majority of asylum seekers and refugees in the OSCE area, due to various reasons, belong to the representatives of the national minorities from OSCE participating States. These challenges, if not being properly met, could result in temporarily suspending of visa-free travel for the citizens of certain OSCE participating States.

- Such situation will definitely have an impact on the on-going process of deepening visa facilitation and liberalization dialogue, having in mind the necessity for protection and guarantying civil, political, economic and social rights of the majority of citizens. In that regard it should be also noted that fundamental freedoms of persons belonging to national minorities and freedom of movement are closely linked and must be addressed simultaneously.

- Bearing in mind all above-mentioned, and ensuring the full enjoyment of freedom of movement in the OSCE region we propose the following suggestion to be considered by:

The ODIHR:

- to support organizing awareness-raising campaigns in affected OSCE participating States with emphasis on facilitation and liberalization of cross-border traveling;
- to provide methodological support for national and international institutions, civil society representatives engaged in monitoring visa processing formalities.

The HCNM:

- to facilitate implementation of national commitments on freedom of movement and national minorities with regard to increased flow of refugees and asylum seekers in the OSCE region;
- to initiate the development within the OSCE of a dialogue on freedom of movement and human contacts with special emphasis on national minorities issue under visa-free travel conditions;
- to expand co-operation with respective governmental and non-governmental actors involved in order to reduce the negative effect on the freedom of movement from the growing flow of asylum seekers, refugees and mixed migration.

The OSCE Field Missions:

- to monitor and analyse situation developments on visa-free travel conditions in host countries based on existing mandates, and prepare respective reports and recommendations on national minority integration for supporting effective visa-free travel policy.

The OSCE participating States:

- to avoid double-standard approach in visa liberalization policy;
- to exchange information on effective implementation of the commitments on freedom of movement and national minorities integration.