



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF TURKEY TO THE OSCE**

STATEMENT BY TURKEY

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Working Session 14, Tolerance and non-discrimination II
3 October 2012, Warsaw

We would like to thank all speakers including the Special Representatives for bringing to our attention the situation on the ground as to the various forms of discrimination witnessed in the OSCE area. As we have stated at the opening session, racism, xenophobia and discrimination based on religion, which came to be everyday experiences like Islamophobia, continues to constitute a no lesser important area of human rights violations.

The examples given at this session today also show that Muslims continue to be targets of day to day discrimination. Furthermore, the increasing attacks in some countries directed at members of the Turkish community and minority are an additional source of concern. In this regard, we expect that the perpetrators of all attacks towards Turkish migrants/ minority members or their possessions or mosques be arrested, justice to proceed properly and the necessary measures are taken in order to prevent the repetition of such incidents in the future. These attacks have the result of creating a feeling of alienation and of discouragement in the participation efforts.

This is about granting basic fundamental human rights. As the CiO's Personal Representative on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims Amb. Akhmetov recommended in the HDIM in 2009, "it should be acknowledged that intolerance against Muslims is not a problem of a specific minority, but a human rights problem concerning everyone".

On the other hand, politicians continue to target Muslims or Turks during elections campaigns. Anti immigrant sentiment is fueled by populist rhetoric and biased media portrayals. Intolerant public discourse against Muslims and Islam, such as the one heard yesterday at a side event held under this roof, should be countered by political leaders through responsible and constructive discourse. Media should be encouraged to stop stigmatizing of Islam. Fears caused by a biased perception of Islam should not fuel additional xenophobia or justify it. Consolidation of a culture of tolerance and better understanding about Islam should be the objective.

In the same token, racist or extremist groups should be monitored closely and their attempts against migrants prevented. Some of the most horrific attacks in Europe of recent years, the string of racist murders in Germany and the ruthless, premeditated murder of scores

of innocent people by an extremist in Norway – should serve as a wake up call. A parallel thinking on preventing hate crimes and preventing terrorist acts should take place, also in the OSCE.

What transpires from those realities is that the OSCE with its cross dimensional approach to security is perfectly placed to assist participating States in meeting their commitments. There is room here not only for additional involvement of ODHIR but also of other OSCE institutions such as the Representative of the Freedom of the Media.

This matter has been rightly on the agenda of many OSCE meeting for some time. Numerous recommendations have been made by experts during OSCE events, numerous decisions have been taken by the OSCE Ministerial Council. Nevertheless, in view of the persistence of discriminations faced day to day, we are convinced that more should be done in order to effectively implement the political resolve that was behind all the relevant OSCE decisions. A decision at the Dublin Ministerial Council could be instrumental in this regard.

There are already a number of tasks given to ODHIR in the fields of xenophobia and its manifestations. In view of all the calls we heard today and the needs on the ground, we expect ODHIR to fulfill in the most effective fashion these tasks. Our delegation will follow closely this issue in the future.

Thank you.