



OSCE

ENGLISH only

Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting
PREVENTION OF RACISM, XENOPHOBIA AND HATE
CRIMES THROUGH EDUCATIONAL AND AWARENESS
RAISING INITIATIVES
10–11 November 2011
Hofburg, Vienna

Today, the state of affairs is such that democracy has turned into the dictates of the majority, human rights of ethnic and religious minorities are violated regularly, anti-Semitism is on the rise and Islamophobia is endemic. Multi-culturalism is pronounced dead, populist racist movements are becoming fashionable, mainstream political parties are competing with each other to see, who can ridicule ethnic minorities the most, powerful media is setting a hateful agenda on the daily basis, and worst of all, one can hear ordinary Europeans saying: I am a racist and so what.

In this atmosphere of intolerance and hopelessness, ethnic and religious minorities, especially the Muslim communities are feeling helpless, defenseless and sometimes angry. Actually they feel under siege.

On local and national level, many NGOs and civil society is trying to create better conditions, where people can live together by sharing common goals, efforts and results.

But this is not enough. Something louder, visible and concrete is the need of the hour. That can only come from those whose voice has weight and authority like OSCE and its Participating States.

COJEP and EMISCO has discussed and worked out a blue print of an inclusive Europe and we would very much like to hear from you, how we – together - can create a new Europe, a Europe where all its citizens and residents experience equality, respect and non-discrimination.

We believe that such a goal is achievable if NGOs, Media and Politicians work together. Not doing anything is not an option because it is not so long ago, Europe suffered tremendously for not stopping the demonization of another religious minority.

As you all know, our main struggle is on anti-Muslim hatred which is increased in Participating States. Islamophobia has shifted from the politics of far-right to the mainstream political spectrum and become an ideology of new racism and xenophobia. The dissemination of hostility, hatred, bigotry and stereotyping through the media and political discourse can lend a sense of social acceptance to potential perpetrators of violence and to those who conduct discriminatory practices. It can give more courage to potential “Breiviks” in our societies to acting against Muslim Communities.





In recent years, anti-Muslim hatred has had a very disturbing change that threatens deeply our democracies and our social cohesion. It was first normalized by some political actors which stigmatized their minorities and especially Muslim communities. Then it was institutionalized by a grand entrance in our parliaments and decision-making bodies. Our convictions have often been criticized by those who put forward the principle of freedom of expression. As if, we Muslims were fundamentally against freedom of expression while this acquired is the essence of democratic debate. We are of course in support criticism and debate. But, threats, the spread of hatred, the call for the exclusion by the force of millions of citizens belonging to a minority groups cannot be considered as a freedom of expression. This situation has some irreversible consequences for the Participating States.

Today, it's common knowledge that intolerant discourse and hate speech can increase the feeling of insecurity among the targeted groups and inflame tensions in the society. After Oslo attacks, we have to condemn all heinous mass killing of innocent people, and emphasizing the need for increasing international efforts to prevent the occurrence of similar incidents in the future. In that frame, the ideas which express that "All Muslims are not terrorists, but all terrorists are Muslims" have to be deeply challenged by Participating States. We all know that some security think-tanks disseminate views reinforcing prejudices associating Muslims with terrorism and violent extremism. This is a part of conspiracy theories, such as "Clash of Civilizations", "Euroabia", "Islamization of Europe/America" which are widely used to dehumanize and demonize Muslims.

The proposal of definition for Islamophobia phenomenon prepared by EMISCO and supported by OIC through the Ambassador Ömür ORHUN is the main tool if we would ensure the effectiveness of the struggle against anti-Muslim hate crimes.

Here are our recommendations for this SHDIM:

We encourage the OSCE Ministerial Council to adopt a comprehensive and substantive decision on countering prevention of Racism, Xenophobia and Hate Crimes especially through educational and awareness-raising initiatives.

We encourage ODIHR to support the upcoming Irish Chairmanship in these efforts in designing and implementing projects preventing Racism, Xenophobia and Hate Crimes especially through educational and awareness-raising initiatives including in media and political speech.

We would like to recommend that ODIHR, in cooperation with the representative on Freedom of Media, should develop tools and materials to support the efforts of media professionals in developing and adopting codes of conduct, self-regulatory mechanisms and other appropriate steps in order to ensure fair portrayal of individuals and groups in societies. ODIHR should engage into dialogue with civil society and political figures to take concrete steps to encourage responsible and ethical public discourse through developing these codes which will help to address the increasing and widespread use of hate language and particularly anti-Muslim rhetoric by mainstream political actors.

We encourage the OSCE Ministerial Council to adopt a comprehensive and substantive decision on countering intolerance and discriminations in public discourse.





We would like to urge the Participating States to support ODIHR's activities on addressing prevention of Racism, Xenophobia and Hate Crimes.

We would like to encourage Participating States to provide financial support for ODIHR's activities dealing with intolerance and discrimination against Muslims.

We encourage ODIHR to support the upcoming Irish Chairmanship in these efforts in designing and implementing projects for preventing Racism, Xenophobia and Hate Crimes especially through educational and awareness-raising initiatives.

We would like to ask ODIHR to design guidelines and compile examples of good practices to prevent Racism, Xenophobia and Hate Crimes.

We would recommend to the Up-coming Irish OSCE Chairmanship to organize an expert meeting to follow up the recommendations came out of from this SHDIM. To encourage Personal Representatives on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination to visit major international media institutions to raise awareness of biased portrayal of ethnic and religious minorities, especially Muslims.

In the end, we would like to congratulate ODIHR's for it's the work realized to create the new set of Guidelines for Educators on Countering Intolerance against Muslims and also recommend to OSCE Chairmanship to give visibility to this important tool.

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