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Session on “Tolerance and Non Discrimination”**

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Address by Anastasia Crickley, Personal Representative of the Chair in Office of the OSCE on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination also focussing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and members of other religions.

Introduction

As Personal Representative of the Chair in Office of the OSCE on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination also focussing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and members of other religions, I am honoured to have the opportunity to address this important session of the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting.

My position as Personal Representative enables me play a particular role in our international and European efforts to combat all forms of discrimination. At this point it is critical that we who are engaged and committed to the struggle against discrimination and promoting human rights and equality, work in solidarity, cooperate and adopt a holistic and integrated approach to our work. For this reason it is both symbolic and, I hope, useful for you that the three Personal Representatives, Ambassador Omur Orhun (PR on Discrimination Against Muslims) and Gert Weisskirchen (PR on Anti-Semitism) with myself can address you this morning.

In 2004 the roles of three Personal Representatives to Chair in Office of Organisation for Security Cooperation in Europe were established in three specific areas, namely combating anti-Semitism, discrimination against Muslims and my area in combating racism and Xenophobia and Discrimination, also focussing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and members of other religions. While each Personal Representative plays a particular role, the three PRs strive to work together to ensure that their work is carried out in a co-ordinated and complementary fashion so that we might achieve the best overall impact.

Personally, I am conscious of the particular value of and role that the position enables me to play and also the added value that I personally am in a position to offer,

facilitated through my work with a number of agencies and the interagency work that is currently taking place. I believe we need a holistic approach to addressing discrimination and that success that can only be achieved through cooperation and solidarity.

The Mandate of the Personal Representative of the Chair in Office of the OSCE on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination also focussing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and members of other religions is as follows:

- To promote better coordination of participating States' efforts aimed at the effective implementation of their OSCE commitments.
- To promote, cooperate and coordinate with the other two Personal Representatives of the Chairman in Office, with ODIHR and other OSCE institutions including with the Representative of the Freedom of the Media and the High Commissioner on National Minorities.

My plans of work as Personal Representative have been informed by many actors and a number of sources, particularly in this context through discussions with my colleague representatives, with ODIHR and other OSCE institutions, and also informed by members of the Permanent Council and the Chair in Office.

My comments and plan reflect also my own background and experience which has been associated over an extensive period with addressing racism and other forms of inequality and promoting interculturalism, human rights and equality at local, national and international levels through a variety of policy, state, partnership and civil society initiatives. This work, which includes the Council of Europe, and in particular my current role with the EUMC, has as indicated earlier, led me to believe in the effectiveness of an integrated approach in responding to all forms of racism. Within this framework specific forms of racism and discrimination, and particular experiences at different times need to be named and analysed and may require directly targeted approaches if they are to be addressed.

When appointed to the position of PR in December 2004, I was a newcomer to the OSCE and was very happy to have the honour to have been invited to engage with it and the opportunity to promote enhanced outcomes for those experiencing discrimination throughout the region through support of OSCE's work. By now with a little more knowledge I offer the following comments.

Comments

The OSCE with its transatlantic community of participating states presents a unique space within which to address racism and various forms of discrimination, support initiatives and responses, and promote communication and interculturalism. Without the important normative, legislative and geographic boundaries of the Council of Europe or European Union, and in view of significant regional changes over the past two decades, it is important that space can be left for open dialogue and exchange of work and programmes, naming shortcomings and learning from the experience of others. This was evident at the OSCE Human Dimension Migration Seminar in Warsaw in May and subsequent OSCE conferences and initiatives including Conference on Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Discrimination held in Cordoba in June and indeed in the exchanges I have heard in my short time here.

As you know, the OSCE already has in place a number of decisions, missions and instruments contributing to its work. However, awareness regarding the space and the instruments can be low or patchy, and implementation of some agreed programmes and decisions has been slow. For example, few the civil society organisations west of Vienna, with the exception of Jewish NGOs, are engaged, and the 2003 Action Plan on Roma and Sinti largely awaits implementation.

Raising awareness and working to ensure engagement of a range of institutions with OSCE including NGOs can significantly contribute to realising the full potential of current OSCE decisions and instruments. In my role as PR I seek to raise awareness to this end and encourage engagement through a number of initiatives including a meeting with European NGOs at the end of August.

In various parts of the OSCE region and throughout, a number of other agencies and organisations share responsibility for responding in various ways to racism and discrimination including the European Union Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) the European Commission on Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and some of the concerns of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Constitution on National Minorities of the Council of Europe, the UN Special Rapporteur on Racism and the UN Convention on Elimination of Racial Discrimination Committee. There is plenty of work for all but awareness of others' remits can help avoid duplication. Developing the co-operation and co-ordination required to maximise the efforts of all in responding to racism and discrimination needs more than avoiding duplication . Ongoing communications, information sharing and high level joint initiatives, where appropriate, are required so as to ensure that value is added rather than competing to be the agency/organisation which gets named as the best at adding value in developing an open intercultural society in the region.

In this work, account needs to be taken not only of different organisational remits and politics but also of the cultures and processes which have developed in each. Policy discourse, responses to, and experiences of racism and discrimination have also developed differently and manifest themselves in various ways at different times throughout the region. For example, a link is increasingly being made between statelessness and racism. The challenge also for states to ensure that the fight against terrorism does not contradict the struggle against racism is growing particularly in Europe after the Madrid and London bombings.

In this regard OSCE participating states are well served by the Cordoba Declaration which states that International developments or political issues never justify racism, xenophobia or discrimination including against Muslims, Christians and members of other religions and International developments or political issues including in Israel or elsewhere in the Middle East never justify anti-Semitism.

Continuing to enhance the fight against racism in today's circumstances has to involve strengthening efforts to address racist violence and hate crime (both

already OSCE commitments) and specifically targeting the elimination of racial and ethnic profiling in policing and other associated activities. In my view this challenge also means going beyond the limits of tolerance, of putting up with people so as to secure their acquiescence, towards the much more difficult space of respect and its implications for naming values in today's world.

Migration and integration and the experiences of migrants are all matters of concern across the region. Even states like the United Kingdom which has longstanding policies and legislation in these areas are facing new challenges with new debates emerging about the limits of multiculturalism. Migrants sometimes without appropriate papers contribute to economies from Boston to Moscow. In fact the contribution of migrants overall, is little acknowledged as an essential feature in a region of falling birth rates and greying populations. The constant evolution of identities and societies across the region is forgotten in the face of migrants perceived threat to collective identities and discriminations are made between "old" and "new" groups.

The realities of movement and migration require more than border controls. The importance of integration has been rightly stressed by the Chairmanship. Past use of the language of integration did not and will not work. New respect based approaches are needed, informed by clear principles and good information. This inevitably leads to the difficulties of measuring and its problems culturally, but managing has to require some measurement.

In all participating states east of the United States and Canada, the problems faced by Roma, Sinti and Travellers are increasingly visible. The discriminations and racism they experience have been well documented and in a number of instances national strategies and plans and regional commitments including the OSCE Action Plan, have been put in place to address them, but as mentioned earlier implementation remains a challenge.

Equally the National Action Plans against Racism which all members of the United Nations committed to after the Durban World Conference against Racism 2001, remain to be implemented – and in some instances more comprehensively

developed. They can provide a practical and integrated way for states to respond to the renewed concerns about racism which have been brought into sharp focus in the aftermath of 9/11 and continue to pose challenges for stability and human rights. It is important that ambivalence in some participating states about the difficult days of Durban does not get in the way of engagement with this helpful tool. A number of useful plans have already been developed in consultation and with the participation of civil society organisations and their implementation is being progressed (e.g. Ireland) so that exchanges of practice and problems is possible.

People experiencing racism and discrimination do so as women and men, old and young and policies plans and actions in response need to respect and integrate these differences. What for example is referred to as the double burden of being a woman experiencing racism needs to be named if it is to be addressed, not just as racism or gender inequality but as a cross-cutting issue between the two. Also, particular discriminations against minorities including discrimination based on sexual orientation are a worrying feature and can impose multiple burdens.

I have experienced a degree of ambivalence towards the possibility of discrimination against Christians and other religions in response to my mandate in this area. Some of the ambivalence seems focused on concerns that the lessening of the power previously held by Christian religions in Europe should not be viewed as discrimination. My work indicates that a number of interests view this as a serious and underestimated concern. Various reports and the work of the OSCE Panel on Religious Freedom also point to issues around freedom to practice religion and state regulation of religion. The nature of the reported concerns vary in the different parts of the region.

We can never afford to become complacent about discrimination and need to be acutely aware of its pervasiveness. The roots and dynamics of discrimination remain but its manifestations continue to change over time. While for example, members of Christian faiths might be clearly in the majority and hold a significant amount of power in one society, in another context members of the same faith can experience discrimination.

It is clear that this is a complex area requiring further consideration, so that both persistent challenges and early warning signs of new difficulties can be named, confronted and discussed. As has been demonstrated in other areas, a previous position of power is not an automatic hedge against oppression.

The reality and detrimental consequences of discrimination on the basis of religion continues. The contributions from my colleagues, Ambassador Omur Orhun and Gert Weisskirchen also show evidence of this.

Conclusion

My role as Personal Representative of the Chair in Office involves a number of support, awareness raising, cooperation and coordinating functions. In attempting to come to grips with it over the past period, I have been very excited by the possibilities it might hold for furthering work to confront and address racism and discrimination, especially given the open opportunities to engage with OSCE institutions and participating states. On the other hand, I have had to acknowledge the difficulties posed by the realities of a part-time new position with as many perceptions as possibilities, and by the challenges that the reasonably required coordination poses for myself and my equally part-time colleagues, whom I would also like to thank for their support of a newcomer to an organisation more familiar to them.

In clarifying realistically the proactive nature of my role, I believe that there can be considerable merit in employing a thematic approach across the diversity of the OSCE region and in striving to support, raise awareness about, and reinforce the work already undertaken by OSCE and ODIHR in participating states. I am grateful for the support generously given of ODIHR and look forward to further crucial collaboration with these towards achieving OSCE ambitions, goals and commitments in the areas of non discrimination. I am glad also to have had the chance to work with the Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities.

I have also been reinforced in my commitment in attempting to add value to the work of all regional organisations and agencies through enhanced coordination

and cooperation and in the need to more actively engage in civil society initiatives against racism and discrimination. I believe there is also a need to raise awareness about the realities for the discriminated of institutional, indirect and often unconscious manifestations of racism and discrimination, and to contribute to developing discussion and understanding of previously less well analysed areas in the discrimination field, including discrimination against Christians and other religions.

Through my OSCE work it is increasingly clear that despite relatively well developed initiatives and legislation, racism and xenophobia continue. They are pervasive phenomena and while some progress has been made we cannot afford to become complacent. Each of us as individuals and in our particular institution has a specific role to play in a necessarily joint struggle towards the assurance of human rights and equality for all. I look forward to continuing to utilise the particular space I occupy towards this end.