



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting Warsaw, 21 September – 2 October 2015

EU Statement – Working Session 17

Madame/Mister Chairperson,

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The European Union warmly welcomes High Commissioner Astrid Thors to this OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting. We highly appreciate her presence here to present to us her views on how she implements her tasks.

The European Union recommends that:

- Participating States meet the commitment made by all OSCE participating States, without exception, to fully cooperate with the High Commissioner in order to enable the High Commissioner to fulfil the mandate.
- Participating States extend an invitation to the HCNM and make full use of the expertise of this Institution. Quiet diplomacy, which characterizes the work of the High Commissioner, is sometimes less visible to the public but brings results of lasting importance.
- Participating States should always grant HCNM full, free and unrestricted access in order to fulfil the mandate.

The European Union strongly believes that protection of human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, is crucial to maintain regional peace and stability.



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The European Union considers the office and the mandate of the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) to be of the utmost importance for the whole concept of comprehensive security of the OSCE. This autonomous institution is and should remain a core conflict prevention instrument for the whole OSCE area in providing early warning and seeking early action with regard to tensions involving national minorities.

We see the need for developing and implementing effective policies for integration of persons belonging to national minorities as an essential aspect of a tolerant and stable society, in line with the principle of “integration with respect for diversity”. We agree that preventing divisions along ethnic lines enhances the stability of societies. Any concerns in respect to persons belonging to national minorities should be addressed with full respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and good neighbourly relations.

The European Union attaches great importance to the work done in the areas of education, including in multilingual and integrated education, effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in public life, and policing in multi-ethnic societies. We commend the High Commissioner particularly for her activities regarding these issues.

Madame/Mister Chairperson,

We welcome the HCNM’s engagement in regard to the crisis in and around Ukraine and we share the High Commissioner’s deep concern about the deteriorating human rights situation on the Crimean Peninsula. We have expressed our concern about the precarious position of both Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian-speaking communities after the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation.



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We are deeply concerned that the de facto authorities on the Crimean Peninsula have so far not accommodated requests from the High Commissioner to facilitate a visit to Crimea. We reiterate that the HCNM and other international human rights actors should be granted full, free and unrestricted access to the whole territory of Ukraine, including Crimea and Sevastopol.

We support the High Commissioner's engagement in the Western Balkans promoting long-term stability and her ongoing activities in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, in particular concerning language issues." We would like to mention here in particular the promotion of the integration of Ukraine's diverse population and the implementation of its minority rights commitments; the development of a strategy on social integration in Moldova; the implementation of a multilingual education system in Georgia; the review of the Ohrid Framework Agreement in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and most notably the implementation of the Sejdic-Finci ruling of the European Court of Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina and measures for the creation of an inclusive and non-discriminatory education system in this country.

Madame/Mister Chairperson,

We look forward to fruitful discussions and reinforced commitment by all participating States in the field of protecting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

Thank you.

The Candidate Countries TURKEY, the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.