



THE THIRTEENTH MEETING OF THE OSCE ECONOMIC FORUM

PRAGUE, 23 – 27 MAY 2005

Session VIII – Economic and social integration of persons  
belonging to national minorities  
(26 May 2005)

*A Role for the OSCE in helping States to collect relevant  
and reliable statistical data on the economic integration of  
persons belonging to national minorities*

Declaration and Recommendation of the Swiss Delegation



**Swiss Delegation**

**Written version (check against delivery)**

**Economic and social integration of national minorities: a role for the OSCE in helping States to collect relevant and reliable statistical data on the economic integration of persons belonging to national minorities**

Mr Chairman,

Switzerland attaches great importance to the integration— whether political, social or economic - of persons belonging to national minorities. In particular, the promotion of economic integration often requires positive measures in favour of persons belonging to national minorities.

In order to explain the need for positive measures – and to identify and implement appropriate positive measures in the first place - it is essential to have reliable and relevant statistical data on the economic exclusion of persons belonging to national minorities.

While the collection of such data is of crucial importance, it is far from straightforward, and in many cases it could be improved. One just has to consider the complexity of overlapping reasons for economic exclusion, for instance minority status and geographical marginalisation, or patterns of multiple exclusion, for example on the basis of minority status and gender. Also, in some situations it may be necessary to dispel the doubts of persons belonging to national minorities themselves about the collection of statistical data.

Mr Chairman,

In view of what has been said, the Swiss delegation recommends that the Office of the Co-ordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities and the Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities jointly draw up a set of principles or guidelines, which can be useful for States in the collection of reliable and relevant statistical data on the economic exclusion of persons belonging to national minorities.

We are certainly not suggesting that the OSCE itself should collect statistical data. Rather, the OSCE should assist States in doing so, by providing them with expert knowledge. For the purpose of establishing the principles or guidelines, the two offices should draw on the expertise of institutions experienced in the field of statistical data collection, such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe or the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), and take into account existing practices in the participating States. They could give particular attention to possibilities of making statistical data from different States comparable. Moreover, Switzerland strongly suggests to include a gender perspective in the collection of statistical data on national minorities. Finally, risks of potential misuse of disaggregated statistical data should also be assessed.

Mr Chairman,

In making this recommendation, we believe that here the OSCE can make a significant contribution to the efforts of participating States in tackling the problem of the economic exclusion of persons belonging to national minorities.

Thank you for your attention.