



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**PRESENTATION BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HUMAN DIMENSION
COMMITTEE**

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 15 October 2015

Mr Chairman, colleagues,

Thank you for this opportunity to update you on the work of the Human Dimension Committee. I will first give a brief account of topics we have covered, and how. In the second part of my presentation I will discuss the issue of voluntary reporting.

Mr Chairman,

The thematic topics we have discussed so far in 2015 include freedom of the media, freedom of expression and opinion, independent judiciary and administration of justice, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, gender equality, national minorities, freedom of religion or belief, death penalty and torture, tolerance and non-discrimination, trafficking and child rights, and economic, social and cultural rights. Next month we will discuss national human rights institutions.

I want in particular to highlight the two joint meetings of all three committees we have organized this year, on protecting and promoting human rights while countering terrorism and on migration. I look forward to the planned joint meeting with the Economic og Environmental Committee in December, devoted to business and human rights.

The last meeting under my Chairmanship will take place on 15th December, when the main speakers will be the Representative on the Freedom of the Media and the Director of ODIHR.

Mr Chairman,

I have continued applying the standing agenda, introduced in 2011. This agenda ensures that we cover the main tasks of the Committee, as outlined in Ministerial Council decision 17/2006.

I have continued aiming at thematic coherence between the main topic, the voluntary reports by participating States and presentations by OSCE executive structures. This has facilitated a more structured debate and more efficient meetings.

Mr Chairman,

Nobody can expect to have all their priorities included in the program of the Human Dimension Committee. But it is worth noting that the main topics this year neatly reflect the 3rd dimension priorities for Belgrade.

In addition we have discussed the rights of the child and economic, social and cultural rights. I take this opportunity to thank my distinguished Russian colleague for helping us identify an excellent key note speaker at last Tuesday's meeting of the Committee.

Mr Chairman,

I am proud to report that the Committee has hosted a number of outstanding experts, including several UN special rapporteurs, representatives of the Council of Europe and of UN Treaty Bodies, one former Prime Minister, a member of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, several professors of law as well as – of course – heads of OSCE institutions and personal representatives of the Chair in Office.

In May the Chair of the Parliamentary Assembly's General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions, Ms. Isabel Santos, addressed the Committee.

I have continued the practice of inviting representatives of the Civic Solidarity Platform to inform the Committee about their recommendations to Ministers.

Mr Chairman,

The Human Dimension Committee has proven its relevance to the work of our organization. Thematic discussions help prepare possible Ministerial Meeting deliverables. The Committee

is the primary forum for drafting of the same deliverables. It also offers a framework for discussion of several cross-dimensional topics, either alone or in cooperation with the other two committees.

Mr Chairman,

I am confident that the next Chair will further develop the Committee. I will conclude by offering a few points on *one* area of possible strengthening, namely voluntary reporting. Such reporting has been a standing agenda item since 2011. It is fully in line with the defined purpose of the Committee and by now well established.

Since 2011 we have had approximately 70 voluntary reports, made by more than 30 participating States. In addition the Fundamental Rights Agency has made reports on behalf of the European Union. So far this year we have had 16 reports, made by 14 participating States. Tajikistan and Kazakhstan made two reports each.

The most frequently chosen topic is follow-up of recommendations after election observation. Another popular theme is related to tolerance and non-discrimination, including Roma and Sinti.

Several reports have been made on the implementation of commitments related to fundamental rights. There have been reports on cross-dimensional issues, for example on gender and gender equality, on trafficking in human beings and on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

Mr Chairman,

Our organization lacks a general monitoring instrument or an effective review mechanism. What we have is a patchwork consisting of – in particular – the HDIM, of review of current issues in the Permanent Council and of voluntary reporting to the Human Dimension Committee. Until and unless we are able to put in place a more systematic and effective review mechanism, voluntary reporting to the Human Dimension Committee will remain important.

Based upon the lessons we have learned so far, and input from delegations, I will offer my successor a few recommendations on how to further strengthen the voluntary reporting. Some recommendations may concern the way such reporting is prepared and carried out, others the

room reporting should have in the ordinary Committee meetings. In this regard the lessons we will be able to draw from the meeting on 17th November, when a number of delegations are expected to report on their efforts to combat hate crime, will be important.

My ambition is to present specific – and realistic – recommendations to the next Human Dimension Committee Chair.

By way of concluding, Mr Chairman, I would like to repeat a point I made in my report to the Permanent Council one year ago: I enjoy chairing the Human Dimension Committee! But it would not have been enjoyable without the good support from you, Mr Chairman, and from colleagues and their Committee delegates.

Mr Chairman, this concludes my presentation.