



1107th Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council, 7 July 2016

Current Issue: International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

Statement by Switzerland

Mr. Chairman,

This statement is delivered on behalf of *Canada, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Mongolia, Norway* and Switzerland.

On the occasion of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture on 26 June, the international community demonstrated its solidarity with torture victims all over the world. Today, we would like to echo the call made by ODIHR Director Michael Link and UN Special Rapporteur Juan Mendez in a joint press release for redoubling our efforts to eradicate all forms of torture and ill-treatment and to fully implement the victims' rights to redress and rehabilitation.

A regional meeting for OSCE countries held in Copenhagen on 23-24 June was dedicated to the topic of rehabilitation of torture victims. During the meeting, state representatives and practitioners shared good practices, reviewed different models of support services for torture victims and discussed challenges with regards to rehabilitation. These exchanges demonstrated clearly, that gaps in providing available, readily accessible, adequate and appropriate rehabilitation still exist in many OSCE participating States and that civil society organizations can play an important role in providing such services.

Early identification of torture victims is another central aspect for successful rehabilitation, and is even more relevant with the current refugee and migration flows in our region. We commend Denmark and the German Chairmanship, which co-organized the meeting, for this important initiative.

Mr. Chairman,

Ten years ago the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT) entered into force. With 84 states having ratified the OPCAT and 64 National Preventive Mechanisms established worldwide, there is reason to celebrate. Nevertheless, much more needs to be done in order to achieve universal eradication of torture. Canada has announced that it will begin a process to join the OPCAT. We call on all OSCE participating States, which have not yet ratified the OPCAT, to follow this example.

The practice of torture and other forms of ill-treatment is still persistent in the OSCE region and we reaffirm our strong commitment to the prevention and eradication of torture in our region. The OSCE with its comprehensive approach to security has a key role to play in the prevention of torture. The organization with its field operations and institutions is in a unique strategic position to strengthen the implementation of international obligations and OSCE commitments with respect to the prevention and prohibition of torture. In particular ODIHR has an important role to play and we welcome the strengthening of ODIHR's anti-torture portfolio.

Mr. Chairman,

In closing, let me reiterate our full support for the adoption of a draft decision on torture prevention, which has been negotiated since 2014.

We believe this will give further impetus to our common goal to eradicate torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in our region.

Thank you.