



848th Permanent Council Meeting, 27 January 2011

Work of the Human Dimension Committee 2011

by the Chair of the Human Dimension Committee: Ambassador Thomas Greminger

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Mr. Chairperson,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Permanent Council today and inform on the work of the Human Dimension Committee 2011. I am sure that the regular reporting of the Committee Chairs to the Permanent Council creates an added value and enables us to work in a more responsive way in the committees.

Let me share with you in the next few minutes some thoughts on how we intend to work in the Human Dimension Committee this year. I will be talking about objectives, working methods, the work programme and HD events.

OBJECTIVES

We have laid out three objectives that should guide our work in the Human Dimension Committee this year:

1. We want to achieve the necessary decisions on the Human Dimension events 2011 on time and in an efficient manner. We will make a major effort to promote this year's discussions in a smooth and focussed fashion, so as to direct the bulk of the Committee's time and energy to working on substantive issues.
2. We want to produce concrete outcomes, be they decisions for the Vilnius Ministerial Council in 2011, recommendations for the Permanent Council or identifying possible avenues for reaching agreement on difficult issues in a medium term perspective.
3. The first two objectives can only be accomplished, if we manage to overcome the mistrust and scepticism that have marked the work of the Human Dimension Committee in the past. It is therefore an imperative to enhance trust and confidence in the Committee's work. We want to achieve this by offering a very balanced agenda for the Human Dimension work 2011, covering both the formal HD events as well as the

Committee's work programme. We have been listening very carefully to interests and concerns of different participating States and integrated them into a balanced and therefore necessarily ambitious work plan. Another important factor contributing to restoring trust and confidence is a working climate that respects the position of others, refrains from naming and shaming, aims at a constructive dialogue and focuses on achieving concrete outcomes by this organisation.

WORKING METHODS

We – that means the Lithuanian Chairmanship and myself as Chair of the Committee – would like to conduct the meetings in a transparent and structured fashion.

Last Tuesday we have distributed a Draft Work Programme that tentatively outlines the Committee meetings for 2011. The Work Programme is a planning instrument both for the Chair as well as for the participating States. It will give participating States enough time in advance to prepare for the meetings and enable fruitful discussions amongst delegates. It is a rolling programme that may be amended in the course of the year as necessary.

The Work Programme builds on the idea of a structured agenda. This structured agenda contains (1) Main topic, (2) Preparation of and follow-up to Human Dimension events, (3) Reports by the participating States on implementation of commitments and follow-up to recommendations, (4) Briefing by OSCE executive structures, (5) Any other business.

Let me shortly elaborate on the third agenda item – Reports by the participating States: This agenda item should give participating States a regular platform to voluntarily report on their implementation of commitments in the Human Dimension and on the follow-up on recommendations from OSCE institutions. This may be on recommendations by the Representative on Freedom of the Media, on ODIHR recommendations on elections or, for instance, on implementing the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality. This represents a very concrete measure to come away from a naming and shaming mode of work and allows for a focus on sharing best practises.

I would ask you to actively consider using this platform and share your experiences with other participating States.

WORK PROGRAMME

The Work Programme that we have presented to the Human Dimension Committee builds on the Astana Declaration. It includes many of the issues that have been taken up by participating States in the Corfu Process and during the preparations for the Astana Summit. It is as I have said a very balanced agenda, if you look at it through a geographic lens. It is also a careful mix of issues where we can realistically achieve a consensus in the course of this year and other issues where this is not likely but that represent important concerns of some participating States. Instead of refraining from tackling such topics at all, we have chosen to put them on the agenda, confident that by creating a positive working environment it is possible to have a constructive dialogue on difficult issues as well. The extensive informal consultations that the Chairmanship and I have been conducting in recent weeks as well as the first Committee meeting have yielded a few sceptic feedbacks, but overall a lot of support for this approach.

The Work Programme of the Human Dimension Committee encompasses the following thematic clusters:

- promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms with an emphasis on the role of national human rights institutions;
- media freedom focussing on new media and safety of journalists;
- freedom of assembly and association;
- freedom of movement;
- prevention of racism, xenophobia and hate crimes through tolerance education and awareness raising;
- democratic elections and electoral observation including both standards and follow up;
- Roma and Sinti;
- gender equality;
- trafficking in human beings;
- reform of human dimension events.

In addition, the Work Programme includes topics that were highlighted during informal consultations as

- tolerance and non-discrimination;
- rule of law;

- freedom of religion and belief;
- combating torture;
- issues related to national minorities as well as
- refugees and internally displaced persons.

Basically, the mentioned topics will be discussed both within the Human Dimension Committee meetings as well as by formal Human Dimension events. Both are interlinked. This means that preparations for events and their follow-up are regularly part of the Human Dimension Committee's agenda.

HUMAN DIMENSION EVENTS

This takes me to making a few remarks on the planned Human Dimension events. They have been just like the Committee's Work Programme designed in a carefully balanced manner. Informal consultations and Tuesday's Committee meeting showed that many participating States can accept the proposed events agenda. Opening up the proposed package will necessarily trigger new demands by participating States currently willing to accept it in a spirit of compromise.

The SHDMs cover the Human Dimension priorities presented by the distinguished Chair in Office at our first PC meeting this year. Titles and dates have been adapted to meet concerns of participating States. SHDMs are planned on the following topics:

- National Human Rights Institutions
- Pluralism in the New Media
- Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Hate Crimes through Tolerance Education and Awareness Raising

In addition, the Chairmanship plans to hold a Chair's Conference on Safety of Journalists, 7 – 8 June, in Vilnius.

In theory by 1 February, in reality hopefully not much later, the Permanent Council will have to take decisions on the topic and dates of the Human Dimension Seminar, the dates of the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, and the topics for the Special Days of the

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting. The following proposals have been discussed in the first Human Dimension Committee meeting:

- Human Dimension Seminar: Political Pluralism – The Role of Political Parties; 18 – 20 May 2011; Warsaw
- Human Dimension Implementation Meeting: 26 September – 7 October 2011, Warsaw with Special Days on
 - Democratic Elections and Electoral Observation: Standards and Follow-up;
 - Freedom of Movement and
 - Enhancing Implementation of OSCE Commitments Regarding Roma and Sinti.

CONCLUSION

Let me conclude by saying that I intend to chair the Human Dimension Committee in a pragmatic, outcome-oriented way, in close co-operation with the Lithuanian Chairmanship. I am confident that a constructive dialogue is possible. I have mentioned the features of the working environment that we need to create together: Mutual respect, instead of finger pointing developing a mindset geared towards sharing best practises and identifying concrete measures to improve human security, but also tolerance for constructive criticism. I am positive that in such an enabling environment the Human Dimension Committee can make a real difference. I am grateful for all the support that the Committee is getting from the Permanent Council towards this end.

Thank you for your kind attention.