



**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan  
1196<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Permanent Council,  
4 October 2018**

*in response to report by ODIHR on the 2018 HDIM*

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of Azerbaijan welcomes Director Gisladottir back to the Permanent Council and thanks her for the report on the 2018 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting.

We regret that this year it was not possible to approve the agenda for HDIM required by the OSCE Rules of Procedure and PC Decision PC.DEC/476 of 2002. In organizing HDIM meetings, ODIHR should follow strictly the organizational modalities, including with regard to the participation of NGO's at OSCE events, as stipulated in the Helsinki Document of 1992 and PC Decision 476, to ensure orderly conduct of HDIM meetings. Disregard of the consensus rule and the Rules of Procedure of the Organization is detrimental to our shared concept of indivisible and cooperative security and to the work of the Organization. This situation should in no way set a precedent for the future.

We recall that HDIM was designed by consensus OSCE decisions as a forum to review implementation of OSCE human dimension commitments of participating States. It must remain so. ODIHR should ensure that HDIM is not used against the legitimate interests of participating States and, in particular, is not directed against the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of internationally recognized borders of States. OSCE and its institutions should demonstrate zero tolerance to attempts to propagate the unlawful separatist regime in gross violation of the OSCE norms, principles and commitments. In this regard, we call on the chair of the Informal Working Group on civil society participation to the OSCE activities to take into account concerns of all participating States in their entirety and address this problem in a comprehensive manner.

We took note that in response to the calls of a number of participating States, ODIHR took a number of measures, including introduction of new registration system, Code of Conduct, clear guidelines for document distribution and organization of side events. Interventions by moderators were also instrumental in orderly conduct of working sessions and ensuring that the debate is generally constructive.

However, this year's HDIM also showed that some loopholes and shortcomings still exist and there is a room for improvement. This particularly concerns discrepancies between provisional and final lists of participants, which raise transparency questions. Furthermore, we regret that Working Session 14 fell short of reviewing in a comprehensive way existing set of OSCE commitments related to the rights of refugees and IDP's. The panelists for this working session and their presentations did not address adequately the topic and sub-topics under consideration.

We urge ODIHR to translate long-standing commitment to facilitate the return, in safety and in dignity, of refugees and internally displaced persons, according to international standards and their reintegration into their places of origin without discrimination, into concrete programmes and objectives in Unified Budget Proposal for 2019, in accordance with the political guidance provided by the OSCE decision-making bodies, in particular reflected in the Lisbon Summit Document of 1996.

We value HDIM as it was originally designed to provide a platform for participating States and civil society to engage into dialogue with a view to improving implementation of the OSCE relevant commitments. We want the HDIM to achieve this objective. We are in favour of having effective dialogue on implementation of our shared commitments in non-politicized, result-oriented manner. We are also in favour of building understanding on the part of Western community of the OSCE of many challenges we face in the period of democratic transition. We expect support from the OSCE, including through the HDIM.

To this end, ODIHR should ensure that HDIM is not turned into a blaming and shaming exercise, which can produce no effect, but is a platform for constructive dialogue and genuine discussion of human dimension commitments. This also concerns the Delegation of EU, which instead of engaging constructively with Azerbaijani Delegation uses every opportunity to repeat its unfounded accusations and allegation, demonstrating its profound lack of knowledge of the real situation in Azerbaijan. Double standards and selective approach of the EU Delegation in its assessment of political developments in the region, question the objectivity of its expressed views.

The Delegation of Azerbaijan is ready for constructive engagement with ODIHR on these questions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.