Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Information Submitted to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights as a Stakeholder in the Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Cyprus

WARSAW, 24 JUNE 2013

The following information is submitted by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE/ODIHR) about an OSCE participating State or Partner for Co-operation under consideration in the Universal Periodic Review process:

Participating/Partner State: Cyprus

UPR Session and Date of Review: 18th Session, January – February 2014

Background

Cyprus has been a participating State in the former Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) and the present Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) since 1975 and has thus undertaken and recently reaffirmed a wide range of political commitments in the "human dimension" of security as outlined in relevant OSCE documents.[1] The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) has been mandated by OSCE participating States, including Cyprus, to assist them in implementing their human dimension commitments. OSCE/ODIHR assistance includes election observation and assessment activities as well as monitoring and providing assessments, advice and recommendations relating to implementation of commitments in the fields of human rights, democracy, tolerance and non-discrimination, and the situation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE area. The present submission provides publicly available country-specific information that may assist participants in the Universal Periodic Review process in assessing the situation in Cyprus and its implementation of past recommendations, as well as to formulate new recommendations that may be relevant to enhancing the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Cyprus.

Overview of this Submission

Upon invitation, the OSCE/ODIHR deployed an Election Assessment Mission (EAM) for the 22 May 2011 Parliamentary Elections and a Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) prior to the 17 February 2013 presidential election in Cyprus. Information about the EAM for the 2011 elections and the NAM prior to the 2013 election is summarized below, and reports from these Missions are annexed.

The authorities in Cyprus and other sources have provided information to ODIHR most recently for its 2011 annual report on *Hate Crimes in the OSCE Region: Incidents and Responses*. This information is described below.

Elections

[1] OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, *Compendium of OSCE Human Dimension Commitments: Volume 1, Thematic Compilation (third edition)*, http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/76894 and *Compendium of OSCE Human Dimension Commitments: Volume 2, Chronological Compilation (third edition)*, 2011, http://www.osce.org/odihr/76895; OSCE Summit Meeting, Astana 2010, *Astana Commemorative Declaration: Toward a Security Community*, 3 December 2010, http://www.osce.org/cio/74985?download=true

Parliamentary Elections, 22 May 2011

In accordance with OSCE commitments, the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cyprus to the OSCE invited the OSCE/ODIHR to observe the 22 May 2011 elections to the House of Representatives (parliament). Based on the recommendation of a Needs Assessment Mission, ODIHR deployed an Election Assessment Mission (EAM). The EAM consisted of ten experts from eight participating States and stayed for a period of three weeks in the country. This was the first time that the OSCE/ODIHR has followed an election in Cyprus.

The report from this EAM noted that "*the elections took place in an environment characterized by respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms and a high degree of trust in the professionalism and impartiality of the election administration. Election stakeholders generally expressed confidence in the overall process." The full report, together with its recommendations, is annexed.*[2]

Presidential Election, 17 February 2013

Following an invitation from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cyprus to the OSCE to observe the 17 February 2013 presidential election, the OSCE/ODIHR deployed a Needs Assessment Mission (NAM). The report noted *"full confidence of all of its interlocutors in the integrity of the electoral process and in the professionalism and impartiality of the election administration. No significant concerns were expressed relating to the respect for fundamental freedoms, transparency of the electoral process, candidate registration, and election day proceedings."* Based on its findings, the NAM did not recommend an election-related activity for this election. *The full report is annexed to this submission.*[3]

Legislation reviewed by ODIHR

Upon request by authorities of a participating State, an OSCE field operation or another OSCE institution, the OSCE/ODIHR reviews draft or enacted legislation of OSCE participating States on topics relating to the human dimension of security for its conformity with OSCE commitments and other international standards. The legal reviews and opinions, often produced in co-operation with the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, are available at www.legislationline.org. While some basic information about the constitutional system and legislation of Cyprus is available on www.legislationline.org, no requests for legislative reviews have been received from the Republic of Cyprus.

Tolerance and non-discrimination issues, including incidents of and responses to hate crime

OSCE participating States have made a number of commitments to promote tolerance and non-discrimination and specifically to combat hate crime, and the OSCE/ODIHR supports states in their implementation of those commitments. As of 2011, 55 OSCE participating

[2] http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/82242
[3] http://www.osce.org/odihr/98755

States including Cyprus had appointed National Points of Contact on Combating Hate Crimes, to support ODIHR in its task of serving "as a collection point for information and statistics collected by participating States". In this context, the OSCE/ODIHR produces an annual report on hate crime – *Hate Crimes in the OSCE Region: Incidents and Responses* – to highlight the prevalence of hate crimes and good practices that participating States and civil society have adopted to tackle them. The bulk of information for the report was gathered through the completion of an online questionnaire by National Points of Contact. The questionnaire for 2011 contained questions about the following areas: data-collection methods; legislation; reported hate crime data: and policies and initiative.

For the 2011 report,[4] the National Point of Contact from Cyprus completed the questionnaire, but did not provide any figures. ODIHR also sent requests for information on hate crime in Cyprus to Cyprus-based non-governmental organizations, but none responded to the request.

Roma and Sinti issues

The OSCE/ODIHR has a specific mandate to assist participating States in implementing the OSCE Action Plan for Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti Within the OSCE Area.[5] A Status Report on implementation of the Action Plan was issued by ODIHR in 2008[6] which indicated that the Roma population of Cyprus was estimated to be about 1,500 persons but included no other specific information about Cyprus. A second Status Report is under preparation and will be available before the end of 2013 at www.osce.org/odihr/roma.

Country-specific ODIHR monitoring and assessment activities (other than elections)

N/A

Other assessments and recommendations contained in ODIHR reports on thematic human dimension issues

N/A

[4] http://tandis.odihr.pl/hcr2011/
[5] http://www.osce.org/odihr/17554
[6] http://www.osce.org/odihr/33500?download=true