

Report by OSCE's High Commissioner on National Minorities: UK response

Thank you Madam Chair. I'd like to join others in welcoming Ambassador Abdrakhmanov to the Permanent Council and thank you for your comprehensive report.

The UK is a strong supporter of your institution, which plays a vital role in early warning and conflict prevention in the case of tensions related to national minorities. We fully support your mandate and your institution's autonomy. We encourage all participating States to fully cooperate with you and your staff to enable you to fulfil this mandate, as well as to make good use of your advice and the extensive examples of good practice compiled by your office. This means not only engaging with you to raise concerns about the actions of others, but also engaging positively with your requests for visits and suggestions and recommendations stemming from them.

We were pleased to hear that despite some continuing challenges from the pandemic, you have been able to conduct several in person visits to participating States and that you have enjoyed a high degree of constructive cooperation during these visits.

We welcome the fact that these in-person country visits have allowed you to engage not only with government representatives from participating States, but also community representatives belonging to national minorities, such as your meeting with Crimean Tatar representatives during your trip to Ukraine. While we acknowledge that challenges to travel remain due to the ongoing pandemic, it is important that you are able to travel freely throughout the entire OSCE region, including to areas affected by conflict and illegal annexation. We were also pleased to hear several practical examples of how you have provided advice to participating States developing legislation, regulation or action strategies relating to national minorities, and how your office has devised projects to help support the implementation of such strategies. Your work over the past year to foster contacts between institutions with similar mandates in the OSCE region is also valuable.

We continue to appreciate the thematic guidelines produced by your office, as well as your events and programmatic work to raise awareness of these guidelines. We look forward to marking the 15th anniversary of the [2006 Recommendations on Policing in Multi-ethnic Societies](#) and to hearing about good practices and shared experiences on mainstreaming gender in policing in diverse societies.

Women belonging to national minorities can often face multiple and compounding forms of discrimination. Taking into account the needs and circumstances of different genders will also help us achieve more effective conflict prevention and more effective programme interventions. We were therefore very interested to hear about continuing progress in your plans to conduct comprehensive research into the intersectionality between gender and

national minorities this year, in cooperation with the OSCE Senior Gender Adviser. We are particularly grateful for the information you shared in your written report about the pilot study in Ukraine and the upcoming expert meeting to take place in the Hofburg, which we are pleased to hear will also provide an opportunity for interested delegations to meet the team informally and discuss your work.

We also continue to stress the importance of gender mainstreaming in all aspects of your work, including country visits, preparation of guidelines and recommendations and implementation of projects. We were therefore grateful for the information you provided about the positive impact that your office's support to the Central Asian Education Programme has had on enrolment of girls from national minorities in higher education programmes. We welcome the fact that as part of the next phase of the Programme, the gender impact will be studied more closely to develop strategies that encourage young people, especially girls, to stay in school.

In conclusion, allow me to thank you and your dedicated team for all your work and wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

Thank you very much.