

U.S. Helsinki Commission Briefing
"Europeans of African Descent "Black Europeans" - Race, Rights, & Politics
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As part of their overall approach to responding to and preventing hate crimes, OSCE ODIHR have taken specific steps to address the manifestations of racism, xenophobia, discrimination and intolerance faced by People of African Descent (PAD) in the OSCE region. MC Decisions 2006 and 2009 task ODIHR to tackle the root causes of intolerance and discrimination. Also, since 2009, OSCE ODIHR have conducted a series activities – Trainings, Roundtables, Conferences and Meetings, and Projects and a number of focus groups with some members of the PAD communities in a number of participating States. Information gathered from these events helped to guide and inform ODIHR's activities in this field and I will present the timeline of OSCE ODIHR's interventions and a few outcomes below.

November, 2011: Roundtable on the contemporary forms of racism and xenophobia affecting people of African Descent in the OSCE region (Vienna)

November, 2011: Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on the Prevention of Racism, Xenophobia and Hate Crimes through Educational and Awareness-Raising Initiatives (Vienna)

January – August, 2012: Focus groups in Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland as well as a number of personal testimonies from Austria, Moldova, Slovenia, Spain, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom.

April 2012: Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Combating Racism, Intolerance and Discrimination in Society through Sport (Vienna)

September, 2012: ODIHR Meeting with Polish Ministry of Interior, Police and African community representatives (Warsaw)

September 30 – October 1, 2012, Hate crime training/workshop for People of African Descent which was a project funded by the US Delegation to the OSCE. The project is in its second and final phase where 5 projects are being implemented by some participants and they will

provide you with their narratives immediately after my intervention here.

02 October, 2012: Participation of PAD representatives during ODIHR's Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM).

July – December 2013: Implementation of 5 small-scale local projects (mentioned earlier)

November 2013: Study Tour to Washington

Whilst these efforts have yielded positive outcomes and benefits for those involved, more work still needs to be done. Worryingly, despite being victims of hate crimes and hate incidents, many people of African descent in the region do not report these incidents to law enforcement or the authorities for a variety of reasons. This is a cause for concern since many, many victims are suffering in silence and feel helpless in the face of aggressive nationalism and/or hate crime. Under-reporting of racist hate crimes and incidents continues to be an issue and needs to be addressed by all concerned parties, i.e., authorities, PAD communities and their representatives as well as international organisations such as the OSCE. We remain committed to tackling racism, xenophobia, intolerance discrimination, and prejudice in all their forms and thank the US delegation for their continued support in this regard.

Thank you