

“Council of Europe, National Human Rights Institutions, Equality Bodies and Ombudsman Offices Promoting Equality and Social Inclusion”

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The role of the Ombudsman of Azerbaijan in preparing and implementation of the National Action Plans and Programs

As is well known state programs, strategies and national action plans assume significant role in increasing of efficiency of measures in human rights protection, more organized conduction of these measures.

The conception of National Action Plans and their role in democratic development were enshrined in the final recommendations of the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna, in 1993. At the conference each state were given recommendations on complying of Action Plans that would determine the steps further improving human rights protection and promotion.

I think that National Human Rights Institutions are able to carry out important works in preparation and implementation of National Action Plans.

I would like to mention that during the independence period of Azerbaijan three strategic documents on efficient provision of human rights and freedoms were adopted (in 1998, in 2006 and in 2011).

As a logical continuation of conducted reforms, national Action Plan on Protection of Human Rights in the Republic of Azerbaijan and National Program for Action to Raise Effectiveness of the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms in the Republic of Azerbaijan were approved with the Presidential Orders on December 28, 2006 and December 27, 2011.

National Program for Action, which is the new document in ensuring of human rights, defines the priorities of raising the effectiveness of human rights and freedoms protection (improvement of normative-legal base, protection of the rights of different groups of population, improvement of the activity of governmental bodies, education, research-analytical and awareness raising activities in the field of human rights, cooperation with international organizations on human rights, coordination of implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation of National Program for Action)

The Commissioner was recommended to guide the activity of the Working Group on Implementation of Program. This once more shows that the guidance by the

Commissioner the implementation of National Action Plan which was adopted before the Program was successfully fulfilled by the Commissioner.

The Office of Ombudsman functioning as a National Human Rights Institution closely participated in the process of preparing the National Action Plan and Programs adopted for more efficient provision of human rights and freedoms.

Sharing our experience in this field as a national human rights institution, I would like to note that the Ombudsman of Azerbaijan participated in complying of the National Action Plan on protection of Human Rights in the Republic of Azerbaijan adopted on December 28, 2006, and of National Action Program on efficient protection of human rights and freedoms in the Republic of Azerbaijan adopted on December 27, 2011. Analyzing the results of received appeals, of conducted monitoring and international experience, the Ombudsman gave numerous proposals to the draft of this documents, then conducted public discussion of these drafts with participation of representatives of civil society, included received proposals and recommendations into the final draft and addressed it to the government, conducted lobbying of facilitation of the process of adoption of the National Action Plan.

I am of the opinion that national human rights institutions should participate in preparation, adoption and implementation of the national action plans using their powers existing in the legislation.

I would like to mention that the Ombudsman of Azerbaijan has sufficient experience in monitoring of the situation with implementation and realization of national action plans adopted in human rights protection field.

This should be noted that the guidance over the working group on monitoring of implementation, evaluation and coordination of national action plans and programs adopted in human rights protection spheres in Azerbaijan is carried out by the Ombudsman of Azerbaijan as an independent monitoring mechanism upon recommendation of the state administration.

The Ombudsman of Azerbaijan conducted round tables and consultation with participation of parliamentarians, representatives of state agencies, non-governmental organizations and mass media with purpose of promotion of National Action Plans. Also there were held meetings in higher schools with teaching staff, students and hearers.

As one of the achieved positive practice this should be mentioned that on the Ombudsman's initiative each year on the eve of June 18 – National Human Rights Day, and in the frames of Human Rights Month – long campaign from May 18 to June 18, the events are carried out for promotion of National Action Plans with participation of local and central executive powers, representatives of civil society, non-governmental organizations and mass media.

One of the innovations in promotion of National Action Plans realized by the Ombudsman of Azerbaijan is conduction of “public hearings”. Thus, in order to monitor the situation with implementation of National Action Plan the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) conducted public hearings in all cities and districts of the country with participation of members of parliament, representatives of local executive powers, courts and other law-enforcement bodies, municipalities, local NGOs, mass media, as well as local communities of ethnic minorities. The “public hearings” being innovative approach in the country were conducted with active involvement of participants and caused high interest.

The presentation of the Commissioner on the National Action Program in the Vienna meeting with participation of OSCE member-states was very successful and caused interest of participants.

The Program was presented by the Commissioner to libraries of European Court of Human Rights and other international organizations as well.

At the same time, the Commissioner and staff members of the Ombudsman Office gave comprehensive information on National Action Program in their presentations and speeches during numerous international events.

I am of the opinion that the national human rights institutions can benefit from such experience of the Ombudsman of Azerbaijan.

Thanks for your attention!