

SUPPLEMENTARY HUMAN DIMENSION MEETING ON HATE CRIMES – EFFECTIVE LEGISLATION

Session II: Improving the Policing and Prosecution of Hate Crimes

Written Contribution by the Greek Delegation

The "Code of ethics for police officers" (Presidential Decree 254/2004) contains rules for the respect of human rights and the protection of vulnerable persons and social groups. The European Code of Police Ethics, resolutions adopted in international fora on rules of behaviour for police officers, the observations and suggestions of the National Commission for Human Rights, the recommendations of the Ombudsman, the views of the Office of the UNHCR in Greece and the views of the police personnel federations were also taken into account in the preparation of that Decree.

Copies of the Code were distributed to all police officers, border guards and special guards. The Code was included in the education and training courses of all police academies. It consists of 7 Articles, which define the general obligations of police officers, guidelines for police action, for the arrest and detention by the police and for preliminary investigation, the obligation of police officers to assist citizens and the duties of the police officer as a public servant.

It is worth citing from the aforementioned Code of Police Ethics the following articles that highlight the non-discriminatory criteria on which this Code was based:

Article 5.3: "The avoidance of prejudice on the grounds of colour, sex, national origin, ideology, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability, marital status, economic or social position or other distinctive characteristic is a fundamental parameter of the police officer's conduct"

Article 5.4: "The police officer shows special care for the protection especially of children, women, aged persons, persons with special needs, disabled persons, refugees, members of minority or more generally other vulnerable social groups..."

Moreover, in 2005 a Circular of the Chief of the Hellenic Police was issued on the "Fight against racism, xenophobia and intolerance, during police action". The Circular notes that respect for the diversity of perceptions and for different ways of life and cultural characteristics constitutes a primary obligation of the personnel of the Hellenic police.

The same Circular establishes the duty of police authorities to investigate racist motives in penal and administrative cases, in which foreign citizens or persons belonging to vulnerable groups are involved.

Finally, Law 3719/2008, which entered into force in November 2008, provides that the commission of a crime on the basis of national, racial or religious hatred or hatred on the grounds of a different sexual orientation constitutes an aggravating circumstance.