

Church & Society Commission

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**The Report of the Second meeting
of the Fundamental Rights Platform Vienna (5- 6 May 2009)**

The second meeting of the Fundamental Rights Platform of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) took place from 5-6 May in Vienna. Ninety-three European Human Rights experts from civil society were glad to see that the EU Fundamental Rights Agency sticks to the commitment to continue the cooperation with the Civil Society.

The themes “The impact of the economic crisis on human rights” and “Under-reporting by victims of human rights violations: lack of awareness on where and how to report: what Civil Society Organizations and the FRA can do?” were discussed in the plenary.

The participants were divided into the four working groups which dealt with the themes on under - reporting by victims of human rights and FRA’s Work Programme for 2010 and 2011. The participants underlined that the victims suffered the human rights violation should be encourage to report those violations to adequate authorities. In this regard proper human rights education is needed as the victims shouldn’t give up on possibility to obtain redress for the violations they suffered.

As the states are obliged to respect the rule of law, human rights and democracy therefore they need to provide effective remedies for human rights violations. The most vulnerable groups as undocumented migrants, children, women, minorities etc. mostly need encouragement to report what happen to them. Access to the human rights education is one of the key issues which should stimulate adequate reporting. The need for providing human rights training for the media and police was overwhelming by participants. Therefore the Church and Society Commission of CEC is working on Human Rights Manual for European Churches which should raise awareness within the CEC membership. The participants agree that effective access to justice is important as the victims would have the trust to report human rights violations to the Institutions.

Discussion on priorities for the FRA Work Programme 2011 went into direction of confirmation of the themes from the Multi Annual Framework taking into consideration the current economic crisis which has impact on human rights. It was reported in the plenary that producing study on discrimination on grounds of religion or belief should be also one of the priorities.

The Advisory Panel/ Contact Group were created. Instead of seven members, nine members were elected among twenty two applicants. The length of the mandate was reduced from two to one year. Ms Elizabeta Kitanovic, Human Rights Secretary of the CEC Church and Society Commission, was elected as a member of the Advisory Panel. The Panel will help the effective functioning of the Platform, suggesting, where necessary, adjustments and improvements to processes and procedures, thus facilitating a vibrant, healthy dialogue between the Platform and the Director of the FRA. The Advisory Panel will be independent, neither representing political opinions nor views of the Platform or of the FRA.