

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which establishes the right "to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information". This concept of the individual citizen's being informed about and involved in the human rights field is already well established, both in theory and practice, in many participating states. Where it is not, surely it is not expecting too much, especially since the signing of the Final Act, to look to an improvement.

Unfortunately, expectations in this regard have not been fulfilled. In three participating states in particular, individuals and their families who have been exercising their freedom of thought and conscience, or acting upon rights and duties established under international law, have been harassed, exiled, arrested, tried on one charge or another, and imprisoned. It is especially regrettable that in some of these cases the individuals concerned have been attempting to enter into a dialogue with their government on the implementation of the Helsinki Final Act. We wonder if the governments concerned have any idea of how corrosive such actions are of the confidence which we have collectively sought to create in Europe — especially when, like the recent trials in Prague, they take place, as though to flout the Final Act, at the very time we are meeting in Belgrade.

One of the most unfortunate results of these practices has been to confuse individuals as to what their rights are and, out of fear, to deter them from finding out. It would be a large step forward, and very much in line with the seventh paragraph of the principle on human rights, if all the regulations, laws, decrees and administrative directives affecting the exercise of various types of human rights could be brought together and made known to the public at large. This at least would ensure that citizens do not move in a frightening world of legal uncertainties. For example, Article 12 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights lists the right to "leave any country", and recognizes certain restrictions on this right only as far as they "are provided by law". In order to see whether a restriction on the grounds of national security, public order, rights and freedoms of others and so on conforms to the conditions laid down in the covenant, one would have to see whether they are indeed provided by law.

There is even reason for participating states to go one step further and examine whether laws that have been passed and, in fact, made public do not go against the very objectives of the Final Act. There is, for example, a law which not only penalizes those living abroad who, in exercising their rights of free expression, may have lost their citizenship for having been critical of the government of the country of their origin, but which also penalizes their family and friends in their old home country. I refer in this particular