

Ms. Silvia Escobar

By Robin Marsh

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The former Human Rights Ambassador for Spain, **Silvia Escobar**, pointed out the role that institutions like the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe play in securing human rights in Europe. She highlighted that the different articles of the UDHR are closely interconnected and “the failure of one is abuse of another.” Escobar emphasised that at the core of the matter is dignity, which is the foundation for peace, security and freedom. She remarked “dignity even comes before equality.”

She expressed her gratitude to Baroness Scotland saying that one of the priorities the focus of the Spanish Chairmanship was to tackle violence against women. She thanked Lord Parekh for his comments on the economic, cultural and social rights. The adoption of the protocol on Economic and Social and Cultural Rights in 2007/2008 was very important. It expresses the diversity of Europe.



"The organisations that have been developed to maintain peace and stability in Europe, the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe as well as the institutions of the European Union all have made the protection and the promotion of human rights a priority. My time as an Ambassador for Human Rights was very rewarding. During the Chairmanship of the Council of Europe Spain helping to unload the terrible workload of the European Court of Human Rights. During the Spanish Chairmanship of the OSCE the fight against discrimination and the rights of minorities was high on our agenda. During the EU Chairmanship we followed the guidelines of the EU. I am speaking about the death penalty, the fight against torture, of course women's rights, children's rights, child soldiers, abused children, the respect for humanitarian law and trafficking in human beings is another important question.

"OSCE, created by the last Helsinki act. It covers Europe, Central Asia and Canada and the USA. OSCE deals with arms control, confidence building, election monitoring, trafficking in human beings as well. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. (ODIHR). Roma and Sinti issues falls under the ODIHR of the OSCE."

"Although and despite the economic issues, despite the immigration issues a significant part of the European character is human rights. The human rights are inalienable and cannot be taken away. These rights are indivisible. The failure to protect one right can lead to the abuse of another right. The Universal Declaration is so complete, thorough and current. The Preamble states that the foundation of peace, security and freedom is indeed the dignity of every man and women. Dignity comes before equality and is the most important question in my opinion. The last articles are very important. Article 29 We have a duty to other people and we should protect their rights and freedoms. Certainly one question that is very important in diplomacy and international relations is the responsibility to protect human beings from genocide and from war crimes and crimes against humanity etc. Nonetheless the violations of human rights occur in many parts of the world. The rights of minorities are not respected in many parts of the world. Racism and xenophobia are reported everywhere. Women are victims of violence in times of peace and in times of war. I would like to mention how important the contribution of women is to peace in the world. There is a very relevant resolution 13:25 of the Security Council that speaks about the role of women in conflict resolution and prevention of war. Women participate in everything in war. We should see women around the table when it comes to the resolution of conflict.

Ms. Escobar added, 'The Golden Rule is a good model. The makers of current political agendas are focussed on markets that exclude the social. The idea of social is losing ground to the concept of competition. Money markets are replacing Governments.

Hannah Arendt's vision of being fully human sees three types of human action: Family Life and paid work are only two of three parts of the human condition. Also there is 'Vita activa' or 'public life' in which we collectively create civil spheres. This makes us uniquely human as only human beings have the capacity of thought, debate and action. Loss of any of these three parts, or over emphasis of one more than the others creates many problems.

Ms Silvia Escobar founded the Spanish Section of Amnesty International and was Spain's Ambassador for Human Rights. Ms Silvia Escobar set up the Human Rights Office in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Madrid. Ms Silvia Escobar organized the social services of the Spanish Red Cross. Ms Silvia Escobar has actively sought to understand and resolve drug-related problems. Ms Silvia Escobar will not rest until there are no causes left. Ms Silvia Escobar was born on September 13th, 1943 in Madrid.