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**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR TACAN İLDEM
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY**

(Plenary Session 1 of the OSCE High-Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination: *Combating intolerance and discrimination against any person, including racism, xenophobia and aggressive nationalism, in accordance with the existing OSCE commitments, Tirana, 21-22 May 2013*)

Thank you Mr. Moderator.

In our opening statement I expressed our growing concern over the manifestations of intolerance and discrimination in the OSCE area, which endanger the security of individuals, our societies and the common values that our Organization exists to uphold. It will be recalled that in the spring of 2012, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) warned that the economic crisis was giving rise to intolerance and anti-immigrant violence. The fact is that, due to various underlying causes, we are facing a deep crisis related to values, where increasing enmity towards people of different background as expressed in intolerant discourse and hate speech leads to not only to discrimination but also to heinous acts of violence against vulnerable groups.

This overall picture seems to indicate that there is an overlap between racism, xenophobia and religious hatred, which we would do well to take into account when formulating preventive strategies. This is also one of the reasons why acts of intolerance and racism are often directed towards members of migrant communities. Discriminatory practices stemming from one's religion come in many guises, including limiting access to employment, housing and education, as has been alluded to during the presentation by the European Union's Fundamental Rights Agency. Such practices in turn provoke feelings of alienation in those communities and reinforce social exclusion, thus producing a further obstacle against integration. Clearly there is a vicious circle here that must be broken.

In order to achieve effectiveness in countering and eliminating the different forms of intolerance and discrimination, it is crucial that we correctly determine and understand the causes which

underlie them all. In this regard, we believe an enhanced coordination between the three Personal Representatives of the Chairperson-in-Office on combating intolerance and discrimination is necessary, and we would further appreciate a more balanced level of effort in their work. We are of the opinion that the Personal Representatives, as well as the Representative on Freedom of the Media, have important contributions to make, also by stressing the role and responsibility of political leaders and representatives, as well as the media, in combating manifestations of intolerance and hatred. The Personal Representatives should make use of every opportunity to condemn alienation and to promote inclusion in participating States, while the Representative on Freedom of the Media could help, along some of her taskings, in addressing the challenges between media freedom and racist, xenophobic and hate-motivated media activities and stereotyping.

Thank you.