

Canadian Delegation to the
Organization for Security & Cooperation
in Europe



ENGLISH only
Délégation du Canada auprès de
l'Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération
en Europe

**DELEGATION OF CANADA TO THE OSCE
STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORTS OF THE
PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE
ON COMBATTING ANTI-SEMITISM, ON COMBATTING INTOLERANCE
AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MUSLIMS
AND ON COMBATTING RACISM, XENOPHOBIA AND DISCRIMINATION
685TH MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
1 NOVEMBER 2007**

We welcome two of the Personal Representatives of the Chairman in Office, Ambassador Orhun and Professor Weisskirchen, to the Permanent Council today. We thank them for their presence, and their presentations today. We look forward to receiving the semi-annual written reports of the three Personal Representatives.

As was apparent from discussions at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw, anti-Semitism is, unfortunately, on the rise in the OSCE region. We also learned that manifestations of intolerance and discrimination against members of Muslim communities and other religious groups also have not lessened. There were several reports of violations of the freedom of religion in various parts of the OSCE region. Whatever their causes, these manifestations of intolerance expose fractures within societies, which threaten their cohesiveness and their capacity to develop and grow stronger. We participating States must not let our guard down in the face of this phenomenon, but redouble our efforts to counter it.

In Canada, a country made up of people of many origins, beliefs, and cultures we have pursued the model of pluralism. This approach allows individuals to retain their cultural, linguistic and religious heritage within a framework of shared citizenship. Successful pluralist societies foster the equal participation of all people in political, economic, educational and socio-cultural life.

While there is a strong sense of pride among Canadians in our pluralist society, we also acknowledge that pluralism in Canada is an ongoing process that takes constant work. We believe in the value of sharing experiences with other countries and learning from each other. The Bucharest and Cordoba Conferences were good occasions for such exchanges of views.

In this context of continued concern over manifestations of intolerance and hate crimes, the key role of ODIHR cannot be overemphasized. The Tolerance and Non-discrimination program of ODIHR does sterling work in the promotion of mutual respect

and understanding, notably through education, law enforcement training and civil society capacity building programs and the tolerance and non-discrimination information system. The work of the ODIHR and that of the three Personal Representatives can and should usefully complement each other. Close coordination between and amongst them is important. We hope that this coordination is becoming more of a reality. We look forward to discussions in advance of receiving from the Spanish Chairmanship the evaluation mandated by Decision 13/06 at the last Ministerial Council.

Lastly, Canada again would like to express its support for the maintenance of the three Personal Representatives of the Chairman-in-office to promote greater tolerance and combat racism, xenophobia and discrimination across the OSCE region.