

Delegation of France

**STATEMENT BY
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REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE TO THE OSCE,
AT THE 960th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

11 July 2013

**In response to the statement at the Permanent Council meeting
of 4 July by the Russian Federation regarding the rise of
neo-Nazism and anti-Semitism in France**

France thanks the Russian Federation for its statement on racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and neo-Nazism delivered last week at the Permanent Council and would like to make the following points with regard to the references to the situation in France.

The French authorities are particularly concerned at the continuation of anti-Semitic acts and the violent activities of some small extreme right-wing groups in our country. These hateful acts are contrary to our Republic and they have been condemned by the highest authorities of the State.

At his annual meeting with the Representative Council of Jewish Institutions in France (CRIF) on 20 March, the President of the Republic, François Hollande, said: “Anti-Semitism is not only hatred of Jews; anti-Semitism is also a hatred of France and what it represents: France, the birthplace of human rights, France, which has enshrined in its motto the word ‘fraternity’. This is why our response must be that of France. It is this spirit that should inspire our laws and our acts in the training of officials, in the culture of our fellow citizens and in the education of our children.”

We fully agree with Russia’s analysis that such expressions of hatred must be subject to “effective mechanisms”. It is a question of finding legal, political and social responses so that all these hateful movements that run counter to all the values of human rights – whether they are racist, anti-Semitic, xenophobic or homophobic – can be combated.

What is France’s response and how can it be improved in the light of the lessons learned within the OSCE? We had the opportunity to present our response at length during the high-level conference in Tirana, through the voice of our Ambassador for Human Rights. The French Ministry of the Interior also had the opportunity to share its good practices in this area during the conference jointly organized by the Ukrainian Chairmanship and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights on the security of Jewish communities on

13 June in Berlin. Let me return, however, to the French response, since Russia asked us about this last week.

In accordance with European Union regulations and commitments undertaken within the OSCE, France has first of all at its disposal a solid legal framework for combating racism and anti-Semitism. Under French law, any manifestation of hatred, regardless of its basis, must be prosecuted. Religious discrimination is punished as an aggravating circumstance of certain common law offences. Racist comments and hate speech owing to a person's origin, race or religion are punished as criminal offences.

Since 2003, France has also had a national steering body, namely the Interministerial Committee to Combat Racism and Anti-Semitism (CILRA). It is composed of the relevant ministers and chaired by the Prime Minister, and sets guidelines for the policy in combating acts motivated by racism or anti-Semitism. It ensures the consistency and effectiveness of the actions undertaken by the various ministries, both to prevent such acts and to ensure exemplary punishment when they do occur.

On 26 February 2013, in order to enhance the effectiveness of interministerial action and to complement the law enforcement aspect, the Committee adopted a programme of action to supplement the national action plan against racism and anti-Semitism for 2012 to 2014 developed in February 2012. Its main objective is to tackle stereotypes and the formation of prejudices. Much attention is devoted to education, training and awareness-raising. School pupils, students, civil servants, people who work with the public, associations working in the areas of public education and sport, Internet users and Internet service providers are of particular concern. Cultural initiatives and the role of memory are also crucial.

An interministerial delegate to combat racism and anti-Semitism (DILCRA), whose function was created by decree on 16 February 2012 at the same time as the adoption of the national action plan, is responsible for monitoring the implementation of all these actions and the co-ordination of the different ministries concerned.

Lastly, as regards the ultra-minority movements motivated by fascism and neo-Nazism, French law permits the dissolution of these entities if they provoke discrimination, hatred or violence towards a person or a group of persons because of their origin, their belonging to a specific ethnic group, nation, race or religion or if they propagate ideas or theories that attempt to justify or encourage this discrimination, hatred or violence. The procedure must meet a number of conditions with a view to respecting democratic norms, especially with regard to freedom of association. The Ministry of the Interior has also recently started several dissolution proceedings against extreme right-wing parties advocating violent and xenophobic ideologies.

In conclusion, France reaffirms its commitment to the full implementation of OSCE commitments in the fight against hate crimes and to combat all forms of discrimination. It will continue its efforts to ensure that all its citizens can enjoy peacefully their fundamental freedoms. It is naturally ready to share its experience in this field with other OSCE participating States.