



**Statement by Ambassador Christian Strohal  
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***Session 3: Responding to anti-Semitic and hate-motivated crimes: the role of governments, institutions, legislation, law enforcement and civil society***

OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism and on Other Forms of Intolerance  
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Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen and Colleagues

I address this session on hate motivated crimes today not just because of the significance of the topic, but because it is my belief that governments, civil society and law enforcement officers can work effectively and successfully in the fight against crimes of hatred.

Therefore, it is with pleasure that I share with you today the tasks implemented by the ODIHR in the fields of legislation, law enforcement and civil society - to share what has been done, and what can, and should, be done by all stakeholders involved in fighting the violence of intolerance.

Hate crime – that is, the **violence** of intolerance, of prejudice and bigotry that is intended to threaten, intimidate and hurt someone because of their race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or disability – tears at the foundations of societies built on tolerance, non-discrimination, and respect for diversity.

At the OSCE Conferences in Berlin, Paris and Brussels, participating States reinforced their commitments to fight violent manifestations of intolerance, including in the form of attacks against places of worship or hate-motivated propaganda in the media and on the

Internet. In the Ministerial Council Decisions of 2003 and 2004, participating States committed to maintaining reliable information and statistics on hate crimes, to make such information available to the public, and to send such information periodically to the ODIHR to enable it to fulfill its tasking to report on these findings.

My Office has now issued its first public report on *Combating Hate Crimes: An Overview of Statistics, Legislation and National Initiatives*. Concerning the need for strengthened legislation to combat hate crimes, the report encourages OSCE states to seek the ODIHR's assistance in the drafting and review of legislation. The ODIHR's Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Programme is now in the process of developing a Legislative Assistance Programme which will provide support to states in strengthening their legislation through the development of a network of legal experts to develop guidelines for the review of legislation pertaining to hate crimes.

Regarding the statistical findings of the report, it is important to stress **first** that the responsibility for maintaining hate crimes data lies with OSCE states and that the ODIHR's role is not to produce statistics or data on hate crimes, but rather to collect, collate, report on and disseminate such information so that it can be used to identify regional trends and challenges. In order to obtain such data, the ODIHR sent out five separate requests for information from participating States. The final number of states that provided **some** information in response to our request was 42. Of these states, 29 provided statistics, the quality and quantity of which was rather limited.

It is clear that data collection efforts need to be further strengthened, but one may ask **what purpose** such data serves once it is collected. Poor data collection means that hate crimes will to a large extent remain hidden from public view. Insufficient information on the nature and extent of hate crimes means that law enforcement and communities are not armed with the information they need to mount an effective response to the problem of hate crimes. Adequate statistics are needed if states are to be able to assess the **scale** and **impact** of hate crimes, identify trends and determine which groups are most

vulnerable **and** map policies and resource-allocation in an appropriate and effective manner.

Given the trans-border nature of hate crimes, data collection is necessary not only *within* OSCE states, but also *between* states. All one has to do is surf the web to see that hate music, clothing and ideologies are created, purchased and propagated throughout the OSCE region. The trans-border nature of hate therefore, necessitates co-operation and information-sharing at a regional **and** international level. As a regional security organization devoted to conflict prevention, the OSCE is in an ideal position to facilitate initiatives aimed at combating the spreading of hate across borders.

Aside from serving as a collection point for information, statistics and legislation, the ODIHR was **also** tasked to collect and disseminate good practices for combating and preventing hate crimes. The ODIHR's report on Hate Crimes highlights a collection of good practices submitted by OSCE states. The ODIHR is also in the process of developing **Tolerance and Non-Discrimination information Base - TnD iBase**, an on-line repository of reports, statistics and practical tools and initiatives related to tolerance and non-discrimination, including efforts to combat hate crimes. The **TnD iBase** will be launched in Fall 2005 through the ODIHR's website.

As you know, my Office is tasked to offer advice and support to OSCE states in their efforts to prevent and respond to hate-motivated crimes. In addition to our legislative assistance programme, the ODIHR has also developed a Programme to support OSCE states in establishing training programmes for law enforcement officials to provide hate crimes awareness as well as the tools needed to identify, report and investigate hate crimes.

For such a programme to be effective, it clearly had to be developed **by** and **for** law enforcement officials. Thanks to our partnership with Paul Goldenberg and the expert team from the National Public Safety Strategy Group (NPSSG), a **police-to-police** Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Training Programme for Combating Hate Crimes was

developed which harnessed the knowledge and best practices of leading law enforcement experts from throughout the OSCE region. The programme has produced technical and practical training tools, including a curriculum, a working definition of “hate crimes” and a data collection template for use by police. All tools and materials were developed by experts from several OSCE states including Canada, France, Germany, Hungary, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

I would like to thank Paul, the implementation team and the cadre of law enforcement experts (who are all here today) for their leadership, expertise and genuine commitment to the Programme. I would also like to commend the governments of Hungary and Spain for their willingness to pilot and contribute towards the development of the Training Programme. Their leadership serves as an example for other OSCE states seeking to further strengthen their response to hate-motivated crimes.

ODIHR was tasked to closely follow anti-Semitic and hate-motivated incidents. It is not a hate watch-dog, but rather a support mechanism for states and civil society which it assists in increasing their capacity to monitor and effectively respond to crimes and acts of hatred. The ODIHR is already working to increase the capacity of civil society to monitor and report on hate-motivated incidents. The ODIHR is also ready, willing and able to provide technical support and expertise in the areas of data collection, legislation, and law enforcement officer training so that OSCE participating States are able to engage in a comprehensive and multi-pronged battle against the violence of intolerance.

In closing, I would also like to point out our recommendation (in our report) of the establishment of a Task Force on Combating Hate Crimes, which would bring together the ODIHR’s cadre of law enforcement experts with other experts in related fields (legislation, education, data collection, judiciary, prosecutorial) in order to ensure a comprehensive, multi-dimensional and trans-border approach to efforts to combat hate crimes across the OSCE region.

There is clearly a significant amount of work still to be done; however, I believe that the mechanisms are in place to support increased implementation. It is now up to states to take advantage of the ODHR's programmes and to undertake concrete actions to effectively combat the spread of hate throughout the OSCE region.

Thank you.