



**THE HOLY SEE**  
**Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on**  
**Combating Racism, Intolerance and Discrimination in Society through Sport**  
*Session II: Monitoring, Preventing and Responding to Hate Crimes, Racist Incidents,*  
*Intolerance and Discrimination, including in Sports*  
**Friday, April 20, 2012**

Mister Moderator!

In our time, organized sport sometimes seems conditioned by the logic of profit, of the spectacular, of doping, exasperated rivalry and episodes of violence, hate crimes, racism, intolerance and discrimination, including on religious grounds. On account of the global dimensions this activity has assumed, those involved in sports throughout the world, either as organizers or as athletes, have a great responsibility.

More in general, my Delegation believes that the prevention and response to hate crimes, as well as intolerance and discrimination against Christians is to be seen in close connection with the promotion of religious freedom. The right to believe in God and to practice that belief is a fundamental human right, one that is central to the OSCE commitments, ranging from its specific mention in the title of Article VII of the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 all the way through its specific reiteration in the Astana Summit Declaration of 2010.

Yet, the right to religious freedom continues to be trampled upon. Hate crimes, as well as incidents of intolerance and discrimination against Christians continue to be witnessed throughout the OSCE region and beyond.

The participating States of the OSCE already have an important tool at their disposal to respond to such violence and hatred against Christians. The Holy See has constantly and actively expressed its deep concern over these situations in a concrete way through its active participation in the meetings of the National Points of Contact on combating hate crime organized by the ODIHR, and by joining in the comprehensive consultation process on this issue with governments and civil society alike. The Holy See acknowledges the efforts of the OSCE and ODIHR in combating hate crimes and would like to continue to encourage the ODIHR not to move away from the Organization's consensual commitment in combating hate crimes against Christians.

The Holy See would like to offer the following recommendations as effective measures in preventing and combating hate crimes, racism, intolerance and discrimination, including against Christians and members of other religions:

- that the ODIHR develop educational material on preventing and responding to hate crimes and incidents against Christians, as well as to encourage OSCE participating States to contribute to such a project.

- that, in line with the Resolution on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination Against Christians in the OSCE Area, approved by the 2011 Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Belgrade, “a public debate on intolerance and discrimination against Christians be initiated and that the right of Christians to participate fully in public life be ensured;”

- that serious and adequate attention be given to the formation of journalists on religious matters, especially the tenants of the Christian faith and the hierarchical organization of the Christian Churches;

- that, in the educational realm, the role of the family and parents in the education of children be protected: and finally

- that those involved in sports recognize and promote how such activity is an eloquent sign of friendship and how it contributes to strengthening relations of solid understanding between peoples, including on religious grounds.

It is important to recognize how necessary this is in our day, where humanity is marked by many tensions and is yearning to build a future of authentic security and peace.

Thank you, Mister Moderator.