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Our own freedom is defined by the freedoms of others. We may not be Roma, or Jewish, or Muslim or members of any other ethnic or religious minority. We may not be physically disabled, migrants or gays or lesbians, unemployed or on welfare or single mothers without resources, but if our fellow citizens who belong to these groups are not free, are not protected against discrimination and are not respected, we will be imprisoned with them. Freedom cannot be sliced up for personal consumption.

For a very long time, the key word in our campaigns against discrimination was tolerance. Tolerance, of course, is important, but it is not enough. If we want to defeat all forms of bigotry and

discrimination in our societies, we must strive for and educate for acceptance and respect. I think that the title of this conference very well reflects this imperative.

With the good will and effort invested, our societies are still plagued by divisions fuelled by inequalities, ignorance and fear which, in return create and aggravate discrimination, tension and violence. All of these phenomena can lead to serious human rights violations. They are documented by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance of the Council of Europe, better known as ECRI. The work of this body composed of independent experts concern different vulnerable groups in our member states. These groups can be national, ethnic and religious minorities, immigrants, refugees and asylum-seekers. Roma are the particular target of deeply rooted racism. Jewish communities continue to suffer from antisemitism, which increasingly persists throughout Europe. Muslim communities face islamophobia and are confronted with negative attitudes, discrimination and sometimes violence. ECRI tells us that now we need to act, effectively, against these different forms of discrimination, not only out of solidarity for these minority groups, but because the persecution against one community should be seen for what it is – an attack against the rights and the dignity of everyone, of the society as a whole. Our effort to eradicate discrimination and intolerance should know no borders. As Martin

Luther King said "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere".

However, we should not stop at describing a problem. A diagnose will not help without the treatment.

In the Council of Europe, we have worked out a thre-pronged strategy, which includes legislation, awareness-raising and education.

In the field of legislation, the objective is to adopt workable definitions of racial discrimination, which covers as many forms of discrimination as possible. The prohibition of discrimination should apply to all discriminations in all fields; and there should be effective provisions against racist conduct and language.

I use this opportunity to encourage those member states of the Council of Europe which have not yet done so to sign and ratify Protocol No12 to the European Convention on Human Rights which provides for a general prohibition of discrimination and reinforces our legal arsenal to fight against it.

Similarly, I would like to call on all OSCE member states to sign and ratify Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime, which criminalises acts of a racist and xenophobic nature

committed through the use of new communication and information technologies.

In the area of awareness-raising the Council of Europe is conducting several European or regional campaigns aimed at the general population; especially young people. I should like to mention two, the very well known and successful All Equal, All Different campaign, conducted by young people for young people, and the Dosta campaign aimed at combating prejudice against Roma in South Eastern Europe.

The objective of these campaigns is not only to change people's minds and mentalities; we want to change the realities. There is ample evidence suggesting that where awareness of issues of racism and racial discrimination is higher, policy responses are more targeted and, ultimately, have better chances of success. This is why we also attach so much importance to education, education for democratic citizenship, human rights and intercultural learning.

One very important precondition for the success of our initiatives is co-operation. If we want to make a difference, we must pool our forces and avoid duplication and waste of resources.

I am very satisfied with the solid co-operation which exists between the ECRI and the ODIHR. These two bodies have focused their co-

operation on the implementation. This is crucially important because all the recommendations and well-intentioned declarations are of little use if they stay on paper. Making racism and discrimination history is a cause which deserves total commitment from both the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

I should like to thank you for the invitation and wish every success to this conference.