



**Prof. Gert Weisskirchen**

**REPORT OF  
MP PROF. GERT WEISSKIRCHEN**

**PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE  
OF THE OSCE ON COMBATING ANTISEMITISM**

**TO THE PERMANENT COUNCIL OF THE OSCE**

Vienna, 01 November 2007

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## 1. Introduction

As indicated in the OSCE Conferences in Vienna, Berlin, Paris, Brussels, Cordoba, and Bucharest, antisemitism is a distinct phenomenon that needs to be addressed. It should not be treated as an issue to be balanced against others.

In my opinion the mandate as Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE should help to

- put a spotlight on antisemitism
- emphasize the importance of the issue
- engage political leaders directly when problems arise
- investigate incidents when needed
- advise member states on ways to monitor and enforce the laws
- make the promise of the past have a real visible implementation
- promote and oversee coordination

### ***1.1. Recommendations for the enhancement of the mandate***

The mandate of the three Personal Representatives should be extended to allow them to plan and establish achievable goals and to schedule their activities. The Personal Representatives need to be able to work – following the holistic approach – independently and to direct their energies to where they are most needed.

OSCE efforts to combat intolerance and discrimination continue to reflect the reality that antisemitism is a distinct phenomenon that requires a separate focus in OSCE programs. Much is needed: new mechanisms, legal measures and human rights strategies, to report publicly and to act on those findings.

Coordination should advance not hinder action. It is important for the Personal Representatives to coordinate as appropriate to avoid duplication and learn from the activities of one another. At the same time it is essential to ensure that requests for coordination do not hinder the capacity of the Personal Representatives to respond to the specific needs of his or her mandate. While coordination is useful and appropriate in international institutions, there is a danger that this constitutes constraints on actions. To operate “as a team” could guarantee that the Personal Representatives would achieve even less and not more in their work for the OSCE.

### ***1.2. Recommendations from the Civil Society***

I want to highlight the recommendations from the Civil Society Preparatory Meeting of the OSCE High Level Conference on Combating Discrimination and Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding in Bucharest from 7-8 June 2007 as important measures on combating antisemitism.

35. We commend initiatives such as the UK All-party Parliamentary Group Inquiry against anti-Semitism and its recommendations and we encourage national parliaments and legislatures in the OSCE region to initiate similar formal high level inquiries into anti-Semitism, when and where appropriate;

36. Participating States should pay closer attention to the fact that anti-Semitic violence may be tied to organized extremist movements. Participating States should counter these movements with a range of educational and legal initiatives;

37. We recommend developing or expanding existing educational curricula in order to focus on anti-Semitism, Jewish history and current Jewish life at all levels. Holocaust education should be a standard part of the curricula and when necessary should be designed to respond to the increasingly diverse heritage of pupils throughout the OSCE region in accordance with the guidance of the International Task Force on Holocaust education, research and remembrance;

38. Recognizing that there is a correlation between violent anti-Semitic acts throughout the OSCE region and the conflicts in the Middle East involving the State of Israel, we call upon participating States to take additional measures to protect potential targets of violent anti-Semitic acts;

39. Recalling the OSCE commitment in the Berlin Conference's declaration, that no political developments, including in the Middle East and Israel justify Anti-Semitism, we call for strong and immediate public condemnation and action against attempts to target Israeli and Jewish institutions and individuals for boycotts, divestment and sanctions;

40. We call upon the OSCE to continue the institution of the Personal Representatives in the future and to ensure the focus on Anti-Semitism as a distinct form of hate. And we call on the future Chairs in Office to support their work and to maintain this focus. We call on the OSCE to continue regular high level conferences on Anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance as well as convening high level expert meetings in between.

41. We call on NGOs and criminal justice agencies to use the working definition on Anti-Semitism of the ODIHR and the former EUMC (FRA).

42. We call on States to increase their efforts to combat hate on the internet as recommended at the 2004 Paris Meeting, which called for increased cooperation between governments and civil society across borders;

43. We call on governments and civil society to condemn and to take action against public, academic and political discourse that legitimises Anti-Semitism including Holocaust denial or trivialisation, questioning the loyalty of Jewish citizens and anti-Semitic conspiracy theories.

## 2. Projects on Combating Antisemitism

### 2.1. Letter to the Head of States of the OSCE

In the last Permanent Council Report on 14 June 2007 I informed about the letter I sent to all head of governments of the participating states of the OSCE on 12 June 2007. Following you can find a copy of this letter:

Berlin, ...

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Every year since 2005, the newly elected Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE has, on entering office, appointed me as his Personal Representative on Combating Antisemitism. Unfortunately, there is still a need to continue this campaign. Recent empirical studies show that last year too, in 2006, antisemitic attacks increased in various regions of the OSCE. That being the case, I would like to express my thanks to you and your Government for taking resolute action against antisemitism.

I wish to draw your attention to two particularly important events which have attracted great interest in the OSCE region. Britain's House of Commons has held an inquiry to examine the situation in the United Kingdom, while in the Netherlands, the Magenta Foundation convened an international conference to analyse current manifestations of "Antisemitism in Academia". Reports on both these events are enclosed with this letter.

With Decision No. 607 on Combating Antisemitism, adopted by the OSCE Permanent Council, the participating States commit to combating antisemitism proactively across the OSCE region. The OSCE's most effective instrument, namely the ODIHR, is tasked with establishing educational programmes for law enforcement agencies and producing teaching materials. This body also gives practical support to projects, compiles useful information, and promotes non-government organizations with the aim of increasing tolerance.

I would be most grateful if you could inform me which new priorities you consider important in stepping up the campaign against antisemitism. I would also be interested to hear to what extent your Government has adopted the working definition of antisemitism as the basis for its activities. The EUMC and ODIHR both apply this definition in order to generate a consensus-based approach to antisemitism.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Enclosures

During the last months I received answers from 16 of the OSCE participating states in which they report about their efforts and activities on combating antisemitism and the general situation in the countries. Most of them responded positive to my request about the ODIHR-FRA definition on antisemitism. Some acknowledged that they use this definition as basis for further investigations in law enforcement.

## ***2.2. Discussion Group on Combating Antisemitism in the German Bundestag, hosted by the German Delegation to the OSCE PA***

Around 40 colleagues of the German Bundestag responded to my request to establish a discussion group on combating antisemitism in the German Bundestag. During the last months I informed about my work as Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE on Combating Antisemitism.

A first meeting took place on 13 September 2007. Dr Kathrin Meyer from the ODIHR came to Berlin and informed about best practices on combating antisemitism in the participating states of the OSCE. All participants of this meeting were very interested in the different approaches from other OSCE participating states.

The President of the German Bundestag, Dr Norbert Lammert, agreed to the request of the German Delegation to the OSCE PA to host a conference on combating antisemitism from 24 to 25 January 2008, following the conference which took place in the German Bundestag in Berlin from 20 to 21 November 2006. The program of the conference and the speakers were discussed with colleagues from all parliamentary groups of the German Bundestag. Panels and discussions about following topics are planned:

- New forms of Antisemitism
- Education about the Holocaust and Antisemitism
- Antisemitism in media
- Antisemitism in sports, especially soccer
- Antisemitism in the academical context
- European Parliaments and the combat against Antisemitism

## ***2.3. Best Practice: All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry***

One of the best practices on combating antisemitism is the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry which was established in the United Kingdom in 2005. In my letter to all heads of governments of the OSCE participating states I drew the attention to this tool as a successful measure, such initiatives were as well recommended from the Civil Society Preparatory Meeting of the OSCE High Level Conference In Bucharest.

MP John Mann, Member of the House of Commons and Chair of The Parliamentary Committee against Antisemitism, visited Berlin from 18 to 19 September 2007, informed about the achievements and the proceeding in the UK and presented this tool as a possibility for other states. During his visit in Berlin he met Parliamentarians from all parliamentary groups in the German Bundestag. A great consensus about the importance and relevance of this tool existed among all Parliamentarians. There are discussions about the adaptation and realisation in Germany.

MP John Mann and his team will visit different other participating states of the OSCE to present the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry to Members of Parliament. It is desirable to establish such a commission in other countries and I will support John Mann in his efforts.

## 2.4. Relations to media

Pressemitteilung vom 09. Juli 2007

### **Prof. Gert Weisskirchen:**

#### **„Sport verbindet Menschen – Extremismus trennt sie.“**

Frankfurt/ Berlin. Prof. Gert Weisskirchen, Persönlicher Beauftragter des OSZE-Vorsitzenden Miguel Angel Moratinos (Spanien) zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus und Mitglied des Deutschen Bundestages, hat sich mit DFB-Präsident Dr. Theo Zwanziger zu einem Gedankenaustausch getroffen. Dabei vereinbarten beide, dass der Dialog zwischen der Organisation für Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit (OSZE) sowie dem Deutschen Fußball-Bund (DFB) zu Fragen der Aktivitäten gegen Rechts-extremismus, Fremdenfeindlichkeit, Diskriminierung und Vandalismus fortgesetzt werden. Gemeinsam erörterten Prof. Weisskirchen und Dr. Zwanziger unter anderem die positiven Möglichkeiten des Sports, insbesondere des Fußballs, gerade junge Menschen in unserer Gesellschaft anzusprechen, um im Kampf gegen Delikte wie antisemitische Hetze oder fremdenfeindliche Gewalttaten zu sensibilisieren.

„Der Fußball erreicht im Alltag viele Menschen und kann daher einen großen Einfluss auf gesellschaftliche Entwicklungen ausüben. Denn ein wesentlicher Aspekt sportlicher Aktivitäten in den Vereinen ist der gegenseitige Respekt und Toleranz. Das ist das genaue Gegenteil, was Rechtsextreme wollen“, äußerte Dr. Zwanziger nach dem Gespräch. Prof. Weisskirchen erklärte: „Sport verbindet Menschen – Extremismus trennt sie. Die positiven Erfahrungen der Fußball-WM 2006, die Deutschland als ein fröhliches und friedliches Land weltweit Renommee gebracht hat, gilt es weiterhin umzusetzen. Gerade im Blick auf die Wertschätzung unserer multi-kulturellen Gesellschaft müssen Politik und Sport weiterhin an einem Strang ziehen.“

Press release from 10 October 2007

### **Dejagah's Behavior is Unacceptable**

Consequences should follow for the cancellation by the U21 national player of Iranian origin Ashkan Dejagah for a team game in Israel. A German national player is always perceived as a representative of Germany abroad. The Federal Republic of Germany's friendly relationship with Israel constitutes part of its basic self-understanding. A player of the German national team has to back this common understanding. Anti-Israel tendencies within the national team cannot be tolerated.

I welcome President of the German Football Association (DFB) Dr. Theo Zwanziger accompanying the U21 national team to Israel and his plan to seek a conversation with Dejagah after his return. It has to be made clear that such behaviour is unacceptable. The unambiguous position of the DFB is a positive example of how public figures can courageously confront antisemitism. I hope that in the future, this clear position will also be matched on the local level and that concrete measures against antisemitism will be implemented. The problem of antisemitism and racism in sports is increasingly coming under public scrutiny. The issue must now be confronted with determination.

## ***2.5. Expert meeting on combating Antisemitism in media, especially in the Internet***

Together with Miklos Haraszti, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, it is planned to hold an expert meeting on combating antisemitism in media, especially in the internet.

In recent years there have been continued statements by the OSCE condemning in the strongest terms the use of the Internet for racist and discriminatory purposes, including antisemitic.

As the Internet is gaining greater importance in the lives of young people, it is therefore all the most indispensable to further educate young people in using modern technologies and develop internet literacy in the society.

Since 2003, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFOM) has put together a useful resource for those trying to understand the complexity and distinctiveness of the Internet. Through a series of conferences and several prominent publications, the RFOM has collected a number of best practices as to how best countering antisemitic content on the Internet while guaranteeing freedom of the media online. This expert meeting should now help put such framework into service.

### 3. Overview of the Activities

#### 3.1. Coordination Meetings

15.06.2007	Bilateral Meeting with the three Personal Representatives and Spanish Chairmanship Coordination Meeting: Three Personal Representatives, ODIHR and the Spanish Chairmanship	Vienna	Meeting
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10.01.2007	Meeting with the Spanish OSCE Chairmanship (Ambassador Jorrin Lopez) and the three Personal Representatives	Vienna	Coordination Meeting
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07.02.- 08.02.2007	Coordination Meeting: Three Personal Representatives, ODIHR and the Spanish Chairmanship	Warsaw	Coordination Meeting
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#### 3.2. Country Visit

03.09.2007	Country Visit to Croatia	Croatia	Country Visit
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#### Agenda

- 11.00 Meeting at Embassy with Mr Ivo Goldstein, Mr Goldstein and Mr Puhovski
- 12.00 Meeting with Mr Tomislav Jakic, Foreign Policy Advisor to the President
- 13.30 Meeting with State Secretary Uzelac and Assistant Minister Dr Fuchs
- 14.15 Meeting with State Secretary Buconjic and Assistant Minister Dragovic  
Transfer to Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- 15.00 Meeting with Foreign Minister Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic
- 15.45 Meeting with Mr Kraus and Ms Sanja Zorisc-Dabkovic, representatives of the "old" Jewish community

#### Report

**I)** The Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, was able to secure the agreement of the Government of Croatia for his Personal Representative on Combating Antisemitism to hold various meetings in Zagreb.

The visit was intended to explore whether the impact of the rock star Marko Perkovic, known as "Thompson", on the Croatian public is more than an expression of nationalist sentiments in the country.

Does Thompson merely reflect these sentiments (1), is he simply dabbling in them (2) or is he reinforcing them?



**On (1)**

Dr Radovan Fuchs, Assistant Minister in the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, described Thompson's music and the singer himself as "more or less patriotic".

According to Dr Fuchs, apart from one song which Thompson himself claims never to have performed – at least not in public – his work should not be classed as dangerous. This one song takes up a theme from Croatia's fascist past and the crimes committed. It is anti-Serbian but has never been released. Some of Thompson's other songs could be regarded as provocative but not as hate-filled.

Dr Fuchs compared the Croatian with the Serbian folk-rock music scene.

**On (2)**

For Zarko Puhovski, the former President of the Croatian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Thompson is first and foremost a "symbol of national Croatia". However, herein lies one of the problems relating to Croatian self-perception, namely that it has not yet undergone adequate historical or critical analysis. As a result, "marginalized young people" all too often voice their protests through symbols from the Ustaša era. Thompson's political influence on young people should not be overstated; it is bad enough that his music promotes bad taste. Thompson's "alternative music" certainly reinforces anti-institutional attitudes.

Marko Perkovic became a national hero at the beginning of the 1990s. His stage name, "Thompson", dates back to his time as a soldier in the Croatian war of independence, when he carried a Thompson submachine gun. His growing popularity is reflected in the fact that 40,000 people – most of them young people – attended his concert before the summer break. Some of them were wearing symbols from the Nazi period.

**On (3)**

Thompson does appear to pose a threat in that he reinforces nationalist sentiments. At his concerts, for example, he shouts out the first part of the Ustaša rallying cry, "Za dom!" ("For the homeland") and then encourages the crowd to yell the response: "Spremni!" (Ready!).

His PR manager Albino Ursic claims to be on the left of the political spectrum, but a poster in his office shows a packet of cigarettes marked with a distorted swastika and labelled "Adolf Filters". He claims that it is an anti-smoking picture.

In Ivo Goldstein's view, a clear distinction cannot be drawn between patriotism and Ustaša nationalism; instead, a grey area exists. Slavko Goldstein added that the problematical relationship between Serbs and Croats has been dominated in recent decades by friendship and hate, political alliances and genocidal crimes, growing tensions and even ethnic cleansing. This period of history has yet to be examined systematically. Even though today's leading politicians – Mesic, Racan and Sanader – are attempting to fill the ensuing vacuum by setting a positive example, the resurgence of Ustaša symbols is still shameful.

**II)** In the view of Tomislav Jakic, Foreign Policy Advisor to the President, Thompson is both "an expression of, and a profiteer from, unresolved social conflicts" which built up in Tudjman's shadow. The government party must abandon its lack of clarity towards extreme-right attitudes.

Ivica Buconjic, State Secretary in the Ministry of the Interior, and Sandro Bosnjak, Head of the Department for European Integration, made it clear how vigorously the Croatian authorities deal with all crimes with an antisemitic background. They described the changes in the law and improvements in the training provided for the police and public prosecutors. At Thompson's most recent concert, 17 offences were recorded and prosecuted.

They said that Croatia is an active partner in the relevant OSCE programmes, especially in relation to prevention.

III) Foreign Minister Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic underlined "with all clarity" that Premier Sanader and, with him, the HDZ are distancing themselves sharply from right-wing extremism. She said that the Education Minister Dragan Primorac had initially planned to attend Thompson's concert in a private capacity, but when the concert was postponed due to rain, he did not attend the rescheduled concert the following day. After the latest concert, Thompson finally declared that he had "never raised his arm in a fascist salute".

The Foreign Minister emphasised Croatia's willingness to fulfil all the international community's demands, as is borne out, in particular, by the close and trustful cooperation with the ICTY. She reaffirmed her country's openness and willingness to engage with the EU and OSCE: "We need individual support in the fight against hate crime, antisemitism and xenophobia and in promoting reconciliation".

IV) Following on from the visit, the following four actions are recommended:

1. A letter to be sent to President Mesic expressing thanks for his resolute stance in combating right-wing extremism.
2. Letter to the head of Croatian state TV asking about the current editorial position on the uncut broadcasting of the concert earlier this year. Will any future concerts be accompanied by critical commentary?
3. Letter to Zarko Puhovski to encourage him to prepare a symposium for modern historians, sociologists and political scientists from various countries to discuss the issue of "dealing with the recent past".
4. Letter to Cardinal Lehmann requesting him to speak with representatives of the Catholic Church in Croatia about Thompson's role.

Gert Weisskirchen

Berlin, 13 September 2007

### ***3.3. Participation in OSCE conferences and meetings***

05.-09.07.2007	OSCE PA Summer Meeting	Kiev	Summer Meeting
24.09.- 26.09.2007 <i>Participation 24.- 25.09.2007</i>	ODIHR: Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM)	Warsaw	Conference

**Statement**

Since 2005 I have been appointed by the respective Chairman-in-Office to the position of Personal Representative on Combating Antisemitism. Now, in my third year of this mandate, it is time to take stock of the current situation, point to successes and positive trends, make critical assessments, and then look ahead to the future.

**OSCE conference in Bucharest**

The mandates of the Personal Representatives of the Chairman-in-Office were created as a consequence of OSCE Antisemitism conferences held in Vienna, Berlin, Paris, Brussels, and Cordoba. A further OSCE conference was held in Bucharest from 7 to 8 June this year: the High-Level Conference on Combating Discrimination and Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding. It was preceded by a NGO meeting.

The Bucharest Declaration contains the following passage:

"Recognizing its unique and historic character, [the participating States] condemn Antisemitism without reservation, whether expressed in a traditional manner or through new forms and manifestations. [They] Reiterate previous OSCE declarations that international developments or political issues, including in Israel or anywhere else, can never justify antisemitism."

Prior to that the NGOs formulated nine recommendations and made reference in this context to the special role of education and parliaments. I strongly support all of these recommendations and in particular the appeal issued by the NGOs to take action against expressions of racial hatred and antisemitic discourse on the Internet. I have listed these recommendations for you in my written statement.

As of June 2007 a total of 48 separate commitments had been made by OSCE participating States in reference to the fight against antisemitism. These commitments are necessary. There is a need now to strengthen the political will to implement these commitments in all OSCE countries. Many countries have been quite exemplary in this area. Unfortunately there are other countries whose efforts have not been sufficient.

**Current state of affairs**

Despite the considerable efforts that have been undertaken in many participating states and the numerous conferences that have been held, there have been recurrent manifestations of antisemitism in many countries of the OSCE region. This includes countries whose governments and public institutions have had an excellent record in the fight against antisemitism. In Germany, for instance, a rabbi from the Jewish congregation in Frankfurt was injured in a knife attack. In addition to egregious acts of violence like this one, there are often other, much more subtle forms of antisemitism that are a cause for concern. What is dangerous, for instance, are attempts to make antisemitic attitudes predominant in public discourse.

One of my objectives is to create an awareness of different forms of antisemitic discourse. I can give two examples of this from my work.

In May 2007 the British University and College Union (UCU) called for an anti-Israeli boycott. Other unions followed this example with similar actions. I issued a press release immediately condemning this call for a boycott. I travelled to London in July to talk with the unions in a further attempt to raise public awareness of this matter.

There was a disquieting development in Croatia. The popular singer Marko Perkovic, alias "Thompson", started showing various symbols from the Ustasha era at concerts. During a country visit to Croatia I was able to talk to a number of government representatives as well as representatives of the Jewish communities. The objective here was to reach a consensus with my Croatian interlocutors that nationalistic tendencies of any kind need to be nipped in the bud.

I wrote a letter to all the heads of government of the OSCE participating States in which I proposed that an inquiry similar to the British All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry be carried out. This was also recommended by the NGOs in Bucharest. I enclosed the Magenta Foundation report on the 1st International Conference on Academic Antisemitism and the ODIHR-FRA Working Definition of Antisemitism. In the meantime I have received answers from some of the governments. Most of them use the working definition of antisemitism that was jointly formulated by ODIHR and the Fundamental Rights Agency. Unfortunately none of the reply letters has made any concrete statements to the effect that plans are being made to use an instrument similar to the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry.

### **CiO Personal Representative mandates**

The role of CiO Personal Representatives encompasses three areas:

1. They implement the decisions taken by the participating states at OSCE Conferences.
2. They draw attention to both progress and setbacks in the implementation process.
3. They encourage efforts by civil society groups and promote national and transnational cooperation between social, parliamentary and governmental actors.

It will hardly be possible to carry out these tasks in a satisfactory manner with the current mandate structure. The Personal Representative mandates need to be equipped with further instruments if they are to be able to do justice to these functions. At the moment there is a considerable gap between what would actually be required and what exists in reality and this gap needs to be closed.

It would be nice if there were more support from the OSCE participating States. This year only one country visit has been agreed thus far, i.e. to Croatia. Unfortunately there have been no further invitations from other countries. Contacts and meetings with NGOs and representatives of the Jewish communities in the various countries is very important in terms of doing justice to the CiO Personal Representative mandates.

Prior to the appointment of the Personal Representatives the following six areas were declared to be in particular need of attention:

- 1) *Data collection*
- 2) *Legislation*
- 3) *Law enforcement*
- 4) *Education*
- 5) *Media*
- 6) *Parliaments*

Progress has been made over the past few years in most of these areas.

In November 2006 OSCE ODIHR held a Tolerance Implementation Meeting in Vienna on the subject of Data Collection. NGOs formulated various recommendations which I have listed in my written statement. I want to focus here on one of the most important recommendation the NGOs formulated:

We remind participating States of their commitment to provide hate crime statistics on a regular basis and to respond to violent manifestations of intolerance;

Various tools provided by OSCE ODIHR have proven to be very helpful. The OSCE ODIHR Law Enforcement Officer Programme has already been implemented in some countries and is in either the planning or preparatory stages in others. ODIHR is also working on a training programme for public prosecutors.

Teaching materials on the subject of antisemitism have been developed for a number of countries and are now in use there.

A code should be developed together with authors, journalists, and publicists that would constitute a voluntary moral and autonomous agreement to show tolerance and recognize the rights of minorities. A project of this kind has already been discussed with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

The OSCE PA can be used as a laboratory for testing new legislative approaches. National parliaments should be encouraged to strengthen their ability to monitor the results of decisions in the OSCE. An instrument comparable to the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry could be employed in other countries as well. It would be a good thing if OSCE PA national delegations were to promote an initiative of this kind in their parliaments.

### **Outlook**

Many parliaments have been exemplary in their efforts to fight antisemitism and recognize the scale of the problem. Nonetheless, there has been growing acceptance of antisemitic statements and stereotypes in some countries, as was observed in the autumn of 2006.

As such, it is of crucial importance that civil society be included in the fight against antisemitism. We cannot afford to lose those who are in the middle of the political spectrum. It must be guaranteed that social initiatives and projects will receive the support they need to be able to do their work successfully. It is a task for the national parliaments to see to it that there is sufficient funding for civil society projects of this kind.

We need to work towards an exchange of information on promising methods of fighting antisemitism. We are currently able to say that there are a number of particularly successful projects that could be implemented in other countries.

In Sweden, for instance, there is an exit programme for radical neo-Nazis. Over a period of many years case workers have succeeded in getting numerous individuals out of the right-wing extremist scene. No one is given up for lost.

In France official data on antisemitic violence and other manifestations of antisemitism is compared with data received from NGOs. Since NGOs do not use the same strict criteria for data collection, a more precise picture emerges as to the scale of antisemitic crimes.

The appointment of special envoys responsible for dealing with the subject of antisemitism and relations with Jewish communities results in the problem being seen more clearly on the part of executive government as well. There are special envoys of this kind in the United States, France, Poland, Spain, and Germany.

The following countries stand out for their efforts to fight antisemitism through education by taking part in the ODIHR Anne Frank House Project and developing relevant teaching materials: Germany, Croatia, Denmark, Spain, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, and Ukraine. I have actively supported this ODIHR programme from the outset and I am pleased by the success it has had in many countries.

As has already been mentioned, the CiO Personal Representative mandates need to be expanded so that they can be carried out in a satisfactory manner. The provision of physical and human resources would be helpful in making our work more effective.

I am certain that we will continue to have strong support for carrying on the fight against antisemitism.

09.-10.10.2007	OSCE Chairmanship Conference on Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims	Cordoba	OSCE Conference
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Speaker on the fifth Plenary Session: **Other active responses against Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, including experiences from other communities**

## Talking Points

### The fight against antisemitism and the discrimination faced by Muslims

- Distinct focus on the various forms of intolerances (antisemitism, racism and discrimination faced by Muslims, Christians and members of other religions) must be maintained. No group of victims of intolerance, hatred and discrimination is being served by lumping together the various phenomena.
- This distinctiveness would be epitomized by continuation of the mandates of the three Personal Representatives as well as through distinct conferences devoted to each problem while of course commonalities in dealing with them (e.g. education, data collection, hate crime policing) should be highlighted.
- Comparisons between discrimination faced by Muslims with the persecution suffered by the Jews under the Nazis are flawed and unacceptable. They denigrate one group of victims and do not help to understand and tackle the specifics of the problems faced by the other.
- Discrimination faced by Muslims or any other group can never be an excuse or reason for discriminating against another group. There is no justification for any sort of hatred. Events in the Middle East or elsewhere never justify antisemitism or discrimination of any particular group of people for that matter. Likewise, belonging oneself to one group of victims of discrimination, hatred and intolerance can never be a justification for victimizing members of another group.

- I would avoid the term “Islamophobia” due to its controversial and strongly debatable terminological genesis and sometimes problematic use, and instead refer to the phenomenon in question as “discrimination against Muslims” or “discrimination faced by Muslims”, which would also be more in line with both this conference’s title and the title of the mandate of my respected colleague Ambassador Ömür Orhun.
- The term “antisemitism” - in its historic genesis and unique forms of expression - means hatred of Jews and Jews only. Its inventor, the self-professed German antisemite Wilhelm Marr left no doubt about this. Any sort of deliberate terminological confusion such as the claim that antisemitism means hatred of all people of the “Semite” family of languages is absurd and aims to blur the specific history of persecution and extermination of Jews.
- While intercultural and interreligious dialogue remains an important tool of communication, mutual learning and sharing of information, it is no panacea to antisemitism or for that matter any other form of group-related hatred. Dialogues that call one group’s inalienable right to national self-determination into question do not serve the purpose of mutual understanding and tolerance. At its core this is not a religious debate.
- There were undeniable achievements in the Arab-Muslim world’s integration of its Jewish minority, despite historical inaccuracies in the legend of peace and harmony that blends out examples of persecution and discrimination. The situation of Jews and Muslims under the Caliphate, reflecting the situation of the treatment of a minority by a majority, should not be superimposed on the current situation of Jews and Muslims living in Europe, where both are minorities and where members of one group have in repeated incidents victimized the other. The spread of antisemitism in the Arab-Muslim world, which is transported to Arab-Muslim migrants in Europe, is also an unfortunate phenomenon of more recent times.

### **Data Collection**

The ODIHR Working Definition of Hate Crimes says:

Part A) Any criminal offence, including offences against persons or property, where the victim, premises or target of the offence are selected because of their real or perceived connection, attachment, affiliation, support or membership with a group as defined in part B

Part B) A group may be based upon their real or perceived race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or other similar factor.

OSCE Participating States have committed to:

- Combat hate crimes, including on the internet
- Collect reliable information and statistics on hate crime, including on antisemitic crimes and make this information available to the public
- Submit existing legislation, statistics and reliable information on hate crime to the ODIHR
- Strengthen efforts to provide public officials, and in particular law enforcement officers with appropriate training on responding to and preventing hate crimes

- Consider nominating national points of contact on hate crimes and examine the possibility of establishing within countries appropriate bodies to promote tolerance and combat racism
- Without data collection there is a data deficit which makes it difficult to combat such crimes and to assess on what exactly policies dealing with issues of tolerance and non-discrimination should focus.
- Despite repeated commitments requiring OSCE participating states to improve their collection of hate-crime statistics and information, in many states there is a lack of publicly available data that is comprehensive in scope and that includes a detailed overview of crimes committed on different bias grounds.
- I want to refer to the NGO recommendations from the Tolerance Implementation meeting „Addressing the Hate Crime Data Deficit“ which took place from 9 - 10 November 2006 in Vienna.
- Following I repeat some important recommendations. The NGOs addressed to the participating states:
  - We remind participating States of their commitment to provide hate crime statistics on a regular basis and to respond to violent manifestations of intolerance;
  - We stress the need for data to be publicized in a comprehensive way and on a regular basis
  - We recommend that all grounds of discrimination including age, disability, gender, social status, political and religious belief and sexual orientation should be included in data on hate crimes;
  - We recommend that specialized bodies acknowledge the information and data provided by civil society representatives and establish consultation mechanisms with civil society when reporting;
- Hate crime statistics are necessary in order to determine which groups are increasingly vulnerable, and collection and analysis of such statistics enable governments to develop policy responses and allocate necessary resources in order to respond effectively to hate crimes and incidents.

### **Education**

- The Cordoba Declaration from 2005 and a number of commitments from OSCE participating states identified education „as a means for preventing and responding to all forms of intolerance and discrimination, as well as for promoting integration and respecting diversity“.
- Since adopting these commitments, several OSCE states have undertaken specific measures to change prejudicial and racist attitudes among young people, to intensify their efforts to promote commemoration of the Holocaust, and to develop educational programmes and tools to combat antisemitism.

### **Teaching Material on Jewish History and Antisemitism**

- Country-specific teaching material on historical and contemporary antisemitism were developed in co-operation of the ODIHR, the Anne Frank House and national experts from each of the states. Specific adaptations, based on the historical and current situation in each country, have been developed and piloted.



- The materials come in three parts:
  - Part 1: History of Antisemitism
  - Part 2: Contemporary forms of Antisemitism
  - Part 3: Relation of Antisemitism and other forms of discrimination
- Lessons taught using these materials will provide insights into antisemitism as a historical phenomenon and also reveal links between past and present forms of antisemitism. The materials also deal with the workings of prejudice in general, showing students the impact that bias can have both on individuals and on whole societies.
- Currently materials are available for Germany, the Netherlands, Ukraine, Lithuania, Croatia, Denmark and Poland, materials are being developed for the Russian Federation, Spain and Slovakia.

### **Preparing Holocaust Memorial Days**

- Another tool from the ODIHR is a document which compiles best practices from 12 OSCE participating states and suggestions for educators how to prepare a Holocaust Memorial Day.
- The materials were developed in co-operation with Yad Vashem, they are available in 13 languages: Croatian, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Lithuanian, Polish, Russian, Serbian, and Spanish.
- The majority of the OSCE participating states commemorates the victims of the Holocaust.
- Education is a means of not only combating antisemitism but also a preventive measure. The topic can be linked to the area of tolerance and non-discrimination in general and is thus conducive to creating and fostering a climate of tolerance and understanding among and within communities.

### **3.4. Participation in conferences, round tables and meetings**

27.06.2007	Meeting with Dr. Theo Zwanziger President of the DFB (Deutscher Fußball Bund - German Football Association) Topic: Antisemitism and Soccer	Frankfurt	Meeting
19.07.2007	Boycott-Issue: Meeting with Government Representatives Round Table with Representatives of the Unions and NGOs in London	London	

### **Program**

- 08:30      Round Table with different NGOs
- 10:00      Meeting with David Hirsh, University of London, Founder of “Engage”
- 11:30      Meeting with Ambassador Ischinger

- 12:30 Meeting with MP Bill Rammell, Minister of State, Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills
- 13:15 Meeting with MP John Mann, Chair of the Parliamentary Committee against Antisemitism and MP Denis McShane
- 15:00 Meeting with Nick Sigler, Head of International Relations, UNISON

**Minutes of the visit to London by the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on Combating Antisemitism, Professor Gert Weisskirchen, on 19 July 2007**

By Yves Pallade, 26 July 2007

**Board of Deputies of British Jews**

Due to a delay of Gert Weisskirchen's arrival at the Board of Deputies of British Jews, his assistant Yves Pallade was briefed in his stead by the Chief Executive of the Jewish Leadership Council Jeremy Newmark on behalf of all the Jewish organizations that were present at the meeting.

Jeremy began by explaining that a number of recommendations from the final report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism, some of which were based on the evidence that Gert had given, had since been taken up by the British government.

Jeremy turned to the issue of anti-Israel boycotts, mentioning that attempts at boycotting Israel had been made by a whole range of organizations including the British Medical Association and the Royal Institute of British Architects, yet so far they had passed no formal decision on a boycott. With a view to the scheduled football match between the English and Israeli national teams in September there were even attempts at achieving a sporting boycott against Israel. The Lebanon War of last summer had obviously increased the impetus of the pro-boycott movement. The activists of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) were the prime movers behind the resolution of the Universities and Colleges Union (UCU), which had been preceded by a similar resolution of the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) that had since been nullified. After the UCU boycott resolution similar decisions had also been passed by the public service workers union (UNISON) and the transport workers union (T&G). Jeremy pointed out that UCU had just passed a call for a national debate on the boycott which in his view was just pretence. UCU was trying to act as if there was no boycott, yet its resolution called on each individual member to ask his or her own conscience as to whether to continue ties with Israel. It also called for a stop of EU funding to Israel. UCU wanted to hold debates in every single one of its branches around the country. It could be assumed that most of the speakers that were to be featured at such debates would be in favour of the boycott. UCU's general secretary Sally Hunt would then have to report back to the national executive of the union. Having already lost to the SWP people on her proposal to hold a referendum among the entire union membership, which would most likely have resulted in the rejection of the boycott, she now believed that she could only hold it sometime in late 2008. Given that she had already lost some power and that she could suffer a defeat at the UCU elections in April 2008, a referendum on the boycott issue would have to happen before then.

Jeremy expressed his concern that a boycott would hit not just Israelis but Jews too, as it was based on national and religious identity. While not every boycotter was necessarily antisemitic, the net effect of a boycott would be clearly so. A debate over whether to impose a boycott would also be problematic. The All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism had found that such debates on the Middle East generally tended to become a breeding ground for antisemitism. Jewish students were suffering the consequences on campus. There was a historical resonance of the Nazi boycott in every boycott narrative targeting Jews. A state of nervousness at the grass roots level within the Jewish community could clearly be felt. Every time an academic union had passed boycott motions in the past there had also been a spill-over of the debate to other unions. This had sparked a new anti-apartheid movement. Bigger unions such as T&G could use their financial leverage to promote the boycott on an international level. If a year-long debate over the pros and cons of a boycott was indeed to ensue, this would be very problematic for the Jewish community in Great Britain.

Jeremy emphasized that the Minister of State in the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, Bill Rammell, had been very helpful on this issue and had also visited Israel to promote academic cooperation. Promises had been made to promote R&D cooperation with the Jewish State. Jeremy suggested that Gert ask Rammell to outline this promise and also to ask what he as Personal Representative could do regarding the boycott issue. Rammell was seen by Hunt as a confidant, so he could talk to her about his conversation with Gert. Jeremy also mentioned the State Secretary for Communities and Local Government Hazel Blears, who was actually dealing a lot with the boycott issue, as another positive example. Jeremy pointed out that the position of the Secretary for Innovation, Universities and Skills, John Denham on the boycott was as yet unclear and suggested that Gert could try to find out more about it. Denham might after all not be as supportive as Rammell. Jeremy furthermore said that Nick Sigler from UNISON whom Gert was going to meet had been very unhelpful, cautioning that he could be quite resentful to any outside interference.

Board of Deputies Chief Executive Jon Benjamin stressed the fact that Jewish students were continuing to face problems on campus.

Jeremy suggested that Gert should tell Rammell about the refusal of the UCU leadership to meet him. He went on to explain that Gordon Brown had condemned the boycott and that Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, Ed Balls, who was close to Brown and who was very supportive on this issue, had met with the Israeli Education Minister Juli Tamir.

UJS Campaigns Organiser Yair Zivan pointed out that the effect of Middle East debates on campus had been fairly consistent, highlighting the case of a mock checkpoint on one campus at which only Jewish students were stopped. Jewish students were sometimes also accused of being agents of Israel. Moreover, Jewish students and academics had been facing problems because they did not know the attitudes of their lecturers and British colleagues. Things had reached a stage where Jewish students had even asked the Union of Jewish Students whether they could take the risk to be active in a Jewish Societies on campus. There was a general pattern of "good Jews" being promoted by pro-boycott activists on campus. In one instance even someone from the Neturei Karta had been invited.

Jeremy explained that the Independent Jewish Voices initiative, which was very unrepresentative and hardly connected to the Jewish community, did not take a clear

position on the boycott issue. Nonetheless it had been used by the pro-boycott activists at the UCU as a fig leaf.

Board of Deputies President Henry Grunwald suggested that Gert ask the British government to increase its links with Israel on all levels and to support those Palestinians who work together with Israelis.

Jeremy explained that universities are public bodies in contrast to the unions. Since the government was interacting with the university management, it could raise the boycott issue with them. In this context Jeremy also mentioned that the Race Relations Act displayed an anomaly in that it did not apply to student unions. The Board of Deputies would prefer an explicit mentioning of student unions by the Act because they receive funding from the universities which were after all publicly financed.

Board of Deputies Vice President Flo Kaufmann said that she would have a meeting with the executive of the European Jewish Congress in Geneva in a couple of months where she would also raise the boycott issue.

## **ENGAGE**

David Hirsh explained that ENGAGE had come out of the 2005 boycott by the AUT which it had managed to turn around. He then noted that Paul Bennett from the UCU had written a response to the report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism. ENGAGE had in turn responded to this response. With regard to Bennett's refusal to meet with Gert, Hirsh noted that this particular UCU functionary had a certain history. He then offered that ENGAGE could write a letter to the press and get 200 UCU signatories explaining that there was a problem with antisemitism in this boycott and that the UCU executives had refused to meet with Gert.

Gert promised that he was going to send a letter to university leaders asking them to address the problem and to make a public statement that Israelis were welcome. If necessary he would also go public about the UCU at a later point, yet ENGAGE could directly go public about this.

Hirsh explained that Sally Hunt was not the bad guy behind all this, but that she was incapable. Bennett on the other hand was much more problematic than her. As to the Independent Jewish Voices initiative (IJV) he remarked that it was trying to assure the British intelligentsia that there was not problem with antisemitism. Yet IJV it was itself split on the boycott issue. UNISON and T&G had said that they supported a boycott but that they themselves did not implement one. Hirsh urged Gert to make them understand that this issue was not something of minor importance. After all UNISON could at some point set up a proper office for the anti-Israel campaign.

Hirsh mentioned the case of Eric Lee, who was running a website that was an important resource on worldwide labour issues. Lee, who is an Israeli American, had received funding from UNISON for his project, but when it had become public that he opposed the boycott, he had not only been smeared as a Zionist by the boycotters but had suddenly been asked questions on the Middle East by a member of UNISON's executive whom he believed was an SWP member. After Eric had replied that he was a left-wing Zionist and that he had supported the war against Hezbollah, UNISON stopped funding his project.

Hirsh also made clear that there was a difference between criticism of Israel on the one hand and demonisation and boycotting on the other. The boycott was turning the debate back on Britain's Jews. It was creating a toxic atmosphere on campus. Any-

one raising the issue of antisemitism was smeared as dishonest. The argument of ENGAGE was that this was not about Israel but about British campuses. Focus should rest on the effects and not on the motivations of the boycott. The apartheid analogy that was drawn by the boycotters was not an honest one as it constituted a shortcut to the boycott. The liberal media were hosting a debate between boycotters and anti-Zionists on the one hand and anti-boycotters and Zionists on the other, treating it as a legitimate discussion. Yet what was missing in the discussion was the centre ground.

David Seymour added that although The Guardian had hosted the ENOUGH campaign against Israeli occupation, when push came to shove it would come out against the boycott. He also stressed the fact that the SWP was supporting Hamas. 20 years ago they had tried to ban Jewish Societies from campus but had failed because the leadership of the National Union of Students had been against this. The SWP was a real cadre party.

David Hirsh drew attention to the fact that unionists regarded any outside interference as irrelevant. Yet the trade union barons had to be educated about antisemitism and be made understood that this created real problems for them. He urged Gert to explain to them that the SWP would build from the boycott issue into other areas and would eventually destroy the unions from within. It was no coincidence that this was happening at a time when the unions were weak.

David Seymour mentioned that there was a history of Jewish antisemitism. To be accepted as a Jew on the left, one had to say that this entire debate was a legitimate one.

### **German Embassy**

Ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger said that the Berlin OSCE Conference had enormously helped to improve the German image in the U.S. at a difficult time in transatlantic relations. He then asked how much of Gert's time he devoted to his OSCE mandate.

Gert replied that about 20% of his work went into his function as Personal Representative. He emphasized that meanwhile more countries have become supportive of the OSCE process.

Ischinger noted that this was indeed much.

Gert asked for Ischinger's assessment of the boycott issue.

Ischinger explained that public opinion was split on this matter. Some tolerated the boycott, while others considered it to be a mistake. The Brown government would probably keep out of this discussion. There was a very influential Jewish community in Great Britain. Brown would probably maintain a good relationship with it due to party-political interests. The debate among British Jews was proceeding much more openly than elsewhere. There were clear differences of opinion on the Middle East conflict. By contrast, in Washington there was only a monolithic bloc that always supported Israel. Ischinger repeated that the Jewish community in Great Britain was very influential. James Wolfensohn had given a speech in front of Jewish organizations at a benefit dinner half a year ago. All important Jews had been there, including Mr. Cohen, the donor of Blair and Brown. An American-Jewish audience would have blown the starting whistle at Wolfensohn. The latter had given the audience "a lesson". His speech had been audacious, urging the Jewish community to get the

bogged-down negotiation process going again. The applause had been very restrained. By contrast, in the U.S. such pluralism within the debate was non-existent.

Deputy Head of Political Section Michael Siebert noted that boycotts could potentially lead to antisemitism. They were more than just criticism.

Ischinger replied that most Brits were of the opinion that more pressure had to be exerted on Israel. By contrast, in Germany such voices would express themselves more reluctantly because of history. Blair had seemed to give unrestricted support to Israel's actions in the previous summer. Some members of his government including David Miliband had been critical of Blair. The general atmosphere in Britain was critical of Israel, yet this did not mean that it was automatically antisemitic. Ischinger concluded by saying that he was unable to determine to what extent antisemitism was part of the motivation behind the boycott.

Michael Siebert noted that discussion partners in Gert's previous two meetings had stressed that antisemitism was not the motivation but the consequence of the boycott.

Gert added that power struggles within the unions also played a role in this. He then asked Ischinger for his view on Blair's future post.

Ischinger said that the appointment of Blair had been problematic. His mandate was very restricted, dealing only with reconstruction of Palestinian society. Yet Blair was the only one who had direct access to the American President. Bush had never been to the Palestinian territories and did not know what they look like, but Blair could let him know. Ischinger noted that by contrast he himself had accompanied Gerhard Schröder on a visit to the territories.

### **Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills**

Departmental Director Andrew Batterbee began by explaining that there was little open, but somewhat more hidden antisemitism at university level. The boycott had various sources. The frustration over the situation in Iraq was one. Behind this was the idea that UK foreign policy had been too uncritical of Washington. Yet both Brown and Bill Rammell had been very clear on this issue. Batterbee emphasized that he himself had joined Rammell on his trip to Israel as had Vice-Chancellor Drummond Bone from the University of Liverpool who was also the President of Universities UK. They had conveyed the message that both the government and the universities were against the boycott and that the latter had been coming from the unions. Batterbee noted that after the summer a more localized debate would take place within the unions. Government involvement on this would not necessarily help but rather be counterproductive.

Minister of State Bill Rammell started out by explaining that this was not yet a fully-fledged boycott. The boycott was making reactionaries on both sides of the Mideast conflict stronger. The British government did not want to interfere too much in this issue in order not to strengthen the radical left. Hunt's policies were in the right place but her courage was not.

Gert noted that he had tried in vain to meet Hunt.

Batterbee said that UCU wanted to have control over both sides of the speakers in the debates. The Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills was trying to

work with the UCU on this matter. By interfering and threatening, US lobbyists such as Alan Dershowitz had been counterproductive.

Rammell encouraged Gert to write to Hunt. He promised that she would receive Gert. Gert said that he would then try again.

Rammell noted that the leadership of the Trade Union Congress (TUC) was OK.

Batterbee explained that the NUS had been critical of the boycott, but that individual student unions had held debates and passed respective resolutions. The ultra-left and Islamist students were usually behind such resolutions, trying to push their agenda through at little-attended meetings. Some people were of the opinion that the Race Relations Act that had been passed five years ago and that applied to public institutions should also be made applicable to student unions, yet it did in fact already cover their parent institutions.

Rammell expressed his view that there was no loophole in the law, saying that he had taken legal advice on this matter.

Batterbee claimed that very strong criticism of Israel was labelled as antisemitic by the Union of Jewish Students. He said that he was not aware of an incident in which Jewish students had been barred from attending a debate on the Middle East on campus.

### **Houses of Parliament**

MP Denis McShane noted that the UK government had responded to the report by the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism. There was going to be a long debate in parliament in one hour, in which his colleagues had a chance to tell the government their expectations, to which the respective minister would have to respond. McShane also noted that he had written a short book on antisemitism that was going to be published by Weidenfeld & Nicholson.

Gert asked whether the boycott would be debated in parliament.

MP John Mann stressed that it was only a would-be boycott.

McShane said it probably would be debated. However, the NUJ had already rescinded its boycott for it had caused huge damage.

Gert asked what he could do on this matter.

Mann suggested that he talk to the leadership of the universities i.e. the committee of vice-chancellors. The heads of the universities had to understand that they would have to react. There was no boycott and there would not be one. Yet the universities were losing international reputation through this issue.

McShane expressed his hope that the issue of EU to UK universities and academic projects would be raised, suggesting that Gert approach the European Parliament. It would be best to solve these problems behind the scene and not to inflame the issue so as not to get other people to join the boycott.

Gert asked if anyone knew something about John Denham and his position on this issue.

Mann noted that Denham was an old Trotskyite.

Director of the Parliamentary Committee Against Antisemitism Elliot Conway mentioned that there had been incidents in which Jewish students had been harassed during "Israeli Apartheid weeks" on campus.

## UNISON

Gert asked for the reasons behind the boycott.

UNISON Head of International Relations Nick Sigler explained that everyone in the union could put forward a resolution on international issues. Motion 53 had in fact been a reiteration of UNISON's previously expressed position. UNISON was cooperating with the Histadrut and supported Israel's right to exist in secure borders. UNISON was also paying a lawyer to defend the rights of Palestinian workers who had not been paid by corrupt employers in Israel. UNISON intended to work with both sides, yet the bulk of its effort rested with the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions as they needed most help. The important part of the resolution was its call on the members. It did not ask for a boycott. Resolution 54, however, which did call for a boycott, had never been put onto the agenda. The national executive had ensured behind the scenes that it would not be discussed. There had even been a discussion with the Trade Union Friends of Israel (TUPI) and the Israeli Embassy in which UNISON's leadership had made it clear that it would stand by everything it had done. It had said that the situation of the Palestinians was not acceptable, that they were being humiliated etc. One of the key tactics of the anti-apartheid movement had been boycotts. They had not ended apartheid but had raised the problem to public attention. Sigler emphasized that he was saying this as the son of a Holocaust survivor. He did not see this issue as having anything to do with antisemitism. There were of course antisemites in the unions who made use of it. Yet the issue was in fact a reflection of what was happening in the Middle East, namely the failure of the Histadrut to respond to the situation of the Palestinians. Unions had a strong record of fighting antisemitism and the political right. Antisemitism was not a massive problem, but it was slowly increasing. It was being complicated by the voices of senior leaders in the Jewish community who equated every attack on Israel with antisemitism. Sigler stressed that he was a proud Jew, the son of refugees from the Nazis, but that he was nonetheless severely critical of the Israeli government. He himself had been described as a self-hating Jew, yet precisely because of what had happened to the Jews they should realize that something not dissimilar was happening to the Palestinians, namely collective punishment. While he would not dispute the security and economic issues that Israel was facing, he stressed that what was happening to the Palestinians was indeed very bad.

Gert remarked that Sigler was an honest person but expressed his concern that this issue could open up a road which could lead to antisemitism. After all people in Israel as individuals would suffer from this. There was a problem in Sigler's argument. An atmosphere was developing on the ground in which Jewish students were being singled out. It would therefore be wise to think twice that the boycott could lead to unintended consequences.

Sigler conceded that a boycott could indeed always lead to something else. He then stressed that he could not speak on behalf of the UCU, yet the decision had been not to boycott Israeli institutions but rather to have a debate on this. However, it was quite certain that there would not be a boycott in the end although the Jewish media would portray it as a boycott.



Sigler's assistant Nick said that the situation in the Middle East was not the same as that under apartheid, but that radical groups were drawing this analogy. People would then immediately draw a connection to South Africa, as this was a short link and an easy message.

Sigler explained that the best way to engage the union membership was obviously not through debates but through action. This by itself did make the boycott neither right nor wrong. The problem was that the Jewish leadership in Britain equated every attack on Israel with antisemitism. The same was also happening in the U.S.. The Jewish leadership should rather denounce the activities of the Israeli government.

Gert countered that in no other country were people as critical of their own government as in Israel.

Sigler admitted that there was dissent and openness in Israeli society. He then stressed that he had been in the Zionist Youth Movement many years before where he had had a debate about whether its members could criticize Israel. The Jewish leadership had said that it was not their role to criticize Israel outside of the country.

Gert mentioned that the OSCE Berlin Declaration of 2004 showed a clear red line between antisemitism and criticism. Israel could not be mixed up with South Africa, as it was not an apartheid country.

Sigler interjected by arguing that there were some similarities between both cases. A client state in the West Bank would not be dissimilar to the Bantustans in apartheid South Africa. Since there were such similarities, there were also some similarities in the campaign against it.

Gert pointed to the fact that Israel was not intentionally oppressing the Palestinians.

Sigler noted the Israeli checkpoints explaining that he had never been subjugated in his life in such a way as he had when he had passed through one of them. A boycott would only become antisemitic if it was declared because of the Jews. There was of course a pro-Palestine lobby that was antisemitic, but that was not the point.

Gert expressed his fear that having the boycott as an instrument working would lead to the idea that Israel was an apartheid state.

Sigler mentioned that UNISON was part of the ENOUGH campaign against Israeli occupation. He described the Independent Jewish Voices group as a left-of-centre initiative of concerned people.

13.09.2007	OSCE PA Round Table of the German Bundestag, guest speaker: Dr Kathrin Meyer Topic: "How could the German Bundestag improve the Combat against Antisemitism"	Berlin	Round Table
01.-02.10.2007	Meeting with the incoming Chairman-in-Office Round Table with Scandinavian and Baltic NGOs and Jewish Organisations	Helsinki	Meeting Round Table

**3.5. Further planned activities**

29.11.- 30.11.2007	Ministerial Council	Madrid	Ministerial Council
<i>Not scheduled</i>	<i>Country Visit of 3 Pers. Reps.in Russia</i>	<i>Russia</i>	<i>Country Visit</i>
<i>Not scheduled</i>	<i>Transatlantic Institute: NGO Round Table about Academic Antisemitism, Cooperation Magenta Foundation</i>	<i>Brussels</i>	<i>Round Table</i>
<i>Not Scheduled</i>	<i>Situation in South-East-Europe / Follow-up to the OSCE Conference in Bucharest in June</i>	<i>Bucharest</i>	<i>Conference</i>
<i>Not Scheduled</i>	<i>Round table in Vienna with the Representative for the Freedom of the Media</i>	<i>Vienna</i>	<i>Round Table</i>
<i>Not scheduled</i>	<i>Follow-up: "Strategies against Antisemitism" and Conference "The Case of Germany and latest Antisemitism in the Western and Eastern part"</i>	<i>Meißen</i>	<i>Conference/Meetings</i>