

ENGLISH only



***Permanent Mission of Italy  
to the OSCE***

*Waechtergasse 1, 1010 Vienna  
tel. +431 7138920  
fax +431 7182390  
permanentmission@italoscevienna.org  
Euoffice@osce.org*

---

**Italian Presidency of the European Union**

---

OSCE Conference on Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination

EU intervention in session 3: Education

The European Union strongly values the importance of education in the fight against racism, xenophobia and discrimination, and in the promotion of diversity and multiculturalism. The European Union is a multicultural entity. Its citizens are called upon to play an essential role in its evolution in particular by promoting a culture of tolerance and respect for diversity and by participating actively in its further development. Education is therefore a necessary component of such a social cohesion and inclusion of "the other" at the national and local level.

The European Union promotes equal access to education, equal treatment in the educational system, and the use of educational activities to combat racism, xenophobia and discrimination and improve intercultural understanding. To realise those objectives, the EU has developed various concrete programmes in the fields of education, vocational training and youth that place particular emphasis on promoting tolerance and respecting diversity by transmitting democratic principles and respect for others. By funding projects proposed by the participants themselves, these programmes enable universities, teachers, educators and associations to organise trans-European actions against racism and xenophobia.

EU programmes and activities apply equally to the Union itself and in its relations with other states and international actors. Under the Tempus III programme, designed to promote the development of higher education systems by encouraging understanding between and rapprochement of cultures, the European Community co-operates with partners in all EU Member States to promote the development of higher education systems in countries as diverse as the new independent states of the former Soviet Union, of the western Balkans and those involved in the Euro-Mediterranean partnership.

In addition, the European Union, at institutional and State level, has initiated several meetings to encourage interfaith and intercommunity dialogue to promote respect,

counter intolerance and improve the understanding amongst its various religious communities. As an example, the EU's Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, here in Vienna, undertook a study on Islamic communities to identify a practical approach to promoting religious equality and tolerance. Examining the situation in five European cities, the report focused on the three key policy areas of employment, public services and education and outlined good practices and recommendations based on lessons learned.

In the field of the media, and especially with regard to the Internet, the EU strongly recommends the adoption of appropriate training programmes to raise awareness (especially among young people) of the problems of hate speeches advocating racism and xenophobia on the web.

The EU hopes this conference will clearly underline the importance of intercultural understanding, community-based initiatives and a greater emphasis on education as key components of the fight against intolerance and the promotion of respect for diversity, and translate them into concrete recommendations.

The Acceding Countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia and the Associated Countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey align themselves with this contribution.