



United States Mission to the OSCE

Report by the Personal Representatives of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Anti-Semitism; on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims; on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, also Focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 5, 2015

The United States welcomes back to the Permanent Council the Chairmanship's Personal Representatives for Tolerance: Professor Talip Küçükcan, Ambassador Alexey Avtonomov, and Rabbi Andrew Baker. Thank you for your presentations and in particular your concrete recommendations on ways to improve how we can work together to further OSCE commitments to combat intolerance and discrimination. The United States firmly believes that strengthening our joint efforts is a key element of ensuring comprehensive security and respect for all people in the OSCE region. As we approach the final weeks of the Serbian Chairmanship, and look ahead to the German Chairmanship, it is an appropriate time to reflect on our tolerance-related work and look toward next year.

The 2014 Declaration on Enhancing Efforts to Combat Anti-Semitism provides focused, practical commitments and taskings aimed at improving the implementation of the Berlin Declaration and other OSCE commitments. We continue to closely follow the recent upswing in anti-Semitic attacks in our region. In fact, on November 3, the United States Congress unanimously passed a resolution urging the United States and European governments to take steps to help keep Jewish communities safe.

We commend the robust engagement of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office's Personal Representatives following the tragic events in Paris and Copenhagen earlier this year. The visits to Paris in the aftermath of the attacks on Charlie Hebdo and the kosher supermarket, as well as engagement with Jewish, Muslim, and other communities, demonstrated the OSCE's enduring commitment to combating anti-Semitism and, by extension, hate crimes, intolerance, and discrimination.

Rabbi Baker, the United States shares your assessment that government measures, while essential, are only part of the solution. Participating States must engage with civil society, religious, and community leaders and support their efforts to fight hate crimes and to promote tolerance. Importantly, governments must engage with a variety of leaders across religious and civil society groups. We urge participating States to support efforts, including those carried out by the Chair's Personal Representatives and ODIHR, to strengthen civil society coalitions against intolerance. We note, for example, Rabbi Baker's recommendation to the government of Turkey to partner with appropriate international Jewish scholars, similar to its

existing arrangement with the Vatican, as a means to enhance efforts to promote tolerance and understanding.

As an organization, the OSCE must remain committed to addressing the problem of intolerance in all of its forms, which, unaddressed, can lead to violence within communities and to conflict within and among States. We welcome the work of the High Commissioner on National Minorities as a possible tool in helping to prevent conflict and efforts to highlight integration measures which foster social cohesion. We note the work of ODIHR's Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department to address discrimination in the OSCE area and support taskings to ODIHR in draft declarations being negotiated now by the participating States. We need the proven expertise and efficiency of the High Commissioner on National Minorities and ODIHR now more than ever.

The draft declarations on combating intolerance and discrimination against Christians and Muslims demonstrate there is an understanding that we must do more to address these problems. The genesis of these potential declarations was the 2014 Ministerial Declaration on Enhancing Efforts to Combat Anti-Semitism, which included taskings for ODIHR. We should similarly enlist ODIHR to assist participating States in combatting intolerance and discrimination against Christians and Muslims. Failure to do so would send the wrong signal.

The United States is deeply concerned by a disturbing trend of intolerant discourse and a related rise of political parties, movements, and groups advocating violence and hate. Relatedly, we are concerned by hate crimes throughout the OSCE region and believe in the need for cooperation to combat such crimes effectively. All hate crimes, discrimination, and intolerance threaten the security of individuals and societal cohesion and are unacceptable. Noting that the refugee crisis has been accompanied by incidents of racial and ethnic violence and prejudice in the OSCE region, we welcome plans by the upcoming German Chairmanship to address racism, xenophobia, and other concerns impacting refugee and migrant populations. The United States is proud to welcome the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's appointment of U.S. Senator Benjamin Cardin to serve as Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism, and Intolerance. His stated efforts to focus on anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim bias, and discriminatory policing, will further tolerance efforts throughout the OSCE region.

In closing, gentlemen, we look forward to receiving the reports you are working on, including those that were previewed today but have not been released. We thank you for efforts in 2015, and wish you all the best.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.