

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I welcome you to our working group. Today we are going to touch on one of the most contentious issues, an issue that instills nausea in politicians.

Anti-Semitism: the longest hatred; a word that conveys the obsession and fear turned against the Jews for the last 2000 years.

Ignorance, envy, pure human stupidity and political expediency are the traditional elements which, when combined, have generated a blind hatred against people who happen to be born Jews over the last 2 millennia.

Essentially, in primarily European nations, Jews became the scapegoats for all the ills of society and were repeatedly attacked in every way possible, facing constant threats that ranged from harassment and deprivation to expulsion or annihilation. This process of exterminatory anti-Semitism, implemented over history by everyone from pagans to particular elements within the established Church to many secular domains, included hostile attitudes and sentiments, defamation, withdrawal and avoidance, denunciation, primary social exclusion, legislative and statutory exclusion, anti-Jewish political and/or religious ideology, economic sanctions and boycott, deprivation of primary health care, medical facilities and welfare, removal of legal protection and human rights, extermination, and ethnocide.⁶ Plainly, the majority of anti-Jewish measures employed by the Nazis in the 1930s and 1940s were similar to threats of annihilation the Jews had experienced for centuries. (Source: <http://www.newantisemitism.org>)

Today I have no more than 15 minutes to speak about it:

Not one hour, not one week, not one month is enough to discuss, to debate and to comprehend the dimensions occupied by the anti-Semitism in the history of the humanity.

Not even a life time is enough to explain and justify the crimes committed against the Jews. Nevertheless there are many people who are trying to do just that and even more that are listening to them.

When in 1948 the State of Israel was created, with the blessing of nations guilty for doing absolutely nothing or very little to save Jews from the Nazi extermination, there was hope that Europe would not allow anti-Semitism to emerge ever again.

Unfortunately we have lived to see and to experience a resurgence of anti-Semitism in new dimensions and forms, as though the Holocaust never happened.

But the Holocaust did happen. In spite of the voices that are trying to reduce it to a simple historical event, the Holocaust changed the world and can not be neither forgotten nor denied or treated as just another chapter in history.

We know it, the anti-Semites and the Holocaust deniers know it.

Globalization and open borders are increasing the interaction between people and reduce the world to a society in which ethnicity, religions and mentalities are meeting in ways never considered possible.

In such a society the need to cooperate and to work together for accomplishing the tasks we are confronted with, regardless religion and mentalities differences, is more real than ever.

Unfortunately at this time when more tolerance and mutual assistance is needed, we see more discrimination, more lack of respect, more racism affecting our way of life.

The world is concerned. Europe is concerned: and this is a good start but it is only a start.

While we are meeting, debating, talking, expressing concerns and making recommendations regarding the anti-Semitic and racist activity we see, more and more of such activities are taking place in our communities.

In Romania, for example anti-Semites and Holocaust deniers are honored members of the community, professors and political leaders.

In Romania, the highly controversial system of justice is rehabilitating war criminal responsible for the extermination of the Romanian Jews.

In Romania, within the Courts of Justice, witnesses dressed in fascist uniforms are presenting their testimonies in front of judges that look upon them with sympathy.

In Romania, Holocaust deniers are justifying the killings of the Romanian Jews in 1940-1942 by saying that the killed Jews were victims not of a systematic extermination policy but of the war conducted by the Romanian army against the Russian army.

Opinion makers and people with great influence on the systems that should monitor and combat anti-Semitism and racism in Romania are doing nothing to change this sad reality.

Cynical anti-Semites are seating in Parliamentary Commissions using, with no shame, their public functions to express their distorted, racist beliefs.

As recently as last month, the newly appointed Ambassador of Romania to Israel was interrogated by the Parliamentary Commission for Foreign Affairs, not on his professional preparation and skills but questioned about his loyalty to Romania and his ethnic background. Would he be interrogated so if he were not Jewish?

As recently as last month, the President of the same Parliamentary Commission, the former Ambassador of

Romania to the US and a moderate political leader, said that the “Jewish problem” is “controversial”.

The good part in all this negativity, if we can say such a thing, is that we know their faces, we know their names, we know their opinions against which we can take a stand and defend ourselves.

But there is a new hidden face of anti-Semitism. It is destructive and far more alarming than anything else we have known since the Holocaust. It expresses not only the traditional blind hatred against the Jews but in many cases hides itself behind anti-Zionism and a criticism of the policies implemented by the State of Israel for defending its very existence.

In order to avoid any misunderstandings that the previous statement might create I need to say the following: To criticize the State of Israel for its policies is not to be considered anti-Semitism.

However, as Israel is a country built by Jews for the Jews, it is only logical to say that the anti-Semites are hiding among those criticizing Israel.

They know that openly expressing anti-Semitism is politically incorrect as they know that to criticize Israel is now an acceptable international trend.

Israel is held to a higher standard than all other nations and expected to act as no other nation would when facing the same threats to its existence.

Is Israel expected to meet such unacceptable expectations because it is Jewish? I believe that it is. And that is anti-Semitism.

In a world in which so called respected NGOs, such as Amnesty International, blame Israel for defending its citizens, more than it blames Sudan for the atrocities

committed against its own citizens, a new chronic disease spreads among us:

The name of this disease is "The New Anti-Semitism". This third level of anti-Semitism is a combination in which the usual extreme elements of the right mix with left wing ideology and Islamic extremism to promote hatred and deadly violence against the Jews, Israel and anything or anyone related to them.

In this strange mixture of ideologies and sentiments, intellectuals, academics, progressives, elites, journalists, politicians and scientists mix with neo-Nazis, Holocaust-deniers, white supremacists, self-hating Jews and various extremist Islamist groups and Islamic terrorists, driven together by their obsession with the Jews and with the state of Israel.

Among them are those who, invoking God, call Jews "sons of pigs" and "infidels" whilst blowing up innocent people in the United States, in Europe, in the Middle East and Far East.

Jews living out of Israel are increasingly confronted not only with the traditional type of Anti-Semitism but also with this New Anti-Semitism.

Jews who are not citizens of Israel are automatically suspected to be loyal to Israel and not to the countries they are citizens of.

This is why the anti-Semitism can not be discussed without talking about the manner in which nations are relating to dangers that are threatening Israel.

Who ever tries to discuss international anti-Semitism without referring to the anti-Israeli trend is manipulating the issue for political purposes.

Stop portraying Israel as an evil state, start understanding the complex situations Israeli is put in by international politics and 50% of the anti-Semitic incidents will not happen

again. Responsibility here lies with academics, the media, and politicians.

In this context we meet here. We meet to discuss issues that have been discussed in the past many times, over and over again.

We meet here to ask OSCE and the Governments what has been done in order to implement the recommendations adopted in past meetings.

In Romania there is no enforcement of the legislation adopted for combating racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia.

We believe that Romania is not exceptional otherwise Europe would not be swept by racism and anti-Semitism in the way that it is.

At this point I want to express disagreement and disappointment caused by the decision to include Islamophobia on the agenda.

You should know that while MCA does not support the OSCE's decision to include Islamophobia with the discussion of anti-Semitism, we do not dispute that there are anti-Muslim prejudices and violent acts against Muslims in today's world.

However Islamophobia, or "fear of Islam" is directly related to the terror that Islamic extremist groups are spreading all over the world.

Islamophobia is amplified by the silence of the Islamic world when "infidels" are attacked and killed by other Muslims, all in the name of Allah.

Be sure that no one wants to see the innocent Muslim population suffering any kind of discrimination.

But for this not to occur the Muslim world has to distance itself from any kind of extremism, it has to condemn and to act against the Islamic terrorist groups that are destroying anything and everything that is not structured according to their distorted understanding of Islam.

It is up to the Muslim world to take attitude against those who are preaching the hatred against the Jew, against Israel, against US, against Europe, against the “infidels”.

It is up to the Muslims to create the organizations and structures and appropriate attitudes to act against those elements among them that are generating this “fear of Islam”, or Islamophobia. We will join them and we will sustain their efforts.

Until then we call on the OSCE and Governments to focus on how to address anti-Semitism and racism that victimize peaceful people:

This is a one of a kind opportunity to call on the Romanian Government, and other Governments, not only to make political declarations but to put together a long term plan for combating and reducing the levels of anti-Semitism and racism.

We want to see the Romanian Government actively and permanently acting to combat the ignorance saturating the state institutions, particularly when speaking about the New Anti-Semitism and racism.

We want to see the proper enforcement of legislation adopted for combating anti-Semitism and racism.

We want to see relevant educational programs to combat anti-Semitism and racism, implemented and enforced in schools, in the military and police academies, and other State institutions.

We want to see, in the Courts of Justice, Judges that understand the meaning of the expressions “human rights”, “discrimination”, “racism” and anti-Semitism.

We want to see in the Romanian Courts of Justice, Judges who are educated and knowledgeable about the 1940’s “Romanization” of the Jewish properties which now, in several cases, are returned not to their Jewish owners but to those who took it from the Jews and lost it to the communists.

We also want to see the OSCE move beyond an organization that merely issues and repeats recommendations to become an organization that has the power to force Governments to combat the anti-Semitism and the racism.

In conclusion, we are looking for a final declaration that will clearly warn of the dangers of the increasing and changing face of anti-Semitism and racism, and which will contain not general recommendations but concrete proposals for measures to be implemented, without delay, to combat the New Anti-Semitism and racism in Europe.

Thank you