

**Address by  
H.E. Mr. Antanas Valionis,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania**

**at the OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism and on Other Forms of Intolerance  
Cordoba, 8 June 2005**

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allying with the EU statement I would like to present a few comments. Also, I would like to express many thanks to the Government of Spain for the excellent organization of this Conference.

Beyond any doubt, the subject of this conference is very timely and important. Tolerance is harmony in diversity and a basis for our modern societies. In our age marked by the globalization of economy and by rapidly increasing mobility, communication, integration and interdependence and changing social patterns, tolerance promotion and shaping of attitudes of openness, mutual listening and solidarity is essential. We have to take all positive measures to promote tolerance. It is not only our moral duty; it is also a political and legal requirement.

Acts of intolerance and discrimination often have their roots in ignorance, prejudice and neglect to history. This year we mark the 60th anniversary of the end of the WWII. We remember with deep respect all the victims of the WWII. We should never forget or neglect the atrocity, suffering or lessons of the Holocaust.

The states are under moral obligation both for the people that perished and for the future generations to preserve the remembrance and monuments to the victims of the Holocaust. The tragedy of the Lithuanian Jewish Community is also the tragedy of the whole Lithuanian people and now our objective is to remember and preserve the historic truth. Thus we are taking care of the sites of mass murder and old Jewish cemeteries as well as marking the historical places of Jewish heritage. This work has significantly advanced due to cooperation with Jewish international organizations and other countries.

I would like to emphasize that acknowledging and remembering history must lead us into further actions of encouraging tolerance and mutual understanding. We can build monuments, but if the spirit of remembrance is not transformed into real action of spreading tolerance, our aims have not been achieved.

Mr. Chairman,

Different prejudices and ignorance are the issues often at the basis of intolerance. Education is the most effective means of addressing them. This means devoting special attention to improving teacher training, curricula, the content of textbooks and lessons. Hopefully, by educating children we can make influence on their parents as well.

In Lithuania, a variety of state and non-governmental actors are implementing the programme of the Ministry of Education and Science on the Holocaust education activities. The International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania has established a network of Tolerance Education Centres in the secondary schools of Lithuania. This network at present consists of 36 centres and their number is constantly growing. A differentiated training programme has been created for teachers who direct these centres and who become engaged in their work. In organising the education of teachers, the International Commission takes into account the needs of local communities, as well as changes in the society in Lithuania. The House of Memory, the Centre for Tolerance, the Vilnius Gaon Jewish State Museum and other NGOs also contributed in achieving the goals of the programme. Their activities include preparing of methodological material for teaching about the Holocaust in Lithuania, book publishing, museum projects and organizing related events.

Tolerance is exercised by individuals, groups and states. Our duty is to ensure that all forms of intolerance be combated with equal determination through just and impartial legislation and creation of economic and social opportunities.

Mr. Chairman,

The discussions that we hold must be transformed into real action. In this regard, Lithuania is planning to hold a conference for national experts and local audience in order to address the issue of implementation of the decisions and declarations on tolerance, first of all adopted by OSCE, and by this to publicize them more as well as to evaluate the situation regarding the occurrences of discrimination.

In conclusion I would like to emphasise that combating stereotypes and bias is a long-term process. Education and policy instruments should help us to efficiently dispose of the ballast of intolerance. This purpose can be achieved only by joint actions of State leaders, international organizations as well as local, non-governmental organisations and civic society.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.