



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Report by the Three Personal Representatives of the CiO on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination

As delivered by Political Counselor, Samuel C. Laeuchli
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 1, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States joins other delegations in welcoming two of the three Personal Representatives of the Chairman in Office to the Permanent Council today and in thanking them for their reports. The recently concluded CiO Cordoba conference on tolerance and non-discrimination, in which you played instrumental roles, highlighted the importance of your work. The fact remains that we have a long way to go towards ending anti-Semitism and discrimination against Muslims, Christians and members of other religions. The Bucharest and Cordoba conferences provided useful opportunities to raise awareness of this important issue.

We thank Ambassador Orhun, Professor Weisskirchen and Ms. Crickley for their work to promote tolerance and for the comprehensive reports of their activities over the last four months. We urge the Personal Representatives to continue to use their political influence to respond to hate incidents and to encourage States to enact hate-crime legislation and to prosecute offenders. We encourage you to continue speaking out, and to encourage others also to speak out, when faced with intolerant and hate-filled public discourse. We strongly support the efforts of the Personal Representatives to raise awareness of tolerance-related issues at the political level. It is the responsibility of the Personal Representatives to promote the implementation of OSCE commitments in four priority areas where we have reached consensus: combating anti-Semitism, intolerance and discrimination against Muslims, discrimination against Christians and members of other religions and racism and xenophobia.

Ambassador Orhun, Professor Weisskirchen, the United States places great importance on combating intolerance. We appreciate your efforts in this regard and wish you success in the continuation of your activities.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.