

**STATEMENT BY MR. HENDRIK VAN DE VELDE,
FIRST COUNSELLOR, HUMAN RIGHTS FOCAL POINT, EUROPEAN
UNION DELEGATION TO THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
IN VIENNA, AT THE OSCE HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON
TOLERANCE AND NON-DISCRIMINATION (INCLUDING HUMAN
RIGHTS YOUTH EDUCATION ON TOLERANCE AND
NON-DISCRIMINATION)**

Tirana, 22 May 2013

**Part 2. The way forward: Preventing and responding to intolerance and
discrimination, including hate crimes. Promoting mutual
respect and understanding**

**Plenary session 5: The role of human rights youth education in promoting mutual
understanding and respect for diversity in accordance with the
existing OSCE commitments**

Schools must teach every pupil to become a citizen. Education on human rights and tolerance is part of this learning process. It must underpin all teaching and learning principles. As a melting pot in terms of living together and community life, schools in fact provide the ideal framework for awareness-raising on the basis of tolerance and respect for diversity.

In addition to moulding each citizen, an awareness of the rights and freedoms to be enjoyed by every human being is a fundamental tool to ensure the rights of all and to advance tolerance worldwide. The World Programme for Human Rights Education adopted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in 2010, in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 12/4, and the work of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization constitute valuable tools when it comes to how best to disseminate this body of knowledge on human rights at all stages of education with the support of the educational community.

The work of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights on combating stereotypes within the educational system, particularly against Jews or Muslims, is also interesting in that it highlights the best way for teachers to fight against the formation of prejudices in all age groups.

Education, through specific programmes or curriculum wide, must include values such as peace, non-discrimination, equality, justice, non-violence, tolerance and respect for human dignity. The curriculum must take into account major issues for society such as

racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, the contribution of different forms of immigration, relations with “the other” and an understanding for the diversity of the world. Teaching students about the dramatic consequences of intolerance in our collective history, such as the Holocaust, should also be part of the curriculum.

The participation of civil society can also be an effective and lively way of transmitting key messages regarding the importance of tolerance and non-discrimination. This is frequently illustrated by the testimonies of victims or non-governmental organizations involved in combating discrimination, regardless of whether it is motivated by race, language, gender, disability or sexual orientation and gender identity.

The European Commission has completely integrated these dimensions into the youth partnership it established with the Council of Europe in 1998.

Beyond the educational sphere, and given the ease with which intolerance can take root in our societies, it is essential that public campaigns against discrimination address all citizens, regardless of their age.