

Delegation of France

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR MAXIME LEFEBVRE,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE TO THE OSCE,
AT THE 1048th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

23 April 2015

Mr. Chairperson,

I should like to draw the Permanent Council's attention to my Government's new action plan on combating racism and anti-Semitism, presented by the Prime Minister, Manuel Valls, on 17 April 2015.

The action plan on combating racism and anti-Semitism will be implemented over three years, from 2015 to 2017. One hundred million euros will be earmarked for this policy, both for running activities at the national level and for contributing at the local level to stimulating policies to promote good citizenship.

This action plan is based on four complementary approaches:

1. **Publicity.** A publicity offensive will be launched to raise awareness and to encourage a commitment in all occupational settings, all social groups, all areas and all generations to reducing prejudice;
2. **Penalties.** Criminal policies will be revised to punish the perpetrators of racist and anti-Semitic acts and sentiments more effectively and quickly;
3. **Combating the spread of hatred on the Internet.** Racist and anti-Semitic content can be combated by deleting messages of hatred, but also through legal proceedings against the originators of the actual messages. There is therefore a need to strengthen liability for digital platforms while at the same time making penalties more effective and promoting effective counter-speech;
4. **Training/education.** Prejudice is rooted in ignorance. Knowledge, culture and education in the broad sense remain the best defences against hate speech. The school system – the centre of passing on knowledge and learning how to live together – is at the heart of this struggle. However, education extends far beyond school walls: it comes about through culture, visiting memorial sites and training for civic life, as well as through sport. Consequently a series of activities will be set up to equip the school system to pass on and foster the values of the Republic, to leave no incident without repercussions, to strengthen memory work and to provide training for citizenship beyond schools.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.