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DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

Statement of the Delegation of Armenia
At the High level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination
Sixth Session: The role of political leadership, legislation, law enforcement, data
collection, and civil society in combating and preventing intolerance and
discrimination, including hate crimes
Tirana, May 22, 2013

Mr. Moderator,

Addressing hate crimes is the most practical outcome of our joint efforts towards promoting tolerance and non discrimination.

As it has been already asserted by a number of speakers the OSCE is in the forefront of combating hate crime: the Athens MC decision 9/09 perhaps is the most comprehensive and consistent document produced by the international community to tackle this issue. The ODHIR work is also highly valued in this realm.

However, there are still gaps in addressing this issue such as already mentioned the issue of underreporting. We always advocated more proactive stance of the ODHIR in collecting data by expanding its sources of information. We understand that this will require consent of other participating states. At this juncture, we will recommend ODHIR to continue its cooperation with the Council of Europe namely ECRI which in our opinion will help to access to more relevant information on the ground.

In our view the link between hate speech and hate crimes are not adequately addressed. The rise of ideologies justifying hatred towards certain group of people is a source for hate crimes. Words tend to act particularly those voiced out by political leadership in countries with overall poor human rights record.

Unfortunately we have encountered new phenomenon of glorifying hate crime and hate crime perpetrator in the OSCE area. The pardon and glorification of Ramil Safarov, an Azeri officer, convicted to life sentence for perpetuating dreadful hate crime have been done in clear contempt of the OSCE commitments particularly of the article 6 of MC decision 9/09 which defines the role of political leadership in condemning hate crimes.

Here it should be mentioned that career promotion and glorification of hate crime perpetrator had not been done at societal level but by the President and Minister of Defense of Azerbaijan.

These instances of clear violation of the OSCE commitments need to be widely condemned since they severely undermine our common efforts.

In conclusion, we would recommend paying a special attention to the issue of glorification of hate crimes in possible draft decision on tolerance and non-discrimination.

Thank you