

Original: ENGLISH



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Chairmanship's Three Personal Representatives for Tolerance

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 4, 2010

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States joins other delegations in warmly welcoming the Chairmanship's Personal Representatives for Tolerance, Rabbi Baker and Ambassador Akhmetov. We wish to thank you for the thorough reports on your important work toward ending intolerance and discrimination, and, of course, we look forward to welcoming Mr. Mauro here soon.

The United States strongly believes that the OSCE's efforts to address all types of discrimination and intolerance must be grounded in robust and effective legislation to protect individual human rights. Only then can we promote tolerance and non-discrimination and build healthy and stable societies, in turn creating and assuring conditions for peace and security within the OSCE area. Thus, we wholeheartedly support the efforts of the three Personal Representatives in advancing tolerance and non-discrimination.

We commend your active participation at recent OSCE events dedicated to tolerance. At the High-Level Conference in Astana, the OSCE community reiterated its commitment to effectively combat all types of intolerance and discrimination based on religion, race, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability and other biases. As both our Special Representative for Muslim Communities, Farah Pandith, and our Special Envoy to Combat and Monitor Anti-Semitism, Hannah Rosenthal, stated at the Astana Tolerance conference: "Jews cannot fight anti-Semitism alone. Muslims cannot fight Islamophobia alone. Roma cannot fight – alone. The LGBT community cannot fight – alone." We must stand together in this campaign to end intolerance and discrimination.

We continue to condemn the occurrence of hate crimes throughout the OSCE area. The effectiveness of our efforts to combat these crimes would be greatly assisted by an accurate definition that includes all possible factors. Participating States have undertaken many commitments to combat violent manifestations of intolerance and discrimination including through the provision of disaggregated data on hate crimes, the training of law enforcement to better investigate and prosecute hate crimes and to engage with civil society in monitoring hate groups and assisting victim communities. Regrettably, ODIHR's report is testimony to the lack of data on these heinous crimes which, of course, impedes analysis and the formulation of appropriate responses.

We encourage the Personal Representatives to exert their influence in calling for greater political will to address lagging implementation of tolerance commitments and the need to make steady progress in the key areas of systematic data collection, education and heightening public awareness and law enforcement. In that regard, we commend your recent country visits, including to Brussels for meetings with EU officials, and to Germany, the UK and Sweden. Enhanced coordination will allow for more visits to countries challenged by persistent intolerance and discrimination.

We support your cooperation with ODIHR. The work to promote and encourage tolerance and non-discrimination—and to build mutual respect—through education around the OSCE area deserves our highest attention. We fully support ODIHR's increased efforts to draft education guides on discrimination against Muslims based on existing educational material on anti-Semitism. Human rights education is an effective tool to promote appreciation for diversity. We also applaud the continuation of the law enforcement program with a new curriculum. We would welcome an expansion of this program to more participating States, including to Moldova and Bulgaria.

In this regard I'm pleased to announce that we recently made a significant financial contribution to support these ODIHR programs.

Looking ahead, we urge Lithuania to hold a Supplemental Human Dimension Meeting on Racism and Xenophobia within a balanced human dimension program in 2011.

Finally, we wish to underscore the importance of unfettered access for civil society reps to OSCE events and the importance of their contributions to inform our work in confronting intolerance and discrimination. As we mark the thirty-fifth year anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, we urge fellow participating States to use this occasion and make significant attempts towards full implementation of commitments in this area.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.