

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION AT THE OSCE HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE
ON TOLERANCE AND NON-DISCRIMINATION (INCLUDING
HUMAN RIGHTS YOUTH EDUCATION ON TOLERANCE
AND NON-DISCRIMINATION)**

Tirana, 21 and 22 May 2013

**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**

Mr. Chairperson,
Colleagues,

Rising numbers of ethnically motivated crimes and those based on religious intolerance, manifestations of xenophobia, racism, aggressive nationalism and neo-Nazism make it necessary to create a system of preventative measures. Key amongst these is the education of young people. The security and prosperity of the participating States and of the OSCE region as a whole tomorrow will depend on today's children.

An analysis of the situation regarding manifestations of intolerance and hate crime in OSCE countries shows that young people are the most influenced by radical, extremist and nationalist movements and ideologies. Evidence of this can be seen in ongoing nationalist and neo-Nazi marches by young people in many OSCE States and the participation of young people in extremist behaviour.

Educating young people is a complex task that involves the family, civil society, religious organizations and educational institutions.

Educational institutions have a great deal of potential in moulding the guiding values of the public, developing well-rounded personalities and preventing negative phenomena in society. An effective strategy here is the moral and ethical development of young people, interaction between different cultures and ethnic groups, and fostering a tolerant attitude towards people of other faiths and ethnicities.

Fostering tolerance requires that a series of conditions be met, including respect for the dignity of each person and the right to preserve one's individuality; an understanding of the cultural and religious identities of others; and an emphasis on that which brings people together rather than that which pushes them apart.

Experts observe that the group that is most vulnerable to extremist ideas is school pupils, whose minds are not yet fully formed and who are easily influenced.

The tasks of educational bodies in fostering tolerance and preventing extremism in inter-ethnic relations are as follows:

- Fostering national and ethnic tolerance as a tool in the fight against extremism;
- Improving inter-ethnic and ethnocultural relations;
- Creating a societal climate of respect for the cultural and moral values of each people;
- Fostering children's interest in the culture, rituals and traditions of their people, as well as those of other ethnic groups;
- Creating the conditions for inter-ethnic dialogue in educational establishments, helping to strengthen inter-ethnic cultural ties.

The main areas that educational establishments should focus on in fostering tolerance and preventing extremism among young people are the following:

- Educating young people about human rights;
- Studying the historical and cultural heritage of different peoples;
- Organizing inter-ethnic cultural communication and interfaith dialogue;
- Helping children and young people to assert their identities as bearers and heirs to the traditions and culture of their country.

An important role in young people's education and the development of their moral compass is played by history lessons with a focus on memory, including teaching on the Holocaust.

It is extremely important that both formal and informal teaching and consolidation methods are used in work with young people. Some methods of teaching young people which allow them to learn the basic principles of respect for cultural, ethnic and religious diversity in an accessible way are: film libraries or talk shows about human rights, the activities of social clubs, festivals and holidays of national cultures, exhibitions on the history of different faiths, and educational games.

The role of media publications in young people's development is not insignificant. At the same time, special attention should be paid to protecting children from harmful content and ensuring that minors cannot have non-traditional values or lifestyles forced upon them.

Migrant children and teenagers who arrive with their own sets of values and basic culture are also a relevant target group for efforts aimed at preventing intolerance and extremism.

We believe that good practice of implementing projects to foster tolerance among young people must be disseminated under the auspices of the OSCE. Summarizing and analysing such programs and projects should remain the focus of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.