

# **High-Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination**

## **Session 2 Combating anti-Semitism**

### **Statement of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)**



**Astana, 29 – 30 June 2010**

*Check against delivery!*

Twenty year ago in the 1990 Copenhagen Document anti-Semitism was for the first time mentioned in a document of the process that became the OSCE. At that time the participating States clearly and unequivocally condemned – amongst other forms of intolerance - anti-Semitism, and declared their firm intention to take effective measures to provide protection against any acts that constitute incitement to violence against persons or groups based on anti-Semitism.

During the last six years huge steps forward were made regarding the participating States's commitments to combat anti-Semitism. In 2004, in the aftermath of two OSCE conferences on anti-Semitism in Vienna (2003) and Berlin (2004) and in light of the Berlin Declaration 2004, the participating States agreed consensually on a series of relevant commitments, including:

- striving to ensure that their legal systems foster a safe environment free from anti-Semitism,
- collecting data and statistics on anti-Semitic hate crimes and reporting them to ODIHR,
- promoting education to combat anti-Semitism,
- promoting Holocaust remembrance and education,
- encouraging and supporting NGOs and international organizations and
- encouraging the exchange of best practices in the field of combating anti-Semitism.

In 2009, the participating States strongly condemned Holocaust denial.

In addition to these commitments ODIHR received relevant tasks including reporting on anti-Semitic hate crimes and assisting the participating States in their efforts to combat anti-Semitism.

However, the implementation of these commitments is far from being fully completed. As ODIHR reported, in 2008 only 8 participating States submitted data and statistics on anti-Semitic hate crimes. Currently ODIHR is drafting the report on 2009 - so far only 4 States have contributed relevant information. In line with its mandate, ODIHR reaches out to NGOs and other relevant international institutions in order to receive a representative picture of the situation regarding anti-Semitism in the OSCE region. According to NGO newsletters (which are in some cases based on media sources), anti-Semitic crimes and incidents occurred in 29 countries in 2009. It must be mentioned that monitoring institutions exist only in a handful of the 56 states. Consequently, the data that ODIHR receives is not sufficient to provide a full picture of the phenomenon of anti-Semitism in the OSCE region, but we do see that it continues to exist and manifest itself through hate crimes, hate incidents and in public discourse, the latter of which is not limited to extremist circles.

Participating States should take necessary steps to collect and maintain comprehensive data and to make them public. This data should be broken down into relevant categories in order to report anti-Semitic hate crimes and incidents.

Participating States should also encourage and support nongovernmental monitoring institutions and to enable them to collect reliable data on anti-Semitic hate crimes.

Legislation that fosters a safe environment free from anti-Semitic harassment, violence or discrimination in all fields of life exists in many OSCE participating States. However, effective implementation can only be realized, when responsible officials have the required awareness of the phenomenon and the capacity and the resources to recognize anti-Semitism and to respond to it. Law enforcement and the judicial system should increasingly make use of their hate crime legislation. ODIHR is, if requested, ready to help build the capacity of responsible officials.

Training of law enforcement officials needs to be intensified so as to increase their ability in responding to and preventing anti-Semitic hate crimes and incidents. Since in many countries a definition of the term anti-Semitism does not exist, it lies in the competence of a first line police officer to decide whether the motivation of a crime is anti-Semitic or not. In order to have full awareness of the sensitivity of this important judgment, extensive training is required.

Acknowledging the importance of freedom of speech and expression, the participating States have repeatedly called for Governmental officials and political, community and religious leaders to condemn manifestations of anti-Semitism and to refrain from creating or reinforcing anti-Semitic stereotypes and prejudices. Participating States should acknowledge that international developments or political issues, including those in Israel or elsewhere in the Middle East, never justify anti-Semitism.

Finally, policies of combating anti-Semitism can only be sustainable, if prejudices and stereotypes are addressed in classrooms. ODIHR is happy to report that it co-operates with 14 countries<sup>1</sup> on a project to combat anti-Semitism. Customized country versions of teaching materials to combat anti-Semitism are being developed and seminars for multipliers and educators are carried out. However, also in some of these 14 countries support from governmental institutions, especially Ministries of Education, is limited to good will. The dissemination of the materials and the training of teachers is in some of these countries left to ODIHR and its project partners.

ODIHR is ready to provide support regarding data collection, legislation, law enforcement, training of officials and education. ODIHR is ready to support relevant institutions with its expertise. We hope that this high level review conference will reinforce the commitments of participating States to take serious and effective steps to combat anti-Semitism.

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<sup>1</sup> Austria, Croatia, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine;