

**STATEMENT BY MR. VALERY ENGEL,
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RIGHTS MOVEMENT WORLD WITHOUT NAZISM, AT THE
OSCE HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON TOLERANCE AND
NON-DISCRIMINATION (INCLUDING HUMAN RIGHTS
YOUTH EDUCATION ON TOLERANCE AND
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**Plenary session 6: The role of political leadership, legislation, law
enforcement, data collection, and civil society in combating and preventing
intolerance and discrimination, including hate crimes**

The most effective policy for overcoming nationalist prejudices in society is to combine State and civil society initiatives. Furthermore, as strange as it may seem, nowadays, it is the State that sets societal attitudes to the issue of aggressive nationalism. It is clear that such an approach requires three dimensions: firstly, actions on the part of State legislative bodies that are clear and comprehensible to society; secondly, the effective implementation of existing legislation; and thirdly, vigorous public-awareness campaigning by the State, with active support from civil society.

Currently, the majority of countries have laws to counter Nazism, racism and aggressive nationalism in their legislative arsenal. However, these laws are applied far from universally. Unambiguous application of these laws unfailingly leads to increased detection of hate crimes and ultimately to a decrease in such crimes.

For example, the adoption of counter-extremism legislation in Russia after 2000 and the start of its strict application in 2005 and 2006 led to the almost full eradication of anti-Semitic crime in Russia – something recognized by experts. The level of anti-Semitism in society today is the lowest for the past 90 years.

This is, however, not enough. The State must give a clear signal to society about what is permitted in national politics and what is not. If the State gives a signal about ethnic inequality by passing legislation that equates titular nationality with State nationality (as, for example, in the case of the last version of the Latvian Citizenship Law), or by forbidding preschool or school education in minority languages, then this can only give one signal to society.

If a State draws up a State Nationalities Policy Strategy, as happened in Russia recently, clearly stating that in a multi-ethnic society, the nation is a community of citizens of different ethnic origins, then that sends a different signal.

I should like to recall that a draft law forbidding Holocaust denial or the glorification of Nazism, presented by World without Nazism president Boris Spiegel, has been submitted to the State Duma. This is a further signal to Russian society. Civil society, for its part, should assess this initiative and either support it or do everything possible within the strict confines of the law to prevent its adoption. I believe it is precisely this approach that will help us to effectively combat racism and aggressive nationalism.