

**STATEMENT BY THE
DELEGATION OF ALGERIA AT THE MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

Vienna, 10 April 2008

Mr. Chairman,

In connection with the statement delivered this morning by the Ambassador of Algeria on behalf of the Arab Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation under the agenda item the Alliance of Civilizations, I should like to reiterate our appreciation for the work carried out by the three Personal Representatives of the OSCE Chairman-in Office for combating intolerance and discrimination.

As was affirmed in the statement this morning, the film “Fitna”, which was produced by Mr. Geert Wilders and continues to be circulated on the Internet, is detrimental to freedom of opinion and expression, which, do we need reminding, includes a duty to respect the freedoms of others. Moreover, this film, which is in very bad taste, equates Islam with terrorism, encourages extremists of all types and pours oil on to the fire of hatred towards Islam and Muslims, which is taking on alarming proportions.

The Algerian delegation would like to take this opportunity to express its appreciation for the mechanisms and framework put into place by the OSCE to combat the evils of intolerance, discrimination and hatred and to promote the tolerance, respect and mutual understanding indispensable for the peaceful coexistence of the cultural and religious diversity that characterizes our pluralist world.

For this reason, we encourage the OSCE to continue the nascent activities that have been undertaken with respect to these incivilities through its various mechanisms, notably high-level international conferences and the Personal Representatives. In this regard, we should like to pay tribute to the progress made, at least with regard to awareness of the potential risks and dangers to peace and international security that intolerance and discrimination represent. Much remains to be done to overcome the prejudices and stereotypes that feed this hatred of all that is different.

In this regard, I should like to recall the proposals made by the Arab Mediterranean partners at today’s meeting of the Permanent Council.

- It would be particularly useful if the OSCE, which plays an important role in promoting tolerance and combating all forms of discrimination, were to condemn the heinous initiative by this Member of Parliament from the Netherlands, as numerous other international bodies have done.

- It would also be useful if the OSCE were to intensify its work on legislation, education, media, data collection, migration, integration and dialogue among cultures and civilizations in order to curb these manifestations of hatred and foster respect and mutual understanding.
- It would be especially useful if the OSCE were to instruct the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims to produce a report, with the support of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, on Islamophobic incidents, discourse and trends so that we are better able to identify the causes and target the efforts of the participating States and their partners on this problem.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.