

**Statement by Mr Alimirzamin ASKEROV, Head of Delegation,
Chief of the Department for Human Rights,
Democratization and Humanitarian Problems
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

**OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism and on Other Forms of Intolerance
(Cordoba, 8-9 June 2005)**

Thank you, Madame Moderator.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we discuss an extremely topical issue, nobody in this hall doubts that racism can lead people to commit unspeakable crimes as the horrors of the Second World War and the more recent wars in the Balkans and the South Caucasus showed to the whole world. No secret that racism and intolerance in all forms strike at the heart of the idea of a democratic society based on respect for the equal dignity of all human beings.

Let's not forget that the motto born out of the ashes of the Second World War encapsulated in two words: "Never again" keeps its urgency due to the continued at present negative developments in the OSCE area *inter alia* ethnically cleansed territories and forcefully displaced persons. Indeed, today, the principles on which the OSCE was founded are still far from being permanently entrenched. We must continually defend them – and to do so, we must have a sound understanding of what threatens them.

The relevant expert studies refer to some striking examples of the use of racist rhetoric during national and European elections. For example, there were worrying signs in 2003 in Armenia before elections when declarations had been made on "genetic incompatibility between Armenians and Azerbaijanis". Reaction from the Council of Europe was immediate condemning this hatred speech.

In this connection we believe that it should be a shared vision that recalling dark pages of European history will never be a good electoral strategy. It is our hope that the sense of responsibility of nationalist leaders and politicians in certain OSCE countries will lead them to resist the temptation to play with fire.

It is crucial to realise that as the OSCE mobilises to meet these challenges, our work in the field of rethinking stereotypes and targeting nationalist ideologies remains fundamental. Building inclusive, stable, and peaceful societies based on shared values means that these values need to be reborn in the minds and hearts of every generation. The role of education and media in this process is indispensable as these factors have profound impact on minds of ordinary people, especially young generations.

That is why we believe that the participating states of the OSCE, especially in the Balkans and the Caucasus regions should create new ways of passing on to the young generations the value of good neighborhood free of prejudices and territorial claims and motivating them to struggle against discrimination, intolerance, aggressive nationalism and separatism, thus embedding in the minds of all Europeans the "Never Again" philosophy.

Thank you.