

EUROPEAN UNION OFFICE
Avenue des Arts 19
1210 Brussels, Belgium
Tel.: +32 (0)2 21420 90
Fax: +32 (0)2 21420 99
EUOffice@ldschurch.org
Facebook/Twitter: @MormonsEU

22-23 June 2017

**OSCE Human Dimension Meeting – Austria, Vienna
Working Session 3: Challenges of combating anti-Semitism and intolerance and
discrimination against Christians, Muslims and members of other religions.**

**Statement of Francesco Di Lillo, Head of the European Union Office of
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints**

Madam/Mr. Chair, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Participants,

We find ourselves at a crucial time in human history. We see in the world today a rising tide of intolerance and religiously motivated violence that knows no borders and has transcended all political and social boundaries. Religion can be both victim and perpetrator in this tragedy. According to the Pew Research Centre, we find Europe, once a bastion of free-flowing ideas and religious sentiment descending down a path toward religious intolerance and persecution. The picture does not look better in its surrounding neighbourhood.

The ability of individuals to freely express their religious values without fear of persecution or marginalisation is slowly becoming an ode to the past. The world has experienced this kind of intolerance before with disastrous consequences. That is why it is up to all of us to address this hostility and lack of understanding in a spirit of love, with an upbeat and positive message, in an effort to stop the world from making a grave mistake once again. Our societies, our future generations, deserve better. If the world ever needed the values

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

practiced by religious groups of love, respect, and tolerance of our fellow neighbour it is now.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints invites all:

1. To not underestimate the importance of the time we are in, or the role that we have in being a voice of moderation and concern in contemporary society. Churches and religious communities were once the binding in the moral fabric of society, but are perceived more and more by a growing secularism as an archaic irrelevance of a by-gone era.
2. Let us work together to guarantee the ability of religious groups to promote these values, to live up to their ideals, and to send the message that there is still a place for religion in today's world. The positive effect religion can have in building a vibrant and all-inclusive society will benefit all.
3. To encourage moderation in the public and political discourse, prevent religious intolerance within our societies, and to encourage opportunities for education to overcome intolerant beliefs.

Thank you.