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**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Secretariat**

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Conference Services

Please find attached the *U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom's chapter on the OSCE from the Commission's 2007, Annual Report*, to be distributed with regard to the OSCE Conference on Combating Discrimination and Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding - Follow-up to the Cordoba Conference on Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Intolerance, Romania, Bucharest, 7 - 8 June 2007.

The Commission, a bipartisan, independent, U.S. government agency, was created by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (IRFA) to monitor violations of the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief abroad, as defined in IRFA and set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related international instruments, and to give independent policy recommendations to the President, Secretary of State, and Congress.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

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The International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (IRFA) specifically cites U.S. participation in multilateral organizations as a way to advance respect for freedom of religion or belief, which is enshrined in numerous international human rights declarations and conventions. The 56 participating States of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), i.e., Europe East and West and the states of the former Soviet Union, along with the United States and Canada, committed themselves to uphold extensive standards to protect freedom of religion or belief and to combat discrimination, xenophobia, intolerance, and anti-Semitism. Freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief is singled out in the OSCE founding document, the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the OSCE has continued to be an important forum in which participating States have been held accountable for their human rights commitments. Moreover, uniquely for an international organization, the OSCE since its inception has involved non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as partners in its review of members' human rights practices.

In recent years, however, some participating states have sought to curtail the organization's human rights activities. In 2004, delegations from nine countries, led by Russia along with eight other former Soviet states—Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan—issued a written statement demanding that the OSCE give more weight to security matters.¹ Russia, in particular, has often protested in recent years that the OSCE focuses too much of its criticism on the countries of the former USSR, while downplaying human rights problems in the West.² Russia withheld needed approval for the OSCE 2005 budget, which must be agreed to by all participating States, thereby delaying its implementation and putting in jeopardy many of the OSCE human rights activities. These activities are particularly important at a time when the governments of Russia and many other countries of the former USSR are demonstrating an increasing lack of commitment to their human rights obligations, including efforts to combat racism, xenophobia, and other forms of intolerance and discrimination. The OSCE, citing an agreement made in Moscow in 1991, has frequently reiterated that OSCE participating States have “categorically and irrevocably” declared that the “commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension of the OSCE are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned.”

Background on Racism, Xenophobia, Discrimination, and Intolerance

In recent years, there has been a rise in incidents of racism, xenophobia, discrimination, and intolerance toward members of religious and ethnic minorities in the OSCE region, including, for example, in Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan, as well as in such democratic

¹ In July 2004, the institution itself came under more pointed attack when these countries accused the OSCE of failing to respect their sovereignty. Having been criticized—in some cases, repeatedly—by OSCE election monitors for holding elections that failed to meet democratic standards, the nine countries accused the OSCE of interfering in their internal affairs.

² Yet, on the invitation of the United States, the OSCE deployed an Election Assessment Mission for the U.S. November 2006 Congressional elections; in November 2006, ODIHR also sent an Election Assessment Mission to the parliamentary elections in the Netherlands.

countries as France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. Extremist rhetoric that goes uncontested by political and societal leaders has also promoted an environment of intolerance toward members of various ethnic and religious minorities. Indeed, officials and state-run media are sometimes involved in efforts to inflame public opinion against minority groups in some parts of the OSCE region.

Anti-Jewish or anti-Semitic views and actions also continue to be problems in many OSCE participating States and officials often fail to hold the perpetrators of anti-Semitic attacks to account. Anti-Zionism and vilification of Israel can also mask anti-Semitism. Reportedly, many of the recent anti-Semitic incidents in Western Europe have been committed by angry and marginalized young North African Muslim immigrants. According to monitoring organizations, there were twice as many physical assaults on Jews in 2006 in comparison with the previous year, with the greatest increases in the United Kingdom, Canada, and France. A disturbing number of anti-Semitic incidents were recorded elsewhere, for example, in Norway, Belgium, Germany, and Ukraine.

“Skinhead” gangs and neo-Nazi groups are other sources of hate-filled rhetoric and violence in many countries in the OSCE region. Various ethnic and religious minorities, including Muslims, Jews, migrants, and members of other minorities, are targeted. Vandalism against religious and other property is also on the rise. Violent acts are often well documented, but they are rarely investigated and prosecuted as hate crimes. Instead, officials, prosecutors, and judges often trivialize such violence by treating it as “hooliganism.” When burnings, beatings, and other acts of violence target members of a particular group because of who they are and what they believe, such acts should be viewed not merely as police problems, but as human rights violations that require an unequivocal response.

The OSCE Response

In the last few years, the OSCE has set up several mechanisms to address intolerance and related human rights issues as mandated by the 2003 OSCE Ministerial Meeting. As a result of U.S. diplomatic leadership on this issue, the OSCE has convened a series of high-level meetings to address anti-Semitism and other tolerance-related issues. As the Commission recommended, in late 2004, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office appointed three Personal Representatives to promote tolerance. The OSCE also became the first international organization to name a prominent independent appointee specifically to examine anti-Semitism. At the same time, it established a Personal Representative monitoring intolerance toward Muslims, and a third who tracks other forms of intolerance, including xenophobia, racism, and intolerance against Christians and members of other religions. Finally, a new Tolerance Program within the OSCE’s Office of Human Rights and Democratic Institutions (ODIHR) was set up in late 2004 to monitor and encourage compliance with OSCE commitments to combat xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia, as well as to promote freedom of religion or belief.

Several OSCE institutions expressed concern in 2006 over the rise of intolerance and discrimination in the OSCE region. These included a declaration issued by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly at its July session in Brussels and the OSCE Brussels Ministerial Council decision in December 2006 on measures to combat intolerance and discrimination and promote mutual respect and understanding.

OSCE Meetings on Tolerance and Related Topics

The OSCE Ministerial Council in 2003 mandated a major international conference to address anti-Semitism in the then-55 states of the OSCE region. The Berlin Conference on Anti-Semitism in April 2004 was attended by 600 officials from 55 nations and by hundreds of NGOs. The conference recommended specific steps to fight anti-Semitism, including collecting and regular reporting on hate crimes data, bolstering national laws, promoting educational programs, and combating hate crimes fueled by racist propaganda in the media and on the Internet. In the 2004 Ministerial Council, the participating States authorized the OSCE Chairman-in-Office to appoint three Personal Representatives to coordinate and highlight OSCE activities in this field. The OSCE has also held a series of high-level and expert-level meetings on other tolerance-related issues, including the Conference on Tolerance and the Fight against Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination (Brussels, September 2004); the Human Dimension Seminar on Migration and Integration (Warsaw, May 2005); the OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism and on Other Forms of Intolerance (Cordoba, June 2005); and the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Human Rights and the Fight against Terrorism (Vienna, July 2005).

The 2005 Ministerial Council in Ljubljana called for the emphasis of OSCE activities in 2006 to be on thematic, implementation-focused meetings, including on tolerance-related topics. In June 2006, Kazakhstan hosted the first OSCE Tolerance Implementation Meeting in Almaty. It was followed by meetings on Holocaust education in Croatia in October and on the deficit of hate crimes data in November in Austria. The 2006 Human Dimension (HDim) meeting in Warsaw, Europe's largest conference involving the NGO community, drew a wide variety of religious and ethnic groups, notably from Muslim minority communities. The HDim plenary session on freedom of religion and belief attracted a record number of speaking requests from 57 OSCE delegations and NGOs. In March 2007, a Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Freedom of Assembly, Association and Expression also included NGO activity relating to freedom of religion.

These conferences have raised awareness among the governments of the OSCE participating States, NGOs, and the public regarding anti-Semitism, discrimination against Muslims, and other tolerance-related issues in the OSCE region. The challenge remains, even after all of the meetings, for the OSCE and its 56 members to act on the ideas that have emerged from these conferences and reports and to translate them into activities and programs that will combat these forms of intolerance in OSCE participating States.

OSCE Personal Representatives

In December 2004, the 55 OSCE participating States authorized the then-Chairman-in-Office (CiO), Bulgarian Foreign Minister Solomon Passy, to name three Personal Representatives to promote tolerance. Anastasia Crickley of Ireland, chairperson of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, was appointed as the Personal Representative on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, also focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions; Gert Weisskirchen, German parliamentarian and professor of higher education, was named the

Personal Representative on Combating Anti-Semitism; and Omur Orhun, former Turkish Ambassador to the OSCE, was appointed the Personal Representative on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims. [Back](#)



German politician Gert Weisskirchen is the OSCE Chair's new Personal Representative on Combating anti-Semitism. (OSCE/Ayhan Evrensel)

Links

Source link: [Chairman-in-Office](#)

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These appointments have been re-confirmed by each subsequent CiO, namely, Slovenia, Belgium, and Spain and will extend at least through the end of 2007. The mandates of these Representatives include the promotion of better coordination of the implementation of decisions by the OSCE Ministerial and Permanent Councils on Tolerance and Non-discrimination as well as cooperation between the CiO and the ODIHR.

The mandates of the three Personal Representatives address separate but interrelated issues that call for distinct, yet coordinated, responses. The persons selected by the OSCE CiO for these honorary and part-time positions come from a variety of backgrounds. The OSCE CiO has expressed the view that the Personal Representatives should coordinate with the various relevant OSCE institutions and among themselves in order to fulfill their mandates. Indeed, the Commission is concerned that the work of the Representatives has been hampered by inadequate funding for staff and travel expenses, and other demands on their time and attention. The Commission also believes that the activities of the Personal Representatives should be given more prominence in the work of the OSCE.

During the past year, the Personal Representatives made contributions to various OSCE meetings. For example, Crickley made a presentation on the role of various international organizations on tolerance education at the October 2006 meeting on education and the Holocaust. Orhun made a presentation on the “cartoon controversy” at the July 2006 OSCE meeting on the media. In addition to playing an active role at relevant OSCE meetings, country

visits have played a key role in the work of the Personal Representatives and in their regular reports to the OSCE Permanent Council. They have all visited the United States; Orhun has held meetings in Turkey and has made visits to the Netherlands, Great Britain, Germany, and France, as well as consulting with the Organization of Islamic Conference; Crickley also met with the UN in Geneva and has visited Great Britain and Austria, as well as consulted with the EU; and Weisskirchen has held meetings in Germany and Canada and has visited Russia. Invitations from the participating States to the Personal Representatives would enable them to meet with relevant government officials and raise key issues of concern directly with them, and to meet with NGOs, and with community and religious leaders and activists, without interference.

The Commission also encourages each of the three Personal Representatives to undertake events with relevant non-governmental communities as well as with the media. In 2006, Weisskirchen held roundtables involving the civil society sector in Germany, the United Kingdom and Canada, which addressed the issue of anti-Semitism and, together with the German delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, he convened an expert meeting on anti-Semitism with specialists from countries throughout the OSCE region. Orhun, working with the ODIHR, convened several roundtables with representatives of Muslim communities across the OSCE region. For example, a 2005 meeting in Warsaw identified key issues of concern and possible areas of cooperation. A 2006 meeting, attended by NGOs and media experts, addressed the portrayal of Muslims in public discourse. Based on these recommendations, the ODIHR announced in 2006 that it is developing a resource guide on improved reporting on Islam and Muslim communities in OSCE States.

The Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Tolerance Program

One of the major institutional responses of the OSCE to growing concerns regarding religious intolerance was to set up a new Tolerance Program in late 2004 within the ODIHR. The mandate of the Tolerance Program includes OSCE efforts to promote tolerance and to combat intolerance and xenophobia, as well as to advance freedom of religion or belief. The United States has been a strong advocate for the establishment of the program and for sufficient funding for its activities. The Tolerance Program staff includes specialists on the issues of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, xenophobia, and racism, as well as on freedom of religion or belief. These specialists monitor and conduct research, write reports, conduct programs, and provide staff expertise for the three Personal Representatives and the ODIHR Advisory Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief. The Tolerance Program was charged with setting up a database of information, as well as projects on such issues as data collection for hate crimes legislation, police training on hate crimes, and Holocaust education in specific countries.

In accordance with a decision by the 2003 OSCE Ministerial Council, many of the Tolerance Program's activities have centered on gathering and publicizing information related to tolerance and non-discrimination. The Program's Web site, <http://www.osce.org/odihr/16431.html>, which became operational in 2006, brings together previously hard-to-find material that is directly relevant to addressing discrimination and to combating intolerance by providing access to information from OSCE participating States, NGOs, and inter-governmental organizations on international standards and instruments. The Web site also references Legislationline, ODIHR's online database, and the Human Rights

Information and Documentation Systems International index to 3,000 NGO Web sites, and provides customized access to more than 1.5 million documents. The Tolerance Program has developed a “Web site Guide to Tolerance Education” and a curriculum unit on “Holocaust Education and Anti-Semitism.” The Tolerance Program has also issued several useful publications on addressing priorities in various OSCE States, including “Combating Hate Crimes in the OSCE Region: An Overview of Statistics, Legislation, and National Initiatives” and “Education on the Holocaust and on Anti-Semitism: An Overview and Analysis of Educational Approaches.”

In 2006, the ODIHR published further information on tolerance-related topics, including “Teaching Materials on the History of Jews and Anti-Semitism in Europe,” in cooperation with experts from seven pilot countries: Croatia, Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, the Netherlands, and Ukraine. This publication includes material on the history of anti-Semitism; contemporary forms of anti-Semitism, anti-Semitism as a form of discrimination, and a teaching guide on the subject. The ODIHR also produced two publications related to the struggle against hate crime: “Challenges and responses to hate-motivated incidents in the OSCE region for the period January-June 2006,” and a fact sheet on the ODIHR Law Enforcement Officer Program on combating hate crime, issued in English, Russian, Polish, and Serbian. During the past year, the Tolerance Program has translated many of its key publications into the Russian language, particularly useful in light of the rising levels of xenophobia, racism, and various forms of intolerance in Russia and other former Soviet republics.

To date, ODIHR’s Tolerance Program has emphasized activities with external organizations, but the Program could examine work with the 18 OSCE Field Presences and other OSCE institutions. The 2003 OSCE Ministerial Council also tasked the Tolerance Program with acting as a focal point for the various national contact points on hate crime set up by the OSCE participating States. Information about practical initiatives from participating States, NGOs, and other institutions can also be submitted online. In 2006, the Tolerance Program ran special programs to train police and the judiciary in, for example, Spain and Croatia, on ways to combat hate crimes.

As mentioned above, part of the Tolerance Program’s current mandate is to address freedom of religion or belief. Responsibility for the issue of religious freedom was removed from the ODIHR Human Rights Department when the issue was assigned to the Tolerance Program in late 2004. The Commission is concerned that as a result of this bureaucratic reassignment, freedom of religion or belief will be relegated as a corollary to tolerance work and will no longer be included in the ODIHR human rights programs. Furthermore, only one staff person in the Tolerance Program is assigned to the issue of freedom of religion or belief, and that person is also assigned to work with NGOs; in 2007, this position was removed from the unified budget, thus endangering its permanent status and changing its recruitment basis. In 2006, the ODIHR planned to hold workshops on freedom of religion issues with NGOs, religious communities, and government officials in Russia and Tajikistan. However, little news and information about those meetings was available in the out-of-date and sparse freedom of religion section of the ODIHR Tolerance Program Web site.

OSCE Venues for Addressing Freedom of Religion or Belief Issues

Freedom of religion or belief is defined as a basic human rights principle in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. Since then, the issue has been addressed in various ways by the OSCE: through the periodic OSCE and later ODIHR conferences to review implementation of human rights commitments by the 56 participating States; during several conferences which specifically addressed these issues, such as the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Human Rights and the Fight against Terrorism, held in Vienna in July 2005; in the structure of the ODIHR, where, until the Tolerance Program was set up, freedom of religion or belief was part of the Human Rights Department portfolio; through the 18 OSCE Field Presences, where freedom of religion or belief can also be the subject of monitoring, reports, and related activities; and through the inclusion of the views of relevant international, regional, and non-governmental human rights organizations in connection with each of the other venues described above.

Under the auspices of the ODIHR, the OSCE also hosts annual conferences, traditionally held in Warsaw in October, to review implementation by the 55 OSCE participating States of their OSCE human rights commitments, including freedom of religion or belief. Known as the Conferences on the Human Dimension (HDim), these 10-day meetings bring together diplomats, representatives of other international organizations, and, reportedly, the largest number of NGOs for a general European human rights conference. These conferences have been criticized by some government representatives for being too lengthy, for not attracting enough press and public attention, and increasingly, for the failure of participating States to respond—either in words or in deeds—to criticism of their human rights records voiced at the HDim.

The ODIHR Advisory Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief was re-organized in 2004 and expanded to a total of 58 persons nominated by countries from throughout the OSCE region, including an Advisory Council of 15 members. The Panel functions primarily as a consultative body for the governments of participating States considering new or amended legislation affecting freedom of religion, as well as for expert opinions on individual cases. The Panel reviews both proposed and enacted legislation under guidelines developed by the ODIHR and the Council of Europe Venice Commission, guidelines that are based on international conventions and on OSCE commitments. The Panel then issues recommendations to the participating States on bringing such legislation into conformance with international human rights standards.

The Panel has advised the governments of Macedonia, Romania, and Serbia on legislation and panel recommendations on relevant legislation were also taken into consideration by the governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Bulgaria. In the case of Uzbekistan, the government has not responded to the Panel's recommendations for revisions of its religion laws. In two recent examples of expert opinions on individual cases, the Panel determined that the situation of Jehovah's Witnesses in Moscow is illustrative of problems in other post-Soviet countries, where registration requirements are being used to control religious groups. The Panel has also been critical of official threats to destroy Hare Krishna property in an agricultural cooperative in Kazakhstan, and in November 2006 offered its assistance in resolving this dispute. The Commission is convinced that the activities of the Panel should be better known and more transparent, in particular with respect to those governments that ignore its recommendations. In addition, every year the Panel should hold at least one meeting of its entire membership.

Commission Activities

Since 2001, the Commission has participated with, often in the capacity of members of, U.S. delegations to OSCE meetings and has made extensive recommendations relating to the work of the OSCE on protecting freedom of religion or belief and on combating intolerance and anti-Semitism in the OSCE region. Then-Commission Vice Chair Felice D. Gaer made public statements on behalf of the Commission at the first-ever special meeting on anti-Semitism in June 2003, as well as at the ODIHR HDim meeting the following October. In July 2004, the Commission recommended that the U.S. government should advocate an active role for NGOs in monitoring religious intolerance. In September 2004, at the OSCE Conference on Tolerance and the Fight against Racism, Xenophobia, and Discrimination (Brussels), Vice Chair Gaer stressed the importance of freedom of religion or belief in the OSCE region. At the October 2004 OSCE HDim, the Commission made certain that public information on the status of freedom of religion or belief in various OSCE states and the Commission's concerns about religious freedom were included in the concluding intervention by the U.S. delegation to the HDim meeting.

At the OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Intolerance, held in Cordoba in June 2005, then-Commission Vice-Chair Nina Shea spoke at the Panel of Experts Workshop on Promoting Tolerance and Ensuring Freedom of Religion and Belief on restrictive registration practices. Serving as official advisers to the U.S. delegation to the Cordoba meeting, then-Commission Chair Michael Cromartie and Vice Chair Shea met with various diplomats and NGO representatives. Archbishop Charles Chaput, a member of the Commission, served in his private capacity on the U.S. official delegation to the 2005 Cordoba meeting. During the 2005 OSCE HDim meeting in Warsaw, Gaer served as a member of the U.S. delegation and made a plenary statement on the problems faced by ethnic minorities, including anti-Semitism. She also held meetings with the three OSCE Personal Representatives and with numerous delegations and NGO representatives. The Commission staff also took part in a roundtable on intolerance and discrimination against Muslims and made a presentation on how the Commission has addressed this issue. During the 2006 OSCE HDim Conference, Gaer, as Chair of the Commission, served as an official member of the U.S. delegation and presented a plenary statement on freedom of religion. Together with Commission staff, she also held meetings with OSCE Personal Representatives, as well as with numerous delegations and NGOs. The Commission staff also made a presentation during an event on freedom of religion in Turkmenistan, held during the 2006 HDim Conference.

The Commission was one of the first official bodies to speak out against the rise in anti-Semitic violence in Europe; it has also addressed anti-Semitism and related issues in countries such as Belarus, Belgium, Egypt, Iran, France, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, and Pakistan. The U.S. Congress introduced and unanimously passed resolutions in the Senate and the House on the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe. The Senate version cited the Commission's findings and urged the Commission to continue documenting the issue.

The Commission has recommended that the U.S. government work with the OSCE and the U.S. delegation to ensure that separate attention is paid to anti-Semitism in the region and successfully advocated for the OSCE's first special meeting on anti-Semitism. During preparations for that meeting, Gaer stressed that acts of anti-Semitism must not be seen as hooliganism, but as a human rights abuse that States should combat by robust implementation of

their international human rights commitments. Participating on the U.S. delegation at the Berlin meeting, Vice Chair Gaer discussed anti-Semitism in the OSCE region and met with a wide variety of delegations and NGOs. During the Berlin conference on anti-Semitism, the Commission brought to the attention of the U.S. delegation the key role played by NGOs in monitoring anti-Semitism, intolerance, and discrimination, and this language was included in the delegation's concluding speech. The resulting OSCE "Berlin Declaration" on anti-Semitism has served as a precedent for the UN in organizing its own public event on combating anti-Semitism.

Commission recommendations:

With regard to the institution of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Commission recommends that the U.S. government should:

- express continued strong support for the OSCE in the face of attacks led by the Russian government, particularly on the OSCE's human rights activities carried out by the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR);
- authorize and appropriate funds in addition to existing U.S. contributions to the OSCE for the purpose of expanding programs that combat anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and discrimination against Muslims, Christians, and members of other religions, and of developing ways to advance freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief.
- hold regular briefings at the State Department for members of the U.S. government and NGO community concerned with OSCE issues and make efforts to expand the number and scope of invitees;
- have the State Department ensure that U.S. OSCE delegations include representatives of relevant U.S. government agencies, such as Homeland Security and the Justice Department, as well as expand the number and range of civil society groups involved in the OSCE process;
- ensure that U.S. OSCE delegations make an effort to organize regular briefings for the civil society groups at OSCE meetings.

With regard to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief and the promotion of tolerance, the Commission has recommended that the U.S. government urge that OSCE participating States undertake the following steps:

- ensure that they are complying with their commitments to combat discrimination, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism, as detailed in the 1990 Copenhagen Document on the Human Dimension, including adopting laws against incitement to violence and ensuring effective remedies for acts of discrimination;
- engage in a regular public review of compliance with OSCE commitments on freedom of religion or belief, on racial and religious discrimination, and on anti-Semitism, including by facilitating a more active role by NGOs as part of that process;

- commit to condemn promptly, publicly, and specifically hate crimes and to investigate and prosecute their perpetrators;
- take all appropriate steps to prevent and punish acts of anti-Semitism, such as publicly to condemn specific anti-Semitic acts, to pursue and prosecute the perpetrators of attacks on Jews and their communal property, and, while vigorously protecting freedom of expression, to counteract anti-Semitic rhetoric and organized anti-Semitic activities;
- condemn in a public fashion, while vigorously protecting freedom of expression, attacks targeting Muslims and pursue and prosecute the perpetrators of such attacks;
- ensure that efforts to combat terrorism not be used as an unrestrained justification to restrict the human rights, including freedom of religion or belief, of members of religious minorities;
- bring national legislation and practice, as well as local laws, into conformity with international human rights standards and OSCE commitments by: permitting all religious groups to organize and conduct their activities without undue interference; discontinuing excessive regulation of the free practice of religion, including registration or recognition requirements that effectively prevent members of religious communities from exercising their freedom to manifest religion or belief; and permitting limitations on the right to freedom of religion or belief only as provided by law and consistent with participating States' obligations under international law;
- monitor the actions of regional and local officials who violate the right to freedom of religion or belief and provide effective remedies for any such violations; and
- establish mechanisms to review the cases of persons detained under suspicion of, or charged with, religious, political, or security offenses and to release those who have been imprisoned solely because of their religious beliefs or practices, as well as any others who have been unjustly detained or sentenced.

With regard to freedom of religion or belief and the promotion of tolerance, the Commission has recommended that the U.S. government urge the OSCE to:

- ensure reappointment of the three Chairman-in-Office Personal Representatives on tolerance issues;
- make the country-specific reports of the three Personal Representatives available to the public;
- provide the ODIHR the necessary mandate and adequate resources to hire as part of the Unified Budget experienced staff at the working level, to direct the Tolerance Program, to monitor compliance with OSCE obligations on freedom of religion or belief, and to combat discrimination, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism;

- provide funding for each of the three OSCE Personal Representatives on Tolerance to ensure travel and other program support;
- take concrete action within the OSCE to ensure that all participating states are living up to their commitments to combat discrimination and intolerance, in particular to combat anti-Semitism, as detailed in the 1990 Copenhagen Document, action which should include adopting laws to protect against incitement to violence based on discrimination, including anti-Semitism, and providing the individual with effective remedies to initiate complaints against acts of discrimination;
- consider opening the sessions of the OSCE Permanent Council to members of the press and public;
- consider ways to attract more public attention to the activities of the OSCE Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief, including by bringing greater transparency to its activities;
- encourage the convening of an annual meeting of the OSCE Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief that is open to its entire membership;
- undertake a public review of compliance by participating States within the OSCE on a regular basis of their commitments to combat discrimination, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism;
- convene expert conferences on anti-Semitism and freedom of religion or belief, as well as other tolerance issues, during 2008 and 2009;
- consider holding the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDim) in September and October in several areas in the OSCE region, preferably in areas with major OSCE Field Presences;
- consider reorganization of the HDim conference into thematically-linked issues, such as Rule of Law (Elections; Judiciary; Penal System), Fundamental Freedoms (Religion, Expression/Media, Assembly/Association, Movement), and Tolerance and Non-Discrimination (Gender and Minorities—Religious, Ethnic, Economic);
- provide funding for added staff to deal with freedom of religion or belief, working within the ODIHR Human Rights Program;
- provide funding for the OSCE Field Presences and the ODIHR to hold public roundtables with local government officials, NGOs, and community leaders to discuss the concept, definition, and implementation of hate crimes and hate crimes legislation;
- ensure that the ODIHR Tolerance Program staff should take part in ODIHR training of Field Presences and other OSCE staff; and

- provide funding for the translation of additional ODIHR Tolerance Program reports into OSCE languages, particularly Russian, and for one ODIHR Tolerance Program staffer with Russian-language capability.