



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Response to Reports by the OSCE Chairperson's Personal Representatives on Tolerance and Non-discrimination**

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Harry Kamian  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
November 30, 2017

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The United States warmly welcomes to the Permanent Council two of the Chairmanship's three Personal Representatives on Tolerance: Professor Gabriel and Rabbi Baker. We send our greetings to Dr. Şenay, and wish him a speedy recovery..

We thank you for your presentations and ideas on how we can work together to further OSCE commitments to combat intolerance. The United States strongly believes that strengthening our joint efforts is an important element of ensuring comprehensive security and respect for all. The OSCE must remain committed to addressing the problem of intolerance in all of its forms – across the organization and across the region.

The Helsinki Final Act commits us to respect the inherent dignity of the human person. Beyond sharing commitments, we share a common humanity. There can be no justification for hate crimes – ever. People should not have to fear attacks because of who they are, whom they love, what they believe, or how they worship.

Rabbi Baker, as you have correctly pointed out, anti-Semitic violence is on the rise across the OSCE region. Such acts give new urgency for participating States to respond with immediate, definitive action.

There is no justification for anti-Semitism. We urge all governments to denounce and combat anti-Semitism, and to work with Jewish communities on how to best protect them. In the United States, threats to Jewish community centers earlier this year elicited condemnation across the political spectrum, and led to prompt Federal investigations. This resulted in the identification and prosecution of perpetrators. A swift response sends the signal that such violence will not be tolerated.

Mr. Chair, the United States shares Rabbi Baker's disappointment that the Permanent Council was unable to reach consensus last year on a working definition. We know that one participating State, just one, publicly rejected it. We would like to commend Rabbi Baker, together with the efforts of the Chair, and all other participating States who did the right thing. Their efforts should be commended and the one participating State that publicly rejected the near consensus decision should be acknowledged.

Mr. Chair, at the same time, the United States strongly supports ODIHR's "Turning Words into Action" Project, initiated under the German Chairmanship. We welcome the Project's guide to "Understanding anti-Semitic hate crimes and addressing the security needs of Jewish communities." The guide identifies tools that governments and communities can use to combat anti-Semitism, including the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of anti-Semitism. We commend ODIHR for using this definition. We also applaud the European Parliament for its June resolution calling on member states and their institutions to adopt and apply the working definition. As Rabbi Baker pointed out, the United States uses the working definition, as do a number of OSCE participating States. We urge all those who have not done so to put it to practical use at all levels of government.

The United States is also deeply concerned about intolerance and violence towards Muslims. There is a growing trend of governments across the OSCE region and elsewhere imposing restrictions on the ability of Muslims to freely practice their faith, including undue limitations on religious practices and attire. In the aftermath of high-profile terrorist attacks, false perceptions equating all Muslims with terrorists have contributed to steep increases in anti-Muslim rhetoric and violence.

Professor Gabriel, as you have reminded us on various occasions this year, discrimination remains a scourge across the OSCE region. In particular, we note with concern the fact that people of African descent and Roma continue to be targets of hate. The United States believes the OSCE can and must do more to combat discrimination by harnessing the creativity of experts in OSCE institutions, and further honing our tolerance activities. Professor, we welcome your thoughts on how we can strengthen our OSCE commitments and activities with this goal in mind.

In closing, thank you both for your efforts in 2017.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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