



United States Mission to the OSCE

Session 16: Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Discrimination II Implementation of OSCE Commitments

As prepared for delivery by Special Envoy to Monitor and
Combat Anti-Semitism, Gregg Rickman
to the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Warsaw, October 12, 2006

Mr. Moderator,

The United States very much welcomes the focus the OSCE has given in recent years to the issues of tolerance and non-discrimination. Unfortunately, manifestations of anti-Semitism and discrimination against members of numerous ethnic and religious minorities persist throughout the OSCE region, underscoring the importance of maintaining a sharp focus on adherence to OSCE commitments.

We welcome the steps taken to date by authorities in Ukraine with regard to the Interregional Academy of Personnel, known as MAUP, which is a notorious instigator of anti-Semitism. Throughout Europe, less visible yet equally poisonous manifestations of anti-Semitic violence and hate are directed at individual Jews and Jewish institutions within the OSCE region, with almost daily desecrations of cemeteries and synagogues or physical assaults, threats and acts of intimidation. We encourage all participating States to continue to vigorously combat such anti-Semitism and related violence. The irrationality of anti-Semitic acts was unfortunately all too evident when celebrating World Cup fans spray-painted swastikas in Rome following Italy's World Cup victory in July. We must be ever vigilant and mindful of the resilient nature of this virulent form of hatred.

Discrimination against Muslims, including through limitations on expression, is also problematic. Central Asian governments continue to harass and arrest observant Muslims on account of their religious practice. Moldova continues to refuse registration to its Muslim community. We urge a serious reconsideration of these policies and practices in light of OSCE tolerance commitments. We are pleased with ODIHR's outreach to Muslims, informing them of the work of the OSCE in these and other fields of countering intolerance.

Manifestations of discrimination against Christians and members of other denominations have also been observed. In Turkey, there has been an increase in violent attacks on Christian clergy, including the murder of Father Andrea Santoro. We urge leaders in Turkey to redouble their efforts to prevent violence, including by speaking publicly about the importance of inter-religious tolerance. When acts of intolerance against members of any faith occur, it is critical that government leaders speak out promptly and publicly to discourage further acts. The Maastricht Ministerial Council urged the relevant authorities in all participating States to "continue to condemn publicly, at the appropriate level and in the appropriate manner, violent acts motivated by discrimination and intolerance."

Finally, Mr. Moderator, I would like to mention the support of the United States holds for the reappointment of the three Personal Representatives of the Chair-in-Office, a decision to be made by the incoming Spanish chairmanship. The United States is optimistic that the incoming Spanish Chair-in-Office will indeed reappoint the three Personal Representatives with their distinct mandates, and we strongly support this worthy action.

In closing, Mr. Moderator, we have accomplished much in combating anti-Semitism, discrimination against Muslims, and racism, xenophobia and discrimination, as well as intolerance and discrimination against Christians and members of other religions. These accomplishments clearly demonstrate that it is possible for participating States to overcome long-held prejudices and prejudicial practice. The progress we have made should stimulate all participating States to further work.