



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Special Representatives on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Carol Fuller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 5, 2009

It is indeed a pleasure for the United States to welcome the Chairmanship's Personal Representatives for Tolerance, Ambassador Adil Akhmetov, Mr. Mario Mauro and Rabbi Andrew Baker to the Permanent Council and thanks them for their valuable work to combat intolerance and discrimination across the OSCE region.

The United States strongly supports the efforts of the Personal Representatives. Their work is at the very heart of the OSCE's principles and commitments. The promotion of tolerance, understanding and non-discrimination empowers healthy societies and fosters respect among different communities, in turn allowing states to become more stable, secure and prosperous.

We are honored that on October 13 and 14, the Personal Representatives chose the United States for their first joint country visit. We assured them of our government's commitment to combating hate crimes and the intolerance that underlie them across our country. While in Washington, the Representatives had full and complete access to meet with anyone they wished and they had a full program.

Madam Chairwoman, we continue to be concerned about the increase in hate crimes throughout the OSCE region. We urge redoubled efforts to combat discrimination based on religion, race, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability and to better position law enforcement to identify and prosecute hate crimes. We support improved collection of disaggregated, specific hate crime statistics and the enactment and implementation of hate crime legislation.

We strongly encourage the incoming Chairmanship to continue the mandate of the Personal Representatives for Tolerance – and we know it is the full intention of the government of Kazakhstan to do so. The United States supports the proposal for a high-level conference on tolerance, within the framework of a robust human dimension program in 2010.

The United States will continue to support the Chairmanship's Personal Representatives, both politically and financially. We expect the Representatives will continue their work to encourage tolerance and non-discrimination throughout the OSCE area and promote dialogue among governments and within societies on how best to accommodate minority communities and protect each individual's fundamental rights and freedoms. We urge the Personal Representatives to draw attention to positive steps undertaken by countries to promote inter-religious harmony, protection of minorities, tolerance education and interfaith dialogue, while also shining light on governments' failures to counteract negative trends leading to an increase in intolerance, discrimination or violent manifestations of hate. We at the same time also encourage the Personal Representatives to extend their work across the OSCE region. We welcome their constructive input on our own country, and urge other participating States to do the same.

We thank the Personal Representatives for their presentations today and we look forward to the release of the joint country report on their recent visit to the United States.

Thank you, Madam Chair.