

**SECOND SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2007
BY AMBASSADOR ÖMÜR ORHUN**

**Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE on Combating
Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims**

1. Introduction:

The OSCE as an organization and its participating States continue to attach high importance to promoting tolerance and combating discrimination. Recognizing that manifestations of discrimination and intolerance threaten the security of individuals and societal cohesion and may give rise to wider-scale conflict and violence, the OSCE underlined its concern for racist, xenophobic and discriminatory public discourse at various occasions. On the other hand, the need for increased awareness raising measures aiming to prevent intolerance and discrimination against Muslims has also been underlined.

Despite these well intentioned declarations and ensuing commitments, intolerance and discrimination against Muslims especially in the Western European and Northern American countries do persist. There is also a general recognition of the existence of some form of intolerance and discrimination against Muslims, albeit no consensus on the extent of this intolerance and discrimination.

As the existence of a problem is accepted, the necessity of finding solutions becomes evident. However, the question remains whether the OSCE participating States would wish to be part of the problem or part of the solution. All in all, it can be stated that on the part of the relevant governments and the general public there is a growing awareness on the need of “doing something”. But the minds seem to continue to be confused on what to do.

As I see it, the first step to be taken is acceptance of the necessity of an intellectual front in the fight against intolerance and discrimination against Muslims. That is to say, a sound strategy in the fields of value systems and perceptions must be devised, and it must be accepted that this is an ethical issue, as the UN Special Rapporteur Mr.Doudou Diene has also underlined at various occasions.

Within the scope of my mandate, the second half of 2007 also proved to be rather active. The main activities carried out during this time frame are summarized here below.

2. Overview of Activities:

a) I attended the OSCE Conference on Combating Discrimination and Promoting Tolerance, held in Bucharest on 7-8 June 2007, as well as to the Civil Society Preparatory Meeting that preceded the Conference.

I chaired the Second Session of the Conference devoted to “Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims” and also moderated the relevant Working Group of the Civil Society Preparatory Meeting.

Despite all the efforts spent to make this event a meaningful added contribution to OSCE’s endeavours in the field of promoting tolerance and combating discrimination, the objectives sought could not be fully met due to logistical and administrative difficulties encountered, especially in relation to some sessions of the Civil Society Preparatory Meeting and in relation to delayed sessions of the main conference, which hampered the subsequent sessions.

b) In mid-June I provided a lengthy article in Turkish to *Avrasya Dosyası* quarterly magazine published by ASAM, a well-known think tank. (This article is an extended version of my article provided for the CORE 2007 OSCE Yearbook, that was annexed to my First Semi-Annual Report for 2007.)

c) On 14 June 2007 I presented my First Semi-Annual Report to the Permanent Council. (CIO.GAL/87/07) Additionally, together with my fellow Personal Representatives we briefed the representatives of the Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation and responded to their questions and comments. Taking the opportunity of our being in Vienna, the Chairmanship organized two coordination meetings, the first between the three Personal Representatives and the representatives of the ODIHR and the Chairmanship, and the second between the three Personal Representatives and the Chairman of the Permanent Council.

d) On 22-24 June 2007 I attended the Council of Europe (CoE) Colloquy held in Lisbon on “Promoting Inter-Cultural Dialogue: Issues and Perspectives of the Council of Europe” that was organized within the context of the preparation of CoE’s White Book on Inter-Cultural Dialogue. The statement delivered by me at the colloquy was distributed as per CIO.GAL/100/07.

e) On 29 June 2007 I attended the Meeting of the Inter-Governmental Advisory Council of the International Centre for Democratic Transition (ICDT) in Budapest and briefed the participants of my activities and concerns.

f) On 3 July 2007 I took part at the Colloquium organized by COJEP International within the premises of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on “Incitement to Racial and Religious Hatred – Islamophobia – Political Discourse” and delivered a statement, which was made available in the OSCE as per CIO.GAL/107/07. It would be recalled that COJEP International had organized similar meetings under the umbrella of UNESCO in Paris and the UN in Geneva.

g) On 17-18 July 2007 I had separate meetings in Istanbul with representatives of civil society organizations working in the field of combating discrimination. Subsequently I met representatives of Muslim organizations based in Lyon on 24-27 July 2007. In my consultations with the representatives of the civil society, after briefing them of OSCE’s activities in the field of combating discrimination and promoting tolerance, I underlined the importance of the role to be played by NGO’s especially in the fields of raising awareness, empowerment of the youth and education.

h) In mid-August I gave an exclusive interview concerning anti-Muslim rhetoric, restrictions in immigration legislation and related subjects to the Turkish Daily News daily, which was published on 16 and 17 August 2007. On the other hand, I responded to a question posed by the European edition of Hurriyet newspaper about developments in Germany and some other European countries, which was published on 15 August 2007. The texts of these news items are annexed to this report.

i) On 7-8 September 2007 I was present at the East-West Encounter Meeting in Istanbul.

j) On 18-22 September 2007 I traveled to the USA to attend the Roundtable jointly organized by the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Georgetown University on “Islamophobia and the Challenge of Pluralism in the 21st Century”. The Roundtable was organized to examine the development and rise of “Islamophobia” and the strain it places on West-Islam relations, historical and contemporary roots of Islamophobia, its impact on foreign relations and responses to Islamophobia. The abstract that was presented by me at the Roundtable is attached to this report. The recommendations that were pronounced at the Roundtable will form the basis of a larger conference that the OIC is intending to convene next year, in collaboration with the civil society.

Taking advantage of my presence in Washington, I met officials of the State Department and exchanged views with them on matters within the scope of my mandate. (Mr. Jeffrey R. Krilla, Deputy Assistant Secretary in charge of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, and Mr. Ken Gross, Director of the Near Eastern Affairs Bureau.)

k) From Washington I traveled to Warsaw on 23 September 2007 to attend the first part of the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) devoted to the examination of the specifically selected topic of “Combating Intolerance and Discrimination and Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding – Implementation of Commitments”. The text of my intervention was circulated as HDIM.DEL/81/07.

In Warsaw, the three Personal Representatives met with the representatives of the Chairmanship and the ODIHR and discussed preparations for the Cordoba Conference, future country visits by the Personal Representatives, Toledo Guidelines, expansion of ODIHR’s TANDIS web-site to include reports and presentations of the Personal Representatives and the November Semi-Annual Report to the PC. Taking advantage of my presence in Warsaw, I also met a number of Permanent Representatives and NGO representatives.

l) COJEP International organized a side event within the margins of the HDIM on 25 September 2007 on the topic of “Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims – Youth and Education” at which I was one of the panelists. This was the fourth event organized by COJEP International under the umbrella of relevant international organizations and proved to be topical and illuminating. The text of my speaking notes were distributed as per HDIM.DEL/92/07.

m) On 1 October 2007 I delivered a key-note address on “Non-Discrimination, Respect for Diversity and Inter-Cultural/Inter-Religious Dialogue” to the Mediterranean Forum organized by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly at Portoroz/Slovenia. The text of my address has been distributed by the Chairmanship. (CIO.GAL/150/07) At the end of the Forum I gave a short interview to the Slovenian State TV on my mandate and activities.

n) Taking advantage of my presence in Slovenia, on 2 October 2007 I conducted a number of meetings with Slovenian officials and civil society representatives with the kind assistance of Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Mr.Taskın Soykan, Adviser on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims at the ODIHR accompanied me during my contacts.

My main purpose in seeking these contacts was to get first hand and detailed information about the recently signed Agreement between the Slovenian Government and the Islamic Community and to learn more about the Islamic Community of Slovenia, including their formal and informal structure, problems encountered, expectations, developments related to construction of a mosque in Ljubljana (which had been pending for almost four decades), and other issues, including hate speech and negative political discourse relevant to my mandate. It would be recalled that in my various interventions I had stressed the need for Islamic Communities in Europe to be recognized by the Governments of the countries where they are residing. In that respect, the Slovenian Agreement with the Islamic Community is considered to be a potential good example.

In Ljubljana, I had separate meetings with Ambassador Matjaz Kovacic, Head of the Division for International Organizations and Human Security at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr.Drago Cepar, Director of the Government Office for Religious Communities at the Prime Ministry and Mr.Zoran Jankovic, Mayor of Ljubljana. Additionally, I met the Mufti of Slovenia Mr.Nedžad Grabus and his collaborators at the Office of the Mufti, as well as civil society representatives. The Turkish Ambassador in Ljubljana kindly hosted a dinner on the occasion of my visit, which was attended by resident Muslim Ambassadors in Ljubljana.

A short report on my contacts and observations will be submitted to the Chairmanship for dissemination within the OSCE.

o) On 9-10 October 2007 I attended the OSCE Chairmanship Conference on Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, which was convened in Cordoba/Spain. The First Session of the Conference on “Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims - Old Prejudices and New Targets” was moderated by me. While introducing the subject matter of this session, I elaborated briefly my considerations in that respect. Additionally, I provided a written contribution to the participants of the Conference. (CIO.GAL/151/07) (In connection with the Report of the First Session, I would like to underline that I am not in agreement with the main thrust, content and language of that report, which was submitted without consulting me as the Moderator and which gives an inaccurate impression of the proceedings. I believe that CiO’s Declaration summing up the proceedings of the Conference should be taken as the main reference point.)

This Conference was timely and topical, as intolerance and discrimination against Muslims was specifically addressed for the first time in an international gathering formally. On the other hand, although debates were diverse in substance, the format of the conference did not allow especially the representatives of the Muslim organizations to address the subject matter in a genuine and comprehensive manner. However, quite a number of relevant recommendations were tabled or reiterated. I would hope that these recommendations will be duly implemented.

During my stay in Cordoba, I also met a number of government and civil society representatives and exchanged considerations within the scope of my mandate

p) On 18-19 October 2007, upon the invitation extended by the Norwegian Government I conducted a country visit to Norway. Mr.Taskin Soykan, Adviser on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims at the ODIHR accompanied me during this visit. A detailed report on my country visit to Norway will be submitted to the Chairmanship in due course.

r) On 22-23 October 2007 I participated to the Partnership for Development Meeting in Berlin. During my stay in Berlin I also met Director General Eberhardt Pohl and his collaborators at the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss issues related to my mandate, including priorities in my activities, working methods and structures of the Personal Representatives and a preliminary assessment of the Cordoba Conference. In a separate meeting, I exchanged views and considerations with Ms.Heidrun Tempel, Director of Department in charge of Dialogue of Civilizations.

s) On 26-28 October, just before going to Vienna, I will attend the World Conference on Dialogue among Religions and Civilizations, organized in Ohrid by the Government of Macedonia* in collaboration with the UN and UNESCO. I will provide a paper to the conference and pronounce its gist at the relevant session.

t) During the remaining period till the end of 2007, I will conduct a country visit to Switzerland on 12-14 November upon the invitation previously extended by the Swiss Government. The programme of the visit is being prepared with the kind assistance of the Swiss Federal Foreign Ministry. Subsequently, I will attend the Meeting of the Intergovernmental Advisory Board of the International Centre for Democratic Transition in Budapest on 26-27 November, and I will be present at the Ministerial Council Meeting in Madrid which will be held at the end of November. If it can be arranged, I would like to convene a civil society consultative meeting in Istanbul in the first half of December, to review activities carried out in 2007 and to receive feedback for any possible follow-up. Furthermore, if a mutually suitable time can be found, I also intend to conduct a visit to Finland and meet the incoming Chairman-in-Office and his collaborators.

u) Finally, I would like to revert back to issues related to distribution of the reports and public statements of the Personal Representatives, as there is no uniform implementation in this respect and as I had also underlined in my previous semi-annual report. It would be recalled that the Report on my Country Visit to Denmark has been made available to the general public, but not the reports for other country visits, despite my recommendation to that effect. Being aware of these country visits, civil society organizations and other relevant international organizations are constantly demanding to receive copies of these reports. On the other hand, the First and Second Semi-Annual Reports of the Personal Representatives for 2005 (CIO.GAL/93/05 dated 20 June 2005 and CIO.GAL/164/05 dated 15 November 2005) have been put on the public website of the OSCE under "CiO Representatives to Promote Tolerance", but not the semi-annual reports for 2006 and 2007. The same non-uniform implementation is also seen in publication of public statements of the Personal Representatives delivered at relevant conferences, symposia and seminars. Since the work of the Personal Representatives should be transparent, and with a view to achieving uniformity, I would like to suggest once again that all such material should be put on the public website of the ODIHR, in consultation with the Chairmanship.

* The OSCE Chairmanship recalls the PC.DEC/81 (of 12 October 1995) that states:

"The Permanent Council welcomes as a participating State of the OSCE the State whose application is contained in the letter of application dated 9 October 1995 contained in REF.PC/598/95. This State will be provisionally referred to for all purposes within the OSCE as "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" pending settlement of the difference which has arisen over the name of that State."

*Ambassador Ömür Orhun
Personal Representative of the OSCE
Chairman-in-Office on Combating Intolerance
and Discrimination against Muslims*

Ankara, 07 September 2007

**Abstract for the OIC-Georgetown University ACMCU Roundtable on
“Islamophobia and the Challenge of Pluralism in the 21st Century”
(Washington DC, 20.09.2007)**

1. Terminology:

The term “Islamophobia” alludes to fear and is also repulsive. The media and the public may use this term for shorthand; however in official jargon better to use “intolerance and discrimination against Muslims”. (Such a practice will be also in line with the following suggestion to address this issue as a human rights matter, rather than a religious issue.)

2. Should not be addressed solely as a religious issue, but as a matter related to protection and promotion of human rights and human dignity. (Better reception and solution possibility by the West.)

3. What is the ultimate aim?

The ultimate aim should not be portrayed as a competition between religions or as proving the superiority of Islam, but rather (in addition to protecting human dignity of all) as searching ways to co-exist in “unity in diversity” and to respect “the other”, and avoiding a clash of civilizations (cultures) and establishing dialogue and partnership.

4. Need for self-appraisal and/or self-criticism:

It is a fact that the image of Islam and of the Islamic world is generally not very bright and positive in the West. Additionally, not only to correct this blurred image but for the sake of its own good and prosperity, the Islamic world also needs to put its house in order. (OIC’s Ten Year Plan of Action attests to this need.) A balanced appraisal of the rightly made criticisms and unfounded allegations needs to be made and deficiencies identified needs to be corrected.

5. Problematique:

a) The historical, cultural and psychological depth of the issue of intolerance and discrimination against Muslims must always be taken into full consideration.

b) The necessity for an intellectual and ethical strategy to avoid political exploitation of the issues related to intolerance and discrimination against Muslims must also be considered.

c) The normative framework to combat intolerance and discrimination adopted by the international fora and by the national legislatures need to be put into full use and implementation.

6. Underlining Causes – Range of Discrimination:

- a) ancient hatreds, old or historical prejudices
- b) powerful new trend of anti-immigration
- c) antipathy towards Muslims in general
- d) allegations that Islam is not compatible with democracy, human rights and contemporary values
- e) negative political rhetoric, coupled with biased and/or misleading media coverage
- f) identification of terrorism with Islam and Muslims

7. Problems Encountered by Muslims in the West:

a) Structural Problems:

- Formal relations or more often lack of such relations between the State and Muslim communities in the West.

- Improper housing, improper or deficient education, unequal access to the job market; in other words a vicious circle, often accentuated by lack of sufficient proficiency in the language of the country of residence.

b) Perceptual and Behavioural Problems:

Prejudice by the mainstream community, also against persons perceived to be Muslim; negative sentiments and display of such sentiments; misrepresentation in the media coverage; negative political discourse, especially by the far right, but recently by the moderates also. (Additionally a recent disturbing trend, in that the Islamic dogma being attacked unjustly, although all religions are based on dogmas.)

c) Discriminatory Practices:

No need to enumerate all discriminatory practices, but suffice to state that these start from housing leading to employment to proper places of worship and burial places. Police practices, like search and arrest, as well as customs entry procedures also must be mentioned. A disturbing recent trend is discriminatory legal measures adopted by parliaments to curb immigration, which target Muslims openly or indirectly. (German loyalty test, German and French Immigration Law amendments.)

d) Harassment, Vandalism and Other Forms of Violence Against Muslims:

(No reliable monitoring, thus no reliable data, insufficient prosecution.)

8. What to do? Remedies: (not an exhaustive list)

a) The problem must be recognized properly and all concerned should be ready and willing to adopt a multifaceted approach to solve it. Efforts that may lead peoples towards a conflict based on a religious axis must be countered. (Growing fault line between the West and the Islamic world.)

b) European and North American countries must be encouraged to take account of the importance of the intellectual front in the fight against intolerance and discrimination against Muslims and devise a sound strategy in the fields of value systems and perceptions.

c) Political rhetoric: Responsible politician must be encouraged to underline the importance of correct and unbiased discourse and to refrain from hate speech and other manifestations of extremism and discrimination. The Muslim leaders, on their part, should also convey messages of non-violence, tolerance, understanding, moderation and respect.

d) The media, likewise, should be encouraged to act responsibly, and to play a positive role in promoting inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue and harmony. Creation of self-regulatory media bodies to deal with manifestations of discrimination and racism should also be encouraged.

e) Western countries must be asked to enact adequate legislation and must also be asked to implement this legislation and their relevant international commitments effectively. (Muslim countries should do the same on their part.)

f) Hate crimes must be defined broadly and the information deficit must be addressed. Clear criteria for reporting and registering of hate crimes must be established and reporting of hate crimes must be encouraged. Additionally, hate crimes must be prosecuted in a timely manner and efficiently. Law enforcement officials should be trained.

g) Capacity of the Muslim communities (in the West) and their civil society organizations should be strengthened.

h) Youth and education (for both the receiving and immigrant groups) must be given priority.

i) International cooperation and coordination should not be neglected.

j) Good practices should be shared with other countries and implemented by them.

9. Specific Suggestions for the OIC:

- “Islamophobia Observatory” to be made more effective and proactive
- Annual Report to the Ministers and to the UN Human Rights Council
- Establishment of a small but well functioning committee to deal with relevant issues
- Appointment of a representative of the Secretary General
- Adoption of an Action Plan, based on remedies enumerated in para 8 above and other measures to be suggested.

1. Anti-Islamic rhetoric sparks identity fears in Europe

Thursday, August 16, 2007

The spread of anti-Islamic rhetoric among European politicians for political gains is creating discrimination against Muslims in particular and fears of an identity loss in the mainstream population, says Ömür Orhun

FULYA ÖZERKAN

ANKARA - Turkish Daily News

A senior official has cautioned against an increasing use of racist and anti-Islamic language both in the political arena and in media outlets in Europe, a development that stirs up frenzy against Muslims among ordinary people.

"This is very unfortunate development because ordinary people are very much affected by this political discourse in that they have an unfounded fear of losing their identity," Ambassador Ömür Orhun, personal representative of the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on combating intolerance and discrimination against Muslims, told the Turkish Daily News in an exclusive interview.

"For example, the small Muslim community in Denmark, which has a very good record of respecting human rights, was unfortunately seen as a threat to the so called Danish identity, which is not correct of course," he added.

Recent attempts by European politicians targeting Muslims and their religious symbols sparked concerns over an upsurge in racist tendencies. In May, members of a Swiss right-wing party launched a campaign to have the building of minarets banned, a move which has shocked Switzerland's 350,000 Muslims.

In the Netherlands, a right-wing politician, Geert Wilders, caused controversy when he argued in a letter to a national newspaper early this month that the Koran must be banned in the country, which drew harsh criticism from even the Dutch government lambasting the politician for exceeding the boundaries of decency. Orhun emphasized that

mainstream political parties resorted to anti-Islam rhetoric when they realized such campaigns against Muslims were playing well with voters.

“Unfortunately, this is a very serious development in European circles recently. In the past it was the far-right which was propagating anti-Islam sentiments but mainstream political parties started to use the same rhetoric when they saw the votes the far-right gets,” he said.

The media and political discourse is interlinked in this context, he added, because the politicians affect the media and they want to use it to propagate their policies.

“But media usually play into the hands of those who spread anti-Islam propaganda and the solution for this is of course not governmental control of the media but self-regulatory measures. Media should have self regulations within itself as the effect of the media should not be underestimated.”

Contradicting moves in Europe

On one hand Europe gives positive signs in order to integrate their Muslim population by allowing them to take stand in political bodies and have authority in decision making mechanisms but on the other hand they take measures that prevent an eventual complete integration.

“The messages we receive and the developments we observe are contradicting in their entirety,” Orhun said. He further added that all European countries recognized something must be done to eradicate so-called Islamophobia and take measures to integrate Muslim communities into the mainstream communities.

“For example, in Holland, Germany and France some members of the Muslim communities have been elected to legislative bodies and even some people of Muslim background have made it to cabinets, so these are good signs.” While welcoming the two events in Germany, the Islamic Conference and Integration Summit, as hesitant but positive steps indicating the recognition by the German government that something must be done, he also underlined their shortcomings.

“There are also not so positive developments like the draft law in France which aims to restrict immigration and the new German law on migration which contains quite a number of clauses against internationally recognized human rights principles. These are developments that I follow with great concern.”

Another source of concern for Muslims is a Swiss move to force a constitutional amendment forbidding minarets and possible legal changes that will have to be approved in a nationwide referendum, which will make the ban on building minarets binding.

"This is of course not acceptable. I have issued a statement saying that a country like Switzerland which preaches human rights to all countries should not be seen in a situation where it is discriminating against 10 percent of its population, which are Muslims, and I said minarets are integral parts of mosques in the same way as bell towers are parts of churches and both churches and mosques are humanity's common heritage, so people should use their energies and time in more constructive and positive things rather than placing a blanket restriction on building minarets in a country," he said.

'Ignorance must be eradicated'

Orhun said misconceptions were prevalent on both sides about Islam and Christianity and that recent developments stemmed from ignorance, namely from not knowing about one another, which can only be eradicated through education.

"Education of mainstream communities including German, French, Dutch or American communities about harmony, respect to the other, respect to other cultures and a sense of living together is very important. This also applies to Muslim communities who should be taught of the values of societies they are living in.

Secondly, for both sides education on world history and cultures is similarly important because there are misconceptions on both sides. For example, the recent suggestion in the Netherlands (on the ban of the Koran) is a very good example of this ignorance; so ignorance must be eradicated."

The OSCE has been working on the issues of promoting tolerance and combating discrimination over the last six years. In this context, after organizing high level political conferences on these issues, the OSCE chairmanship in late 2004 appointed three personal representatives who are not employees of the OSCE but honorary personalities representing the OSCE chairman: Ambassador Orhun of the Turkish Foreign Ministry is Personal Representative of the OSCE chairmanship on combating intolerance and discrimination against Muslims; Gert Weisskirchen of Germany is Personal Representative on combating anti-Semitism; Anastasia Crickley of Ireland is Personal Representative on combating racism, xenophobia and discrimination.

2. 'More needs to be done for minorities'

Friday, August 17, 2007

FULYA ÖZERKAN

ANKARA - Turkish Daily News

It is a fact that religious minorities in Turkey have some grievances and problems that await solutions, despite steps by the government to meet their needs, said Ambassador Ömür Orhun.

“There have been steps to solve the problems of religious communities. For example, the need of the growing Protestant community in Turkey for places of worship have been met by the government but other communities still have some problems that need to be solved,” he told the Turkish Daily News in an exclusive interview.

He said the situation in Turkey was not very tragic but underlined that more understanding needed to be shown toward religious communities. “Because it is in our tradition to be tolerant and to help religious minorities follow their traditions and customs in our country.”

Ambassador Orhun is personal representative of the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on combating intolerance and discrimination against Muslims. Asked about Turkey's role in that respect, Orhun said Turkey was one of the leading countries within the OSCE promoting greater tolerance and non-discrimination.

He also emphasized that the country's role here was very much related to its bid to become a full member of the European Union.

“Turkey's eventual membership would show that the EU is not a religious entity but is a melting of different cultures and religions,” he said.

Elaborating further, Orhun said as a Western country and also a member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), a leading Islamic body, Turkey can act as a link and gave Turkish efforts to convene OIC-EU Joint Forum and to promote the Alliance of Civilizations initiative as “very good examples of such a role.”

Under the leadership of Turkish Secretary General Professor Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, the OIC is actively cooperating with international organizations including the OSCE to combat discrimination against Muslims. The OIC

recently established two important bodies: The Youth Forum which is based in Istanbul and the Islamophobia Observatory, which aims to follow up developments in European and other countries where such incidents occur. The leading Muslim organization also decided to prepare an annual report on Islamophobia that will be presented not only to OIC ministers but also to the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva.

The OIC lends its support to the U.N.-led Alliance of Civilizations initiative, co-chaired by the prime ministers of Turkey and Spain. The initiative aims at preventing hatred and misunderstanding between the East and the West and urges interfaith dialogue.

3.Hürriyet, European Edition, 15 August 2007

Unofficial Translation

Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office Ambassador Orhun stated that he is expecting information from Germany concerning the Islamic Conference and the Integration Summit, but has not received any response from the Government in the last four months.

Upon our inquiry, the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, Ambassador Ömür Orhun underlined that he had asked information about the Islamic Conference and the Integration Summit organized by the Government in Germany, but has not been able to receive a response to the question he posed four months ago. "I asked about the Islamic Conference and the Integration Summit four months ago. However, as yet, I have not received any information", he said.

Ambassador Ömor Orhun has made the following statement to Hürriyet: "As I underlined in my last report to the OSCE Permanent Council, the developments in the field of discrimination against Muslims and integratrion of immigrants as one step forward, followed by a backward step. (About the Islamic Conference) There were some criticisms that the criteria forv participation was not clear. However, it was a forward step. It was displaying an approach which recognized the Islamic Community and the immigrants in the country as a fact. However, it was followed by the Immigration Law".

Ambassador Orhun, on the subject of the Immigration Law, said that: "As this law is not directed only against Muslims, I will not make a special analysis about it. Although it is a general law, as the majority of the immigrants are of Muslim origin, the measures foreseen in the Immgration Law are against principles of equality and prevention of discrimination".

Orhun stated that the Immigration Law which foresees a clear distinction between ethnic Germans and naturalised Germans, is against the principle of equality.

Underlining that a similar situation is also seen in France, Ambassador Ömür Orhun said: "The same situation is also seen in France. There also some restrictive legal measures are contemplated to be adopted concerning integration of immigrants. As opposed to this, the Slovenian Government has recently recognized the Slovenian Muslim

Community as a legal entity. After Spain, this is the second positive development. There is such a contradiction that we face.