



Delegation of Canada
to the OSCE

Délégation du Canada
auprès de l'OSCE

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Combating racism, hate crime, xenophobia, and discrimination, in all their forms, is a key commitment made by OSCE participating States.

In recent years, the OSCE region, and the world at large, has witnessed a troubling rise in discriminatory populism, acts of xenophobic hatred, violent extremism targeting members of minority groups, and other forms of exclusion. The victims of such acts and expressions see their inherent human dignity trampled and their human rights violated. Canada reaffirms that human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, and that everyone is entitled to enjoy these rights equally and without distinction. Furthermore, we recall that in Article VII of the Helsinki Final Act, participating States recognized this universality.

We recognize that globalization and changing patterns of migration – including irregular mass movements of people, urbanization, rapid technological advances, and other forces – can accentuate the many forms of existing and new diversity in our societies. Our challenge is to regard this diversity not as a threat to what one currently enjoys, but rather as a strength and an asset that can bring additional benefits to all. To enhance the security of our societies, we must move beyond tolerance and non-discrimination towards a broader respect for diversity and inclusion of all members of society.

Through our historical experience – which has not been without its challenges, many of which we continue to address today – Canada has learned that inclusion is the proven path to peace, security, and prosperity. We will continue to bring this message to multilateral fora, such as the OSCE, encouraging and supporting inclusive narratives, creating spaces for further discussion, and highlighting the benefits that diversity brings.

We have found that inclusive societies reap the windfall of diversity. Specifically, that inclusive policies and legislation produce economic, social, cultural, civil, and political benefits. Inclusive economic growth reduces income inequality, and inclusive workplaces have been shown to be more productive. Inclusive social policies and services provide more equitable access to resources and reduce social exclusion and marginalization. An inclusive civic space and a democratic political environment lead to greater public participation and enhanced legitimacy for public institutions.

We commend the work of ODIHR, OSCE field operations, and many of the OSCE participating States, for the significant progress made to encourage inclusive capacity-building over the past year. We welcome the recognition that inclusion and respect for diversity must be built using a comprehensive approach, one which engages a wide variety of stakeholders.

We are all responsible for changing our thinking and our behaviour so as to be more respectful and inclusive towards others; and to leverage our differences to make our societies richer, stronger, freer, more peaceful and more secure.

To conclude, Canada offers the following three recommendations:

- 1) That OSCE participating States pursue policies and programs that promote inclusion in order to derive the economic, social, cultural, civil, and political benefits of diversity;
- 2) That OSCE participating States strengthen, or introduce where it does not exist, legislation that outlaws damaging acts of hate, discrimination, and intolerance and ensures their perpetrators are brought to justice.
- 3) That the OSCE and ODIHR continue to raise awareness about discrimination, hate crimes, anti-Semitism, and other forms of intolerance, including against Muslims, Christians, other religious groups, women and girls, and against sexual minorities, including LGBTI persons.