

**Remarks by the President of MAGEN LEAGUE  
Rabbi&Dr. ALEXANDER LAKSHIN  
as delivered at  
The OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism and on Other  
Forms of Intolerance**

**Cordoba, 8 and 9 June, 2005**

Dear Chairman,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is truly symbolic that we meet here in Cordoba, birthplace of Maimonides, and crossroads of the three monotheistic religions, sometimes peacefully coexisting, sometimes revealing horrors of persecution and hatred.

It is an honor and a privilege to address this important meeting on behalf of MAGEN League – the international Jewish counter-missionary organization.

This is my fourth OSCE meeting in less than two years. Therefore, it is time for assessment whether it was worth of time, money and effort spent. As far as I recall “concrete” has been the key word throughout these forums. It is good that we openly discuss issues of anti-Semitism and other forms of hatred and bigotry. But we should already stop being euphoric from the mere fact of openly talking about evil. I still want to hear from the official representatives of the OSCE countries of the concrete steps taken and concrete deeds done to overcome this evil.

As it was mentioned here, the purpose of this forum is not to condemn a country or countries for having anti-Semitism and hate crimes in their land or even for not doing enough to eliminate them. However, the best way to avoid this counterproductive approach is to honestly assess the situation in one’s own country and to present to the international community realistic plans of how to overcome one’s own problems. In subsequent meetings an honest analysis of successes and yes, even of failures would be the welcome and concrete contribution to common cause.

I was very much disappointed to learn here that 26 countries did not even present the report on the situation with anti-Semitism and hate crimes. I am neither a diplomat, nor a politician. But as a former college professor I have one thing to say to those countries – homework must be done and there should be no way around it for anyone if we want to succeed.

Let me add a concrete suggestion – for future meetings official country reports should be, if possible, presented literally back to back with consolidated NGO reports. Comparing the two will provide valuable information both about the situation and the credibility.

Cooperation of both government and non-government organizations between themselves and with OSCE commissioners is essential for fair and objective evaluation.

Much was said about education as a way to eliminate hatred. Education is neither a panacea, nor an instant cure. It is important as it plants seeds that will hopefully bring fruit in the future. As for the present, immediate needs are to be taken care of by national and local governments and law enforcement agencies.

Personally, for me anti-Semitism is not just statistics. It is an unfortunate personal experience. Less than 6 months ago I was a victim of a violent anti-Semitic attack in Moscow, Russia. As we heard, similar attacks happen in many countries, so the key factor is not the fact itself, but society's and law enforcement reaction. So far only two of 6 or 7 alleged perpetrators were apprehended by Moscow police and are awaiting court trial. Fair public trial and appropriate punishment will surely improve the general situation and send a clear message to others who espouse anti-Semitic and xenophobic views and are ready to move to violence manifesting them. Such manifestation, by all means is clearly beyond any legitimate freedom of self-expression.

In conclusion I would like to thank the hosts and organizers of this conference and stress the need to see and hear about concrete deeds in the future.  
Thank you.

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