



**Statement by  
OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights**

**Second Plenary Session: Consequences of Intolerance  
Against Muslims**

**OSCE Chairmanship Conference on Intolerance and  
Discrimination against Muslims**

**Cordoba, 09 October 2007**

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to focus my remarks on the ways in which the ODIHR can provide support to Muslim communities and participating States in their efforts to combat intolerance and discrimination against Muslim communities. According to the mandate provided by the OSCE Ministerial Council, ODIHR's Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Programme deals with monitoring, information collection, awareness raising, capacity building and cooperation with international bodies.

The ODIHR closely monitors hate-motivated incidents, including those targeting at Muslims, in the OSCE region. Through consultations with the national point of contacts on hate crimes and civil society representatives, we identify trends in anti-Muslim hate incidents, follow up state responses and highlight several good practices in this area. As mentioned in the previous session, hate crimes against Muslims are under-reported and there are very few NGOs monitoring hate incidents motivated by anti-Muslim bias. With the view of supporting the participating States to remedy this situation, in 2008 we intend to enhance the Law Enforcement Officers Programme on preventing and responding hate crimes from the point of anti-Muslim hate incidents. I would like to also encourage Muslim community-based NGOs to participate in our civil society training programme on the monitoring of hate crimes which will take place in 2008.

As a collection point for information, the ODIHR's Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Information System (TANDIS) hosts reports, key documents, examples of good practices and tools concerning tolerance and non-discrimination. You can find a section on TANDIS pertaining specifically to intolerance and discrimination against Muslims. We keep this section up-to-

date, based on the information we receive from both participating States and civil society.

One of key priorities of our Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Programme is to establish strong cooperation with Muslim community-based organizations and to develop concrete projects in combating intolerance and discrimination against Muslims.

For this purpose, in 2005, the ODIHR organized jointly with Ambassador Orhun, the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, a roundtable meeting with Muslim community-based organizations from across the OSCE region. The roundtable provided opportunities to: (i) learn more about the key concerns facing Muslim communities in the OSCE region; (ii) facilitate discussion on prospective areas of action; and (iii) identify potential areas of cooperation between the ODIHR, the Personal Representative and civil society.

This event was followed up in 2006, by an issue-specific roundtable on the Representation of Muslims in Media and Political Discourse. This event examined the increasingly negative political rhetoric, media coverage and intellectualization of anti-Muslim sentiment. Participants noted that stereotypes and prejudice are to a great extent rooted in insufficient knowledge and understanding of Muslim communities and Islam. In public discourse and in the media, Muslim's diverse ways of living and their different worldviews, their problems and social backgrounds often find limited reflection.

Taking into account the recommendations that came out of the second roundtable meeting and the example of the Media Guide on Muslims in Britain, in 2007 the ODIHR launched a project which seeks to support the development of a series of country specific resource books on Muslim communities within the framework of its educational capacity building and awareness raising activities. This project aims to promote an increased understanding of Muslim communities living across the OSCE region and to provide a more complete overview of their role and contribution in society. In this respect, the books can be useful resource tools for journalist, policy makers and educators. They will contain fact, figures, short essays on different aspects of Muslim life and culture, directory of contacts and a glossary of Islamic terms.

As a pilot project, the ODIHR is currently cooperating with Casa Arabe, Spanish Muslim community-based NGOs and journalists in order to support the development of a resource book for Muslim communities in Spain. To this end, in July 2007 the ODIHR, with the assistance of Casa Arabe, held a roundtable meeting in Madrid, where academics, media experts and NGO representatives reviewed the first draft of the resource book and made their comments on it. We intend to complete this pilot project in the coming months. In 2008, based on the lessons learnt from the pilot project, the ODIHR will support the development of similar country specific resource books for other participating States.

In 2008, we will also organize a second issue specific roundtable, in cooperation with the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office. The topic of this roundtable will be determined in consultation with Muslim civil society representatives. We hope that these roundtable meetings will facilitate the development of OSCE-wide networks of organizations working to combat Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims.

Finally, I would like to reiterate the ODIHR's willingness to support OSCE states and civil society organizations in their efforts to combat intolerance and discrimination against Muslims, be it through the provision of a forum in which to raise and follow-up issues, or through joint co-operation on concrete projects.

Thank you.