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International Network Against Cyber Hate

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Intervention by Ronald Eissens, representing the International Network Against Cyber Hate (INACH), at the OSCE Human Dimensions Implementation Meeting 2007, Warsaw, Poland, during working session 2, Tuesday September 25, 'Combating intolerance and discrimination and promoting mutual respect and understanding – implementation of commitments'.

Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates,

The International Network Against Cyber Hate, a 15-country strong NGO network that monitors and counters cyber hate on both sides of the Atlantic has, since its founding in 2002, not only succeeded in the voluntary removal of thousands of instances of hate-speech but also in monitoring and comprehensive reporting on the growth and danger of hate on the internet within the OSCE area.

We put the subject firmly on the agenda of the OSCE in 2002, resulting in the June 2004 conference, organised and hosted by the French government, on the relationship between racist, xenophobic and antisemitic propaganda on the Internet and hate crimes.

Thanks to ODIHRs TnD, progress has been made by training new hotlines on cyber hate in Central and Eastern-European states. One year of funding for one of our eastern European members was kindly provided by TnD.

Those are up to now the tangible results, which are not much as we look at the commitments made during the 12th meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council in 2004 in Sofia, one of those commitments being to follow-up the work on Internet and hate Crime.

The just released excellent ODIHR report 'Hate crimes in the OSCE region: incidents and responses' shows that online incitement is on the rise and we see the daily results across the OSCE region; violence against Gays and Lesbians, Jews, Muslims, Roma and Sinti, those of African descent, oftentimes because of online incitement.

The OSCE should make good on commitments made in Paris and Sofia and proceed to work on the issue of online incitement and hate crime. The Paris conference only scratched the surface. As Ambassador Strohal said in his opening speech yesterday, we should not gloss-over challenges and we need a more focussed international will to combat racism.

We recommend the OSCE participating states to:

- Follow-up the Paris 2004 conference by organizing an expert-meeting on all forms of Hate speech on the Internet and the relation between on-line incitement and hate crime;
- Create financial support for NGOs that counter and monitor cyber hate;
- Promote and support educational projects directed towards countering hate on the Internet.