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United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Public Discourse Related to European Muslims and Romani Communities

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a. i. Carol Fuller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 26, 2011

The United States would like to reiterate its support for the OSCE's work in combating intolerance and discrimination, particularly with regard to Muslims and Roma/Sinti. As U.S. Special Representative to Muslim Communities Farah Pandith conveyed to the Permanent Council in February, states must strive to ensure that no group can be marginalized, stereotyped, or discriminated against on the basis of race, religion, birth, or national or social origin.

We are disappointed that recently, some political leaders in the OSCE region have made statements about Muslim and Romani communities that contradict the OSCE's goals in combating intolerance and discrimination. Statements that perpetuate Islamophobic and racist attitudes are never part of responsible political discourse. Strong political leadership at the highest level is needed to counter negative portrayals of minorities by politicians and members of the media, to speak out against those who use public platforms to incite ethnic hatred, and to encourage factual and balanced portrayals of Europe's minority communities.

We urge all OSCE participating States to seek ways to improve the socio-economic and security situation for their Muslim and Roma residents and to ensure accountability for discrimination or violence directed at them, in accordance with OSCE commitments.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.