



**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR TACAN İLDEM
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY**

**In response to the Personal Representatives of the Chairperson-in-Office on combating
intolerance and discrimination**

970th Meeting of the Permanent Council, 7 November 2013

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.

I join the previous speakers in warmly welcoming the Personal Representatives of the Chairperson-in-Office on combating intolerance and discrimination to the Permanent Council, and wish to thank them for their thought-provoking presentations. The increasing relevance of their work has been underlined once more by the reports that we heard today.

In the statement I made in reply to Ambassador Lenarcic, I pointed out that this year's Human Dimension Implementation Meeting had highlighted once again the alarming trends in intolerance and discrimination, especially on the basis of religion or belief. It is deplorable, yet also indisputable that Muslims, Jews, Christians, Roma and Sinti, as well as others are subject to widespread discrimination in many participating States. Migrants are particularly vulnerable in this regard, often becoming targets of hostility, harassment and hate-motivated crimes. Islamophobia is on the rise in the OSCE region. Anti-Semitism persists in spite of the many measures we have taken. This situation poses a threat not only to our security, but to the common values that underpin our commitments and our Organization as a whole.

Many Muslims living in different parts of the OSCE area are unfortunately victims of Islamophobia and other forms of intolerance, discrimination and exclusion. This is why combating Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate crimes is felt as a priority issue. We expect the participating States and our Organization to be more sensitive to this issue. In his presentation, Ambassador Akhmetov drew attention to many of the current challenges posed by intolerance and discrimination against Muslims in the OSCE area. We fully agree with his recommendations.

We are confident that the three Personal Representatives shall fulfill their crucial mandates with increasingly balanced efforts and enhanced coordination, backed by the valuable technical support of ODHIR. As I stated during the High-Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination held last May in Tirana, the Representatives can also make important contributions by stressing the role and responsibility of political leaders and representatives, as well as the media, in combating manifestations of prejudice, intolerance, and hatred. While they make use of every opportunity to condemn alienation and to promote inclusion with diversity in participating States, the Representative on Freedom of the Media could also help by addressing the existing challenges between media freedom on the one hand and racist, xenophobic and hate-motivated media activities and stereotyping on the other.

I would like to take this opportunity to touch upon a final point. I am certain we all agree that the OSCE is a platform for well-functioning dialogue, effective cooperation and constructive



engagement. I doubt that holding the adherents of one religion responsible for the problems and challenges faced by the adherents of another is in keeping with the spirit and aims of our Organization. I have pointed out in the past, and wish to do so again, that the Personal Representatives would do well to calibrate their observations and statements in order to better reflect this understanding and to facilitate interreligious cooperation.

In conclusion, I would like to wish the Personal Representatives every success in their endeavors, and since this is his last appearance before the Permanent Council, also to express how much we appreciate Ambassador Akhmetov for his sincere efforts in the past five years as Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in Office on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims.

Thank you.

