



**Statement by Paul LeGendre  
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**Reporting on the recommendations made during the  
Civil Society Preparatory Meeting**

**OSCE High Level Conference on Combating Discrimination and  
Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding**

**Bucharest, June 8, 2007**

**Plenary Session 4: Legislation in the field of tolerance and non-  
discrimination; the role of law enforcement in combating hate  
crimes; data collection on hate crimes**

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

The commitments undertaken by the OSCE participating States are only as good as their implementation and so as civil society actors, we welcomed the opportunity during Wednesday's Civil Society Preparatory Meeting to discuss two questions: How is legislation on hate crimes implemented? And how are the commitments related to data collection implemented? The fruitful discussion resulted in 18 recommendations for the OSCE participating States, which have been made available to you. Let me share with you a few of them.

First of all, we recommend that states, if they have not already done so, enact laws that expressly address hate crimes. Such laws should recognize bias as an aggravating circumstance in the commission of violent crime and should provide for enhanced penalties for crimes motivated by animus on the basis of the victim's race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or other similar forms of discrimination.

The enforcement of such laws is paramount. We call on states to ensure that those responsible for violent hate crimes be held accountable under the law. In order for this to happen, states should ensure that criminal justice officials have the training and resources to identify and respond to these crimes.

Data collection is another important tool to better understand and combat hate crimes. We underline that systematic data collection often reveals how high the incidence of such crimes actually are and that this reality is hidden where data is not available.

We thus recommend that states collect comprehensive data on hate crimes. Data collection systems should distinguish between violent and nonviolent forms of hate crimes, should track cases through the criminal justice system, and public reporting should disaggregate the attributes of the victims or the bias motives.

In this connection, we recommend the establishment of specialized anti-discrimination bodies, or the strengthening of those already in place. Such bodies can play an important role in systematic data collection.

Let me finish with perhaps the most important recommendation to emerge from our discussion: political will and leadership are essential if these measures to combat hate crimes are to be effective.

Thank you for your attention.