



Preventing and Responding to Hate Incidents and Crimes against Christians

Rome, 12 September 2011

Centro Alcide De Gasperi

OSCE participating States recognize that manifestations of discrimination and intolerance threaten the security of individuals and may give rise to wider scale conflict and violence that undermine international stability and security. Today, there are a broad range of commitments to combat racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, discrimination and intolerance, including against Muslims, Christians, and Jews and preventing and responding to hate crimes.

The OSCE acknowledges the specificity of different forms of intolerance, while at the same time recognizing the importance of taking a comprehensive approach and addressing cross-cutting issues. In this context, participating States have adopted and reiterated a number of commitments on combating discrimination against Christians. The OSCE Chairperson-in-Office first specifically mentioned intolerance against Christians in a declaration emerging from the 2005 Cordoba Conference; this was followed by a number of Ministerial Council Decisions that sought to develop an Organization-wide response for countering discrimination and intolerance against Christians.¹

Recent attacks on Christian communities have highlighted the necessity to address the problem of intolerance against Christians with a specific focus on hate crimes. In light of the increasingly public dimension of religion, fast dissemination of information and the world's increasing religious diversity have the potential to amplify discussions and debates and have repercussions on the security and stability of the OSCE area.

With its expertise on hate crimes, the OSCE is well positioned to provide a forum for a discussion on this topic. The aim of this Meeting is to provide a platform for experts and practitioners to discuss hate-motivated crimes and incidents against Christians in the OSCE area.

The objectives of the meeting are threefold: it aims at

¹ Ministerial Council Decisions 10/05, 13/06, 10/07 and the Bucharest Ministerial Declaration (2001).

- Raising awareness on hate-motivated crimes and incidents targeting Christians and their property across the OSCE region;
- Sharing good practices and gathering a set of recommendations on how to prevent and respond to hate-motivated crimes and incidents targeting Christians;
- Illustrating and confronting the findings relevant to hate-motivated violence with the specific example of attacks on places of worship.

The high-level meeting will commence with an opening session to be followed by three working sessions. Discussions should be interactive, allowing for an exchange between the panelists and the participants. The first session will explore the extent and the nature of hate-motivated violence targeting Christians. The second session will focus on prevention and response to this phenomenon on an international, national and local level. The third panel will examine the specific challenges associated with attacks targeting places of worship and how these are being addressed by government and communities.

Sunday, 11 September 2011

20:30 Opening Reception hosted by the **Hon. Gianni Alemanno**, Mayor of Rome

Monday, 12 September 2011

10.00 Opening Session

11:00 Coffee Break

11:15 **Session I: Hate-motivated Crimes and Incidents against Christians in the OSCE area**

General overview on the hate incidents and crimes against Christians in the OSCE area and discussion of the special challenges faced by Christian communities.

12:45 **Lunch**

14.15 **Session II: Preventing and Responding to Hate Crimes and Incidents against Christians: International, National and Local Responses**

Initiatives at the international, national and local levels will be illustrated that can help prevent and respond to hate crimes against Christians.

15.45 Coffee Break

16.15 **Session III: Special Challenges in Preventing and Responding to Attacks on Places of Worship**

Overview of the type of attacks against Christian places of worship in the OSCE area and illustration of practical responses to prevent the attacks and protect these places.

17:45 Closing Session

18.30 Closing Reception hosted by **H.E. Alfons Kloss**, Ambassador of Austria to the Holy See