



**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR TACAN İLDEM, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
TURKEY IN RESPONSE TO THE PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CIO ON COMBATING
INTOLERANCE AND DISCRIMINATION**

(930th Meeting of the Permanent Council, 15 November 2012)

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. I wish to thank them for their work and their update on their activities today.

The work of our organization in fighting tolerance and non-discrimination is to a large extent carried out by the Personal Representatives, therefore we value this occasion to exchange views on their observations, evaluations and recommendations.

They complement the work carried out by the institutions of the OSCE in general and ODIHR in particular. Last week during our debate with Ambassador Lenarcic on the results of the HDIM, I had the occasion to reaffirm our support for ODIHR's activities on the fight against racism and xenophobia and to voice our expectations on the necessity to intensify the work of ODIHR, along with the need to see the taskings in this area met at satisfactory levels.

Today, I wish to emphasize the increasing relevance of the three Personal Representatives' work and our wish that their efforts continue unabated. The Representatives have a crucial role to play especially through their consultations with affected communities, and we are confident that they will continue and strengthen their efforts with the valuable technical support of ODIHR.

As evident in the presentations of today, it is a deplorable fact that the OSCE area continues to be plagued by frequent and often violent incidents of racism and xenophobia. Certain groups such as Muslims, Jews, Roma and Sinti and others, face day-to-day discrimination. Migrants are being constantly reminded that they are different. Ethnic profiling during identity checks, hostility, hate-motivated crimes, hate speech are common features in the OSCE area.

In addition to the rising phenomenon of Islamophobia, which has unfortunately become a peculiar form of racism with its own distinctive nature, the persistence of anti-Semitism despite the many measures already taken against it and other forms of intolerance to followers of other faiths, continues to be a ground for concern.

I want to briefly repeat how the variety and complexity of the problem was eloquently and extensively voiced by civil society during the relevant section of this year's HDIM, in which

the Personal Representatives also took part. The recent Thematic Event on Intolerance and Discrimination against Migrants organised by the Irish Chairmanship was yet another complementary occasion to tackle the nature of the challenges and the way to remedy them together.

Today's presentations also should serve as a wake-up call for the participating States. We believe that the Personal Representatives have important contributions to make in this regard, also by stressing the role and responsibility of political leaders and representatives, as well as the media, in combating manifestations of intolerance and hatred. The Personal Representatives should continue making use of every opportunity to condemn the alienation of those perceived to be "others" and to promote inclusion in participating States. In reporting on challenges faced in multicultural societies, one should also refrain from pinpointing certain groups. This is multi-dimensional challenge. It involves outreach to vulnerable communities, training, education materials and capacity building for governmental institutions, equality bodies, parliaments, the private sector and civil society.

I believe that the adoption of the decision on strengthening efforts to combat racism and xenophobia in the upcoming Ministerial Council would not only provide a necessary signal to all stakeholders on the importance of continuing our common action but also help the Personal Representatives and ODIHR in fulfilling their mandates.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the delegation of Albania for their offer to host a High-Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination in 2013. We welcome and support Albania's timely initiative and believe that such a conference will provide a valuable opportunity to take up the challenges facing us in this field.

In conclusion, I would like to wish the Personal Representatives every success in their endeavors.

Thank you.