



*PERMANENT MISSION
OF TURKEY TO THE OSCE*

**STATEMENT BY TURKEY
(HDIM WS 13-Tolerance and non-discrimination II)
(4 October 2011, Warsaw)**

Thank you Mr. Moderator,

I would like to begin by congratulating the ODIHR as well as the representatives of the civil society for initiating such a lively debate in this working session, focusing on our commitments in the fields of tolerance and non-discrimination. We believe that the civil society has become an important actor that the OSCE region, particularly Europe, today, more than ever needs when it comes to promoting diversity and tolerance and fighting racism, discrimination and xenophobia.

Since our last gathering in Warsaw on this topic, the facts on the ground confirm the enduring gravity of the threat posed by the advancement of intolerance, racism, xenophobia and disrespect to inherent human dignity in almost all segments of our societies. Today, intolerance and discrimination against persons belonging to specific ethnic and religious groups or people with other status continue to be steadily on the rise.

Recent surveys make a compelling case that hate motivated incidents, racist and xenophobic violence, ethnic profiling, hostility against migrants are not mere common denominators of the so-called `isolated` actions of ultra nationalist and extreme right-wing groups. The scope and the frequency of these incidents, fostered by official ignorance, deserve decisive and result-oriented action. Mass media coverage portraying the migrants as the scapegoats of negative trends in country of residence, depicting the Muslims as the prime suspect of terrorism, widespread anti-Semitic manifestations are only a few examples of recurrent challenges that require prompt and careful deliberation of the participating States.

Role and responsibility of political leadership in stemming intolerance and discrimination deserves further attention. As long as the political leaders

continue to cater populist perceptions of discrimination, segregation and hate, there is minimum, if any, chance to combat xenophobia, let alone to prevent it. The adverse effects of current economic and financial crisis as well as of politicians contributing to the resurgence of intolerance ahead of and during elections have already been underlined by the previous speakers.

Non-discrimination is a *sine qua non* for the enjoyment and exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms by each and every individual. We should recognize that we are all different, that differences are the richness for our societies, but that we are indeed in the end all equal.

Mr. Moderator,

Perceiving and portraying the tolerance and non-discrimination issues as separate from or even secondary to the core human rights issues urge us to constantly remind ourselves of this fundamental principle.

It is worth repeating that the growth of incitement to racial and religious hatred and resurgence of all manifestations of intolerance create an environment in which vulnerable groups face growing challenges to enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Education is identified as the most effective way to change this worrisome trend. In this respect we commend the work of ODIHR in the development of tools in education to address different forms of intolerance.

In a globalized world, we also need to invest more in the prevention and early warning of potential intercultural conflicts based on misperceptions and prejudices, instantly disseminated through the media and the internet. States and civil society should cooperate to monitor and analyze patterns of hate motivated crimes and incidents. The ODIHR's Hate Crime Report provides a valuable tool and insights in this regard.

We commend the work of ODIHR in the field of combating hate crimes, including its valuable annual reporting exercise. On the other hand, it is discouraging to observe that almost half of the OSCE participating States is still hesitant to provide ODIHR with adequate information and data.

We hope the calls and recommendations of the civil society and the participating States will be reciprocated by a substantial decision at the Ministerial Council meeting in Vilnius.

Thank you.