

Report of Moderator Gert Weisskirchen (Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE on Combating Antisemitism)

Session 2: Education on the Holocaust and Antisemitism

We have had an inspiring debate. To summarize the highlights, I would like to start with the conviction: there is a growing need for more awareness by teachers of their role in the formation of students' personalities and the development of children's values. Therefore, a comprehensive approach in education is necessary to be successful in the fight against antisemitism and other forms of intolerance. The importance of Holocaust education was stressed to underline its significance as a watershed in history. However, there was agreement that Holocaust education alone is not sufficient to combat present day antisemitism in all its forms. Instead, young people need to learn more about Jewish life and history, as well as about Israel. New approaches were stressed, with one speaker, Yehuda Bauer, mentioning peer education in a Berlin program as a promising technique.

The following recommendations were made at this session:

- 1) Holocaust education remains essential for our understanding of the world today. Tools for keeping it relevant include visits to former concentration camps, support for more programming at these memorial sites and comparisons to contemporary examples of genocide.
- 2) Teachers need to be given the opportunity to discuss the problems they face in teaching about the Holocaust and in teaching about antisemitism. This means that at the national and international level it is important to hold teachers conferences that focus on the exchange of best practices.
- 3) Dialogue should be encouraged as an important requisite for successful education programs, especially between groups in our societies confronted most directly with intolerance and discrimination.
- 4) NGOs and educational authorities should work together to create teaching materials for both the elementary and the secondary level that are easily available to teachers.
- 5) The OSCE and its member states should develop educational programs that promote a deeper knowledge of the history, traditions and culture of the Jewish people and their contribution to the society at large.
- 6) Educational material should be developed to teach young people about the history of Israel and its birth within the context of European history. This can be reinforced with more academic and teacher training exchanges by OSCE countries with Israel.
- 7) Boycott threats and intimidation at universities related to the issue of Israel and other spheres of antisemitism compromise academic freedom and should

be condemned. Instead, education should promote cultural mediation, bringing diversity into the dialogue.

- 8) Antisemitism among some in the Muslim world stems in part from a lack of Moslem immigration and should be countered by programs to integrate Moslems. Educational strategies should stress the achievements of the Islamic, Christian-European and Judaic civilizations, stressing acceptance and mutual understanding.
- 9) The OSCE should encourage member states to review textbooks and other educational material related to the Holocaust, the depiction of Jews and modern Israel. It should also fight against antisemitism in schoolbooks, including those found in some countries of the Mediterranean basin and the Middle East.
- 10) The OSCE should encourage all member states to participate in the police training program to deal with "hate" crimes established by ODHIR.
- 11) The OSCE should encourage the parliaments of all member states to establish parliamentary committees to consider and recommend legislation and educational reforms to deal with "hate" crimes and other educational reforms at all levels of education.

Cervantes/ Don Quichotte: Nada de grande se hace sin soñar.

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