

**Spanish Chairmanship
Chairman-in-Office**

CORDOBA CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE'S DECLARATION ON INTOLERANCE AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MUSLIMS

Distinguished delegates,

Let me sum up the proceedings of this Conference on Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims in what I would like to call

“OSCE Chairman-in-Office Cordoba Declaration on Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims”.

Being inspired once more by the spirit of Cordoba, the City of Three Cultures;

Recognising that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law is at the core of the OSCE comprehensive concept of security, and reaffirming that racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, discrimination against Christians, and discrimination against Muslims, are against these principles, values and commitments,

Bearing in mind the 2005 Cordoba Declaration, which recognised that some *forms of intolerance and discrimination may have unique characteristics and origins and require proper definition, but the methods to fight against them are, in many fields, similar and include efforts in monitoring, data collection, legislation, law enforcement, education, the media and promotion of dialogue;*

Recalling the Decisions of the OSCE Ministerial Councils at Porto and Sofia, which, *inter alia*, expressed concern over intolerance and discrimination against Muslims, as well as OSCE Conferences in the last years in Vienna, Berlin, Paris, Brussels, Cordoba and recently Bucharest and Meetings such as the recent Almaty OSCE Meeting, which focused, *inter alia*, on intolerance and discrimination against Muslims,

Considering that the purpose of this Conference was to further examine intolerance and discrimination against Muslims in the OSCE area, with a view to offer possible remedies, as part of our efforts to combat all forms of discrimination;

In the Chairman's view,

1. Intolerance and discrimination against Muslims should be regarded with utmost concern; acts based on such intolerance and discrimination should be condemned without reservation, and the commitment of OSCE participating States to combat intolerance and discrimination against Muslims should be reiterated.

2. It is necessary to avoid the prejudices engendering intolerance and discrimination against Muslims, which may drive our societies and countries to biased perceptions, and which may build new walls of division within and among them.
3. To that end, it is the Chairman's view that
 - The primary responsibility for addressing acts of intolerance and discrimination against Muslims rests with participating States, including by promoting and facilitating open and transparent interfaith and intercultural dialogue and partnerships towards tolerance, mutual respect and understanding, promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and by fighting prejudice, disaffection and marginalisation,
 - It is also the Muslim communities' responsibility to engage fully within society. Their participation in social and political life through, *inter alia*, representative organisations, is very relevant.
 - International developments or political issues can never justify intolerance and discrimination, including against Muslims,
 - All forms of terrorism must be strongly condemned. The identification of terrorism and extremism with Islam and Muslims has to be firmly rejected.
 - Political and community representatives can play a relevant role in the fight against intolerance and discrimination against Muslims, among others, through a constructive public discourse to diffuse tensions within societies, while respecting freedom of expression.
 - Education is a crucial means to prevent and address intolerance and discrimination against Muslims, as well as to promote integration and pluralism and to combat radicalisation. In this respect, the Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions and Belief in Public Schools in the OSCE area that will soon be published will undoubtedly contribute to these efforts.
 - The commitment to collecting, maintaining and improving methods to gather reliable information and statistics about acts motivated by intolerance and discrimination, including against Muslims, and to following them closely, is commendable. At the same time, it would be convenient that participating States report such information periodically to the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), and make this information available to the public.
 - Legislation and law enforcement are essential tools to combat crimes and violent manifestations of intolerance and discrimination, including against Muslims.
 - The ODIHR could further strengthen the work of its Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Programme, in particular its assistance activities, *among others*, with regard to intolerance and discrimination against Muslims. Furthermore, the ODIHR should

continue co-operation with other OSCE institutions and other organisations, as well as with the Three Personal Representatives on Tolerance, on the issue of Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims.

- The development of informal exchanges among experts from OSCE participating States on best practices and experiences, as well as international organization and NGO efforts in these areas, should be encouraged and supported.
- In this context, the UN Alliance of Civilizations initiative, which aims at facilitating harmony and dialogue by underlining the common denominator of different cultures and religions, should be highlighted, and the appointment of the UN High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations and the presentation of his implementation plan 2007-2009 to the Friends Group Ministerial Meeting in September in New York, are most welcomed.