

**OSCE CONFERENCE
ON ANTI-SEMITISM AND ON OTHER FORMS OF INTOLERANCE**

**Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration
H.E. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović**

(Cordoba, 8-9 June 2005)

Mr. Chairperson,

Allow me to express my sincere thanks to Spain and this multicultural city of Cordoba for hosting this important OSCE conference on Anti-Semitism and on other forms of intolerance.

Since the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, our commitments to promote and encourage effective exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without any discrimination have been considerably expanded. Recently we have adopted a comprehensive set of recommendations on Anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance: the 2003 Maastricht Decision on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, the 2004 Berlin Declaration on Anti-Semitism, the 2004 Brussels Declaration on Tolerance and the Fight against Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, the 2004 Paris conclusions on the relationship between Racist and anti-Semitic propaganda on the Internet and Hate Crimes, as well as relevant Permanent Council Decisions on Combating Anti-Semitism, on Tolerance and the Fight against Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, and on Promoting Tolerance and Media Freedom on the Internet.

At this conference we should concentrate on measures and good practices to implement them.

Mr. Chairperson,

2005 is a year when Europe is called to remember and to act.

Recent commemoration of the Day of Europe, sixty years after the defeat of fascism, brought us together to reaffirm our anti-fascist and democratic values. That historic day also inspired the Croatian Parliament to adopt its Declaration on Anti-fascism that emphasises significant contribution of the Croatian people to the defeat of fascism and calls for democracy, freedom, tolerance, solidarity and elimination of all form of extremism and totalitarianism.

Last month the Croatian President and the Prime Minister visited the Jasenovac Memorial Centre where they paid tribute to all victims of fascism, and called for respecting the right of victims to the truth.

Croatia, as a country with tragic recent experience of war conflict would like to point out that remembrance of the past must be based on objective and scientific facts. Occasional

attempts at revisionism or manipulation with numbers of victims and identity of war crimes perpetrators— whether regarding anti-fascism and Holocaust, or conflict in the former Yugoslavia - represent an unacceptable disrespect for the victims and their rights and should be strongly condemned.

In Croatia teaching and learning about the Holocaust is connected with teaching and learning on human rights. Croatia proclaimed 27 January as the Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust and the Prevention of Crimes against Humanity. On that day all schools provide lectures, presentations, videos, student projects, films, all in order to inform, remember and remind. Other educational and cultural institutions and the media also help them in this respect.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Republic of Croatia has also made considerable progress in addressing issues related to racism, discrimination and intolerance. Croatia has accepted all core international instruments in the field of human rights relevant to combating racism and intolerance. Further progress in acceptance of international standards was made by ratifying the UN Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, Protocol No. 12. to the European Convention on Human Rights concerning discrimination, European Convention on Cyber Crime as well as by signing the Additional Protocol thereto. Following the latter the Criminal Code was amended in 2004 with a new provision on racial discrimination and Internet that criminalizes the distribution or publication through a computer system of material which denies, grossly minimizes, approves or justifies the criminal acts of genocide or crimes against humanity.

Alongside a wide ratification of international human rights instruments Croatia is making serious efforts to improve their implementation on the national level. Although ratified international treaties form the part of internal legal system of the Republic of Croatia, their implementation is strengthened through the adoption of national laws such as the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities.

Furthermore, Croatia has signed a number of bilateral agreements on protection of minorities, aimed at enhancing protection of national minorities in Croatia, as well as improving the position of Croat minority in other countries. Minority Rights Agreement concluded last year between Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro has just entered into force, on June 1 2005.

Equally important, Croatia has adopted the Law on Gender Equality, and established new independent mechanisms for human rights protection, such as the Ombudsperson for the rights of the child and the Ombudsperson for gender equality.

The Croatian Government is also acting on the recommendations by various UN, Council of Europe and OSCE monitoring mechanisms using them as a tool for stronger implementation of accepted human rights and non-discrimination standards on the national level. Recently the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has issued its recommendations and currently the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance and the Council of Europe Commissioner of Human Rights are elaborating their respective recommendations.

In order to advance the fight against all forms of discrimination, the Croatian Government set up a Working Group to draft National strategy in this field.

Mr. Chairperson,

As regards the constitutional framework, the Croatian Constitution establishes the fundamental principle of equality in law and before the law without any discrimination.

It stipulates that any call for or incitement to national, racial or religious hatred or any form of intolerance shall be prohibited and punishable. In that respect the Criminal Code sanctions public presentation or dissemination of ideas claiming superiority or inferiority of race, ethnic or religious community, sex, nation, as well as the idea of superiority or inferiority based on colour aimed at the promotion of racial, religious, gender, national or ethnic hatred or hatred based on colour or aimed at derision.

The Constitution of the Republic of Croatia guarantees freedom of religion and freedom to manifest religion and other convictions. All religious communities are equal before the law and are free, in conformity with the law, to open schools, educational and other institutions, social and charitable institutions and manage them. The Law on the Legal Status of Religious Communities fully affirms and promotes the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, especially its paragraph 7 on human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Mr. Chairperson,

To combat discrimination against the Roma the Croatian Government has adopted a wide national platform with measures for their integration into society, signed this year the «Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015» and adopted National Action Plan for its implementation aimed at improving the economic and social status of the Roma through better education, health care, housing and job opportunities.

In Croatia, programs of education on human rights have been launched in preschool institutions, and are continuously carried out in elementary and high schools within the regular curricula. Those programs aim at the promotion of tolerance, non-discrimination and democratic values and include active participation of children.

Croatian Government promotes active co-operation with non-governmental organizations in the area of human rights and allocates funds for projects to NGOs directly from the state budget, in particular to those whose program promotes human rights and tolerance.

Finally, Mr. Chairperson, let me conclude that the abovementioned steps and activities clearly represent the determination of the Republic of Croatia to create a comprehensive legal framework for the promotion of human rights and the protection of vulnerable social groups.

In light of the Cordoba Declaration, we are determined to advance implementation of our commitments to combat Anti-Semitism and all other forms of intolerance.