

## **OSCE CONFERENCE ON COMBATTING DISCRIMINATION AND PROMOTING MUTUAL RESPECT AND UNDERSTANDING**

Part 11, Plenary Session 4

### **Intervention by the United Kingdom**

Michael Whine

In recent years the UK has been troubled by inner city tension, but it has demonstrated a willingness and openness in confronting these problems.

As John Mann, the Chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism, noted yesterday, the reason why the United Kingdom's high levels of recorded antisemitic incidents is quoted by others is because we are very good at recording such incidents. Nothing is missed; nothing goes unrecorded.

Both the Police and prosecuting authorities record hate crimes prosecutions and convictions, although the annual British Crime Survey, which is based on widespread polling indicate that hate crimes are being underreported.

In an effort to narrow this gap the government has undertaken initiatives to improve the performance of the criminal justice agencies, and involves civil society in doing so

Let me cite just a few examples:

The London Criminal Justice Board is a regular roundtable meeting between senior police, prosecuting, probation and courts service officials. Their aim is to narrow the 'criminal justice gap', the gap between the commission of crime and judicial disposal by the courts. This body also allows full access to its decision making process to the Independent Advisors Group, an oversight committee drawn from representatives of religious and other minority groups.

The Office for Criminal Justice Reform Hate Crime Forum, is charged with assessing the implementation of recent hate crime and diversity legislation. It too has an oversight panel composed of representatives of the main minority communities.

The Metropolitan Police Authority in London and the Greater Manchester Police Authority both have hate crime forums drawn from civil society which have the power to interrogate their police services on their strategies for combating hate crime in their regions.

The policy guidance for police and the prosecuting authorities for prosecuting racial and religious crime was drafted by a committee of senior prosecutors and representatives of civil society and is about to be rewritten shortly to take into account recent changes in legislation.

My final example concerns the recording of hate crimes against the Jewish community.

The Community Security Trust, the Jewish community's defence agency, has won an enviable reputation for the accuracy of its hate crime data. Last week we concluded an agreement with the national police agency tasked with monitoring community tensions: to meet every three months to exchange information; to meet with the police authorities of London, Manchester and West Yorkshire, which contain the largest Jewish communities, in order to educate them about how we collect data, and to use this process to assist the police in recording hate crime data about other minority communities.

Mr Chairman, the United Kingdom leads the way in involving civil society in criminal justice reform, and in seeking to better its performance