

HDIM.IO/27/07
24 September 2007



Statement by the Council of Europe Prevention of aggressive nationalism, chauvinism and ethnic cleansing

"Never again" was the leading motto of foundation of the Council of Europe in 1949. Never again the atrocities of the Second World War, never again aggressive nationalism, racism, chauvinism and ethnic cleansing which were among the root causes of the World War II. This is why the CoE has always been active in the fight against these evils, unfortunately still alive at present. Today the Council of Europe's principal organ for combating these phenomena is ECRI: the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance.

I would like to draw your special attention to the work of other CoE bodies in the field of prevention of nationalism, extremism and chauvinism, which are relevant to the OSCE concerns.

Last year PACE debated a report in which it recommended the establishment of a European remembrance centre for victims of forced population movements and ethnic cleansing". The aims of this centre would be to favour reconciliation, act as an instrument of conflict prevention and combat racism and xenophobia by sensitizing European public opinion to the human and human rights aspects of forced population movements and ethnic cleansing.

In its work in the field of prevention of nationalism, chauvinism and extremism the CoE also pays special attention to education, and in particular to history teaching and intercultural education. One of the roles of the Council of Europe is to build an ever closer union of its Members. Education build bridges between cultures, societies and nations on the basis of the integration of democratic values aiming at strengthening reconciliation, tolerance and mutual understanding at all levels: national, regional, European and world.

As a follow up of Recommendation (2001) 15 of the Committee of Ministers on "History Teaching in the 21st Century in Europe" and in the framework of the work on strengthening and developing intercultural dialogue, being done in all sectors of the Council of Europe, its Steering Committee for Education has decided to run a project on "The Image of the Other in History Teaching" from 2006 to 2009.

This project aims at drafting general guidelines for policies on history teaching within the framework of intercultural dialogue; proposing strategies, methods and instruments which can be used to turn these general guidelines into specific projects; and making proposals on the training, not just of history teachers, but of all those involved in the history learning process.

The Council of Europe has made it a priority to promote intercultural and inter-religious dialogue in order to ensure not only a better understanding among

cultures but also cohesion and stability in our societies, on the basis of the principle of accepting others, with their differences, and the principle of freedom of expression. To this end, the Council of Europe is to publish a White Paper on intercultural dialogue.

The concept of “the White Paper on intercultural dialogue” is based on the view that intercultural dialogue is one tool – among several others – contributing to the democratic management of (cultural) diversity within European societies and Europe’s relations with neighboring regions. It can also make an important contribution to the prevention of tensions.