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**Statement by
OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights**

Plenary Session 1: Combating Anti-Semitism

**OSCE Conference on Combating Discrimination and
Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding**

Bucharest, 07 June 2007

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This session on Combating Anti-Semitism provides an important opportunity to assess the implementation of political commitments made by all 56 participating States at the past OSCE Conferences on Anti-Semitism in Vienna in 2003, and in Berlin in 2004, and at the Conference on Anti-Semitism and on Other Forms of Intolerance in Cordoba in 2005. With these high level conferences the OSCE confronted the rise of anti-Semitism in the OSCE region since the beginning of the 21st century, and has also been recognizing the role that anti-Semitism has played throughout history as a major threat to freedom, security, and human dignity.

In their decisions and declarations, the OSCE participating States:

- recognized that anti-Semitism has assumed new forms and expressions
- Acknowledged that anti-Semitism poses a threat to:
 - democracy
 - the values of civilization
 - to overall security in the OSCE region and beyond
- condemned without reserve all manifestations of Anti-Semitism
- and declared unambiguously that international developments or political issues including those in Israel or elsewhere in the Middle East, never justify anti-Semitism.

Nevertheless, numerous manifestations of anti-Semitism continue to be noted in many parts of the OSCE region. They involved physical and verbal assaults, even murder, mainly against visibly identifiable Jews or Jewish institutions, and attacks against Jewish property, including vandal attacks on Jewish cemeteries and synagogues. Analyses and investigations of these incidents show that the projection of anti-Israel sentiment onto Jewish communities throughout Europe has become a widespread pattern in 2006. This trend intensified during the Israel-Hezbollah war and found its expression in both organized and spontaneous violence.

The usage of Holocaust imagery as a rhetorical device to threaten Jews or to equate them with the perpetrators of the Holocaust appears more and more often. This development and the politicization of Holocaust denial also account for the fact that the Shoah has become a theme in anti-Semitism. In 2006, attacks against the memory of the Holocaust were both rhetorical and physical, with memorial sites being desecrated and demolished in various participating States. Apart from these trends, adherence to (elements of) the traditional anti-Semitic worldview,

traditional stereotypes and radical exclusionary nationalism have continued to motivate anti-Semitic incidents. Across the OSCE region, authorities have been investigating these incidents systematically, especially in the case of threats, harassment and violent attacks against Jewish individuals and/or communities.

An important trend to be noted with respect to the year 2006 is that numerous manifestations of anti-Semitism have focused on and evolved around schools and pupils. In 2006, Jewish schools or Jewish students were under threat and/or attacked in Austria, Denmark, Hungary, the United Kingdom, Ukraine, France, USA, Belgium, the Russian Federation, Germany, and in Canada. In addition, the rise of attacks on Jewish children on their journeys to and from school and during the school day by schoolmates, is a most worrisome and alarming development.

A priority of the ODIHR's Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Programme has been to support participating States in implementing their overall commitments to combat anti-Semitism. In order to support States in responding effectively and appropriately to the trend of violence and anti-Semitic attitudes among students, the ODIHR, together with the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam and national experts, has developed teaching material that address anti-Semitism in its historical and actual context. So far, seven participating States have developed the materials and three new States are now working to do the same. This material, which comes in special country adaptations, has been tested in schools and is now being implemented into the school system in most of the respective countries. The implementation process is supported by Prof. Gert Weisskirchen, the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on Combating Anti-Semitism, who

regularly raises awareness about the materials and other ODIHR tools in his discussions with participating States.

Samples of the teaching materials are available on the display tables outside and more detailed information about this project and other ODIHR tools and assistance programmes will be provided during the session on education.

These and other ODIHR activities need the continued commitment and support from governments. The collection of data and their analysis is an important precondition to combating anti-Semitism effectively, as is the development of appropriate legislation, law enforcement training, and international cooperation. The ODIHR is active in all these areas and committed to further strengthen its support. We look forward to your continued feedback.