



**B ' N A I B ' R I T H I N T E R N A T I O N A L**  
**STATEMENT**

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

*Bucharest, Romania  
June 7-8, 2007*

The OSCE's historic first conference on anti-Semitism in Vienna in 2003 marked a turning point for this region. We had experienced a long history – up until the Holocaust and even the decades since – of a lack of will in the international community to address, let alone vigorously fight, anti-Semitism. The Vienna gathering, followed by one in Berlin in 2004, in Cordoba in 2005, and in Bucharest today, finally demonstrated a new seriousness of purpose and provided a basis for optimism.

But while the important progress that these conferences have represented should be acknowledged and appreciated, and while these now regularly-scheduled meetings have come to represent a real source of hope, recent events unfortunately have reminded us that much work remains to be done. Since the fighting between Israel and the terrorist groups Hezbollah and Hamas broke out last year, a discernible increase in anti-Semitism has resulted. Great Britain in particular has witnessed a surge in violent attacks on Jewish institutions and individuals, but elsewhere in Europe and throughout the OSCE sphere, anti-Semitic incidents have risen in number. Meanwhile, some European institutions continue to boycott Israel while turning a blind eye to the offenses of even the world's worst human rights violators. And with the occurrence this year of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Six Day War and, next year, the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Israeli independence, it is all too plausible that the observance of these milestones might give new impetus to such worrisome trends.

Our objective here must be to rededicate ourselves to effectively carrying out the practical task of combating, neutralizing, and even, where possible, eradicating anti-Semitism. It is simply unacceptable that hatred of Jews continues to threaten citizens and communities in many of the OSCE's 56 member countries and beyond the OSCE region, and that that threat is in fact escalating in some areas. To lessen or lose the focus that the OSCE has applied to opposing anti-Semitism in the past four years – precisely when events have led to an intensification of the problem over the past year – would be a tragic mistake. Rather, this is a time to *increase* the spotlight on anti-Semitism as a distinct and uniquely resilient social illness, and to redouble our efforts to fight it.

To this end, the Ministerial Council should formalize the scheduling of conferences on anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance at regular intervals. Moreover, so that these gatherings can serve as a spur to more than mere discussions, we must continue to advance the spirit of zero-tolerance for anti-Semitism cultivated at these OSCE conferences, by diligently implementing relevant programs of action – in tolerance education, Holocaust education, legislation, and law enforcement.

We must extend, for the foreseeable future, the terms of the OSCE chair-in-office's personal representatives on intolerance, who direct sustained attention, at high levels, to the problems of anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance. We must also support conditions that would facilitate rather than hinder the work of the personal representatives and enable them to perform their functions to the best of their respective abilities.

We should further promote, within the OSCE, the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia's working definition of anti-Semitism, and provide for the utilization of that EUMC standard in monitoring efforts.

We must continue to bolster the funding for ODIHR's anti-Semitism-related staffing and programs, so that ODIHR can further expand its critical work. In that vein, OSCE member-states must fulfill their reporting requirements with respect to combating anti-Semitism.

We must continue to recognize anti-Semitism as a distinct phenomenon – one whose unique character and manifestations require specialized treatment – even as we deplore the many other forms of intolerance and support efforts to combat them.

Finally, we must strongly reiterate and proactively reinforce the crucial principle declared at the 2004 Berlin conference and reiterated at the 2005 Cordoba conference: that no political event or cause can ever justify anti-Semitism. We must further make clear, once and for all, that the de-legitimization and demonization of Israel is often none other than anti-Semitism in a different guise. Like any other democratic country, Israel expects to endure responsible criticism of its government's policies. But denial of the Jewish right to self-determination – to peace and security for Jews in their homeland – is clearly a manifestation of anti-Semitism. Likewise, to employ terrorism and to intimidate and incite against Jews – in schoolbooks, sermons, television broadcasts, print publications, or Internet materials – is also certainly anti-Semitism. In Europe or anywhere, let us not blindly apologize for hatred and criminality.

In light of the history of this continent, the willingness of the OSCE to confront the problem of anti-Semitism is both welcome and encouraging. While intolerance is by no means limited to the jurisdiction of the OSCE's 56 member states, it is fitting and necessary that we here today lead by standing decisively against anti-Semitism, in both word and deed. Let us continue to work together to make our shared vision – a more secure Europe and a more humane world – a reality.