



DELEGATION OF ROMANIA

Statement by Romania

**Working Session 3: Combating Intolerance and Discrimination
and Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding –
Implementation of Commitments**

In addition to the EU statement presented this morning by the United Kingdom, I would like to add a few remarks on a national basis:

Romania expresses its satisfaction for having a special day dedicated to combating intolerance and discrimination and promoting mutual respect and understanding. Romania will continue to support the inclusion of this topic as a priority on the OSCE agenda.

Despite significant efforts in this field and despite unchallenged political commitment of the OSCE participating States to fight against manifestations of discrimination, racism, xenophobia and intolerance these still remain active in our societies.

Romania's guiding principle remains "zero tolerance towards discrimination and intolerance" - and yet, we note with concern the increase of racist violence in Europe, as well as common shortcomings in identifying its causes and adequate means to address the issue. We see, for example, that migrant workers are particularly exposed to intolerance, at times alone on ground of their ethnicity.

The Bucharest Conference on combating discrimination, promoting mutual respect and understanding, that we had the honour to host in June this year, fully showed how much still remains to be done in order to find effective ways to promote a culture of mutual respect, understanding and equality in all of our countries.

In order to implement the commitments taken in the OSCE in the field of tolerance and non-discrimination since 2002, the Romanian authorities improved the legislative framework and developed practical instruments for its implementation that I would like to mention as examples of good practices:

The 2002 *Law on combating all forms of discrimination* has been amended in 2006 in accordance with the new international commitments in the field. As a result, the National Council for Combating Discrimination, set up in 2002, has become an independent agency under Parliamentary control, its capacity to address and to sanction discrimination cases being consolidated at the same time as its autonomy.

In April 2006, the Government Ordinance of 2002 on the ban on public denial of the Holocaust, condemnation of the Fascist, Nazi, and xenophobic actions and statements and outlawing public monuments recalling war criminals, was amended to extend its application to all victims of Holocaust, including the Roma population.

In the field of education, our public schools offer now the framework to study the Holocaust as part of the history curricula, as well as in separate optional classes. To this end a textbook on the history of the Holocaust was launched in 2005 by the “National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust” and several seminars were held in order to train the history teachers.

Similarly, a Commission for the study of Roma slavery was established in June 2007, aiming at providing historical data that will be conveyed through education, thus helping the young generation to better understand – and, consequently, better address – the deep roots of discriminatory attitudes and clichés.

As a member of the **Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research** and having established, since 2004, a National Day to commemorate the Holocaust, on October 9, Romania has started the construction of a Holocaust Memorial, in Bucharest, aimed at addressing the need for all Romanian citizens to learn about the Holocaust.

These are some of the measures taken by the Romanian authorities to implement our OSCE commitments in the field of combating anti-Semitism, discrimination, racism, xenophobia and all other forms of intolerance. We will continue to support the valuable work of the OSCE in this field.