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**STATEMENT BY MR. VEYSEL FILIZ,
SPOKESPERSON OF THE EUROPEAN MUSLIM INITIATIVE FOR
SOCIAL COHESION, AT THE OSCE HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE
ON TOLERANCE AND NON-DISCRIMINATION (INCLUDING
HUMAN RIGHTS YOUTH EDUCATION ON TOLERANCE AND
NON-DISCRIMINATION)**

Tirana, 22 May 2013

**Plenary session 6: The role of political leadership, legislation, law
enforcement, data collection, and civil society in combating and preventing
intolerance and discrimination, including hate crimes**

Ladies and gentlemen,
Excellencies,
Colleagues,

The reports of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) or of many national bodies specialized in combating racism, intolerance or discrimination confirm an increase in hate-motivated incidents targeting Muslim communities. Indeed, not a day goes by without verbal or physical attacks taking place to the west of Vienna. Being a Muslim or looking like one has become dangerous and we must be vigilant before this becomes a mass phenomenon. The media connections enjoyed by certain populist politicians – not only within the extreme Right – are largely responsible.

In many European countries, Muslim communities can no longer be described as migrants. However, full inclusion within their host societies is slow to arrive. We cannot accept this social fragmentation, which opens the door to violent extremism of all forms.

I should like to commend Sweden and Switzerland for the reports they have submitted to the ODIHR regarding Islamophobia in their countries. Two countries out of almost sixty! This figure is woefully inadequate. We invite the participating States to carry out this work in the near future as mapping hate-motivated incidents in our region is extremely important for our common security and preserving our democratic *acquis*.

The Guidelines for Educators on Countering Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims have become a useful tool that should be broadly implemented to proactively counter these phenomena.

The decision of the current OSCE Chairmanship to convene a meeting on the security of the Jewish community is an excellent initiative. A similar meeting on Muslim communities is equally necessary and will allow us to respond to the lack of data on intolerance and discrimination against Muslims. We know that the public authorities and law enforcement agencies do not have the logistical capacity or experience to respond to this need. This meeting could provide an effective response.

In conclusion, the European Muslim Initiative for Social Cohesion supports and will accompany the official visit of the Special Representatives of the Chairperson-in-Office next month to Belgium.