

**Draft**

**Session 5**

**Address by prof., habil.dr. Alfonsas Eidintas, Ambassador at Large for  
OSCE Human Dimension, MFA of Lithuania  
at the High Level Conference in Astana**

**Topic: The Role of Tolerance Education in the framework of OSCE  
commitments**

**Dear Chairperson, distinguished Colleagues, Excellencies, Ladies and  
Gentlemen**

Promotion of tolerance, understanding and respect is an important part of OSCE efforts in the area of Equality, Tolerance and Non-discrimination and in fact – in global peace, understanding between nations and religions and common security.

Monitoring is very important, but equally important is prevention. Young people do not have strong moral and value positions established, their immunity is weak, they are vulnerable. I believe, that with tolerance education, we can improve this situation. The young generation needs knowledge of the basics of history, which will allow them to understand the mechanism of indoctrination. Pupils suppose to be able to understand and discuss most complicated questions of the past and present. The participating states of the OSCE in the Copenhagen Document of 1990 declared that they form intention to intensify the efforts to combat totalitarianism, racial and ethnic hatred, anti-semitism, xenophobia and discrimination, take effective measures, in conformity with their constitutional systems, at the national, regional and local levels to promote understanding and tolerance, particularly in the fields of education, culture and information. Education is the main tool to prevent hate crimes.

I am particularly pleased that the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is paying more and more attention to the Tolerance Education and fight against Anti-Semitism. Only in 2009, the training sessions for the teachers were organized in 48 participating states, some others began cooperation in trainings were held on the topic of combating Anti-Semitism.

In the area of education the ODIHR has facilitated a number of important guiding publications, which highlights good practices and recommends areas for strengthening and improving teaching about the Holocaust; Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools (2007).

We have numerous OSCE commitments on promotion of Tolerance and Non-Discrimination including through education. However, we need better implementation of them. These include the Minister Council Decision of Porto 2002, Maastricht 2003, and Sofia 2004. Special emphasis should be given to tolerance education, exchange of information and good practices.

Let me focus now on the topic of Holocaust education, which is an important aspect of promotion of tolerance, on which my country has been working. Holocaust education and the lessons on history and culture of national minorities play an important role in developing and promoting tolerance in schools and the society in general.

The school curriculum adopted by the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science considers the teaching about the Holocaust as a part of the history of the world and Lithuania. It is obligatory for the grades 5, 10 and 12 of one thousand schools. It constitutes an important part of the history of the World War II. The topic of Holocaust is also included in such disciplines as Ethics, Religious and civic education, and Literature.

In Lithuania the development of Holocaust education has been significantly advanced by the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF), with which Lithuania is co-operating since 2000. In 2002 Lithuania gained full membership in the ITF. In co-operation with partners from the ITF countries a variety of projects of the Holocaust and tolerance education have been implemented by the ITF involving many Austrian, Israeli, American partners, including such institutions as United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Simon Wiesenthal Center, Yad Vashem, and Austrian Gedenkdienst ("Remembrance Service"). Such co-operation contributes to the exchange of good practice and helps to implement the time-proved ideas and the best achievements of our partners.

After almost a decade of Lithuania's implementation of the National Programme on Holocaust and Tolerance Education and Prevention of Crimes Against Humanity, a new qualitative approach was achieved. That was

observed and welcomed by internationally recognized Holocaust scholars, educators and ITF representatives. Established by President of Lithuania the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania was created in close cooperation with the international partners. This commission has been serving for 11 years as a main tool to teach not only about Holocaust, but also about national minorities, other religions, to help better understand racial persecutions, Nazi ideology, occupations, local collaboration with Nazis, the period of dictatorships in Europe between the two world wars, and, finally, the current aspects of combating modern Anti-semitism. One of the activities that should be implemented in the field of improvement of teaching of the Holocaust history in schools is teachers' training and the employment of the methodologies that have proved effective in other countries, as well as translation of the major studies on Jewish history into Lithuanian.

Therefore program is overviewed every two years and this year we are preparing for the modernization and a reset again, paying more attention to the creation of new Tolerance centers and further developing Holocaust and Tolerance Education Network. Today the network consists of 63 Tolerance Education Centers (TEC) established in secondary schools, NGOs and museums. TECs arrange numerous educational activities for schools and local communities, using modern educational methods, calling conferences, seminars, and discussions on human rights and historical topics, commemorating victims of the Holocaust, attending and taking care of Jewish cemeteries or memorial sites. Students are also collecting materials about brave people who helped to save innocent lives. So far 780 Lithuanians have been recognized by Yad Vashem as saviors of the Jews in the Holocaust – Righteous among the Nations.

This is one example of promotion of tolerance through education in one country. Unfortunately, we still face numerous manifestations of intolerance today, also among the youth. Therefore we will to renew our programmes and projects adapting them to the new needs of today's life and specific situation in every country, choosing the priorities in the prevention of hate crimes and better education of tolerance.

There is still a real need and the OSCE have an opportunity to become an initiator in promoting necessary educational programmes and, using the best examples, to continue education combating hate crimes, intolerance, racism, xenophobia and discrimination.