



**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR TACAN İLDEM  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY**

**2014 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting  
Working Session 13 – Tolerance and non-discrimination II (continued), including  
combating racism, xenophobia and discrimination, also focusing on intolerance on  
religious grounds  
Warsaw, 30 September 2014**

Thank you, Mr. Moderator.

We warmly welcome the Personal Representatives of the Chairperson-in-Office on combating intolerance and discrimination to the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting. Their presentations have underlined the deplorable, yet also indisputable fact that Muslims, Jews, Christians, Roma and Sinti, as well as others continue to face widespread discrimination in many participating States.

Turkey has long been at the forefront of efforts to promote tolerance and non-discrimination in the OSCE area. Indeed, today more than ever before, the rise of racism, xenophobia, intolerance and discrimination is among the foremost challenges facing our Organization. The situation on the ground amply demonstrates the need to address this vital field. Especially alarming in this regard is the increase in intolerance and discrimination against those perceived to be “other” or “different”, particularly migrants, in many participating States. Anti-Semitism also persists in spite of the many measures we have taken. This situation poses a threat not only to our security, but also to the common values that underpin our commitments and our Organization as a whole.

Muslims have been especially hard hit as Islamophobia continues to flourish, feeding off the increasing general levels of extremism and xenophobia. It is a well-established fact that anti-Muslim prejudice reinforces social exclusion and hinders the integration of Muslims in European societies. Combating Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate crimes is therefore a priority issue. To give just one striking example of such hate crimes, in one prominent EU

member country an average of 22 mosques were attacked each year from 2001 to 2013, with the figure rising to 36 in 2013 and 70 in 2014.

Mr. Moderator,

Protection and further promotion of freedom of expression is obviously a priority and the right to freedom of expression may include the right to criticize belief systems. However, it would be important that while protecting free expression, participating States should also ensure respect for religion, prevent hate speech and hate crime.

In concluding I wish to underline one of the recommendations that I will circulate in writing later on, namely our call on all participating States to acknowledge the threat of Islamophobia and take the necessary legal, administrative and educational measures to combat manifestations of anti-Muslim sentiment, including stereotypes, prejudice and hate crimes against Muslims.

Thank you.

### **Recommendations by Turkey**

- Hostility and hate crimes against Muslims have had a serious impact on the sense of security among Muslim communities. We call on all participating States to acknowledge the threat of Islamophobia and take the necessary legal, administrative and educational measures to combat manifestations of anti-Muslim sentiment, including stereotypes, prejudice and hate crimes against Muslims.
- Participating States should intensify their exchange of best practices in combating intolerance and discrimination towards Muslims, including examples of good cooperation between Muslim communities and law enforcement officers in combating hate crimes against members of these communities.
- Participating States should step up their efforts in monitoring and reporting on hate crimes, including a more effective partnering with civil society as well as the collection of disaggregated data in order to shed more light on the extent of manifestations of hostility towards Muslims.

- Participating States should develop community projects that aim to provide around-the-clock support to victims of anti-Muslim hate crimes; participating States should also take measures to thoroughly address forms of intolerance and discrimination other than hate crimes experienced by Muslim communities.
- Participating States should develop training programs on Islamophobia for law enforcement officers, other public officials, as well as teachers, clergy and imams, requesting ODIHR to provide the necessary support if required.
- Participating States should support and increase funding for the work of the ODIHR and the three Personal Representatives of the Chairperson-in-Office on combating intolerance and discrimination.
- Participating States should make better use of ODIHR's capacity to raise awareness on intolerance, discrimination and xenophobia, also by providing extended tasking for ODIHR beyond the scope of the Office's work on hate crimes reporting.
- Participating States should initiate increased cooperation to address intolerant public discourse concerning Muslims, including by political leaders, in the media, and on the internet. In addition, ODIHR and the Representative on Freedom of the Media should enhance their collaboration in addressing anti-Muslim media activities, biased reporting and negative stereotyping.
- Participating States should consider possible avenues of cooperation and coordination in countering the growing cohesion and networking of across the OSCE area of groups promoting an Islamophobic agenda.
- ODIHR should continue and enhance its valuable work on educating Muslim communities about hate crimes.