



ADDRESS

**by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Dr Dimitrij Rupel
at the Preparatory NGO Forum for the OSCE Conference
on Anti-Semitism and on Other Forms of Intolerance
*Sevilla, 7 June 2005***

It is my great pleasure to be here today. I would like to express my gratitude to The Foundation Tres Culturas, the organizers of this NGO Preparatory Forum for the Conference on Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Intolerance, which is to start tomorrow in Cordoba. This event is part of a long tradition of meetings of civil society representatives from the OSCE region. We all know that with the active participation of civil society, your ideas, your observations, your proposals and your constructive criticisms, you directly contribute to the quality and richness of discussion held at OSCE conferences and meetings. This is why one of my first meetings after Slovenia assumed the Chairmanship was with representatives of civil society. Thanks to your knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm, you play a vital role within the OSCE in providing support and contributing to the implementation of OSCE commitments; your role is not only recognized, but highly valued.

I therefore particularly welcome this forum. You all probably know that the Cordoba Conference – the sixth OSCE event to deal with the promotion of tolerance – is now, more than ever, about implementation. The Conference will give us time to cast a critical look at the commitments on intolerance made by OSCE participating States, to assess how far they have been implemented and to identify areas that may have been neglected so far. This Forum offers a unique occasion for all stakeholders from the OSCE region to discuss these issues and prepare the Conference in a very concrete way. I am looking forward to hearing your suggestions and recommendations for the Conference, which we can then use in designing the further policies of the OSCE.

Apart from conferences, the OSCE has created other possibilities for cooperation and coordination between the Chairman-in-Office and civil society. I would like to draw your attention to the appointment of three Personal Representatives of the Chairman-in-Office:

- Ms Anastasia Crickley on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, also focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions;
- Ambassador Ömür Orhun on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims;
- Professor Gert Weisskirchen on Combating Anti-Semitism.

They were appointed to promote better co-ordination of participating States' efforts to implement commitments in the field of tolerance and non-discrimination. In particular, they will cooperate and coordinate activities with OSCE Institutions, relevant international organizations and NGOs in order to avoid duplication of efforts. Some of you have already had the occasion to meet with them recently in Warsaw during a preparatory meeting for the Cordoba Conference. This event provided an opportunity for the Personal Representatives to present their mandates and for the civil society representatives to discuss the programme of the Cordoba Conference, to raise issues and to explore new areas of co-operation. The organization of the meeting was welcomed by all participants and it was decided that the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights would continue to organize regular consultations between the three Personal Representatives and NGO representatives on issues relating to tolerance and non-discrimination.

I believe your discussions have brought many specific and useful suggestions and I look forward to hearing your recommendations and ideas presented during the course of the Cordoba Conference over the next two days.

Thank you.