



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Chairmanship-in-Office's Three Personal Representatives for Tolerance

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 15, 2012

The United States welcomes today's important discussion addressing issues of intolerance and discrimination in the OSCE region. We are pleased that the Chairmanship's Personal Representatives for Tolerance, Ambassador Adil Akhmetov, Justice Catherine McGuinness, and Rabbi Andrew Baker are able to join us at the Permanent Council.

We commend the Personal Representatives for their efforts over this past year and we appreciate their partnership, country visits, and participation in OSCE events. The Personal Representatives play a critical role in promoting the protection and inclusion of persons belonging to minorities as well as drawing attention to areas where governments need to make critical progress.

November 9th marked the 74th anniversary of Kristallnacht – the Night of Broken Glass – when 267 synagogues and 7500 businesses owned by Jews were destroyed or damaged by Nazi paramilitaries and at least 91 persons were killed. Very few people spoke up against the events of Kristallnacht. Very few governments addressed the hatred expressed in this and similar incidents; very few religious voices condemned the cruelty; very few editorial boards spoke out against the brutalities perpetrated against Jews. This year's remembrance of Kristallnacht again reminds us of our responsibility to speak out when there is oppression of any sort, when there is inaction in the face of hatred and violence, when there is indifference to the suffering of others. On too many occasions this year, we were reminded of the urgency in the work that remains for the Personal Representatives, for the OSCE, and for participating States.

In March this year, the Personal Representatives responded to the tragedy in Toulouse where an attack on a Jewish school left three children and one adult dead. The French authorities swiftly responded to these murders as hate crimes and took vigorous steps to investigate and ensure the security of all, including the Jewish and Muslim communities. In August, a white supremacist killed six Americans at a Sikh temple in Wisconsin. In October, two dozen masked men stormed a gay club in Moscow and injured more than ten people, in one instance smashing a glass into a young woman's face. In Greece, attacks against migrants have reached alarming levels. In August, an Iraqi migrant was stabbed and last week an Egyptian was found tied to a tree and beaten on the island of Paros. At the beginning of the year two Senegalese migrants died at the hands of a far-right sympathizer in Italy. German authorities also charged members of an underground German neo-Nazi cell for the murders of at least nine immigrants over the past 12 years.

These horrific examples demonstrate how unchecked prejudice and hate can fuel extreme violence and insidious harassment against racial, religious, and ethnic minorities such as Jews, Muslims, migrants and Roma in addition to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered individuals and other vulnerable populations. The devastation caused by a single act of hate can reverberate through families, places of worship, and an entire nation. Such violence jeopardizes the sense of safety and security in our communities.

This afternoon, ODIHR will convene its Annual Meeting of the National Points of Contact on Combating Hate Crimes. We are pleased that a distinguished representative of our Department of Justice will contribute to this meeting as our new National Point of Contact. We have learned that hate crime statutes are powerful tools for combating hate and violence so that all of our citizens can live free from fear of being targeted because of the color of their skin, the background they were born into, what they believe, their gender, or the persons they love.

We urge participating States to enact appropriate legislation, to collect disaggregated data on hate crimes, to train law enforcement, to assist victim communities, to engage with civil society on common efforts, and to promote integration. We encourage participating States to make use of ODIHR's resources including its law enforcement hate crimes training that can assist in addressing the problem.

We commend the Irish Chairmanship's commitment to tolerance with focused events that addressed racism and xenophobia and its coordination with OSCE institutions and civil society to examine discrimination from multiple angles – from empowerment to victimization – and through the experiences of women, migrants, and Roma, persons of African descent, and other minorities. We urge all participating States to work constructively to achieve a successful Ministerial Decision in Dublin.

Looking ahead, we encourage the Ukrainian Chairmanship and the Troika to consult closely with the Personal Representatives and ODIHR to support their important work. We would like to see an enhanced focus on, and standardized approach to, country visits and subsequent reports. We would like greater engagement when incidents do occur – whether through public statements or private engagement with national officials. We seek increased attention to the issue of security for vulnerable communities and look forward to the upcoming conference on the *Safety of Jewish Communities*.

Given its expressed interest in tolerance and youth, we encourage the Ukrainian Chairmanship to focus on access to education as a means toward greater tolerance by addressing such issues as segregation, language access, disabilities, safety in schools, human rights and Holocaust education, as well as anti-bullying measures. ODIHR and the High Commissioner on National Minorities have rich expertise on these topics.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.