



OSCE CHAIRMANSHIP CONFERENCE ON INTOLERANCE AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MUSLIMS

(Cordoba, 9 and 10 October 2007)

ANNOTATED AGENDA

The OSCE, as well as the UN, the EU or the Council of Europe, and other International Organizations has shown on several occasions its concerns on the increasing phenomenon of Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims. There are several examples of the specific attention the OSCE has paid to this issue, such as the Decision nº 6 of the 2002 Porto Ministerial Council Meeting or 2004 Permanent Council Decision nº 621.

The focus of the OSCE Chairmanship Conference on Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims has to be understood in the larger context of the OSCE's efforts to promote mutual respect and understanding and to fight Intolerance and Discrimination as a whole, as enshrined in Ministerial Decisions 10/05 or 13/06, to recall the most recent ones. In this respect, the Chairmanship-in-Office is fully aware of the debate between the holistic and strand approaches to the development of an OSCE agenda on Tolerance and Non-discrimination. Various Conferences and Seminars have successfully blended both perspectives, examining specific forms of discrimination from a thematic, cross-cutting and horizontal perspective, highlighting at one time the uniqueness of every form of discrimination and intolerance as well as the existing common ground underlying all of them.

In this spirit, at Conferences such as those held in Cordoba in 2005 or in Bucharest in 2007, discussions were held on the challenges Muslims face in being accepted as full and equal members of their respective societies, as well as the possible ways and means to be taken in the OSCE in order to increase mutual engagement and accommodation, including measures that might be taken by Muslims themselves. This OSCE Chairmanship Conference aims at building upon these efforts.

Tuesday 9th October

Note: Delegates to be seated by 9:45 a.m.

10:00 H. OPENING SESSION

Interventions of:

- OSCE Chairman-in Office and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation of Spain, Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos.

- Mr. Manuel Chaves, President of the Junta de Andalucía.
- Ms. Rosa Aguilar, Mayoress of Cordoba.
- M. Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, OSCE Secretary General.
- Mr. Amr Moussa, Secretary General of the Arab League.
- President Jorge Sampaio, High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations.

11:15 H. FIRST PLENARY SESSION: Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims: Old prejudices and new targets

Note: Conclusions of the civil society meeting will be presented prior to the beginning of the First Session

Moderator: Ambassador Omur Orhun, Personal Representative of the OSCE
CiO on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims

Speakers: Gema Martín Muñoz, General Director of Casa Árabe.
Humayun Ansari, Royal Holloway, London University.

One of the central questions of the OSCE's Agenda to promote tolerance and mutual understanding and to combat discrimination is how to combat stereotypical generalizations, how to reduce fear and how to strengthen cohesion in our increasingly pluralistic societies while countering marginalization and discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, religion or belief. Nowadays, and increasingly after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, individuals practicing Islam as a religion and as a way of life seem to be discriminated not because of who they are, but because of the religious community they belong to, however deeply or loosely they choose to practice that religion or that way of life.

The opening plenary session is intended to reflect on how Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims feeds themselves on a distorted image of 'the other'. Delegations are kindly asked to limit their interventions to a maximum of 3-4 minutes.

The debate arising from this session could consider some of these points:

- What are the roots that nourish these prejudices, both in the West and in the Islamic world itself? Does referring to these prejudices as between the West and the Islamic world reinforce them, given the large Muslim populations in the West and vice-versa?
- How can it be prevented that Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims renders accommodation of Muslim minorities within OSCE participating States and Partners for Cooperation's societies more difficult?
- How can it be achieved that the voices of reason and moderation prevail within societies, while at the same time promoting respect for human rights and more broadly for civic norms in them?
- How can the fight against Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims learn from the experiences of other communities discriminated on the basis of religion or belief?
- How best could the OSCE address this phenomenon?
- What could be an appropriate OSCE contribution by the OSCE to the implementation of pertinent recommendations from the report of the High level Group of the UN Alliance of Civilizations Initiative?

13:20 H. End of First Plenary Session

13:30 H. Lunch (optional)

- For Heads of Delegation: Diputación de Córdoba
- For Delegates: Restaurant El Bandolero

15:30 H. **SECOND PLENARY SESSION:** Consequences of Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims

Moderator: Sheyi M. Hisham Kabbani, President of the Islamic Council of America.

Speakers: Ioannis Dimitrakopoulos, Head of Research and Data Collection at the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights.

Ibrahim Kalin, Director, Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA), Ankara.

This session will deal with the different kinds of Intolerance and Discrimination that Muslims face, from two main viewpoints:

From a domestic viewpoint, in areas such as labor market, housing or education, and according to, *inter alia*, recent EU, CoE and UN reports, Muslims experience various levels of discrimination in our increasingly pluralistic societies, as is the case of other minority communities. It will be useful then to tackle the issue of Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims from an OSCE perspective and assess what the situation regarding this phenomenon is in the OSCE area, how it contributes to the rise of extremist attitudes among a small fraction of members of those communities and what are the remedies for countering the phenomenon, at local, national and international level, including the contribution that the OSCE can offer to that purpose.

The first part of this session focus on what political leaders and institutions could do to send a strong message of respect to all communities within their States and societies- as for instance by establishing meaningful intercultural dialogue, promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as civic norms, or implementation of practical initiatives to bring those communities together and tackle prejudice, disaffection and marginalization.

That said, it is relevant as well to realize that overcoming Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims is somehow similar to a double-track journey. On the one hand, mainstream society and State institutions need to accept diversity and remove whatever barriers stand in the way of accommodation. On the other, it is the Muslim communities' responsibility to engage fully within society within the framework provided by our democratic values and principles.

From an international viewpoint, Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims may become a factor of international tension between countries if it is not well managed. The necessity to reconcile intercultural respect and freedom of expression may prove to be a

sensitive issue, open to different interpretations and that may lead to a tension of relations among nations.

Based on the points mentioned above, this session could entail a debate based on some of the following questions:

- To what extent do Muslims suffer intolerance and discrimination in the OSCE area? To what extent has Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims impacted on employment opportunities, education standards and social marginalization of Muslims within the OSCE area?
- How can public authorities facilitate intercultural dialogue, promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as civic norms, and implementation of practical initiatives that tackle prejudice, disaffection and marginalization with regard to Muslims within the OSCE area?
- How can OSCE executive structures and institutions, including ODIHR and the Personal Representative of the CiO on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, provide support to OSCE participating States in implementing those efforts?
- How can effective political participation be used in the fight against Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims?
- Should gender equality issues be subject to debate within the larger context of Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims?
- How can it be avoided that Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims becomes a factor of international tension between countries?
- How can it be prevented that acts of violent extremism are associated with Islam as a religious faith and with its practitioners?
- Discussion on the collaboration and the exchanging of experiences with other communities who have historically taken a lead in spear-heading the antidiscrimination fight against them.

17:00 H. End of Second Plenary Session

17:15 H. **THIRD PLENARY SESSION**: Media and public discourse as instruments to counter Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims.

Moderator: Mercedes Rico, Director General for Religious Affairs, Ministry of Justice of Spain

Speakers: Thomas Deltombe, French journalist, author of “Imaginary Islam” and “Islam: the Media Construction of Islamophobia in France”.

Al-Husein Madany, Executive Director of Islamic Magazine, US.

Media, including internet, because of their powerful influence, play a very relevant role in the development of collective attitudes. It is then greatly relevant that media reports objectively and non prejudicially. When it comes to reporting on Muslim communities, the media can sometimes found to be selective, one sided, sometimes simplistic and clichéd. On the other hand, media, including internet, can amount to be an obstacle to integration of Muslim minorities within pluralistic societies. Unbalanced reporting

reinforces stereotypes and promotes increasingly differing and intolerant views of 'the other', potentially conducive to confrontational situations within them.

Policy responses need to react to the diversity of Muslim communities and be complemented by supporting action in communication, awareness-raising, capacity building and outreach. It is therefore indispensable that political and community leaders from all sides set a leading example in terms of responsible discourse and set up intergroup partnerships and opportunities for engagement. These leaders have the ability to influence public opinion and attitudes. Political leaders may serve as a positive example in terms of engaging and reflecting the diverse interests that characterize our societies.

This session would examine the relevant role that political and community leaders can play in defusing tensions within societies by elaborating a constructive public discourse that effectively counters Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims from all sides.

Topics may include, *inter alia*:

- Discussion of negative trends and challenges in media portrayal and political discourse regarding attitudes towards Muslims or recourse to extremism.
- How can media across participating States and through awareness, responsibility and sensitivity toward Muslims can become allies in the common fight against Intolerance and Discrimination against them?
- To what extent responsible media and public discourse could prevent violent backlashes that further reinforce negative attitudes towards the Muslim community?
- How can governments contribute positively to public perceptions and attitudes concerning Muslims?
- How can OSCE executive structures and institutions, including ODIHR and the Representative on Freedom of the Media and the ODIHR and other international organizations support efforts to raise awareness among journalists about Muslim sensitivities and the need to counter extremist discourse?
- How can OSCE executive structures and institutions, including the ODIHR and the Personal Representative of the CiO on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, provide support to OSCE participating States in implementing their commitments to combat such expressions of intolerance?
- How can political and community leaders and personalities assist in these efforts?
- Discussion of stereotypes in the media as TV programmes, the Internet and the press with a view to raising awareness among journalists and media professionals and to encouraging the adoption of codes of conduct, fostering cooperation between stake holders such as, *inter alia*, the media, relevant government agencies and civil society.
- Identification of good practices in combating and countering racist, xenophobic and religious-based prejudices and misrepresentations, while respecting freedom of expression.

18:45 H. End of Third Plenary Session

20:00 H. **Family photo:** Jardines del Alcázar

Reception for all participants: Jardines del Alcazar

(If weather conditions do not permit it, the reception will take place at El Picadero de las Caballerizas Reales)

20:30 H. Official dinner for Heads of Delegation to be held at El Salon de Mosaicos del Alcazar

Wednesday 10th October.

9:00 H. FOURTH PLENARY SESSION: Educating to overcome Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims.

Moderator: Olivier Roy, Director of the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS).

Speakers: Riay Tatary, Co-chairman of the Spanish Islamic Commission and Secretary General of the Union of Islamic Communities of Spain (UCIDE)

H. A. Hellyer, Senior Fellow, Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations, University of Warwick, U.K.

All educational systems should seek to promote tolerance and non-discrimination between major religions. Bearing in mind this premise, the subject of Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims could be seen from a threefold perspective:

Promotion of an objectively true image of Islam through education: the image of Islam conveyed in general education throughout the OSCE area could happen to be stereotypical and conducive towards negative attitudes towards Muslim communities.

Discrimination of Muslim students: the absence of statistical data and analysis makes the distinction between religion and ethnicity as causes of discrimination in the field of education very hard to measure. It is necessary then to pose the question on whether differences in the educational attainment of various ethnic groups can be traced back to discrimination based upon their ethnic origin or whether they are caused by other factors, such as different social backgrounds, or language, or religion, so as to assess whether Muslim students perform poorer than the rest, and then whether the reason for this is to be found on discrimination based upon their religion.

Provision of Islamic religious education: it would be useful to examine how Islamic religious education is given and guaranteed in the OSCE area. Islamic religious education can be part of the formal secular religious education or can be taught separately within or outside the state school context. In this respect, relevant experiences could be referred to.

Topics may include, *inter alia*:

- Is there discrimination against Muslim students in parts of the OSCE area? To what extent?
- To what extent have OSCE participating States implemented educational programmes for combating discrimination against Muslims?
- What could be an appropriate OSCE contribution to the implementation of pertinent recommendations from the report of the High level Group of the UN Alliance of Civilizations Initiative in the field of education?
- In the context of existing commitments, how the OSCE structures, including ODIHR, in co-operation with other international organizations and actors, can assist participating States in developing educational programmes aiming at promoting non-biased portrayals of Muslims?

- Identification of good practices on materials on successful educational programmes in combating and countering racist, xenophobic and religious-based prejudices and misrepresentations against Muslims, while respecting freedom of expression.
- Discussion on the various national perspectives on how to ensure Islamic education, particularly with regard to Islamic education as part of a secular education or not, as well as being taught in public or private schools or outside the mainstream school system.
- Discussion on the level of instruction of teachers imparting Islamic education, as well as on the founding, public or private, of that education.

10:30 H. End of Fourth Plenary Session

10:45 H. **FIFTH PLENARY SESSION**: Other active responses against Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, including experiences from other communities.

Moderator: Ambassador Christian Strohal, Director of the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

Speakers: Anastasia Crickley, Personal Representative of the OSCE CiO on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions.

Gert Weisskirchen, Personal Representative of the OSCE CiO on Combating anti-Semitism.

Khaled Fouad Allam, Sociologist and Specialist on the Muslim world, University of Trieste.

This session is intended to consider four complementary elements of the effort to counter Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims:

Identification of good practices: it is very important to showcase good practices carried out above all by civil society and public institutions at the local and national level in order to demonstrate how the promotion of inter-cultural and inter-religious understanding can facilitate a respect for diversity *within* our pluralistic societies in public roles, representative bodies and institutions or effective legal and factual assistance to Muslim victims of discrimination could be some of those examined.

Legislation and law enforcement: it is necessary to push forward the development of legislation and the review of existing legislation to effectively respond to Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims. Law enforcement measures could be examined too, including case studies of how practically legislation on this matter was enforced, both at the national and international level, as well as ways and means to foster international co-operation to fight this form of discrimination. Mention should be made of the role of law enforcement officials in identifying, investigating and responding to hate crimes against Muslims, as well as promoting regular police training on this matter.

Data collection: the issue of data collecting, incident recording and monitoring of progress is crucial and could be examined, bearing in mind all its complexities.

Muslim organisations: the participation of Muslim communities in social and political life through representative organisations is very relevant, in that it is a way to contact mainstream politics, so religious difference and equality issues can be adequately dealt with, counting on the input of Muslim communities. The nonhierarchical organisation of Islam, coupled with the ethnic, cultural and religious differences of the Muslim communities within the OSCE area, can represent an obstacle to the formation of organisations aiming at representing Muslims at a national level. In this regard, measures to promote the interaction and creation of networks among Muslim NGOs could be addressed, taking into account that setting up the conditions for cooperation among them will facilitate, *inter alia*, that the most representative voices of Islam are heard.

Topics may include, *inter alia*:

- What good practices can be identified in this field by civil society and NGOs? How best could these be exchanged?
- What good practices can be identified in this field by governments and public institutions? How best could these be exchanged?
- To what extent have participating States undertaken efforts to strengthen legislation related to Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims?
- What steps have participating States taken to train law enforcement officials on this matter?
- How can data collection, incident reporting and monitoring of progress be best improved throughout the OSCE area?
- How can the OSCE executive structures, including ODIHR, as well as other intergovernmental organisations assist participating States in their efforts to strengthen legislation, data collection and law enforcement response?
- How can participating States promote the emergence of representative Muslim organisations which facilitate integration as well as the taking into account of diversity within OSCE participating States and Partners' for Cooperation, or networks among them?
- How can the OSCE executive structures, including ODIHR, as well as other intergovernmental organisations assist participating States in their efforts to do this?
- Discussion on the collaboration and the exchanging of experiences with other communities who have historically taken a lead in spear-heading the antidiscrimination fight against them

12.15 H. End of Fifth Plenary Session

12:30 H. **CLOSING SESSION**

Reports to be presented by Rapporteurs

Minister of Justice of Spain, Mr. Mariano Fernández Bermejo

OSCE Chairman-in Office, Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos.

13:15 H. **PRESS CONFERENCE**