

**Presentation to the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
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At the outset I want to express condolences at the recent and untimely death of Ambassador Stephan Minikes. As some of you may recall, Steve was the US Ambassador to the OSCE during the critical period when we witnessed a resurgence in anti-Semitism in 2002 and following. It was in significant measure due to his personal efforts that the OSCE organized a first conference on anti-Semitism in 2003 and followed this with important meetings in Berlin and Cordova, with the adoption of the Berlin Declaration on anti-Semitism in 2004 and the development of a department on tolerance and non-discrimination at ODIHR. I can vividly recall one evening at his residence in Vienna early on in this process when he showed me a postcard sent to him by his grandmother sixty years ago. It was a brief note written in pencil telling her grandson that everything was fine. But the postmark belied the message. It was sent from Theresienstadt, and only a short time afterward she was deported to Auschwitz. I understood then why this effort was personal and not just one concern among many in an ambassador's portfolio. We have all benefited as a result.

- In March of this year the OSCE and ODIHR organized a conference on anti-Semitism in public discourse in Prague. It underscored the fact that a significant source of anti-Semitism in many OSCE participating states today is what is transmitted through the media—print and television and on the Internet. This anti-Semitism is wide ranging, and it weaves together traditional anti-Jewish stereotypes with more modern political and economic conspiracy theories. Frequently, anti-Israel rhetoric crosses over from mere criticism to become a form of anti-Semitism itself, where the Jewish State is demonized or where Jewish communities around the globe are held responsible for Israeli policies. In this regard, the EUMC working definition of anti-Semitism is an important tool for civil society monitors and government authorities alike.
- Words do matter. This anti-Semitism in public discourse can have a corrosive affect on the security and well-being of Jewish communities throughout the OSCE region, where Jewish schools, community centers and synagogues are frequently identified by their enhanced levels of protection. As I have witnessed during individual country visits, meeting these security needs can represent a significant financial burden particularly on small communities. Government policy can vary greatly from one state to another, but we hope that more governments will help shoulder some of these security costs. They should be understood not as parochial needs but rather if unmet a very real challenge to the basic principle of freedom of worship and assembly which we all value.

- Previous declarations and the work of ODIHR's department on tolerance and non-discrimination focus rightly on the importance of education as a means to combat anti-Semitism. Many of these educational initiatives naturally focus on the broad challenges posed by racism and xenophobia, which remain a scourge in many participating states and threaten all minority communities. Such work is important and must continue, and governments must live up to their commitments in this area. However, monitoring data where available and discussions with Jewish community leaders in various participating states reveal that a significant source of anti-Semitic incidents in some states can be traced to elements with Arab and Muslim minority communities. Thus, a "generic" approach to combating racism and anti-Semitism may not be very effective in such situations. Governments and educators must do more to tackle this special facet of the problem, and effective measures should be highlighted and shared.
- Several countries within the OSCE region have proposed and debated legislation that would curtail the traditional Jewish practice of kosher slaughter known as *shechitah*. Proponents of such legislation are not necessarily anti-Semitic; in fact the strongest voices are usually those of animal rights advocates. But passage of such legislation will have a direct and debilitating impact on traditional Jewish communities and runs counter to basic principles of religious freedom. Governments and parliamentarians need to take this fact into account and prevent such legislation from being enacted into law.
- Since this Human Dimension Implementation Meeting last convened a year ago, we have witnessed dramatic changes in the Middle East with the advent of what has come to be termed, "the Arab Spring," in countries including several of the OSCE Mediterranean Partner States. The OSCE, which brings governments and civil society together around a common table, is naturally suited to engage and assist in the transition that is taking place. Thus, the OSCE and ODIHR should be commended for their plans to hold a civil society conference ahead of the Vilnius Ministerial Council that will focus on electoral good practice, political participation and legal reform. However, they must not overlook the need to address the anti-Semitism and broader sectarian strife that have also marked these societies. The experience and good practices that have infused ODIHR's department on tolerance and non-discrimination and that are reflected in the various NGOs that are assembled at this session should also play a significant part in this forthcoming conference.