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## **Irish Presidency of the European Union**

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### **OSCE Conference on anti-Semitism**

#### **Session 4 Information and Awareness-Raising: The Role of the Media in Conveying and Countering Prejudice**

The EU recognises that a free and open press is one of the core values of any democracy. The media have a tremendous impact on public opinion. It is therefore of particular concern that some media continue to convey anti-Semitic bias and to spread heinous stereotypes directed against Jews.

On the other hand, the media can have a crucial role in strengthening tolerance and cultural dialogue and in countering prejudice. They can contribute to the elimination of ignorance and misunderstanding through appropriate educational and awareness raising campaigns directed towards both the public and media professionals, such as journalists and media owners.

Combating anti-Semitism, as well as other forms of racism, and promoting tolerance remains a top priority on the agenda of the EU. In two reports on this subject published last month (both on the manifestations and on the perceptions of anti-Semitism in the EU) the EUMC reiterated its commitment to reinforce its work on the media notably through media monitoring, called upon EU member states to enact or reinforce appropriate legislation preventing the dissemination of racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic material, and encouraged media and Internet service providers to develop clear codes of conduct, and training programs for journalists and other

media professionals to promote diversity and combat all forms of racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism.

The advent of new technologies such as the Internet poses additional concerns, as they can be used as platforms for bigotry, hate speech and racist materials. The proliferation of anti-Semitic, racist and Holocaust denying Websites is of special concern to the EU. The EU therefore welcomes the decision taken by the Ministerial Council in Maastricht in December 2003 to hold in Paris on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> June an OSCE meeting on the relationship between Racist, Xenophobic and Anti-Semitic Propaganda on the Internet and Hate Crimes. The EU looks forward to a broad action oriented exchange of views that would encourage throughout the OSCE region the establishment of public private partnerships involving all relevant actors of the Internet including the NGOs and the industry to counter hate speech on the Web. The EU also expects that a special emphasis will be laid on the necessity to promote appropriate steps in the field of education of young people, training of teachers and awareness-raising of users.

The EU calls upon all participating states of the OSCE to make full use of the tools of the organisation in the fight against anti-Semitic hate speech in the media and, in particular to encourage the office of the Representative on the Freedom of the Media to follow closely this issue.

The EU stands ready to support actively, through its relevant institutions and programs, any initiative of the OSCE in that field.

The Acceding Countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia [and the Candidate Countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey] align themselves with this statement.