

American Jewish Committee
Statement

ENGLISH only

OSCE Conference on Combating Discrimination and Promoting Mutual Respect
and Understanding - Follow-up to the Cordoba Conference on Anti-Semitism and
Other Forms of Intolerance
Romania, Bucharest, 7 - 8 June 2007
Plenary Session 1

We recognize that the OSCE has taken several important and path-breaking steps in the period since the Berlin Declaration, including but not limited to:

- The continued recognition of the distinctive and unique nature of antisemitism.
- The appointment of a Personal Representative of the Chair-in-Office to address the problem of antisemitism
- The creation of an ODIHR police training program regarding hate crimes
- The development and dissemination of educational materials to combat anti-Semitism
- The collection of information and reporting on antisemitism and legal measures adopted nationally and regionally
- The development of a website containing national, regional and international materials about antisemitism and other forms of intolerance
- The convening of follow-up conferences in Cordoba, Spain in April 2005 and in Bucharest, Romania in June 2007

At the same time, antisemitic incidents and the persistent agitation of antisemitic groups continue to pose a threat to the well-being of Jewish communities in the OSCE area. Such manifestations of antisemitism, in common with other forms of prejudice and racism, actively undermine the principles of democracy and social tolerance. Therefore, we urge the OSCE to deepen its commitments on these critical issues by adopting the following measures:

- Urge Member States to implement the provisions of the Berlin and Cordoba Declarations as regards antisemitism, discrimination, and hate-motivated violence, including the commitment to provide hate crime statistics on a regular basis.
- Encourage national parliaments and legislatures in the OSCE area to convene formal inquiries into antisemitism in their own countries. The results of such enquiries will enable member states to draw insights from each other's experiences and establish further common strategies to counter antisemitism.
- Alert Member States to pay closer attention to the fact that antisemitic violence is often tied to organized movements, including extremist and terrorist groups, bound together in whole or part by antisemitic ideologies

- and/or theologies. Participating states should counter these movements with a range of educational, informational and legal initiatives, including prosecution where appropriate.
- Stress the important role of political leaders and elected officials in denouncing public manifestations of antisemitism with a loud and clear voice and in a timely manner.
 - Institute training programs for officials and employees in public sectors such as education, law enforcement, parliament and government to create a broader understanding of the fundamental mechanisms of antisemitism
 - Develop or expand existing curricula to include material on Jewish history and current Jewish life, including information on antisemitism. Holocaust education should be a standard part of the curricula and when necessary should be redesigned to respond to the increasingly diverse heritage of pupils in many OSCE countries.
 - Expand efforts to follow closely and collect information and data on antisemitic incidents and to report publicly on them and the measures taken to hold accountable those responsible.

The Berlin Declaration stated, “International developments or political issues, including those in Israel or elsewhere in the Middle East, never justify antisemitism.” But experience has taught that when conflict involving Israel erupts in the Middle East, there is a significant increase in antisemitic incidents against Jews in the OSCE area, including hate crimes. Participating OSCE states should undertake additional measures to protect citizens and Jewish-linked targets against acts of antisemitism in case of escalations of the conflict in the Middle East. There must also be strong and immediate public condemnation of attempts to target Israeli institutions and individuals for boycotts, divestment and sanctions, all too often a means to cloak antisemitism under the cover of Middle Eastern politics. (Applying such “double standards” to Israel has been cited by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights as one example of antisemitism.)

Finally, we call on OSCE itself to maintain and build upon the human rights structures and methodology it has established, including those addressing antisemitism within the tolerance and non-discrimination program at ODIHR, the appointment of the personal representative of the Chair-in-Office for combating antisemitism and the various law enforcement and educational initiatives.