



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Secretariat**

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ENGLISH only

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**Conference Services**

**2<sup>nd</sup> OSCE Tolerance Implementation Meeting “Education to promote Mutual Respect  
and Understanding and to Teach about the Holocaust  
Dubrovnik, Croatia  
23 to 24 October 2006**

**OPENING SESSION**

Please find attached the presentation by Ms. Anna-Maria Getoš, University of Zagreb,  
Faculty of Law, Croatia.

# TOLERANCE

in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Society



Anna-Maria Getoš, M.sc.  
Faculty of Law ~ University of Zagreb



Human diversity makes tolerance  
more than a virtue; it makes it  
a requirement for survival.

- Rene Dubos, Celebrations of Life, 1981 -

## The MEANING of TOLERANCE throughout HISTORY

- Colonial powers & extinction of natives
- Witch-burning in the Middle Ages
- World War II & the Holocaust
- Communism & the Cold War
- Escalation of Hatred in Regional Conflicts

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## The MEANING of TOLERANCE TODAY

“...respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, for all without distinction as to *inter alia* race, colour, sex, language, religion or belief, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”

OSCE Ministerial Council Decision

Ljubljana 2005

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## INTOLERANCE, PREJUDICE & HATRED

- Intolerance, prejudice & hatred are one of the root causes of everyday violence
- Preconditions for mass-hatred & large-scale violence
- Constant threat to modern society
- Empathy enables mutual respect & tolerance
- Empathy can be taught

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## CONFLICT & POST-CONFLICT SOCIETIES

- The vast majority of represented states and societies at some recent point in history experienced violence on a larger scale
- If the roots of past and ongoing conflicts are not addressed and resolved accordingly, there is a high possibility that past grievances are passed on from one generation to the next
- Global War on Terrorism & Muslim Communities

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## BREAKING CYCLES of INTOLERANCE & HATRED

- Cycles of intolerance & hatred are generated:
  - in the environment of primary socialisation (family, etc.)
  - confirmed by the environment of secondary socialisation (local community & broader society)
- In order to break cycles of intolerance & hatred a broad overall strategy is needed

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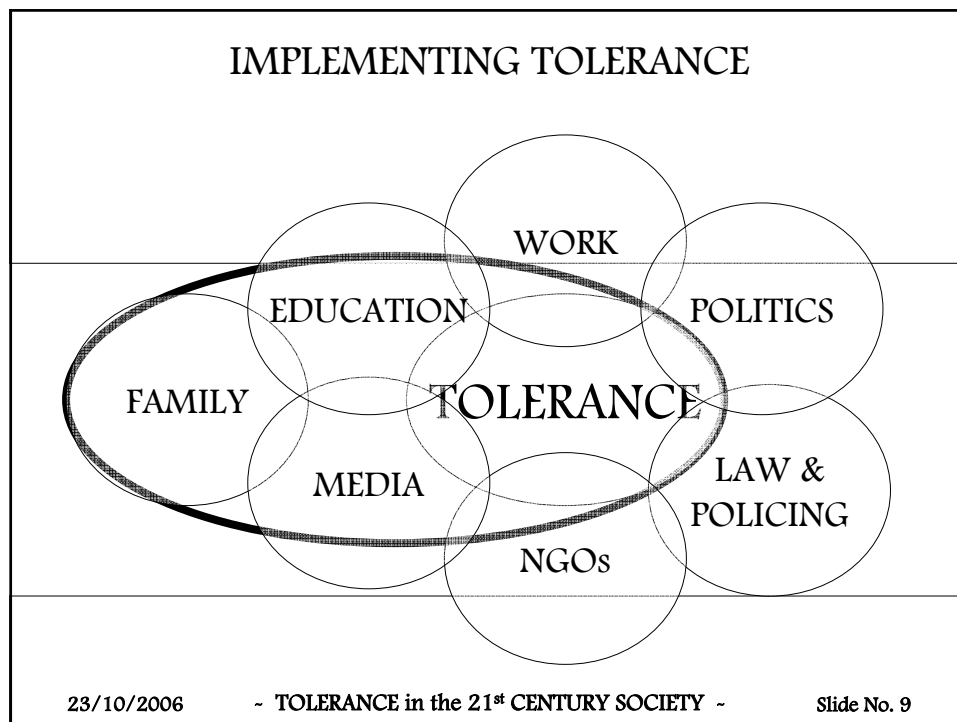
## EDUCATION & KNOWLEDGE versus INTOLERANCE

- Education & knowledge as part of a broader strategy for combating intolerance
- Education and its' importance in teaching tolerance through empathy & understanding
- Fostering mutual respect through more knowledge about each others uniqueness

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- COMBATING INTOLERANCE & HATRED**
- AWARENESS RAISING on the importance of education & knowledge in fostering mutual respect & tolerance
  - Responsible MEDIA COVERAGE
  - Tolerant POLITICAL DIALOGUE
  - INTER-CULTURAL & INTER-FAITH DIALOGUE at national and international level
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## COMBATING INTOLERANCE & HATRED

- Adequate legislation & policing through the RULE OF LAW
- Coping with the VIOLENT PAST by focusing on common interests in the PEACEFUL FUTURE
- Breaking the VISCOUS CYCLE of intolerance:
  - education plays the key role in BREEDING RESPECT & TOLERANCE
  - family, local community & the society as a whole must be INCLUDED DIRECTLY

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## FINAL REMARKS

- ~~Is it difficult to develop more tolerance?~~
- Is there political will & backup to do it?
- Is it really that simple?
  - no, but our determination to do it, is the basic precondition
- Leave the rest to the experts?
  - no, stay involved, because this issue really effects all of us

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FOOD FOR THOUGHTS

There's nothing in this  
world so sweet as love,  
And next to love  
the sweetest thing is hate.

- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow -

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CONCLUSION

- Human nature makes us perceive all things as either GOOD or BAD
- Either LOVE or HATE - the "US" and a "THEM"
- We LOVE CHALLENGES - HATE THREATS
- EDUCATE ourselves & society to stop perceiving THEM=ENEMIES=THREATS → we HATE
- There is a good chance we start perceiving THEM=EQUALS=US=CHALLENGE → we LOVE

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By turning the imaginary ENEMY  
into an actual EQUAL,

a THEM becomes an US,  
the THREAT becomes a CHALLENGE,  
...and at the end of the day...

**WE START LOVING  
WHAT WE ONCE HATED**