

HDIM Session 16/17, 12 October 2006  
Speaking points for Ambassador Ida van Veldhuizen-  
Rothenbücher

Thank you Ambassador Strohal,

- The Netherlands evidently fully supports the statement made earlier this morning by the British ambassador on behalf of the EU. However, let me add in my national capacity the following.
- Tolerance is not self-evident and requires continued attention from both governments and civil society. Therefore we think that meetings like this one are of the utmost importance.
- The Netherlands is very much aware of the need for attention to tolerance, in view of recent national and international developments. Therefore we would like to stress especially the importance of the enforcement of the legal rules and the engagement of all parties involved, including police, public prosecutor and the judicial system in taking the fight against hate crime seriously. At the same time, we would like to underline the importance of education in creating better awareness of the issues concerned.
  
- The Netherlands is deeply concerned about recurring incidents in the field of anti-Semitism, especially on the internet.
- The Netherlands – and some like-minded States – adhere to the commitments found in the Sofia Ministerial Decision 12/04. We encourage all participating States to take time to become aware of its merits, such as supporting national NGOs that monitor and fight online hate content (cyber hate).
- Therefore, we are particularly pleased that ODIHR has worked together with the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam in developing teaching materials on anti-Semitism as a practical tool to combat this phenomenon.

- Mr. Chairman, the Netherlands also believes that the OSCE has played an important role in ensuring freedom of religion. We pay specific attention to equal treatment of all religions. This means that currently extra efforts are made to better integrate Muslims into Dutch society and to combat Islamophobia.
- Although we notice the wish of some NGOs to have government support for education of the mother tongue language, we would like to emphasize the need of a profound knowledge of the Dutch language for a complete integration in the Dutch society. Only in this way full participation is possible, including in the labor market.
- In response to the intervention of the esteemed representative of the Dutch-Turkish Education Foundation, I would like to notice that the Netherlands minister of Education, with whom the representative of this foundation has good contacts, is a member of the Dutch government. Regarding the “black and white” remarks, I would like to state that a policy supporting apartheid in education does not, I repeat, does not exist in the Netherlands, let alone separate entrances to school buildings.
  
- Finally, Mr. Chairman, the Netherlands would like to call for a strong stand against homophobia. It is our firm belief that in a diverse world governments and civil societies should ensure the inclusion and acceptance of all members of society. Gay and lesbian rights are human rights, and it is therefore that the Netherlands calls upon all participating States to safeguard and protect all basic rights, and thus preventing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.
- The Netherlands highly welcomes the Report on Challenges and Responses to Hate Motivated Incidents and is pleased that for the first time attention is devoted to hate motivated incidents against LGBT people.
- We hope that this year’s discussions at HDIM on LGBT rights will set a new trend and stimulate participating States to pay greater attention to combating homophobia in the OSCE area. We also recommend to ODIHR that homophobia will be addressed at the Dubrovnik meeting (October 2006), the Bucharest Conference (2007) and any other relevant TND and Human Rights events.
- Thank you very much for your attention.