

STATEMENT
by the Head of the Delegation of the Slovak Republic

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*Chairperson,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is my pleasure to address you, esteemed participants of the Implementation Meeting, today with the national statement of the Slovak Republic on the topic of anti-Semitism and Holocaust remembrance.

The Government of the Slovak Republic, in the interest of developing the multiethnic and multicultural character of the society of its citizens, is firmly committed to fight against all forms of racial, ethnic, religious and political hatred. Therefore, the Government undertakes to wage a permanent struggle against discrimination, racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, extreme nationalism and chauvinism, and for the promotion of truth about the Holocaust. It categorically refutes all manifestations of such threats. This is of the utmost importance particularly in the period of economic crisis, when such threats can have increasing tendency.

Permanent Holocaust education and its research constitute an inseparable part of combating anti-Semitism and the Slovak Republic uses all available instruments to improve the level of educating and informing the general public regarding this issue.

At this place I would like to draw your attention to some of the particular initiatives and actions taken by the Slovak Republic to implement the latter policy.

The first one is the Slovak participation in the so-called Sobibor projects with Poland, Netherlands and Israel. The aim of these projects is to create a dignified memorial site, sufficient information and education capacities at the former Nazi extermination camp Sobibor and thus preserve area of one of the most deadly camps in the World War II history.

Secondly, even only a fraction of the former Jewish population lives in Slovakia today Jewish cultural and spiritual heritage remains huge in terms of its extent as well as importance. Therefore, we continue to develop it further.

Particularly, I would like to mention the project of the Museum of the Holocaust in the area of the former labor and transit camp in the city of Sered', which is the only authentic place related to the Holocaust in Slovakia. The Museum together with the educational center will operate as the first facility of this kind in Slovakia and should be completed by the end of the year 2012.

We believe that these and many more initiatives and actions demonstrate that Slovak Republic takes the problem of anti-Semitism and remembrance of the Holocaust seriously. That is also why we welcomed the interest of Rabbi Andrew Baker, Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairmanship on Combating anti-Semitism, to pay a visit to Slovakia at the beginning of September 2009. Besides several meetings with the relevant stakeholders, Mr. Robert Fico, Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic, invited the honorable guest to take part also in the ceremony for the dedication of the Glass Monument in the Park of Noble Souls in Zvolen, which is a uniq obelisk devoted to the Slovaks, who tried to save Jews before being deported to the Nazi extermination camps.

To conclude, I would like to assure you that our Government's efforts aimed at promotion and protection of human rights in the Slovak Republic are permanent. Therefore,

the Government of the Slovak Republic adopted a strict approach also to extremism and does not tolerate any illegal activity on the part of the members or supporters of extremist groups or movements as well as act decisively wherever there is a threat to its citizens based on their nationality, race or other differences.

Thank you for your attention!