

OSCE ODIHR Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

Working Session on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination

Intervention by Gidon van Emden, CEJI Policy Officer, made on 6 October 2009 at the OSCE ODIHR Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw, Poland.

In 2007, more than 5,700 antisemitic incidents were reported in Europe – one incident every 90 minutes on average. During the length of this working session, two reported antisemitic incidents will take place.

This does not include every time someone is prevented from renting a house, getting a job, or is beaten up because they are black, because they are Roma, because they are Muslim or because they are gay.

And there is more bad news: every player on the block, from the OSCE through the EU Fundamental Rights Agency and civil society, knows that hate crimes are underreported and badly recorded. So those 5,700 incidents in the OSCE region are only the small tip of a huge iceberg of hate.

There are various things to be done: Despite commitments regarding the fight against antisemitism, notably in the Berlin Declaration and in the 2003 Maastricht Agreement, data collection is still below the standards indicated in these documents. And there are no agreed common standards for monitoring, making a serious analysis of trends impossible.

CEJI urges the Participating States to live up to their commitments on data collection and monitoring of Hate Crimes.

Law enforcement officers and members of the judiciary are not sufficiently prepared to deal with hate crimes. The Law Enforcement Officers Programme is not sufficiently supported.

And in the educational field, there is not sufficient training about dealing with diversity, tackling discrimination and teaching respect for one's fellow citizens. ODIHR has developed teaching materials on combating antisemitism, which is a step in the right direction, but it is not enough.

CEJI recommends that the Participating States strongly support the creation of more comprehensive educational programmes that will train educators and officials to teach about diversity, tolerance and respect.

The commitments are there. So today, CEJI – A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe, urges the OSCE and its Participating States to make good on these promises, and to strengthen their implementation. To make the work light through many hands, we emphasise, finally, the importance of the sharing of experiences, exchanging of practices, and mutual support among the Participating States and with civil society.