



THE HOLY SEE
Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting
“Prevention of Racism, Xenophobia and Hate Crimes Through
Educational and Awareness-Raising Initiatives”
Session 1: Challenges and Perspectives for the Prevention of Racism and
Xenophobia
Thursday, November 10, 2011

Mr. Chairman,

1. The Delegation of the Holy See wishes in the first place to express its appreciation to the ODIHR and to all others who have contributed to the organization of this Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting dedicated to the prevention of racism and xenophobia – realities which, unfortunately, still threaten the security of individuals and social cohesion in the OSCE area.

2. Globalization is accelerating at an ever-greater pace; countries, economies, cultures and ways of life are drawing closer together and becoming more universal and intermingled. The phenomenon of interdependence is evident in every area: political, economic, financial, social and cultural, even religious. Scientific discoveries and the development of communications technology have shrunk the planet considerably. The globalization now emerging manifests itself in various ways; for example, the impact of a political, economic or financial incident occurring unexpectedly in one country is felt by other countries as well, and the great problems or questions of our time are global in scale such as immigration, the environment, food resources, etc.

3. Paradoxically, at the same time disagreements are growing sharper, ethnic violence is increasing, the quest for group, ethnic or national identity is becoming more relentless as the stranger and those who are different are rejected, to such a degree that at times barbarous acts are committed against them. Thus we have seen ethnic or nationalistic wars which give rise to growing unease about the future. This paradox is well known and is explained in part by fear of a loss of identity in a world becoming planetary too rapidly, at the very time when inequalities are also increasing.

4. As a result, the situation with regard to racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia and related intolerance has regrettably not improved; despite the lessons of history, these deplorable phenomena are still being reported today, at a time when migration and the general movement of peoples has continued to increase and the intermingling of cultures and multi-ethnicity have become social facts.

5. For the Holy See, “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” and are united in one human family (cf. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, No. 1). Consequently, firm and concrete action is required at a national and international level, to prevent and eliminate racism and xenophobia. Above all, an extensive educational effort is needed, which exalts the dignity of the person and safeguards his or her fundamental rights.

Quite simply, “The Church rejects racism in any form as a denial of the image of the Creator inherent in every human being” (Pope John Paul II, Speech on the occasion of the Visit to the Yad Vashem Museum, March 23, 2000). The Holy See, for its part, reaffirms that only the acknowledgement of human dignity created in the image and likeness of God, can constitute a reliable reference point for such a task. From this common origin, in fact, stems a common destiny of humanity that should inspire in one and all a strong sense of solidarity and responsibility. It is my Delegation’s sincere wishes that this Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting, carried out in a spirit of dialogue and mutual acceptance, will contribute to putting an end to racism and xenophobia, thereby marking a fundamental step toward the affirmation of the universal value of human dignity and rights, in a horizon of respect and justice for every person and nation.

Thank you, Mister Chairperson.