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**STATEMENT BY
AMBASSADOR VÉRONIQUE ROGER-LACAN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE TO THE OSCE, AT
THE 1086th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

21 January 2016

**In response to the presentations by Mr. Takács,
Chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, and by
Ambassador Klein, Special Representative of the German Federal Foreign
Office for Relations with Jewish Organizations, Issues Relating
to Anti-Semitism and Holocaust Remembrance and
International Aspects of Sinti and Roma Issues**

Mr. Chairperson,

I align myself with the statement by the European Union. I should like to add a few words in a national capacity because France is particularly actively involved in promoting Holocaust remembrance and transmitting this to new generations in France and around the world.

To remember means to refuse to forget and to work to prevent the mistakes of the past from recurring. It is to understand the way things work and provide everyone with the tools to resist views exploiting ignorance and fear that circulate on the street or on the Internet. President François Hollande thus recalled on the occasion of the inauguration of the Camp des Milles memorial site on 8 October 2015: “Today, [...] we are familiar with the infernal mechanics, the processes. Our history sheds light on what were our most glorious and darkest moments. So, we cannot say that we do not know. We cannot pretend that the impossible cannot become possible again. We therefore have a duty to reject certain words, words that are uttered, and to denounce the effects of these words and what they reflect – divisions, generalizations, resentments, instances of exclusion and discrimination.”

The Shoah Memorial in Paris and all the memorial sites in France organize several commemorative events each year in conjunction with various foundations, Jewish associations in France, associations of deportees and historians. The public authorities at the ministerial level as well as locally elected officials and civil society are very closely associated with these events. Particular emphasis is placed on the duty of remembrance, the memory of the deportees, and the responsibility of the French Vichy Government in the

deportation of Jews from France. Every commemoration is also an opportunity to recall the duty of tolerance and of combating all forms of anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial.

These remembrance activities are also based on rigorous scientific work and objective teaching of history in schools. Teaching on the history of the Holocaust has been a mandatory part of the French school curriculum since the late 1980s. In the light of the resurgence of anti-Semitism throughout Europe, this remembrance work is more necessary than ever. This is why the French authorities decided to adopt a new inter-ministerial plan to combat racism and anti-Semitism in April 2015 under the authority of the Prime Minister, which has an extensive educational component. The plan also involves the French Ministry of Education and memorial institutions like the Shoah Memorial.

France is a member of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and also actively supports the Aladdin Project launched by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in 2009, which aims to increase awareness of the Holocaust throughout the world. With the French Government's support, a Frenchman, Father Patrick Desbois, contributes to outstanding work documenting the Holocaust in several Eastern European countries.

This remembrance work is not intended to reopen wounds. It is a reminder of the ordeals that people went through. At the national and international level, these commemorative activities should also constitute calls for unity and for the gathering and mobilization of forces in the face of the challenges of destructive hatred against which no society and no era is safe as current events so bitterly show.

France again suffered terrorist attacks in 2015 and has been shaken by a new resurgence of anti-Semitism and also by incitement to hatred aimed at dividing French society. The public authorities at the highest level of State act with the utmost determination to condemn and systematically punish racist acts and fight against all generalizations and stereotypes. They work closely with all religious authorities and civil society to combat these issues. Their determination to preserve respect for diversity and peaceful coexistence as part of the republican ideal is in keeping with the resolve with which France is committed to the fight against terrorism.