

1086TH OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

ENGLISH only

on 21 January 2016

statement of

H.E. Ms. Talya Lador-Fresher

**Permanent Representative of the State of Israel to the UN, OSCE and
International Organizations in Vienna**

in occasion of the

Commemoration of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day

Thank you Mr. Chair,

Let me extend my thanks to Mr. Szabolcs Takács, Chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and Amb. Felix Klein, Special Representative for Relations with Jewish Organizations, issues relating to Anti-Semitism, Holocaust Remembrance and International Aspects of Sinti and Roma Issues, for their statements and assure them of my country's full support of their efforts in the preservation of the memory of the Holocaust, its horrors and lessons learned.

In six days we will commemorate the 71st anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Nazi death camp, which signaled the end of the darkest chapter of human history. It was a time when a modern nation, under Nazi ideology, utilized modern tools in order to terrorize, persecute and exterminate members of society merely because they were Jews.

Elie Wiesel once said that not all victims of the Holocaust were Jews, but all Jews were victims of the Holocaust. One of these victims was Yehiel De-Nur, who spent two years as a prisoner in the Auschwitz concentration camp. Being one of the very few that survived the Holocaust, he testified at the Eichmann Trials 1961 in Israel. Before collapsing at the witness stand, being overcome by his emotions, he declared that Auschwitz had been a different planet with different wheels of time where the inhabitants had no names and no children. Let me emphasize, however, that it was no other planet. The Holocaust happened on this planet and was perpetrated here, by human beings.

Despite intensive work by European countries in the past decades in educating the younger generations about the Holocaust and its horrors, outcomes and lessons, one cannot say that Anti-Semitism has been uprooted. It is shameful that Anti-Semitism and terrorism directed against Jews are again on the rise. When Jewish life becomes

increasingly threatened by extremists and hate mongers, when Jews are forced to contemplate their future on European soil, no other wake-up call is needed to realize the threat posed to the security, stability, freedom and prosperity of all the people across the European continent and world-wide.

The work of the OSCE and ODIHR towards fighting antisemitism through facilitating the exchange of good practices among governments, educators and civil societies represents a collective response towards an issue that concerns not only Jews but all of us.

The outgrowths of Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, religious intolerance, racism and the persecution of LGBT community must be prevented from spreading throughout Europe and eradicated at their very root. For this we not only need the affirmation of support in words but also substantial commitment. Let our words therefore be followed by actions and our promises by deeds.

Let me end by quoting the suicide note of famous Austrian writer Stefan Zweig, who took his life in Brazil on February 22nd 1942 after fleeing from Europe:

“Every day I learned to love this country more, and I would not have asked to rebuild my life in any other place after the world of my own language sank and was lost to me and my spiritual homeland, Europe, destroyed itself.

But to start everything anew after a man’s 60th year requires special powers, and my own power has been expended after years of wandering homeless”.

Thank you Mr. Chair.