



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE THREE PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE OSCE CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 5 November 2015

Mr Chairman,

I join others in welcoming the three Personal Representatives to the Permanent Council.

Mr Chairman,

Intolerance and discrimination against any person or group based on religion or belief is unacceptable. Indeed, intolerance or discrimination on any basis is unacceptable. We must all step up our efforts to combat all forms of intolerance and build more inclusive societies.

My delegation welcomed the Declaration on combating anti-Semitism that we agreed on in Basel last year. We support the Chairmanship's intention to negotiate declarations on enhancing efforts to combat intolerance and discrimination against Christians and Muslims this year.

Mr Chairman,

Combating hate speech and hate crime is important in combating intolerance and negative stereotypes. We need legislation against discrimination and hate-based violence against any group. However, we must at the same time safeguard fundamental rights, particularly freedom of expression. Preventing intolerance should never be a pretext for disproportionate restrictions on freedom of expression or freedom of the media.

The reinforced meeting of the Human Dimension Committee on 17 November will focus on exchange of experience in combating hate crime. I look forward to contributions from many delegations around this table.

Mr Chairman,

This year's HDIM again showed that restrictions on freedom of religion or belief exist in many participating States. This is often done through strict and inflexible administrative requirements, as registration requirements. These restrictions are a violation of the rights of

individuals, and they contribute to upholding discrimination and exclusion of religious minorities.

Mr Chairman,

The role of political, religious and community leaders is essential. These leaders should never be perceived as condoning, or even encouraging, intolerance. They should never be tempted to use any kind of differences between groups for political gains.

In fact, we all have a responsibility to speak out against hate speech and negative stereotyping of any group.

Mr Chairman,

We must promote open and transparent interfaith and interreligious dialogue to identify and address issues that can be a cause of discrimination, exclusion or conflict. All religious and belief communities must have the possibility to organize and to express their concerns and take part in this dialogue. These organizations should also be valuable partners for governments.

Mr Chairman,

We commend the work done by ODIHR, the field missions and other executive structures of the OSCE to assist participating States in combating intolerance and discrimination and promoting freedom of religion or belief. We should all make use of this expertise and practical experience.

Mr Chairman,

Allow me finally to make a remark related to Rabbi Baker's point on different ways of protecting synagogues.

After the tragic events in France and Denmark earlier this year there was also in my country a discussion on how we could ensure protection of Jewish facilities, in particular synagogues. I was personally very pleased when young people in Oslo, mainly young Muslims, through social media, organized a human chain around the synagogue in Oslo.

I think this was a powerful message that ordinary people, including people who themselves belong to minority groups, are ready to protect a vulnerable minority in our society.

Thank you, Mr Chairman