



**PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE**

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE
INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE ALLIANCE
Delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 1 February 2018

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chair,

Like others, I warmly welcome Mr. Galizia to the Permanent Council, and thank him for his important presentation.

Last week, on 27 February, we commemorated the International Holocaust Day, 72 years to the day from when Soviet troops liberated the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. As the Norwegian Minister of Education and integration stated on this year's occasion: "We know what happened - and we must prevent a Holocaust from ever happening again. This is a permanent struggle. It never finishes."

Our region has seen recurring incidents of hate speech, of harassment of Jews and Jewish property, and of neo-Nazis marching our streets. As history has demonstrated, we must not allow these forces of intolerance and discrimination to define our societies.

Norwegian authorities work actively with national and international partners with the combined purpose of safeguarding history, preventing distortion and misinformation about the Holocaust, and countering anti-Semitism and other group-based prejudice and harassment wherever it occurs.

Norway has an Action Plan that sets out our strategy against anti-Semitism. Several ministries and government agencies work together in implementing the action plan with a particular emphasis on prevention and education. As a result, surveys show a decrease of prejudice in Norway. Nonetheless, challenges remain.

Moreover, anti-Semitism and distortion of the history of the Holocaust is an international issue that we must confront internationally. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) is a valuable partner in international efforts to combat anti-Semitism. IHRA's mission is unique in uniting both governments and experts in efforts to strengthen education, information and research into the Holocaust. We welcome the internal reform processes of IHRA aimed at making the Alliance more efficient and with a wider outreach.

The OSCE also has an important part to play. Throughout its executive structures, countering and preventing anti-Semitism is a relevant activity. Allow me to take the independent institutions as examples: for ODIHR through its work on tolerance and non-discrimination and for RFoM in its efforts to counter hate speech in the media.

However, the responsibility to prevent and counter anti-Semitism remains with the participating States. To free our region from intolerance and discrimination and its manifestation in anti-Semitism, vigilance must remain the watchword of us all.

Thank you