



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT ON THE
INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

Delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad to the Permanent Council
Vienna, 30 January 2020

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chair,

On 27 January, we observed the International Holocaust Remembrance Day. We did so while seeing that anti-Semitism is on the rise in Europe and elsewhere. Jews have been attacked in the streets and their places of worship have been desecrated.

Anti-Semitism is a threat not only to Jews. It is a threat to us all. All people who understand the value of diversity and tolerance have a duty to remain vigilant against the dangers of anti-Semitism: to speak out, and to act.

Norway values the contribution that the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) is making to counter this menace. Anti-Semitism and denial, or distortion, of the Holocaust are international issues that we must confront together. IHRA is valuable in bringing both governments and experts together in efforts to strengthen education, information, and research into the Holocaust.

In 2016, the Norwegian government launched an action plan against anti-Semitism. The plan will be updated and extended this year. The plan has an emphasis on education and prevention, and includes efforts to prevent anti-semitism in schools, as well as to preserve Jewish heritage both in Norway and in Europe at large.

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.

The OSCE also makes important contributions. ODIHR does so broadly, through its work on tolerance and non-discrimination, but also quite specifically: The 2018 ODIHR/UNESCO guidelines for addressing anti-Semitism through education serve as an example. The annual overview of Holocaust Memorial Days is another. It shows us the extent of our region's commemoration of the Holocaust. The RFoM, too, plays a role in his efforts to counter hate speech in the media. The High Commissioner on National Minorities as an instrument of conflict prevention with regard to national minority issues also has a mandate to engage with the Jewish communities in our region.

Still, our institutions can ever only assist us. The responsibility to prevent and counter anti-Semitism rests with the participating States. Norway is committed to ensuring that the victims and survivors of the Holocaust, and others that were persecuted, are not forgotten. The actions that we take today, and every day, must be guided by their memory. Remembering what they went through is necessary to ensure that the horrors of the Holocaust are never allowed to happen again.

Thank you