



## United States Mission to the OSCE

### **Prevention of Anti-Semitism**

**Statement of Representative Christopher H. Smith  
U.S. Delegation to the OSCE Implementation Meeting  
October 14, 2003**

The United States, along with our German colleagues, has been very active through the OSCE and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, in urging participating States, through their governments and elected leaders to speak out against anti-Semitism and to ensure that their laws are robustly equipped to prosecute perpetrators of the hateful acts that flow from it. Around this table, we have found many like-minded allies in our effort to combat and denounce the recurring threat of anti-Semitism. I especially wish to commend the work of Weisskirchen and member of the German delegation, Claudia Roth for her extraordinary, historic statement. We should heed these important words.

While it appears the wave of violence that swelled in parts of the OSCE region during early 2002 has receded, anti-Semitic incidents and other manifestations continue to occur. Government-sponsored anti-Semitism is almost unheard of in OSCE participating States, but inaction and silence by officials and elected leaders can create an environment in which it is considered acceptable. Desecrations of cemeteries and other Jewish sites and anti-Semitic tirades in the media are still common in many OSCE member States. Arson attacks against a synagogue in Belarus, the defacing of a Holocaust memorial in Greece, populist appeals to anti-Semitic hatred in Romania, the propagation of Jewish conspiracy theories in Western Europe and anti-Semitism on college campuses in the United States are only a few of the many examples that can be cited. No nation represented here is immune.

At the same time, I am happy to say, a growing number of nations and their political leaders are beginning to take action. Increased security and more vigorous prosecution have begun to reduce the number of violent anti-Semitic crimes. More vigilant monitoring of neo-Nazi and skinhead activities has prevented new outbreaks. Pressure from political leaders has reversed efforts to rehabilitate fascist-era figures.

In the OSCE context, we fully supported the Porto Ministerial document on combating anti-Semitism and related follow-up. The United States was very pleased by the June Conference on Anti-Semitism, as the level of representation from most participating States was high and a large number of NGOs attended both days. The Vienna Conference was an important step in encouraging participating States to seriously address this distinct and longstanding human rights issue in concrete and practical ways.

The focus of this day at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting should be to discuss which of the recommendations made at the June Conference we want to move forward, specifically with a view to preparing Ministerial documents.

The United States fully supports and strongly embraces the offer by Germany to host in Berlin in 2004 a follow-up OSCE conference on anti-Semitism, a proposal that should be supported today by delegations and formally endorsed by the Maastricht Ministerial. We join the Chairman-in-Office, Jaap De Hoop Scheffer, in “supporting” and “welcoming” Germany’s offer. It is essential that we maintain our efforts to raise awareness and build upon the Vienna Conference and seek to use the Berlin Conference to seek ways to bring actions to combat anti-Semitism into the existing OSCE processes and to its day-to-day activities.

The other recommendation we would like to see forwarded and endorsed in a Ministerial document is the idea that it is time to take more deliberate action to fulfill commitments made during the 1991 Meeting of Experts on National Minorities in Geneva and several subsequent summits to improve enforcement of hate-related crimes by collecting, publishing and making available to the public data about such crimes. To this end, the Ministerial Council should call for all OSCE participating States to inform ODIHR of what legislation they have in place to penalize and punish the perpetrators of anti-Semitic violence and other hate crimes. The ODIHR should assist participating States with drafting legislation on hate crimes and the collection of hate-crime statistics. OSCE participating States should commit to amending, with a view toward strengthening, their hate-crime statutes, as necessary. Where statistics are available, participating States should share that information with ODIHR and other participating States. OSCE participating States should use appropriate OSCE meetings to discuss these statistics. Participating states should also use these statistics to develop appropriate, targeted OSCE programs and projects. These commitments would be necessary first steps to understand what the States must do in order to fight against this anti-Semitism cancer.

The United States also calls for Ministerial language urging all elected leaders and government authorities to denounce acts of anti-Semitism when they occur -- don't sit silent, speak out and act on them -- as well as seek vigorous investigations and prosecutions of acts leading to hate crimes. While strong law enforcement is needed, education of youth -- this is very, very important. The Maastricht Ministerial should therefore urge all participating States to ensure their education systems accurately teach about the Holocaust and work to counter anti-Semitic stereotypes and attitudes. Lastly, the Ministerial should additionally urge those participating States that have not already done so to join the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, and to implement the provisions of the Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust.

In closing, the United States appreciates the involvement of the Dutch Chairman-in-Office on this issue and looks forward to Bulgaria’s leadership as Chairman next year, as we continue to move forward together to fight anti-Semitism throughout the OSCE.