



## **OPENING STATEMENT**

**by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Dr Dimitrij Rupel,  
at the OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism  
and on Other Forms of Intolerance  
*Cordoba, 8 June 2005***

Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my great pleasure to be here in the historic city of Cordoba – a city of three cultures – whose rich tradition of tolerance and respect provides an appropriate backdrop for this Conference. I would like to thank the Government of Spain and especially my friend Miguel Angel for hosting this event and congratulate it on its excellent organisation.

### ***Integrating Diversity for the Sake of Human Dignity***

The 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Second World War, celebrated earlier this year, gives us an extra reason to reflect on the importance of preventing the spread of intolerance and discrimination, religious and ethnic hatred, racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, violent extremism and aggressive nationalism. Never again should people have to live in fear on the streets of our cities because of differentiation of any kind.

Security is not only about weapons, army and police. It is about feeling safe where one lives, and about human dignity. Therefore, we should more often be aware of addressing the issues of security from the human security perspective. As our societies become increasingly multi-cultural, we should not be afraid of “otherness”. Nor should we merely “tolerate” each other. We should celebrate the richness of diversity, and ensure the protection and promotion of minority rights and identities. We should not say “no” to integration, but we should say “no” to division and disintegration. As this beautiful city shows, the inter-action of cultures leads to innovation, growth and renewal. There is a need for mutual respect between minority and majority cultures. There should be a widespread wisdom, that majority can easily become minority and vice versa. This process is called democracy.

We must be vigilant against discrimination and show no tolerance for intolerance. We therefore need to find ways of accommodating diversity while maintaining social cohesion.

### *Focusing on Implementation*

Implementation is the key word of this Conference. We should therefore exchange our experience about best practices, identify areas where implementation is lacking, and seek remedies to recurrent problems.

Last year's OSCE Conferences on anti-Semitism in Berlin and on Tolerance and the Fight against Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination in Brussels as well as the Meeting on the Relationship between Racist, Xenophobic and anti-Semitic Propaganda on Internet and Hate Crimes in Paris resulted in Declarations and Permanent Council Decisions, which were endorsed by the OSCE Ministerial Council in Sofia in 2004.

The famous French philosopher Pascal has said: what is true on this side of the Pyrenees is not true on the other side of the Pyrenees. And one famous bank knows why it advertises the importance of local knowledge.

The Conferences also culminated in structural changes in the OSCE, including the appointment of three Personal Representatives of the Chairman-in-Office: Ms. Crickley, Ambassador Orhun and Professor Weisskirchen. I would like to commend all three Representatives for their efforts to raise awareness about the need for the implementation of commitments and encourage them to pursue their work with a renewed vigour in the months leading up to the Ministerial Council meeting.

The OSCE is about reconciliation of the truths I have mentioned and about local knowledge.

Another major structural change that took place within the OSCE in the past year was the launching of a Programme on Tolerance and non-Discrimination under the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. The aim of the Programme is to provide technical support to OSCE participating States and civil society in order to help ensure that commitments are implemented.

Allow me to highlight some of the work that has been done so far.

- In 2004, OSCE participating States made commitments to collect and keep reliable information and statistics on hate crimes and to provide the ODIHR with this information as well as information on relevant legislation to combat such crimes. The ODIHR has now prepared a public report summarizing the information compiled. Unfortunately, the findings fall short of expectations as only 29 States provided statistical information relevant to hate-motivated crimes. Despite this information deficit, the report offers concrete recommendations and refers to specific ODIHR programmes and tools available to OSCE participating States. We may want to discuss the OSCE role in data collection, and what should be done with these data.
- At the Berlin Conference, states were called upon to strengthen education on the Holocaust and on anti-Semitism. As a follow-up, the ODIHR has produced a report, based on a questionnaire it sent out to all OSCE states, which provides an assessment and evaluation of existing educational approaches. The findings from the report will be presented during this conference, along with concrete actions that the ODIHR will undertake, in co-operation with the International Task Force for Holocaust Education, to increase capacity of teachers and educators to teach about the Holocaust and anti-Semitism.
- Regarding commitments to combat acts of intolerance against migrants and migrant workers, a Human Dimension Seminar on Migration and Integration was held last month, which resulted in several key recommendations, many of which were reinforced at the recent OSCE Economic Forum.
- Concrete programmes have been developed and implemented by the ODIHR in order to provide technical support to states in training law enforcement officials in how to identify, investigate and record hate crimes. Pilot projects were carried out in Hungary and Spain. The results of this programme will be presented at the OSCE Police Expert Meeting in September.
- Finally, the ODIHR is actively engaged in assisting and monitoring the implementation of the *Action Plan for Improving the Situation of the Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area*. Workshops were held in Romania and Poland in order to identify good practice in improving Roma-police relations. The practices will be disseminated across the OSCE region in a *Guidance Manual* as recommended by the chapter of the OSCE Roma and Sinti Action Plan on Combating Racism and Discrimination.

Several other good practices in the field of tolerance and non-discrimination were undertaken by OSCE states last year. While we will hear about many of these positive initiatives during the next couple of days, the ODIHR is also in the process of finalizing the development of a database containing information, reports and a collection of good practices on promoting tolerance and non-discrimination in order to make these practices available to governments and NGOs.

The issues of tolerance and non-discrimination have become one of the priorities for the OSCE. In this regard, I would like to commend the activities undertaken in this field by OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities, OSCE Representative for Freedom of the Media, OSCE Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

I would also like to mention the NGO Conference held yesterday in Seville. I am told that the Conference resulted in a significant number of concrete recommendations which will be presented and discussed here today.

The OSCE is also highly appreciative of the enormous work performed by other organizations in this field, particularly the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. I believe that we need to maintain close co-operation in order to make most effective use of our respective strengths and comparative advantages.

While fighting a common cause, the main responsibility lies with participating States – they must have effective legislation, enforce the law, and speak out against racism, xenophobia and discrimination. The ultimate test will be whether or not communities at risk feel safer, if potential perpetrators of hate crimes are deterred by the full force of the law, and if the message “Zero tolerance for intolerance” truly takes root in our societies.

I hope for a successful conference with effective follow-up, inspired by the spirit of Cordoba.

Thank you for your attention.