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**SUMMARY REPORT**  
**OF THE**  
**OSCE HIGH LEVEL MEETING**  
**ON**  
**CONFRONTING ANTI-SEMITISM IN PUBLIC DISCOURSE**

**23-24 March 2011**

**Prague, Czech Republic**

**Warsaw, May 2011**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I.</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>SUMMARY OF THE SESSIONS.....</b>	<b>11</b>
	<b>Session I:</b> Traditional Anti-Semitic Themes and Stereotypes.....	11
	<b>Session II:</b> International Developments as a New Factor Related to Manifestations of Anti-Semitism.....	12
	<b>Session III:</b> Effective Practices.....	14
<b>IV.</b>	<b>ANNEXES.....</b>	<b>18</b>
	<b>Annex I:</b> Meeting Agenda.....	18
	<b>Annex II:</b> Texts of Speeches made during the Opening Session.....	22
	<b>Annex III:</b> Biographical Information on Meeting Moderators and Panelists .....	36

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION

The OSCE high level meeting on “Confronting Anti-Semitism in Public Discourse” was held in Prague on 23-24 March 2011. The meeting was co-organized by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office and was hosted by the Foreign Minister of the Czech Republic, Mr. Karel Schwarzenberg. Financial support for the event was provided by the Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (EVZ) Foundation (Germany).

The meeting provided a forum for representatives of OSCE participating States, the media, and political and civil society actors to discuss sensitive issues related to anti-Semitism in public discourse and to share best practices. A total of 164 participants registered, including 51 civil society representatives. Participants came from 36 participating States.

The meeting took place in the framework of the OSCE’s ongoing efforts to promote international co-operation to combat anti-Semitism. Ministerial Council Decisions in Maastricht and Sofia<sup>1</sup>, among others, established a broad set of commitments aimed at preventing and responding to anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance. Participating States have equipped the Organization with mechanisms and tools to address the problem of anti-Semitism. These efforts have yielded positive results, in particular in response to hate crimes, which are the most insidious form of anti-Semitism.

Despite these efforts, expressions of anti-Semitism in public discourse remain a serious issue of concern in the OSCE region. Manifestations of anti-Semitism exacerbate hostile attitudes towards Jews and have the potential to fuel anti-Semitic incidents. Expressions of anti-Semitism in public discourse have not gathered the attention they deserve throughout the OSCE region, and often governments have been slow in responding or have failed to respond properly.

In this context, the main objectives of the High Level Meeting were to raise awareness of the existence of anti-Semitic expressions in public discourse, to increase the understanding of this phenomenon and of its impact on security, to explore the role that media may play in promoting tolerance and preventing hate crimes, and to identify practical measures to mitigate the problem. Participants were encouraged to describe best practices and to offer practical recommendations.

Following an opening session, the meeting was organized in three working sessions, focused on:

- Traditional anti-Semitic themes and practices;

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<sup>1</sup> Maastricht Ministerial Council decision 4/03 on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination (2003); Sofia Ministerial Council Decision 12/04 on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination and Annex to Decision 12/04 on Combating Anti-Semitism (2004).

- International developments as a new factor related to manifestations of anti-Semitism; and
- Effective practices in combating anti-Semitism in public discourse.

During the **Opening Session**<sup>2</sup>, Mr. Jiří Schneider, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, underscored the pervasive nature of anti-Semitism throughout the OSCE region and highlighted a number of contemporary transnational challenges in confronting anti-Semitic discourse, in particular the rise of information technology, social networks and blogs.

Ambassador Janez Lenarčič, the Director of ODIHR, used his opening remarks to address the challenge of finding a balance between freedom of expression and the principle of non-discrimination, which can sometimes come into conflict. The issue is complex, since criminalizing hate speech can carry significant risks. It is therefore important for the international community, national governments, professional associations and civil society to adopt a comprehensive approach in addressing anti-Semitic discourse. Although the OSCE has already done significant work in this area, Ambassador Lenarčič encouraged increased cooperation among international organizations, civil society groups and Internet providers in tackling hate speech on the Internet.

The third keynote address was delivered by Rabbi Andrew Baker, Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating anti-Semitism. Rabbi Baker discussed the historical underpinnings of anti-Semitism. He also highlighted what he termed the “new anti-Semitism”, which relates to depictions of Israel and Israeli policies which cross the line into racism or hate speech. Such images and messages contribute to a climate of anti-Semitism that can threaten the physical security of Jewish communities and individuals. He called upon OSCE participating States to continue to monitor anti-Semitic hate crimes and discourse and to respond to such incidents in a consistent, principled and pragmatic manner.

Mrs. Asta Skaisgirytė Liauškienė, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, also spoke on behalf of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office. Ms. Liauškienė’s address highlighted the unique challenges of moderating public discourse in increasingly globalized and transnational forums. Ms. Liauškienė underscored the commitment of the Chairperson-in-Office to promoting tolerance education and applauded the efforts of the ODIHR in drafting and disseminating teaching materials relating to holocaust education and anti-Semitism.

**Session I** covered a range of issues related to “traditional” or historic forms of anti-Semitism. The discussion touched – among other issues – on prevalent stereotypes, the challenges faced by new or transition countries in combating hate speech, and the tensions that can arise between freedom of expression and the need to prevent hate speech.

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<sup>2</sup> The full text of the speeches made during the opening session can be found in Annex II.

**Session II** provided meeting participants with an opportunity to explore how international developments can spark manifestations of anti-Semitism. In particular, panelists and participants discussed how events in the Middle East and negative perceptions of Israeli policies have been followed by spikes in anti-Semitic hate crimes. Other modern forms of anti-Semitism were also raised, including manifestations on the Internet.

The focus of **Session III** was to share good practices and gather a set of recommendations on how to prevent and respond to anti-Semitism in public discourse. Many participants stressed the role of political leaders in responding to anti-Semitism and the value of building coalitions – both within parliaments and more broadly – to address the issue. Others highlighted the value of providing educational programmes, training for journalists and encouraging journalists through positive reinforcement, such as journalism prizes.

## II. RECOMMENDATIONS

This section of the report contains a selection of the wide-ranging recommendations made by participants. The recommendations are addressed to a variety of actors, including OSCE participating States and OSCE institutions and field operations, as well as other international organizations, civil society organizations and the media. These recommendations have no official status and are not based on consensus. The inclusion of recommendations in this report does not suggest that they reflect the views or policy of the OSCE.

### **General recommendations to OSCE participating States:**

- Participating States should implement OSCE commitments on monitoring and reporting of hate crimes.
- Participating States that have not yet done so should enact laws that establish hate crimes as specific offenses or provide enhanced penalties for bias-motivated violent crimes.
- When collecting data on hate crimes, participating States should produce disaggregated statistics in order to be able to distinguish anti-Semitic hate crimes from other hate crimes.
- Participating States should monitor and publicize data on instances of anti-Semitic speech, in addition to anti-Semitic hate crimes.
- Participating States, NGOs, and other interested parties should make use of the European Union Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) Working Definition of Anti-Semitism.
- Participating States should fulfill their obligations to provide security to vulnerable communities and invest the necessary resources to protect vulnerable community institutions and places of worship, including synagogues, cemeteries, and faith based schools.
- Participating States should consider supporting the use of telephone hotlines for victims of hate crimes and should support programs to assist hate crimes victims.
- Participating States should take full advantage of the assistance offered by the OSCE/ODIHR in the area of monitoring and responding to hate crimes, hate speech and other forms of intolerance and discrimination.
- Governments should show leadership by robustly imposing obligations on public officials at all levels, including ministers, to avoid making statements that promote discrimination.

- Governments should consistently and publicly denounce all forms of intolerant speech, and condemn the use of foreign conflicts to inflame domestic inter-communal tension. Politicians should counter hate speech and Holocaust denial with truthful and informative responses and should increase the use of the Internet and online forums in addition to traditional media sources when communicating these messages to the public.
- Parliaments should consider establishing all-party parliamentary committees against anti-Semitism along the lines of the United Kingdom's All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism.
- Civil society should be strengthened and given the opportunity to participate in dialogue on issues relating to anti-Semitism on an equal footing with governments, recognizing its unique perspective and firsthand experience in societal trends and patterns.
- Participating States should create specialized law enforcement units to monitor and investigate cyber hate speech and should strengthen transnational networks and partnerships that monitor and investigate hate speech on the Internet.
- In the area of hate speech legislation, criminal and civil law provisions should clearly demarcate the line between acceptable speech and speech which incites violence, in order to avoid misuse and an overbroad application which might threaten freedom of expression.
- Participating States should invest in educational initiatives that confront prejudice and stereotypes related to anti-Semitism. The initiatives should raise awareness about human rights standards and increase knowledge and understanding about the history of the Jews, the Holocaust and the history of the State of Israel. These programs should make it clear to students that anti-Semitism is not a historical relic but a living issue. These topics should be addressed in curricula for students of all ages. Teachers should be encouraged to utilize modern forms of technology which are relevant to young people, including on-line social networking forums.
- In the area of education, participating States should invest in teacher training programs on human rights norms and principles. These programs should include the introduction of teaching methodologies which focus on inter-cultural communication and understanding.
- Participating States should invest in professional training programs for members of the media to develop their skills and capacity to report about issues facing different religious and cultural groups, including the Jewish community. These programs should focus on the role of the media in exacerbating and/or decreasing inter-ethnic tension and violence and explore issues relating to professional ethics and responsibility.

- Participating States should consider showcasing the work of journalists who might serve as a model for best practice. One example of such an initiative is the Tolerance Prize created by the Guild of Interethnic Journalism and supported by the Ministry for Regional Development of the Russian Federation.

**Recommendations to the OSCE, its institutions and field operations, as well as other international organizations:**

- The OSCE should strengthen its partnerships with other international organizations in the area of combating hate crimes and hate speech.
- The OSCE should share resources with and build the capacity of civil society to monitor anti-Semitic hate crimes and hate speech.
- The OSCE should assist participating States to build the capacity of their criminal justice systems to respond effectively and comprehensively to hate crimes and hate speech.
- The OSCE should enhance dialogue and consultation with religious communities.

**Recommendations to the Members of the Media:**

- Members of the media should adopt voluntary codes of conduct and/or ethics which clearly articulate the responsibility of members to report in a well-balanced, objective manner.
- Broadcasting agencies should implement measures to ensure that there are no deficits in the reporting of issues relating to anti-Semitic discourse and violence. This could include hiring journalists who speak multiple languages and have the background and skills to report about inter-faith and inter-communal issues.
- Editorial boards should exercise robust leadership and share best practice models with journalists and other media members in order to ensure that there is clear, shared understanding of effective and ethical reporting.

**Recommendations to Civil Society:**

- Civil society organizations should increase their efforts to monitor anti-Semitic hate crimes, as well as anti-Semitic discourse in traditional and online media.
- Civil society should implement programs which encourage and assist victims to report hate crimes or incidents. Civil society should strengthen its partnerships with government institutions which investigate, prosecute and provide other support to hate crime victims.

- Inter-faith and inter-communal initiatives and coalitions should be strengthened. Faith-based groups should focus their lobbying efforts on common issues which may affect all vulnerable communities.
- Non-Jewish civil society organizations should join Jewish organizations in taking ownership of issues relating to anti-Semitism.
- Projects should be carried out in order to preserve the narratives of Holocaust survivors. This is a particularly timely issue.

### III. SUMMARY OF THE SESSIONS

#### SESSION I: Traditional Anti-Semitic Themes and Stereotypes

**Moderator:** **Dr. Kathrin Meyer**, Executive Secretary, Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, Germany

**Panelists:** **Mr. Petr Brod**, Journalist, Czech Republic  
**Dr. Sarunas Liekis**, Professor, Vilnius University, Lithuania  
**Mr. Konstanty Gebert**, Journalist, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Poland

This working session was dedicated to exploring “traditional” forms of anti-Semitism and stereotypes. Panelists were asked to comment on the distinction between traditional and new forms of anti-Semitic discourse and to provide recommendations for combating anti-Semitic stereotypes in the media and public discourse.

The first panelist, Mr. Petr Brod, noted that in practice it is often difficult to distinguish between traditional and contemporary forms of anti-Semitic discourse. He identified a number of waves of anti-Semitic discourse throughout history, including what he characterized as “pre-modern” anti-Semitism linked to religious prejudices, anti-Semitic discourse connected with racist ideologies including those found in Nazi Germany, and newer forms of anti-Semitism which seek to blame members of the Jewish faith for “subverting the political order” and “dominating the world media”. He noted that some of these narratives are still pervasive today.

Dr. Sarunas Liekis focused on the Lithuanian context, noting the challenges that exist in confronting hate speech and other forms of intolerant discourse in a transitioning nation state. He listed inadequate educational programs, social disorientation and a weak legal infrastructure as particular challenges. He commented that recommendations should focus on addressing these challenges, including capacity building for members of the media, for judges and for others working in the justice system.

The third panelist, Mr. Konstanty Gebert, spoke of the vulnerability of minority community members, including but not limited to members of the Jewish faith, during nation building processes such as those found in post-Soviet states. He offered a number of pragmatic approaches to confronting anti-Semitism in this context including the importance of building connections and coalitions among stakeholders, such as inter-faith initiatives. Civil society coalition building, he commented, creates awareness that combating anti-Semitism is not just an issue for Jews, but one that concerns all of society.

In his remarks about discourse in the media, Mr. Gebert questioned the distinction between “mainstream” and “extremist” discourse, since there may be a fine line or an overlap between the two. He also noted that the media often refrains from reporting on matters that are perceived to be “Jewish issues”, in part because they view such issues as too politically sensitive, and in part for fear of being accused of anti-Semitism. This approach results in limiting constructive public

discourse. Educational initiatives should focus on building the capacity of journalists to deal with such issues.

Interventions from the floor focused on the tensions between state obligations to protect freedom of expression and free media with state obligations to combat speech which incites hate and violence towards members of a particular group. In this regard, speakers noted that the criminalization of hate speech is just one strategy available to OSCE participating States to combat anti-Semitic discourse. Other effective strategies include strong political leadership and the condemnation of anti-Semitic rhetoric by political leaders.

Speakers touched on a number of other challenges to combating anti-Semitic discourse. Some mentioned that civil society organizations were weak in a number of countries in transition, affecting their ability to address issues such as anti-Semitism. Other participants lamented that funding is often a serious problem for civil society organizations dealing with anti-Semitism, limiting their activities. Another problem in many countries is the growth of extremist movements.

One participant pointed out that the use of ethical codes for journalists is a common and effective means of curtailing anti-Semitism and other forms of hate speech in the media. Some speakers suggested that governments should devote resources for educational programmes for civil society, as well as for educational efforts in schools. Others reiterated the responsibility of government leaders to speak out against anti-Semitism.

## **SESSION II: International Developments as a New Factor Related to Manifestations of Anti-Semitism**

**Moderator:** **Rabbi Andrew Baker**, Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on Combating anti-Semitism

**Panelists:** **Mr. Mark Gardner**, Director of Communications, Community Security Trust, United Kingdom  
**Ms. Esther Voet**, Editor in Chief, *Dutch Jewish Weekly*, Netherlands  
**Mr. Mark Weitzman**, Director of Government Affairs, Simon Wiesenthal Center, United States of America

The focus of this plenary session was to explore the role that international developments play in fuelling anti-Semitic discourse and endangering security in the OSCE region. The panel's moderator, Rabbi Andrew Baker, initiated the session by noting that events in the Middle East are increasingly being used by anti-Semites as a pretext for targeting European Jews and Jewish institutions. In addition, he noted that increasingly negative views of Israel are being applied to Jewish communities across the OSCE region with potentially dangerous consequences.

Panelists provided both qualitative and quantitative data regarding the connection between international developments and contemporary manifestations of anti-Semitism. Mr. Mark Gardner focused his remarks on some of the methodological difficulties in monitoring anti-Semitic incidents, noting the challenges in identifying the root causes of and triggering events related to anti-Semitic violence. Nonetheless, he highlighted data produced by the Community Security Trust which illustrates a direct link between international developments, particularly in Israel and other parts of the Middle East, and an increase in anti-Semitic hate crimes. The most obvious examples of this are attacks in which perpetrators make reference to political events as a motive for the attack. Statistics show that anti-Semitic incidents in Europe often increase following violent incidents in the Middle East.

Other panelists directed their statements to qualitative examples of modern forms of anti-Semitism. Ms. Esther Voet discussed the experiences of Jewish community members in the Netherlands and the growing feeling of insecurity amongst Jews living in the country. She mentioned the increasing use of anti-Semitic slogans during sporting events. Mr. Mark Weitzman provided examples of modern forms of anti-Semitic discourse found online, such as the “Punch a Jew Day Campaign” on the social networking site Facebook. Nevertheless, he warned against blaming the Internet for anti-Semitism. The Internet tends to reflect and in some cases to magnify anti-Semitic sentiments which already exist in society.

Panelists expressed a view that there is a very real danger in regarding anti-Semitism as a relic of history. The Community Security Trust has conducted a series of opinion polls which have exposed the tendency among members of the public in the United Kingdom to associate anti-Semitism with the Holocaust and as a form of racism that no longer exists. The importance of Holocaust educational initiatives was underscored as a strategy which is particularly useful in demonstrating that genocide can result when intolerance becomes state policy. Beyond the historical context, it was noted that there is also an increasing need to expose and challenge new forms of anti-Semitism in the classroom and beyond.

Interventions from the floor focused on a variety of recommendations for civil society and state actors. The effectiveness of education as a tool for combating anti-Semitism emerged as a key strategy. A number of participants noted that educational initiatives should focus on interactive and creative teaching methodologies which involve students and teachers alike in active rather than passive roles. A civil society representative applauded the educational approaches utilized by ODIHR in its teaching materials to combat anti-Semitism and noted that the Internet and social networking can be used as positive teaching tools.

One delegation shared its efforts to mainstream Holocaust education in schools and to include Holocaust education in teacher training programs. At the same time, however, a speaker pointed

out that Holocaust education is not a cure for anti-Semitism. The representative of another delegation spoke of the need to record and preserve narratives from Holocaust survivors.

There were some reports of teachers being punished or criticized for teaching about the Holocaust. Participants commented on the need for teachers to be supported by state authorities in their efforts to promote tolerance education and to be provided with effective protection from such attacks.

The importance of monitoring and responding to hate crimes was cited as an important element for combating anti-Semitism. Hate crime victims are often reluctant to come forward and report such crimes to authorities. To encourage victims to come forward and ensure that hate crimes are adequately reported, speakers encouraged participating States to direct resources to the creation of hate crimes monitoring and investigative units.

A civil society representative provided a number of best practice recommendations in the area of responding to and investigating hate crimes, including the introduction of specialized telephone hotlines for hate crime victims, the introduction of tolerance education and the need for governments to invest resources into security for vulnerable community institutions, such as synagogues. He also called on political leaders to consistently denounce political discourse which exacerbates inter-communal tension.

A number of participants spoke of the need to distinguish clearly between criticism of Israeli policy positions on the one hand and anti-Semitism on the other.

Participants also stressed the importance of monitoring anti-Semitic discourse and hate crimes. Without adequate statistics and research in this area, there is a danger that the extent of anti-Semitism could be minimized and that adequate responses might not be implemented by various stakeholders.

### **SESSION III: Effective Practices**

**Moderator:** **Ms. Floriane Hohenberg**, Head, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department, OSCE/ODIHR

**Panelists:** **Representative Christopher Smith**, Member of Congress, United States of America  
**Mr. Danny Stone**, Director, All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism, United Kingdom  
**Mr. Richard Lobo**, Director, Board of Governors, International Broadcasting Bureau, United States of America

**Mr. Alexey Zenko**, Deputy Director of the Department for Interethnic Relations, Ministry for Regional Development of the Russian Federation

During the final plenary session, dedicated to sharing best practices, panelists were asked to provide examples of effective initiatives and to provide recommendations to different stakeholders, including members of the media and OSCE participating States.

Representative Christopher Smith underlined the importance of utilizing a comprehensive approach that strengthens coalitions across sectors and encourages different actors to take ownership of issues relating to monitoring and combating anti-Semitism. Such coalitions should include members of civil society, educators, justice system professionals and politicians. Representative Smith offered a series of recommendations for political actors and expressed the opinion that bi-partisan initiatives are particularly effective for advancing issues relating to anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance. He encouraged participating States to create special envoys to monitor and combat anti-Semitism. Parliaments, he said, should adopt resolutions to compensate victims who had their properties confiscated during the Holocaust. He also called upon political actors to engage in proactive media strategies. One approach is to use press conferences and public statements to counteract anti-Semitic discourse and to send consistent messages to the media about the perils and nature of anti-Semitism.

Mr. Danny Stone focused his remarks on the history and experiences of the All-Party Parliamentary Group against Antisemitism, of which he is the Director. Initiated in London to ascertain whether practices at the time were effective in combating anti-Semitism and to gather expert opinion about strategies for the government to adopt, the Group has enjoyed particular success due to its cross party approach. Since its establishment, the Group has commissioned an all-party inquiry into anti-Semitism and received three government responses. The Group's work has led to an agreement providing that all police forces in the United Kingdom must record anti-Semitic hate crimes statistics, to the creation of a government envoy responsible for post-Holocaust issues and to a government action plan on Internet hate. While emphasizing the advantages of an all-party approach, Mr. Stone reported a series of challenges including the need for strongly committed members and leadership, the importance of a competent secretariat, and time constraints. He noted that parliamentary initiatives are generally most favourably received when they focus on best practice rather than punitive approaches. Members of the media, justice and law enforcement systems tend to respond to approaches which help them to develop their professional capacity rather than threaten their professional independence.

Mr. Richard Lobo prefaced his remarks by noting a relatively recent upward trend in anti-Semitic discourse in the media. In particular, there has been an increase in anti-Semitic statements reported in the mainstream media during the past year by high profile celebrities and politicians. He highlighted a number of contemporary challenges in combating anti-Semitism in the media, including the impact that the economic recession has had on the availability of

resources to monitor and report on such issues. Spending cuts have led to diminished personnel resources in many media outlets, including a reduction in the number of competent journalists who speak a diverse set of languages. This has resulted in reduced and uneven reporting on issues related to anti-Semitic discourse and violence throughout the OSCE region. Mr. Lobo advocated the use of consistent guidelines and journalistic codes of ethics, effective training on monitoring hate crimes and hate speech for journalists, and called for strong leadership from editorial boards throughout the region.

Mr. Alexey Zenko's presentation centered on the Russian Federation's support for journalists engaged in reporting about interethnic relations in a manner that encourages tolerance. One such initiative is the "Tolerance Prize". Created by the Guild of Interethnic Journalism and supported by the Ministry for Regional Development of the Russian Federation, its objectives are to encourage and showcase examples of ethical reporting and to build the capacity of media professionals to address interethnic issues in the Russian Federation in a manner that promotes tolerance and co-operation. The initiative's success is credited to its focus on positive reinforcement of best practice and protection for media freedoms. Mr. Zenko reiterated the point that the most effective means of ensuring ethical and responsible reporting is through programs which build the skills of media members, rather than through the imposition of external standards and/or measures which threaten the freedom of the media.

Recommendations from the floor were varied. There was, however, agreement that coalition building across sectors is an important strategy in efforts to combat anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance.

A representative of civil society stressed the need to increase monitoring and combating of cyber-hate, and expressed concern about the lack of civil society actors working on the educational aspects of this issue. One delegation highlighted its government's efforts to combat anti-Semitism through the creation of a Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism and through infrastructure projects to protect vulnerable Jewish institutions, such as synagogues and Hebrew schools.

Another delegation noted the importance of engaging non-Jews in efforts to combat anti-Semitism through innovative initiatives. The speaker advocated engaging Holocaust deniers by developing opportunities for learning experiences, including tours of Holocaust sites. In addition, the delegation stressed the need to engage youth through contemporary forms of media, including Twitter and Facebook. The online initiative "2011 Hours against Hate" was cited as an example of such an initiative.

Another intervention proposed a series of recommendations for political actors. The speaker urged the use of letter writing campaigns and public statements to pressure participating States to

respond to anti-Semitic incidents. He also asserted the efficacy of bipartisan and transnational initiatives.

Several participants focused their recommendations on educational initiatives. They proposed that the problem of anti-Semitism should be incorporated into teacher training programmes for both new teachers and experienced teachers. In addition, students should be engaged at all levels in projects about the Holocaust and anti-Semitism, and should be encouraged to volunteer and interact with community members who have different religious or cultural backgrounds from their own.

Some participants noted the need to engage members of the media in a constructive manner. These participants echoed the arguments made by panelists that punitive and regulatory approaches can endanger the freedom of the media, while efforts that provide support to media members to develop their professional capacity are more effective.

## Annex I: Meeting Agenda



### Confronting Anti-Semitism in Public Discourse

A High Level Meeting hosted by the Foreign Minister of the Czech Republic and generously supported by the Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (EVZ) Foundation

Expressions of anti-Semitism in public discourse remain a serious issue of concern as they exacerbate hostile attitudes towards Jews. They have the potential to fuel anti-Semitic incidents, leading to greater insecurity in the Jewish communities and in societies across the OSCE region. The purpose of the meeting is to consider the role that media and public discourse may play in promoting tolerance and preventing hate crimes, and to raise awareness of the existence of anti-Semitic expressions in public discourse, to increase the understanding of this phenomenon and of its impact on security, and identify practical measures to counter it.

The OSCE has spearheaded international co-operation with regards to fighting anti-Semitism, notably with their Ministerial Council Decisions in Maastricht and Sofia. In this context, OSCE participating States adopted a comprehensive set of commitments related to preventing and responding to anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance. They have also equipped the organization with mechanisms and tools aimed at supporting their efforts in tackling anti-Semitism. These efforts have led to measurable results, in particular in the response to the most insidious form of anti-Semitism, hate crimes.

Despite these efforts, there are still issues that have not been fully addressed by governments and civil society. The expression of anti-Semitism in public discourse has not gathered the attention it deserves everywhere in the OSCE region, and often governments are slow or even fail to respond properly. The meeting will provide a forum for representatives of OSCE participating States, the media, political and civil society actors to debate sensitive issues related to anti-Semitism in public discourse. How can anti-Semitism in public discourse be identified and how to draw the distinction between acceptable and unacceptable speech? Is it possible to prevent anti-Semitic statements without infringing on the right to free expression and freedom of the media? Which good practices can be identified that encourage free debates in society while at the same time confront and combat anti-Semitic expressions?

The objectives of the meeting are threefold: it aims at

- addressing expressions of anti-Semitism in public discourse, including in the media and political speech;
- analyzing current occurrences of traditional and new forms of anti-Semitic discourse; and
- sharing good practices and gathering a set of recommendations on how to prevent and respond to anti-Semitism in public discourse. Participants will be asked to focus on concrete measures that can be highlighted in order to assist participating States in shaping a constructive and respectful discourse in society.

The high-level meeting will commence with an opening session to be followed by three working sessions. Discussions should be interactive, allowing for an exchange between the panelists and the participants. The first session will address ‘traditional’ forms of anti-Semitism and stereotypes that are still seen today. The second session will explore more modern manifestations of anti-Semitism such as those identified by the OSCE 2004 Berlin Conference, when the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office stated, *inter alia*, that “international developments or political issues, including those in Israel or elsewhere in the Middle East, never justify anti-Semitism”. The third panel will examine effective ways to combat anti-Semitism in public discourse, aiming to showcase some practical examples for addressing the issue at hand.

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### **Wednesday, 23 March 2011**

17:00 Registration

18:00 Opening Session

**Mr. Jiří Schneider**, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic

**H.E. Ambassador Janez Lenarčič**, Director, OSCE/ODIHR

**Rabbi Andrew Baker**, Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating anti-Semitism

**Mrs. Asta Skaisgirytė Liauškienė**, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania

18:45 Exhibition Opening. “The Jewish World of Yesterday, the Hope of Today: Pictures and Stories from the Centropa Interviews in Lithuania.”

19:00 Reception hosted by H.E. Minister Karel Schwarzenberg

### Thursday, March 24, 2011

9:00 Session I: Traditional Anti-Semitic Themes and Stereotypes

Moderator: **Dr. Kathrin Meyer**, Executive Secretary, *Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research*, Germany

Panelists: **Dr. Sarunas Liekis**, Professor, *Vilnius University*, Lithuania  
**Mr. Petr Brod**, Journalist, Czech Republic  
**Mr. Konstanty Gebert**, Journalist, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Poland

10:45 Coffee Break

11:30 Session II: International Developments as a New Factor Related to Manifestations of Anti-Semitism

Moderator: **Rabbi Andrew Baker**, Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating anti-Semitism

Panelists: **Mr. Mark Gardner**, Director of Communications, *Community Security Trust*, United Kingdom  
**Ms. Esther Voet**, Editor in Chief, *Dutch Jewish Weekly*, Netherlands  
**Mr. Mark Weitzman**, Director of Government Affairs, *Simon Wiesenthal Center*, United States of America

13:15 Lunch

14:45 Session III: Effective Practices

Moderator: **Ms. Floriane Hohenberg**, Head, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department, OSCE/ODIHR

Panelists: **Mr. Richard Lobo**, Director, International Broadcasting Bureau,

United States of America

**Rep. Christopher Smith**, United States Congress, United States of America

**Mr. Danny Stone**, Director, All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism, United Kingdom

**Mr. Alexey Zenko**, Deputy Director of the Department for Interethnic Relations, Ministry for Regional Development of the Russian Federation, Russian Federation

16:15 Coffee Break

17:00 Closing Session

#### Key Recommendations from Sessions

Moderator: **H.E. Ambassador Renatas Norkus**, Chairman of the OSCE Permanent Council

Remarks: **Mr. Emanuelis Zingeris**, Vice President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Chairman of the Parliamentary Forum of the Community of Democracies, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania

19:00 Closing Reception hosted by **H.E. Ferdinand Trauttmansdorff**, Ambassador of Austria to the Czech Republic

## **Annex II: Texts of Speeches made during the Opening Session**

Confronting Anti-Semitism in Public Discourse  
Prague, Czech Republic  
March 23-24, 2011

Mr. Jiří Schneider, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic  
Opening Remarks

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear guests,

I have the privilege to welcome you at the premises of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs to address a most unpleasant issue – that of antisemitism, the world’s oldest species of hatred and resentment, still alive and kicking in the entire OSCE region.

I would like to thank Rabbi Andrew Baker, the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman for combating antisemitism, as well as the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, for organizing this conference.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is deeply embarrassing that we have to deal with the problem of antisemitism 66 years after the defeat of Nazi Germany. Current antisemitism may appear as old poison in new bottles. While the bottles are not always new, the content is as deadly as ever before. In line with the general rise of hatred and hostility in European societies, antisemitism is very much alive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century - in countries formerly under the communist rule as well as in Western Europe.

As we know from history, antisemitism arises not from experience or historical facts, but from itself. The antisemite, afraid „of himself, of his own consciousness, of his own liberty, of his instincts, of his responsibilities, of solitariness, of change, of society, and the world”, has in fact always been „a coward who does not want to admit his cowardice to himself.”

As there are less and less direct witnesses of the extermination of European Jewry during the Second World War, the Holocaust is passing from memory to history. In countries with small Jewish communities like the Czech Republic, the passion for hate is often manifested by attacking the memory of the dead. This is manifested in attacks against Jewish cemeteries as well as by denying the Holocaust. Swastikas are painted on tombstones in remote locations, words questioning the largest genocide of the past century are posted anonymously in Internet discussions. Regardless of their form, these attacks on memory are intended to do harm to living people, and they do cause pain to those who survived the Holocaust. It is important to point out that they are being directed not only against the Jewish community but also against the Roma, Sinti and other groups of victims of Nazism.

In the Berlin Declaration adopted by the last OSCE conference on antisemitism in 2004, the participating states expressed their commitment to promoting education for combating antisemitism and about the Holocaust as well as about the importance of respect for all ethnic and religious groups. The OSCE States are also committed to collecting reliable information about antisemitic crimes and other hate crimes in their territory, to reporting such information periodically to ODIHR and making it available to the public.

Since the Berlin Conference in 2004, our world has changed in many ways. Let me mention two decisive points.

- A) With Web 2.0, the revolution in information technologies has passed into another stage. The amount of information shared by users of Facebook and Twitter has become practically impossible to follow. A war is being fought at this moment at the battlefields called social networks and blogs. In this battle for freedom, civil rights and democracy against hatred, intolerance and bigotry, the means at the disposal of States and their authorities are necessarily limited. Without an active involvement of civil society, the war against antisemitism and other forms of racism and xenophobia cannot be won.
  
- B) A part of the discussion tomorrow will be devoted to „International Developments as a New Factor Related to Manifestations of Antisemitism”. Looking back at European history, we can clearly see this factor is not quite new. In my country, links to a „Zionist conspiracy” played a key role in the largest show trial of the Stalinist era. Recently, we have seen that a wave of violence against Jewish people and property has occurred in Western Europe after the Israeli operation in Gaza on the turn of 2008 and 2009. Let me express very clearly that international developments or political issues, including those related to Israel and the Middle East, never justify antisemitism. Neither can they ever justify hatred against Muslims, Arabs or any other group of people. In this respect, the OSCE participating States as well as civil society and religious organizations must do their best to promote a culture of tolerance and dialogue. I believe this must include the acceptance of some core values, such as respect for the fellow human being regardless of his or her race, ethnicity or religion. A true dialogue between religions and cultures – including a dialogue between Jews and Muslims – is a vital necessity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Europe. Such a dialogue must stem from a mutual interest on the part of civil society and religious organisations in the OSCE States, rather than from governmental and ministerial declarations.

It remains a key task for OSCE participating States to enact legislation to combat hate crimes, providing for effective penalties that take into account the enormous danger of these crimes which may target the very foundation of each society. All hate crimes, whether motivated by hatred against Jews, Muslims, Christians, sexual minorities or any other identity groups, need to be investigated without delay. Law enforcement must treat manifestations of antisemitism and other types of hostility directed against a group of people as such and not as ordinary acts of violence or „hooliganism”. Motives emerging from hostility have to be acknowledged and publicly condemned by the authorities and political leaders.

Ladies and gentlemen, as a Czech contribution to this conference that has been organized by the OSCE, let me invite you all to a presentation by representatives of Czech organizations involved in combating antisemitism as well as in Holocaust remembrance and education, including the Prague-based European Shoah Legacy Institute. The presentation will take place on Friday at the Jewish Museum in Prague.

I wish you all a good conference.

Confronting Anti-Semitism in Public Discourse  
Prague, Czech Republic  
March 23-24, 2011  
**H.E. Ambassador Janez Lenarčič**, Director, OSCE/ODIHR  
Opening Remarks

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to today's high level expert meeting on '*Confronting Anti-Semitism in Public Discourse*'.

We are gathered here to discuss a topic that has been at the heart of the OSCE's preoccupations for the last decade, the perseverance of anti-Semitism in the midst of our societies, and how to address it effectively. The OSCE has played a unique, pioneering role in shaping the international political agenda on this issue beginning with the seminal High Level Conference in Berlin in 2004 and subsequent follow up High Level events in Cordoba (2005), Bucharest (2007) and Astana (2010). We can be proud of the record of the Organization in this respect: we have adopted comprehensive commitments to address anti-Semitism and, with the development of ODIHR's activities in this area, have developed programmes and resources that are sought and used by participating States in their efforts to abide with their commitments.

Looking back over this time period, we can say that much has been achieved. In 2004, I remember that an unprecedented wave of hate-motivated incidents targeting Jewish communities across some parts of the OSCE region since the end of the 1990's had been met with surprise and shock by most political decision makers and communities alike. How could this be possible four decades after the liberation of the Auschwitz camp? How could this happen after most political leaders had pledged to rebuilding a democratic order on the rubble of World War II where targeting Jews because they were Jews would never again be tolerated? Providing coherent responses, verbally and through action, represented the challenges that OSCE had to face up to and take a leading role. It is again incumbent upon us to do so now when facing the current issues in anti-Semitism today.

In the last seven years, we have witnessed the emergence of a normative framework on hate crime and consensus on the adoption of concrete preventive and responsive measures to combat anti-Semitic crimes. ODIHR's annual report on hate crimes shows that significant progress has been made in the area of legislation, capacity building of criminal justice actors, and data collection, although much still remains to be done. ODIHR's annual hate crimes report provides general information on hate crimes in the OSCE region, and indicates issues related specifically to anti-Semitism (various acts of violence, speeches, and incidents). My understanding is that we have a comprehensive roadmap with clear parameters when it comes to developing policies aimed at combating anti-Semitic crimes. The remaining task, and it is no small task, is to effectively implement these policies.

Our meeting today will address an aspect of anti-Semitism where no consensus has emerged so far, namely how to address of anti-Semitism in public discourse. I am confident that we are united about the impact of anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism is corrosive to society, and a chilling

reminder of the horror of the holocaust. Anti-Semitic discourse undermines the safety and security of Jewish people across the OSCE region and harms us all. Yet, there are some grey areas of definition and perception

I would like to draw your attention to a few elements since these questions will be explored in-depth in the course of today during the three panels.

What are the issues at stake? In terms of human rights, the major issue is to find the right balance between fundamental rights: freedom of expression, freedom of the media and the right to be protected from the real harm that discrimination, including in the form of intolerant speech can cause.

When is it legitimate and necessary to restrict freedom of expression because some perceive that their rights or their dignity are being violated? Politically, we are at the heart of a debate raging throughout most of our societies: how do we define the “living together”, what are our political and collective identities, how do we define the relationship between “majority and minority”? My sense is that we are currently at the crossroads where long accepted principles and beliefs are being questioned at the highest levels in many democratic societies, are truly putting into question what we thought was the holy grail of our societies: the tacit terms and conditions of the “social contract”. From a security standpoint, this is particularly worrying since history shows us that *this* is precisely when minorities are at risk of being victims of scapegoating by the majority for the social demise attributed to them because of their difference.

I would like to stress that this topic is a core issue for the OSCE. The OSCE is a political organization with a **security mandate**, thus providing the crucial focus to this debate. Anti-Semitic discourse and other forms of intolerant discourse can undermine security at the levels of the individual, the neighbourhood the nation and society. We are not here to interfere with freedom of speech, thought or association. However, looking at the issue through the lens our conflict prevention mandate, we know that anti-Semitic speech has the power to ignite conflicts and tensions in the midst of our societies and beyond

***What are the international instruments at hand?***

The principle of equality among human beings, including the right to freedom from discrimination, is at the heart of human rights. Article 1 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948 states that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”. Article 19 of the UDHR guarantees freedom of expression, and is fundamental to human rights protection.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) builds on this approach. Its Article 19 guarantees the right to freedom of expression, and allows for restrictions on these rights, but only where they are provided by law and necessary in a democratic society.

On the other hand, Article 20 places an obligation on State Parties to prohibit, by law, speech that incites hatred. While this implies a high threshold, and rightly so, in order to protect freedom of speech, there is no consensus what incitement and advocacy of hatred under the law really means. To illustrate the complexities of the issue, some countries only consider acts that just stop short of direct calls to engage in acts of violence are contained within this definition while other jurisdictions consider a variety of conducts from displaying racist symbols to praises for acts

already committed (genocide), display of symbols (swastikas), support for certain actions (expel all Jews from the country).

In our work, we have found that there are significant risks in criminalizing hate speech. Why? Because it can be used in an overbroad sense having the effect of discriminating against other parts of societies, impeding the robust debate that is necessary in a healthy democracy.

Owing to the complex nature of this issue, the OSCE has adopted a very considered approach in this area of its work. OSCE commitments reaffirm the freedom of expression and the freedom of the media and the right to equality and non-discrimination. However there are no commitments calling for criminalization of hate speech, but an articulation of the positive obligations of political leaders to refrain from making intolerant statements and to publicly condemn intolerant speech whenever they occur.

*What should be the appropriate answer of the international community and national authorities to address these developments?*

So what, you may ask, should we be doing? Well, not only am I convinced that the OSCE can offer a good forum for this kind of discussion, I am proud of the work that we have undertaken to date.

I have five suggestions to make to you today:

**First of all, we need to carefully and sensitively monitor the issue.** Currently, there is no comprehensive official data on instances of anti-Semitic speech that is considered as punishable by law. While not every kind of hate speech passes the threshold of punishment monitoring will help us understand and address the intolerance that might be taking place in the midst of our societies.

**Second: Governments should show leadership** by robustly imposing obligations on public officials at all levels, including ministers, to avoid making statements that promote discrimination or undermine equality and. This should be reflected in formal codes of conduct or employment rules and augmented by implementing initiatives in the form of **voluntary codes of conduct or ethics committees.**

**Third: Civil society should be supported.** A core advantage of the OSCE is its unique record of giving a voice to civil society where they can participate in dialogue on an equal footing with governments. They have a unique perspective and crucial evidence to share with us about the topic. They witness - firsthand - societal trends and patterns in all spheres of public life, in political parties, on the university campus, in schools, in the streets, and in the stadium.

**Fourth: We should step up our investment in education.** We should build on this partnership to raise awareness about human rights standards, increase knowledge and understanding about the history of the Jews, the Holocaust, the history of the State of Israel, confront prejudice and stereotypes related to anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance, including by providing teacher training on human rights values and principles and by introducing or strengthening intercultural understanding as a part of the school curriculum for pupils of all ages.

**Fifth: we need to build on our partnerships with other international organisations and with private sector such as the media.** We at ODIHR are grateful for the excellent cooperation we share with each of our partner international organisations, and I am delighted to see you here today. Your work in producing regular reports regarding trends and developments related to anti-Semitism as well as your policy recommendations and other practical resources complement and reinforce our shared efforts in combating anti-Semitism. Just to give one of several examples of this, our common voice was recently expressed in the form of a joint press statement on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 21 March.

We can also intensify our work in combating hate speech on the Internet. Intolerant discourse is global in nature: speech does not know any physical boundaries. The OSCE took the initiative in Athens in 2009, bringing together the key organisations and experts to analyse the issue and suggest concrete actions to tackle it. There is a real opportunity to further develop this approach in partnership with Social Network and Internet providers.

### ***Conclusion***

Today's event shall enable us to elaborate on some of these issues and improve our responses to anti-Semitism in public discourse. Today represents an opportunity for all of us to highlight and discuss openly the challenges we face in our field of work, and to open a discussion on how we can all react more effectively as well as how to use our limited resources in the most efficient way. I can already predict that we won't reach any complete consensus on this issue, but I would like to stress that I count on an open, frank and respectful discussion on a topic that is sensitive. In this regard, let me mention that we are testing a new format for this event: the panellists will engage in a discussion rather than delivering presentations, stimulating everybody to contribute. I am certain that the variety of the backgrounds, professional fields and organizations we have gathered in this room will result in a fruitful discussion and relevant recommendations.

Thank you for your attention.

Confronting Anti-Semitism in Public Discourse  
Prague, Czech Republic  
March 23-24, 2011  
Rabbi Andrew Baker  
Opening Remarks

Words matter.

Few people would disagree. Hatred and incitement usually begin with words. The lethal genocide of Nazi Germany was driven first by a relentless propaganda campaign.

Anti-Semitism in Europe has a deeply-rooted foundation. Christianity had long asserted that Jews were a despised people for their rejection of Jesus. The accusation of deicide has accompanied the Jewish people into modern times. (Witness Pope Benedict XII's recent work in which he "absolves" the Jews of this heinous charge.) Misunderstandings of Judaism, its rabbinic texts and religious practices have spawned claims of blood libel and the public burning of sacred books. In such cases pogroms and physical attacks were seldom far behind.

A century ago the secret police of Tsarist Russia promulgated the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, a notorious fiction that described an international Jewish conspiracy bent on achieving world-wide economic and political domination. At the same time "enlightened" figures such as Vienna Mayor Karl Lueger recognized the value of harnessing anti-Semitism to further their political ambitions.

Such was the state of things well before Hitler came to power and when the Holocaust was still unimaginable.

Today many OSCE Participating States still grapple with the problem of anti-Semitism. Those nations that emerged from Communism two decades ago were freed from repressive and authoritarian rule, but state-sponsored anti-Semitism has given way to the populist form. In some countries it is folded in with the racism and xenophobia directed against Roma and Sinti and migrant communities. In others it has accompanied calls for the restitution of Holocaust-era assets and demands for a critical examination of history. It may manifest itself in the growth of right-wing political parties or in the deeds of skinheads and neo-Nazis. It may be fueled by a yellow press that serves to raise passions, and it is often accompanied by the reprint of traditional anti-Semitic tracts. In virtually all places the power and anonymity of the Internet has permitted this hatred—and many others—to spread virtually unchecked.

Even when political leadership is principled and recognizes the unacceptability of such discourse, serious action is frequently lacking. Shaky coalitions and minority governments limit the ability or willingness to act. Appealing to the better nature of voters may be no key to success even in a stable economic and social climate. These days we are probably fortunate if

mainstream parties can be restrained simply from getting down in the mud, and even that is not always the case.

All democratic societies recognize the need to balance free speech and freedom of the press with the desire to limit that which incites and foments group hatred. This poses very real challenges. A growing number of countries have adopted legislation designed to prevent or penalize the publication of certain materials and the display of offensive signs and symbols. The success of such laws is decidedly mixed. Prosecution is far from certain. Long delays, uncertain verdicts and modest penalties call into question their deterrent value. Countries such as the United States with constitutional protections of the press have had to find other ways to address the problem. We hope that in tomorrow's plenary session on best practices we will see a full discussion of the various tools that might be employed.

We shall also take up another area of concern, sometimes referred to as the "new anti-Semitism." This reflects a situation where the State of Israel and its citizens are depicted in ways that cross the lines of acceptable criticism, and they are demonized and their very legitimacy is called into question. The unresolved Middle East conflict can engender strong emotions in people far from the battle lines, and European Jewish communities have become targets for their anger. Their small numbers mean that few people in most OSCE countries have the personal experience of Jewish friends or coworkers which might otherwise mitigate prejudicial feelings. Thus the images and messages that are conveyed through the media of Jews and of Israel play an outsized role in shaping the attitudes and increasing the prejudice of many. This is damaging in its own right but it also contributes to a climate that can threaten the physical security of Jewish communities and individuals.

It is not the purpose of this conference to debate the Middle East conflict. But any serious effort to describe and understand anti-Semitism in Europe today must take into account the role that Israel now plays. I believe this is manifest in three ways:

1. Events in the Middle East have aroused the passions of certain individuals in Europe—primarily among Arabs and Moslems—who have in turn looked to European Jews and Jewish institutions as a convenient target for their anger usually through verbal and physical assaults. In large measure this accounts for the increase we have seen in the number of anti-Semitic incidents in recent years—numbers that tend to spike at times of heightened conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. This development led the OSCE to declare in its Berlin Declaration in 2004 that such events can never justify anti-Semitism.
2. We must recognize that Israel itself is sometimes described in ways that transcend mere criticism, however vigorous, and become a form of anti-Semitism. It was with this in mind that the European Monitoring Center (EUMC) in 2005 adopted a working definition of anti-Semitism that included such examples as when Israel is declared a "racist endeavor" or when drawing comparisons of current Israeli policies with those of the Nazis.

3. Europeans' increasingly negative views of Israel are applied to Jewish communities with potentially dangerous consequences. The Friedrich Ebert Foundation recently published a survey of European attitudes drawn from polling in eight countries. When asked whether they agreed with the statement, "Considering Israel's policy, I can understand why people do not like Jews," significant percentages of the respondents said yes. (Italy 25%, Germany 35%, UK 35%, Netherlands 41%, Hungary 45%, Portugal 48%, Poland 55%) When other surveys report that many Europeans view Israel as a pariah state, much like they see Iran or North Korea, there is genuine cause for alarm. We already see Jewish communities facing significant costs to increase the security of their schools, synagogues and community centers that they believe are mandated by the changing climate.

I believe it is fair to say that the media plays a significant role in each of these areas. Of course it is firstly the messenger, and it should not be blamed for this part. But it can also be an actor or enabler. In tomorrow's discussions we shall be interested in trying to understand better how this happens and what steps can be taken—by the media itself or by other players—to ameliorate the problem.

The OSCE and ODIHR have pressed Participating States to take note of the rise in anti-Semitism, to monitor and to collect data. Communities and individuals have been encouraged to collect their own information and to report incidents. Although still incomplete, there has been steady progress in recent years. The presence of anti-Semitism in public discourse may be harder to quantify, but it is no longer dismissed or minimized. This conference should take things still further and hopefully result in pragmatic recommendations that can be taken up in future Human Dimension Implementation Meetings.

I would like to thank Czech Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg for hosting this conference and Lithuanian Foreign Minister Audronius Azubalis for making it part of the Chairmanship's program. It would not have been possible without the organizational support of ODIHR's director, Ambassador Janez Lenarcic, and the director of its Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department, Ms. Floriane Hohenberg. We are also grateful for the additional help provided by the EVZ Foundation and by Austrian Ambassador Ferdinand Trauttmansdorff.

Confronting Anti-Semitism in Public Discourse  
Prague, Czech Republic  
March 23-24, 2011  
Mrs. Asta Skaisgirytė Liauškienė,  
Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania  
Opening Remarks

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The issue of anti-Semitism in the societies that make up the OSCE community of nations is hardly a new topic.

In preparing my remarks for today, I looked back over the conclusions from some twenty years of OSCE conferences, seminars and Ministerial decisions addressing issues of human rights, minority issues, anti-discrimination, building up toleration and furthering respect for one another.

And I read, time and again, our collective expression of concern over “manifestations of intolerance, discrimination, aggressive nationalism, xenophobia, *anti-Semitism*, racism and violent extremism...” as threats to our OSCE value system.

It appears that despite our conscious efforts and continuous resolve over the years to deal with this scourge, this scourge of Anti-Semitism, we continue to see its threat in our midst, and the need to combat it.

Why?

Not “why do we need to combat it?” That is self-evident, I would hope.

But why does the threat persist despite all our efforts to contain it?

Why are we not more successful in eradicating Anti-Semitism from our common society?

What are we not doing right?

What should we do, what should be done better?

Where are we, as individuals and as societies, failing in our institutions, by our way of life, in our public discourse, that Anti-Semitism can keep coming back, and threaten the roots of our society with hatred and intolerance?

In this high level meeting we will have an opportunity to take a fresh look, a current look, at three aspects of Anti-Semitism and how it is manifested in our public discourse:

- 1) The “traditional” forms of anti-Semitism and stereotypes as they are still seen today;

- 2) Linking international and political issues, including those in Israel and the Middle East as a means of justifying anti-Semitism;
- 3) Effective ways to combat anti-Semitism in public discourse, addressing practical steps which all of us can take to combat this insidious evil.

I do not intend this evening to pre-empt or anticipate our distinguished panelists in the discussions scheduled for tomorrow. There are a few observations, however, which come to mind as I look at the program.

You know – we know – the old anti-Semitic stereotypes.

If we are self-aware, we recognize them and can seek to dismiss them.

The problem is, however, that the old stereotypes find ways to present themselves in new forms, in new clothing, as it were.

Some of these you will recognize immediately, others may surprise you. What is disturbing is that they keep coming back again and again.

They keep coming back, I believe, for at least two reasons: First, too many people have been taught these stereotypes by their families, or friends, by society or religion when we were young, and easily impressionable. A certain fundamental imprinting has occurred, and even with years of thoughtful self-examination and re-conditioning it is difficult to wholly erase what was once placed into the unconsciousness. Rationally people can recognize it, but on an unconscious level it may still sneak up and impact their behavior and thinking, particularly when the idea or image comes in a new guise.

When I think of the unexpected attack of old anti-Semitic ideas in new forms, I think of it in terms of modern computer software. There are new viruses being directed at our “software” every day. And every day our awareness of the danger must be updated. As we protect our computers, so we must also protect our minds.

That is why we are here. To update our awareness; to ensure that in our public discourse, in our hearing and our speaking, we protect ourselves and others from dangerous, new, viral infections.

We need to consider ways to put an end to the cycle of re-infection.

Knowing the destructive quality of anti-Semitic images and stereotypes, we are called upon all the more to discipline our actions, our attitudes, our speech so that we ensure these impressions are not passed on to our children and our children’s children.

We are called upon to find ways to teach, at an early age, the story of the Holocaust and inoculate children from the virus of anti-Semitism.

In Lithuania we have benefitted from ODIHR's assistance through teaching materials which have allowed us to update existing teaching materials, and to prepare training seminars for teachers. Other countries, Ukraine, Poland, Austria, Hungary and Latvia are following this example. This is how we take practical steps to update our defenses against new forms and new guises of Anti-Semitism.

But I will speak about the second reason for the constant re-emergence of anti-Semitic ideas and arguments in our society, I believe, is that the framework for our "public discourse" has changed and continues to change so radically.

Some 150 years ago the basis on which our public discourse was delivered was the printed word of books, pamphlets and newspapers. The number of writers, publishers and experts – and also readers -- was, relatively speaking, small. The tempo of the discussion was moderate. The forum for our discussions was the town meeting, the public rally of several hundred people, a limited number in a limited place.

Some fifty years ago broadcast media added a significant new dimension to the public arena. The numbers of participants and the speed of the discussions and exchanges grew dramatically.

But now, today, with the introduction of the World Wide Web, electronic communication and the social media, the realm of the "public discourse" has grown exponentially and proceeds literally at the speed of light.

Every person is a potential "publisher".

Every group can have one or more web-sites; every demonstration, gathering or rally can find voice and face on U-tube.

In short, the arena in which our public discourse takes place has become global, and the number of participants has become almost limitless.

How are we to moderate the public discourse under these conditions?

How can there be a moderator, and yet preserve freedom of expression?

How can anti-Semitism in public discourse be identified and how to draw the distinction between acceptable and unacceptable speech?

Is it possible to prevent anti-Semitic statements without infringing on the right to free expression and freedom of the media?

Which good practices can be identified that encourage free debates in society while at the same time confront and combat anti-Semitic expressions?

To these questions there are no easy or quick solutions.

Now I turn to you with some challenges, also challenges for you for tomorrow's discussions

These are rhetorical questions.

Can the answers be found in the fundamental principles which underlie the OSCE comprehensive concept of security?

What practical role can the transparent implementation of the rule of law, protection of human rights and freedom of speech play in establishing genuine respect for the dignity and integrity of minorities?

We know the OSCE participating States are a diverse assembly of societies and state systems. How can we, in practical terms, build common institutions, structures, and practices to achieve and insure the lofty goals we have set for ourselves?

When dealing with Anti-Semitism, or any form of racism, or nationalism, or xenophobia or prejudices in our public and private discourse how do we balance freedom of speech and respect for the rights and dignity of "the other?"

Practically speaking, what new approaches can you suggest to create conditions of communication and trust where each party, or each group, can operate on a basis of respect for the other?

The experience of the OSCE demonstrates that only when mutual respect and trust can be established is it possible to fairly address the kernel of a complex and highly charged issue, and not be lost in the smoke, dust and heat of non-rational rhetoric surrounding it.

Much has been done, but there will always be more to do.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Rabbi Baker,

Thank you for your role in bringing us together, we have to put our heads and hearts together to seek new and practical and effective solutions to the challenges to be addressed by this High Level Meeting.

I look forward with anticipation to the results of tomorrow's panels, and discussions.

All the best to you.

### **ANNEX III: Biographical Information about Meeting Moderators and Panelists**

#### **Session I: Traditional Anti-Semitic Themes and Stereotypes**

Moderator:

**Dr. Kathrin Meyer**, Executive Secretary, Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, Germany

Dr. Kathrin Meyer, Executive Secretary of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research (ITF), has an MA in Educational Science and a PhD in History from the Technical University Berlin. After her completing her studies, she was a research fellow at the Center for advanced Holocaust studies at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum and became a Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Research on anti-Semitism, Technical University Berlin. In 2002, Dr. Meyer was appointed Adviser on anti-Semitism Issues at the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in Warsaw, Poland. At the OSCE/ODIHR, she designed and implemented a program aimed at combating Antisemitism and strengthening Holocaust education and remembrance in the 56 participating OSCE States. In 2008, Dr. Meyer was selected as the new Executive Secretary of the ITF to establish and head its Secretariat located in Berlin. In her role as Executive Secretary, Dr. Meyer implements the priorities of the ITF Chair, and coordinates the activities of its 28 member countries, four expert working groups and several specialized committees.

Panelists:

**Mr. Petr Brod**, Journalist, Czech Republic

Peter Brod was born in Prague in 1951. He studied political science, East and Southeast European history and journalism at the University of Munich where he gained his M.A. in 1977. He has also studied at the London School of Economics and Political Science and at Harvard University (Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA).

Between 1980 and 1987 he held various positions with BBC radio (external and domestic services) and BBC television in London. He later worked with Radio Free Europe (RFE), serving in various posts in Munich, including as special assistant to the director of the RFE and from 1990 to 1992 as the station's first permanent correspondent and bureau chief in Prague. From 1993 to 1996, Mr. Brod joined the staff of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* in Munich and left the paper in 1996. After a two-year stint as a freelance journalist in Munich, he returned to the daily as its Prague correspondent.

In 2000, Brod rejoined the BBC and was in charge of its Prague bureau until 2006. Since then, he has been freelancing in Prague. His activities have included presenting the programme *Historical Magazine* on Czech public TV's news and current affairs station CT24.

**Mr. Konstanty Gebert**, Journalist, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Poland

Konstanty Gebert, was born in 1953 in Warsaw. He is an international reporter and columnist at *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Poland's biggest daily. Mr. Gebert was a democratic opposition activist in the 1970s and an underground journalist during the 1980s, writing under the pen name Dawid Warszawski. Mr. Gebert is a frequent contributor to other Polish and international media.

Mr. Gebert is also the founder of the Jewish intellectual monthly *Midrasz* and a board member of the Taube Centre for Jewish Life and Culture. He has authored ten books in Polish, including books focused on the Polish roundtable negotiations in 1989, the Yugoslav wars, and Israeli history, in addition to commentaries on the Torah, and a panorama of the European 20<sup>th</sup> century. His essays have appeared in two dozen collective works in Poland, Japan, US, UK, Italy, France and Belgium, and his have appeared articles in many newspapers around the world.

**Dr. Sarunas Liekis**, Professor, Vilnius University, Lithuania

Šarunas Liekis is a professor at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, professor in the Department of Politics, Mykolas Romeris University and Dean of the Political Science and Diplomacy Faculty. Mr. Liekis acts as the Director of the Vilnius Yiddish Institute at Vilnius University, where he also lectures.

Mr. Liekis served as an expert for the Lithuanian Government Department for Minorities; a country deputy expert for the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) at the Council of Europe (since 2002); a country deputy expert for the EUMC in Vienna (since 2003); Chairman of the Board of the NGO Information and Support Center, Vilnius (since 2000).

He has studied at Vilnius University (habilitation procedure passed in 2005); Brandeis University, Waltham, USA (1993-1998, PhD); Hebrew University, Jerusalem (1995-1996); Oxford University and OCPHS, UK (1991-1992, Diploma). During his earlier career, he was a Miles Lerman Research Fellow of the Center for the Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (2001-2002); Assistant Professor, Department of History, Vilnius University (1999-2000); Director of Programs at the Open Society Fund Lithuania (1997-2001); and Research and Teaching Assistant at Brandeis University (1993-1997).

**Session II: International Developments as a New Factor Related to Manifestations of Anti-Semitism**

Moderator:

**Rabbi Andrew Baker**, Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating anti-Semitism

Rabbi Andrew Baker is Director of International Jewish Affairs for the American Jewish Committee and a prominent figure in international efforts to combat anti-Semitism. In January

2009, he was first appointed the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chair-in-Office on Combating Anti-Semitism, and he was reappointed in 2010 and 2011.

He has played an active role in confronting the legacy of the Holocaust. He is a Vice President of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany, the Jewish umbrella organization that has worked on restitution issues for half a century. In 2003 he was awarded the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit (First Class) by the President of Germany for his work in German-Jewish relations. He was a member of Government Commissions in both the Czech Republic and Slovakia that were established to address the claims of Holocaust Victims.

He was a founding member of the National Historical Commission of Lithuania and involved in restitution negotiations there. In 2006 the President of Lithuania presented him with the Officer's Cross of Merit for his work. For similar work he was awarded the Order of the Three Stars by the President of Latvia in 2007. He helped the Romanian Government establish a national commission to examine its Holocaust history and served as one of its founding members. For this work he was awarded the National Order of Merit (Commander) by the President of Romania in 2009.

Rabbi Baker directed AJC efforts in the development and construction of the Belzec Memorial and Museum, a joint project of the AJC and the Polish Government on the site of the former Nazi death camp in Southeastern Poland. In May 2006 he was appointed by the Prime Minister of Poland to a six year term on the International Auschwitz Council, the official governmental body that oversees the work of the Auschwitz State Museum.

A long-time resident of Washington, DC, Rabbi Baker has served as President of the Washington Board of Rabbis, President of the Interfaith Conference of Washington and Commissioner on the District of Columbia Human Rights Commission.

A native of Worcester, Massachusetts, Rabbi Baker received a B.A. from Wesleyan University and a Masters Degree and Rabbinic Ordination from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York City. He is the father of four children.

Panelists:

**Mark Gardner**, Director of Communications, Community Security Trust, United Kingdom

Mark Gardner has worked full time for Community Security Trust (CST) (and its predecessor, Community Security Organisation) for twenty years. Formerly Director of Research, he has been Director of Communications for five years and is regularly quoted in Jewish, UK and international media on CST's core issues of antisemitism, policing, security and terrorism. Mr. Gardner is the author of many articles on anti-Semitism and represented CST and the Jewish community in giving verbal evidence at the 2006 Parliamentary inquiry into anti-Semitism. He has also represented CST and the community on numerous national police advisory committees and was awarded a police commendation for helping to lead police communication with London's minority communities during the neo-Nazi nail bombing campaign of 1999.

**Ms. Esther Voet**, Editor in Chief, *Dutch Jewish Weekly*, Netherlands

Esther Voet has been a journalist for 23 years. She publishes regularly in publications and broadcasts in the Dutch media regarding anti-Semitic incidents and themes.

Ms. Voet was Editor for the *Jewish Journal* and the *Jewish Yearbook* and is Editor in Chief of the *Dutch Jewish Weekly (het Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad)*, the oldest weekly newsmagazine in the Netherlands (published since 1865). It concentrates on Jewish news and Israeli issues and is widely read by Jewish and non-Jewish readers and policy makers.

Next year Ms. Voet will begin working for the Information and Documentation Centre in Israel (CIDI).

**Mr. Mark Weitzman**, Director of Government Affairs, *Simon Wiesenthal Center*, United States of America

Mark Weitzman is Director of Government Affairs and the Director of the Task Force against Hate and Terrorism for the Simon Wiesenthal Center. He is also the Chief Representative of the Center to the United Nations in New York, and was the Founding Director of the SWC's New York Tolerance Center. Mr. Weitzman is a member of the official US delegation to the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research and a board member and former Vice-President of the Association of Holocaust Organizations. He is a member of the advisory panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), of the advisory board of the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy at Yale University, chairs the Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research Working Group of the European Shoah Legacy Institute and was also a longtime member of the official Jewish-Catholic Dialogue Group of New York. Mr. Weitzman is also a participant in the program on Religion and Foreign Policy of the Council on Foreign Relations.

### **Session III: Effective Practices**

Moderator:

**Ms. Floriane Hohenberg**, Head, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department, OSCE ODIHR

Floriane Hohenberg has been working for ODIHR since 2005. She has been the Head of the Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department since 2009. From 2000 until 2004, she was the Head of the Representation in Germany of the French Commission for the Victims of Spoliation Resulting from the Anti-Semitic Legislation in force during the Occupation. Between 1998 and

1999 she participated in a study commissioned by the French government on the extent of the confiscation of Jewish assets in France during World War II.

Panelists:

**Mr. Richard Lobo**, Director, International Broadcasting Bureau, United States

Mr. Richard Lobo is the current Director of the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), International Broadcasting Bureau. The Broadcasting Board of Governors is an independent federal agency, supervising all U.S. government-supported, civilian international broadcasting, whose mission is to promote freedom and democracy and to enhance understanding through multimedia communication of accurate, objective, and balanced news, information, and other programming about America and the world to audiences overseas. BBG broadcasting organizations include the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, the Middle East Broadcasting Networks (Alhurra TV and Radio Sawa.), Radio Free Asia, and the Office of Cuba Broadcasting (Radio and TV Marti).

Mr. Lobo also serves as chairman of the Florida Public Broadcasting Service Inc. and is president and chief executive officer of WEDU (PBS) Tampa/St. Petersburg/Sarasota. He previously was president and general manager of WTVJ in Miami, station manager for WNBC-TV in New York, and vice president and general manager of NBC stations in Chicago and Cleveland. Early in his TV career his interview subjects included Fidel Castro, Robert Kennedy, Mickey Mantle, Malcolm X, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Barbra Streisand and The Beatles. He also served as Director of the Office of Cuba Broadcasting in the United States Information Agency from 1994-1995. A graduate of the University of Miami, Mr. Lobo is a member of the Tampa Bay chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists and the Leadership Council of the Community Foundation of Tampa Bay. He is on the board of the Florida Association of Broadcasters and a member of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences' Suncoast chapter. He earned the Leadership Award from the Chicago Latino Committee on the Media. He will be inducted into the Tampa Bay Business Hall of Fame in March. Mr. Lobo is a Captain (Retired) in the U.S. Army Reserve.

**Representative Christopher Smith**, United States Congress, United States

Elected in 1980, Rep. Chris Smith (R-Robbinsville, NJ) is currently in his 16th term in the U.S. House of Representatives. Smith, 57, currently serves as a senior member on the Foreign Affairs Committee, and is chairman of its Africa, Global Health and Human Rights Subcommittee. He is also chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and has served on the Congressional-Executive Commission on China. He also serves as "Special Representative" on Human Trafficking for the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and as an executive member of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission. Previously, he served as Chairman of the Veterans Committee and Chairman of the Foreign Affairs' Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Operations and the Subcommittee on Africa.

Smith has long chaired a number of bipartisan congressional caucuses (working groups) including the Pro-life Caucus (30 years), Autism (14 years), Alzheimer's (12 years), Lyme

Disease (eight years), Spina Bifida (eight years), Human Trafficking (eight years), Refugees (eight years), Combating Anti-Semitism and serving on caucuses on Bosnia, Uganda and Vietnam.

According to the independent watchdog organization Govtrack, as Smith ranks third among all 435 Members of the House over the last two decades in the number of laws authored, and eighth among all Members of the U.S. Senate and House.

He is the author of America's three landmark anti-human trafficking laws including "The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000", a comprehensive law designed to prevent modern-day slavery, protect victims, and enhance civil and criminal penalties against traffickers, as well as more than a dozen veterans health, education and homeless benefits laws, and laws to boost embassy security, promote democracy, religious freedom, and health care.

**Mr. Danny Stone**, Director, All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism, United Kingdom

Danny Stone is the Director of the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism and runs the PCAA Foundation, a charity which provides the secretariat to the group. He works with a wide range of MPs and Lords to combat and help develop and seek implementation of effective public policy to combat anti-Semitism. Before taking up his role Mr. Stone was a senior political advisor at the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Director of the Coexistence Trust - a political interfaith network - political advisor to Lord Janner of Braunstone Q.C. and a national student campaigns organiser.

Mr. Stone has a Bachelors degree from the University of Nottingham and is an MCIPR with a diploma in public relations. He has won awards for his work in the field of public affairs. He co-wrote the article in the Fall 2010 edition of the *Canadian Diversity* journal on learning the lessons of best practice for international approaches to combating anti-Semitism

**Mr. Alexey Zenko** is Deputy Director of the Department for Interethnic Relations, Ministry for Regional Development of the Russian Federation, Russian Federation

Mr. Alexey Zenko, was born in 1964. In 1987, Mr. Zenko graduated from the history department of the Leningrad University and in 1992, he defended his dissertation in ethnography, ethnology and anthropology. Mr. Zenko has authored more than 100 scientific publications about the contemporary ethnic diversity and culture of the Russian peoples. From 1991 to 2004, Mr. Zenko worked as an academic at Tumen State University as Head of the Department of Ethnic Studies of the Institute of the North Development of the Siberian Department of the Russian Academy of Science.

Mr. Zenko currently works as the Deputy Director of the Department for Interethnic Relations of the Ministry for Regional Development of the Russian Federation. He is involved in implementing a process regarding monitoring the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in addition to other international

conventions ratified by the Russian Federation and is involved in preparing normative legal documents regarding interethnic relations.

Mr. Zenko also sits as the Executive Secretary of the Consultative Advisory Council on National-Cultural Autonomy Issues and specializes in questions regarding interaction between public and national-cultural associations of the peoples of the Russian Federations.