



Leadership Conference on Civil Rights

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Declaration of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights

Conference on Anti-Semitism and on Other Forms of Intolerance Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Cordoba, Spain June 8-9, 2005

The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR) is the oldest, largest, and most diverse civil and human rights coalition in the United States. Founded in 1950, LCCR consists of more than 185 national organizations, representing persons of color, women, children, labor unions, individuals with disabilities, older Americans, major religious groups, gays and lesbians, and civil liberties and human rights groups. Together, over 50 million Americans belong to organizations that comprise LCCR.

Over the years, LCCR has been at the forefront of efforts to combat racism and discrimination of all forms in the United States. Building on this legacy of accomplishment, in recent years, working with selected member organizations, LCCR has extended its efforts to address these concerns – and to reach out to and demonstrate solidarity with a range of other organizations and individuals – within and outside the United States.

Our cooperation is premised on the notion that hate must not be fought by its victims alone. We see great strength in the diversity of our coalition and the solidarity it represents. That is why we organized a diverse delegation of preeminent civil and human rights leaders to participate in the Berlin Conference on Anti-Semitism and the Brussels Conference on Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination. In addition, LCCR members participated in the Paris OSCE conference on Internet hate in June to share their expertise on how to combat online hatred while safeguarding the right of free expression.

Recalling our declaration in Berlin and in Brussels, this Conference now affords another critical and timely opportunity to advance the fight against anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance throughout the OSCE region, to share our learning and expertise, and to learn from others from Europe, North America, and Central Asia.

LCCR and its member organizations recognize that addressing specific forms of intolerance requires a distinct focus to identify the scope and nature of a problem and to better understand the varying ways to best address it. We have seen, for example, that the historic scourge of anti-Semitism has its unique origins and characteristics, and calls for unique remedial approaches. At the same time, addressing anti-Semitism poses many of the same challenges for governments and societies as other forms of racism and intolerance. We welcome the OSCE's commitment to allow the space and focus to

approach individual problems effectively – tailoring responses to various challenges in different parts of the OSCE region. And we also welcome its commitment to promote programs and practices that can address what these problems have in common.

In that spirit, we have come to Cordoba with a delegation, each of us unique but united in purpose. We are white, black, and Latino, Arab and Jew, but we have come together around a common understanding that the failure to address racial, ethnic, and religious intolerance against any of us carries a price for all of us.

We meet at a time of what one of our member groups in a new report terms a growing “assault on identity” – with the hatreds of anti-Semitism joined by increased incidents of hate violence against Arabs, Muslims, South Asians, and Sikhs, as well as longstanding hatreds and intolerance directed toward Afro-descendants and immigrants. Most troubling, this violence is sometimes encouraged by the rhetoric of political leaders who have portrayed minority populations as security threats as well as economic burdens.

Now is a time to “take stock” of where we are a year after the Berlin and Brussels conferences and the launch of the OSCE’s work program on anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance: a time to assess the status of implementation of the Ministerial tasking and, most importantly, progress made by states in implementing commitments.

Crimes motivated by bias and hate have a special emotional and physical impact extending well beyond the original targets. Indeed, by their very nature, they are designed to intimidate others in the victim's community – causing many more to feel isolated, vulnerable, and unprotected by the law. By making members of a targeted group fearful, angry, and suspicious, these criminal acts are intended to polarize communities and damage the social fabric.

We welcome the steps already taken toward combating hate violence and intolerance by the OSCE’s Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the three Personal Representatives, but also note that a great deal more remains to be done. We urge states to support and enhance the capability of the ODIHR and the Personal Representatives in ways outlined below.

In addition, LCCR encourages the work of regional institutions such as the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and the European Union Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), in particular relating to the monitoring of and reporting on bias-motivated crimes in member countries.

We renew our call on OSCE member states to enhance their efforts to implement the Maastricht Decision and commitments undertaken at both Berlin and Brussels concerning improved collection and dissemination of information on hate crimes, in cooperation with the OSCE and other regional institutions.

LCCR recognizes further that NGOs also have a critical role to play in working with national and local civic and religious leaders, enforcement authorities, and others to strengthen monitoring, reporting, and enforcement of laws addressing bias-motivated crimes, as well as to advance the

reporting of such crimes by victims and affected communities. In that spirit, NGOs should take on additional commitments at this Conference. We pledge to rededicate ourselves to reach out to each other to work together to combat the menace of bias-motivated violence across the OSCE region, and we urge other civil society groups to do so.

- We commit to intensify efforts to combat anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance and to promote and strengthen acceptance and non-discrimination across communities throughout the OSCE region.
- We commit to working with NGO partners to learn from each others' experience and to share best practices in the fight against all forms of racism and discrimination.
- We commit to work with states, encouraging and recognizing progress and highlighting the gaps that remain in states' criminal justice and educational systems.
- We commit to support and complement the efforts of ODIHR to share information on incidents and best practices and to continue to seek out ways the NGO community and ODIHR can support civil society's efforts.

But in the end, it falls to participating states to make the most critical difference. Since the adoption of the Berlin and Brussels declarations there has been insufficient state progress on implementation. We call on participating states to move toward implementation to ensure that all individuals may fully enjoy their human rights on an equal basis, in full security and dignity.

Recommendations for Action by the OSCE and Participating States to Combat Racism and Discrimination and Promote Tolerance

1. States must reaffirm their commitments to take effective measures to combat anti-Semitism and other forms of racism, intolerance, and discrimination.
2. The incoming Chair in Office should reappoint the three Personal Representatives on Anti-Semitism; Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination; and Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, and take steps to support and enhance their capacity.
3. States should continue to share information on hate crime statistics and legislation with ODIHR and designate a representative responsible for this ongoing effort. States should also work together to strengthen the ability of the OSCE, as well as other institutions at the regional and national levels, to monitor incidents of hate crimes and publicly report on their findings.
4. ODIHR should craft model hate crime law guidelines that could be used to develop and implement new laws where none exist, and strengthen those that do already exist, to improve the response of the criminal justice system to hate violence.
5. The OSCE should promote anti-bias training for law enforcement officers to counter racial and ethnic profiling and other discriminatory forms of police conduct targeted at particular communities.

6. States should support the expansion of the OSCE's law enforcement training pilot program to improve the capacity of national and local law enforcement officials to identify hate crimes and develop effective, transparent procedures for recording and responding to these incidents, consistent with the interests and needs of the affected individual victims and communities of which they are members.
7. Government and civic leaders must condemn -- consistently and unequivocally -- all manifestations of racism and intolerance, including those that sometimes emanate from political and civic leaders.
8. States should utilize public and paid media to launch public service announcements and other similar forms of educational outreach, using messages that discourage intolerance and discrimination.
9. States should counter the growth of hate speech and other forms of intolerance on the Internet through substantial efforts to develop educational websites and online materials. Such sites and materials should be heavily promoted throughout the Internet.
10. The OSCE should encourage member states to develop and institute appropriate anti-bias education programs designed to make schools a safer environment.
11. The ODIHR should follow up on its just-released study of education efforts against anti-Semitism by promoting programs that respond to its recommendations, as well as addressing education efforts in the OSCE region to combat other forms of racism and intolerance.
12. In fulfilling its mandate to closely follow hate crimes in the OSCE region, ODIHR should follow up on the findings of its survey of where mechanisms are in place, continue to proactively solicit information from participating states, and offer assistance to states where gaps in effective monitoring and enforcement remain.