

Switzerland

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

**OSCE Chairmanship Conference on Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims,
Cordoba, 9 and 10 October 2007**

Session 1

Dear Mr. Chairman

It is an honour for me to have the opportunity to express my thoughts as a Swiss Moslem and a member of the Swiss Federal Commission against Racism (*) in front of such a distinguished audience.

The Moslems in the world and in Europe are on the defence because of a very small group of people out of Islamic background who have selected to express their dissatisfaction with the world order through violence and terror that is not acceptable by Islam, instead of using the available means of expression or protest. We therefore need the dialogue with other religions since violence can be carried out by people of all religions. We need solidarity in that area between all of us. We want to remind that a culture or a religion may not be deemed guilty as a punishment to actions of a few.

Even though the Moslem community of Switzerland, which is about 4.5% of the population, is on a good way of integration, the public opinion about this minority has continuous negative tendency in recent years. Particularly, some political parties exploit Islam and Moslems, and create Islamophobia to win the votes. Last example is the new launched public initiative that aims to forbid in the constitution building minarets in Switzerland. The referendum will take place after 100'000 signatures are collected until October next year. But in principle, the Federal Council (the government) takes a position on a initiative only when it is officially accepted. Instrumentation and misuse of Islam and Muslims unfortunately is getting more intensive and frightening. For the national elections of coming 21 October 2007 the votes of the Swiss population are asked with placard campaigns like "Baden instead of Bagdad", Minarets piercing the Swiss map as rockets and so on. Further, according to the news, in Switzerland a European-wide cooperation of campaigns against Muslims is planned with "Pax Europa e.V." of Germany. This type of political actions accompanied with high-budget anti-Islam and anti-Moslem campaigns in the media burden to live together in peace.

We expect a different attitude of politics to give us a framework for a forum of constructive dialogue and to give us the confidence and support. We strongly hope that mutual understanding and respect will help us to address the common problems and to jointly find appropriate and sustainable solutions. We Moslems in Europe need to be integrated in Europe and to have the chance to help integrate also Moslems out of Europe living in Europe.

We need the fair and objective attitude of the media. We expect more professional ethics of the media than commercial interest. We say to the media: Stop to use Islam as a commercial commodity and to base your success on exaggeration and excitation.

We have to learn how to deal with such complex phenomena such as terrorism, which is primarily political, social and psychological and not religious. We endeavour to understand the causes of terrorism and expect other religions, politics and media to be creative with us on how to contribute to their elimination. We want to jointly establish peace between religions and condemn together all forms of violence.

We all need the blessings of God that he may help us to reach the inner peace which is necessary to realize the peace in the European societies in which we live and also in the world.

Thank you.

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(*) <http://www.ekr-cfr.ch>