

## Romania's Statement in the Working Session 14

Romania fully subscribes to the Statement delivered by France on behalf of the European Union, but we would like to make just a few remarks in a national capacity.

Romania joins the international efforts in fighting against the phenomena such as extremism, racism, intolerance, xenophobia and discrimination.

We would like to inform you that Romania will chair the *International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance* (IHRA) between March 2016 and March 2017. Taking over the IHRA Chairmanship is a commitment to the acknowledgement of the past, the commemoration of the Holocaust victims and the fight against Anti-Semitism and xenophobia. Equally important, it reflects Romania's orientation towards the future, its pro-active approach in tackling its own past and developing projects that target the new generations by showing them how to avoid tragedies such as the Holocaust. The Romanian Chairmanship will have three main priorities: (1) work with the media and social media in combating anti-Semitism, (2) consolidation of Holocaust education in member and observer states, and (3) promotion of academic research.

In the context of today's discussion, we want to highlight that Romania has just amended its law in 2015 regarding the prohibition of organizations and symbols of fascist, racist or xenophobic character, as well as of promotion of worship of persons guilty of crimes against peace and humanity (Law no. 217/2015). The new element introduced by the law is the criminalization of promotion of legionnaire doctrine (an ideology promoted by a fascist organization in Romania, active in the period 1927-1941). The law brings therefore clarity in defining the notions of fascism in Romania, as well as the Holocaust on Romanian territory. These aspects are instrumental in the work of prosecutors and judges.

In the end, we would like to point out an example of good practices within the Prosecutor Offices. In 2014, together with The National Institute for the Study of Holocaust in Romania "Elie Wiesel", a campaign was launched in order to raise awareness among prosecutors on developing investigations and promoting prosecutions, through indictments on discrimination offences and hate crimes. In this context, in autumn 2014, a conference on *Combating Fascism, Xenophobia, and the Worship of Persons Guilty of Offences against Peace and Humanity* took place in Bucharest. A step forward in this regard will take place during the Romanian Chairmanship of IHRA, when a training session on best practices for the police and judicial representatives on implementing the legal framework on combating all forms of discrimination, including anti-Semitism, is envisaged.

Thank you.