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FOR HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY AND HUMANITARIAN AID, AT
THE OSCE CONFERENCE ON ANTI-SEMITISM**

Berlin, 28–29 April 2004

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We can look back at a very intensive, diverse and fruitful exchange of opinions here in Berlin. The delegations have made their position clear: anti-Semitism is a very specific form of intolerance, a threat to our basic values and an attack on our coexistence in open democracies. Anti-Semitism is not only the problem of Jews — no, I as a non-Jew do not want to live in a society in which Jews have to be afraid of practising their religion, in which Jewish kindergartens and old people's homes must be protected by the police. This limits the freedom of all non-Jews as well, and represents a challenge for us all.

It therefore gives me all the more satisfaction to note that we are not looking back at a conference of fine words, but rather at an effective, results-oriented exchange about existing mechanisms and strategies for the future. At the level of their political decision-makers, delegations have confirmed their determination to work together in combating anti-Semitism. They have made it known that they do not want to leave Berlin without a concrete result. I feel sure that the declaration to be adopted at the close of our Conference will be an important document constituting not the end but rather the beginning of an operational and efficient strategy for the future.

With their substantial contributions, reflecting the diverse experiences throughout the OSCE area, delegations have confirmed that the OSCE offers a unique forum for our joint struggle against anti-Semitism.

In order to combat this particularly abhorrent form of intolerance, countries must take co-ordinated measures. We have received an overview of the range of legislative measures in the individual participating States. We have learned that the essential element of effective legislation on anti-Semitism must be the strict criminal prosecution of every form and every manifestation of anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism is not covered by the civil right to freedom of speech; anti-Semitism is a criminal offence.

We have also learned that legislation alone is not enough. Tolerance, indeed respect and acceptance, must be anchored in society as a whole — that means cultivating acceptance, it means an educational effort in the media and responsible behaviour by the media, it means

dialogue between religions, between cultures and between peoples. It does not mean repressing the memory of the Holocaust but remembering it for the future. Only together can we continue to educate our societies, through co-operation between the State and civil society. For this reason, the exemplary co-operation between national delegations and representatives of civil society was of particular importance here in Berlin.

The workshop in conjunction with session one highlighted that it would also be useful to strengthen capacities for research and the collection and evaluation of data in order to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon of anti-Semitism today. In that connection, networking could significantly improve the use of existing structures of State bodies and non-governmental organizations, as well as the work of research institutes throughout the OSCE area. I was particularly impressed by the contribution of Dina Porat who told us about the work of the Stephen Roth Institute in Tel Aviv. The institute has put together an overview of legislative measures in all OSCE States, which provides a basis for our further work.

Contributions to the workshop also focused once again on anti-Semitism in the media, in particular hate propaganda on the Internet.

With regard to co-operation among existing bodies and how we can build on this, Michael Head, who led on my behalf the workshop concerning the implementation of the Maastricht Ministerial Council decision, can undoubtedly add something.

But allow me now to express my personal thanks. For me as a German, what counts is not the grace of late birth but the historical responsibility that accompanies me in my life and work. Yesterday and today were moving days with you here in Berlin. For us in Germany as well, this anti-Semitism Conference sends a loud signal rejecting anti-Semitism, racism and xenophobia, a signal that cannot be ignored.

Mr. Head, I shall now hand over to you.