

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

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Plenary Session 1: Intolerance and Discrimination  
against Muslims: Old prejudices and new targets

**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

*As delivered by H.E. Ambassador Mahmud Mamed-Kuliyev, Deputy Minister  
of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan*

Dear Mr. Moderator,

Distinguished speakers,

Dear Colleagues,

At the outset, I would like to thank the OSCE Spanish Chairmanship for holding a conference on such an extremely important and urgent issue of today's world. In this regard, the devotion of Spain to the process of strengthening of tolerance between different religions and cultures deserves the highest appreciation.

Mr. Moderator,

It is not a coincidence that we call this issue urgent. Today, unfortunately, we witness cases of intolerance and sometimes even violence of adherents of one religion against the others who differ in nothing but their confession. For people of my generation, who witnessed the world surviving ideological confrontation between East and West just two decades ago, it is distressing and painful to see the world drifting into a new standoff now on the basis of religion. From my point of view, if we allow this happen, the consequences will be far more catastrophic than we had in past during the Cold War.

The globalization and increasing interdependence of states, contrary to expectations, did not lead to greater tolerance across the globe. The manifestation of Islamophobia in some countries, publications of well-known cartoons and articles as well as the reaction to such cases create or exacerbate existing cultural and religious tensions.

Nevertheless, these events have also a positive effect as we all recognize the importance and indispensability of tolerance, mutual understanding and dialogue among civilizations.

In order to properly respond to this extremely dangerous challenge we have, first of all, to find out its root causes. This work has to be done on permanent basis and aimed at disclosure of deep and invisible reasons of this process

Secondly, proceeding from revealed main and real roots concrete effective measures can and should be developed and be taken to eliminate them. However, to achieve these two goals there is a dire necessity to bring together all main stakeholders, such as governments, international organizations, particularly OSCE, OIC, EU, Council of Europe, NGOs, civil society, academicians, intelligentsia, etc. and to ensure close and unfeigned cooperation between them.

In conclusion, let me underline that establishment and strengthening of partnership requires more efforts than we have made so far. Azerbaijan, as a homeland of various cultures and religions, reiterates its readiness to further contribute to this process to achieve the ultimate goal.

I thank you.