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## **The Rome International Conference on the Responsibility of States, Institutions and Individuals in the Fight against Anti-Semitism in the OSCE Area**

Rome 29 January 2018

### REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Under the OSCE Chairmanship of Minister Angelino Alfano, this international conference took place in Rome on 29 January 2018. During the meeting, the following thematic topics were addressed:

- Responsibility: the role of law makers and civil servants
- Responsibility: religion and Anti-Semitism
- Responsibility: the challenge of digital platforms
- Responsibility: the role of educators and sports

The event was attended by 54 OSCE participating State delegations including 22 at the level of minister or deputy minister, leaders of major international Jewish organizations, important representatives of both the Catholic and Orthodox Christian Churches, and leaders of the Islamic community. The event was structured into a plenary session and four thematic panels.

Officials and representatives of OSCE participating States, institutions and stakeholders from international and non-governmental organizations, the business community, and academia attended the Conference. Attendees engaged in constructive discussions throughout the four Panels and debated on the presence and the influence of anti-Semitic language in different fields.

Before the Conference opened, speakers and representatives of the government delegations were received by Pope Francis at the Vatican. His Holiness addressed the audience, recalling the concept that, “the enemy against which we fight is not only hatred in all of its forms, but even more fundamentally, indifference; for it is indifference that paralyzes and impedes us from doing what is right even when we know that it is right.” “Indifference” – continued Pope Francis – “is a virus that is dangerously contagious in our time, a time when we are ever more connected with others, but are increasingly less attentive to others.”

The Rome Conference convened in the facilities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where several interesting displays including two exhibitions were mounted for the guests. The first was a photographic exhibition dedicated to diplomats who have been awarded the medal of the

“Righteous among the Nations” by the Yad Vashem Museum in Jerusalem. The second, consisting of two parts, was a documentary exhibition prepared by the Shoah Museum in Rome to mark the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Italian racial laws and a presentation by the Foreign Ministry dedicated to the role of Italian diplomacy before and during the war in relation to the persecution of Jews in Italy and in the territories occupied by Italian forces.

## **Plenary session**

The Rome Conference was opened by the Italian Foreign Minister, Angelino Alfano, in his capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE for 2018. In his speech, the Minister started with a fundamental concept: "Indifference... is the epitome of evil, but if something can save humanity, it is memory." This phrase, which Alfano attributed to Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel, must serve as a warning when new acts of anti-Semitism, discrimination, racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia are recorded in our cities. Italy in 2018 has the opportunity - thanks to the coincidence of chairing both the OSCE and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) - to make new and concrete progress in combating anti-Semitism through these bodies.

The Italian Chairmanship, with the support of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), will promote events dedicated to the threats and discrimination that affect Jews, Christians, Muslims, and people of other faiths. The Italian Observatory on Religious Minorities in the World and the Respect for Religious Freedom, established at the Foreign Ministry, is headed by Professor Salvatore Martinez, who currently holds the position of Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, also focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions. In this position, Professor Martinez is in contact with the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Anti-Semitism, Rabbi Andrew Baker, and with the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, Professor Bülent Şenay, making religious freedom one of the operative points of the Italian OSCE Chairmanship.

Today, Italy is a mature and responsible country that intends to deal with its own history—a history rich in centuries of culture, which however also contains painful passages and serious faults that cannot be hidden. This year is the 80th anniversary of the promulgation of the ignoble Italian racial laws, adopted and implemented with widespread complicity from constitutional and administrative bodies, to officials and citizens who did not assume the responsibility of saying "no". Italian President Sergio Mattarella has defined this period of time as, "an indelible stain on our history".

With reference to the Rome Conference, the Minister recalled the duty to draw the attention of our countries and our citizens on some measures to counter the virus of anti-Semitism. In this spirit, hope was expressed that the Rome Conference will be only the first in a series of annual conferences dedicated by the OSCE to the struggle against xenophobia and anti-Semitism. Minister Alfano also noted Italy's adoption of specific criminal penalties in combating anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial. He also spoke of the importance for Italy to appoint a national coordinator for the fight against anti-Semitism.

The words of Minister Alfano were accepted and reiterated by Ambassador Thomas Greminger, Secretary General of the OSCE, and Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, Director of ODIHR. Secretary General Thomas Greminger said: “Anti-Semitism spreads a toxic climate and encourages extremism and crime, damages the fabric of democratic societies, putting stability and security at risk.” He continued: “This phenomenon can be fought with education and remembrance, as seen on recent International Holocaust Remembrance Day, but also by carrying out investigation activities on hate crimes.” ODIHR Director Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir added: “The fight against anti-Semitism is a shared effort: we can all personally make the difference and we have the responsibility to do it.”

The representatives of Jewish organizations—Ronald Lauder, President of the World Jewish Congress, Moshe Kantor, President of the European Jewish Congress, and Noemi Di Segni, President of the of Italian Union Jewish Communities—greeted the Conference. Lauder recalled how the organization he represents repeatedly sounded the alarm at the reemergence of anti-Semitism, which today tends to present itself under two different forms: hatred of Jews and the demonization of the State of Israel. Kantor defined anti-Semitism as, "the sickness of the continent", denouncing the increase in the number of incidents in recent years. He then indicated among the priorities of the OSCE in the fight against anti-Semitism the adoption of the IHRA Working Definition of Anti-Semitism. Noemi Di Segni finally defined the fight against anti-Semitism as an "ancient but not antiquated" theme in light of the recent resurgence of the phenomenon.

During the Plenary Session, representatives of the following participating States took the floor for brief yet intense interventions: Austria, the Holy See, Bosnia Herzegovina, Macedonia, Malta, Montenegro, San Marino, Serbia, Israel, Slovakia, Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Georgia, Hungary, Croatia, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Ukraine. All participating States condemned the re-emergence of anti-Semitism in the OSCE area, considered a threat to security and democracy, and unanimously assumed responsibility to combat it. The representatives underlined in particular the importance of education and the strengthening of the legal instruments available to States. Moreover, some of them expressed the hope that they would soon adopt the IHRA Working Definition of Anti-Semitism, crowning the efforts made over the years by the organization in the fight against anti-Semitism and all forms of discrimination.

After the interventions of the representatives of the participating States, three more speakers took the floor to conclude the Plenary Session in a session entitled, “The Meaning of Responsibility”. Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, Chairman of Yad Vashem Council and a survivor of the Holocaust, expressed dismay for the persistence of anti-Semitism in Europe and in the world, which he defined as an "epidemic madness". He also invited some European countries to come to terms with their history of collaboration with the Nazis.

Daniel S. Mariaschin, CEO of B’nai B’rith, on the other hand, made an invitation to the countries present to adopt a proactive attitude in the fight against anti-Semitism, without hiding behind pretexts. He spoke about concerns of the American Jewish world regarding the situation of Jewish communities in the “old continent,” in particular in Central and Eastern Europe (making reference to the recent legislation in one country in the region). In the final part of his speech, he focused on

the relatively new (but no less dangerous) form of anti-Semitism which consists in the demonization of the State of Israel.

In the intervention that concluded the Plenary Session, Andrea Riccardi, Founder of the Community of Sant'Egidio, reaffirmed that we cannot remain silent in the face of anti-Semitism, and that it is the task of everyone, including churches, to look in the mirror without reticence. He then called on the governments of the States convened to take responsibility: all states – he said – need to help in the fight against anti-Semitism and to recognize the seeds of hatred that hatch in every nation. Living together, respecting minorities, is the necessary condition to guarantee a good level of safety.

## **Panel Discussions**

Following the Plenary Session, four thematic panels were respectively dedicated to the role of legislators, political figures and public officials in assuming personal and collective responsibility; the role of religions in promoting ethical behavior and positive education; the challenges represented by the show of racism and discrimination on the Internet and in social networks; and educational responsibility in schools and in sports.

The panels were moderated by eminent media opinion leaders: Maurizio Molinari, Editor-in-Chief of “La Stampa”; Giovanni Maria Vian, Editor-in-Chief of “L’Osservatore Romano”; Gerardo Greco, Editor-in-Chief of Radio Rai and Radio Uno; and Stefano Polli, Deputy Editor in Chief of the Italian press agency ANSA.

### **Panel 1: Responsibility: The Role of Lawmakers and Civil Servants**

The first panel on the role of legislators and public officials revealed broad consensus on the importance of incorporating the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism into the legislation of every participating State, insofar as only through a clear definition of anti-Semitism it is possible to effectively recognize and combat the phenomenon.

The Chief of Italian Police, Prefect Franco Gabrielli, valued the effective collaboration established with the Jewish communities, an action also noted by the President of the Jewish Community of Rome, Ruth Dureghello. Ambassador Sandro De Bernardin (incoming Chair of IHRA), highlighted how anti-Semitism is a problem which requires transnational responses. Cristina Finch, Head of the ODIHR Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department, presented the ODIHR's multi-year project "Words into Action to Address Antisemitism", aimed at strengthening the capacity of the OSCE Participating States and civil society to prevent and combat anti-Semitism.

MP John Mann, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Coalition for Combating Anti-Semitism, underlined the moral obligation of parliamentarians to raise public awareness. The CEO and Executive Vice-President of the European Jewish Congress, Raya Kalenova, described anti-Semitism as a complex phenomenon, evolved from an anti-religious feeling to the point of representing hatred for an entire community. The European Commission's Special Coordinator on

Anti-Semitism, Katharina von Schnurbein, underlined the importance of adopting the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism (supported by the European Parliament), as it makes it possible to recognize and effectively oppose the phenomenon. According to Mark Weitzman of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism should be used to oppose the increasing attacks on historical memory and attempts to minimize the Holocaust, to be implemented through use of the Working Definition as well as through the establishment of national Coordinators on the subject.

The Lithuanian representative announced, in the course of the subsequent debate, the recent adoption by Lithuania of the definition of anti-Semitism. On the role of institutions and governments, the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, Professor Dr. Bülent Şenay, emphasized the opportunity to pursue Islamophobia in the same way as anti-Semitism, a position also supported by the representative of the Turkish government, the Deputy Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Kaan Esener.

## **Panel 2: Responsibility: Religion and Anti-Semitism**

The second panel showed that religion too can play a primary role in combating anti-Semitism, as the phenomenon can be fought by rejecting anti-religious feelings. Anti-Semitism does not exclusively concern Jewish communities but it is a problem that involves everybody, as it undermines the very foundations of pluralistic democracy. In this context, as stated by Professor Salvatore Martinez, strengthening inter-religious dialogue is the way of consolidating a tolerant and open society.

Anti-Semitism is not just about Jewish communities, but it is everyone's problem because it undermines the very foundations of democracy. Such is the sense of the video message of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, according to which, "the hatred that begins with the Jews never ends with the Jews." Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, President of the Conference of European Rabbis, suggested that the defense of religious freedom and human rights is part of the OSCE mandate. To address both threats, religious leaders in Europe should be trained in Europe, or even outside the Continent but in OSCE-certified facilities.

The Metropolitan Cleopas, Head of the Greek-Orthodox Metropolis of Sweden and Scandinavia, recalled how Orthodox Greeks saved thousands of Jews during the war. (Archbishop Damaskinos, for example, was a Righteous Among the Nations). Many Jews were saved through false certificates of baptism, while the Orthodox Church refused to provide the Gestapo with the names of the ten thousand Jews residing in Greece. The representative of the Center for Interfaith and Peacebuilding Research, Rabita Mohammadia of Oulemas of Morocco, Farid El Asri, said that within the Muslim world, it is necessary to fight the ideas that lead to anti-Semitism, deepening the references of theology. In this regard, El Asri has argued that the Muslim tradition is rooted in Christianity and Judaism and therefore the anti-Semitic Muslim is in contradiction with his own theological references.

The speech by the President of the Italian Catholic Bishops Conference's Commission for Ecumenism and Dialogue, Msgr. Ambrogio Spreafico, was also significant. He drew attention to the dangers of globalization that "separates peoples into tribes" and erases diversity. The same concept was expressed by the President of the Union of Islamic Communities of Italy, Imam Izzedine Elzir, who argued that the world has extinguished diversity and that, in our "dis-culture," diversity spurs hatred as an enemy who becomes necessary to eradicate.

The Chief Rabbi of Rome, Riccardo Di Segni, has, for his part, argued that the fight against anti-Semitism must be understood as simply a paradigm against hostility and intolerance towards the "other," as all phenomena of religious hatred must be considered. Dina Porat, Director of Tel Aviv University's Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry, concluded the panel by tracing some of the most evident problems of communication and reciprocal knowledge between the Catholic Church and the Jews, with particular reference to the relationship between the Vatican and the State of Israel.

### **Panel 3: Responsibility: The Challenge of Digital Platforms**

The third panel on digital platforms revealed that the fight against anti-Semitism needs repressive actions both off-line and on-line, where the technology-hatred combination currently represents one of the major challenges that the international community is called on to tackle. In this sense, social networks are important allies in making technology a means with which to disseminate the democratic values of tolerance.

The panel was opened by the CEO and Executive Vice-President of the World Jewish Congress Robert Singer, who, in his speech, recalled how the spread of antisemitism in the digital space has reached alarming proportions. Every 83 seconds, anti-Semitic content is uploaded on the web. Of this content, 80% consists of offenses or exhortations to violence. In the words of Singer, greater responsibility in the fight against online anti-Semitism needs to be placed with large companies operating in the sector, also through forms of corporate responsibility. The common thread for all panelists was the search for tools to promote, in the digital space, narratives of religious diversity that are alternatives to that of anti-Semitism.

The Senior Vice-President of the Anti-Defamation League, Sharon Nazarian, focused on the centrality of training and sharing of best practices in the fight against anti-Semitism in the cyber space. The intervention of the Director of the CEJI - A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Inclusive Europe, Robin Sclafani, contained similar tropes. The Facebook Policy Manager for Europe, the Middle East and Africa, Aibhinn Kelleher, confirmed the commitment of the large companies that operate on the web in the fight against anti-Semitism, while recognizing the existence of technical limitations that still make it difficult to fully monitor the web in an effective way.

The importance of using digital platforms to disseminate positive content was also the focus of the speech of the Director for Public Policy of the Google Cultural Institute, Giorgia Abeltino, and of Yahia Pallavicini, the President of the Italian Religious Islamic Community (CO.RE.IS), who cited the example of the "Sacred Spaces" platform, created to promote among young people a new vision

of the relationship between Islam and Judaism. Professor Clelia Piperno (Talmud Project) presented the online translation platform from Hebrew, "Traduco", as tangible proof of how the network can be used to transmit positive content. The same concept was also expressed by the Italian representative of the American Jewish Committee, Lisa Billig Palmieri, through an invitation to, "go beyond police work," promoting a positive agenda. The panel concluded with an intervention by the Director of the Italian Postal Police, Nunzia Ciardi, who emphasized the importance of training schools in the proper use of digital platforms. The banality of evil - claimed Ciardi - actually passes also through a given "like" without thinking.

#### **Panel 4: Responsibility: The Role of Educators and Sports**

All panelists for the fourth panel unanimously recognized the fundamental role of all levels of education and educators in the fight against anti-Semitism. Preserving Holocaust memory and promoting the values of democracy, tolerance and civil coexistence represent an essential tool in effectively combating the culture of hatred.

The panel was opened by Professor Robert Rozett, Representative of Yad Vashem, who underlined the need to create a broader context in which educational endeavors can be deployed in parallel with the development of a receptive environment to it and its contents. Yad Vashem's educational program receives an average of 100,000 teachers and organizes about 70 seminars on various issues related to Judaism and anti-Semitism. The importance of training teachers is all the more significant as it has a "ripple effect", propagating learning from teachers to students. In addition, a MOOC program (massive online open course) will be available from next March.

Robert Williams, Deputy Director of International Affairs at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, highlighted the problems engendered by focusing only on episodes of anti-Semitism (as compared to violence against the LGBT community for instance), or only on the importance of general anti-discrimination laws. New priorities must be assigned in the fight against anti-Semitism: the teaching of civic education, common morality and history; the importance of dialogue, because our identities are constantly evolving; and the sense of national identity, which can erode human rights. We can control this phenomenon by respecting diversity.

Simonetta Della Seta, Director of the National Jewish Museum in Ferrara (MEIS), underlined the importance of education. Education without responsibility, or vice-versa, responsibility without education, are not conceivable; they feed each other. Dr. De Maio took the floor in substitution of Giovanna Boda, Head of the Department for Equal Opportunities. Dr. De Maio described the intense cooperation between the Italian Ministry of Education, Universities and Research (MIUR) and Yad Vashem in training new generations of teachers and reminded the audience that, on 27 October 2017 MIUR adopted the "National Plan for Education and Respect for Countering Forms of Discrimination," as enshrined in Article 3 of the Italian Constitution.

The speech by Charles Asher Small, Executive Director, Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP), listed the different options that ISGAP offers to spread knowledge of the phenomenon of anti-Semitism. These include programs and seminars that are also held at the University La Sapienza in Rome. He noted that there are no specialized courses on

contemporary anti-Semitism and that further research should be undertaken on phenomena such as the different forms that anti-Semitism takes in certain areas of the world.

Abdellah Redouane, the Secretary General of the Islamic Center of Italy, recalled the intervention of Rabbi Capo Di Segni to the Conference about the Italian Racial Laws, and focused his reflection on education. Beginning with the families, it is necessary to deconstruct the anti-Semitic discourse and the practices that follow. He recalled that in Morocco, King Mohammed V saved his Jewish citizens from Nazi persecution, responding to the Nazi demands of having only Moroccan subjects.

Rabbi Meni Even Israel, Executive Director of the Steinsaltz Center, recalled his meeting with the Orthodox Church in Jerusalem and their reflection on the lack of public debate on anti-Semitism after the Second World War. In the last 15 years the situation has changed, together with the increase in anti-Semitic phenomena. Even Israel said that there is no solution if we're unable to adopt creative responses, both diverse and immediate, by building on experiences of dialogue and mutual respect.

Alina Bricman, President of the European Union of Jewish Students, represented the voice of the new Jewish generation and listed the values the new generation prioritizes: inclusion, diversity, integrity, tolerance, enhancement of diversity, and protection of identities. In her vision, values inform actions that influence policies and are ultimately reflected in the educational system.

Federico Balzaretti, former player in the Italian National Football Team, centered his intervention on the visit of the Italian national football team during the 2012 European Championship to the Auschwitz concentration camp, and the awareness that it drew about the need to transmit the values of respect for human rights and of life to the new generations. The intervention of Shaul Ladany, who survived both the Holocaust and the terrorist attack of the 1972 Munich Olympics, reminded the audience of the role of Jews in the political life of many European countries, including England, Italy, Hungary and Switzerland. Concluding the panel was Gioia Bartali, granddaughter of sports champion Gino Bartali, who cited the importance of keeping Gino Bartali's memory alive; in 2013 he was named a Righteous among the Nations by Yad Vashem.

## **Final Recommendations**

The conclusions of the Rome Conference were drawn by the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Anti-Semitism, Rabbi Andrew Baker, and by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Angelino Alfano.

Rabbi Baker thanked the Italian Presidency and Ambassador Francesco Talò for the organization of the Conference, speaking of a true "spirit of Rome," and expressed deep appreciation for the personal commitment of Minister Alfano to ensure that Italy identifies a national coordinator focused on combating anti-Semitism. In addition, Rabbi Baker recalled the many steps made by the OSCE in countering anti-Semitism, starting with the Berlin Declaration of 2004, up to the Conference on the Security of Jewish Communities of 2013, through the provision of training activities, monitoring and countering hate speech. To conclude, Baker announced the desire to bring

together the proceedings of the Rome Conference in a publication to be presented in Vienna in the coming months.

Minister Alfano, after expressing his appreciation for the work of the Conference, announced, with his gratitude to the Slovak Government, the commitment of the 2019 OSCE Slovak Chairmanship to carry on the discussions of the Rome Conference with a follow-up conference early next year, ensuring continuity and the focus of the International Community on the subject of anti-Semitism. The Minister then underlined how the Conference dealt with the issue of anti-Semitism, how "responsibility" is the fundamental element that encourages each individual to become aware of the phenomenon and to react. With this aim, the Conference has highlighted a personal responsibility, alongside the functional responsibility, of policy makers and legislators who must be guided in their action by a "sense of right." In this context, the Minister also called for a constant update of national legislation in order to ensure full protection of human rights.

With reference to the role of religions, the Minister expressed his desire to strengthen the collaboration between political and religious authorities, especially in the development of foreign policy, in order to "separate those who pray from those who shoot." This separation is an essential element to effectively counter the terrorist threat, which manifests itself as "an attack on peoples, rather than on nations."

Likewise, the Minister stressed the need to start a partnership with Internet providers to firmly oppose the spread of anti-Semitism through digital platforms. At the same time, the teaching of the Holocaust in schools and the sensitization of civil society on these issues are crucial elements to prevent silence and indifference. The Minister concluded his speech by urging all the States of the International Community to change their attitude, moving from "narration to action... from narration to intervention."

## **Key Conclusions**

- Broad consensus on the value of participating States adopting and employing the Working Definition of Anti-Semitism
- Disseminating and implementing the recommendations of the ODIHR Words into Action to Address Anti-Semitism in the areas of community security, education and coalition work
- The special role of parliamentarians to raise public awareness in the fight against anti-Semitism through the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Coalition for Combating Anti-Semitism
- Acknowledgment that anti-Semitism undermines the very foundation of democracy and thus is "everyone's problem"
- The importance of interreligious dialogue to a tolerant and open society
- A commitment to refute the ideas that lead to anti-Semitism in the Muslim and Christian world
- Recognition of the spread of anti-Semitism in digital space and limitations in monitoring and addressing it

- Employing social media and other digital platforms in promoting tolerance and democratic values
- The fundamental role of education and educators in the fight against anti-Semitism
- The special role of sports figures in promoting positive practices to combat anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance

*As OSCE Chairman-in-Office (CiO), Italy hosted on January 29, 2018 an International Conference on the Responsibility of States, Institutions and Individuals in the Fight against Anti-Semitism in the OSCE Area. The event was held in cooperation with the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), ODIHR (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights), the Foundation Jewish Contemporary Documentation Centre (CDEC) and the Union of Italian Jewish Communities (UCEI).*

**Foundation CDEC**  
**via Eupili 8 – Milan | Italy**  
**[www.cdec.it](http://www.cdec.it)**