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OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland Elina Valtonen, addresses conference on addressing anti-Semitism in the OSCE region, Helsinki, 10 February 2025. (OSCE)

PRESS RELEASE

OSCE calls for greater efforts to counter resurgent anti-Semitism and promote tolerance

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“This year marks the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. As the living memory of the Holocaust fades, we have a profound responsibility to commemorate the victims of this atrocity and to understand its ongoing meaning and consequences,” the Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland Elina Valtonen noted in her opening speech. “We must all do our part and strive to build tolerant, open, and inclusive societies, ensuring that everyone, especially the younger generation, can look forward to a future free from hatred.”

Anti-Semitism has a long and complex history in the OSCE region, and it remains a major concern. This deep-rooted hatred does not only pose a threat to Jewish individuals, families, and communities, but

also to democracy and a free, diverse and peaceful society. The OSCE was the first international organization to recognize that anti-Semitism is a real threat to security and stability in our region. The commitments in this area, culminating in the 2014 Basel Declaration in which states rejected and condemned anti-Semitism, remains the foundation and guiding principle of the organization's work in this area.

"The unspeakable atrocity of the Holocaust was the result of an ideology, an ancient hatred built on exclusion, marginalization, and the devaluation of human life," emphasized Maria Telalian, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). "But through awareness raising and interfaith dialogue, we are planting the seeds of understanding and empathy, challenging the myths and stereotypes that have fuelled anti-Semitic hatred for far too long."

The conference will focus on numerous issues, including current and emerging trends and threats in the OSCE region, the impact of new and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, and the importance of education and interfaith dialogue in countering anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance.

Participants agreed that the commitment to tackling anti-Semitism and all other forms of hatred requires more than words. It requires proactive, comprehensive and sustained efforts, creative collaboration, and the courage to confront difficult truths. Only through cooperation between governments, civil society, Jewish and other religious or belief communities, the media, the private sector, universities, and international organizations, will it be possible to ensure the principles on which the OSCE is based become reality, helping to build a more resilient and secure region for all.

"Participating States and international organizations including the OSCE have made considerable progress in the past two decades in addressing a resurgent anti-Semitism, with the drafting of national strategies, appointment of coordinators, more intensive monitoring of hate crimes and data collection, new educational initiatives, and enhanced security for synagogues and other communal centers. And yet, Jews throughout the OSCE region consider anti-Semitism today to be such a real threat that it has altered the way they live their lives. This conference will be an opportunity to look carefully at what we are doing and what we must do better in order to reverse this trend," the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Anti-Semitism, Rabbi Andrew Baker noted.

Government officials, civil society representatives and experts from across the OSCE's 57 participating States participated in the conference, which is part of the official programme of Finland's 2025 OSCE Chairpersonship. All OSCE states have unequivocally condemned anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance and discrimination, and the 2025 Chair remains committed to combating anti-Semitic hatred as well as other kinds of intolerance and discrimination.

For PDF attachments or links to sources of further information, please visit:

<https://www.osce.org/chairpersonship/585610>

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