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## The OSCE Anti-Semitism Conference in Berlin<sup>1</sup>

It is happening right under our noses. In the oppressive heat of the summer, in 2003, in the Berlin district of Reinickendorf. The windows of the “Israel-Deli” grocery are smashed, and not only once. Youths spit into diners’ food. Neo-Nazis curse the owner as a “*Judensau*” (Jewish pig) and slash his car tyres. Nights of fear. The owner is in a state of despair. His neighbours support him at first. But as they too are intimidated, they increasingly fall silent. The owner sees no alternative – resigned, he closes his shop.

Did we not hope that we had been successful in shutting anti-Semitism away, sealing it in and rendering it harmless? But now, like the vampire it is, it has returned from the dead. After all the horrors unleashed by anti-Jewish hatred, how can it gain a hold in people’s minds once again, destroying their ability to think? Are we no longer aware of how it seeks to spread? How could we have forgotten? It comes like an assassin in the night. It attacks the emotions. It poisons them. The conscience languishes until there is finally nothing left.

“Anti-Semitism, a Social Disease”, was the title of the book published in 1946 by members of the Frankfurt School of Social Research, including Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. In his introduction, the book’s editor Ernst Simmel, wrote the following: “The anti-Semite hates the Jew because he believes the Jew is the cause of his own misfortune. He persecutes the Jew, because he believes that the Jew persecutes him.” “The most powerful force,” writes Simmel, “that threatens to destroy civilization,” is found “in the hearts of men.”<sup>2</sup> If it is not kept in check, this force corrodes the basic rules of human society from within. That is how it destroys democracy. The despotism of violence triumphs. Hitler branded the name of Germany with the mark of the Shoah – until the end of days. And now? Anti-Semitism is now no longer restricted to attacks on Jews as individuals. Mortimer Zuckerman, Bill Clinton’s Special Envoy to the Middle East, wrote in the US News and World Report in November 2003, in an article entitled “Graffiti On History’s Walls”, that Israel “is emerging as the collective Jew among nations”. Zuckerman finds anti-Semitic journalism throughout Europe – in the Guardian, the Observer, *le Nouvel Observateur*, *La Stampa*, and *L’Osservatore Romano*. Mikis Theodorakis recently claimed that the Jews are “at the root of evil”. Rolf Hochhuth once said “I can think of nothing historical without at the same time thinking of Auschwitz.” This insight must not be forgotten. Where Jews are threatened, no other minority is safe.

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2 Author’s translation.

### *Anti-Semitism Today*

The OSCE area includes the old Western democracies on both sides of the Atlantic. Their circle has been expanded to include successful new democracies that regained their sovereignty following the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact. These two groups of states present an opportunity for the new states that emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union, those whose democratic character remains precarious, displays occasional flaws, or may even regress temporarily.

Anti-Semitism is present in every OSCE state. It establishes itself under a variety of disguises and its intensity, aggressiveness, and social power differ from place to place. Anti-Semites have long globalized their activities, taking advantage of the latest communications technology. However, whatever new form the old demon anti-Semitism takes in its new incarnation, one thing is constant: the allegation of a worldwide Jewish conspiracy. Jews are said to control global finance, to dominate the media, to secretly influence political leaders, and to manipulate world events. This fundamental anti-Semitic trope “explains” a vast range of diverse events and developments. Holocaust denial seeks to rewrite history by reversing the role of the historical victims. The “Auschwitz lie” aims to eliminate the basis of the right to exist of the Jewish state of Israel. At this point, we can see where the old far right meets the new Islamism: “Arab anti-Zionism” meets with a favourable response wherever it uses global communications technologies to colonize the minds of younger Muslims. Another group with a key role is that section of the political left that, mainly out of naivety, aligns itself with the Palestinian “struggle for freedom”. The “new” anti-Semitism absorbs critical views of Israel and tries to make them acceptable to the majority. The result is no different from old anti-Semitism: hatred of Jewish life.

Current strains of anti-Semitism assemble around three main archetypes: anti-Jewishness, modern anti-Semitism, and anti-Zionism.

1. Anti-Jewishness spreads the slander of Jewish ritual murder as made by Christian ideologues. It often refers to the Protocols of the Elders of Zion and the claim that Judaism seeks to conquer the world.
2. Modern anti-Semitism culminated in the Nazi dictatorship, which aimed to destroy all Jews and all that is Jewish and ended in the monstrosity of industrialized genocide.
3. Anti-Zionism feeds on the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Mistaken solidarity with the “weaker party” and excessive criticism of the “stronger party” encourage Jews in the OSCE area to take sides and can feed the potential for anti-Jewish prejudice.

An explosive mixture of all three forms of anti-Jewish hatred – the traditional, which has declined in importance, the most virulent 20th century

form, and the most recent variant – has emerged against the background of the second intifada. Each form restates the prejudices of those that went before it and allows them to give vent to the aggression they inherently contains.

Every society contains a certain freely floating potential for violence. The more strongly integrated a society is, the weaker this potential. Modernization produces points of uncertainty that allow violence to enter a society at the flanks. The faster the rate of modernization, the greater the need to ensure social stability. Societies undergoing modernization become susceptible to destructive violence when they lose their ability to continually rediscover and strengthen democracy as the form of universal self governance. Organized groups that attack the universal character of democracy represent the ultimate threat to the humanity of modernizing societies they are able to infiltrate. The brand of Islamism that has declared the Western way of life to be its mortal enemy has forfeited its right to tolerance.

Older forms of anti-Semitism are associated with right-wing extremism. The social democratic movement and the democratic left have been fighting anti-Semitism in the OSCE area for as long as they have existed. Pursuing liberty, equality, and fraternity also means ending the hunting of human beings. In the early years of the 20th century, the Socialist International still entertained the hope that it was preparing the way for a culture that would end the oppression of individuals. In the age of extremes, this hope was dashed. The left was too slow to realize the danger of new forms of anti-Semitism. Michael Lerner speaks of the “socialism of fools”, referring to those parts of the left that confuse Palestinian terrorism with the struggle for freedom. The real confrontation with the reincarnated anti-Semitism still lies ahead. It will affect the democratic foundations on which the institutions of coexistence in European societies rest. We need to reconsider whether we have the strength to ensure that globalization is a force for good, and to ask what new powers we can mobilize to ensure that modernization succeeds. Finally, we need to ask ourselves if our reserves of tolerance suffice in providing space for alternative cultures and ways of life to thrive? Have we truly recognized that if societies want to remain stable in the future they need a new politics of cultural and social recognition? One that is capable of continually rediscovering the courage needed for the work of integration. In this, tolerance cannot be given merely a passive role.

### *Integration versus Xenophobia*

But more is required: The claims of different cultures cannot simply co-exist in isolation. That would be a false understanding of multiculturalism. Tolerance must become active. I want to accept the otherness of other cultures on its own terms, as that is the only way I can escape the prison of identity.

Whoever pursues modernity needs to abandon the error that a person's identity is tied up with their place of origin. Globality means living in a civilized community – a community of civilizations. The walls that protected each little world have been removed. Borders become transparent. The other becomes present in my life and in my feelings. As long as he was separate from me, I could ignore him if I didn't want to reject him. The stranger, however, is "the person who comes today and stays tomorrow". Hatred of him is the counterpart of self-hatred. He succumbs to hatred, who has himself been humiliated. Who has given in to the compulsion of a never-ending purification of his identity. Who does not want to acknowledge how his identity would be enriched if allowed to open beyond the barriers of nationhood, until the limits of identity are transformed into bonds of solidarity, linking all people with each other.

Germany has always been a destination for immigrants, as have all the EU countries, and will be even more so in the future. The westernmost OSCE States, the USA and Canada, became what they are today as a result of immigrants. The eastern OSCE States have also experienced immigration. The OSCE area has been fundamentally shaped by the imperialism of conquering immigrants. Rare cases where immigrants were invited in by a territorial ruler have been the historical exception.

However, the most recent form of immigration is a product of politics. Western European societies need to fill the population gap that their reproductive deficit has left. In recent years, the call has been answered by people whose sense of cultural identity we experience as new. They want cultural, social, and political recognition. Are we really doing our best to accept them into our midst? The answer to this question determines whether our societies are capable of managing the challenges ahead. If we do not improve our efforts, we fail to tackle what is increasingly the fundamental problem of modern societies: their ability to successfully integrate their immigrant populations. We face a great danger if all those struggling for social recognition suddenly come together and place responsibility for all their suffering on one individual, just because he belongs to a minority. In this way, the old lie could be reinvented: It is all the fault of the Jews.

Anti-Semitism is our problem, in all the OSCE States. It seeks to break through every barrier placed in its way – decency, religious belief, civilized values. Its violence affects us all: Christians and Muslims as well as Jews. Terrorism is its most deadly offspring. It knows no bounds. Its aim is to destroy our humanity. It is so acutely dangerous right now because of the ambivalences that arise from the social conflicts inherent in accelerating modernization processes. Wherever premodern cultural behaviour patterns harden along the lines of supposed traditional certainties in an attempt to save themselves from the fluid and ever-changing demands of modernity, wherever the attempt to find a new balance between colliding value systems has failed, backward-looking utopias have a chance. In such precarious phases of trans-

formation, concepts of identity that deny complexity can assert themselves. Once ideologically charged, they can intensify their inherent potential for violence and mobilize it against other, equally simplifying concepts of identity. Contrary to the view of a Samuel P. Huntington, however, the front lines in the clash of civilizations do not take the form of territorial confrontations on a grand scale, but rather subsist within individual societies. Reductionistic concepts of identity need to find enemies, because they falsely assume that every other (equally reductionistically defined) group must necessarily be seeking to destroy their own. The simplest form of reductionism is ethnicity. All those trapped within its sphere of influence are subject to the sempiternal compulsion for ethnic purification. In the end, the barriers previously capable of holding back the flood of violence are opened. Wherever local-linear identity tries to resist what it perceives as the onslaught of universal modernity and fabricates a stylized enemy out of a minority group, co-existence is in grave danger. This can only be averted when universal values are renegotiated. Procedural fairness must be guaranteed for all parties, so that all can embrace the negotiated settlement.

The context will vary, but, in their substance, the values must always remain within the horizons of enlightened modernity. Anything else would be an admission of defeat by Western thought.

To this extent, therefore, the processes that lead to social self-understanding remain irrevocably aspects of modernity. However, the intensity of the work of integration is increasing. Without a firm basis in mutual respect and active tolerance built on reciprocal recognition, integration will fail. The work of integration will place great demands on all the societies within the OSCE. They may collapse under the strain – collectively or as individuals. But they can also – again collectively or individually – learn from each other and with each other how conflicts that threaten to break out can be successfully managed.

#### *Preparations for the Berlin Anti-Semitism Conference*

The OSCE is presented with a unique opportunity. It can identify the problems that exist in its region and weigh up their relative importance. The OSCE participating States can then forge a mutual commitment to tackle them. Beforehand, they can share their various points of view and carry out time-consuming multilateral negotiations to formulate the consensus that can best contribute to dealing with each problem. However, before a problem can be recognized as requiring attention, awareness must be raised by political means. This was also necessary before the OSCE was able to adopt the topic of anti-Semitism as its own.

Since the start of the second intifada, new forms of anti-Semitism have mushroomed in many societies. In several Western OSCE participating

States, the number of events that could clearly be considered anti-Semitic has been increasing: in Germany, France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Greece. Older forms of anti-Semitism have come to public attention in Hungary, Poland, Ukraine, and Russia. The OSCE first became aware of the alarming increase in occurrences of this kind through members of its Parliamentary Assembly, who are frequently among the first to become aware of tectonic shifts within their societies. In the run-up to the Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Berlin in 2002, the delegations of the USA and Germany agreed that the Organization should take up the struggle against anti-Semitism. At the same session of the Parliamentary Assembly, a fringe discussion meeting was organized by the US Congressman, Christopher Smith, and German Parliamentarian, Gert Weisskirchen, which aimed to decide how to proceed.

Following the collective commitment to the fight against anti-Semitism made in the Berlin Declaration of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentarians concentrated on persuading the representatives of their governments to take collective action in pursuit of their goal. Considerable resistance needed to be overcome at both parliamentary and governmental levels. In Germany, the concern at first was that it could itself end up in the dock – a worry that was shared by many participating States. It was frequently argued that the fight against anti-Semitism was a matter best pursued at the national level. And it was claimed that public discussion could in fact serve to increase anti-Semitism. A final attempt was made to reject the topic of anti-Semitism on the grounds that dealing with it could encourage crude “anti-Islamism”.

However, the impasse was overcome by the compromise formulation presented by the USA and supported by Germany at the OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting in Porto. At two conferences held in Vienna in 2003, government representatives discussed a range of closely related topics that formed the basis for the Berlin Conference in 2004. The German government invited the OSCE to the Conference, thereby leaving no alternative for the other participating States but to take part.

The starting point was the rebirth of anti-Semitism. Parliamentarians were alarmed at this and persuaded their governments to take collective action to oppose it. Christopher Smith and Gert Weisskirchen also began to seek close co-operation with non-governmental organizations in the run-up to the Berlin Annual Session of the Parliamentary Assembly, believing that, from now on, these will have a vital strategic role to play at the interface between state, parliament, and society.

Winning the fight against anti-Semitism is easiest when a society's immune system is strong enough to fend off its attacks. In the last instance, it is the civil courage of individuals that decides whether violent acts can be prevented where they threaten to occur. There must be individuals prepared to stand up and oppose those who are willing to use violence at precisely the

moment when it becomes apparent that violence may explode. The state certainly has a role to play in creating the conditions that allow civil courage to thrive. It needs to pass laws that condemn anti-Semitism in all its forms. It also bears responsibility for the political climate – whether it retains the openness necessary to ensure that social conflicts are worked out fairly, or whether minorities are marginalized.

The task of civil society, for its part, is to maintain and sharpen public vigilance. It should observe local conflicts closely, monitor developments, and perform an early-warning function.

The role of parliaments is to mediate between the local, the regional, the central and – in the case of the OSCE – the transnational level. In doing so, they have a great degree of freedom to act independently, extensive supervisory powers, and – in conjunction with governments and civil society actors – can set the political agenda in a way that can optimize the abilities of each actor.

Although it is their combined effect that is important, the functions of these three levels should be kept strictly separate. The autonomy of civil society must not be subject to political restrictions. That is not only necessary to ensure their effectiveness. It is essential that civil society groups retain the ability to criticize.

Governments and parliaments may tire, and there is a danger that they hand over vital tasks to the consensus-driven machinery of the OSCE, thereby weakening the fight against anti-Semitism.

The run-up to the Berlin OSCE Conference in 2004, the preparation, the Conference itself, and its results allow for hope that the fight against anti-Semitism in the OSCE region may be won more easily than if it had not taken place. A final assessment cannot yet be made. Nonetheless, one thing can be stated with certainty: Both the form and the content of the Conference were convincing.

### *The Conference*

In the Decision of the Maastricht Ministerial Council of December 2003 on Tolerance and Non-discrimination, the OSCE “decides to follow up the work started at the OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism, held in Vienna on 19 and 20 June 2003 and welcomes the offer by Germany to host a second OSCE conference on this subject in Berlin on 28 and 29 April 2004”.<sup>3</sup>

Interest was tentative at first, but grew to a rush as the Conference approached. The participation of considerably more than 600 delegates from

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3 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Eleventh Meeting of the Ministerial Council, Maastricht, 1 and 2 December 2003, MC.DOC/1/03, 2 December 2003, Decision No. 4/03, Tolerance and Non-discrimination (MC.DEC/4/03), pp. 78-80, at: <http://www.osce.org>.

governments, parliaments, and international and non-governmental organizations demonstrated how important the topic had become. As did the fact that speakers included not only the OSCE's Chairman-in-Office, Bulgarian Foreign Minister Solomon Passy, and the Conference's host, German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, but also US Secretary of State Colin Powell, and several other foreign ministers. Israeli President Moshe Katzav also used the opportunity presented by the Conference to make a visit to Germany.

The Conference opened with speeches from Simone Veil, Paul Spiegel, Max Jacobson, and Elie Wiesel. They effectively defined the mood of the proceedings as one of seriousness – a *basso continuo* that was to underlie the Conference's two days, and which was also taken up by Germany's Chancellor Gerhard Schröder in his closing *coda*. At a reception for the delegates held in the Chancellery, he stressed the central message of the Conference: "Anti-Semitism is a threat to democracy." German President Johannes Rau used the occasion of the Conference to look back over his time in office, stating that all his political efforts should be considered as a work of reconciliation. He also commented on a contemporary controversy, arguing that criticisms of the actions of the Israeli government are acceptable when they remain fair and honest, but noting that "in my opinion, it is important to ensure they take an appropriate form".<sup>4</sup> It is vital that old stereotypes are not "reaffirmed or even recreated". It is not sufficient for human dignity and human rights to be enshrined in constitutional law, they must be constantly explained and taught both in theory and by example to new generations. "From time to time, the struggle must be recapitulated. That requires commitment on the part of many citizens."<sup>5</sup>

The central topics of the Conference were tackled in four sessions, framed by the opening and closing plenary sessions. They were accompanied by workshops dealing with specific topics.

(1) Session 1 debated legislative and institutional mechanisms and governmental action, including law enforcement. Delegates presented best practices from their own experience and called for the development of a comprehensive strategy that would effectively combine the various approaches to fighting anti-Semitism. Hate-crime legislation is an indispensable element of this. All relevant actors should be involved in formulating this strategy: the state and representatives of society, including, in particular, representatives from education, the media, and the churches. The Spanish delegation made a key contribution by offering to host the next Anti-Semitism Conference in Cordoba in the spring of 2005, if the OSCE Ministerial Council in December 2004 should resolve to hold one.

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4 Speech by Federal President Johannes Rau on the Occasion of the Opening of the Anti-Semitism Conference of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe on 28 April 2004 in Berlin, at: <http://www.bundesregierung.de/Anlage647609/attach.ment> (author's translation).

5 Ibid.



(2) Session 2 dealt with the role of governments and civil society in promoting tolerance. Several delegates began by emphasizing that intolerance is partly a consequence of the failure to remember the atrocities of the Holocaust. Remembering the Holocaust should teach us to be vigilant so that, among other things, we are always ready to act, for anti-Semitism is always reappearing. Fighting anti-Semitism is therefore part of the struggle against intolerance in all its forms. Governments and civil society need to be open to one another and work together to oppose any attempts to dismiss anti-Semitic crimes as an inevitable side-effect of inter-ethnic conflicts. Tolerance and hatred were described as learned behaviour, which is why education is so vital. All schools must teach their pupils knowledge of other cultures, while encouraging mutual respect. The OSCE must use the instruments at its disposal to fight anti-Semitism more effectively – especially ODIHR, the HCNM, and the Representative on Freedom of the Media. ODIHR should help states to gather data on hate crimes systematically, to promote dialogue, and to provide information to support the political work of national parliaments. One delegate also called on the OSCE to establish the office of a High Representative as a means of intensifying the Organization's struggle against anti-Semitism.

(3) Session 3 dealt with the role of education. The participants agreed that more attention needs to be paid to teacher training, as a higher quality of teaching is a prerequisite for effective education against anti-Semitism. It is equally important to promote research in order to develop better ways to educate about the Holocaust. Proposed measures include developing special curricula and screening schoolbooks for anti-Semitic content. Religious communities were called to intensify interfaith dialogue and to work together towards the mutual recognition of all cultures. The importance of civil society in educating to combat anti-Semitism was underlined. Different civil-society groups can help to create a climate of mutual respect at the local level. The key role the media can play in this was also noted. In several OSCE participating States in which Arab television can be received, programming with an anti-Israeli bias has led to a revival of anti-Semitism. A key conclusion was that teachers themselves should never stop learning how prejudices come into being and how this process can be fought.

(4) Session 4 focused on the role of the media in disseminating and fighting prejudice. Anti-Semitism can be "industrialized" by the media. The sensationalist presentation of information by the mass media can increase people's willingness to turn to violence. Journalists and publishers should develop a code of conduct for the responsible presentation of news events. Media organizations should provide professional training opportunities for journalists serving minority communities. The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media should be supported in continuing to actively promote tolerance. Civil society groups should make more use of the internet to post information on anti-Semitism more effectively. Education should provide learners with the

skills they need to be critical of what they view, hear and read in the media. Young people need to be encouraged to examine what is presented by the mass media and to stand up against abuses.

(5) The closing session took stock of the Conference's achievement. The responsibility and the commitment of the delegations to actively continue the fight against anti-Semitism after the close of the Conference were reaffirmed. Practical suggestions were discussed on the role of governments, parliaments, civil society, and the institutions of the OSCE. It was resolved to establish networks that would enable these various bodies to work together more effectively; e.g. it was proposed that ODIHR should co-operate closely with bodies such as ECRI and EUMC that are also involved in gathering data.

Solomon Passy summed up the results of the Conference in the "Berlin Declaration", from which the following is taken:

[...] the OSCE participating States,

[...] Recognizing that anti-Semitism, following its most devastating manifestation during the Holocaust, has assumed new forms and expressions, which, along with other forms of intolerance, pose a threat to democracy, the values of civilization and, therefore, to overall security in the OSCE region and beyond,

Concerned in particular that this hostility toward Jews – as individuals or collectively – on racial, social, and/or religious grounds, has manifested itself in verbal and physical attacks and in the desecration of synagogues and cemeteries,

1. Condemn without reserve all manifestations of anti-Semitism, and all other acts of intolerance, incitement, harassment or violence against persons or communities based on ethnic origin or religious belief, wherever they occur;
2. Also condemn all attacks motivated by anti-Semitism or by any other forms of religious or racial hatred or intolerance, including attacks against synagogues and other religious places, sites and shrines;
3. Declare unambiguously that international developments or political issues, including those in Israel or elsewhere in the Middle East, never justify anti-Semitism;

In addition, I note that the Maastricht Ministerial Council in its Decision on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, tasked the Permanent Council "to further discuss ways and means of increasing the efforts of the

OSCE and the participating States for the promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination in all fields.”

1. The OSCE participating States commit to:

- Strive to ensure that their legal systems foster a safe environment free from anti-Semitic harassment, violence or discrimination in all fields of life;
- Promote [...] educational programmes for combating anti-Semitism;
- Promote remembrance of and, as appropriate, education about the tragedy of the Holocaust, and the importance of respect for all ethnic and religious groups;
- Combat hate crimes, which can be fuelled by racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic propaganda in the media and on the Internet;
- Encourage and support international organization and NGO efforts in these areas;
- Collect and maintain reliable information [...] report such information periodically to the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), and make this information available to the public [...]
- Work with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to determine appropriate ways to review periodically the problem of anti-Semitism;
- Encourage development of informal exchanges among experts in appropriate fora on best practices and experiences in law enforcement and education;

2. To task the ODIHR to:

- Follow closely, in full co-operation with other OSCE institutions as well as the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UNCERD), the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) and other relevant international institutions and NGOs, anti-Semitic incidents in the OSCE area making use of all reliable information available;
- Report its findings to the Permanent Council and to the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting and make these findings public. These reports should also be taken into account in deciding on priorities for the work of the OSCE in the area of intolerance; and
- Systematically collect and disseminate information throughout the OSCE area on best practices for preventing and responding to anti-Semitism and, if requested, offer advice to participating States in their efforts to fight anti-Semitism [...]

In the form of the “Berlin Declaration” and the other results of the OSCE Conference of April 2004, the participating States have established a firm foundation from which to pursue the fight against anti-Semitism. If the OSCE Ministerial Council succeeds in December 2004 in translating this success into a precise plan of action that commits participating States to measurable norms of behaviour, this will optimize both the instruments that are to be used in this struggle and their application.

A single criterion can be used to measure whether today’s success continues in the future: If it proves possible to establish the position of a High Representative with the power to undertake largely independent examinations of anti-Semitic incidents in the OSCE area and who is placed in a position where he can promote appropriate policies, then the decisive step will have been taken.

### *Conclusions*

To defeat anti-Semitism in the OSCE area requires a great collective effort on the part of states and international organizations, civil society and parliaments. In April 2004, they came together at the initiative of the OSCE’s Parliamentary Assembly. The goal of this collective endeavour is to banish anti-Semitic prejudice from society. The easiest way to reach this goal is for social and political actors to work together. The Berlin Annual Session of the Parliamentary Assembly and the OSCE’s government-level Conference in Berlin have played their part in this respect. Civil-society groups participated actively in the conferences, making a significant contribution.

The superior strength of democracies means that anti-Semitism and intolerance in general will finally be defeated – because tolerance has the power to overcome prejudice.

Hannah Arendt looked evil in the eye. It was the face of Adolf Eichmann. She was shocked by what she recognized: Evil had taken the form of the banal. That is how evil begins: in banality. Anyone may be the death list. And then the murders start: of people, civilization, democracy.

We do not only pursue the fight against anti-Semitism to protect those of Jewish faith. We also undertake this fight because we want to save ourselves from a new descent into barbarity. Thankfully, democracy is stronger than hatred. Because: “Politics is the applied love of life.” (Hannah Arendt)