



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Secretariat**

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Conference Services

At the request of the Slovenian Chairmanship please find enclosed the final report of the Ambassador Ömür Orhun, Personal Representative on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, prepared in addition to the report circulated on 15 November (CIO.GAL/164/05).

Ankara, 23 December 2005

H.E. Mr. Janez Lenarcic
Ambassador
Chairman of the Permanent Council of the OSCE
Vienna

Dear Mr. Ambassador,

1. As a follow-up to my second Semi-Annual Report which was circulated on 15 November 2005 (CIO.GAL/164/05) and to inform the Chairmanship of subsequent developments within the scope of my mandate, I would like to bring the following to your attention.

2. My remarks on the occasion of presentation of my second Semi-Annual Report to the Permanent Council on 17 November 2005 was circulated as CIO.GAL/173/05. Following this presentation, I took part in a press conference organized by the Chairmanship and the Press Section of the Secretariat together with my two fellow Personal Representatives to brief the media on our activities and on our reports. Aside from an Austrian journalist, mostly Turkish media members were present at this press conference. After making short presentations on our mandates and on our activities, we responded to the questions put, some of which were beyond our mandates. Coverage of this meeting in the press was mostly confined to Turkish journals.

The same afternoon we briefed OSCE's Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation and responded to their remarks and questions. I have to note with appreciation the deep interest shown by Mediterranean Partners to our activities.

Taking advantage of my presence in Vienna, I visited the new Secretary General of the OSCE Ambassador Marc Perrin de Brichambaut and had a comprehensive conversation with him. We especially welcomed the statement made by the Secretary General of the OIC to the Permanent Council a few days ago and also welcomed establishment of closer links between the OSCE and the OIC.

During my stay in Vienna I also conducted bilateral meetings with the Permanent Representative of Denmark and with the Ambassador of Egypt.

3. During my visit to Amman/Jordan on 13 – 14 December 2005, I visited Prince Hasan and the Secretary General of the Jordanian Foreign Ministry Ambassador Shegoum and briefed them on my mandate and also about my activities within the scope of this mandate. I particularly mentioned my cooperation with the civil society organizations.

Prince Hasan underlined that he himself also has spearheaded quite a number of initiatives on combating discrimination, intolerance, racism and xenophobia, outlining the main features of these initiatives and their outcomes. He also referred to the International Foundation of Cultures, to the Parliament of Cultures, to the Partnership for Harmony and his role in promoting inter-cultural and inter-faith dialogue and enhancing tolerance.

Prince Hasan stressed the need to establish links and coordination between various initiatives and activities in the field of tolerance and non-discrimination and suggested that a panel composed of a limited number of prominent international personalities might be tasked to undertake a study for this purpose.

Prince Hasan further stated that he would be ready to render any assistance or support to the OSCE and to myself in furthering our endeavors in promoting tolerance and combating discrimination. I recalled his outstanding address to the Brussels Conference.

Ambassador Shegoum, on the other hand, while agreeing with my analysis on how to combat discrimination against Muslims, underlined Jordan's readiness, as an OSCE Partner for Cooperation, to contribute to my efforts. He touched upon tendencies for radicalism in certain segments and underlined the necessity for all Muslim countries to address this issue in a concerted manner, through a common platform. He also stressed the need for closer links between the Organization of Islamic Countries, the OSCE and the European Union.

During my visit to Jordan, I also met and talked briefly with the Minister for Planning and International Cooperation Ms. Suhair Al-Ali and exchanged views on the need for reform and change in the broader Middle Eastern region.

All my interlocutors indicated their desire to strengthen their participation in and cooperation with the OSCE.

Taking advantage of my presence in Amman, I visited the Headquarters of the Jordan Institute of Diplomacy and briefed this civil society organization about my activities and my plans to further my cooperation with relevant Muslim NGO's.

Although my visit to Jordan was not a country visit, I believe I had useful contacts with Jordanian officials, who have shown a keen interest to the OSCE and its activities in the field of tolerance and non-discrimination.

4. My report on my country visit to France on 2 and 5 September 2005 was subsequently circulated on 23 November 2005 as per CIO.GAL/174 /05. (Here I would like to express my appreciation to the Chairmanship that my reports are now being circulated also to the Partners for Cooperation, who have shown an interest to receive such material.)

5. The detailed report of the Roundtable of Selected Muslim Non-Governmental Organizations working in the field of tolerance and non-discrimination, which was organized on 27 September 2005 in Warsaw, to which reference was made in my second Semi-Annual Report (para 12), was subsequently finalized by ODIHR and myself and was distributed on 30 November 2005 (CIO.GAL/178/05). I would like to underline that this report has been made available also to the participants to the Roundtable Meeting as well as to relevant partner International Organizations, including the OIC. I believe a similar and even larger Muslim NGO Roundtable Meeting should also be organized in the first half of 2006 to follow the useful exchanges initiated and to collect further recommendations.

6. It would be recalled that, upon receiving information to the effect that some anti-Islamic postures had been posted in Budapest and that statements of similar content had appeared in the Internet, I had written a letter on 6 October 2005 to the Permanent Representative of Hungary to the OSCE and requested information on Hungarian Government's response and comment on these incidents, as well as on a letter from the Hungarian Muslim community. The response of the Hungarian Government to this request has been forwarded to me on 16 December 2005 and is attached to this letter. (Annex 1)

7. It would also be recalled that I had sent a second letter to the Permanent Representative of Denmark to the OSCE on information received concerning manifestation of intolerance and discrimination against Muslims in Denmark. (Annex 4 to my second Semi – Annual Report) The detailed response of the Danish Government on this issue forwarded through the Danish Permanent Representative Ambassador Mr. Bernhard was circulated on 2 December 2005 as per CIO.GAL/179/05.

8. I regret to state that the ODIHR has not yet been able to prepare the first draft of the report on my country visit to the U.K. I will forward this report to the OSCE Chairmanship as soon as it will be ready.

9. My article titled “Countering Islamophobia and Discrimination Against Muslims” was finally published in December 2005 in EUMC’s Equal Voices magazine. For ease of reference, I am attaching a copy of this article to this letter. (Annex 2)

10. Upon the invitation of the Chairman in Office Dr. Rupel, I attended the OSCE Ministerial Meeting held in Ljubljana on 5 – 6 December 2005. During the margins of the Ministerial and with the assistance of the Chairmanship, the Institute for Ethnic Studies in Ljubljana organized a roundtable discussion on “The Situation of Human Rights, Countering Discrimination and Promoting Tolerance in the OSCE” with the participation of the three Personal Representatives. The roundtable was well attended and after brief presentations by us, comments and questions were responded. The press release by STA news agency about this roundtable is attached to this letter as Annex 3.

11. Finally, being informed that the Ministry of Interior of Baden-Württemberg has decided that as of 1 January 2006 foreigners of Muslim faith who would like to acquire German citizenship will be asked to fill in a separate and special questionnaire, I sent a letter to the Permanent Representative of Germany to the OSCE on 20 December 2005 asking information on the actual situation, including information on any new questionnaire that may be put into effect beginning of next year only for applicants of Muslim faith. (Annex 4)

Mr. Ambassador,

With this letter, I am concluding my mandate which Minister Rupel had entrusted me at the beginning of this year. I believe our collective efforts and activities have raised awareness to the need for tolerance and non-discrimination. I feel honoured to take part in this noble endeavour. I have to underline that, without the confidence, support and assistance of the Chairmanship and of the ODIHR I would not have been able to perform my duties. Through you, I would like to express my deep gratitude to all our colleagues in Vienna, Warsaw and Ljubljana.

Finally, I would like to request that this letter together with its annexes be distributed as an addendum to CIO.GAL/164/05.

Please accept, Mr. Ambassador, my highest considerations and best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Ambassador Ömür Orhun
Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-
Office of the OSCE on Combating Intolerance
and Discrimination against Muslims



ÁLLANDÓ MAGYAR EBESZ KÉPVISELET
PERMANENT MISSION OF HUNGARY TO THE OSCE

E-mail

358/2005/EBESZ

To: **Mr Ömür Orhun**
Personal Representative on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination Against Muslims
(omur.orhun@mfa.gov.tr)

Copy to: **Jo Anne Bishop** (jo-anne.bishop@osce.org) **Marcus Brand** (marcus.brand@odihp.pl)

Date: 16 December 2005

Attachment: 2

Reference: Situation of the Islamic Organizations in Hungary

Dear Mr. Personal Representative,

In response to your e-mail message of 6 October 2005 and following our personal discussion in Vienna, I have the honour to send herewith the reply of the Foreign Ministry of Hungary.

I do apologize for the delay, but questions you have raised obviously required detailed research and coordination among relevant Hungarian authorities and agencies.

Let me express my conviction that the attached document provides you with all the necessary information deemed important to have a correct picture about the concerns that you addressed in your letter.

Sincerely yours:

Marianne Berez
Ambassador



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS{PRIVATE }
Department of Human Rights
and European Organizations

No.: 23/712/2005

Budapest, 16 December 2005.

NOTE VERBALE

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Hungary presents its compliments to the OSCE Personal Representative on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, and has the honour to attach herewith the requested information about the situation of Islamic Organisations in Hungary.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Hungary avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Personal Representative on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims of the OSCE the assurances of its highest consideration.

Ömür Orhun
Personal Representative on Combating
Intolerance and Discrimination
Against Muslims
OSCE
Vienna

Islamic Organisations in Hungary

On the basis of the Constitution and international treaties, the Hungarian legal system ensures the fundamental human rights to all persons residing on its territory, regardless of their sex, race, colour, political or religious affiliation, etc. According to the decade long practice of the Constitutional Court, Article 70/A (1) of the Constitution, in accordance with the right to human dignity provided for in Article 54, obliges the state to respect and protect the human dignity equally for all persons. As the Constitutional Court first phrased it in Resolution No. 61/1992. (XI. 20.) AB, “the state as an executive power and as a legislator is obliged to ensure equal treatment to all persons residing on its territory. In this respect, it may not make any difference among them on the basis of sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, financial, birth or other status”. This principle extends to cover the whole legal system.

Based on the Constitution, Act CXXV on Equal Treatment and the Promotion of Equal Opportunity was adopted in 2003. Article 8 of the Act declares that any person or a group, treated less favourably than another person or group in a comparable situation because of his religious or ideological conviction, or any persons or groups having characteristics defined in a considerably larger disadvantage compared with other persons or groups in a similar situation, may turn to the authorities on the basis of Article 15 of the Law, and request a proceeding to be conducted against the injurer of the law.

In order to keep the provisions of the law more strictly, the Equal Treatment Authority was set up in February 2005. Since the establishment of the authority, no request or complaint has been submitted on discrimination by the Islamic community, or by individual persons.

Relations between State authorities and Islamic Organisations

Hungary has always attached special attention to keeping good relations with the ambassadors of Muslim countries accredited in our country, and with Muslim communities in Hungary. Presently, we know of three Muslim communities, which have been registered at the Municipal Court of Budapest. The relationship with these, especially with the Hungarian Islamic Community, is quite active. The Hungarian Islamic Community, led by Zoltán Bolek, receives the 1% of the personal income tax that private individuals may offer to churches, and the amount with which the state supplements this. The Community also receives support for religious education. In 2004 the Ministry of National and Cultural Heritage supported the international conference organised by the Hungarian Islamic Community. (The current amount has not yet been transferred as the Community led by Mr Bolek has accumulated a HUF 8 million public debt.)

With reflection to the cases mentioned in the letter of Mr. Bolek, the Hungarian authorities would like to note that during the investigations based on the claims filed by Mr Bolek, no information was found on discrimination directed against Islamic organisations or against Muslim communities in Hungary. The Hungarian authorities have also started building relations with Islamic organisations functioning in Hungary, and the experiences are rather favourable. The partners of the authorities until now, have not signalled objections, or violations of law. So far the following cases were examined, however, for the lack of criminal offence, none of these issues were found to violate the law, or incite against the community:

In 2002 Zoltán Bolek filed a complaint against the article entitled “Why is the fight against terrorism condemned to failure?” published in the weekly paper “Magyar Demokrata” number 2002/47, but the procedure led by the Investigation Department of the Budapest Police Headquarters was terminated on 20 October 2003 in the lack of criminal offence. Zoltán Bolek filed a complaint against the termination, but this was rejected by the Budapest Chief Prosecutor’s Office in its ruling of 26 January 2004.

Zoltán Bolek also lodged a complaint against two broadcasters of the “Sláger Rádió” because of their statements in the programme broadcast on 13 December 2002. According to the motivation, those statements did offend Arabic people, but did not disturb the social order and peace by arousing hatred, and the Budapest Chief Prosecutor’s Office refused to investigate the case.

Last August a breach of peace committed by group occurred in a bar in Békéscsaba, where the measures taken by police received great publicity. The investigation showed that the origin and the religious affiliation of the persons, against whom the measures were taken, did not play a role in this case.

Because of the banners found on the Internet and the posters put in public spaces in Budapest by the Association Exploring the Inseparability of Islam and Terrorism (ITT), the President of the Hungarian Islamic Community, Zoltán Bolek filed a complaint against an unknown offender for incitement against the community, violating Article 269 (b) of the Penal Code. The Budapest Police Headquarters – on the basis of the prosecutor's opinion – rejected the complaint in the lack of criminal offence.

The Situation of Refugees and Immigrants

Contrary to those written in Mr Zoltán Bolek's letter, the menu served at the reception centres for refugees does not include pork at all. The raw materials are procured according to the regulations on public procurement, thus the Islamic community has the possibility to make a contract with a supplier participating in the public procurement procedure or to make an offer itself. Until now no demand was raised on behalf of those living in the refugee stations to have their food served prepared according to the ritual rules ("halal food"). According to the information given by the reception centre for refugees in Békéscsaba, they received such kind of meat once as a donation; however, this meat did not meet the expected hygienic requirements (HACCP system). During the month of Ramadan, the special demands concerning consumption are taken into consideration, thus if a person in the station signals that he would like to keep Ramadan, the person may take the food ensured from the kitchen, and consume it at the time most convenient for him. Similarly to the reception centres for refugees, persons in detention may also receive food, in accordance with their religious affiliation.

It may also be said that free practice of religion is ensured in all reception centres for refugees and communal places of accommodation, Muslims are provided with a separate room for praying, and it is also ensured for them to visit the community, which suits their habits of practicing religion. No complaint has arrived to the personnel from the reception centres for refugees, or from the communal places of accommodation, concerning the order of eating, or the practicing of religion.

During the official procedures for family reunification, when the Office of Immigration and Nationality is applying the law, it complies with the provisions of the relevant domestic legal regulations, with the obligations assumed by the Republic of Hungary under international treaties, and with the recommendations made by the European Union. Accordingly, it performs its procedures always by ensuring equality before the law, and without discrimination.

In case of family reunification, the competency of the immigration authorities depends on the type of residence permit requested (visa, residence permit, settlement permit). In case a residence permit is requested with the purpose of family reunification, the foreigner is entitled to such a permit in case of the existence of the conditions determined in the legal regulation, thus it is accordingly impossible to apply discrimination. When applying the law, the purpose of family reunification is always treated positively.

When a person is applying for a residency visa, the issuing of that falls into the discretionary power of the Office of Immigration and Nationality. In such cases, the authority exercises its discretionary powers taking into account the conditions determined by the legislator, and with regard to the specific characteristics of the given case. Most of the family reunification cases are evaluated positively in this procedure to the benefit of the client. This is also proved by the fact that in case of family reunification, it is possible to receive the visa in Hungary, thus in numerous cases, the residency visa is issued at local level (facilitating the situation of the clients).

When applying for a settlement permit, the authority also evaluates the fact of family reunification to the benefit of the client. When applying for a settlement permit, the foreigner applying as a family member, with the purpose of family reunification, may be exempted from the requirement of having to reside for three years continuously from the date of entry, without breaks, legally, and with a normally conducted everyday life.

With regard to the above, it may be stated that in accordance with the law, the immigration authorities apply the possibilities of preferential evaluation provided by the Hungarian legal regulations. The decisions taken after due consideration and in accordance with the obligations assumed under international treaties by the Republic of Hungary, are based on the prohibition of discrimination.

COUNTERING ISLAMOPHOBIA AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MUSLIMS

By Ambassador Ömür Orhun*
(Equal Voices Magazine of the EUMC, No.17, December 2005)

In this article, Ambassador Ömür Orhun, OSCE Personal Representative on Combating Islamophobia, discusses current manifestations of Islamophobia, which he defines as the "fear or suspicion of Islam, Muslims and matters pertaining to them". He finds that in the post-September 11 period Muslims are subjected to increased discrimination, intolerance and hostility. Going beyond multiculturalism and assimilation, he calls for "true integration" which fosters community cohesion and allows Muslims to contribute fully to these communities. He concludes with recommendations on how to promote tolerance and combat discrimination.

Almost all Muslim communities in Western Europe and North America are experiencing an increasingly hostile environment towards them. This environment, which started to be more pronounced in the post September 11 period, is characterized by suspicion and prejudice at times going back to history; ignorance; negative or patronizing imaging; discrimination including in housing and employment; stereotyping all Muslims or Islam in general as "terrorist, violent or otherwise unfit"; lack of provision, recognition and respect for Muslims in public institutions; and attacks, abuse, harassment and violence directed against persons perceived to be Muslim and against mosques, Muslim property and cemeteries.

This is Islamophobia, which can also be defined in short as "fear or suspicion of Islam, Muslims and matters pertaining to them."

Islamophobia has existed for a very long time, albeit in a rather subdued form, and is deeply rooted in prejudice. However, it became a topical issue since 2001, with devastating effects not only on the lives of the Muslim communities, but also on the societies where they live. Islamophobia, whether in the shape of intolerance and discrimination, or whether in the form of violence, is a violation of human rights and is a threat to social and political cohesion. It is obvious that Islamophobia is seen in countries where Islam is not observed by the majority of the population.

Among others including the EUMC, the Council of Europe has recognized that negative connotations of Islamophobia may lead to exclusion and self-exclusion of especially younger generations, with obvious negative results in terms of self-esteem and social integration. It is also acknowledged that persistent forms of Islamophobia and in particular its repercussions through the mass media represent a threat to peace, stability and democracy.

To remedy this negative and disturbing phenomenon, sound strategies and educational approaches must be developed and vigorously implemented. Increasing understanding and respect for religious diversity would be the first step to identifying and developing criteria for good practices in combating intolerance and discrimination against Muslims.

OUR PRESENT ENVIRONMENT

Our present environment is essentially different from the world we left behind in the 20th Century. Not only the international system, but also the conceptions, attitudes and expectations of people are transforming.

Future developments in that regard will depend on the choices we make and on the path we follow. A new reappraisal of how best to pursue our common vision and collective interests is called for more than ever.

1990s was characterized by a sense of optimism, fuelled by the spread of democracy, market economy and human rights and freedoms. However, we tended to forget that our globe is a complex one and is vulnerable in view of unforeseen developments. In fact, the attacks on September 11 brutally demonstrated how far extreme and violent groups can succeed in challenging values of the civilized world. Aside from the dramatic impact of this event on international relations and on transatlantic links, its negative consequences related to the emergence of a climate of fear, suspicion and unrest, leading to manifestations of discrimination and racism, must be thoroughly considered.

Within this context, and as underlined above, the environment facing Muslims, especially in the Western countries, has deteriorated considerably in the post September 11 period. Muslims, together with some other minorities and groups of foreigners have been and still are subjected to intolerance, discrimination, distrust and hostility.

A so-called "Islamic terrorism or Islamic extremism" is portrayed as the source of all evil, adding fuel to the already existing prejudice and intolerance against Muslims. People of this moral following are stigmatized because of their beliefs, ethnicities or appearances. The 2004 Report of the International Helsinki Federation on Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims in the EU is an eye-opener in this respect.

This phenomenon has two additional adverse consequences:

It undermines efforts of integration and brings about negative trends in attempts to create an atmosphere of harmony.

An even wider fault line between the Muslim and the Christian worlds may emerge.

Therefore, both from a micro-social angle and also from a global perspective it would be wise to stop such discrimination.

THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE)

The OSCE brings together 55 countries in the Euro-Atlantic-Asian area and, as such, is the largest regional international organization. OSCE's comprehensive approach to security includes "human security" as an important component. Common values of the OSCE are based on a firm commitment to human rights and on the recognition of the inherent dignity of all human beings.

In that respect, human rights and fundamental freedoms are recognized as essential safeguards of tolerance and non-discrimination, which are indispensable elements of stability, security and cooperation. However, despite all efforts for the promotion and protection of human

rights, acts related to racism, xenophobia and discrimination, as well as related intolerance persist in many societies. The resurgence, especially after September 11, of racist tendencies and Islamophobia challenge the exercise of fundamental human rights and freedoms particularly in Western countries. In spite of tangible progress achieved in eliminating institutionalized forms of discrimination, OSCE countries still experience new and mounting waves of bias, exclusion and racist violence. These constitute a major threat to friendly and peaceful relations not only among states, but among peoples as well. Hence, the need to struggle against all forms and manifestations of discrimination and intolerance has become more urgent and evident than before.

Recognizing this necessity and in line with its comprehensive concept of security, the OSCE has recently initiated a series of activities to promote tolerance and non-discrimination and has also undertaken to organize major international conferences for the same purpose. Within the scope of the overall fight against discrimination and promoting tolerance, the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE appointed three personal representatives at the end of 2004 to promote better coordination of activities related to this endeavour.

PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE

My mandate as the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims envisages promotion of better coordination of participating States' efforts aimed at effective implementation of OSCE decisions in the field of tolerance and non-discrimination, paying special attention to combating intolerance and discrimination against Muslims.

My perception on the implementation of my mandate can be summarized as follows:
The historical, cultural and psychological depth of the issue of discrimination and intolerance needs to be always taken into full consideration.

A sound normative framework to combat intolerance and discrimination both in the OSCE and in other international and national fora does exist; what is needed is to put this normative framework into full use and implementation.

There is also a need for an intellectual and ethical strategy to avoid political exploitation of the issues related to discrimination and intolerance.

Discrimination and intolerance against Muslims is not only a matter of discrimination against a specific religious group, but it also deeply affects international relations as well as the internal stability of Western societies. As such, it is a multifaceted question and must be addressed through a holistic approach.

Various forms of intolerance and discrimination need not be subject to an artificial hierarchy. Discrimination is discrimination and must be condemned and dealt with whatever the underlying motive might be. Within this framework, there should be complementarity between efforts dealing with different forms of discrimination.

The following points must be underlined and given prominence:

The quality of life of Muslims living in Western societies must be improved. This will lead to better understanding and better integration, thus to lessening of mutual mistrust.

Muslims should not be seen as second class citizens, must not be demonized, marginalized, feared or despised.

The war on terror must not become a war on Muslims.

It should be recognized that Muslims have the same basic needs and desires as others, which are material well-being, cultural acceptance and religious freedom, without political or social intimidation. In that vein, Muslims should not be marginalized or attempted to be assimilated, but should be accommodated. Accommodation is the best strategy for integration.

On the other hand, in my role I try to raise awareness on the necessity of tolerance and non-discrimination; stress the importance of social harmony and respect, especially respect for "the other", whoever this other may be; search for commonalities rather than divisions and promote inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue.

Stressing the need for sound legal strategies, a sound legal framework and the implementation of that framework (judicial measures), underlining the need for education, not only of the law enforcement officials, but especially of the younger generation, highlighting good practices and the role of the media are also among my priorities.

What we need is a positive consciousness on the necessity of a new relationship among all our citizens to attain solidarity through respect for cultural diversity. We must, as responsible members of our communities, have the wisdom and also the courage to work and to live together. Thereby we can eliminate any clash or any perception of clash among civilizations, cultures or religions.

THE TRUE MEANING OF INTEGRATION

As Ambassador Christian Strohal, Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), stated at the 2005 OSCE Human Dimension Seminar on Migration and Integration, a cohesive society relies on more than just equal opportunities for all. It relies on social conditions that enable people from all backgrounds to feel and to be included in society and to share an identity.

Such will be true integration. Therefore, the main task of the political leaders and the civil society in communities where large Muslim groups live is to help dismantle the barriers that prevent Muslims from contributing fully to these communities. This should be at the heart of integration agendas.

Let me emphasize here that I am not suggesting that Muslims should cease to be what they are and adopt some other identity. Integration is a two way street and in this process all involved are to contribute.

We should recognize the limitations of both assimilationist and multiculturalist policies. In our advanced modern world, even the notion of "assimilation" smacks of totalitarianism. Multiculturalism, on the other hand, and if carried to its extreme, may amount to imprisoning migrants in cultural ghettos. Some countries have defined freedom as the right (for migrants) to live in exactly the way they choose, in an enclave of their own. This will lead to segregated societies. To separate communities in this way may offer the illusion of a multicultural paradise, but in actual life it brings about inequality, incomprehension, fear and even hostility.

On the other hand, migrants should not be held responsible for problems over which they have no control or for acts in which they did not take part.

There are quite diverse forms of integration. Without going into their details, we may enumerate them as follows: cultural and behavioural; structural; civic; marital; identificational; and attitudinal. I believe structural and civic integration is the most sound of all. In the post September 11 period, the task of encouraging economic, social and cultural integration of Muslim groups is becoming more urgent. As recent events show, the price of getting this wrong will be detrimental.

A CONCEPTUAL APPROACH TO TOLERANCE AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Today, we seem to agree that democracy is the best form of government. Fundamental and indispensable elements of democracy are worth remembering:

Tolerance for differences and freedom of expression of thought and belief, which is the basis of creativity and development;

Participation, which bolsters the awareness of common responsibility;

Solidarity, which is the complementary element of civic identity; and finally

Transparency, which enables togetherness in solving problems without ignoring differences of opinion.

We must learn to enjoy our differences, while respecting the others. Differences should not lead to discrimination. Nations and societies, like the individual person, act in their perceived best interest. However, they should understand that bridging the gaps between divergent best interests is the key to common recuperative capacity.

Nowadays we witness increasing demands to enhance action against racism, xenophobia, discrimination and related intolerance. Many international organizations, NGOs and also governments are paying particular attention to the question of tolerance and non-discrimination. These efforts are welcome, but as long as the sickness is not cured completely, they are bound to remain either ineffective or only temporarily effective.

It is a well established fact that tolerance and non-discrimination principles lie at the center of the human rights system. These principles are also closely linked to the concept of mutual respect. Mutual respect, on the other hand, is based on equality in dignity as well as equality in benefiting from human rights. Disregard for tolerance and non-discrimination principles leads to dismantling of peaceful, secure and stable societies and harms inter-state relations. Democracy and protection of fundamental freedoms and human rights, on the other hand, are essential safeguards of tolerance and non-discrimination.

HARMONY AND RESPECT

Nowadays I notice a most deplorable trend, whereby peoples of the world are being re-categorized according to their species. Those who have forgotten are being forced to remember their colour, their ethnicity, their religion. People are being fed with terror or fear

because of their creed. They are being told: beware of the dark, beware of the Muslim, beware of the Arab or the Turk or the Pakistani.

How to get out of this hell? The road to salvation would go from protecting those that do not look like us from "ourselves." We must not try to make others look like us. On the contrary, we must be proud of their difference, we must learn to nourish from their difference. We must guarantee that "the other" must be able to live like "the other."

As the 2002 OIC-EU Forum held in Istanbul acknowledged, history has shown that lack of knowledge and mutual respect among civilizations and cultures greatly affects world stability and peace. On the other hand, harmony and welfare are nurtured when different peoples make communication a priority, taking the time to express and listen to each other's views and interests, acknowledging and tolerating differences, while at the same time seeking out commonalities that can help build strong relationships that promote cooperation.

The tragic events of September 11 and their repercussions have shown once again the need to strengthen tolerance and understanding among different cultures to avoid reappearance of deeply rooted prejudices. Acts of terrorism cannot be explained or justified for political, religious, cultural or any other reason. On the other hand, there is now a growing consciousness of the need for all sides to discuss and to attempt to better understand the differences in perceptions, values and interests, as well as to promote tolerance and appreciation for cultural diversity.

In our deliberations to protect and to improve the shared values of different cultures and to enhance tolerance, dialogue and cooperation within and among nations and peoples, it is useful to remember the conclusions of the OIC-EU Forum:

"Cultures, in their diversity, complement and enhance one another. We must, therefore, confirm our conviction on the necessity of harmony among cultures and civilizations and attainability of this harmony.

The main means to support coherence and solidarity and to avoid racial, religious and cultural prejudices is to enhance our knowledge of one another through communication and cooperation for the promotion of common universal values, such as those enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant international human rights instruments. To this end all political entities have a joint responsibility to contribute to the achievement of these goals.

We must reaffirm that terrorism cannot be justified for any reason whatsoever. Also, we must recognize the joint responsibility to fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

We must be committed to defining problems emerging from cultural prejudices and political and economic injustices and to promoting solutions that will contribute to universal peace, welfare and stability.

We must accept the need for further cooperation. For that, existing frameworks, both bilateral and also multilateral, must continue to be utilized."

CONCLUSION

We may not have all the answers to all the problems we face. This should not lead us to doing nothing. We have to start somewhere.

The first thing we must do is to reach out across the barricades that exist or that some want to place between the Muslim communities and the rest. We should avoid being at the wrong end of racism and Islamophobia. We should recognize that even cruel words and dismissive gestures are instrumental in creating barricades of prejudice.

Secondly, as Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the United Nations, stated, we must "unlearn intolerance." No one can or should be neutral in the fight against intolerance and discrimination.

Thirdly, we must accept the importance of compliance with already agreed norms and decisions in combating intolerance and discrimination. A culture of compliance should be created, as opposed to a culture of non-responsiveness.

We must combat intolerance and discrimination not only with words, but also with acts of justice, campaigns of integration, harmony and respect for "the other" and with adequate resources. In this endeavour, the light of knowledge must be our source of inspiration; not the darkness of hatred. We must forget everything we memorized concerning hatred and enmity.

Let me conclude by quoting two lines from a popular Turkish song:

I am not more than you, nor less;
If you are not (don't exist), I am nothing.

**Former Permanent Representative of Turkey to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Ambassador Ömür Orhun, was appointed in December 2004 as Personal Representative of the OSCE Chair-man-in-Office on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, a recently established part-time honorary position.*

ANNEX - 3

Report by the STA news agency dated 07.12.2005 on the Round Table held at the Institute for Ethnic Studies in Ljubljana on "The Situation of Human Rights, Countering Discrimination and Promoting Tolerance in the OSCE"

"The public awareness of racism and xenophobia has undergone dramatic changes in the new millennium, notably in the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 attacks, OSCE Chairman's Personal Representative on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination Anastasia Crickley said during a Monday panel hosted by the Ljubljana-based Institute for Ethnic Studies.

Addressing the panel on human rights, the prevention of discrimination and promotion of tolerance in the OSCE area, Crickley pointed out that numerous OSCE participating States have adopted initiatives to fight racism, but failed to make progress in their implementation.

Asked about the Slovenian case of segregating Roma children in one local elementary school, Crickley told STA that the experience in international education clearly indicates that segregated education discriminates the segregated groups and deprives children of good education.

Furthermore, Crickley estimated that segregated education went against the spirit of EU directives regarding discrimination, as well as the spirit of the decisions delivered by the OSCE.

The OSCE Chairman-in-Office's Personal Representative on Combating Racism Gert Weisskirchen meanwhile said that although the partner states took on the obligations to prevent antisemitism, he could not remain optimistic about their actual implementation.

Meanwhile, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office's Personal Representative on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims Omur Orhun discussed "islamophobia", which he labelled a familiar phenomenon, which however has deepened after September 11.

Orhun said that discrimination manifested in Muslims being perceived as different, inferior and associated with terror and violence. Moreover, Islam was said to be incompatible with contemporary lifestyles, Orhun said.

In reference to Slovenia's problem of building a mosque in the capital, Orhun told STA that examples have shown that if a country fails to provide a suitable place of worship, this triggers underground activities.

All officials called for raising the public awareness, as well as passing relevant anti-discriminatory legislation and see that it is adequately implemented."

ANNEX- 4

Ankara, 20 December 2005

H.E. Dr. Axel Berg
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Germany to the OSCE

Dear Mr. Ambassador,

It has been brought to my attention that the Ministry of Interior of Baden-Württemberg has decided that as of 1 January 2006, foreigners of Muslim faith who would like to acquire German citizenship will be asked to fill in a separate and special questionnaire.

Civil society representatives who brought this decision to my attention are of the opinion that such an application only towards adherents of a specific religion would amount to discrimination and would be against endeavours to achieve structural and civic integration. I have also seen some press reports to the same effect.

You would recall that I had elaborated on my mandate as the Personal Representative of the Chairman in Office of the OSCE on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims and on my perception on the implementation of this mandate at various occasions to the Permanent Council and at different OSCE events. In all these statements I have also tried to underline the need of true integration in conjunction with combating intolerance and discrimination.

Before pronouncing any judgment on the new questionnaire that is said to be put into practice next year, I will appreciate to be informed of the actual situation, including information on any new questionnaire that may be put into effect beginning of next year only for applicants of Muslim faith. I will also appreciate to receive an English translation if such a new and separate questionnaire exists.

Thanking for your cooperation and, as agreed before, hoping to visit Germany within the scope of my mandate at a suitable time early next year, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

Ambassador Ömür Orhun
Personal Representative of the Chairman in Office of the OSCE
on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims