

**Statement of the Honorable Christopher H. Smith, Ranking Member
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe**

**Hearing on
“Part II: Taking Stock: Combating Anti-Semitism in the OSCE Region”**

February 7, 2008

Mr. Chairman, thank you for convening today’s hearing as part of the Commission’s ongoing efforts to maintain a sharp focus on manifestations of anti-Semitism and related violence throughout the OSCE region, including here in the United States.

Indeed, nearly six years have passed since I chaired the Commission’s first hearing devoted exclusively to anti-Semitism. Then we were in the midst of a spike in anti-Semitic violence in Europe, a grave concern to many of us.

The May 2002 hearing drew on the expertise of activists from the NGO community. I welcome many of those same groups here today to evaluate our common efforts to date and how we might confront the ongoing challenges faced by Jewish communities and institutions throughout the OSCE region and beyond.

Our efforts within the OSCE have been successful in keeping a unique focus on anti-Semitism warranted given the darker chapters of Europe’s own history, though none of our countries is immune from this poison. Beginning with the Parliamentary Assembly, we have worked to ensure that efforts to combat anti-Semitism be placed high on the OSCE agenda.

Obviously there was strong resistance from other countries which would rather turn a blind eye to this phenomenon and U.S. leadership proved crucial. While much progress has been made since then our work is far from complete.

There are hopeful signs as well as almost daily reminders that Jews and Jewish institutions continue to be targets for hatred. According to the annual global report on anti-Semitism for 2007 there was a rise in anti-Semitic incidents in Germany, Australia, the United States and Ukraine, with large number of incidents recorded in Britain and France. Anti-Semitic violence takes many forms, from acts of vandalism to physical assaults, sometimes resulting in death.

An early priority has been in areas such as data collection – efforts to begin to define the scope of the problem. All OSCE participating States accepted specific commitments in the regard. I am deeply disappointed that several participating States, including Armenia, have yet to provide OSCE with any statistical data on anti-Semitic incidents, while many other countries lag behind in supplying updated statistics.

Law enforcement training has made important inroads, especially in correctly reporting anti-Semitic crimes. A critical area is that of education. This is an area in which the United States has excelled and has valuable experience to share. I understand that ODIHR has made this a priority area, though resources are always an issue. From our discussions last week, it was clear

that some of these projects require very modest sums but have the potential to have a big impact on today's youth and future generations.

Mr. Chairman, the partnership forged between members of this Commission and the NGO community has proven a winning combination in making a difference. I look forward to the testimony of the expert panelists before us today as we forge forward to confront anti-Semitism in the OSCE region and beyond.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.