



## HELSINKI COMMISSION HEARING

---

UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON  
SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

# Testimony :: Hon. Benjamin L. Cardin

Commissioner - Helsinki Commission

Mr. Chairman, I join you in welcoming Foreign Minister de Hoop Scheffer and thank him for his leadership as Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE. I also want to thank the Minister and his government for their hospitality in hosting the Annual Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Rotterdam in July.

The Foreign Minister has set a determined agenda for the Dutch chairmanship and I congratulate him on the concrete strides that have been made in implementing the Charter on Terrorism, on producing an action plan to combat trafficking in human beings, and on maintaining continuing focus on strengthening human rights and the rule of law. I also appreciate the Minister's support for convening the first high-level OSCE Conference on anti-Semitism held in Vienna, Austria, June 20, 2003 and strongly urge him to ensure that a follow-up meeting on anti-Semitism is held in Berlin next year.

The U.S. delegation, under the leadership of Chairman Smith, has sought to raise awareness of the rise in anti-Semitism in Europe and North America in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and to seek ways to combat this frightening trend. We have held several forums with our German colleagues--in Berlin in July 2002, in Washington, D.C. in December 2002 and in Vienna in February 2003. In Rotterdam this past July, the Parliamentary Assembly unanimously adopted the U.S. resolution on Combating anti-Semitism which calls on parliamentarians in OSCE participating States to strongly and publicly condemn anti-Semitic acts when they occur, to ensure effective law enforcement against criminal acts stemming from anti-Semitism, and to encourage education efforts throughout the OSCE region to counter anti-Semitic stereotypes and attitudes among younger people.

Mr. Chairman, we can never justify anti-Semitic actions by international developments or political issues. We need to have an action plan to fight anti-Semitism. We need to have strong laws that are adopted by our member States and enforced. We need educational programs for our children and we need to speak out against anti-Semitism as elected representatives and government officials. Silence is not an option, Mr. Chairman.

I strongly support further engagement and discussion with the OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation, which include Israel and Arab countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, on the issue of anti-Semitism and on regional security. I am very eager to open a dialogue with our fellow parliamentarians in those nations in the near future. My resolution on the OSCE Mediterranean Dimension, adopted during the Annual Assembly in

Rotterdam, calls on the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation to adhere to the guiding principles contained in the Helsinki Final Act and to use the framework and mechanisms of the OSCE, including those devoted to conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation, as a model for enhancing security, promoting co-operation, and protecting human rights in the region. I hope that the Dutch Chairmanship and its successors will support this effort.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, as you know, during the Parliamentary Assembly in Rotterdam my colleagues elected me to Chair the Committee on Economic Affairs, Science and Technology, for which I am deeply honored. I will be working closely with the Vice-Chair and Rapporteur of the Committee and members of the Assembly to focus our work on issues and strategies that will serve to enhance the economic and environmental dimension of the OSCE. I believe that the work of the Parliamentary Assembly should support and enhance the work of the OSCE and its missions. I therefore look forward to receiving the views of the Chair-in-Office on what contribution the OSCE can make to enhancing sustainable economic and environmental development throughout the region.

Again, I welcome Foreign Minister de Hoop Scheffer and look forward to his testimony.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.