



## HELSINKI COMMISSION HEARING

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UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON  
SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

# Testimony :: Hon. Alcee L. Hastings

Commissioner - Helsinki Commission

I join the Chairman and Co-Chairman in welcoming Foreign Minister de Hoop Scheffer. We appreciate having the opportunity to discuss with you the many critical issues facing the OSCE and I want to thank you for your leadership.

I also want to thank you for your hospitality and your participation in the Annual Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Rotterdam in July. In my view, as Vice President of the Assembly, it is essential that the delegations in Vienna and the members of the Parliamentary Assembly work more closely together as we face the challenges ahead.

Mr. Chairman, let me also commend the Foreign Minister for the hard work he has undertaken on an issue that many of us have been leaders on here in Congress: anti-Semitism.

As you know, Mr. Minister, this past spring, I represented the United States Congress, along with our Chairman and my friend Representative Smith at the OSCE Conference to Combat anti-Semitism. Moreover, at recent OSCE conferences, I have joined with my U.S. colleagues in introducing resolutions condemning the escalation of anti-Semitism in OSCE member-states, as well as commending many countries for their continued efforts to combat anti-Semitism. In the last six months, I have also had the opportunity to speak on this important topic with members of the Anti-Defamation League here in Washington and back in my home state of Florida. We all know that the ADL is instrumental in raising awareness and encouraging tolerance. I have introduced legislation combating anti-Semitism and seeking to secure reparations for Holocaust survivors, an issue with which this Commission has spent a great deal of time. Of course, Mr. Minister, I look forward to your continued leadership on this issue as we look forward not only to the conference on xenophobia but also next year's conference on anti-Semitism in Berlin.

Mr. Minister, I commend you for your focus on implementing the Charter on Terrorism and combating trafficking in human beings, drugs and arms. Clearly, trafficking in human beings is modern day slavery and an egregious violation of human rights. It destroys human beings and destabilizes the societies and economies of the region. The work of this year's Economic Forum and the adoption of the Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings will assist the OSCE states in countering this scourge. Chairman Smith is the guiding light here in the U.S. Congress in fighting trafficking in human beings. He recently reintroduced his Trafficking Victims Protection Act which will further strengthen U.S. law and programs to

punish the traffickers and save the victims.

Mr. Minister, thank you again for appearing before us. I look forward to hearing your assessment of the current state of affairs in the OSCE region as well as your vision for the future of the organization.

I look forward to our continued work together and I look forward to seeing you in Maastricht.