



# HELSINKI COMMISSION BRIEFING

UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON  
SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

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## Testimony :: Hon. Christopher H. Smith

**Co-Chairman - Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe**

Two weeks ago during the Holocaust commemoration, “Days of Remembrance Week,” students in my home State of New Jersey held a vigil at Rutgers University to honor Ilan Halimi. Ilan was a French Jew who was kidnapped and gruesomely tortured to death earlier this year because of his faith. Ilan’s tragedy made brutally clear that Jews are still attacked because they are Jews, and that our work to eradicate the evil of anti-Semitism in all its ugly forms and manifestations is far from done.

Other groups also suffer from violent acts of hatred throughout the OSCE region, including right here in our own country. Despite a slight decline, ADL’s annual Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents recently found that the number of anti-Semitic incidents in the United States remained at disturbing levels in 2005.

As Co-Chairman, I am likewise concerned with the recent wave of violence against ethnic and religious minorities that has spiked in Russia. All too often, police there seem incapable or unwilling to vigorously protect minorities, including Roma and persons with dark skin.

Four years ago this month, the Helsinki Commission held a hearing on escalating anti-Semitism and related violence in Europe. That hearing was instrumental in elevating this issue and related concerns at the OSCE. Strong leadership by the United States and others has led to greater engagement by the OSCE and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in efforts to combat anti-Semitism and other forms of hate, as well as increased its focus on Holocaust education. On the first panel for today’s Helsinki Commission briefing, we will highlight that work through the presentations of two experts, Paul Goldenberg and Dr. Kathrin Meyer. The second panel will add the insights of three very distinguished NGOs – the American Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League, and the Simon Wiesenthal Center Museum of Tolerance.

Paul Goldenberg is the former Chief of the New Jersey Bias Crime unit and now serves as Special Advisor to ODIHR on hate crimes training. Paul has done a tremendous job in bringing into reality the OSCE/ODIHR Law Enforcement Officers Hate Crimes Training Program. The Training Program has created a flexible hate crimes training curriculum designed to meet the needs of the law enforcement community within any OSCE participating State. The curriculum includes the fundamentals of response, investigation and management of anti-Semitic crimes and hate crimes in tandem with community engagement and mutual capacity building. Training law enforcement personnel in both Europe and North America on these methods will go far in winning the war against hatred and anti-Semitism.

Paul has overseen the successful implementation of the program in Spain, Hungary, Croatia and Ukraine. I’m very pleased with how the program is developing and hope to see it implemented in additional countries.

Dr. Kathrin Meyer is the Adviser on Anti-Semitism Issues for OSCE’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in Warsaw, Poland. This past January during the first commemoration of the international Day for Holocaust Remembrance, ODIHR and Yad Vashem released guidelines on Holocaust commemoration, specifically designed for educators. Kathrin played a key role in developing these guidelines, which are a hands-on asset for teachers as they work to ensure the lessons of the Holocaust are inculcated with our children. If we are to remember the Holocaust, our children must be taught its lessons at an early age. I am pleased that ODIHR has diligently committed itself to this issue.

Our second panel represents three organizations that are no strangers to the Helsinki Commission. Rabbi Andrew Baker of AJC will first share his thoughts on where the OSCE tolerance process is going and what needs to be done to maintain our positive momentum in combating anti-Semitism. Next, Stacy Burdett will speak about ADL’s programs to combat hate crimes and educate law enforcement officials. Lastly, Liebe Geft, who is the Director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center

Museum of Tolerance, will talk about how the Museum works with police to ensure they understand and appreciate the importance of tolerance.

My Holocaust education began when I was 14, when my father introduced me to a Holocaust survivor. While every child may not have the privilege of meeting a Holocaust survivor, education in the classroom and in the home, remains the next best hope of inculcating tolerance and respect.

While the battle is far from won against the forces of anti-Semitism and hate, the OSCE is pushing ahead. Today's announcement by the Belgian Chair-in-Office of the upcoming OSCE Tolerance Implementation Meeting on "Promoting Inter-cultural, Inter-religious and Inter-ethnic Understanding" in Kazakhstan on June 12 - 13 will be another opportunity for us to push ahead. In addition to important meetings like this, it is the tireless work of Paul and Kathrin in education and training that proves the OSCE is making a difference.