



Delegation of the United States of America
to the Parliamentary Assembly of the
Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

February 22, 2024

Heads of Delegation and Members of the Bureau
c/o OSCE Parliamentary Assembly International Secretariat
Tordenskjoldgade 1
Copenhagen, Denmark

Dear Colleagues:

In 2004, OSCE participating States adopted the *Berlin Declaration* which recognized antisemitism for what it is: a threat to democracy, human rights, and the security of the OSCE region and beyond. States pledged to intensify efforts to combat antisemitism in all its forms and to strengthen policies which promote tolerance and non-discrimination.

In 2005, Gert Weisskirchen, a German parliamentarian, became OSCE's first special representative on antisemitism at the invitation of OSCE's then Chair-in-Office, Slovenian Foreign Minister, Dimitrij Rupel. Mr. Weisskirchen served in this important role under the successive Belgian, Spanish, and Finnish Chairs.

Since that time, OSCE chairs and OSCE PA presidents from 24 countries have named special representatives and enshrined OSCE's practice of convening an annual, high-level conference on combatting antisemitism. Recent OSCE chairs have also named special representatives on combatting Islamophobia, Racism, Xenophobia, and discrimination against Christians.

Last year, following advocacy by many Americans, including myself, President Biden acknowledged the threat that antisemitism poses not only to Jewish Americans but to the values for which we stand as a nation and issued the United States' first National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism.

Last week, I visited France, where I met with our colleague Didier Paris and other members of parliament to discuss these challenges and the specific actions the French government is taking to enhance its efforts to combat antisemitism.

Yet, as we prepare to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the *Berlin Declaration* this year, instances of harassment and violent attacks against Jews, Muslims, and other minorities have spiked across the OSCE region. Following the atrocities committed by Hamas terrorists on Israelis on October 7 – and Israel's military response – Jews have been threatened, attacked, and killed in numbers not seen since the Holocaust.

We must not be daunted by this challenge. Rather, we as elected officials need to utilize the platforms our offices provide to speak out against antisemitism, anti-Muslim bigotry, and hatred whenever it occurs. We must develop education, law enforcement, and policy initiatives which combat intolerance. We must build interfaith coalitions and teach future generations the painful lessons of the Holocaust. In short, we must turn our words into action, not only because it is right but because it is the only way to realize the promises of *Berlin*.

Sincerely,



Ben Cardin

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
Special Representative on Combatting
Anti-Semitism, Racism and Intolerance