Combating anti-Semitism in focus at event hosted by Special Rep Cardin

United States Senator Ben Cardin, the OSCE PA's Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism, and Intolerance, hosted an event last week in Washington featuring youth from diverse communities leading efforts to combat anti-Semitism. Speakers at the 20 October event, “Conversation on Combating Anti-Semitism in Europe,” included Jane Braden-Golay, the outgoing head of the European Union of Jewish Students; Siavosh Derakhti, head of Young People Against Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia in Sweden; and Niddal El-Jabri, organizer of the human ring formed around the Copenhagen Synagogue in March of 2015.

Each of the speakers noted that anti-Semitism is a problem for all of society, not just the Jewish community. Cardin highlighted the importance of youth and coalition efforts in the fight, but also stressed the need for additional action from governments to accurately collect and report hate crimes data, as well as to focus on educational initiatives to reduce societal prejudice. In the context of the current refugee crisis and upticks in violence and prejudice, he noted that diversity is a strength, not a weakness.

Other participants in the meeting included OSCE Personal Representative on Combating Anti-Semitism Rabbi Andrew Baker, U.S. Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism Ira Forman, officials representing the U.S. and OSCE participating States, and representatives from civil society. Braden-Golay, Derakhti, and El-Jabri were visiting the U.S. to receive awards from Human Rights First for their work in combating anti-Semitism.

Deputy SG Pallares delivers lecture at Spanish Atlantic Institute in Madrid

Last week in Madrid, OSCE PA Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares participated as a lecturer in the programme of Government, Leadership and Public Management of the Spanish Atlantic Institute. The Institute is a prestigious academic institution and think tank bringing together scholars and professionals from the public and private sectors for debate on transatlantic issues.

Pallares presented the work and objectives of the OSCE and the Parliamentary Assembly, discussing their role in the current international context. He also addressed specifically the rise of populism and populist political movements in northern Europe. Pallares described the impact these political movements are having within European institutions, including the OSCE PA.