



Delegation of Canada
to the OSCE

Délégation du Canada
auprès de l'OSCE

**DELEGATION OF CANADA TO THE OSCE
STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JOCELYN KINNEAR
ON ADDRESSING RACISM, XENOPHOBIA, INTOLERANCE, AND DISCRIMINATION
IN THE POST-PANDEMIC RECOVERY
APRIL 22, 2021
1310th MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

Thank you Mister Chairperson. I am delivering this statement on behalf of Andorra, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Mongolia, Norway, San Marino, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada.

Mister Chairperson,

We have raised this agenda item because we believe that it is an opportune time to highlight this issue at the Permanent Council. Following this week's Human Dimension Committee meeting that addressed the impact of participating States' emergency measures on vulnerable groups, as well as last week's address by Director Mecacci, we have all seen compelling testimony and data on the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the most vulnerable and marginalized in our countries. As has been said before, the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the existing inequities and discrimination in all of our societies, and has compounded the social, health, and economic challenges facing vulnerable and marginalized groups. In some parts of the OSCE region the pandemic has led to manifestations of antisemitism, anti-Muslim discrimination, or anti-Roma discrimination, while in other parts it has propelled anti-Asian hate and discrimination. Elsewhere migrants or refugees are scapegoated, and persons with disabilities are denied medical care and are unable to obtain lifesaving information due to inaccessible forms of communication. Ultimately, it has targeted those who are not part of the majority. The crisis has been a stark reminder that racism and systemic discrimination disrupt lives, undermine people's health and wellbeing, and are major drivers of inequality.

Before the pandemic far too many people throughout the OSCE region faced discrimination, hate, and human rights violations simply because of the colour of their skin, their ethnic background, their sexual orientation or gender identity, their disability, or their religion or belief. The pandemic has only made this situation worse. But as we move towards an end to this pandemic, an opportunity exists to address these longstanding injustices. It is incumbent on all our states to ensure that we do not return to the status quo ante; that we do not allow existing discrimination and inequality to persist. It is in our interest, both individually and collective, that we ensure an inclusive recovery, that respects the human rights and dignity of all.

To this end, it is critical that all participating States take steps and measures to address the complex and longstanding issues that drive inequality in all of our societies. We must prioritize these issues in the recovery and in our planning, and continue this conversation over the course of what could be a long recovery. We must ensure that the recovery is inclusive, and that we do not let slip away this opportunity to correct inequities as we shape our post-pandemic future. By working together,

and with the OSCE institutions and Field Missions, we can make the OSCE region fairer and more inclusive as we emerge from the pandemic.

Thank you.