



Combating anti-Semitism High-level round table on 10 November 2008 in Vienna

VIENNA, 10 November 2008

In the night of 9th to 10th November 1938 pogroms were carried out by the Nazi regime with popular support all over the territories of then Nazi Germany. Almost a hundred Jews were killed, roughly 30.000 Jews were deported to concentration camps and countless synagogues were burnt or destroyed all over today's Germany and Austria.

In order to commemorate these events, a high-level round table entitled “**Lessons learned? Holocaust remembrance and combating anti-Semitism in 2008**” was held in the Vienna Hofburg on 10 November 2008. Upon invitation of the Austrian Chairmanship of the International Holocaust Task Force (ITF) and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights representatives of various International Organisations introduced their activities in the field of Holocaust Remembrance and the fight against Antisemitism.

Professor Yehuda Bauer, Honorary Chairman of the ITF, opened the event with an impressive [keynote speech](#) on the historical background of the November pogroms. He concluded: “There are repetitions that hark back to the genocide of the Jews. The Shoah was unprecedented. But it was a precedent, and that precedent is being followed. We should do everything we can to stop that”

Further statements were given by:

- [Ambassador Ferdinand Trauttmansdorff](#), Austrian Chair of the Holocaust Task Force
- [Ambassador Janez Lenarčič](#), Director of the OSCE/ODIHR
- [The Right Hon Terry Davis](#), Secretary General of the Council of Europe
- [Morten Kjærum](#), Director of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency
- [Maher Nasser on behalf of Prof. Francis Deng](#), UN Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide
- [Marcello Scarone Azzi](#), Programme Specialist, Division of Human Rights, Human Security and Philosophy, UNESCO.

This round table was regarded as very helpful, as it brought together, for the first time, high level representatives of these organizations to exchange information but also to express their commitment to enter into closer cooperation in this field.

As a first step a letter of intent was signed by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, the Right Hon. Terry Davies and the Chair of ITF. The letter and the following Memorandum of Understanding shall ensure close co-operation between the two international institutions on the issues of Holocaust remembrance and fighting Anti-Semitism, xenophobia and extremism and on ensuring human rights.