

Press Release

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Council of Europe Secretary General Terry Davis speaks at the Durban review Conference in Geneva

Excerpts from the speech

Geneva, 22.04.2009 - "In the fight against racism, xenophobia, discrimination and related intolerance, there are no easy fixes and no quick wins. It would be naïve to expect that our efforts will succeed in putting a quick and irreversible end to prejudice and hate. But through what we do, we can and we must make a difference! And this must be the yardstick to measure the success of the process launched at the World Conference against Racism in Durban.

I should like to recall the mission of the Durban Conference – and this Review Conference – which is to fight against racism everywhere in the world. Racism is more than intolerance and discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin. Discrimination is equally unjust when it targets people because of their religious belief, their nationality, their gender or their sexual orientation.

The terrible crimes of the Holocaust which happened only a lifetime ago are reason enough for Europeans to avoid any holier-than-thou attitudes. But I also want to make it absolutely clear that Europe will not keep quiet if anyone anywhere preaches intolerance and hate or rejects the lessons we have learned from our own painful past. There is nothing ambiguous or dubious about the Holocaust. And we will speak out whenever we hear anyone deny the fact that millions of Jews, Roma, homosexuals and people with disabilities were murdered in the death camps. We will speak out because we have learned the hard way that the only effective way to make sure that such horrors never happen again is to insist on unconditional respect for the human dignity and the human rights of everyone, by everyone, everywhere and at all times. "

[Integral version of the speech](#)

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