

**OSCE/ODIHR Roundtable on Combating Extremism  
1-2 July 2004**

**Closing speech by Ambassador Ivar Vikki  
Head of OSCE Centre in Almaty**

Mr. Chairman, dear participants,

It is a great honour to close this very productive and important *Roundtable on Combating Extremism*.

I would like to again thank the Kazakhstani authorities for their excellent assistance and co-operation in hosting such event, first in the series of meetings across Central Asia.

I would like to recall Article 14 of the 1999 Istanbul Summit Declaration, in which OSCE participating States shared concerns expressed by the Central Asian participating States “regarding international terrorism, violent extremism, organized crime and drug and arms trafficking” in which the participating States agreed “that national, regional and joint action by the international community is necessary to cope with these threats.”

OSCE devotes great attention to the development of anti-extremism and anti-terrorism measures and preservation of peace and stability in the Central Asian region, as well as in other OSCE participating States.

Extremism ideas can be found in any society, especially if there are unresolved social and economic hardships, political instability or ethnic tension. As it has been pointed out by many speakers, democratic states face a challenging dilemma: on the one hand, how to protect society from the threat of extremism, and – on the other - to ensure human rights and personal freedoms.

Necessary progress in this difficult and complex process to come to grips with extremism, should therefore be followed up by an increase in our efforts based on co-operation and common commitments. I would like to emphasize that strengthening the rule of law, the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as the development of civil societies, constitute the basis of OSCE commitments.

I therefore do hope that the discussions yesterday and today will not be a one-time event and that they indeed will have contributed to fruitful co-operation and a start up of a necessary dialogue and sharing experience in combating extremism.

Finally, I would like to thank our hosts and guests once again for the opportunity to be here with you today – albeit briefly - and I wish you all a success in your further activities.