



Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 22 September to 3 October 2014

Working session 1: **Democratic institutions**

Warsaw, 22 September 2014

Declaration of Switzerland

Madam Moderator,

This year, the OSCE has proven once more how relevant its support to participating States to effectively implement their commitments is. This support strengthens democracy in the OSCE region, which in turn contributes to stability and conflict resolution.

Often the work of ODIHR, such as support to legal reform, recommendations of election observation missions, as well as the daily support offered by OSCE field missions are complementary. In Kosovo the OSCE field Mission promoted the integration of the various communities and supported the wider democratic process. OMIK facilitated the conduct of the municipal elections in 2013 and of the early parliamentary elections in 2014. These elections were held for the first time on the entire territory of Kosovo, thereby contributing to the integration of the north of Kosovo into Kosovo's overall legal structure.

Madam Moderator,

We commend ODIHR for the election observation missions which they have already carried out in 2014 and praise its professionalism, its sound methodology and credibility. Switzerland supports ODIHR in these endeavours, including by contributing to the Election Observers Training Programme. In May, ODIHR deployed the largest observation mission ever - to Ukraine. In this challenging environment, also marked by the severe budget constraints of ODIHR, we welcome the observation of the upcoming early parliamentary elections and will support the ODIHR in this respect.

Switzerland notes with satisfaction the positive trend towards more systematic follow-up to the recommendations of the ODIHR electoral observation missions. Still, there is room for further improvement of the follow-up process. The Human Dimension Committee offers an excellent opportunity for voluntary reporting by participating States, an opportunity not yet taken up by all participating States. Additionally, ODIHR is ready to support electoral authorities with follow-up missions. Quite some potential lies also in better coordinating reform processes with other international institutions such as the Council of Europe. Switzerland is working towards addressing ODIHR recommendations issued following its last elections. Our national electoral authority has already adapted practices where possible. Legal reforms have also been undertaken, in particular on e-voting. Responses to the remaining recommendations are being discussed at various level of our government.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.