

Remarks by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, First Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia H.E. Mr. Ivica Dačić
at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting,
Warsaw, 21 September 2015

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentleman,

Distinguished participants,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you on behalf of the Serbia's
Chairmanship of the OSCE to the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting.

At the outset I would like to express my sincere gratitude to polish
authorities as well as Director Link and his team at ODIHR for organizing this
most important annual meeting within human dimension.

I would also like to welcome representatives of the OSCE participating
States, Partners for cooperation, international organizations, civil society and
academia.

As one of the largest annual human rights forums, Human Dimension
Implementation Meeting is an excellent opportunity to review the
implementation of commitments and exchange views on numerous issues in the
area of human rights. At the same time, it is an important occasion to discuss
emerging challenges that we are facing currently. And challenges are many.

As we all know, Serbia took over OSCE Chairmanship in extremely
difficult moment for the whole OSCE area. Situation in and around Ukraine
continues to pose a serious threat to European security. Throughout the year the

Chairmanship, and the Organization as a whole, continued to do its utmost to support implementation of the Minsk agreements and to ensure the cessation of hostilities and to bring political process on track. These efforts included also engagement aimed at emphasizing the importance of upholding the OSCE human rights commitments. We also opened a debate on how to address the structural damage caused by the crisis in and around Ukraine to the European security system, at the core of which our Organization is embodied. We hope that by the Belgrade Ministerial Council in December we will have a clearer picture how to proceed in rebuilding trust within the OSCE and reaffirm its basic principles. Report of the Panel of Eminent Persons that was established by the Swiss Chairmanship last year will help us in that regard, we believe.

Speaking of challenges, in Europe these days we are witnessing increasing and extremely serious migrant crises. In the time when thousands of people are risking their lives leaving the countries affected by conflicts in the OSCE neighborhood, we must not forget the human rights and humanitarian aspects of the migrant crisis. The response in that sense so far has been less than adequate, to say the least. Building fences, closing borders, using excessive force against people who are fleeing from devastating conflicts is not a response in line with human rights commitments participating States of this Organization undertook to respect, nor other international human rights norms and standards. We have to therefore, stand for respecting human rights for all, especially having in mind that in the times of conflicts and crisis the fundamental human rights are the ones most affected.

The Republic of Serbia is among the countries affected by the huge wave of migrants coming from war-torn areas. We have put all our efforts to respond adequately to the current crisis.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year we are marking 40 anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. This was the first time that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms were included in a regional security agreement. Not as an annex, but on par with politico-military considerations. The Helsinki Final Act also established that citizens had the right to know and act upon their rights. It provided a major starting point for the development of civic and civil society engagement throughout the OSCE area.

Contributions given by civil society organizations remain highly important in enhancing human rights protection. I expect this year's Human Dimension Implementation meeting will provide us a good basis for fruitful discussion among participating States and with civil society on our common challenging agenda.

As recognized in Astana Declaration civil society organizations have over the past four decades played an invaluable and indispensable role in monitoring governments' respect of their commitments, for the benefit and security of all. Nowhere is this more visible than at HDIM.

The role of the civil society remains high on the agenda during our two Swiss and Serbian consecutive Chairmanships. For example, both countries carried out self-evaluation of the implementation of their OSCE commitments in cooperation with civil society. Therefore, I would like to use this opportunity to personally thank all of you here for your tireless efforts and contributions.

Ladies and gentlemen,

During our Chairmanship of the OSCE, Serbia has been devoted to further updating and strengthening the implementation of OSCE commitments in all three dimensions. In the third dimension we have paid special attention to

the rule of law, national human rights institutions, freedom of expression and freedom of the media, including safety of journalist, freedom of religion or belief, freedom of assembly and association, protection of rights of persons belonging to national minorities and promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination.

Serbia's Chairmanship started preparing deliverables for the Belgrade Ministerial Council earlier than usually, in order to have enough time for inclusive and constructive debate among delegations. With this respect, I would like to encourage delegations to engage in that discussion in a constructive manner, underlying that our main goal should be adoption of substantive documents rather than the big number of decisions just reconfirming existing commitments. Your contributions and concrete recommendations will be valuable for our future steps towards Ministerial Council, to be held in Belgrade on 3-4 December.

Before concluding, I would like to underline important role of the OSCE institutions, especially having in mind that only strong and professional institutions with adequate financial and human resources are able to assist participating States in implementing their OSCE commitments. Therefore, we have to create necessary conditions for fulfillment of their respective mandates.

At the very end, let me thank once again to the distinguished representatives of the OSCE Institutions and Executive Structures for their support and fruitful cooperation.

Thank you.