

**Address by H.E. Dr. Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz
Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Poland
at the Opening Session
of the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
(Warsaw, October 4th, 2004)**

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to be here with you. I wish to thank Ambassador Strohal and his staff for their consistent work over the last year, and for organization of this meeting. It is due to your efforts that the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, here, in Warsaw, has become important and permanent event in the calendar of the OSCE.

I do believe that ten days of discussions on how we fulfil our commitments and how our record in this respect can be improved should help us in defining concrete areas for further actions of our community. This meeting also offers excellent opportunity to reaffirm our commitments to the principles of liberty, democracy and rule of law, as cornerstone of human dimension remaining at the very heart of the OSCE's activities.

Terrorism, all forms of illegal trafficking, corruption, different manifestations of intolerance – the list of challenges and threats we face today has become long indeed. However, effective action against these threats, in particular terrorism, cannot be conducted at the expense of human rights. The OSCE *acquis* in the human dimension cannot be questioned, and commitments we all subscribed to, have to be fully implemented.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Unfortunately, every day we see aggression and violence in various places of the world, we see victims of ethnic, religious or political conflicts. In many cases at the roots of such conflicts we find unjustified fears, ignorance, and lack of confidence between and among different groups. That is why the promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination is so important, and we find it most appropriate that this issue has become a priority for the OSCE. In my opinion we have already achieved one objective – the general public awareness of threats, which anti-Semitism and other forms of discrimination and intolerance pose to our societies is much higher today than it was before.

My country has been very active in the field of promoting tolerance. Poland participates in the Task Force for International Co-operation and Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research where we will take over the Chairmanship in 2005. This year my government, as a follow up to previous commitments, especially those resulting from deliverables of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in Durban in 2001, has adopted a *National Program for Countering Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance*. Poland has also actively supported the OSCE efforts in this field, in particular preparations to this year conferences in Berlin, Paris and Brussels. We look forward to the discussion on the most effective follow-up to these conferences.

In such discussion proper attention has to be given to the expertise already developed by various institutions and organisations. It is always worth repeating that we do not want competition among them or duplication of their efforts, but aim at complementarity and cooperation.

With this in mind allow me to draw your attention to the fact that next year we will be celebrating 30th Anniversary of Helsinki Final Act. The importance of commitments enshrined in Final Act, especially those related to human dimension, in bringing to the end the Cold War, cannot be overestimated. Also next year, a Third Council of Europe Summit will be held in Warsaw. In addition to that, ODIHR, the

primary OSCE human dimension institution is also located here. It may be pure coincidence, but, in my view, a very fortunate one.

Circumstances offer us sometimes irrepressible opportunities, which should not be missed. Next year we will be offered a chance to start the process of re-evaluating and raising to the qualitatively new level relations and cooperation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe. It would require from us political will and creativity to prepare, adopt and implement necessary decisions. I also trust that the discussions of the forum we open-up today will be conducive to this end.

I wish you fruitful debates and pleasant stay in Warsaw.