

14th HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING

28 September – 9 October 2009

Warsaw



Closing remarks by

Ambassador Janez Lenarčič

Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Some of you have now spent two full weeks within and around the Warsaw Sofitel Victoria. I think that I speak for most of us when I note three points.

First, this HDIM provided again – now for the 14th time - a good forum for exchanging views. We had a densely packed programme with 17 working session on continuously relevant topics, including special focus days. We also had a record 50+ side events. I am convinced that with these two weeks behind us, we have gained a better understanding of the degree of compliance with our human dimension commitments, and some clear and useful suggestions about the way forward.

Second, from my experiences over the past two weeks, from the many encounters I have had with delegates and representatives of civil society, I can see why the HDIM remains an important tool for building trust and as a laboratory for new initiatives.

Third, let me note that your presence here in such big numbers showed the interest that you afford to the topics. This in itself is evidence of the importance of the issues covered by the wealth of human dimension commitments. In this context, I would like to recognize the strong presence of civil society actors, who we all need to engage in a way that they can participate in developing government policy, and specifically in the areas most relevant to the OSCE's human dimension: the full respect for fundamental human rights, including the freedom of assembly, freedom of association, freedom of expression and, of course, a free media.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

In my opening remarks I expressed regret at the fact that we still don't seem to have overcome the charges of 'double standards' in the OSCE. This Meeting has, I believe, confirmed that there is only one standard, and one goal in the OSCE's human dimension – building security and stability based on common commitments to respect human rights and democratic principles. Our commitments are the normative baseline around which we have built values and a sense of ownership in our region. They continue to stand firm. Less firm is the political will to implement them, which is the basis for the OSCE's understanding of accountability of individual

States – to their citizens and to other OSCE States, laid down in the Moscow Document of 1991.

It is indeed worth reminding ourselves that, since 1991, raising human rights concerns in the OSCE context is the legitimate prerogative of all States and should not be construed as interference in that country's internal affairs. In short, it is our common responsibility to raise such concerns as they arise.

A last word. A lively debate has started about a new European security architecture within what has become known as the 'Corfu process'. I welcome this dialogue, and I am encouraged by the broad consensus that exists about the importance of human rights and democracy standards remaining an essential element of what we in the OSCE are proud to call our comprehensive concept of security. The Corfu process, in my view, is a welcome opportunity to enter a next stage by which we build an understanding around the importance of the human dimension in the wider security architecture and think about how the implementation of human rights and democracy commitments could be effectively advanced.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In closing, I would like to express my gratitude to the Greek Chairmanship for their strong support not only in organizing this meeting, but also more generally the work of ODIHR. As we all know, we now have a new Chairman-in-Office and I wish us all a successful voyage to the Athens Ministerial Council.

And I want to thank all of you who have contributed with your presentations, statements and ideas to the success of this meeting. We are also very grateful to our Polish hosts for their hospitality during these two weeks, and for their commitment to host ODIHR here in Warsaw, also in the future.

A big thank you goes to my colleagues at ODIHR, for having made this meeting possible. We appreciate a lot the excellent work done by our note-takers and rapporteurs, who gave us a very good overview of the issues that were raised and the recommendations that were made during this meeting.

I look forward to working with you all, as we at ODIHR move ahead in developing our programmes and implementing them together with you. I wish you a safe journey back home and look forward to welcoming you again next year.