

**Address by**  
**Ms. Krystyna Żurek, Director of the Department of the United Nations**  
**and Human Rights,**  
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**at the Opening Session**  
**of the OSCE Human Dimension Seminar**  
**IMPROVING OSCE EFFECTIVENESS BY ENHANCING**  
**ITS CO-OPERATION WITH RELEVANT REGIONAL AND**  
**INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**  
**(Warsaw, May 12, 2014)**

*Mr. Chairman,*  
*Your Excellencies,*  
*Ladies and Gentleman,*

I would like to welcome you all to another Human Dimension Seminar in Warsaw. I am in particular happy to welcome distinguished speakers, who will offer key-note addresses this morning. I would also like to welcome ambassador Thomas Greminger, representing the Swiss Chairmanship in the Organisation. Let me thank the Chairmanship for energetic and successful leadership over the Organisation's work at this extremely difficult time.

Facing the current crisis in Ukraine, the OSCE responded very actively and with courage by monitoring the situation on-site, easing tension and seeking ways out of the crisis. The way our Organisation reacts proves the usefulness of the instruments and mechanisms at our disposal, ranging from confidence and security building measures to human dimension tools. I am deeply convinced that we ought to maintain these instruments and continue our engagement in Ukraine.

I would like to thank the Chairmanship for selecting the issue of cooperation between international organisations to promote and strengthen the protection of human rights as the theme of this year's seminar. We appreciate the significance of the theme, as well as its cross-sectional nature. Strengthening cooperation between international actors in the specified areas is crucial. It is necessary for the organisations to exchange experiences, best practices, information on assumed obligations, implemented projects, and to undertake joint initiatives. Effective coordination requires time and efforts but at the end of the day it always pays off.

It is common belief that international organisations should avoid duplication of actions and it is hard not to agree with this statement. However, the issue should be approached with some caution, since it is always better if tasks and areas of interest of different organisations overlap, than if the international community shows lack of interest in a given issue. When one

organisation is not able to meet the expectations and tasks set for it, another one can take its place and fill the gap. Thus in that sense overlapping of competences of international organisations is, to some extent, justified. First of all however, we should always aim at effective coordination and cohesion.

Appreciating the role and significance of the “classical” international organisations acting in the field of human rights and democratisation, we are deeply convinced that it is also important to launch and develop mechanisms and instruments that are less formalised, but sometimes more operational and effective. Thus Poland continues to promote such instruments as the Community of Democracies or the European Endowment for Democracy assuming that their flexibility allows them to act as complementary elements to actions of other international organisations.

2014 marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of democratic transition in Poland and in our region. It will be an excellent opportunity not only to look back at our achievements, but also to express support for those who still struggle to defend democracy and civil freedoms. It is in this purpose that the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland established in January 2014 the Solidarity Prize - the first worldwide award dedicated to support democracy and freedom around the world. As you may know, last week Minister Sikorski announced that the award will be given to brave leader of Crimean Tatars, Mustafa Dzhemilev. The award ceremony which will take place on 3 June this year, in the presence of many distinguished guests, will provide another opportunity to remind of the significance of democratic change for socio-economic development and building trust in international relations. Let me also mention another Polish initiative - the Warsaw Dialogue for Democracy. The third edition of Dialog is scheduled for the second half of October this year. It will mainly cover the issues pertaining to civil society and the problem of shrinking room for action of the non-governmental organisations in many countries, including OSCE countries.

In the end, I ought to thank, as usual, ODIHR for its involvement in the preparations to the Seminar, which this year were particularly difficult given the late adoption of the meeting agenda. Let me especially thank Ambassador Lenarčič for whom, as it would appear, this is the last Warsaw Human Dimension Seminar in which he participates as the Director of ODIHR. His devotion, professionalism and impartiality during six years of chairing the works of the Office deserve the highest recognition.

I wish you all fruitful debate.

Thank you for your attention.