



Vienna, 22 September 2014

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**National statement by Sweden as delivered by Ambassador Fredrik
Löjdquist to the 2014 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting,
Warsaw 22 September 2014**

**Democratic Institutions and welcoming new Director of ODIHR,
Michael Georg Link**

While aligning with the EU statement, let me, in my national capacity, take this opportunity to personally and on behalf of my government warmly welcome you, Michael (Link), to the OSCE family and to thank you for having the courage to take on the job as ODIHR director and for having the integrity to do it well.

A couple of words on ODIHR's role when it comes to democratic institutions.

This HDIM is taking place at the perhaps most challenging time in the history of our organization. The Russian aggression against Ukraine is not only a punch in the face of the people of Ukraine, their dignity and aspirations, the territorial integrity and sovereignty of their country, but also an attempt to undermine our security community, built on the basis of shared, commonly agreed, principles and values.

We can also observe how increasing internal repression and external aggression go hand in hand. This is the exact opposite of the concept of comprehensive and co-operative security.

We have all committed to these democratic principles, and we have all agreed that we do not only have a right to hold each other accountable for violations and shortcomings, but that we have an obligation to do so. At these challenging times, the need to uphold, defend and protect our common OSCE principles and commitments, is more urgent than ever.

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The fact that these principles and commitments are violated is not an argument for changing them, or watering them down, it just underlines the need to uphold them firmly. And that is done also by pointing out when they have been violated.

In this ODIHR plays a central role. Be it as a guardian of a methodology that guarantees unbiased and professional election observation, continuously reminding us to protect those defending our human rights, or to work to strengthen rule of law and improve freedom of assembly and association, we count on, and trust your engagement as director of this autonomous institution to continue to fulfill the mandate given to ODIHR by the pS, even when wind turns to storm.

Respect for human rights, democracy, freedom, rule of law on the one hand and security and stability on the other hand are intrinsically interlinked in the comprehensive concept of security, which is the unique value of the OSCE. The respect of fundamental rights and freedoms, democracy and rule of law is **a precondition** for security and stability, and not a threat as is sometimes argued. This is recognized in the OSCE principles.

Sweden will continue to strongly support and defend ODIHR, as well as the values, principles and commitments that lie in its foundation. It is ultimately the European security order as we know it that is at stake. No less.

I look forward to frank and fruitful discussions.

Thank you!