

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2017

Opening statement by Mr. Witold Waszczykowski Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland (Warsaw, September 11, 2017)

Mr. Secretary General,

Mr. Secretary-General for Foreign Affairs,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

I am delighted to welcome you to the annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) in Warsaw. This year, for the first time we gather in a new venue – the Stadium PGE Narodowy's Conference Centre. This place is very successful, not only as a venue for sport events, but also it was very successful for NATO summit last year, and I'm sure that it will bring luck also to HDIM.

This year's edition of the HDIM is also special for another reason – we have with us the newly appointed Secretary General of the OSCE and Heads of all its institutions. Therefore, first of all let me welcome warmly the new Secretary General Mr. Thomas Greminger, the High Commissioner on National Minorities Mr. Lamberto Zannier, and the Representative on Freedom of the Media Mr. Harlem Désir.

As the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the host country of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), I would like to kindly greet Madame Gísladóttir, the new Director of ODIHR. Madame Director, welcome to Warsaw! I wish you every success in fulfilling the tasks ahead of you. I am convinced that under your leadership the Office will maintain the high level of competence and independence while at the same time effectively advancing the cause of human rights.

Let me also commend the Austrian Chairmanship and especially the leadership of Minister Sebastian Kurz, unfortunately not present today, who demonstrated his valuable abilities

and firm commitment during a series of difficult negotiations at this crucial time for the Organization.

Last, but not least, I would like to welcome all representatives of the OSCE's Parliamentary Assembly, and in particular its Vice-President Ms. Marietta Tidei.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We gathered here today against the backdrop of a serious security risk in the OSCE area. I am glad to say, however, that the Organization proved to become an indispensable actor in the field of crisis management, in particular with regard to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

Yet, we all have to acknowledge that in the current unstable security scenario there is no space for being complacent. First of all, we need to make better use of the existing instruments aimed at rebuilding trust and confidence. Poland will continue its efforts to modernize the existing Vienna Document. We are particularly committed to improving risk reduction mechanisms, including those concerning dangerous military incidents.

Speaking about the OSCE itself, it is worth underlying, once again, that the Organization provides a truly unique platform for building comprehensive security, especially because all its dimensions are interdependent and interrelated. Speaking about the human dimension, we do not omit the critically important political-military context and, at the same time, considering the political issues, we do not forget about the respect for human rights and democratic values. These rights and values, which are often put in jeopardy during crisis situations, constitute an inseparable part of every far-reaching solution.

We recognize the *Structured Dialogue on the current and future challenges and risks to security*, launched after the Hamburg Ministerial, as a serious and important exercise. While not prejudging its outcomes, we think that this process offers a chance to improve our mutual understanding. Should the Structured Dialogue be conducted properly

and all participating States engage seriously, it might facilitate bringing the OSCE back on track.

Similarly, we consider this very conference – the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting – to be an important tool which can not only help us return to the full respect of the OSCE's commitments through constructive dialogue and trust, but also supersede the attitude of aggressive confrontation which we have witnessed on several occasions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank Director Gísladóttir and her team for their effective co-operation and for organizing this conference. The HDIM is the largest and most ambitious platform for dialogue on human rights issues across the OSCE region, allowing governments and civil society to take stock of the situation in the OSCE area and to discuss openly potential ways of advancing the implementation of our commitments.

Poland highly values the work of ODIHR and its crucial role in building public confidence in the governance processes, thus strengthening democratic societies and accountable institutions across the OSCE area, particularly through its electoral assistance.

Last year, we jointly celebrated 25 years of the establishment of ODIHR in Warsaw and we look forward to many more years of good cooperation. In this context, I am pleased to announce that we have recently signed the host country agreement, which consolidates the OSCE's, and thereby ODIHR's legal status in Poland.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I hope that this edition of the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting gives us all the opportunity to join constructive and substantive discussions focused on concrete human rights issues.

Expecting that during the 2017 Ministerial Council we will make progress in the third dimension, I also hope that this year's HDIM discussions will bring us closer to reaching an agreement on the major goals we wish to achieve this year.

Thank you for your attention. And I hope you will have very successful discussions at this new venue and also very pleasant stay in Warsaw.