

Address

ENGLISH only

by Ms Grażyna Bernatowicz

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of the Republic of Poland

Opening Session of the OSCE Review Conference (Human  
Dimension Segment)

(Warsaw, 30 September 2010)

Mister Chairman,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Radosław Sikorski, I am pleased to welcome you to the Human Dimension Segment of the Review Conference.

I also extend warm greetings to Minister Konstantin Žigałow, representing the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, to the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Mr. Petros Efthymiou and distinguished heads of OSCE institutions and committees.

At this point I wish to commend the Kazakh Presidency of the OSCE for its commitment to the efficient functioning of the Organization, both as regards its ongoing activity and long-term challenges.

This time of the year is traditionally devoted by the OSCE to a review of our achievements within the human dimension. There is no need to argue that the Review Conference of the Human Dimension Segment is a crucial component of the OSCE agenda.

Thus, it is natural that Poland is proud to host the event. This year, in view of the approaching Astana Summit, our Warsaw meeting has a somewhat different formula and exceptional character: it is the inaugural part of the Review Conference, preceding the political summit. The conference will be continued in Vienna and later in Astana, in the immediate run-up to the summit. Furthermore, I am sure our discussions will be stimulated also by two important anniversaries being marked this year: the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Copenhagen meeting, which resulted in the adoption of ground-breaking commitments in the sphere of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

I trust that the Astana summit will be a milestone in the process of restoring mutual confidence between states, consolidating the Organization's credibility and energizing its operations. But for that to happen we need to conduct a thorough review of the fulfillment of commitments and the functioning of the OSCE. On that basis the participating states should affirm their readiness to be more effective in implementing their commitments, to be open to collaboration and dialog in seeking new solutions and to draft a long-term agenda. In no area of OSCE activities are these objectives more urgent than in the human dimension.

Mister Chairman,

Due to the changed character of the meeting and its shorter duration, our task is more difficult this time. On the one hand, our discussions and analyses of the fulfillment of human rights commitments should produce conclusions and proposals useful in the preparation of the December summit. We should seek ways of enhancing the implementation of commitments and identifying the areas where practice is not congruent with declarations. The Astana summit won't be a success if concrete solutions on strengthening the fulfillment of third-basket goals and a robust political declaration by heads of state are not prominent among its results. To achieve that we should tap the numerous proposals made in recent months at OSCE forums, especially within the Corfu process. Special attention is due to better implementation of commitments, the mechanisms of their review and improved effectiveness of human-dimension meetings and conferences, including the utilization of their conclusions.

The situation of the media and human rights defenders remains another constant concern.

On the other hand, we must also remember the importance of the periodic review of the implementation of commitments over the past year. That component of our meeting should retain its due place. We also need to make optimum use of the broad presence of NGOs and other civil society representatives at our gathering. The voice of the NGOs should be clearly audible since they often have the best knowledge about the human rights situation in a given country, the experience needed for its accurate interpretation and credibility built over years of challenging activity. The presence of civil society representatives turns the annual meetings in Warsaw into an exceptional event, helping our discussions to be more concrete and closer to the true problems of the citizens.

Mister Chairman,

In conclusion I'd like to address some warm words to the Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Ambassador Janez Lenarcic, and his dedicated staff. As a representative of the authorities of the host country, I want to say how pleased I am with our relations with the Office. Financial and administrative backing of my ministry for the new ODIHR premises is a decent prove of our appreciation for its activity. The Office is highly professional and impartial in helping states fulfill their human dimension commitments, in promoting democracy, the rule of law, tolerance and non-discrimination and in building mutual confidence between states and societies. It also makes a crucial contribution to consolidating stability and preventing conflicts. Thus, I hope that the Astana summit decides to upgrade the cooperation of the participating states with the ODIHR (and other OSCE institutions) and to make better use of the Office's achievements.

Thank you, Mister Chairman.