

Closing statement
by Ambassador Ihor Prokopchuk,
Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council at the
Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
(04 October, Warsaw)

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 2013 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting is coming to an end. In the course of the last two weeks we have all been part to open and dynamic debates, both during plenary sessions as well as during various side events, devoted to the review of implementation of OSCE human dimension commitments by all participating States.

I am confident of the continuous significant benefit of constructive dialogue in the OSCE, in the Helsinki spirit of co-operation, for strengthening our security and implementation of the extensive acquis of commitments, in particular in the human dimension.

This year's HDIM has been unprecedented in terms of registered number of participants and the number of side events organized with active involvement of the civil society representatives. This bears testimony to the important role they play in our efforts to promote democracy and human rights across the OSCE space.

Throughout the year the Ukrainian Chairmanship has been supportive of engagement with the civil society in achieving the goals of this Organisation. The broad participation of non-governmental organizations in human dimension meetings is an accomplishment for which the OSCE could be proud of.

The discussions at this year's HDIM once more testified that the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting offers us an excellent platform to affirm our dedication to the principles of democracy, observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, just as to review implementation of our commitments, identify shortcomings and share best national practices in addressing them. The implementation review is reinforced by HDIM's important feature of bringing together government and civil society representatives around the same table, on an equal footing, to discuss human rights issues.

Distinguished participants,

Democracy is not static, it is a living process. The OSCE has come a long way since *the Charter of Paris in 1990* heralded a new era of democracy, peace and unity. We may not have fully achieved yet what we expected, but since then immense progress has been made in strengthening pluralism, transparency and accountability throughout the region.

As it was stated in this hall during the discussions, no one comes perfect to this table. However, it is important that what we come with are our common commitments, which our countries have voluntarily undertaken, acknowledgement of the core role of security of an individual for security of the state and readiness to engage in dialogue and continuously improve on implementation. Notably, many of the interventions from participating States contained update on progress achieved in different areas since the last year's HDIM.

At the same time more efforts are needed to improve responses to existing as well as to emerging challenges in the human dimension in the OSCE region.

Let me highlight a few specific areas, based on our discussions over the last two weeks and which directly relate to the Ukrainian Chairmanship priorities.

Our debate at this year's HDIM testified yet again that *media freedom, including protection of journalists, faces challenges and thus should continue to be placed high on the agenda of the Organization.*

We recognize the fundamental importance of freedom of expression, including the principles of diversity and pluralism, as a core element of democracy and an essential tool for the protection of all other rights.

Despite significant development in recent years of international standards regarding the promotion and protection of freedom of expression by international bodies and civil society actors, *a number of gaps still exist in giving full effect to the right to freedom of expression.*

Trafficking in human beings remains a complex human rights issue and a serious challenge that cuts across the entire spectrum of the OSCE's comprehensive security concept.

While the OSCE participating States have made important steps in combating this global criminal phenomenon since the adoption of the OSCE Action Plan in 2003, *more focused and coordinated efforts are needed at the national and OSCE level to strengthen effectiveness of our response to the plague of human trafficking in the OSCE region.*

The OSCE's work on tolerance and non-discrimination requires constant attention. In the course of the working sessions we heard from

speakers, delegates and from civil society representatives that manifestations of intolerance do not only occur across the OSCE region but in some respects are on the rise. They range from institutional discrimination, spreading of stereotype or prejudice, to hate-motivated incidents and crimes. It has again become clear that intolerance and discrimination are phenomena that directly undermine human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In this regard let me emphasize that education, including *human rights youth education*, plays an essential role in promoting tolerance, mutual respect and understanding.

Discussions at the HDIM also made clear the need for improvement of implementation of commitments *in the areas of freedom of association and assembly, protection of national minorities, including Roma and Sinti, ensuring rule of law in the promotion and protection of human rights, the conduct of democratic elections*. Attention was drawn to the areas where the participating States need to close the implementation gap with a view to observing the OSCE commitments.

The HDIM reaffirmed its role of an essential component of the OSCE peer review system. This meeting is not just about identifying shortcomings in the implementation of commitments, but also about identifying solutions and strategies to move forward.

During the discussions at this year's HDIM we have recorded a variety of recommendations addressed to the participating States and OSCE institutions.

Our fruitful discussions need to be reinforced by genuine follow-up efforts by the participating States, taking advantage, where appropriate, of the expertise offered by the OSCE institutions and field missions.

The only way to make tangible progress in the human dimension is to take concrete steps aimed at improving implementation of the commitments.

Dear colleagues,

Over the past few years the OSCE participating States have expressed their interest in improving the modalities of the human dimension events aimed at making them more attractive, effective and focused.

I would like to reiterate the Ukrainian OSCE Chairmanship's firm objective to enhance the effectiveness of the human dimension events. In this regard the Chairmanship resumed the activity of the Informal Working Group on the Review of Human Dimension Events. We have proposed to

proceed with a step-by-step approach and hope that a number of improvements could be agreed upon before the end of this year.

A comprehensive dialogue on human dimension review process can lead to solutions that foster participating States' engagement in the OSCE activities and events in the human dimension.

Ladies and gentlemen,

During the debate many participants referred to the 65th anniversary of the *UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which serves as the cornerstone of all international human rights obligations.

As the OSCE participating States reiterated in *Astana in 2010*, the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms is our first responsibility, and the implementation of human dimension commitments is of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States.

The Ukrainian Chairmanship remains convinced that to advance further in strengthening comprehensive security in the OSCE space there needs to be continuous progress in the human dimension.

Therefore I submit to you that it is high time to reaffirm our commitment to the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, as agreed upon by our leaders in Astana.

Looking ahead to the Kyiv Ministerial Council meeting the Chairmanship hopes that through dialogue in a co-operative and constructive spirit we will be in the position to further enhance confidence among each other and *produce concrete deliverables in the human dimension this year*. We do hope that such joint effort will be facilitated by early preparation and distribution this year of the Chairmanship's proposals on draft decisions.

Dear delegates,

I would like to conclude by expressing the Chairmanship's deep appreciation to Ambassador Janez Lenarčič and his team for the excellent preparation of HDIM, and all those who contributed to the effective conduct of the meeting, including key-note speaker, introducers, moderators, rapporteurs and interpreters. Our gratitude also goes to Poland as the host country.

I also thank all delegations and representatives of non-governmental organisations for their active participation in the meeting and valuable interventions and contributions to our discussions.

I believe that we have all benefitted from the inclusive dialogue on a broad range of important human dimension issues which formed the agenda of this meeting.

Thank you for your attention.