



## **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**

**Opening Statement by OSCE Secretary General  
Marc Perrin de Brichambaut  
at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting,  
Warsaw, 2 October 2006**

Mr. Chairman,  
Ministers,  
Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The HDIM is a key moment in the OSCE calendar, and I look forward to the discussions that will take place here.

This event is thought of as the largest and most substantive conference across the OSCE area covering the whole range of human rights issues, and this is right.

Nowhere else is this panoply of questions relating to fundamental freedoms and their implementation discussed in such a manner. Discussion in detail on this range of topics with such varied participants is a luxury that is necessity.

Allow me also to congratulate Ambassador Strohal for his vision and the leadership that he brought to this Meeting and to all ODIHR activities.

Much has happened since we gathered in Warsaw last September.

We welcome the Republic of Montenegro as a new member of the Organization. All of us can and should take pride – ODIHR most especially -- from the role that the OSCE played in the peaceful process that led to Montenegro taking a seat in the Permanent Council on June 22.

The lesson is clear: When fundamental individual rights are respected, even the most momentous decisions can be taken peacefully and legitimately.

This last year reminds us also of the difficulties that we face – the difficulties of building greater tolerance and non-discrimination, the difficulties that remain for crafting democratic institutions and processes across the whole of the OSCE area.

The so-called ‘cartoons crisis’ that erupted in January over the publication by numerous media outlets of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammed compelled each of us to consider the nature of our responsibilities to the commitments that that we have entered into, and to the principles that stand behind these.

Ladies and Gentleman,

The context of our work in the OSCE is not always easy. As is their right, participating States enjoin us continually to work with limited resources, and they remind us of the realities of ‘zero growth’ of the budget of the Organization and its Institutions.

This reality places a premium on co-ordination *within* the Organization and with key partners *outside*.

A major challenge that we face is to strengthen coherence within the OSCE. Managing such a de-centralized organization as ours, with our comprehensive approach to security and our unique role in the Human Dimension is a tall order. In order to improve our effectiveness in a restrained budgetary environment, more co-ordination is vital.

More and more OSCE activities are cross-dimensional. As the Chair of the Organization just reminded us we must consider such issues as dealing with transnational crime and improving criminal justice systems, and the need for deeper co-ordination becomes crystal clear.

We have the expertise, but we need to join our thinking and actions between units and Institutions, in order to pool our resources in a more targeted manner.

Current realities also call for greater OSCE co-ordination with external partners.

It is my task, as the Secretary General, to be active in ensuring effective and continuous working contacts with other international organizations. These relations should be pragmatic and action-oriented. In 2005, we set the framework for deepening co-operation with the Council of Europe; we can do more to take this further.

It is time also to take further our relations with the United Nations and its agencies, in line with our special role as a regional arrangement of the UN under Chapter VIII. There is scope for enhanced co-operation in, for example, human rights (including national minorities issues), early warning and conflict prevention.

The OSCE has a lot of experience and expertise it can share with the UN and others in areas of capacity-building, particularly in the Human Dimension. We have almost unparalleled standards, instruments and institutions on national minorities, freedom of the media, democratization and the rule of law. Our experience stands to be shared.

Greater co-ordination with NGOs is also vitally important.

Civil society has always been a privileged partner of the OSCE. NGOs are the founding pillars of a healthy civil society and the foundations for a healthy international society. At my count, some sixty NGOs are represented at this Meeting, highlighting the importance of NGOs in assisting the implementation of commitments by participating States. I look forward to listening to your views and suggestions, and, not least, thoughtful criticism.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Intolerance, hate crimes, and terrorism are creating fear and distrust in our multi-cultural cities and our societies. We can not let this lead to divisions, to social, religious or ethnic polarization. Tackling these challenges should be among our highest priorities, certainly within the Human Dimension.

In June of this year, the Chairman in Office and myself presented a Report to the UN Secretary General on the OSCE Contribution to the *Alliance of Civilizations Initiative*. This initiative, may I remind you, was launched by two participating States, Spain and Turkey.

The thesis of this Report is clear. As an organization of common commitments and values among equals, that spans three continents encompassing major world religions and cultures, the OSCE is itself already an alliance of civilizations in action.

This means we have an important contribution to make. Hard work remains before us to make the potential of this Organization a reality.

Anti-trafficking is at the top of this year's HDIM agenda. This is in line with the OSCE's commitment to end this offence to human dignity. There is no quick fix. Combating this problem should be seen in the context of globalization, social and economic inequalities, discrimination and corruption -- which all contribute to the so-called "demand" for trafficked persons.

The Report, *From Policy to Practice: Combating trafficking in Human Beings in the OSCE Region*, just released by the Anti-Trafficking Assistance Unit of the

OSCE, documents the numerous activities undertaken by the Organization, its structures, Institutions and field operations to assist the participating States in the implementation of their anti-trafficking commitments. These efforts include *inter alia* trial monitoring of trafficking cases, promoting and protecting victim's rights and access to justice, as well as assisting in legal reform to counter trafficking.

We need to do more to break the cycle of trafficking and to address the factors that contribute to all forms of trafficking. More can be done to identify, protect and assist the individual victims of this crime and to bring the perpetrators to justice. To this end, the Special Day on Trafficking will contribute to the further implementation of the OSCE Action Plan

The OSCE is not a military alliance or an economic union. It is a community of values, spanning the entire northern hemisphere. We need to ensure that the commitments designed to uphold those values remain in force. This Meeting helps to maintain vigilance and to encourage participating States to keep the promises they have made.

Thank you for your attention.