

## **OSCE Secretary General Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu**

### **Remarks at the opening of the Warsaw Human Dimension Conference, 6 October 2025**

Distinguished Chair, Minister Valtonen, Deputy Prime Minister Sikorski, President Sampietro of OSCEPA, Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentleman,

I am pleased to join you today for my first Warsaw Human Dimension Conference since I became Secretary General.

Two months ago in Helsinki, we marked the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. That moment gave us reason to reflect on what I believe was a historic achievement.

In 1975, at the height of the Cold War, competing blocs came together and, in the face of the prospect of mutually assured destruction, recognized the urgent need to agree on principles to manage peaceful co-existence.

The ‘human dimension’ of security lay at the heart of the Final Act. It committed participating States to ‘respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief.’

It made clear that this was an essential basis for peace in Europe. True then. True today.

A little more than a year after the Helsinki Summit, Charter 77 promised to initiate a new era of civil liberties and freedoms. It was followed by many other movements, including Solidarność here in Poland, that helped to expand and strengthen the democratic space across the OSCE region.

The spirit of Helsinki was eagerly taken up by dissidents who collected evidence of violations and abuses of human rights and demanded accountability for it.

For the first time in history, adversaries came together and agreed that a factor in mutual security was *how* governments treat their citizens. This was a critical innovation for maintaining international peace and security.

This principle was reaffirmed in 1991 when participating States agreed that ‘commitments undertaken in the human dimension are matters of direct concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the domestic affairs of a State.’ The Astana Declaration reiterated this key principle in 2010.

Yet today that same principle along with the others underpinning the Final Act, are in flames. Our founding principles have been violated and instrumentalized. Respect for human rights, territorial integrity, the sovereignty of participating States are under sustained attack.

In response, governments are focusing their response on deterrence. Increases in defense spending and ever more assertive displays of capabilities are the order of the day. We have also seen nuclear weapons used as a threat. The risks are growing.

This Conference also reminds us that security cannot be ensured by military deterrence alone.

Strategic stability requires also dialogue, confidence-building, transparency, and cooperation - including in the human dimension. Without trust between and within societies, peace will always remain fragile.

That is why this Conference matters. It provides a platform for dialogue where ultimately *all* participating States, institutions and civil society can and should come together and reaffirm the OSCE’s unique approach to security: comprehensive, co-operative, and centered on human dignity.

This is the OSCE’s unique and indispensable contribution to the European security architecture. When the current war in Europe finally ends, it will be these principles that must guide us back to peace, trust, and co-operative security.

Thank you.