



Vienna, 27 October 2009

CORFU PROCESS

Vienna Informal Meetings at Ambassadors' Level
27th October 2009

CHAIR'S PERCEPTION

COMMON CHALLENGES IN THE HUMAN DIMENSION

"Our approach is based in our comprehensive concept of security as initiated in the Final Act. This concept relates the maintenance of peace to the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms" (Helsinki 1992 Summit Declaration)

"Peace and Security in our region is best guaranteed by the willingness and ability of each pS to uphold democracy, the rule of law and respect of human rights" (1999 Charter for European Security)

"...Protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms is one of the basic purposes of government" and "...the recognition of these rights and freedoms constitutes the foundation of freedom, justice and peace" (1990 Copenhagen Document)

"...Issues relating to human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law are of international concern, as respect of these rights and freedoms constitutes one of the foundations of the international order" and "...commitments undertaken in the human dimension are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating states and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the state concerned" (1991 Moscow Document)

The sixth session of the Corfu Process was dedicated to the common challenges in the Human Dimension and especially in the fields of human rights and fundamental freedoms, democratic institutions and the rule of law, tolerance and non-discrimination as well as the freedom of the media. It should be noted that issues of the Human dimension have been present in almost all previous Corfu Meetings since previous discussions have proved that the OSCE comprehensive concept of security is not an abstract perception but a reflection of reality. Security is cross-dimensional and, therefore, issues traditionally attributed to the third dimension emerge even when the focus of the discussion is on topics dealt with by the first dimension, such as different levels of security or conflicts or new security threats and challenges.

The presentations by the Director of the ODIHR, Ambassador Lenarcic, and the OSCE Representative for Freedom of the Media, Mr. Haraszti, provided invaluable contribution for an open and interactive discussion among the delegations.

The discussion indicated differences of opinion among the delegations as regards a) the best possible means of improving the functioning of the Human Dimension *and* b) the specific areas in which we face challenges calling for the reinforcement of relevant commitments or the adoption of new ones.

Despite the different points of view, pS repeatedly stressed two fundamental elements of the OSCE approach to issues pertaining to the Human Dimension:

a) Our conviction that there is an **inseparable connection** between the OSCE human dimension and maintaining peace, justice, well-being for peoples and stability, as recognized by the OSCE concept of common and comprehensive security and b) Our conviction that commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension are matters of **direct and legitimate concern** to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of any one State, as stipulated in the 1991 Moscow document.

Furthermore, the discussion indicated that there are some basic parameters of common understanding, as follows:

The commitments already undertaken in the OSCE framework constitute a key asset of our Organization. They comprise a set of normative rules reflecting a **common willingness** to meet the highest possible standards in the areas of human rights and fundamental freedoms, democratization and the rule of law and tolerance and non-discrimination. Participating States recognize our commitments as the measure of our commonly stated expectations and ambitions and we, therefore, are committed to implementing them. There is, therefore, a **sense of ownership** of these commitments and a recognition that we can mutually benefit from the implementation of this Human Dimension acquis.

Implementation of our commitments, and more specifically the improvement of implementation, is the key aspect that needs to be addressed. Implementation in the human dimension is based on the notion of **peer review**, which needs to be made more effective. Improving implementation involves discussing a number of possible parameters like the role of the Permanent Council, the enhancement of the crucial role of the **Institutions** and the reassessment and possible reinforcement of the Human Dimension **Mechanisms**, in order to make them more efficient, "user-friendly" and flexible. It is clear that the functioning of any measure that may be considered in this connection needs to be governed by the principles of **impartiality** and **objectivity** and be **depoliticized**, aiming at supporting the pS to implement its commitments and not serving a "name-and-shame" purpose.

The OSCE clearly faces a number of challenges in various areas of the human dimension. **Shortcomings** may be identified on a wide gamut of issues, ranging from human rights, democratization and the rule of law, to other areas, such intolerance, discrimination and human trafficking, which might be further accentuated by the repercussions of the global economic crisis.

The **freedom of media**, being part of the fundamental freedom of expression, was discussed today with special focus on its new parameters due to technologic advantages and mainly the extensive use of the internet for communicating and spreading ideas. In this field, particular challenges may be noted all over the OSCE region. Dealing with such challenges may involve considering the adoption of new commitments or reinforcing existing ones, or even, taking procedural/institutional measures in order to deal with specific areas of concern.

Political dialogue, being one of the main assets of the organization, has an important role to play in the human dimension, be it in the context of improved implementation of commitments or in the discussion of challenges and crises as they emerge. **Political will** is a prerequisite of any notion of progress in our Organization, including any prospect of making headway in the implementation of our commitments. **Civil society** and its role in the functioning of the OSCE Human Dimension is an asset to our Organization and needs to be preserved and built-upon. The OSCE **Field Operations** are an

additional asset in order to assist the pS efforts to achieve progress in all areas of the human dimension.

The discussion also indicated that pS **need to work closer** together in order to **regain the commonality of purpose** that has been the driving force for undertaking the whole set of OSCE commitments. Though no pS doubts the absolute validity of the OSCE commitments in their entirety and in all fields, different pS have been through different historic experiences and different degrees of state institution-building. The OSCE unites some of the world's oldest states with some of the newest ones, which have gained their independence in the last 20 years and a few of them are still going through the challenges of transition. The commonality of purpose and the concept of indivisible security unite all the pS in their commitment to build their relations "guided by equal partnership, solidarity and transparency". Participating States have committed to support each other, in order to achieve their common vision to "foster a new era of democracy, peace and solidarity throughout the OSCE area".

Issues to be taken forward:

- Examination of ways to improve implementation of commitments in the human dimension;
- Assessment of the effectiveness of existing human dimension mechanisms, aiming at improving their efficiency and flexibility;
- Identification of new challenges or areas of concern and determination of how best to deal with them in the medium and long run;
- Promotion of political dialogue as an important element for regaining the commonality of purpose, improving the functioning of the human dimension and making better use of the potential of the peer review.