



## **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, 29 September 2008**

Mr. Chairman,  
Madame, Monsieur,  
Collègues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This will be the first HDIM chaired by Ambassador Lenarcic as Director of the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, and I am certain he will show the same leadership in bringing this Meeting to success as he has in organizing it. I was pleased to hear his message from you, Mr. Chairman.

The HDIM pays tribute to the core messages of the OSCE. One message is that fundamental freedoms and human rights are at the heart of comprehensive security. Another is that all 56 participating States need to engage in continual dialogue about their nature and implementation. Yet another is that the vitality of civil society must be harnessed in the process.

The HDIM has become the largest and most substantive conference of its kind in the OSCE area. Nowhere else is such a spectrum of questions relating to fundamental freedoms and their implementation discussed in such depth.

The HDIM also underscores that the OSCE is a living project to be refined constantly, on the basis of equality and in the spirit of co-operative security. This is a challenging process, and an exciting one.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is challenging, because the 56 participating States have agreed to share a rich and complex body of commitments in the Human Dimension. The participating States have agreed that promoting the 'inherent dignity of the individual' is the foundation for effective and legitimate governance, and the basis for building reliable relations between States and across regions.

OSCE commitments remain relevant today, because they are constantly interacting with the changing face of reality. This process requires constant dialogue around the nature of OSCE commitments and their implementation. New issues arise, old commitments take on new contours, and new engagements are taken.

The HDIM is a key milestone in this process. Constant dialogue ensures that the Human Dimension is a living body, evolving with the times and the needs of States and their societies, while always remaining true to core values.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

How are the participating States implementing their commitments to ensure the rights of persons belonging to national minorities? How can the OSCE assist in strengthening equal opportunities for men and women? How are participating States addressing issues concerning refugees and IDPs? What laws and mechanisms have the participating States put into place to ensure that the victims of human trafficking have access to justice?

These are just a few of the questions that will be addressed over the next two weeks. The red line threading its way through all of these questions is the OSCE's commitment to support the participating States in implementing the commitments they have undertaken.

Implementation must often be a path of patience rather than one of instant success. What matters in this process is the constantly renewed spirit of dedication by each and every participating State to the OSCE compendium of commitments, including in the Human Dimension, and clear evidence of their translation into practice.

Effective co-ordination within the OSCE and with our international partners that share most of these commitments is vital for supporting this process.

Guided by a comprehensive approach to security, the OSCE remains a highly decentralized organization. Smooth and transparent co-ordination with all members of the OSCE family is all the more important in a restrained budgetary environment and a time when more and more activities are cross-dimensional.

It can also be important in times of crisis, as exemplified by the request of the Chairman-in-Office to the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the ODIHR to help in assessing the situation regarding human rights and those of minorities in the regions affected by the conflict in Georgia.

All the components of the OSCE family can provide great expertise but can do more to join thinking and actions in order to pool their resources in a more targeted manner.

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

As Secretary General, it is my task to ensure effective and continuous working contacts with other international organizations. We have a framework for deepening co-operation with the Council of Europe since 2005. This is a strong foundation, and we can build upon it by deepening our co-operation even 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. The OSCE has quite unparalleled standards, instruments and institutions on national minorities, freedom of the media, democratization and the rule of law. This experience stands to be shared.

Greater co-ordination with NGOs is also vital.

Civil society is a privileged partner of the OSCE. NGOs are the founding pillars of a healthy civil society and a healthy international society. The great number of NGOs represented at this Meeting underscores their importance in assisting the implementation of commitments by participating States. NGOs are also vital sources of expertise on often complex questions. All participating States gain from their advice and from their thoughtful criticism.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The OSCE Chairmanship, Finland has helped to stimulate discussion between the participating States on key OSCE commitments in the Human Dimension. The *Chairmanship Event on Election-Related Issues* on July 21-22 was particularly relevant. By all accounts, in-depth and open discussions were successful in infusing fresh air into the debate. We may look forward to this same spirit guiding our discussions during this Meeting.

I believe that integrating diversity while strengthening our common values is one of the most important challenges of our times. The *Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting* of 10-11 July underlined the need for continuing and focused attention to improving the situation of the Roma and Sinti. It is important that the question of implementing the OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti features high on the agenda of the HDIM.

I would also stress the special attention given to the issue of ensuring access to justice for the victims of human trafficking. Identifying and assisting victims lies at the heart of the OSCE approach to supporting States and societies in their fight against the trafficking in human beings. We can and should do more in concrete terms to act on this principle.

In this respect, I am especially grateful to the Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Eva Biaudet, for her work in ensuring deep and abiding attention to this matter.

The HDIM will also pay special attention to supporting the implementation of the *OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality*. Last month, I circulated my report to the participating States on the implementation of the 2004 Action Plan. The Report shows that the OSCE is working to include gender aspects in its programmes, policies and activities, to promote the improvement of women's rights in the participating States and to increase opportunities for women within the Organization. Over the reporting period, there has been progress in all three of these areas. But we can do more to take this progress much further and translate it into deeper change.

I look forward to our discussions in this Meeting on this vital matter.

I note also that the OSCE remains keen on following the development of the *Alliance of Civilizations Initiative*. As mandated by OSCE Foreign Ministers in Madrid, I participated in the first annual Alliance of Civilizations Forum last January in the Spanish capital. Participating States are currently debating appropriate ways for the OSCE to contribute to the implementation phase of the Alliance.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Since 1975, the OSCE has proved its use to the participating States and their societies as a laboratory of ideas and tools for tackling challenges to their security. The evolution of the Human Dimension, the constant debate between States and society that it reflects, is one of the greatest attributes of the Organization.

The OSCE is a community of values as much as a community of interests. It is our shared responsibility to ensure that the commitments designed to uphold those values remain salient and are applied in the real world. The Human Dimension Implementation Meeting is a vital part of this process.

Thank you for your attention. I look forward to participating in the Meeting.