

Closing Remarks
by the Representative of
the Greek Chairman-in-Office,
Amb. Louis-Alkiviadis Abatis,
Deputy Head of
the OSCE Chairmanship Task Force

**2009 HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION
MEETING**

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The main aim of the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting is to discuss and review implementation of OSCE human dimension commitments and to look at ways to enhance compliance with these commitments. In the last two weeks here in Warsaw we had the opportunity to discuss the main aspects of the Human Dimension including possible recommendations for the future.

On the one hand, our human dimension commitments also face new challenges - for example related to technological and social developments and the recent economic crisis-

which we have to take into account when further developing and strengthening our commitments. On the other hand, these challenges should not provide any excuse for shortcomings in the implementation of existing commitments. This calls for a forward-looking and action-oriented approach by all stakeholders. Greece, during its Chairmanship, is stressing the need for continuous efforts aimed at full implementation of the human rights commitments by the participating States.

In the endeavour to ensure respect and promotion of human rights in our societies, it is crucial to build partnerships among States, international organisations and the civil society. I am convinced that our meeting has further promoted this goal. The broad and active participation of non-governmental organizations in human dimension meetings is an achievement for which the OSCE should be proud of.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me highlight a few specific themes on the basis of our deliberations during the last two weeks.

Referring to our Chairmanship priorities, **Roma and Sinti rights** is an issue of great importance that deserves our attention and dedication. One of this HDIM's specifically selected topics focused on early education. Indeed, early education can make a difference in tackling problems that Roma and Sinti children are confronted with later in the educational cycle. It can be an instrument for preventing social exclusion and marginalization. Early education is a long-term investment which, in the end, will pay off. Therefore, it is worth intensifying our efforts so as to transform our commitments into action and results.

Gender equality still remains high on our agenda.

Violence against women, including domestic violence and violence in conflict situations, unfortunately occurs in all participating States on a daily basis. Moreover, domestic violence tends to increase in times of economic hardship such as we experience at present. Taking concrete steps to turn obligations and commitments into real terms is vital and the Greek Chairmanship encourages the Secretariat, the Gender Equality Unit of ODIHR and participating States to continue their activities in this important field.

Moreover, the OSCE's work on **tolerance and non-discrimination** remains topical and requires constant attention. Our region continues to be plagued by the rise of intolerance as is demonstrated in the ODIHR's newly released hate crimes report. The report unfortunately shows that in particular Jews, Muslims as well as migrants, Roma, and refugees are increasingly facing hate-motivated attacks. In addition, violent crimes based on individuals' sexual orientation are unacceptably common. In this regard, the Greek Chairmanship is looking forward to the forthcoming meeting of National Contact Points on hate crimes in Vienna later this month, signaling an encouraging step in the right direction.

The Greek Chairmanship would also like to draw your attention to the World Day against the Death Penalty - which is celebrated around the world tomorrow, on October 10th.

Yesterday we witnessed a lively debate on **election-related issues**. The Greek Chairmanship has contributed to this dialogue by organising last July an Expert Seminar on

Electoral Management Bodies. We intend to continue reinforcing this dialogue.

Ladies and gentlemen,

During the discussions at this year's HDIM we have recorded a variety of recommendations addressed to the participating States and OSCE actors. This feedback needs to be carefully studied, also in light of the ongoing Corfu process. As appropriate, we should consider action towards further enhancing the implementation of OSCE commitments on human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Let me conclude by expressing the Greek Chairmanship's deep appreciation to Ambassador Lenarcic and his Office for their dedicated work in guaranteeing the success of this Meeting. Our gratitude also goes to Poland as host country. Furthermore, I would like to thank the introducers for their thought-provoking interventions. Our moderators, under whose professional guidance the discussions have taken place, should also be commended. I wish to convey a great word of thanks to our dynamic rapporteurs for summarizing

the deliberations of this Meeting. Last, but not least, I would like to thank the interpreters and technical staff. Without their contribution this Meeting would have been impossible.

Thank you for your attention.