



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
High Commissioner on National Minorities

address by
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to the
10th Anniversary Conference
of
The Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies

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Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to address you on the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of *The Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies* here at the beautiful Brdo Castle, where my predecessor, His Excellency Knut Vollebæk, first presented the Ljubljana Guidelines. I am very pleased to see him among us here today.

First, I would like to thank our hosts, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia, for their superb co-operation and invaluable support in organizing this event, as well as the Permanent Representation of Slovenia to the OSCE. Your excellent operational support and guidance made this event possible, and your hospitality has made us feel very welcome here. A special word of thanks also goes to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary for their generous contribution to make the event possible. I am also very grateful to those of you who have travelled from Vienna and other capitals. Let me also acknowledge and appreciate the participation of the Special Envoy of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Ambassador Artur Dmochowski, who is with us here today.

Our participants include experts, policymakers and speakers from a variety of fields and institutions. They will provide their analysis and reflection on integration issues and diversity management practices.

Our objective today is to review our work in the past decade, reflect on the path that led us to today, and share good practices from the OSCE region. This will help us to identify new opportunities and address future challenges in diversity management.

As many of you know, 30 years ago, the position of the High Commissioner on National Minorities was established as an instrument of conflict prevention. The mandate is to provide early warning and early action in regard to national minority issues. Since then, the successive High Commissioners have worked towards addressing the short-term triggers of inter-ethnic tension or conflict, as well as improving stability in the 57 OSCE participating States.

During this time, the successive High Commissioners have issued nine thematic Guidelines and Recommendations. They aim to provide policy advice to governments on national minority issues and diversity governance. In this sense, *The Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies* is my institution's most comprehensive thematic publication.

The Ljubljana Guidelines state that: "Integration is a dynamic, multi-actor process of mutual engagement that facilitates effective participation by all members of a diverse society in the economic, political, social, and cultural life, and fosters a shared and inclusive sense of belonging at national and local levels". This means that both the State and society share a responsibility in diversity governance. In this, the State ensures that the rights of all are respected by putting in place the conditions conducive to mutual accommodation.

The key takeaway from the Ljubljana Guidelines comes back to one single point: that society as a whole, not just one specific group, benefits from diversity and integration policies. That is, integration-based policies can actually help States to function better, which makes them more resilient to conflict.

We anticipate that in the coming years, minority issues will continue to be instrumentalized and politicized. Therefore, it is vital to continue supporting diversity governance by investing in integration policies. We must also share our good practices, be willing to learn from each other and continue to engage on these issues.

Speaking of "staying engaged", yesterday, my office organized an Expert Meeting to reflect on the theoretical and conceptual perspective of the Ljubljana Guidelines 10 years after their inception. Many of the experts were the original drafters of the Ljubljana Guidelines. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them, as well as my team, for organizing the meeting, which provided a platform to revisit the past through the lens of the present. These conversations facilitate an important dialogue to build and grow our knowledge base. Integration as a process is evolving and is dynamic. This means that the way we work has to be constantly reassessed. I want to emphasize that good diversity governance starts with providing access to opportunities for all, including national minorities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I hope that today's event will serve as a catalyst for us not only to reflect on and learn from the past, but also to recognize that respecting and effectively governing diversity within our society is vital for our future. For we have far more in common that unites us than divides us.

Thank you for your attention.