

Statement of Bärbel Kofler, German Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Assistance at the Federal Foreign Office and Member of the German Parliament, at the Opening Session of the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) in Warsaw, 16 September 2019

[Mr President,]

[Mr Chairman,]

[Ministers,]

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me start by thanking ODIHR and the Slovak Chairmanship for preparing and organising Europe's largest conference on human rights.

I would like to fully subscribe to the European Union Statement but would like to add some points in my national capacity.

In the 1991 Moscow Document, we, the participating States, "categorically and irrevocably" declared that the 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 the State concerned.

Ladies and gentlemen,

during the next two weeks, we will transform these words into action. Working with NGOs, we will address the challenges of implementing these commitments and exchange views on important aspects of the human dimension.

Active civil-society participation is the basis for this meeting's unique character and success. Civil society is, and will have to remain, part of this dialogue. We believe that broad participation by members of civil society is vital in order to strengthen and implement human rights and rule-of-law standards across the entire OSCE region.

We welcome the fact that participating States were able to agree unanimously on the meeting agenda this year. Looking ahead, we hope that this consensus prevails.

Germany plays an active part in the OSCE's work. We are the second-largest financial contributor, support extra-budgetary projects in all three dimensions, and share our experience and expertise by seconding personnel.

We are glad to support ODIHR's activities in areas such as the rule of law, good governance, human rights, the strengthening of civil society and election observation. We also grant sizeable extra-budgetary funding to projects that address specific issues such as the fight against anti-Semitism, freedom of speech and the media, the protection of national minorities, and tolerance and non-discrimination. These issues remain particularly close to our hearts.

One of ODIHR's trademarks is election observation. We support these missions with a significant amount of seconded personnel and call upon other participating States to do likewise. We should counter the recent trend of decreasing numbers of long and short-term observers!

As an elected member of the UN Security Council in 2019 and 2020, Germany attaches great importance to the preventive aspects of human rights. In our view, the Security Council needs to address human-rights violations as part and parcel of its responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

During our Security Council Presidency in April, we therefore undertook several initiatives to increase the Council's focus on human rights, including by inviting UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet to a Council meeting, initiating the adoption of UNSC Resolution 2467 on combating sexual violence in conflict and inviting a record number of female civil-society briefers to Security Council meetings.

If we are re-elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council for the coming three years, we would like to make use of our concurrent membership of the Security Council and the Human Rights Council in 2020 to bring the security dimension and the human rights dimension even closer together in our UN work.

The OSCE's "gold standard" in applying a comprehensive security concept serves us as a best practice example.

Thank you.