



**Copenhagen Anniversary Conference**

**"20 years of the OSCE Copenhagen Document: Status and future perspectives"**

**Copenhagen, 10–11 June 2010**

**Contribution of Slovenia**

**Session 3: National Minorities**

Mr Chairperson,

Slovenia attaches great importance to the protection of national minorities. This is evident from our constitutional and legislative frameworks, which provide very advanced and comprehensive protection of traditional (autochthonous, indigenous) national communities in Slovenia, including collective rights, while the individual rights of persons belonging to other ethnic groups are fully guaranteed by the Constitution and the legislative framework. Slovenia therefore expects its neighbouring countries to comply with their international obligations and provide a similar level of protection to Slovenian national minorities in their respective countries.

Minority rights are human rights that protect all persons belonging to minorities. Learning from tragic events in the recent past, we are fully aware of the importance of promoting and respecting the rights of national minorities in their respective countries of residence, as well as allowing the minorities to maintain fruitful relations with their mother country. Settled and well managed issues of national minorities between countries are a prerequisite for friendly relations and stability in neighbouring regions, as well as for overall tolerance and dialogue in our societies. We appreciate the work done by the OSCE HCNM in this field, especially conflict prevention, since its establishment in 1992 in Helsinki.

Slovenia has fully supported the Bolzano Recommendations from the very beginning, October 2008, when they were officially presented. We have therefore decided to host the first regional roundtable on this issue in Brdo, Slovenia, in March 2009 (for the region of

South-Eastern Europe). The event clearly showed the necessity to further promote the Bolzano recommendations throughout the whole OSCE area.

We believe that the Bolzano Recommendations comprehensively address the issue of national minorities in the context of interstate relations. As a set of practical instructions on how countries should act in relation to national minorities, they are based on the very valuable past experience of the previous High Commissioner and on the report of the Venice Commission, as well as on various international instruments and standards. The Recommendations are aimed at preventing interstate conflicts concerning national minority issues. Finding a way to guarantee this in the OSCE region would be of crucial importance.

In this context we are convinced that Bolzano recommendations should be further promoted and implemented, as conflict prevention is one of the major pillars of this organization. Therefore, Slovenia supports the proposal within the Corfu Process for adoption of the Bolzano recommendations as a political commitment.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson