

**Address by Dr Janusz Stańczyk
Under-Secretary of State
at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland
at the Inaugural Session
of the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
(Warsaw, October 2 2006)**

**Mister Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Poland is proud and honored to be the host country of the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, which has been held in Warsaw since 1993.

Over the years the Meeting has come to be recognized as one of the most significant forums devoted to human rights. We are gratified that the OSCE participating states consider the Meeting results a major component of their efforts to consolidate international security and peaceful coexistence.

I particularly wish to thank Ambassador Strohal and his dedicated staff for their consistent work over many years and the preparation of this event.

I am confident that the next two weeks of debate on the fulfillment by states of their OSCE human dimension commitments will provide valuable guidance for our future actions in this field. Furthermore, this Meeting offers us an excellent opportunity to affirm our dedication to the principles of democracy, observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law and other profound issues at the heart of the OSCE mission.

The Meeting is an important manifestation of the culture of dialog within the OSCE area. And it is not dialog conducted only between governments; the civil society - whose representatives are in this room – is also actively involved.

I welcome the presence here of so many persons representing governments, NGOs and academic communities. Engagement in dialog implies a willingness not only to present ones own ideas, but also to be open to the arguments and opinions of others. Debate and dialog are the basic principles of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, they constitute the cornerstone of democracy. Cooperation would not be viable without them.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Different forms of intolerance, trafficking in human beings, corruption, organized crime and terrorism are relatively new topics at the HDIM. The list of challenges and threats we have to confront today – along with traditional problems – is indeed long. It is our duty to keep reminding the international community that the countering of these threats, especially terrorism, must not be achieved at the expense of human rights and individual freedoms. The human dimension acquis of the OSCE must not be questioned, while the commitments we have assumed must be fully implemented.

The Meeting has the primary task of reviewing the implementation of commitments with regard to electoral freedoms. After all, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights was originally called the Office for Free Elections. Since its establishment in 1990, the ODHIR has developed unique, widely recognized methods of election monitoring. Poland highly commends the activity of the ODHIR and its achievements. Still, we should reflect at this meeting on ways of enhancing both the effectiveness of election monitoring and the support for it of the participating states.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sadly, violence and aggression are practically a daily occurrence across the world. We witness people who fall victim to unresolved conflicts – whether political, religious, ethnic or other. In many instances, past war atrocities breed fear and prejudice, undermining confidence between and within different groups and communities. That is why the promotion of tolerance is so crucial and should be highlighted among the priority areas of the OSCE.

Trafficking in persons is a topic that stands out in the agenda of this year's Meeting. It is unacceptable that in the 21st century, people – particularly women and children – still fall victim to this abominable crime. Allow me to quote at this point the OSCE Secretary-General, Marc Perrin de Brichambaut.-At the High-Level Conference on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, held in Vienna last March, he said – I quote: “Fighting this horrendous crime of child trafficking, while ensuring the safety and well-being of this most vulnerable group in our society, should remain our common goal if we want to promote human development, prosperity and security at regional, national and international levels” – end of quote.

Trafficking in persons should not be perceived merely as a problem of abuse and exploitation since it also demonstrates an upsurge of organized crime in Europe and beyond. As the international community, we must intensify our endeavors to

eradicate this scourge with all means at our disposal. I hope the Warsaw Meeting will significantly contribute to progress in this regard.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting is not a simple and easy conference. We have two weeks of packed agendas and numerous side events ahead of us – and that's a challenging proposition. But first, I'd like to invite you to a reception given tonight by the Polish Foreign Ministry at Foksal Street, where the atmosphere promises to be more informal.

I wish you fruitful work during the Meeting. As every year, it should advance confidence through dialog and produce tangible results in the form of concrete projects. This is expected of us.

Thank you for your attention.