



**PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF PORTUGAL
TO THE OSCE**

Report by
the Chairperson of the Human Dimension Committee of the Permanent Council
Ambassador Ana Martinho
Permanent Representative of Portugal to the OSCE
at the Opening Plenary of the OSCE Review Conference 2010

Warsaw 30th September 2010

It is for me a great honour and privilege to address the opening of the Human Dimension sessions of the Review Conference and, as Chair of the Human Dimension Committee, to report to this important audience in Warsaw.

I thank the Polish authorities for their warm welcome and for the perfect organization of the meeting.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the Secretary General and to ODIHR's Director and their staff for their contribution to our work.

To Kazakhstan, I would like to say that thanks to the leadership and vision of your Chairmanship we are now gathered in this Review Conference and preparing with high expectations to an historical Summit in Astana.

We are still dealing with problems of the past but we must live up to the future challenges. We are facing deep global transformations. These changes have a significant impact on our security environment and demand the emergence of a strategic vision for a security community, inclusive and equal, to frame our efforts in the years to come.

We need a comprehensive set of multilateral instruments capable of addressing challenges that are transnational, asymmetric and evolving in nature. There is a role to be played by all existing security organizations and a very relevant one for the OSCE, acting as a regional organization under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, with its Euro-Atlantic and Euro-Asian scope, its Partnerships, its cross dimensional nature and its unique concept of indivisible, common, cooperative and comprehensive security.

Through the impulse of the Corfu Process, and as stated in the Athens Declaration, our highest priority remains to re-establish trust and confidence as well as to recapture the sense of common purpose that brought together our predecessors.



PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF PORTUGAL TO THE OSCE

We need to prepare a Summit with tangible progress and concrete substantive results that will gather the political will to set the course for the future and explore the full potential of our organization.

It is in this context that our Review Conference must be placed, for everything we do must represent a meaningful and ambitious step in facing the challenges before us.

OSCE commitments in the human dimension are unique in many ways: they encompass protection for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and include the promotion of the rule of law and democratic institution building; further, they apply to all Participating States, for they were and are adopted by consensus.

It is important to stress that their implementation in any participating State is of concern to all and in this context to highlight the OSCE's cooperative approach to security. Indeed, OSCE Commitments rely on the common engagement of participating States to assist each other in fulfilling them.

It is in this framework and having in mind the responsibility of this Review Conference in preparing the Astana Summit that, as Chair of the Human Dimension Committee, I see my task to report on the work of our Committee.

I have to thank my predecessors, the Ambassadors of Spain, Ireland and Lithuania, and their teams, for their role in chairing the Committee and their valuable support to the current Chair.

The Human Dimension Committee completes in 2010 its fourth year of existence as an informal subsidiary body of the Permanent Council - placed under the political responsibility of the Chairmanship in Office - with the larger objective of improving the Consultative Process. The remit of the Committee is an extensive one: support the preparation of the Human Dimension Implementation Meetings; discuss thematic issues in the Human Dimension – such as elections and media - and also cross dimensional ones with a particular connection to the Human Dimension – like trafficking in human beings; discuss recommendations to the Permanent Council, including actions to follow-up on recommendations made at the Human Dimension Committee meetings.

The mandate given to the Committee has a great potential and the work that has been done has so far undoubtedly contributed to the improvement of the consultative Process.

However, the contribution of the Committee to the overall activities of the organization can still be improved.



PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF PORTUGAL TO THE OSCE

It is my conviction that the possibility of developing a fixed - or rolling - multi-year agenda would provide greater continuity in supporting the implementation and review process, which could greatly benefit the Human Dimension.

It seems adequate to say a few words about the Corfu Process, in itself a review process with a comprehensive, forward-looking approach, that has - specifically in the area of the Human Dimension - produced good ideas and proposals that may impact positively the work of the Committee.

Within the Corfu Process, our debates in the Human Dimension, far from being easy, were none the less encouraging – they were lively, frank and they marked progress in better understanding, of one another, creating more trust and willingness to move forward.

During our discussions, it was acknowledged that the enduring validity of the OSCE *acquis* in the Human Dimension and that respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law lie at the core of the OSCE approach to security.

And though the importance of fulfilling commitments is recognized, the challenge remains its weak implementation and the need for political will to meet this shortcoming.

The possibility of developing further mechanisms of peer engagement and review may be a way, and in crisis situations we could even envisage new mechanisms to address specific issues relating to Human Dimension.

While differences of view remain on several issues, a few thematic areas can be identified as being considered priorities in our future work: freedom of the media and the need to combat violence against journalists; freedom of assembly and association; freedom of movement; tolerance and non discrimination; protection of the human rights of national minorities and migrants; combating the trafficking of human beings; human rights defenders; and election observation.

Also highlighted was the necessity of improving the human dimension meetings and their follow-up – for instance the Human Dimension Implementation Meetings.

Linked to this is the important role of Civil Society and NGO's in the Human Dimension events.

And finally, the work of our Institutions – the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the High Commissioner on National Minorities - as well as our field operations and other executive structures was valued as an important instrument in assisting the



**PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF PORTUGAL
TO THE OSCE**

participating States in complying with their commitments. Indeed, the unique role they perform is at the core of our Organization.

We are about to engage in the first part of the Human Dimension sessions of the 2010 Review Conference. We will look at the state of the implementation of our Commitments in a comprehensive way. We will then proceed, here and in Astana to address present and future challenges in a forward-looking way. We must do it with boldness and ambition but in a spirit of trust and common endeavour.

We are all part of the same effort – combining and interlinking the work of the Review Conference and the Corfu Process, mutually contributing and reinforcing the same goal to prepare the ground for a successful and substantive Astana Summit where our leaders will: celebrate the important anniversaries of the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris and the Copenhagen Document; reaffirm the commitment of all participating States to the OSCE and its agreed principles and commitments; and agree to a vision and plan of action for a reinforced and enhanced Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community.