



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

**Opening Statement by OSCE Secretary General
Marc Perrin de Brichambaut
at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Warsaw, 19 September 2005**

Mr. Chairman,
Minister,
Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a real pleasure for me to take part in this Human Dimension Implementation Meeting.

Allow me first to congratulate Ambassador Strohal for his outstanding leadership in the preparation for our meeting and steering the work of ODIHR. I very much share the points he made.

As the Chairman-in-Office reminded us, the first priority for your Secretary General is to help ensure that OSCE decisions are implemented. This is a tall order, and has to be approached with some modesty, especially in relation to my limited role in the human dimension. Nevertheless, my mandate gives me a degree of responsibility to assist you in your work and to assist ODIHR, and I intend to introduce a number of initiatives to improve our common capacity to implement OSCE decisions.

A major challenge is to strengthen the sense of internal coherence within the OSCE. Managing a de-centralized organization with a comprehensive approach to security is not easy. But in order to improve our effectiveness, practical co-ordination can be achieved.

The OSCE institutions, missions and the Units of the Secretariat should all pull in the same direction when it comes to addressing thematic or country-specific issues.

After all, as has been pointed out most recently by the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons, more and more of the OSCE's activities are cross-dimensional. Issues like anti-trafficking, dealing with transnational crime, promoting good governance, migration, and peace-building are just a few examples.

We have the expertise, but we need to connect the dots between our respective units and institutions in order to pool our resources. We have done this to good effect in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan and should continue in this vein when, for example, looking at the OSCE's future role in Kosovo.

It is also the Secretary General's task to ensure effective and continuous working contacts with other international organizations and institutions. These relations should be as pragmatic and action-oriented as possible. A good model is the relationship that is evolving with the

Council of Europe pursuant to the Declaration of Co-operation endorsed in May at the Council of Europe Summit. We should now put more meat on the bones of our mutually agreed skeleton.

It could also be a good time to further develop our relations with the United Nations and its agencies, in line with our special role as a regional arrangement of the UN under Chapter VIII. There could be scope for further co-operation in, for example, human rights (including national minorities issues), early warning, conflict prevention, small arms and light weapons, development issues, and peace building. We should also continue our work in the regional implementation of global instruments.

More generally, the OSCE could do more to share its experience and expertise with the UN and others in areas of capacity-building, particularly in the human dimension. We have almost unparalleled standards, instruments and institutions on national minorities, freedom of the media, democratization and the rule of law. This could be shared with others.

One area where further improvement is necessary is in promoting gender equality and strengthening the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. We have an Action Plan from 2004, but we still have to fully implement it. There will be an opportunity to discuss this at next week's session on equal opportunities for men and women.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Intolerance, hate crimes, and terrorism are creating fear and distrust in our multi-cultural cities and our societies. We can not let this lead to divisions, ghettoization and religious or ethnic polarization. Tackling this challenge should be our highest priority, certainly within the human dimension.

A number of themes to be discussed here over the next two weeks should put a sharper focus on our efforts to promote human rights, tolerance and non-discrimination. We need to stimulate a dialogue between cultures in order to prevent a clash of civilizations.

I recall that in the past the CSCE had a cultural dimension to its work, for example through a cultural forum in Budapest in 1985 and a symposium on cultural heritage in Cracow in 1991. Perhaps, in co-operation with UNESCO, the Council of Europe and others, it is time to consider ways how culture can be a confidence building measure.

Stereotyping, marginalization, and a lack of integration can rip the fibres of our inter-woven communities. And this can lead to the anger and resentment that breeds hate and even violence.

We cannot only focus on the symptoms of terrorism, racism, bigotry, and sectarian violence. We need to get at the root causes. And here the OSCE, with its common values and rich cultural diversity could play a role in promoting inter-cultural and inter-faith dialogue.

Minister Switalski reminded us eloquently that the OSCE is not a military alliance or an economic union. It is a community of values, spanning the entire northern hemisphere. We

need to ensure that the commitments designed to uphold those values remain in force. This meeting helps to maintain vigilance and to encourage states to keep the promises they have made.

The dignity and security of the individual have been at the heart of the OSCE for the past three decades and remain as relevant today as ever.

Thank you for your attention, and I look forward to observing this meeting and studying its outcome.