



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
High Commissioner on National Minorities

CONCLUDING REMARKS

by
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to the

Launching conference of the

Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies

[Check against delivery]

Brdo, Slovenia – 7 November 2012

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for a great day. The assumption or the basis upon which the Ljubljana Guidelines have been elaborated is the acknowledgement that integration of society is important to us all. The discussion today proves that this assumption is correct. The OSCE area is highly diverse in all respects, and so the challenges of integration are different in each district, country and region. As a result, the application of the Ljubljana Guidelines will also be different.

As with previous HCNM thematic publications, the launch does not mark the end of our efforts, but rather a starting point. Just as our thematic work feeds off the experiences we gain in our country-specific engagements, so our country-specific advice will draw upon the foundations and frameworks set out in the thematic area. I plan to follow up today's launching event with more context-specific seminars in the countries and regions where we are actively involved on integration issues, and where I hope to meet some of you again. In this way, I hope to see the Ljubljana Guidelines become a vehicle for discussing integration with participating States. I also hope that you will make use of these Guidelines, and that they will be of value in your future work. Given the importance of the topic, I believe a more informed debate on integration could be helpful to many participating States. I also believe the OSCE, as a regional security organization, could play an important role in fostering and furthering such a debate.

Before we move on to the reception area, I would like to extend my thanks to those who have contributed to the Guidelines and today's event. John Packer reminded us of how many former and present HCNM staff members have been actively involved. The moderators – Ilze, Natalie and Francesco – have also been instrumental in elaborating and drafting the Guidelines, and I am much obliged to you for the job you have done. I would also like to extend my gratitude to all the experts who have participated today as panellists. You have provided very valuable input throughout the drafting process, which has been crucial to the quality of the final product. Let me thank you for all your advice, and I hope we can continue our co-operation in the future. I am grateful for the participation from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, the Council of Europe and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights – important institutions that we already work with and look forward to

continuing to engage with also in this field. Thank you also to Simon Short and his team, who have handled the logistics of this project from start to finish with a very good result.

I would also like to thank once again our Slovenian hosts for welcoming us here today, and the Irish Chairmanship for their continued support to my Institution.

Last but not least, let me thank all of you for coming here today and taking part in the discussions. The product is ultimately meant for you, as representatives of the participating States, and I hope you will find that both the Guidelines and the discussions here today serve as an impetus for further work on the important topic of integration. We hope that they will form a basis for active debate.

Thank you and I would now like to welcome you to a small reception.