



OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Warsaw, 2 – 13 October 2006

Opening Plenary Session

Opening Statement by the Swiss Delegation
(2 October 2006)



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Swiss Delegation

Mr Chairman,

First of all on behalf of the Swiss delegation I would like to thank the ODIHR for its excellent preparation of this year's review conference. I would also particularly like to thank our Polish hosts, who have made this event possible for a number of years now.

As you know, my delegation attaches great importance to this review conference, in which the pressure of expectation is particularly high. This meeting is important because its purpose is to measure the degree of implementation of a wide range of commitments in the human dimension, to bring the "acquis" up to date and to discuss what additional measures need to be taken. We often tend to forget that our Organisation is what the individual participating States and civil society make of it. I am pleased to note that in addition to representatives from Vienna and from the capitals an impressive number of non-governmental organisations is present. Their representatives will certainly not hesitate to raise difficult and urgent problems and to express their views forcefully.

Mr Chairman,

I would like to take this opportunity to focus on two specific topics: the first is the wide area of tolerance; the second is the idea of establishing a Human Dimension Monitoring Instrument.

Efforts to strengthen the Organisation's efficiency and at the same time to maintain its flexibility and creativity have meant that this year not enough attention, or at least too little systematic attention, has been paid to the response to current problems by the solution-oriented range of services provided by the OSCE. The promotion of tolerance and of non-discrimination must be further developed into a central area of activity and must not be dependent on a fragmented working structure, which often impedes rapid and timely action. The institutional upgrading of the relevant department of the ODIHR and the publication of the significant report on hate-motivated incidents in the OSCE area are both steps in the right direction

Certain reactions in recent months have underlined the need for inter-cultural und inter-religious dialogue. Several initiatives like for example – the OSCE Tolerance Implementation Meeting in Almaty in June or the Congress of Religions in Astana in September – clearly highlighted these concerns. It would be desirable if within a reasonable time frame the OSCE could be organised in the areas of tolerance and non-discrimination and if this could be done comprehensively, coherently and effectively.

Mr Chairman,

As you know, the "acquis" grows from one Ministerial Council to the next, and the effective review process presents the OSCE and the participating States with increasing problems. The current reform discussion is a phase of reflection on how the Organisation can be improved and indeed optimised. This phase should be used to analyse and to discuss the nature of an instrument that would tackle violations of human dimension commitments critically and effectively. If we fail to take such steps, we run the risk that the foundations of our work will slowly be eroded. Without committing ourselves in advance to the various monitoring options, we would like to initiate such a discussion. My delegation believes that in future the implementation of commitments in the human dimension should be as systematic and efficient as possible. Ideally, violations of OSCE commitments by participating States would need to be tackled jointly and in a structured manner in order to find sustainable solutions to the problems. This is why a comprehensive approach that takes account of existing monitoring mechanisms in other international organisations such as the UN and the Council of Europe seems to be advisable. I strongly hope that the spirit of reform can and will lead to the creation of a general Human Dimension Monitoring Instrument. Towards the end of this Implementation Meeting the Swiss delegation will hold a side event on this subject, to which you are all cordially invited.

Mr Chairman,

In conclusion I would like to touch briefly on a matter of crucial importance. In response to the ministerial request in Ljubljana, the ODHIR will present by the end of October a report on the implementation and enlargement of commitments in the human dimension area which will focus on election monitoring and election observation. Once this is published it will, I hope, quickly become clear whether and to what extent a political will exists for specific additions. Whatever procedural path this eagerly awaited report may follow, my delegation will study and comment on it in a constructive spirit. It looks forward to intensive cooperation with other delegations in this matter.

Mr Chairman, thank you.