



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Opening Statement by OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, Warsaw, 26 September 2011

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to participate, for the first time as Secretary General, in the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting.

This is the largest and the most inclusive meeting of its kind in the OSCE area. It is a unique forum, bringing together national representatives, experts and members of civil society for an inclusive debate on the state of fundamental freedoms and human rights in our region and as much as it provides an opportunity to highlight the importance of the human dimension for comprehensive, cross-dimensional security.

This meeting is also the first after the Astana Summit. At the Summit, OSCE Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their shared vision of a free, democratic, common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community. They acknowledged that the inherent dignity of the individual is at the core of comprehensive security. And they recommitted themselves to full implementation of the OSCE human dimension acquis, recognizing that human dimension commitments “are matters of direct and legitimate

concern of all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned.” This meeting opens today inspired and guided by these words.

The HDIM plays a central role in the dialogue among participating States that is at the core of the OSCE. This dialogue was initiated in Helsinki in 1975 and, with different accents along the way, has continued uninterrupted to this day.

The HDIM also constitutes an essential component of the OSCE peer review system. This meeting is not just about identifying shortcomings in the implementation of commitments, but also about finding common solutions and ways to move forward together.

While OSCE commitments provide a solid bedrock and a constant reference, they are also a living body, applied in specific contexts that change over time as new challenges emerge. The implementation of those commitments requires constant debate and review, to be undertaken in a co-operative and constructive spirit.

It is no secret that there are different views among participating States about how the HDIM and other human dimension events might be improved in future years. In this regard, I welcome the Lithuanian Chairmanship’s initiative to launch a comprehensive dialogue on Human Dimension in the coming weeks. I am convinced that a constructive dialogue can lead to solutions that foster participating States’ ownership of OSCE activities and events in the human dimension.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since taking up my post as Secretary General three months ago, I have called on numerous interlocutors to “regroup” around the Organization’s core principles and the spirit of Helsinki, Paris and Astana. Yes, the OSCE must keep up with the new security environment, yet this should not translate into a constant attempt to reinvent the wheel. At heart, our added value today remains the same as in 1975: we remain the most inclusive and comprehensive security organization in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian space, built on agreed standards and commitments that span across the three dimensions.

In an Organization governed by consensus, every decision and commitment carries a special moral weight, as a freely and voluntarily accepted pledge. I frequently refer to the consensus rule as one of the strengths of this Organization, as consensus lends our decisions a unique legitimacy and confers upon participating States a special responsibility for their implementation.

The HDIM also provides us with an opportunity to reflect upon developments in the world beyond the OSCE area, and their implications for our own security. In Astana, our leaders acknowledged that security in the Mediterranean region is “inextricably linked” with security in the OSCE area. This year, we have seen developments in the Southern Mediterranean that underscore the truth of this statement.

The launch of democratic transition processes in some OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation is a powerful reminder of the links between democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, economic opportunity and long-term security and stability. I am convinced that the OSCE’s experience in supporting its own participating

States in meeting the challenges posed by democratic transition can be of interest and potential benefit to our Mediterranean Partners, and we stand ready to share it with them. In this regard I particularly welcome the presence and active participation of our Partners for Co-operation in this meeting.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to conclude by highlighting the role of civil society in the OSCE process in general and in this meeting in particular. Your ample presence here highlights the long-standing engagement of the OSCE with NGOs and other civil society representatives. Your input to this meeting is essential for helping us gain a good understanding of the actual level of implementation of human dimension commitments in the participating States and to identify ways to move forward.

As Secretary General, I plan to further the OSCE's partnership with civil society in order to strengthen our partnership in all areas of our activities and foster a broader knowledge of the Organization in societies throughout the OSCE region.

Let me wish you a fruitful and constructive discussion during the coming two weeks.

Thank you for your attention.