

## S T A T E M E N T

by the Chairperson of the Permanent Council Ambassador Vuk Žugić  
at the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting  
29 October 2015

Excellencies,

Colleagues

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure to welcome you on behalf of the Serbian Chairmanship of the OSCE to the Third Supplementary Human Dimension Implementation Meeting.

At the outset, I would like to thank High Commissioner on National Minorities Astrid Thors, as well as to Director of ODIHR, Michael Link and their able staff for valuable assistance in organizing this event.

At last year's Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw, we have presented our priorities in human dimension and proposed that one of the supplementary human dimension meetings should be devoted to OSCE contribution to the protection of national minorities, with special emphasis to Bolzano Principles and Ljubljana guidelines.

Since the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, the OSCE has accumulated a substantial body of commitments where the participating States underlined that the protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities were essential factors for democracy, peace, justice and stability within, and between, participating States.

Among these commitments, the Copenhagen document represents the most significant milestone in the protection of national minorities. Therefore, the first session of today's Meeting will be dedicated to marking 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of this important document.

Over the past years, the institution of High Commissioner on National Minorities has continued to engage closely with participating States in number of issues regarding to protection of persons belonging to national minorities.

The "quite diplomacy" performed by the HCNM has already become a well-known trade mark.

This accumulated experience High Commissioner synthesized and analyzed, offering the valuable recommendations on language, education, effective participation, media, policing and minorities in inter-state relations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The participating States are still facing with the number of challenges in protection of national minorities, especially those related to inter/state relations and integration of their societies. Therefore, two separate session of third Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting, will tackle two sets of recommendations, namely Bolzano/Bozen Recommendation on National Minorities in Inter-State Relations and The Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies.

In Bolzano/Bozen Recommendation on National Minorities in Inter-State Relations it was stressed that States should promote the integration of society and strengthen social cohesion. This implies that persons belonging to national minorities are given an effective voice at all level of governance, especially with regard to, but not limited to, those matters which affect them.

The Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies suggested that national minorities should not only enjoy the legal right to effectively participate in the overall governance of the State, but that they should also be encouraged to do so.

Dear Colleagues,

I hope this Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting will provide us a platform for further discussions on how has the OSCE contributed to the protection of persons belonging to national minorities. Also, I believe this is a good opportunity for sharing experience among participating States on policies that facilitate the integration of diverse societies and their implementation.

Also, this meeting may serve as an opportunity to review implementation of these documents and assess whether some of them should be updated.

We would like to commend the intention of the incoming German Chairmanship to keep this issue high on the agenda, especially in the context of national minorities as bridges connecting communities.

In concluding, I wish you a successful meeting, fruitful discussion and exchange of views on possible ways for further improving of the position of national minorities in our respective countries.

Before the floor is turned over to Director Link, I would like to humbly apologize to our distinguish speakers for having to leave the meeting since I'm chairing the meeting of the Permanent Council.

I thank you for your attention.