



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, 28 September 2009**

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to be here.

The HDIM that brings us together today is the largest, the longest and the most inclusive meeting of its kind in the OSCE area. There is no other meeting that brings together this range of national representatives with experts and representatives of civil society for such an intensive debate on fundamental freedoms and human rights in the framework of cross-dimensional security.

HDIM is part of the continual dialogue on vital and difficult issues that is at the core of the OSCE. It constitutes its main tool to promote the implementation of its ambitious standards and commitments and to monitor the progress achieved in this process.

The OSCE is a living project that is constantly refined, on the basis of equality and in the spirit of co-operative security. Every year you contribute to moving forward this project.

The HDIM reminds us of the core message of this Organization: that comprehensive security must be built around the 'inherent dignity of the individual'. It was a great innovation in 1975. It remains sharply relevant today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This idea is relevant, because the participating States and their societies face today a challenging, multifaceted crisis.

What started a year ago as a set of financial difficulties has transmuted since into a global economic downturn that has hit all parts of the OSCE area in no time. The global downturn may have reached its bottom, but the impact of the crisis remains real across the OSCE area. Emerging economies are being hit hard, as are the newly-emerged. The impact on growth and employment is deep. We are not out of the difficulties yet.

An economic crisis on this scale should serve as a powerful reminder of the comprehensive, cross-dimensional nature of our security. Economic in nature, the crisis has given rise to serious social and political challenges, which all governments have been confronting. New social questions are being posed. The situation may lead to new forms of instability and turbulence inside our societies. These will require careful handling.

The consequences of the crisis also remind us that security cannot be assured only within national boundaries, and that today's challenges can only be confronted cooperatively.

Far from being immune, the OSCE area is a theatre where many parts of the current crisis are being played out.

Protecting and promoting the inherent dignity of the individual is all the more important in this context. Human rights and fundamental freedoms face new threats today, even as old challenges remain. Strengthening the rule of law, combating intolerance and discrimination, carrying forward the fight against human trafficking – these are live issues, and many crucial questions will be raised during the coming days. Allow me to mention some of them.

How is transparency ensured in judicial disciplinary proceedings? To what extent are the participating States fulfilling their commitments to promote freedom of religion and belief? What steps are being taken to ensure respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the struggle against terrorism? Which policies are successful in promoting inclusiveness, understanding and tolerance within OSCE societies? How are participating States promoting

the integration of legal migrants? How can we simultaneously preserve freedom of the media and foster respect for cultural sensitivities? How can we succeed in ensuring the participation of Roma and Sinti children in early education?

These are just a few of the questions that will be addressed over the next two weeks. They are not easy to answer. Our discussions are vital to the process of tackling them.

The OSCE Institutions, the Secretariat, the Field Operations and the Parliamentary Assembly were created to help the participating States take their commitments forward in practice. They seek to assist in constantly rekindling the spirit of dedication by every participating State to the OSCE compendium of commitments in the Human Dimension, as the Director of ODIHR reminded us, as well as in other dimensions.

Effective co-ordination within the OSCE family is vital for this process.

Guided by a comprehensive approach to security, the OSCE remains a highly de-centralized organization. Effective co-ordination between all of its component parts is all the more important in a restrained budgetary environment and a time when more and more activities are cross-dimensional in character and in impact. It is being undertaken in a pragmatic way between all parts of the system with the help of all participating States.

We can do more to pool our thinking and our actions in order to apply our resources and expertise in a more targeted manner.

Civil society also has a privileged role in the OSCE process.

Non-governmental organizations are vital for the healthy governance of societies and States. They also provide unparalleled sources of expertise and advice. The presence of so many NGOs at this meeting underscores their importance for meaningful debates on the implementation of Human Dimension commitments. I take this opportunity to thank them for their time and dedication and hope they will continue to be actively present in spite of the economic constraints that affect them as others.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would be remiss if I did not highlight the role of our Chairmanship. The leadership of Greece has been vital this year in the Human Dimension. In July, in co-operation with ODIHR, the OSCE Chairmanship organized an *Expert Seminar on Electoral Bodies*. The seminar saw in-depth discussion of election-related issues, including different models of electoral management bodies and the challenges they face.

Co-ordination with external partners also plays a role in tackling such complex questions.

Effective and continuous working contacts with other international organizations are part of the life of the OSCE. We have a strong framework for co-operation with the Council of Europe. Co-operation is deep also with the United Nations and its agencies.

In this regard, the meeting in Vienna earlier this month of the *Alliance against Trafficking* showed the OSCE at its best, in building innovative international networks to address complex threats and challenges. Discussions this year addressed the theme of ‘preventing modern slavery.’

The meeting benefited from the role played by the UN Special Rapporteurs at this forum. The dialogue that the Special Representative Eva Biaudet and her team have initiated together with UN colleagues has opened a new chapter in collaboration between OSCE structures and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Special Procedures under the Human Rights Council.

The Alliance brought together a unique mix of participants from all backgrounds with the OSCE acting as a platform for such networks in a unique way.

Dialogue and joint work can be taken further. The OSCE has exceptional instruments on national minorities, freedom of the media, democratic institution-building and the rule of law. This experience and expertise can be shared more with international partners.

Tackling violence against women requires precisely such a coordinated, international approach. In this respect, I am pleased that this year’s HDIM devotes particular attention to

the *OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality*. Last Thursday, I presented my annual report on the implementation of the Action Plan to the Permanent Council.

The OSCE participating States have made the goal of equality between men and women an integral part of the Organization's policies -- within the Organization's executive structures, in its field operations and programmes, and at the level of the commitments undertaken by the participating States themselves. The debate in the Permanent Council pointed to areas of concern and challenges still to be met.

One final word on the Corfu Process that has been launched by the Greek Chairmanship in Vienna:

Following an unprecedented informal meeting of foreign ministers in Corfu last June that showed strong support for OSCE as a venue for a revived pan-European security dialogue, the Chair has initiated a series of discussions on ten subjects drawn from the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security. Thus far, exchanges have been frank, sharp and stimulating. Two sessions will be dedicated to 'Common Challenges in the Human Dimension,' and address questions of human rights, fundamental freedoms, tolerance and non-discrimination and the implementation of commitments. The aim is to clear the ground for roadmap that will take forward the renewed dialogue on European security next year. The Human Dimension is integral to the Corfu Process. The discussions that will occur at the HDIM will contribute directly to this process. In preparation of the Athens I meeting and the forthcoming Kazakh Chairmanship they will show that the OSCE is playing its role in overcoming the crisis in all its facets.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All of us together need to ensure that the commitments designed to uphold the shared values at the heart of the OSCE remain in force and are respected. 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 before.

I wish to thank Ambassador Lenarcic and the whole staff for putting together this meeting.

Thank you for your attention.