



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Secretary General Lamberto Zannier

Opening Remarks

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

Warsaw
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Minister Dačić,
Minister Schetyna,
Special Envoy Erler,
Director Link,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very glad to speak at the opening of this year's Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, the HDIM, not only because this is one of the OSCE's key annual events but especially as this is our main instrument for reviewing and fostering the implementation of OSCE commitments in the human dimension. I would like to thank Director Link and his talented and dedicated team for organizing this important event and to commend them for their tireless efforts to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, which remain at the core of the OSCE's comprehensive and multi-dimensional concept of security.

This meeting should inspire the entire OSCE community to support these efforts, and ensure that the human dimension remains an essential part of our daily work across the Organization. As we are all part of the same team, we should use all tools and opportunities at our disposal to continue advancing human rights, democratic institutions and the rule of law in the OSCE area.

We can do this most effectively if we speak with one voice within the Organization and work together. An excellent example of how successful we can be when we join forces is the joint effort of the Secretariat and ODIHR to deepen OSCE co-operation with Belarus. By coordinating closely and developing a common and comprehensive approach, we were able to strengthen the OSCE's engagement with this country much more effectively than if we had pursued separate agendas. By working together, we were able to achieve a new package of projects covering all three dimensions of the OSCE security concept and including cross-

dimensional elements. This was consolidated when Michael joined me in high-level meetings during a recent trip to Minsk. We have much to gain by working together, including when we co-operate with external partners.

And in today's increasingly complex world, the OSCE must reach out and work together with external partners. Civil society is one of the most crucial partners, as it helps multiply the impact of the OSCE's efforts, particularly in the implementation of OSCE human dimension commitments by our participating States. I am very pleased to see so many civil society organizations from so many participating States represented here today. Your contributions and active participation are vital to our efforts to strengthen respect for human rights and promote democratic principles and the rule of law throughout the OSCE region, while stimulating the Organization with fresh ideas and forward-looking recommendations. In this context, I would like to emphasize that youth organizations should play a key role. We need to engage young people today to encourage them to strive for a world with greater respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law tomorrow.

The role of youth is all the more urgent when we consider the violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism, since it especially affects young people. Countering radicalization and violent extremism is not a task for governments and law enforcement agencies alone. It is a responsibility shared by all parts of society. This is why last May I organized a Security Days conference to stimulate a wide-ranging and constructive discussion on how the media, education, inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue, and the empowerment of women and youth can effectively help to prevent and counter this phenomenon. I was very pleased that ODIHR, the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Representative on Freedom of the Media, as well as the Anna Lindh Foundation, co-sponsored and took part in this debate, which generated a number of proposals and recommendations for follow-up activities that the OSCE can undertake both on its own and with external partners.

One immediate step I myself took at this Security Days event, together with the Serbian Chairmanship, was to launch an Organization-wide campaign to encourage and inspire us all to do our part to counteract radicalization and violent extremism. All OSCE structures, including Institutions and Field Operations, participating States, Partners for Co-operation, as well as civil society, academia and religious institutions across the OSCE area, are invited to rally around and promote a common slogan: "OSCE United in Countering Violent Extremism". This campaign will be featured throughout the HDIM sessions and I invite you all to join in, express your support, and spread the word online and offline.

But violent extremism is only one of many increasingly complex and interconnected challenges that the OSCE faces today. The crisis in and around Ukraine remains very high on the Organization's agenda, requiring an unprecedented level of engagement both at the political level and on the ground to help de-escalate the situation. The crisis has further undermined trust and the spirit of co-operation among participating States, and it has opened a divisive debate about the consequences of violations of key OSCE principles and

commitments, including in the human dimension. Despite these profound challenges, the OSCE has managed to hold true to its vision of comprehensive security and continues to support efforts to restore peace and stability, including by promoting dialogue and reconciliation. Indeed, the OSCE has mobilized all its structures and put its entire toolbox into action. All our Institutions, the Secretariat and its Conflict Prevention Center, and of course our Field Operations – the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, the Project Co-ordinator’s office in Kyiv, and the Observer Mission at two Russian Checkpoints – are doing their part to achieve a lasting peace. The OSCE has once again demonstrated that it can respond rapidly and flexibly in times of crisis.

The current refugee and migration crisis is another pressing issue that calls for a comprehensive, co-ordinated and humane response from the international community and OSCE participating States. As an organization encompassing all of Europe and with strong ties in the Mediterranean and Asian regions, the OSCE can provide an important platform for co-operation. We have a significant role to play in making sure that migration does not become yet another divisive issue. Relying on its comprehensive and cross-dimensional security concept, the OSCE can offer specific expertise to deal with some of the root causes of migration, including conflict and poverty, as well as other challenges that are often intertwined with migration, such as human trafficking and smuggling, violent extremism and terrorism, and even climate change. We can also offer an inclusive forum for dialogue where our participating States together with our Partners for Co-operation can exchange ideas and explore common approaches to the crisis. This year’s OSCE Mediterranean Conference will provide a platform for high-level discussions on how some of these interconnected issues affect the Mediterranean region and how the OSCE could help to address them. And I am planning to hold a Security Days event on migration in early 2016 to stimulate forward-looking thinking for a more strategic and systematic approach to this phenomenon within the OSCE.

In concluding, I would like to underscore that all of the security challenges that affect the OSCE area cannot be successfully addressed without genuine consideration for the rule of law and the protection and promotion of human rights. What is more, the challenges we face today are too big and too complex for any country or organization to tackle alone. We need a co-ordinated approach involving many different actors – first and foremost civil society – but we also need to enhance co-ordination among the various parts of the OSCE itself. The HDIM provides the ideal forum to bring all these elements together to strengthen security for citizens, communities and countries throughout the OSCE region and beyond. I look forward to hearing about the results of your discussions over the next couple of weeks.

Thank you.