



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, 24 September 2007**

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Mr. Chairman,
Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor to be addressing you with such a distinguished group of speakers.

The Human Dimension Implementation Meeting is a key moment on the OSCE calendar. And rightly so. The HDIM is the largest meeting of its kind in the OSCE area; it is also the longest and most inclusive.

The HDIM pays tribute to one of the core messages of the OSCE and of the CSCE before it. This message is one that places fundamental freedoms and human rights at the heart of OSCE preoccupations about common security, that engages all fifty-six participating States in a continual dialogue about their nature and implementation, and that harnesses the vitality of civil society in the process.

The Human Dimension Implementation Meeting shows the common values at the heart of the OSCE as both a legacy to be carried forward and a living project to be refined constantly, on the basis of equality and in the spirit of co-operative security.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

OSCE commitments are relevant because they reflect the interaction of principles and values with the changing face of reality. The confrontation of values and realities entails a process of constant debate around the nature of OSCE commitments and shared values. New issues arise, old commitments take on new contours, and new engagements are taken. The HDIM is vital to this process.

These commitments remain equal for all participating States seeking continually to improve their adoption of common standards through shared policies and practices.

OSCE commitments are politically-binding, and they are unambiguous in their intent to forge common security through co-operation. To the extent that they have been reached through consensus, participating States are all unequivocally bound to work towards their implementation.

Implementation is not a one-off decision. It is a path of patience rather than one of haste, a path of progress and consolidation. What matters in this process must be the constantly renewed spirit of dedication by each and every participating State towards the OSCE compendium of commitments, including in the Human Dimension, and clear evidence of their translation into practice.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Which policies in OSCE participating States have been successful in promoting inclusiveness, understanding and tolerance? Do the constitutional and legislative frameworks of participating States ensure separation of powers as a fundamental element of democratic order? What steps have participating States taken to ensure that counter-terrorism provisions adhere to international human rights

law? What are the main challenges that States face in meeting their commitments regarding the conduct of democratic elections?

These are just a few of the questions that we will address over the next two weeks. The questions are difficult and require complex answers. Addressing them places a premium on co-ordination within the OSCE and with key partners.

A first challenge is to strengthen coherence *within* the OSCE. Managing such a de-centralized organization as ours, with its comprehensive approach to security and its unique role in the Human Dimension, is a tall order. In order to improve our effectiveness in a restrained budgetary environment, effective co-ordination is vital. Especially as more and more OSCE activities are cross-dimensional. We can do more to share expertise, to join thinking and actions between units and Institutions -- in order to pool resources in a more targeted manner.

On this point, I am pleased to underline the experience of the joint work of the Secretariat and ODIHR on Organized Crime. In the first half of 2007, different elements of the OSCE, including the Secretariat, the ODIHR and the field missions came together to coordinate activities and consider the best possible way to put into practice the Ministerial Decision 5/06 on Organized Crime. The output of this process was the first joint report of the Secretary General and the Director/ODIHR, presented to the Permanent Council on July 19th.

Addressing difficult questions also calls for greater co-ordination with external partners.

As Secretary General, it is my task to ensure effective and continuous working contacts with other international organizations. Since 2005, we have a framework for deepening co-operation with the Council of Europe; we can do more to take this further.

OSCE relations with the United Nations and its agencies, in line with our special role as a regional arrangement of the UN under Chapter VIII, are vital. The OSCE has a lot of experience and expertise to share with the UN and others in areas of capacity-building, particularly in the Human Dimension. We have almost unparalleled standards, instruments and institutions on national minorities, freedom of the media, democratization and the rule of law. Our experience stands to be shared.

Greater co-ordination with the NGO community is vitally important.

Civil society has always been a privileged partner of the OSCE. NGOs are the founding pillars of a healthy civil society and a healthy international society. I understand some three hundred NGOs are represented at this Meeting, highlighting the importance of NGOs in assisting the implementation of commitments by participating States. I look forward to listening to your views and thoughtful assessments and suggestions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are grateful for the priority given by the Spanish Chairmanship to the challenges of responding to intolerance, and discrimination. The OSCE *Conference on Combating Discrimination and Promoting Mutual respect and Understanding*, held in Bucharest in June was an important undertaking, as will be the OSCE *Chairmanship Conference on Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims* in Cordoba on 9-10 October.

OSCE States share the challenge of integrating diversity into healthy societies and polities. This issue bridges the misleading notions of ‘east of Vienna’ and ‘west of Vienna,’ of North and South.

Stereotyping, discrimination of all sorts, marginalization, and a lack of integration can rip the fibres of delicately inter-woven communities. This can lead to the

anger and resentment that breeds hate and even violence. This can lead also to the greatest losses of all – the loss of our histories of tolerance, the loss of the richness of our diversity, and the loss of the potential these qualities holds out for future generations.

On this point, I wish to note that the OSCE is actively following the development of the *Alliance of Civilizations Initiative*, especially after the appointment by the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of Jorge Sampaio, the former President of Portugal, as High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations.

The thesis of the 2006 OSCE Contribution to the Initiative remains valid: As an organization of common commitments and values among equals that spans three continents encompassing major world religions and cultures, the OSCE is itself already an alliance of civilizations in action.

I am pleased to see the organization during the HDIM of a Special Day on gender aspects of security. This reflects clear recognition that gender equality is vital for the OSCE's goal of comprehensive security.

The report I presented to the Permanent Council in July outlined some of the gaps we still face in the implementation of the *OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality*. In particular, the need to integrate further the gender perspective in the OSCE politico-military dimension was highlighted.

I look forward to debate on the progress reached in the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 during the HDIM Special Day. Clearly there must be greater commitment, co-operation and coordination between participating States, senior management and those in leadership positions in order to step-up efforts in this area.

It is important that our discussions consider the implementation of the *OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings*. We are grateful to the Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Eva Biaudet, for her work in catalyzing further innovative co-operation in this key area. More needs to be done to break the cycle of trafficking, to identify, protect and assist the individual victims of this crime and to bring the perpetrators to justice.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In over thirty two years, the OSCE has proved itself as a laboratory of ideas and instruments for tackling threats and challenges to security. The organic evolution of the Human Dimension, the constant debate between States and society that it reflects, is one of the greatest attributes of the Organization and clear evidence of its usefulness.

The OSCE is not a military alliance or an economic union. It is a community of values as much as a community of interests. It is our shared responsibility to ensure that the commitments designed to uphold those values remain salient and are applied. The Human Dimension Implementation Meeting is a vital part of this process.

Please allow me to congratulate Ambassador Strohal and his team for their leadership and vision in organizing this Meeting. I am also pleased to be seated along side with the new High Commissioner of National Minorities, who has already contributed so much to the OSCE. Knut, I wish you every success with your mission.

Thank you for your attention.

Thank you Christian.