

**Address by Grażyna Bernatowicz
Under-Secretary of State
in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland**

**at the Opening Session
of the OSCE Human Dimension Seminar
(Warsaw, May 14, 2012)**

*Mr. Chairman,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentleman,*

I have the pleasure to welcome you to the annual Human Dimension Seminar in Warsaw. I am particularly pleased to welcome Ms. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.

Let me also kindly welcome representative of the Chairman-in-Office. Poland praises the efforts of the Chairmanship in Office and reaffirms its continuous support for the Irish Chair in its endeavours to gather the OSCE participating states around common ideas, objectives and values. We cherish the hope that the Chairmanship's hard work will bear fruit at the end of the year, through the adoption of meaningful decisions also in the third basket, thus making the outcome of the Dublin Ministerial Council balanced and successful in all of our organisation's three dimensions.

Since I had the opportunity to attend various meetings and seminars organised in Warsaw within the OSCE human dimension, including a few Human Dimension Seminars, let me underline their thematic diversity as an important characteristic, which makes it possible to maintain their relevance, importance and prominent place in the European calendar of annual events devoted to human rights. Undoubtedly, credit for this should go to the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and its head, Ambassador Lenarčič. The Office's experience and expertise in a wide spectrum of issues – both traditionally related to human rights, as well as those that are cross-dimensional in nature – broaden our range of interest, stimulate our discussions and help us to identify and tackle new challenges.

That is why our goal should be the further implementation of the OSCE human dimension commitments, including by improving the follow-up process and analysing more carefully the recommendations resulting from human dimension events.

It is therefore of paramount importance that while embarking on discussions on the future of the human dimension events, we should aim at improving their effectiveness and be guided by the aforementioned principles, remembering about the need to secure the unhindered and active participation of civil society representatives.

Human trafficking remains a serious problem, despite the international community's incessant efforts, including those by the OSCE. Even during the Vilnius OSCE ministerial meeting, not a particularly successful endeavour, from the perspective of achievements in the human dimension, we were able to agree on the important declaration on combating all forms of human trafficking.

Human trafficking strongly affects the most vulnerable groups, such as poor people or children. It is also an extremely difficult phenomenon to combat and eradicate due to its complexity and profitability for organised crime networks. Thus, we need to acknowledge that the important work in the sphere of human trafficking undertaken by the Special Representative, Ms. Giammarinaro is tough and challenging, and we wish to recognise and praise her efforts and initiatives carried out in this field, wherein a special role is played by the Alliance Against Trafficking in Persons.

In conclusion, I would like to wish you, experts engaged in activities aimed at combating human trafficking, that your tasks be not only demanding and grueling, but also satisfying, productive and plentiful in concrete results.

Thank you for your attention.