



HDIM 2004
Closing Plenary Session, 15 October 2004

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Director of the ODIHR

- I will not attempt to summarize the summaries, let alone the recommendations we have collected, as I will be reporting to the Permanent Council in less than two weeks. I will note, however, a few things.
- First, recommendations made this year appear more focused, more immediately directed at implementation. This will assist participating States as they discuss the ideas that emerge from this fortnight and as they work through the next seven weeks to prepare Decisions for the Ministerial Council meeting in Sofia.
- Second, a number of recommendations made, directed at my Office, are in fact already implemented.
- Third, some of the recommendations contradict each other. In a strange way, this is very healthy, because it reflects a real discussion about how best the participating States, the Organization, the institutions, and our intergovernmental and non-governmental colleagues should interact and work together to achieve full compliance with human dimension commitments.
- There cannot be any reopening of the agreements made in Helsinki, Copenhagen, Moscow, Paris, Budapest, Istanbul, Maastricht, and elsewhere. There cannot be, there must not be, any walking back or walking away from the progress we have achieved in the OSCE region – from what is enormous progress indeed – in the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for the rule of law, and democratic governance.
- But there is no doubt that we can all do better. None of us – governments, organizations, institutions, or civil society – can pretend to be perfect. We should all be prepared to continue this dialogue, to admit some mistakes, to accept constructive criticism, and, most importantly, to work together for solutions.
- The HDIM is the highpoint of human dimension activities in the OSCE year. No other meeting in the OSCE region brings so many people together for discussion on so many topics.

- Over 1,000 participants registered this year; around 800 actually came – proof that this meeting is seen as very useful by governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. We had stronger participation by other parts of the OSCE family – institutions, the Secretariat, field operations – and I want to thank them for their first-hand contributions.
- The HDIM is the only place where civil society and government officials sit side by side around same table. We view this high level of interest by civil society as a reaffirmation of the Helsinki Principles and of the fundamental OSCE commitment to human security in all its aspects.
- Unfortunately, attendance by some participating States was brief or low-level, and Turkmenistan again failed to participate in any way whatsoever.
- Attention devoted to various elements of our agenda differed somewhat. As last year, we had more speakers than time available in some working sessions, and more time than speakers in others. I think we should think about adapting our time management pragmatically in order to allow optimal use of these two weeks. The ODIHR will make some proposals to participating States in this regard in the months ahead.
- All delegates will have seen the compilations of recommendations, which have been posted for some time on our new, electronic Documents Distribution System (more on that later). We collected 35 pages of recommendations from implementation review during the first week, and about two dozen pages this week, from the three “special days” and the discussion of human dimension activities, projects and programmes.
- I want to point out, in particular, the attention paid on Tuesday this week to the issues of tolerance and non-discrimination. As those of you who were present will recall, this room was very full on Tuesday, reflecting the serious nature of the issues and the deep commitment by governments, civil society and this organization to work together to address the many problems that fall under this overarching topic.
- Our work has just begun, for I fear this problem is inherent in human nature to a certain extent, but, working together, I know we can make tremendous strides. I thank you for your confidence in, and support for, the ODIHR in this regard, and I know this will be the subject of active discussions in the Permanent Council and at the Ministerial Council.
- Before I conclude, a few words about the housekeeping of this meeting. I mentioned the electronic Documents Distribution System, accessible through the bank of workstations in the corridor outside this hall. As of last night, participants had submitted a total of 461 documents to our Secretariat.
- This on-demand copying, along with the possibility to e-mail texts to your offices, means not only less baggage on your return flights but also a significant savings to the ODIHR, of a factor of 10, in fact. We are now working with the Secretariat in Vienna to provide Delegations with a CD-ROM of all the documents and to establish a link through the OSCE/ODIHR website to enable access through Internet.
- I stress that this system was designed and implemented in house by ODIHR personnel, using simple software and surplus hardware, and I compliment

Zuzanna Lukaszczyk and Piotrek Stepien for their work on this. They should be very proud. I know they are very tired.

- Thanks also are due to Basia Matusiewicz-Protas, the guardian of the speakers' list, whom many of you have visited in the past two weeks. She has once again done an excellent job in helping the moderators bring order out of potential chaos.
- Likewise to Irek Stepinski, our Senior Conference Services Assistant, who solves problems before they even appear. And to Ania Sierant, who has again managed to produce a clear and comprehensive list of participants from your electronic registrations and a large number of barely legible faxes. To Jakhongir for looking again so well after a record number of NGOs, to Steven Wagenseil, patient moderator, and to all our staff – all involved, all appreciating occasions for concrete interaction with delegations.
- And finally, to the interpreters, who have sometimes struggled to make sure that your thoughts are clearly understood by those among us who do not understand your language and who have been willing to work an extra few minutes on occasion to ensure that speaking time is given to as many participants as possible.
- In conclusion, I thank you all for your input before and during the meeting and for carrying messages forward. I want to thank especially the numerous human rights directors who have come and participated.
- As the 30th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act approaches, these two weeks have demonstrated, once more, the importance of the human dimension, its relevance and topicality. The HDIM has again proven to have the capacity to serve not only as a forum but also as a crucial tool for implementation of commitments. Let me also thank you for the trust placed in our institution. I look forward to working with you all, as we continue to develop our programmes and implement them.

Farewell, safe journey and see you again.