

Opening statement
by Ambassador Ihor Prokopchuk,
Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council at the
Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
(23 September, Warsaw)

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Mr. Leonid Kozhara I would like to warmly welcome all of you to the 2013 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting.

Respect for and promotion of democracy, human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law are cornerstones of stability and security in Europe and beyond. *The OSCE Astana Commemorative Declaration reiterates that the inherent dignity of the individual is at the core of comprehensive security*, and the commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating states. The broad concept of comprehensive security would remain hollow without the promotion and protection of human rights as its essential elements.

Translating into reality the Astana Summit's call for the establishment of a security community requires continuous engagement, coordinated efforts and persistence in implementing our commitments. Strengthening implementation of commitments by all participating States on human rights, democracy and the rule of law has been placed at the top of the Ukrainian OSCE Chairmanship's agenda.

Through many years the OSCE has elaborated an extensive acquis in the Human Dimension aimed at enhancing protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. *The HDIM, as the Europe's largest annual human rights and democracy conference dedicated to the review of implementation of the human dimension commitments, continues to remain crucially important for the fulfillment of human rights and democratic standards by the participating States.*

Let me point out that this year's HDIM is symbolic. Exactly 20 years ago, in 1993, the first CSCE Implementation Meeting on Human Dimension Issues took place in Warsaw being first of its kind.

Back in 1975 the participating States introduced the notion of “*a thorough exchange of views (...) on the implementation of the provisions*” of the Helsinki Final Act. And it was again in Helsinki 1992 where the participating States set up a specific system of reviewing the implementation of commitments, designed to be “*of cooperative nature, comprehensive in scope and at the same time able to address specific issues*” and which has developed into our annual Human Dimension Implementation Meetings.

The nature of the HDIM is unique.

On the one hand, it provides participating States with an excellent opportunity to discuss a wide range of issues relating to human rights and democracy, identify existing shortcomings, emerging challenges and share best practices in the implementation of the OSCE human dimension commitments.

On the other hand, the HDIM is a forum for broad and active participation of the civil society and NGOs. Given the security challenges that we face, free and open dialogue among NGOs representatives, OSCE institutions and the participating States, in accordance with the Helsinki 1992 document, remains of utmost importance. Civil society participation in the meeting, on equal footing, enriches our deliberations and allows to look at the situation in the OSCE area from different angles.

Excellencies,

I would like to use this opportunity to briefly highlight a few areas which the Ukrainian Chairmanship pursued throughout this year in the human dimension.

Building on the work of the previous OSCE Chairmanships and following up on last year's discussions at different human dimension events, Ukraine has prioritized for 2013 *combating trafficking in human beings, media freedom and youth human rights education on the principles of tolerance and non-discrimination.*

We have also focused our attention on issues such as free movement of people, inter-religious dialogue in promoting freedom of

religion or belief, freedom of association and assembly, as well as democratic elections and election observation.

The Chairmanship secured agreement between participating States on a balanced and relevant programme of the Human Dimension activities in 2013 and a number of successful events have already taken the place over the year.

We started the year with the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Freedom of Movement and Human Contacts, which looked into implementation of OSCE commitments and challenges in this area. It provided for an interesting discussion on policy solutions in facilitating the freedom of movement and cross-border mobility.

The Human Dimension Seminar on Media Freedom Legal Framework provided a platform for participating States and all interested actors to discuss the pressing issues of media freedom domestically and internationally, particularly in the context of legislative framework that should guarantee and foster this freedom. *This has been one of very few events on media freedom within the OSCE to which all participating States agreed by consensus.*

A Supplementary Meeting took place in July on the Rule of Law in the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights addressing the role of different frameworks and instruments to protect human rights and prevent human rights violations.

The Ukrainian Chairmanship successfully facilitated consensus building on holding the OSCE High-Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, which took place in May. The Conference addressed such important issues as combating manifestations of discrimination and intolerance, prevention and response to hate crimes, and important role of human rights education for young people to promote mutual understanding and respect for diversity.

In pursuit of its priorities the Chairmanship convened the High-Level Conference on Strengthening the OSCE Response to Trafficking in Human Beings, held in Kyiv in June, which set the ground for elaboration of a new Addendum to the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings. Adoption of such an Addendum would mark a continuous high-level commitment to tackling this problem and allow to substantively update the 2003 Action Plan and subsequent Ministerial Council decisions, declarations and recommendations.

Convinced that youth participation can bring added value to the OSCE in achieving the goals and purposes of the Organization the

Ukrainian Chairmanship hosted in July the OSCE Youth Summit in the International Children's Center "Artek" in Crimea, aimed at promoting tolerance and non-discrimination, respect for diversity, peaceful development and friendship as well as raising awareness of OSCE activities among young people. It brought together over 500 young people from different OS and partners countries.

The upcoming, last this year's Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting to be held on 7 and 8 November in Vienna will allow to mark the 10th anniversary of the OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti by focusing on assessing its implementation and taking stock of progress in this area.

The Ukrainian Chairmanship believes that all human dimension events held in 2013 make an important and meaningful contribution to strengthening the implementation of the OSCE commitments in the human dimension.

Moreover, all these meetings generated numerous proposals and recommendations that could serve as a basis for Ministerial Council decisions. *Looking ahead to the Kyiv Ministerial Council the Ukrainian Chairmanship has prepared a balanced package of draft decisions that reflects the priorities of all participating States in the human dimension. We will aim at building consensus on the draft decisions on protection of journalists, freedom of movement, freedom of religion or belief, Roma and Sinti.*

We do hope that by continuous joint efforts we will be in the position to effectively address the divergence of views in a number of areas and enhance confidence among each other. It is important to *revitalize the "culture of engagement"* that inspired the signing of the Helsinki Final Act. In 1975, divergences among signatories were far greater than those among participating States today, yet still they managed to unite around a common notion of comprehensive security and a set of shared principles and commitments that maintain their relevance today.

In achieving these objectives the Chairmanship sees a critical role in *translating our common vision of a security community formulated at the OSCE Astana Summit into common actions.* We encourage the participating States to demonstrate constructive approaches that would allow us to promote and strengthen implementation of existing commitments as well as produce decisions by the end of this year with a view to making the human dimension more efficient.

Dear colleagues,

It is clear that decisions without adequate follow-up do not lead to results. I would like to emphasize that the key word in the title of this Meeting is *implementation*. Strengthening full implementation of the extensive OSCE acquis in the human dimension remains of utmost importance with a view to safeguarding stability and security in the OSCE region.

In this regard I would like to note the high value of ODIHR's assistance to participating States in meeting voluntarily our commitments. We commend ODIHR for providing expertise to participating States in the field of elections, supporting and strengthening democratic institutions, gender equality and rule of law, building capacity of government authorities in human rights and anti-terrorism, preventing and responding to hate crimes and intolerance, and promoting full integration of Roma and Sinti people.

Let me also express my gratitude to the Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Parliamentary Assembly as well as the CIO's Personal representatives on tolerance non-discrimination for their valuable work and contribution to enhancing implementation of human dimension commitments by all participating States.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am confident that the next two weeks of debate on the implementation by OSCE participating States of their human dimension commitments will provide valuable insights and guidance for our activities through employment of best practices. This Meeting offers us an excellent opportunity to affirm our dedication to the principles of democracy, observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law and other pertinent issues that lie at the heart of the OSCE comprehensive concept of security.

I wish to thank the ODIHR's Director Ambassador Lenarcic and his staff for their tireless efforts in organizing this year's meeting. *I am confident that it will be marked by dynamic discussion, both fruitful and constructive, in the Helsinki spirit of co-operation, equality and dialogue.*

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to cordially invite all distinguished participants of the Meeting to the reception hosted by the Ukrainian Chairmanship which will take place tomorrow, September 24, 2013.

Thank you for your attention.