

**Address by Witold Waszczykowski
Under-Secretary of State
at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland
at the Opening Session
of the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
(Warsaw, September 24, 2007)**

**Mister Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am pleased to welcome you all in Warsaw at the 2007 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting. Poland is proud and honored to be the host country of this event, which has been held in Warsaw since 1993.

Over the years the Meeting has come to be recognized as one of the most significant forums devoted to human rights. Today its results are a major component of the efforts to consolidate international security and peaceful coexistence. Expanding agenda and growing number of participants testify that the importance of the HDIM is constantly increasing.

I am happy to see here so many delegates from the OSCE participating states, OSCE institutions and field presences as well as numerous representatives of other international organizations. I fully agree with ODIHR Director Ambassador Christian Strohal that: "The participation of NGO's at this conference on an equal footing with government representatives is essential for fulfilling the HDIM tasks".

Ladies and Gentlemen

The list of challenges and threats we have to confront today is indeed long. The most prominent of them are: terrorism, trans-border crime activities, trafficking in human beings, racism, xenophobia and intolerance. I am confident that the next two weeks of debate on the fulfillment by states of their OSCE human dimension commitments will provide valuable guidance for our future actions against aforementioned challenges. 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 profound issues at the heart of the OSCE mission.

It is also our duty to keep reminding the international community that the actions against terrorism and other threats, must not be achieved at the expense of human rights and individual freedoms. The human dimension acquis of the

OSCE must not be questioned, while the commitments we have assumed must be fully implemented.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you know, trafficking in human beings is the third largest criminal activity in the world today and the fastest-growing one after drug trafficking and the illegal arms trade. Trafficked persons are subject not only to sexual exploitation, but also to work-related exploitation in various sectors, including domestic service, construction and agriculture. For those reasons, most of the victims of this scourge are women and children. Poland was recently shocked by the death of three Chechen young girls, frozen and exhausted while trying with their mother to illegally cross Poland on their way to Western Europe. Let that be an example that our work against those challenges during the seminar is gravely serious. I hope the Warsaw Meeting will significantly contribute to progress in this regard.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The ODIHR, which plays significant role in disseminating international standards for free elections, rule of law and human rights, is of special importance to Poland. We firmly believe that the ODIHR's independent position should be preserved and its outstanding work in election observation continued.

Here, I particularly wish to thank Ambassador Strohal and his dedicated staff for their consistent work over many years and the preparation of this event.

I wish you fruitful work during the Meeting. There are two weeks of hard but important work ahead of us. As every year, it should advance confidence through dialog and produce tangible results in the form of concrete projects. This is expected of us.

But before we start our deliberations both in regular sessions and in the side events, I'd like to invite you to a reception given tonight by the Polish Foreign Ministry at Foksal Street, where the atmosphere promises to be more informal.

Thank you for your attention.