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Address to the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Warsaw, 6 October 2003

I thank the ODIHR for giving me the opportunity to address the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting on behalf of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, representing more than 300 Parliamentarians from the OSCE countries. I have the pleasure to convey to you the best wishes of Mr. Bruce George, President of Assembly, who regrets that he is unable to be here due to other obligations.

The Human Dimension Implementation Meeting is an important annual opportunity to assess the participating States' implementation of their OSCE commitments. It is a most useful event as long as such assessment is made honestly, openly and critically. I do hope that these three requirements, honesty, openness and spirit of constructive criticism, will dominate our work during the following two weeks. Such an open debate depends on mutual confidence and on the declared will to achieve our common goals and commitments.

I would like to take this opportunity to briefly introduce a few issues discussed during the Twelfth Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, held in Rotterdam last July. Many of the issues debated in Rotterdam are relevant to the issues on the agenda of this meeting.

The overall theme of the Rotterdam Session was "the Role of the OSCE in the New Architecture of Europe". Our key conclusion was that neither the enlargement of NATO and the EU, nor the fact that the Council of Europe includes most of the European members of the OSCE, will cause any fundamental changes to the role of the OSCE and, in particular, to its work in the human dimension, which is the focus of this meeting. The enlarged NATO remains a military institution based on the principle of exclusiveness. Military means must only be used as military defence, deterrence or as last resort after all political means have failed. The European Union will gain importance as a result of its enlargement towards East. However, the EU will, for the foreseeable future, not include all European members of the OSCE and several countries even fear new caps arising in Europe as a consequence of EU enlargement. Therefore, the OSCE, as a political instrument and common forum of 55 equal participating states from Vancouver to Vladivostok, must continue to work for the implementation of the participating States' OSCE commitments. The OSCE is unique with its institutions, field missions and as a table for dialogue. It is important that the international community has this organization and these instruments at its disposal.

At the same time, the OSCE must adapt to the changing world and respond to new challenges. Some of these new challenges were identified during our debates in Rotterdam and are recorded in the Rotterdam Declaration. I will take three examples only: Trafficking, the "New Minorities" and gender sensitivity.

- 1. Trafficking:** Trafficking in human beings will be debated intensively during this Implementation Meeting. It will be on the agenda on Friday. Trafficking in human beings has its roots in poverty and in the uneven distribution of wealth in the OSCE area. People, mostly young women, are being illegally trafficked from poverty and lack of opportunities from poorer countries to wealthier countries. And what waits for them in our wealthier countries? Simply a new kind of poverty, slavery and, again, lack of opportunities. Therefore, combating illegal trafficking goes together with combating poverty and creating equal opportunities. Trafficking in human beings is linked to organized crime and corruption. Therefore, combating illegal trafficking means also combating corruption and organized crime. Organized crime and corruption are symptoms of weakness of state institutions, lack of democracy and inadequate implementation of the rule of law. In these matter all OSCE participating States need to improve themselves. At the same time co-operation between States is essential. Countries of origin, countries of transit and countries of destination share the responsibility and thus must co-operate in combating these problems.

The Rotterdam Declaration of the Parliamentary Assembly suggests that the OSCE takes upon itself special tasks in the fight against trafficking in human beings. In many ways the OSCE is well placed in this matter. It embraces countries of origin, transit and destination. The Parliamentary Assembly calls upon the participating States and their parliaments in particular, to ensure that their national legislation provides means and tools for combating trafficking, protecting the victims and co-operating on international level. The Assembly also suggests that the OSCE should better organize its work in this matter. We called for the Chairman-in-Office to appoint a Special Representative on Trafficking in Human Beings. This would assure that these matters are constantly considered at the highest political level. At the same time the resources of the Senior Police Adviser should be strengthened and mechanisms should be established in order to co-ordinate closely with the participating States and relevant OSCE institutions and officials, including the Parliamentary Assembly, the High Commissioner on National minorities, the ODIHR and the Senior Police Adviser.

- 2. New Minorities:** The protection of the rights of national minorities has always been one of the main priorities of the OSCE. The Parliamentary Assembly highly appreciates the work of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. The High Commissioner is a most important and effective OSCE Institution.

There are so called “traditional” minorities in the OSCE area, which continue to need attention. I only mention the Roma and Sinti as an examples. However, the Rotterdam Declaration points out that there are also “new” minorities, which need attention. These minorities mostly live in Western Europe. They are a result of migration. Migration has often been considered exclusively as a problem. This notion is wrong. There has always been migration and it is a natural phenomenon. When done legally, it also is a positive phenomenon providing work force as well as human and cultural exchange and interaction. The economic and cultural development of both countries I have the privilege to be citizen of - Switzerland and Canada - depend on immigration. Of course, immigration also causes problems, which need to be recognized and solved by the countries involved. At the same time, the Parliamentary Assembly encourages the OSCE to strengthen its efforts in combating xenophobia and discrimination against minorities in

established democracies and in protecting their new minorities. The Assembly also suggests that the resources of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities be strengthened in order to deal with the protection of these new minorities and to help them integrate into the societies of their new homelands while recognizing their right to maintain their cultural heritage.

- 3. Gender Sensitivity:** Promoting awareness of the gender issue remains a priority for the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and I do hope, for the entire OSCE. We believe that the problem of gender imbalance in society and also within the OSCE should be placed at the top of the agenda until suitable solutions are implemented. As a result of the decision taken last year in Berlin, the Rotterdam Annual Session held a debate on this issue. I believe that such debates will become a regular annual event in the Assembly.

The Gender Unit at the Parliamentary Assembly has published annual reports on the gender equality situation in the OSCE participating States as well as in the Organization itself. The latest report, which was distributed at the Rotterdam Session, showed that although an equal number of men and women are employed in the OSCE overall, a thick glass ceiling seems to prevent women from entering the leadership. It is also worrying that still less women are employed in the OSCE field missions. In Rotterdam the Parliamentary Assembly discussed how to correct this situation and several Members stressed the need to ensure that the participating States promote qualified women as candidates, especially for leadership positions.

And last but not least: also the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly itself must not remain outside a critical scrutiny. As a consequence of the shortage of women in National Parliaments we are an unfairly small number of female Members in the Assembly. Therefore, Mr. Bruce George, President of the Assembly, appointed my Swedish colleague, Vice-President Tone Tingsgård as his Special Representative for Gender Issues. Gender means more than women. Thus, the gender issue is more than simply promoting women in their carriers. Most problems in our societies show gender aspects. The great majority of the victims of trafficking in human beings are women - just to come back to our first subject.

Allow me to draw attention to a very topical and important matter in the OSCE. That is the appointment of the new OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. Mr. Freimut Duve, a former active Member of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, is about to finish his term and has chosen to retire. We all are grateful to Freimut Duve for his excellent work to protect and to promote the freedom of the Media in any OSCE country. A number of Governments have put forward excellent candidates for this important post. The OSCE and the participating States need a good, competent and professional Representative on Freedom of the Media. Much work remains to be done on this field. The Representative is an important instrument to help the participating States, to defend and promote free media, which is an essential element of democracy. Any attempt by any Government to block an appointment in order to avoid potential criticism against itself, must be rejected. Such motives would be unacceptable. I appeal to all Governments of the participating States to approach this matter constructively and in good faith in order to come to a solution.

Once again, I thank for the opportunity to address this Human Dimension Implementation Meeting on behalf of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. I am particularly pleased that so many NGOs, representing the civic societies in their countries, are present. We, representatives of Governments and Parliaments, need to listen to their views particularly carefully.

Finally, I am pleased to inform you that the Parliamentary Assembly will also have an important human dimension event later this week. Some two hundred Parliamentarians will meet in Rome on Thursday, to discuss and promote freedom of religion. We will be happy to share our outcomes with you.

I wish to the meeting and to all its participants every success.