



Closing Remarks

**by Mr. Stanislav Rascan**

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(on behalf of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office Dr. Dimitrij Rupel)

at the 2005 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

**Warsaw, 30 September 2005**

Director,  
Ambassadors,  
Human Rights Directors,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the 1990s, the OSCE helped to stabilize the New Europe. Despite hopes for a new Europe whole and free, the end of communism did not mark the end of history. Inter-ethnic conflicts had to be prevented, new conflicts resolved, and democratic transition needed to be supported. There is a growing need to openly discuss issues such as mutual respect and inter-cultural, inter-religious and inter-ethnic understanding, issues of integration and migration, fighting terrorism, all kinds of illegal trafficking, including trafficking in human beings, the freedom of media, and the role of civil society in democratic transitions as well as in established democracies.

The Panel of Eminent Persons wrote in its report entitled "Common Purpose – Towards a More Effective OSCE" that – I quote – "New threats to international security and stability have emerged. Different historic backgrounds, the uneven pace of integration, economic growth and democratic development have led to the emergence of new problems in achieving comprehensive security." End of quote.

We need to address new threats. At the recent UN World Summit the need for a dialogue and alliance among civilisations and cooperation between the OSCE and the UN were discussed. Chairman-in-Office Dr. Dimitrij Rupel stressed that "we do realize that the process of changes is always difficult." He also stressed the importance of co-operation of regional organisations with the UN in several different areas. I am pleased to address this forum on behalf of Minister Rupel.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thirty years after the beginning of the Helsinki process we discuss the reform of our Organisation. Likewise within the United Nations and other international organisations, the discussions focus on addressing new threats and on how to confront them effectively. Yet, the discussions during these two weeks of the HDIM have reminded us that above all we should keep a continuous focus on the implementation of the existing commitments. To keep promises and to even strengthen our commitments where this is necessary should be our first goal.

States should not be allowed to break commitments with impunity. Empty rhetoric, either from the states concerned or the international community, is worthless. We need deeds to match our words, and that requires political courage. We need this courage when discussing the reform.

The OSCE has been one of the most progressive and effective organizations for the advancement of human rights in recent history, and in my opinion it should continue to play this role in the future. In promoting the respect for human rights among participating States, preventing and deterring human rights violations, setting high and detailed human rights standards, obtaining a wide consensus and the commitment of states to adhere to these standards, aiding states in implementing commitments, monitoring compliance, and applying various means and mechanisms to encourage and enforce this compliance, the OSCE has been indeed the leader in promoting the implementation of human rights and the rule of law, democracy and democratic elections in Europe since the end of the Cold War. The OSCE Secretariat and Institutions, in particular the ODIHR, as well as field operations have made an important contribution in implementing this comprehensive concept of security.

In the 1970s and 80s, it was dissidents who demonstrated that courage – even going to jail and risking their lives for the defense of CSCE human rights principles. There are still many brave activists in OSCE states, inspired by and fighting for OSCE commitments. Over 300 NGOs and human rights defenders participated this year at this meeting and this is a clear message to all of us that there is still a lot of work to be done. We should take the involvement and contribution of civil society seriously, otherwise we will be breaking our own promises, and the world will be less secure.

The OSCE has few enforcement mechanisms and its decisions are not legally binding. It is sometimes called a “soft” security organization based on “soft” jurisprudence. After all, it is an organization based on consensus and co-operation, not deterrence. At the same time, the OSCE has avoided the disadvantages that come with treaties, the legal remedy that it lacks in actuality – a working judicial system – is not exactly appropriate for the type of work that it does, and it also enjoys the benefits of soft law: the flexibility to be innovative in standard-setting and able to respond to new situations quickly, many of the mechanisms necessary for ensuring compliance with its commitments, which, in turn, have the binding force necessary to be taken seriously on the international stage. It seems that the OSCE commitment-making process, especially in human dimension, can qualify as contributing to the formation of regional customary law.

Mr. Chairman,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The OSCE arguably has the best capabilities for and record of the implementation and enforcement of human dimension commitments in the areas where it matters the most: regions of high tension and post-conflict recovery. The OSCE is also a key instrument for post conflict rehabilitation, and for promoting restorative justice. For example, the OSCE is now playing a key role in enabling the transfer of war crimes cases from the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia to domestic courts of Serbia and Montenegro, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina by ensuring the monitoring of war crimes trials.

One of the reasons for the OSCE success in the past is its comprehensive approach to security, whereby all three dimensions – politico-military, economic and environmental and human dimensions – play a crucial role in ensuring security. Undoubtedly, democracy and the respect for human rights provide the basis for security. Therefore, in the process of reform, we should strive to strengthen the effectiveness of the Organisation with awareness that the human dimension cannot be diminished; at the same time, the politico-military and economic-environmental dimensions should be enhanced.

I am convinced that the OSCE will remain a crucial instrument guaranteeing stability in the wide area from Vancouver to Vladivostok. If we succeed in equipping it with more effective tools, investing the necessary political will and in strengthening its role within the Transatlantic and Eurasian security environment, this will be to the benefit of all its participating States. The baseline should be to reaffirm the existing commitments and achievements and discuss how to bring them into life most effectively. Based on these grounds, we should seek the ways of how to most effectively address new security threats such as terrorism, poverty, environmental concerns, the promotion of mutual respect and understanding, as well as dialogue and alliance among civilizations.

At the end I would like to thank the ODIHR Director Ambassador Christian Strohal and his team for excellent preparation and organization of this year's Human Dimension Implementation Meeting.

Thank you for your attention.