

**Address by  
Secretary of State  
in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland  
Mr. Jan Borkowski**

**at the Opening Session of the OSCE Human Dimension Seminar  
(Warsaw, May 12, 2009)**

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

I am pleased to welcome all of you on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, Mr. Radosław Sikorski, in Warsaw at the 2009 Human Dimension Seminar.

It has been stated on many occasions, but please allow me to repeat once again that Poland is proud and honoured to host this significant event organized regularly in the framework of the OSCE Human Dimension.

It is reassuring that the work done by the OSCE in the third dimension is progressing. Only last week in Vienna experts deliberated on the issue of hate crimes. Later this year we will meet again in Warsaw to take part in the regular review of the compliance of the participating States with the OSCE Human Dimension commitments. In the meantime there are other meetings planned in Vienna, which will focus on issues of the OSCE third basket.

I am referring to the well-known to most of you calendar of scheduled events to underline the continuous importance of the Human Dimension of the OSCE. It is beyond doubt that its achievements must be preserved and further developed. The inclusiveness, ample and far-reaching nature of the Human Dimension activities is of particular importance today, when the human rights are not only confronted with the “old” threats and obstacles, but often also face challenges and limitations imposed in the name of security requirements.

In this context, the Human Dimension meetings and conferences provide us with an opportunity to recommit ourselves to the OSCE values, norms and standards. Furthermore, Human Dimension events offer a unique chance to assemble in one place delegates of governments and representatives of the nongovernmental organisations.

Here I should particularly like to underline that an important pillar of the OSCE's Human Dimension is the ODIHR. Its work done in a competent and impartial way and regardless of numerous obstacles (including political and budgetary ones) simply cannot be overestimated. The ODIHR must continue its comprehensive activities, engaging in the promotion of democracy and human rights, offering assistance to the participating States, facilitating better understanding and adherences to the OSCE fundamental values.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Let me speak now a little on the specific theme selected for the seminar we are inaugurating. First of all I would like to thank the Greek Chairmanship for suggesting this topic.

The rule of law remains one of the priority issues for the OSCE. Let me remind you that in May last year, here in Warsaw, we dedicated a similar event to constitutional justice, the subject of paramount importance to the rule of law. Our commitments in the field of rule of law have been steadily developed, regularly reappearing on the scene throughout the OSCE process – from Helsinki Final Act of 1975 up to the Ministerial Council decision taken last year in the Finnish capital. The issue encompassing various important aspects and elements continues to be high on the agenda of the OSCE field presences and the ODIHR.

The seminar focuses on the specific issues which are extremely important for any democratic state. It goes without saying that issues like appointment of judges, complaint mechanisms, public access to trials or fair trial safeguards deserve our constant attention and thorough examination.

I am confident that the three days of deliberations that are ahead of us will facilitate critical analysis of the issues on the agenda of the meeting and will make a solid contribution to better understanding and practical application of the commitments undertaken in the framework of the OSCE.

Before I conclude I would like to thank once again Ambassador Janez Lenarcic and his dedicated staff for their consistent efforts in the preparation of this event.

I wish you fruitful work during the meeting and I would like to remind you that you are all warmly welcomed to the reception offered this evening by the Polish Foreign Ministry.

**I thank you for your attention.**