



Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia to the OSCE and other International Organizations in Vienna

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Žarko Obradović, Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia to the
OSCE and Other International Organizations in Vienna**

at the Opening Session of the 2024 Warsaw Human Dimension Conference

30 September 2024

At the outset, we would like to express our appreciation to the Maltese Chairpersonship for its dedicated efforts to convene this year's Warsaw Human Dimension Conference, the ODIHR for its preparation and our Polish hosts for their hospitality.

This year's Conference is taking place against the backdrop of many challenges that our Organization is facing, including the lack of a Secretary General and Heads of Independent Institutions. Despite the difficulties, the OSCE institutions have continued to deliver on their valuable mandate across the entire OSCE region. The previous leadership guided the Organization with professionalism and dedication, and their tireless work was acknowledged by the majority of participating States. We would like to commend them for this, especially the former ODIHR Director Mr. Matteo Meccacci. We appreciate the excellent cooperation with ODIHR, which provides effective help and support in improving the electoral process, strengthening democratic institutions and implementing reforms that are a priority for the Republic of Serbia.

We believe that it is important to invest all possible efforts to find peaceful and sustainable solutions to existing challenges throughout the entire OSCE region, and rebuild trust and confidence within our Organization. While we regret that participating States have been unable to reach a consensus on holding the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, we believe that this does not diminish the value of this event. The Warsaw Human Dimension Conference continues to bring together representatives from participating States, including the civil society, providing a platform for dialogue, as well as an opportunity to address the concerns that we are all facing. We believe that it is our common goal to build a future in which democracy, rule of law, and human rights are guaranteed.

Over the next two weeks, the participants of this Conference will engage in discussions on a broad range of topics, including the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. This is very important, because there are cases of gross violations of these principles in certain areas of the OSCE region. Unfortunately, they are not addressed the same.

Dear colleagues,

I am once again compelled to point out the gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Serbs living in Kosovo and Metohija. Physical attacks, illegal police incursions, arbitrary arrests, denial of voting rights, expropriation of land, the ban on Serbian currency, and embargo on goods constitute a grim reality of the everyday life of Serbs living in Kosovo and Metohija. As the latest step in the long-lasting politics of ethnically motivated attacks and repression against the Serbs, four weeks ago a heavily armed so-called Kosovo Police forcibly entered the premises of the Provisional Bodies and other institutions in the four northern Serb-majority municipalities of Kosovo and Metohija, including a hospital, social work center, and cultural facility. These actions cannot be seen otherwise than as a direct affront and political persecution of the Serbs and their leaders in the north of Kosovo and Metohija. They primarily affect the most vulnerable social groups - women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.

Having said that, I would like to invite you to the side event dedicated to the Violation of Basic Human Rights and Principles of Equality, Especially of Women and Children in the Territory of Autonomous Province Kosovo and Metohija, which will take place on 10 October at 14:30 in the Krolewski Hall. This event will provide an important opportunity to gain valuable insight into the grave situation faced by Serbs and other non-majority communities living in Kosovo and Metohija.

The violation of human rights has no justification, no legitimacy and must be condemned. We call upon the OSCE participating States to uphold respect for democracy, the rule of law, and to consider all protection mechanisms available to secure respect of the human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the OSCE region, especially for those that are most vulnerable.

Thank you.