

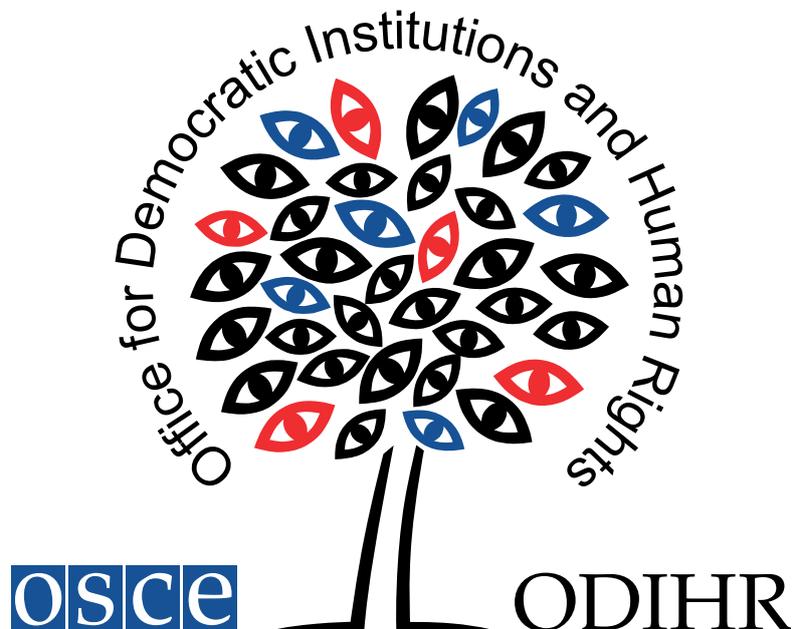


Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Conference
**PROMOTING THE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION
OF WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES**

**Vienna
16-17 April 2018**

OSCE/ODIHR Meeting Report



**Warsaw
August 2018**

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Conference
**PROMOTING THE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN WITH
DISABILITIES**

**Vienna
16-17 April 2018**

MEETING SUMMARY

On 16 and 17 April 2018, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) organized the conference *Promoting the political participation of women with disabilities*. The event was held as part of ODIHR's project, "*Our right to participate – Promoting the participation of Persons with Disabilities in political and public life (Phase II)*", implemented across the OSCE region.

The conference served as a platform to raise awareness about the limited participation of women with disabilities in political life across the OSCE region and to identify positive measures which can facilitate more diverse and inclusive democratic institutions and parliaments. It explored ways to strengthen linkages between the women's movement and the disability movement, drawing on common experiences, challenges and opportunities.

Altogether 91 (60 women and 31 men) participants, including parliamentarians, public officials, academia and civil society, women's networks and disabled people's organizations, representatives of OSCE delegations and other international organizations, such as the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, UN Women and the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights attended the conference. During the conference, 22 speakers (18 women, 4 men) from 19 OSCE participating States (pSs) shared their experiences, views and suggestions on how to strengthen the political participation of women with disabilities across the OSCE region.

The conference highlighted some of the challenges that women with disabilities face on a daily basis. This includes prevailing stereotypes, prejudices and limited expectations from the society, medical/charity approach to disability, limited access to information, infrastructure, transport, low quality segregated education, restrictions on legal capacity, violence against women with disabilities, lack of support for political participation and unequal resources. All these challenges and barriers result in women with disabilities being invisible and under-represented at all levels of decision-making: international, national, regional and local.

To address these issues, participants noted the need to implement a number of measures. States should collect gender/disability disaggregated data to allow them to develop necessary policies and measure the achieved progress. Restrictions to legal capacity, based on disability, should be removed. Girls and boys with disabilities should have free access to good quality, inclusive education and should have opportunities to develop their skills and talent to the best of their abilities on an equal basis with others. Awareness raising campaigns should be implemented, including through social media to fight the prevailing stereotypes and ensure a cultural transformation of the society. To enable the participation of women with disabilities in political life, it is necessary to build their capacity and contacts through mentorship programs and networking opportunities. Women with disabilities should be provided the necessary encouragement and support, including financial support. Leadership programs should help women develop the necessary skills, encouraging joint training to all women – with and without disabilities. Women’s organizations and disabled people’s organizations should be strengthened and should receive the support they need for their work. Finally, it is crucial to use intersectional approach, mainstream disability in all areas and ensure the respect for basic human rights of all women.

The opening remarks were delivered by **Ms. Katarzyna Gardapkhadze**, First Deputy Director of ODIHR, **Ms. Silvia Santangelo**, Counsellor, Deputy Head of Delegation for the Human Dimension of the Italian OSCE Chairmanship 2018 and **Ambassador Sian MacLeod**, Head of UK Delegation to the OSCE.

In their remarks, the speakers acknowledged that seeing persons with disabilities in leading roles in decision-making positions remains an exception rather than the norm across the OSCE region. Even less visible are women with disabilities who face additional challenges, exclusion and multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. At the same time, speakers emphasised the significance of direct engagement of women with and without disabilities in decision-making processes to shape the debate in society on disability issues, as well as in other areas.. Democratic institutions and government structures should and must represent society as a whole, and that includes women and persons with disabilities. The speakers also recognized the importance of OSCE’s engagement on this issue, including by mainstreaming the participation of persons with disabilities across the work of the organization.

Following the opening remarks, the floor was given to **Mr. Damjan Tatic**, Vice-chairperson of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and **Ms. Helga Stevens**, Member of the European Parliament and

Co-Chair of the Disability Intergroup of the European Parliament, for keynote speeches.

Mr. Damjan Tatic noted that women with disabilities are often facing discrimination and barriers to the enjoyment of their human rights, such as the right to take part in the government of one's country, the right to vote and be elected. He pointed out that voices of women with disabilities in politics were often under-represented and unheard, and that is why the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has invited state parties to take measures to empower women with disabilities to take part in political processes. Mr Tatic stressed the importance to support the participation of women with disabilities in organizations, as well as setting up specific organizations, led by women with disabilities, which will deal with issues that are especially relevant for women and girls with disabilities.

In her speech **Ms. Helga Stevens** noted that the opportunity to be involved in political life, whether by standing for elected office, electing a candidate, joining a political party, listening to or participating in a political debate or even reading political news stories in the media is at the heart of what it means to live in a democratic society. She stressed, however, that the awareness of the importance of political participation of persons with disabilities is rather low at national levels. The reason is simple – persons with disabilities are invisible citizens. Many still live segregated from the general population. Ms Stevens emphasised that accessibility, good quality education and inclusion are basic conditions for ensuring full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life.

The subsequent **three panel discussions** focused on challenges, positive practice examples from the OSCE region and on the ways to increase co-operation between diverse women's groups:

- Panel I: What challenges and obstacles prevent the participation of women with disabilities in political and public life?
- Panel II: What positive practices can be identified in the OSCE region to enable and promote more active and effective engagement of women with disabilities in political and public life?
- Panel III: How can increased co-operation and broader networks among diverse women's groups contribute to more visible and meaningful representation of women with disabilities?

Panel I: What challenges and obstacles prevent the participation of women with disabilities in political and public life?

The session focused on three main questions:

- 1) *Are women with disabilities interested to participate in political and public life?*
- 2) *What are the main obstacles which prevent women with disabilities from participating in political and public life? Are there any specific challenges to political participation which women face due to gender and/or disability?*
- 3) *What steps should be undertaken and by whom to promote stronger engagement of women with disabilities in political life? What is the role of political parties, parliaments, women’s movements in advancing such engagement?*

Speakers of the panel were **Ms. Martha Stickings**, Social Research Officer, EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, **Ms. Helga Stevens**, Member of the European Parliament and Co-Chair of the Disability Intergroup, **Ms. Ljupka Mihajlovska**, Member of Parliament in Serbia, **Ms. Rayisa Panasyuk**, Special Representative on Persons with Disabilities under the Cabinet of Ministers in Ukraine and **Ms. Safak Pavey**, Senior Advisor to Women Political Leaders Global Forum.

Ms. Martha Stickings elaborated on some challenges that persons with disabilities face to political participation, including: legal and administrative barriers such as the restrictions on the right to vote by those deprived of legal capacity, lack of accessibility, limited awareness among the key actors (including political parties, election officials and media) about the right to participate, the question of civic participation, and the lack of disability disaggregated data. She noted that in most EU member states covered by the European Social Survey, respondents with disabilities were more likely to say they were interested in politics than persons without disabilities. However, despite the interest, persons with disabilities, and especially women with disabilities are underrepresented in national parliaments and decision-making process. She noted some of the actions which should be undertaken, in light of the challenges discussed earlier.

Ms. Ljupka Mihajlovska asked if the provisions in laws are enough to enable the participation of women and women with disabilities. While quotas are important, we should focus on discussing whether women have actual influence and power with respect to political developments in their countries. Ms Mihajlovska noted that for her, the question is not whether women with disabilities want to participate in political life but if they have the opportunity to do so. The rights of women with disabilities have been denied for a very long

time. As a consequence, women are socially invisible and are often victims of psychological, physical, economic, sexual and institutional violence. Psychological support, personal assistance, housing with support and accessible public transportation and any other services which are important for the full inclusion of persons with disabilities, should be ensured.

Ms. Rayisa Panasyuk stressed that persons with disabilities need to play a role in which they are able to protect their own rights. It is very important for everyone to understand that change in the political situation depends on their participation on an equal level. She noted the importance of mentorship programmes for women with and without disabilities and a good quality education to make participation possible. In addition, she highlighted the need to remove barriers and provide access to information, infrastructure and transport to persons with different kinds of disabilities.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was noted by **Ms. Safak Pavey** as one of the most important legal documents which has been ratified by a majority of the UN member states. She noted that now that we have states on board, we need to focus on cultural transformation in our societies. This is where the issue and the challenges start. How do we introduce these quotas and legal instruments that we are developing at the national level and turn them into values in our societies? The cultural transformation is something we need to pay more attention to, while introducing supportive legislation and regulation at the political party level and national government level. She thought that local authorities will play an even bigger role in the near future in the political space, so it is also very important that women with disabilities are part of these developments as well.

Ms. Helga Stevens noted that quotas can be a good tool to kick-start change that has come after a bad precedent, but it is not a solution in itself. We do not want to see women or a person with a disability being selected for a position just because they are women or have a disability. We want to see people who are qualified for these positions and can contribute to government and politics based on their capabilities, their skills and life experience. She stressed that instead of focusing on what separates us, we should engage in a co-ordinated effort. Regardless of our beliefs, the colour of our skin or political opinions, everybody has the right to be involved in politics, and parliaments and governments need to reflect the society they represent.

During the discussion the participants elaborated on the importance to empower persons with disabilities and make them more visible in media and other areas of public life. The panellists highlighted some positive practice from their

experiences, such as, for example, improving their skills in a school of women in politics which engages participants with and without disabilities. It was stressed that when a person with a disability works on a programme for others, he or she indirectly influences the image or perception of persons with disabilities across the board which is very important. In addition, complicated political settings which exist in many countries were noted. To this end, the speakers noted that if we want further progress and more visibility of women with disabilities in political spaces, we need to establish and promote nonpartisan solidarity to help with that. Finally, the speakers emphasised the need to think about what we can do proactively to enable persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, to participate in political and public life and not just wait for certain individuals to succeed and then react to the successes they have already had.

The focus of Panel II then was on the question: *What positive practices can be identified in the OSCE region to enable and promote more active and effective engagement of women with disabilities in political and public life?*

The session focused on three main questions:

- 1) *What positive practices can be identified which address under-representation of women with disabilities in political and public life?*
- 2) *What initiatives can be implemented by different stakeholders, such as parliaments, political parties, disabled people’s organizations and women’s movements to enable stronger participation of women with disabilities?*
- 3) *How important is co-operation between political parties, members of parliament, disabled people’s organizations, women’s movement and other structures in promoting more representative societies?*

The speakers of the second panel were **Ms. Virginia Atkinson**, Senior Access and Inclusion Specialist at IFES, **Ms. Ashley Graczyk**, Councillor at Edinburgh Council, **Mr. Zurab Khrikadze**, Commission Member and the Chair of Gender Equality Council of the Central Election Commission in Georgia, **Ms. Lyazzat Kaltayeva**, Chairperson of the Central Asian Disability Forum and Head of the Association of Women with Disabilities “Shyrak” and **Ms. Vera Shamaeva**, Deputy Chairperson of the Saint-Petersburg local branch of the All-Russian Public Organisation of Persons with Disabilities “All-Russian Society of the Deaf” (“ARSD” AOPD).

Ms. Virginia Atkinson informed about IFES work on the inclusion of under-represented groups in political and public life in various countries. Ms Atkinson noted that the first step for IFES is to conduct intersectionality assessment,

looking at different barriers that people with multiple social identities encounter. Based on these findings, in some countries, IFES is working to develop a leadership course for women with disabilities. In addition, in the pre-electoral period IFES supports the establishment of policy platforms by women with disabilities and encourage political parties to sign up to the platform, committing to implement their political promises. Main conclusions and lessons learned include: (i) programming should address unique barriers encountered by women with disabilities and adapt accordingly, (ii) we have to be proactive in recruiting persons with disabilities to participate, (iii) collaboration with civil society groups, political parties, election observer groups and male allies is very important, and (iv) leadership and awareness raising, including by taking advantage of free social media, are crucial elements to include women with disabilities in political and public life.

Ms. Ashley Graczyk introduced the National Action Framework in Scotland which aims at improving the lives of persons with disabilities, promoting participation and creating a more inclusive society. Scotland Inclusion is working to implement the Framework and has been looking into the underlining reasons why persons with disabilities are not sufficiently represented in politics and elected office. Among main issues which were identified is the lack of finances. Acknowledging this challenge, Scotland has established an Access to Elected Office Fund which provides financial support to candidates with disabilities. In 2015, the Scottish government commissioned Inclusion Scotland to develop a program called Access to Politics, which proactively reaches out to disabled people who might be looking for greater involvement in political life, and offers non-financial advice to those involved in politics at any level. This includes individual goal setting, encouragement, networking and advice on the rights and adjustments that some organizations, including political parties, should make to ensure equal access.

Electoral participation of persons with disabilities was at the focus of **Mr. Zurab Khrikadze’s** presentation. He elaborated on recently established practices of the Central Election Commission in Georgia, including creating an accessible website and public service announcements, video clips and election manifestos with sign language interpretation. He noted that programs of political parties are made in an audio format in co-operation with the Eastern European Centre for Multiparty Democracy. The Commission is allocating funds for voter education and information, and provides training to election administration members on the etiquette and behaviour for working with persons with disabilities, in cooperation with IFES. Finally, the Commission has been working to improve the accessibility of polling stations for persons with various types of disabilities.

Ms. Lyazzat Kaltayeva noted that there is a prevailing medical and non-gender distinct approach to disability in Central Asia. To address these issues, as well as confront the lack of information in the public space, women with disabilities in Central Asia decided to establish a movement to promote understanding in the society of the discrimination that women with disabilities suffer. The movement provides leadership programmes and courses delivered by women with disabilities themselves. As a result, women with disabilities began to occupy greater positions of authority, and the movement started a monitoring programme on disability rights. In the last years the movement has enriched its experience and increased the number of elected candidates with disabilities in public positions. She further elaborated about her experience running as a candidate for local elections, emphasising that candidates with disabilities should be representing a broad constituency of people, not only persons with disabilities. Finally she noted that there should be equal conditions and equal resources provided to all those who are running for office, including transport resources and any other kind of support.

Ms. Vera Shamaeva informed about legislative and policy framework in the Russian Federation, protecting the rights of women and women with disabilities. She emphasized that the number of women in the Russian Parliament is 14% and that in 12 years it has increased 2.5 times. Ms. Shamaeva noted a positive trend – an increase in the number of women with disabilities receiving middle and higher education in her country. At the same time, Russian women are facing similar problems as in many other countries, for example, glass ceiling. Women with disabilities and especially deaf women or women with hearing impairments are not well aware of their rights and do not always know how to protect them. Russia is yet to establish a special organization working on the rights of women with disabilities. Meanwhile, she acknowledged the need to develop specific training and keep promoting positive experience exchange at the international level.

The discussion focused on positive and negative aspects of introducing quotas and special measures for political participation of persons with disabilities. The panellists noted that governments should provide gender mainstreamed policies and gender sensitive education at all levels to help advance women’s participation. Awareness raising campaigns should be introduced to improve an understanding about participation of women with disabilities. A question was raised on how an increased co-operation and broad networking can improve visibility of women with disabilities. It was stressed that women’s movements often do not see the matters which affect women with disabilities as a human rights issue. Promotion of positive practices from various countries is thus

important to highlight the existing examples of co-operation between the women’s movement and disability movement.

The second day of the conference was opened by **Ambassador Päivi Laivola de Rosière** of the Permanent Mission of Finland to the OSCE who emphasized that equal participation of women and men is a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development. She pointed out to the importance of access to good quality education for girls with disabilities, and said that more attention should be paid to how our democratic institutions function, including elections, parliaments and political parties.

The final panel of the conference then focused on the topic: *How can increased co-operation and broader networks among diverse women’s groups contribute to more visible and meaningful representation of women with disabilities?*

The session elaborated on three main questions:

- 1) *Women with disabilities have different identities. Does the current work of international organizations and civil society organizations sufficiently addresses and takes into account these multiple identities of women when implementing their activities/programmes?*
- 2) *How important is co-operation between different stakeholders, including women’s movements and organizations working on disability rights, as well as Roma rights to promote stronger participation of women in political and public life?*
- 3) *What positive outcomes and lessons learned can we identify from the existing examples of co-operation between women’s movement, disability movement and organizations working on inclusion of various underrepresented groups?*

The speakers of the third panel were: **Ms. Pirkko Mahlamäki**, Member of the European Disability Forum Board of Directors, Member of the Board of the European Women’s Lobby, **Ms. Maribel Derjani Bayeh**, Policy Specialist in the United Nations System Co-ordination Division of UN Women, **Ms. Saida Inoyatova**, Chairperson of the League of Women with Disabilities “Ishtirok” and **Ms. Carmen Gheorghe**, President of the “E-Romnja Association.”

Ms. Pirkko Mahlamäki mentioned the co-operation between the European Disability Forum and European Women’s Lobby as a positive example of engagement between the disability movement and the women’s movement at the European level. She emphasised that to be successful, we need to be stronger and more united as a movement, as a civil society entity, and still remember to pay special attention to people who have civic and/or multiple challenges and face multiple and intersectional discrimination or any other form of

marginalisation. She noted that during the conference we have often talked about the *Nothing About Us Without Us* principle. However, she wanted to invite the participants to think in more positive terms: *All About Us With Us*. It is important to rethink the idea that there are specific disability-related issues, such as social protection, social welfare and disability policy. Instead, we should consider that there are very few areas of policy that do not have a dimension that affects persons with disabilities and women with disabilities more specifically.

Ms. Maribel Derjani Bayeh referred to what had been earlier noted about the importance of partnerships and co-operation between different groups. She stressed that issues and topics are not limited to persons with disabilities or to women, or women with disabilities. Agency and participation of women with disabilities should be across all areas of life. Gender mainstreaming and equality have been helpful in advancing the empowerment and participation of women with disabilities, but women of different identities are not fully represented, so there are opportunities for synergies we can build on. Ms Derjani Bayeh noted that the discussion about persons with disabilities and empowerment of women is a relatively new development, and noted some mechanisms which have been already established at the international level to include members of organizations of women with disabilities, such as the UN Women Civil Society Advisory Group.

Ms. Saida Inoyatova informed that while a lot of positive work has been done in Tajikistan across different public structures and organizations to promote the rights of persons with disabilities and mainstream disability within the government policies, a number of challenges still remain. Among them are: a charity-based approach to disability, inaccessible environment, dependence of women with disabilities on their relatives, limited disability disaggregated data, lack of solidarity among disabled people’s organizations. Not many disability rights organizations consider it necessary to include women with disabilities in their programmes and work. Due to these issues, women with disabilities continue to face discrimination and isolation. Ms Inoyatova emphasised that it is necessary to continue empowering women with disabilities through various activities and capacity building programmes, as well organize public awareness programmes to change public perceptions.

Finally, **Ms. Carmen Gheorghe** informed about the work of her organization “E-Romnja Association,” noting that their approach is intersectional, based on multiple identities that women have. The organization does not see any specific area or question as specifically a women’s issue. All areas and questions can have an effect on women’s lives. She recognized that unfortunately it is not always possible to address all these dimensions due to the lack of time,

experience, and resources, both financial and human. To this end, the organization has decided to engage with different coalitions, networks, informal groups, where it is possible to act in solidarity and have a greater input. Therefore, E-Romnja Association has developed informal alliances with different NGOs on topics such as reproductive rights, sexual education, LGBT issues, social assistance, etc. She acknowledged that many of the challenges that Roma women face are similar to the ones encountered by women with disabilities: isolation, segregation, lack of adequate services and support, institutional discrimination, they are under-represented and invisible in policies or neglected in decision making processes. When using an intersectional approach, it is possible to bring more benefit to individual lives. Eventually it is not about dividing the agenda, creating singular spaces, but it is about power-sharing, and it should be more about solidarity.

The discussion elaborated further on ways how an intersectional and inclusive approach in programmes can be used to achieve the most beneficial outcome for all women with different identities. Some participants raised a question regarding the importance to provide education on disability and gender equality to young people at the elementary level to break stereotypes and promote inclusion. It was noted that one of the most effective ways to fight stereotypes is for children be together with children with different backgrounds and disabilities. Insufficient data on persons with disabilities and their participation, as well as limited data analysis and dissemination was repeatedly mentioned as one of the challenges that should be urgently addressed.

In the closing remarks **Mr. Jürgen Heissel**, Deputy Head of Mission for the Human Dimension, Permanent Mission of Austria to the OSCE recalled one of the most important conclusions of the conference: that women with disabilities have strong interest to participate in public and political life. The only question is if they have a possibility to do so. He highlighted a number of challenges which prevent the participation of women with disabilities, including the prevailing stereotypes and prejudices, low expectations of women with disabilities, inequality of resources, limited access to information, inaccessible infrastructure and transport and low quality and segregated education for girls with disabilities. Mr Heissel then elaborated on the most urgent steps that should be taken to address these issues, including fighting stereotypes and raising awareness, ensuring equal rights of all women and mainstreaming disability across all areas of life.

Mr. Branislav Pavlovič, Deputy Head of Mission, Permanent Mission of the Slovak Republic to the International Organizations in Vienna, then spoke about OSCE commitments in the area of political participation of persons with

disabilities. He noted that in line with these commitments and obligations, OSCE participating States should take concrete steps to ensure all women and men with disabilities have a voice and an active role in decision-making processes in their countries at all levels: national, regional and local. He further stressed that a number of steps can be taken by OSCE in this respect. Firstly, all events should be accessible to all persons with various types of disabilities. Second, the means of communication should be improved, including, for example, the OSCE website. Thirdly, the needs of persons with disabilities, when implementing programs and activities, should also be taken into account. We should step up all our efforts to make sure that persons with disabilities should enjoy the same treatment when applying for a job or seeking an appointment, be it within the OSCE or in their home countries.

ANNEX 1: AGENDA

Conference

Promoting the political participation of women with disabilities

Vienna, Hofburg
Neuer Saal

16 and 17 April 2018

AGENDA

Day 1, 16 April 2018

10:00 – 10:30 **Registration and welcoming coffee**

10:30 - 10:50 **Opening remarks**

- Ms. Katarzyna Gardapkhadze, First Deputy Director of ODIHR
- Ms. Silvia Santangelo, Counsellor, Deputy Head of Delegation for the Human Dimension of the Italian OSCE Chairmanship 2018
- Ambassador Sian MacLeod, Head of UK Delegation to the OSCE

10:50 - 11:20 **Keynote speech**

- Mr. Damjan Tatic, Vice-chairperson of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Ms. Helga Stevens, Member of the European Parliament and Co-Chair of the Disability Intergroup

11:20 – 13:00 **Panel discussion I:**

What challenges and obstacles prevent the participation of women with disabilities in political and public life?

Persons with disabilities remain widely under-represented in political life across the OSCE region. Women with disabilities are even less visible in elected positions and democratic institutions, facing double challenges and often discrimination due to both disability and gender. The panel will identify and discuss the main obstacles which prevent

the engagement of women with disabilities in public and political life, including in political parties and parliaments.

Panel speakers:

- Ms. Martha Stickings, Social Research Officer, EU Agency for Fundamental Rights
- Ms. Helga Stevens, Member of the European Parliament and Co-Chair of the Disability Intergroup
- Ms. Ljupka Mihajlovska, Member of Parliament in Serbia
- Ms. Rayisa Panasyuk, Special Representative on Persons with Disabilities under the Cabinet of Ministers in Ukraine
- Ms. Safak Pavey, Senior Advisor to Women Political Leaders Global Forum

Moderator: Ms. Amarsanaa Darisuren, OSCE Senior Adviser on Gender Issues

13:00 – 14:30

Lunch

14:30 – 16:00

Panel discussion II:

What positive practices can be identified in the OSCE region to enable and promote more active and effective engagement of women with disabilities in political and public life?

In a number of OSCE participating States governments, political parties and Disabled People’s Organizations have implemented positive practice initiatives which have contributed to increased participation of women with disabilities in decision-making. The session will explore some of these initiatives, reflect on the lessons learned and identify initiatives which could be used in different national contexts.

Panel speakers:

- Ms. Virginia Atkinson, Senior Access and Inclusion Specialist at IFES
- Ms. Ashley Graczyk, Councillor at Edinburgh Council
- Mr. Zurab Khrikadze, Commission Member and the Chair of Gender Equality Council of the Central Election Commission in Georgia

- Ms. Lyazzat Kaltayeva, Chairperson of the Central Asian Disability Forum and Head of the Association of Women with Disabilities “Shyrak”
- Ms. Vera Shamaeva, Deputy Chairperson of the Saint-Petersburg local branch of the All-Russian Public Organisation of Persons with Disabilities “All-Russian Society of the Deaf” (“ARSD” AOPD)

Moderator: Ms. Tiina Kukkamaa-Bah, Chief of Democratic Governance and Gender Unit, ODIHR

16:00 – 18:00 **Civil society networking event and reception**

Day 2, 17 April 2018

9:30 – 10:00 **Welcoming coffee**

10:00 - 10:15 **Opening remarks and recap from Day 1**

- Ambassador Ms. Päivi Laivola de Rosière, Permanent Mission of Finland to the OSCE

10:15 – 11:40 **Panel discussion III:**

How can increased co-operation and broader networks among diverse women’s groups contribute to more visible and meaningful representation of women with disabilities?

Addressing intersectionality and creating closer interaction between the women’s movement and the disability movement will be the focus of the final panel discussion. The panel will explore how diverse women’s groups can promote inclusion in political and public life through increasing co-operation with and among women who often face double marginalization and exclusion due to race, disability, ethnic origin and other factors.

Panel speakers:

- Ms. Pirkko Mahlamäki, Member of the European Disability Forum Board of Directors, Member of the Board of the European Women’s Lobby
- Ms. Maribel Derjani Bayeh, Policy Specialist in the United Nations System Co-ordination Division of UN Women

- Ms. Saida Inoyatova, Chairperson of the League of Women with Disabilities “Ishtirok”
- Ms. Carmen Gheorghe, President of the “E-Romnja Association”

Moderator: Ms. Martha Stickings, Social Research Officer, EU Agency for Fundamental Rights

11:40 – 12:00

Closing remarks

- Mr. Jürgen Heissel, Deputy Head of Mission for the Human Dimension, Permanent Mission of Austria to the OSCE
- Mr. Branislav Pavlovič, Deputy Head of Mission, Permanent Mission of the Slovak Republic to the International Organizations in Vienna

12:30 – 14:00

Lunch

ABOUT THE OSCE/ODIHR

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) is the OSCE’s principal institution to assist participating States “to ensure full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, to abide by the rule of law, to promote principles of democracy and (...) to build, strengthen and protect democratic institutions, as well as promote tolerance throughout society” (1992 Helsinki Summit Document). This is referred to as the OSCE human dimension.

The OSCE/ODIHR, based in Warsaw (Poland) was created as the Office for Free Elections at the 1990 Paris Summit and started operating in May 1991. One year later, the name of the Office was changed to reflect an expanded mandate to include human rights and democratization. Today it employs over 130 staff.

The OSCE/ODIHR is the lead agency in Europe in the field of **election observation**. Every year, it co-ordinates and organizes the deployment of thousands of observers to assess whether elections in the OSCE region are conducted in line with OSCE Commitments, other international obligations and standards for democratic elections and with national legislation. Its unique methodology provides an in-depth insight into the electoral process in its entirety. Through assistance projects, the OSCE/ODIHR helps participating States to improve their electoral framework.

The Office’s **democratization** activities include: rule of law, legislative support, democratic governance, migration and freedom of movement, and gender equality. The OSCE/ODIHR implements a number of targeted assistance programs annually, seeking to develop democratic structures.

The OSCE/ODIHR also assists participating States’ in fulfilling their obligations to promote and protect **human rights** and fundamental freedoms consistent with OSCE human dimension commitments. This is achieved by working with a variety of partners to foster collaboration, build capacity and provide expertise in thematic areas including human rights in the fight against terrorism, enhancing the human rights protection of trafficked persons, human rights education and training, human rights monitoring and reporting, and women’s human rights and security.

Within the field of **tolerance** and **non-discrimination**, the OSCE/ODIHR provides support to the participating States in strengthening their response to hate crimes and incidents of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance. The OSCE/ODIHR's activities related to tolerance and non-discrimination are focused on the following areas: legislation; law enforcement training; monitoring, reporting on, and following up on responses to hate-motivated crimes and incidents; as well as educational activities to promote tolerance, respect, and mutual understanding.

The OSCE/ODIHR provides advice to participating States on their policies on **Roma and Sinti**. It promotes capacity-building and networking among Roma and Sinti communities, and encourages the participation of Roma and Sinti representatives in policy-making bodies.

All ODIHR activities are carried out in close co-ordination and co-operation with OSCE participating States, OSCE institutions and field operations, as well as with other international organizations.

More information is available on the ODIHR website (www.osce.org/odihr).