

OVERVIEW OF SIDE EVENTS
As submitted by the organisers
28 September – 09 October 2009
Warsaw, Poland

The Helsinki Document of 1992 (Chapter IV) called for increasing the openness of OSCE activities and expanding the role of NGOs. In particular, in paragraph (15) of Chapter IV the participating States decided to facilitate during CSCE meetings informal discussion meetings between representatives of participating States and of NGOs, and to provide encouragement to NGOs organizing seminars on CSCE-related issues. In line with this decision, NGOs, governments, and other participants are encouraged to organize side meetings at the Implementation Meeting on relevant issues of their choice.

The side events below have been exclusively organized and scheduled at the request of participants of the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting. The content for each meeting was prepared by the organization convening the events and does not necessarily reflect the views of the OSCE/ODIHR. .

The below descriptions have been provided by the organizers. They have been lightly edited by ODIHR for language but not for content. Responsibility for content remains with the organizers.

Monday, 28 September

Time: 13.00-15.00
Venue: Meeting Room 2
Title: Subsidiarity and the Limits of Conscientious Objection

Convenor: European Humanist Federation
Working languages: English, French, Italian

Summary: There can be little justification for forcing someone to act contrary to their conscience in private life. Is the same true when a person is acting in a public role? In particular, if the person in question holds a public office, If he or she is charged with delivering a public service.

Churches and religious organizations claim that the right of conscientious objection is supreme and religious bodies are seeking in many countries to take over and run public services under contract on behalf of local or national government. The Roman Catholic Church promotes the concept of subsidiarity – as in the latest papal encyclical “Caritas in Veritate”. The combination of these two trends threatens the rights not just of people who follow other religions/confessions and non-believers but also of less fervent or orthodox followers of the same religion. What happens when religious office holders refuse to perform parts of their duties as magistrates or public registrars, or doctors? When religious suppliers of services deny citizens their lawful rights because of a religious doctrine?

The European Humanist Federation argues that religious exceptionalism has already gone too far. Individuals who willingly take on public office, organizations that willingly enter into contracts to deliver public services should not be allowed to pick and choose which parts of their duties they will perform.

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 13.00-15.00
Venue: Meeting Room 3
Title: Lawyers of Kazakhstan Clamour Against Pressure Brought by Law-Enforcement Authorities
Convenor: Almaty Bar Association
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: Lawyers of Kazakhstan are facing resistance to their activities from law-enforcement agencies. Journalists are required by special services to have some special permissions. The right of citizens of Kazakhstan to protection of their rights is in jeopardy

Tuesday, 29 September

Time: 13.00-15.00
Venue: Meeting Room 1
Title: Kazakhstan & the OSCE Chairmanship
Convenor: Freedom House
Working languages: English

Summary: At the 2007 Ministerial Council Meeting in Madrid, Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister promised the participating States that his country would implement far-reaching domestic reforms before assuming the chairmanship of the OSCE. At this side event, a group of leading Kazakhstani civil society activists will provide an analysis of the steps Kazakhstan's government has taken to date and the steps it still needs to take in order to fulfil those obligations. Presenters will include: Ninel Fokina (Almaty Helsinki Committee), Tamara Kaleeyeva (International Fund for the Defense of Freedom of Speech "Adil Soz"), Zhemis Turmagambetova (Charter for Human Rights), and Vera Tkachenko (Legal Policy Research Center).

Moderator: Iva Dobichina (Freedom House)

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 13.00-14.00
Venue: Meeting Room 2
Title: Awareness of Unwanted Same-Sex Attractions for the Public Debate
Convenor: Redeemed Lives, INC.
Working languages: English

Summary: This workshop will equip employees of NGOs and government agencies to sensitively engage the issue of unwanted same-sex attractions. Specific areas covered include various reasons (both religious and non-religious) for some people finding same-sex attraction to be unwanted. Also included are suggestions for aiding such people find the help they desire, be it in the form of psychological treatment or counselling or from Jewish and Christian religious resources.

Time: 13.00-15.00
Venue: Meeting Room 3

Title: Study (through short videos and interviews with sociologists) of the hatred and fear of religious minorities in French-speaking countries.
Convenor: European Raelian Movement
Working languages: English, French

Summary: Short videos and extracts from French and Belgian broadcasts and interviews with sociologists demonstrating how fear and hatred against religious minorities has spread in French speaking countries

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 13.15-14.45
Venue: Plenary Hall
Title: Involving Defenders, Improving Standards: the Case for Government co-operation with Human Rights Defenders
Convenor: ODIHR /HR
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: Human rights defenders at times still face challenges in exercising their work throughout the OSCE region. This side event aims to keep the issue of human rights defenders on the international agenda while at the same time using the opportunity to show how human rights defenders can positively influence the human rights climate in an OSCE participating State. One governmental and one civil society representative from different regions within the OSCE area will share concrete examples of fruitful cooperation between defenders and governmental authorities.

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 13.00-15.00
Venue: Opera Room
Title: Questions and Answers (Q&A) with the Advisory Council of the OSCE/ODIHR Advisory Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief

Convenor: ODIHR/TND

Working languages: English

Summary: ODIHR will convene a Questions and Answers event (Q&A) with the Advisory Council of the OSCE/ODIHR Advisory Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief during the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM).

This event aims at creating the opportunity for an informal and open discussion with the Advisory Council on issues related to freedom of religion or belief in the OSCE area. It is structured around a Q&A format to make the debate more focused and dynamic. Interested participants will be able to benefit from the Advisory Council's expertise on specific subject matters. The Advisory Council will gain a deeper understanding of themes and issues discussed by the main actors in the field. It is expected that this discussion will inform the Advisory Council's update of the 2004 Guidelines for Review of Legislation Pertaining to Religion or Belief.

The Q&A will start with a short presentation by the Advisory Council on their activities and issues of interest. Then, the floor will be opened for questions. Each question will be answered by an expert of the Advisory Council. At the end of the session, the Advisory Council will summarize the discussion and highlight the main points emerged during the event.

Please submit any questions in advance by e-mail to simona.santoro@odhr.pl by 24 September 2009.

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 13.00-15.00
Venue: US Delegation Room (1St floor)
Title: The Role of the Human Dimension in European Security Architecture
Convenor: US Mission to the OSCE
Working language: English

Summary: Participating States have commenced a wide-ranging dialogue on European security. Despite efforts by some to limit the discussion topics to traditional security or so-called “hard security” issues, most participating States have maintained that such a dialogue must encompass all three of the OSCE dimensions (political-military, human and economic). The side event, featuring a speaker well acquainted with the security debate in Europe and the extensive human dimension track record of the OSCE, will address the importance of continued progress in the full array of human dimension activities in the OSCE area as a cornerstone to enduring security in Europe. The side event aims to promote discussion on how OSCE principles and commitments set out an essential framework for ensuring security and how perceptions of insecurity can grow when those principles and commitments are not being observed and implemented.

The speaker at this side event will be Ambassador John Kornblum, former Assistant Secretary of State and U.S. Ambassador to the OSCE.

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 18.00-20.00
Venue: Meeting Room 2
Title: Present status of Protection of Freedom of Religion or Belief Rights in the Republic of Kazakhstan
Convenor: Institute of European Law and Human Rights, Human Rights Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: The side event will be about Freedom of Religion or Belief in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The OSCE and NGO experts will look at the legal and public possibilities of Kazakh citizens to choose their beliefs and practice their own religion. Representatives of Kazakh NGOs, deputies of Kazakhstan’s parliament, the Human Rights Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan and others will take part.

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 18.00-20.00
Venue: Meeting Room 3
Title: The Role of National Human Rights Bodies in the Prevention of Ill-treatment of Detainees
Convenor: PRI & University of Bristol HRIC
Working language: English

Summary: There is an increasing realization of the key role to be played by national human rights institutions in preventing ill-treatment of detainees.

The aim of this side event is to consider recent developments relating to the role of such bodies, including the impact of the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture, and how their use and effectiveness can be maximized. Building on the experience of the seminar co-sponsored by the OSCE in Prague in 2008, particular attention will be given to how such bodies can most effectively be configured, their powers, the various models of operation that they might employ as an element of a preventive strategy and the approaches and standards which they may adopt. The overall aim is to contribute to thinking in the OSCE region on how best to engage with national authorities to enhance the protection of persons deprived of their liberty.

Wednesday, 30 September

Time: 13.00-15.00
Venue: Meeting Room 1
Title: Torture in Russia: Problems and Ways Out
Convenor: Committee Against Torture (CAT)
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: This side event is intended to highlight the challenges in investigating torture cases and bringing perpetrators to justice, including the indifference of governmental institutions, judiciary and prosecution and threats to human rights defenders. The INGO CAT will present its experiences in Russia.

The objective of the event is to raise awareness among the governments in the OSCE regions about cases of torture in Russia and initiate a call for law improvement and a change in law enforcement practice; to draw the attention of NGOs and state representatives and to call upon the Russian state authorities to prohibit absolutely the use of torture, conduct proper investigations of torture cases, use of medical documentation and ensure torture victims' access to justice, reparations and rehabilitation services.

Another topic that will be also discussed is the need for the promotion of the implementation of the Istanbul Protocol in Russia, including basic education of medical specialists dealing with torture survivors as a part of their everyday work.

The side event will include:

Demonstration of a documentary film describing the torture problem in Russia – 30 min;
Presentations of speakers – 30 min;
Panel discussion – 60 min
Presentation of a common paper for signing.

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 13.00-15.00

Venue: Meeting Room 2
Title: Arbitrary Detention in OSCE Participating States, with a Focus on Central Asia
Convenor: Frontline, the Observatory (FIDH –OMCT), Human Rights Watch
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: The panelist will report on the question of the arbitrary detention of human rights defenders in several OSCE participating States, notably Central Asia

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 13.00-15.00
Venue: Meeting Room 3
Title: Assessing Damage, Urging Action: the Way forward for Counter-terrorism in the OSCE Region
Convenor: International Commission of Jurists
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: As early as 1983, the OSCE participating States expressed “their determination to take effective measures for the prevention and suppression of acts of terrorism”.¹ Over the past decade, the fight against terrorism has become a priority for the OSCE. As affirmed by the UN Security Council, the OSCE Bucharest Plan of Action for Combating Terrorism (2201) and the OSCE Charter on Preventing and Combating Terrorism (2002) among others, responses to the threat of terrorism must not unlawfully infringe upon, damage or destroy the very standards, principles and values one is trying to defend and protect in the first place. Counter-terrorism measures which violate international human rights standards are counter-productive.

In 2005, the *Eminent Jurists Panel on Terrorism, Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights* commenced one of the most comprehensive inquiries ever undertaken into the impact of counter-terrorism measures on human rights. The event will highlight key findings of the Report of Eminent Jurists Panel “Assessing Damage, Urging Action” issued in 2009 and will provide for a discussion on the experience of counter-terrorism measures and their impact on human rights protection in the OSCE region, and on the future role of the OSCE and its participating States in preventing and combating terrorism.

The Eminent Jurists Panel was an independent body of eight distinguished judges and lawyers established by the ICJ to conduct a global inquiry into the impact of counter-terrorism and human rights. Its final report is based on 16 public hearings held around the world and a series of individual meetings with stakeholders, including senior government officials, members of the judiciary and legal profession and of civil society. The Panel examined key issues in the fight against terrorism, including the consequences of a “war on terror” paradigm, the increased role of intelligence services, the reliance on administrative measures based on intelligence and the role of the criminal justice system in countering terrorism. The report calls for a fundamental reform of international and national counter-terrorism policy at a time when, seven years after 9/11, there is a unique momentum for change. For more information, see www.icj.org

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 13.15-14.45
Venue: Plenary Hall

Title: Presentation of the National Human Rights Action Plan of the Republic of Kazakhstan”
Convenor: Human Rights Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: The National Plan was prepared and based on the results of the Baseline Report on human rights in Kazakhstan and research conducted by governmental human rights organizations and international organizations, using data from a sociological survey.

Establishing positive dynamics in the development of the country’s mechanisms for the protection of human rights, the National Plan reveals the presence of gaps in the legislative base and practices of application of rights and the absence of sufficient coordination and systematization in the work of governmental institutions and NGOs for the protection of human rights.

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 13.00-15.00
Venue: Opera Room
Title: The Fight Against Torture: the OSCE Experience – launch of the ODIHR manual
Convenor: ODIHR/Rule of Law
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: Torture is a phenomenon that continues to exist and requires further action in the OSCE region. Through the work of OSCE field operations in the area of torture prevention, the organization has gained significant experience in how to best tackle torture and other forms of inhuman and degrading treatment. In accordance with its mandate, ODIHR has assembled all of this experience to make it available to a wide audience, including torture prevention practitioners, OSCE field operations, and relevant policy makers in the 56 participating States. Moreover, the online-publication takes into consideration latest developments in the international regulatory framework addressing the issue of torture and provides examples of how participating States moved towards implementation of the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment (OPCAT).

ODIHR will officially launch the online publication in this side event. The Office will be supported by representatives from OSCE field operations in Baku, Moldova and Montenegro who will present their torture prevention activities and report on challenges and best practices and how they can employ the publication in their work.

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 18.00-20.00
Venue: Meeting Room 1
Title: Torture Prevention and Victim Rehabilitation
Convenor: Freedom House
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: Torture in Central Asia: Opportunities for Ending Impunity

The past 12 months have been marked by the unprecedented attention given to the problem of torture in Central Asia, most notably in Kazakhstan. As Kazakhstan prepares to assume the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office, it has been under review by the UN Committee against Torture, visited by the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, and investigated by Amnesty International. As a result, a group of Kazakh NGOs united to create a coalition committed to ending torture.

Manfred Nowak, the UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment or punishment concluded that in Kazakhstan he “received many credible allegations of beatings with hands and fists, plastic bottles filled with sand, police truncheons; of kicking, asphyxiation through plastic bags and gas masks used to obtain confessions from suspects.” Similarly, there have been cases of juvenile torture in Kyrgyzstan’s Chui oblast, and there were also reports of torture among those arrested at a religious celebration in Nookat, including an account of a pregnant woman who was led to miscarry. In Uzbekistan, an expert working group has come to the realization that even after the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture visited the country in 2003, the majority of his recommendations have not been heeded by the government.

The Open Society Justice Initiative and Freedom House would like to jointly use this opportunity to shed light on the issue of torture in Central Asia, to present its roadmap for torture reform to the OSCE community, and to urge the governments of Central Asian states, including Kazakhstan, to fully implement fully their OSCE human dimension commitments against torture. Panelists will include human right defenders from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.

Time: 18.00-20.00
Venue: Meeting Room 2
Title: 193-1: Criminal Prosecution for Activities Undertaken by Non-registered NGOs in Belarus
Convenor: The Assembly of Pro-democratic NGOs of Belarus
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: Activities undertaken by non-registered NGOs in Belarus have been prohibited since 1999. In 2006, article 193.1 of the Criminal Code was introduced, which implemented a criminal penalty for activities performed on behalf of non-registered public associations, political parties, religious organizations and foundations. Such activities are now punishable under Article 193.1 by fine, arrest or imprisonment for up to two years.

During this side-event, representatives of Belarusian human rights organizations will make a legal analysis of the ways in which Article 193.1 against the activists of non-registered NGOs was implemented in the period 2006-2009. Proposals of possible ways of improving the situation in the sphere of freedom of association in Belarus will be examined. Also an evaluation will be made of the actions of the Belarusian authorities in the field of normalizing the situation with NGOs in the light of European Union’s new politics in regard to Belarus, will be given

Time: 18.00-20.00
Venue: Meeting Room 3
Title: The “road map” for the coming OSCE Chairmanship. Putting it into practice by means of special services and their outrageous actions
Convenor: Foundation “Civic Activity”
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: Kazakhstan is under the reign of the special services. There have been recent arrests of businessmen and state officials and persecution of dissenters at all levels. Putting the lawyers and relatives under pressure has become common practice – viz the cases of Zhovtis, Dzhakishev, Ablyazov and Yesergepov.

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 18.00-20.00
Venue: Opera Room
Title: Rule of Law in Russia-- Latest Developments
Convenor: Coalition of Russian and International NGOs
Working languages: English

Summary: The Rule of law in Russia remains problematic. There are systematic violations of freedom of assembly by the authorities and the latest amendments to NGO legislation leave doubts about the willingness of the government to lessen the regulatory burden on NGOs. Anti-extremism legislation continues to be widely misused and constitutes a danger for civil rights. Torture and cruel treatment are extensively used by law enforcement bodies and are not addressed on a systematic level by the authorities. Human rights defenders remain a vulnerable group with risks ranging from defamation in mass media and threats from neo-nazi groups to searches, abductions and assassinations. Representatives of human rights organizations working in Russia will report on current developments and present their recommendations.

Refreshments will be provided

Thursday, 01 October

Time: 13.00-15.00
Venue: Meeting Room 1
Title: Human Rights in Tajikistan
Convenor: OSCE Office in Tajikistan
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: The issue of human rights in Tajikistan will be raised by representatives of civil society and local and international NGOs, as well commented on by representatives of governmental authorities. Selected experts will present selected aspects of the challenges facing the issue of human rights and its varying dimensions in Tajikistan.

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 13.00-15.00
Venue: Meeting Room 2
Title: Human Rights Protection in the Return of Trafficked Persons. Case Studies and Draft Guidelines
Convenor: ODIHR/HR
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: Countries are increasingly resorting to measures to return undocumented migrants to their countries of origin, according to research. These measures are also applied to trafficked persons who do not have a regular residence status in the

country of destination. In 2008, the ODIHR commissioned a series of papers on the return of trafficked persons and/or undocumented migrants to their countries of origin with a view to examining the different aspects of the process and its overall compliance with human rights standards. Papers were commissioned for the UK, Germany, Spain and Italy – all important destination countries for trafficked persons in the OSCE region. The papers highlighted a number of important issues that deserve further attention. These include continuing difficulties with the identification of trafficked persons resulting in possibly significant numbers of trafficked persons not being given the opportunity to establish their status during proceedings to remove them; the detention of vulnerable people; the failure to conduct risk assessments to ensure the safety of the return, the application of re-entry bans and re-trafficking. In June 2009, ODIHR hosted an expert meeting for civil society and international organizations to explore the gaps in protection and make recommendations for future action. This event will allow for a presentation of the country papers and discussion of recommendations for future action.

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 13.00-15.00
Venue: Opera Room
Title: Addressing Pressure on HR Defenders in the Caucasus
Convenor: The Human Rights House Network and the Observatory
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: Human Rights defenders from Northern and Southern Caucasus are facing increased pressure. How can ODIHR's focal point and international partner organizations assist defenders at risk in this region? What can human rights defenders from the Caucasus learn from the work of organizations in Belarus? Representatives working and/or associated with the Human Rights House Network and the Observatory (Mothers of Dagestan, the Chechen magazine DOSH, the Human Rights Centre (HRIDC), the Legal Education Centre and Viasna) will report on their own experience.

Beverages will be provided

Time: 18.00-20.00
Venue: Meeting Room 2
Title: Compensation of Trafficked Persons: Law and Practice from the OSCE Region
Convenor: ODIHR/ATP
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: Trafficked persons may suffer serious harm through trafficking, yet few ever receive compensation. The 2008 ODIHR report on *Compensation for Trafficked and Exploited Persons in the OSCE Region* highlighted many of the difficulties in law and practice that victims face in making successful claims. Civil society organizations in recent years have taken up the challenge of tackling this failing and have intensified their efforts to raise awareness of the problems and take steps to address the gaps. This side event brings together La Strada International, the German Institute for Human Rights, the Albanian Center

for Civic and Legal Initiatives, the Bureau for Human Rights in Tajikistan and Polish labour lawyers to present current examples of effective action to obtain compensation for trafficked and exploited persons.

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 18.00-20.00
Venue: Meeting Room 3
Title: Misuse of the Fight against Terrorism and Extremism in Russia
Convenor: FIDH, Civic Assistance Committee, Russia, Dagestan mothers for Human Rights, Russia
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: The discussion will focus on anti-terrorist and anti-extremist practices in Russia, including the northern Caucasus and Tatarstan: the complex anti-terrorist and anti-extremist legislation can be used against the followers of “non-traditional” Islam, against the political opposition, the media and sometimes NGOs all around Russia.

The report, entitled “A society under control: misuse of the fight against terrorism and extremism in Russia”, will also be presented.

Beverages will be provided

Friday, 02 October

Time: 13.00-15.00
Venue: Meeting Room 1
Title: Presentation of the New Educational Tool “Human Rights Education in the School Systems of Europe, Central Asia and North America: A Compendium of Good Practice”
Convenor: ODIHR/HR, CoE, OHCHR
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: Upon the initiative of the OSCE/ODIHR, the four partner organizations – the Council of Europe (CoE), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the OSCE/ODIHR – have developed a practical tool that provides examples and guidance for all those involved in human rights education in the school system: “Human Rights Education in the School Systems of Europe, Central Asia and North America: A Compendium of Good Practice.” The compendium is a compilation of 101 examples of good practice in human rights education in primary schools, secondary schools and teacher training institutions.

The participants of the side event will learn about the concept of the resource and also meet several educators whose practices were selected for the Compendium, who will share their experiences of doing human rights education work in Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Norway, Russia and the Netherlands.

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 13.00-15.00
Venue: Meeting Room 2

Title: Freedom of Association in the Newly Independent States: “Civil Platform” on Freedom of Association in the OSCE Region
Convenor: International Youth Human Rights Movement, Foundation for Legal Technologies Development (Minsk, Belarus)
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: Recent years have seen a wave of offensives and restrictions on freedom of association in such newly independent States as Belarus, Russia, Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan, both in the sphere of legislation and that of law enforcement practice. The existing international mechanisms in the OSCE region have proved insufficient for defending this fundamental human right. Representatives of human rights NGOs, professionally engaged in monitoring and advocating for the freedom of association in their countries, will present the current state of affairs in this sphere and propose some systematic solutions on the civil society and intergovernmental level to respond to existing challenges.

Time: 13.00-15.00
Venue: Meeting Room 3
Title: The Role of Educational Methods and Materials in Conflict Prevention and Tolerance Promotion
Convenor: OSCE Mission to Bosnia & Herzegovina
Working languages: English

Summary: Discuss Bosnia and Herzegovina's post-war experience in developing textbooks, teaching materials and classroom methods aimed at supporting steps towards reconciliation and greater understanding of life in a heterogeneous country.

- Exchange information on good practices in schools (curricular and extra-curricular activities) with regard to diversity promotion, intercultural appreciation and peace building, in general and in post-conflict situations plagued by intolerance, segregation and discrimination.
- Explore the links between education, intercultural awareness and security in an increasingly diverse world, and the role of the the OSCE's Human Dimension in ensuring constructive debate and engagement.

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 13.15-14.45
Venue: Plenary Hall
Title: Turkmenistan – a closed nation
Convenor: Norwegian Helsinki Committee, Memorial, Democratic Civil Union of Turkmenistan
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: Turkmenistan remains largely a closed country for visitors, despite President Berdymuhamedov's assurances at Columbia University in 2007 that there are no limitations on those seeking to access the country. Also, there are strict restrictions on who can exit the country, as exemplified by the large number of Turkmen students who recently were denied exit in order to study in neighbouring Kyrgyzstan. Access to independent media and internet remains limited. Finally, many jailed for political activities are still in prison, despite amnesties. The Norwegian Helsinki Committee and its partners will screen a short film shot undercover by the freelance journalist Simon Ostrovsky in Turkmenistan late last year, and present facts and a call for access to Turkmenistan, followed by a discussion.

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 13.00-15.00
Venue: Opera Room
Title: Guiding Principles for the Citizen of the World
Convenor: Soteria International
Working languages: English

Summary: All the spiritual traditions of the world speak of certain essential principles which govern all natural and human phenomena. These principles are present in all the spiritual traditions, and in this age are also covered by modern physics and psychology – thus, these principles are universal. These spiritual principles offer guidelines for the human being in his/her life. Knowledge of these principles allows us to understand the interaction between ourselves and the world around us, thus allowing us to direct the actions so as to bring peace, harmony, fulfillment and sustainability – not only for us but for the whole world.

These common-sense principles have been developed over two international conferences and are now presented in a rational and concise manner. In this side event, these principles are presented in an attempt to foster understanding of them and their integration into human rights education, as they are key to every human being achieving peace and the fulfillment of his/her human-rights

Monday, 05 October

Time: 13.00-15.00
Venue: Meeting Room 1
Title: Preventing and Responding to anti-Muslim Hate Crimes
Convenor: COJEP International
Working languages: English, French

Summary: COJEP and other ethnic and religious minority NGOs and individuals are extremely worried about the ever-increasing xenophobia, racism, racial profiling, anti-gay violence, anti-Semitism, anti-Islam and anti-Muslim statements and hate crimes in Europe. Since Muslims are being particularly targeted now, the purpose of this roundtable is to review hate crime situation against Muslims and Muslim communities, identify the features and draw attention to recent events. We think that the media and politicians should pay close attention to these crimes because not only extreme far right movements are involved in this but youth are also being influenced by the negative media coverage and political rhetoric concerning Islam. On top of this, the lack of accurate statistics and data makes it difficult to assess the extent of the problem. The authorities should accelerate their efforts to deal with this issue.

Moreover, police forces are often without the necessary tools to properly categorize hate crimes. A discussion on how law enforcement agencies must understand and deal with these crimes is timely. Education and training of officers should be provided in this area. An improvement of complaint procedures, justice recourse and visible results will create a climate of trust and co-operation between Muslim communities and police authorities.

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 13.00-15.00
Venue: Meeting Room 2
Title: Briefing for the HDIM delegates: “Prevention of Racial and Religious Intolerance in Modern Russia”

Convenor: The Moscow Bureau for Human Rights
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: The briefing will be given by the Director of Moscow Bureau for Human Rights, the member of the Public Chamber of the RF, Mr. Alexander Brod, the Executive Director of Moscow Bureau for Human Rights, the member of the Union of Journalists of the RF, and the expert in national policy affairs, Ms. Natalia Rykova.

The Moscow Bureau for Human Rights will present the latest statistics on hate crimes caused by xenophobia within the territory of Russia and evaluate the actions of law enforcement bodies and judicial system of Russia aimed at fighting xenophobia.

The experts of the Moscow Bureau for Human Rights will present their programme "Prevention of racial and religious intolerance in the Russian Federation" and efforts in the field of resistance to extremism.

A documentary film, "The Shadow of swastika" (produced by Moscow Bureau for Human Rights) will also be shown. The film poses the question: Why, in a country that defeated fascism, are the works of the Third Reich's ideologists are being published and the most dismal xenophobia myths being disseminated?

Time: 13.00-13.45
Venue: Meeting Room 3
Title: Update on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians
Convenor: Human Rights Network working on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians
Working languages: English

Summary: Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians is on the rise east and west of Vienna. Incidents which occur west of Vienna are continuously being documented on the online platform www.christianophobia.eu. ODIHR held a special round table on this issue in March '09. Hear about findings and latest developments in this complex matter during this 45-minute side event. At stake are not special rights – but *equal rights* of Christians.

Time: 13.15-14.45
Venue: Plenary Hall
Title: Presentation of the Final Draft Annual Report – Hate Crimes in the OSCE Region: Incidents & Responses
Convenor: ODIHR/TND
Working languages: English

Summary: The event will be used to present the final draft version of the ODIHR's 2008 annual report: *Hate Crimes in the OSCE Region: Incidents and Responses*. The methodology and main findings of the report will be presented. These include lack of comprehensive and comparable data on hate crimes in the OSCE participating States. Recommendations from the report will also be presented. Emphasis will be placed on co-operation between ODIHR, participating States, OSCE field operations, inter-governmental organizations and civil society.

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 13.00-15.00
Venue: Opera Room
Title: Including Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in the OSCE Tolerance Mandate.
Convenor: COC Netherlands
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: For a number of consecutive years, the OSCE Hate Crimes report, produced by ODIHR, has provided evidence of ongoing hate-motivated incidents and hate crimes against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. However, only a limited number of participating States include sexual orientation and/or gender identity as grounds for bias and/or an aggravating circumstance within national hate crime legislation.

This side-events aims to illustrate the need to include sexual orientation and gender identity explicitly within the OSCE Tolerance mandate. During the event, a dialogue shall take place on how the OSCE mandate can be made inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 18.00-20.00
Venue: Meeting Room 1
Title: Challenging Intolerance against Muslims
Convenor: ODIHR/TND, US and Spanish Delegations to the OSCE
Working languages: English

Summary: Recent surveys and studies indicate that negative attitudes towards Muslims are still high in many parts of OSCE region, in spite of participating States' efforts to combat all forms of intolerance and discrimination and promote respect for diversity. This poses one of the greatest challenges to managing our increasingly diverse societies and maintaining peace and security in the region. Therefore, it is essential to raise awareness about intolerance against Muslims and promote a better understanding of Muslims across the OSCE region. In this side event, participants will reflect on how OSCE, particularly ODIHR, can further support educational and awareness-raising initiatives to counter intolerant attitudes and behaviour towards Muslims. The discussions will revolve around recent developments, key challenges, opportunities and barriers, lessons learned, effective and less effective methodologies and approaches, and examples of good practice from throughout the OSCE region.

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 18.00-20.00
Venue: Meeting Room 2
Title: Protection of Migrants' Rights
Convenor: ODIHR/Anti-Trafficking & Migration and Freedom of Movement Units
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: The event's aim is to raise awareness among the OSCE participating States about the need to enhance the protection of migrants' rights and to present the possible ways of doing so in the area of migrants' access to information on legal matters and their rights, as well as to justice itself. The focus of the discussion will be the role of civil society and especially of migrants associations in increasing the protection of migrants' rights.

ODIHR's mandate is to assist the OSCE participating States in developing efficient and humane migration management policies at the national and regional level and supporting the integration of migrants and the protection of their rights. ODIHR will continue this work by drawing from the good practices of the civil society organizations and state institutions that have already developed a certain level of expertise in this area.

Migrants still have few social and employment rights under the national legal systems and the specific international standards concerned with the protection of migrant workers. Although migrants are very much needed to fill the labour shortages and to provide essential services, they are also among the least protected groups in the receiving societies. In general, they have limited access to a secure residence status, which means restricted possibilities for having access to proper housing, health care and education. In many countries, they are unable to change employers without losing their legal status. They often do not enjoy protection of rights arising from past employment. Now, with the economic crisis, their vulnerability is even more visible – they are the first to be fired by employers. They also lack access to information and are unable to exercise their rights. In these circumstances, they remain vulnerable to abusive working conditions, exploitation and even trafficking. Allowing them to participate in community affairs would enable them to be better informed of their rights and to avoid abuse and exploitation, as well as exclusion and marginalization.

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 18.00-20.00
Venue: Meeting Room 3
Title: Still Human, Still Here: Human Rights of Irregular Migrants
Convenor: Netherlands Helsinki Committee
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: At this side event, the Netherlands Helsinki Committee and Amnesty International (Dutch section) will present the situation regarding irregular migrants in the Netherlands and other OSCE participating States. The large number of irregular migrants living in the participating States of the OSCE is definitely one of the most serious human and social tragedies. Although a more precise number is by definition not available, the more or less official estimates of 2006 vary from 3 to 5 million in the member states of the Council of Europe (18 million in the USA).

The term “irregular migrants” is neutral and does not carry the stigmatization of the term “illegal”, which is in many cases not appropriate. There are a great variety of reasons for irregular migrants entering or staying in the country of residence (e.g. a negative decision in an asylum procedure).

Most participating States argue that there are, at the end of the day, only two alternatives: either regularisation or a return to the country of origin. But whatever their policies are, it is a fact of life that there will always be a number of irregular migrants present in the OSCE region. This, despite the fact that they are not officially registered, their existence is ignored and, worst of all, they are completely deprived of human rights. Consequently, irregular migrants are extremely vulnerable and are increasingly the target of exploitation and organised crime.

The event will focus on *inter alia*:

1. Measures that states take to avoid irregular migrants entering their country and the compatibility of these measures with international human rights standards;
2. Universal human rights that are applicable to all human beings, including irregular migrants;
3. The criminalization of irregular migrant and illegality; and
4. The position of irregular migrants that are not able to return to their country of origin.

The event will consist of the presentation of a film “Still Human, Still Here”, followed by a presentation by Amnesty International. Afterwards the participants are kindly invited to ask questions and discuss the topics presented at the side event.

Refreshments will be provided

Tuesday, 06 October

Time: 13.00-14.00
Venue: Meeting Room 2
Title: Freedom of Speech Made Null & Void. Kazakhstan has begun “sweeps” in mass media ahead of its assuming OSCE chairmanship
Convenor: Kazakhstan newspapers “Republic” & “Alma-Ata Info”
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: Describing the situation regarding freedom of speech in Kazakhstan in advance of its chairmanship of the OSCE. Special services against journalists. Multi-million court actions as a method of eliminating independent newspapers. State control over the Internet. Imprisonment of journalists on political grounds

Time: 13.00-15.00
Venue: Meeting Room 2
Title: Satellite television channel K+: Convergence of Information Technologies as a Way of Creating a True Alternative to On-air TV Broadcasting in the Countries of Central Asia Where Authoritarian Regimes Prevail

Convenor: Satellite TV K+
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: The satellite television channel K+ is the first independent electronic mass medium broadcasting in the region of Central Asia. The broadcasting is carried out through the Yamal and Hot Bird satellites. The channel's broadcasting concept is unique and is developed to accommodate the “survival” conditions in countries with authoritative regimes.

Satellite coordinates:

Yamal 201 at 90.0°E 3764 L 2531-3/4
Hot Bird 6 at 13.0°E 11623 V 27500-3/4

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 14.00-15.00

Venue: Meeting Room 3
Title: Hurdles Facing Independent Media in CIS States
Convenor: Freedom House
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: Stanislav Markelov, Anastasia Baburova, Alisher Saipov, Almaz Tashiev, Natalia Estemirova, Anna Politkovskaya: over the years, independent journalists in CIS states have been exposed to a constant increase in pressure, ranging from governmental coercion to blatant attacks, and even murder. What outlets of free speech and expression are still available in the CIS states? What challenges do journalists face in this atmosphere, and how do they try to circumvent them? What is the future of freedom of media and expression in these states? Please join Freedom House and our invited panellists to analyze and discuss these questions.

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 13.15-14.45
Venue: Plenary Hall
Title: "Religious Liberty and Rights of Conscience in the 21st Century"
Convenor: Alliance Defence Fund
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: Ever increasingly, legislation in participating OSCE States has created a clash between the fundamental rights of religion and belief, freedom of expression and the principle of non-discrimination. The Alliance Defence Fund is an NGO which daily engages in legal and policy matters in this controversial area. Its presentation will examine the battle with first-hand accounts of the legal problems that occur when fundamental rights clash, will provide expert legal analysis of the governing international law and will discuss policy aspirations for possible OSCE implementation.

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 13.00-15.00
Venue: Opera Room
Title: Through the Lens of Ukrainian Media Practice – the Interrelation Between Equality and Freedom of Expression
Convenor: International Media Support
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: The event will aim to open up a discussion on the relation between equality and freedom of expression by launching *The Camden Principles on Freedom of Expression and Equality (The Camden Principles)* in the OSCE region. The Camden Principles will be presented as a thoughtful and alternative approach to addressing challenging issues like hate speech, the role of the mass media in combating discrimination, and the right of reply, based on a progressive interpretation of international human right standards. It will offer participants - be they policy-makers, diplomats, media or civil society activists - guidance in balancing the rights to freedom of expression and equality. The event will particularly focus on Ukrainian media practice and will further aim at developing this discourse within the context of other member-states of OSCE.

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 13.00-15.00
Venue: EU Presidency Room (1st Floor)
Title: Freedom of Expression on the Internet – Possibilities and Challenges
Convenor: Sweden/EU, EU Agency for Fundamental Rights
Working language: English

Summary: Freedom of expression on the Internet is topical throughout the OSCE region, and also one of the priority areas of the Swedish Presidency of the European Union. As a traditional human right, freedom of expression is in many ways being reshaped with the development of new technologies. Modern developments on the Internet challenge - yet also enable - freedom of expression, and the panelists will be approaching the topic from various perspectives. They will highlight government, advocacy, and business and human rights perspectives, critically assess the situation and ponder ways to ensure that human rights thrive on the Internet.

Introducers

- Mr. Morten Kjaerum, Director of FRA
- Mr. Miklos Haraszti, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

Panelists

- Ms Lorna Woods, Professor of Law at City University, London
- Ms Karin Deutsch Karlekar, Author of the Report Freedom on the Net
- Ms Susan Pointer, Google

Moderator

- Mr. Jan Axel Nordlander, Ambassador at large for Human Rights, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden

Publications of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights will be made available.

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 18.00-20.00
Venue: Meeting Room 1
Title: Georgian-Russian Civil Dialogue – One Year in Action
Convenor: Public Movement Multinational Georgia
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: One year has passed since several NGOs from Georgia and Russia declared the launching of the Civil Dialogue project – a platform for collaboration between civil societies of countries in post-conflict transition. We are proud to show some results and willing to open discussion about the visions of the future and priorities of acting that will be possible to implement in the given settings.

With a view to establishing and developing ties between societies of Georgia and Russia, and fostering communication between the two nations and reinforcing the role of civil societies in both countries and in the region in general, we are eager to work in several directions.

The primary direction encompasses our common actions aimed at minimizing the humanitarian problems of the civilian population, which suffered as a result of different armed conflicts, including protecting the rights of these people and helping to defuse conflict situations to which the civil population may fall victim.

We are also dedicated to the following:

- 1) Dialogue “Remembrance and Future-building”
- 2) Dialogue about standards of Human Rights and the sovereignty of Law and Democracy in our countries and in the region in general (including combating xenophobia and discrimination and support for long-term peacemaking initiatives)
- 3) “Public dialogue” in the spheres of education, culture, art, literature and journalistic, direct contacts among the youth, teachers, students, etc.
- 4) Cross-border dialogue – the support of initiatives at all levels in this respect.

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 18.00-20.00
Venue: Meeting Room 2
Title: (No) Freedom to Speak, Assemble, or Be Secure: Challenges To LGBT Advocacy
Convenor: International Commission of Jurists, Human Rights First and ILGA-Europe
Working languages: English

Summary: How do you advocate for your rights when you cannot speak? How do you organize when you are not allowed to form an NGO? How do you demonstrate when demonstrations are met with violence? The OSCE has undertaken many commitments on freedom of expression, association, and assembly, as well as on the ensuring of tolerance and non-discrimination, yet recent events suggest that there are continued challenges for LGBT persons. In July, the Lithuanian Parliament enacted a law that prohibits public dissemination of information that “agitates” for homosexuality. In Turkey, LGBT groups have faced repeated legal obstacles to registering as NGOs. In Poland, human rights groups took the government to court to win the right to march on the streets of Warsaw. Panellists will discuss how their organizations have responded to restrictions on their freedom of speech, assembly and association - through activism, legal challenges, and public awareness campaigns.

Participants: Elif Ceylan Ozsoy (Turkey), Co-founder of Black Pink Triangle Izmir and member of the LGBT Rights Platform; Joel Le Deroff (Belgium), ILGA-Europe; Adam Bodnar (Poland), Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights; Paul LeGendre (USA), Human Rights First.

Moderator: Alli Jernow, Sexual orientation & Gender Identity Project, International Commission of Jurists

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 18.00-20.00
Venue: Meeting Room 3
Title: Freedom of Expression: Holding Governments to Account
Convenor: UK/Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: To coincide with the Special Day on Freedom of Expression, Free Media and Information at the HDIM, the UK is organising a Side Event on 6 October entitled “Freedom of Expression: Holding Governments to Account”.

William Horsley, ex-BBC foreign correspondent and now independent writer and broadcaster on international affairs, will host a discussion featuring UK experts including Professor Bill Bowring of the University of London. Miklos Haraszti and a representative of the British

Government will provide opening remarks.

There will also be a showing of a short film. In a year in which a number of journalists have been killed, assaulted or imprisoned across the OSCE space, the aim will be to provide practical advice, through an exchange of best practice, on how to hold governments to account regarding their commitments on Freedom of Expression. We are aiming for an interactive discussion, useful to NGO representatives and Government officials alike, and will welcome contributions from the floor.

Refreshments will be provided

Wednesday, 07 October

Time: 13.00-15.00
Venue: Meeting Room 1
Title: Roma Education – The Project of Roma Assistants in Slovenia
Convenor: The Government of the Republic of Slovenia
Working languages: English

Summary: The Republic of Slovenia is carrying out numerous activities in the area of Roma education. This side event will present recent examples of such activities: the establishment of a network of schools, through which teachers exchange their experiences and best practices with Roma pupils and promote intercultural dialogue; the standardization of the Roma language as a basis for teaching this language; the elaboration and adoption of a teaching plan for the subject of Roma culture; the creation of programmes for professional training for experts dealing with Roma children; the financing of adult Roma education; and raising awareness among young Roma intellectuals of the importance of knowledge and education among Roma and Sinti communities. The highlight of this side event will be the presentation of the successful project of Roma assistants in Slovenia, sponsored by the European Social Fund and under the patronage of the Slovenian Roma Association

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 13.30-15.00
Venue: Meeting Room 2
Title: Populism-Extremism-Racism-Social Exclusion – Breaking the Circle: the Ultimate Challenge of the Modern Democracy
Convenor: Roma Center for Social Intervention and Studies – Romani CRISS; the Roma ACCESS Association; the “Sanse Egale” Association; ODIHR/CPRSI
Working languages: English, Romani

Summary: A debate, “Populism-Extremism-Racism-Social exclusion ... breaking the cycle: the ultimate challenge of the modern democracy”, will address the essential aspects of the current situation of the Roma in Europe.

The organizers will formulate a series of answers to the following questions: Which are the instruments, tools and available solutions to be used and implemented by the OSCE participating States in order to put a stop to the rising of extremism and anti-Roma attitudes and violence throughout the region and to further prevent escalation of tensions?

Is the situation of Roma and Sinti a current matter of concern for all the OSCE participating States, or just for those with a significant Roma population? To what extent do the OSCE States share responsibility for ensuring the safety of Roma communities and their members' equal chances as citizens in their societies? And to what extent do the OSCE participating States implement the provisions of the OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti (Maastricht Ministerial Decision No. 3/03)?

The above questions are only some of those that must be considered both at national and international level.

The need for such a debate stems from the current worrying attitudes of populations of and certain groups within some participating States - such as Italy, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania and the Czech Republic, countries in which groups of extremists and far-right parties have behaved in an undemocratic manner that pays no respect to the rule of law, organizing anti-Roma protests and demonstrations.

Refreshments will be provided

Thursday, 08 October

Time: 13.00-15.00
Venue: Meeting Room 1
Title: The Voice of Civil Society in the EU-Belarus Dialogue Process
Convenor: Assembly of Non-governmental Pro-democratic Organizations, Human Rights Centre Viasna, Belarusian Helsinki Committee, Committee for the Defence of the Repressed "Solidarity", Institute for Privatization and Management, Belarusian Association of Journalists, Human Rights Defenders' Movement
Working languages: English, Russian, Belarusian

Summary: The side event will focus on the dialogue process taking place between the EU and the Belarus authorities, which was initiated after the country's September 2008 parliamentary elections. Following several years of virtually frozen relations, EU decision-makers initiated a policy of cautious reengagement, having concluded that earlier policies of isolation had served neither EU nor Belarusian interests. The EU is offering improved relations and the possibility of assistance to Belarus in return for the government in Minsk meeting certain human rights obligations and complying with European and international standards.

Because of the global financial crisis and increasingly difficult relations with Russia, the Belarusian government is interested in improving its relations with the EU. It has been promoting the steps it has taken to meet the EU guidelines. But the majority of independent experts inside and outside of Belarus agree that the government's "liberalization" has not been systemic, but continues to be cosmetic and reversible. In this context, several prominent Belarusian NGOs have prepared a report which summarizes the actual changes, and assesses the impact that the "liberalization" policy is having on the ground. During the side event, NGO representatives will present their monitoring of the results of the Dialogue Process. The presentation will be followed by a discussion on potential future developments, the involvement of the third sector in the process of reforms in the country, and recommendations for normalizing relations with Belarus while improving the human and civic rights of its citizens.

Time: 13.00-15.00
Venue: Meeting Room 2

Title: Launch of Guidelines on Population Registration
Convenor: ODIHR/ Migration and Freedom of Movement Unit
Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: Many OSCE participating States have similar traditions of population registration. When operating effectively, population registration provides reliable information for various purposes. The information gathered through continuous population registration is used for planning, budgeting and taxation; for issuing identification documents; for establishing voting eligibility, education, health, military service, social insurance and welfare and the pension system.

The Guidelines on population registration elucidate the main principles governing establishment and maintenance of functional models of population registration in a democratic society. The Guidelines focus on describing criteria for developing efficient population registration systems which correspond to the legitimate needs of the participating States and their citizens. They outline characteristics of such systems highlighting good practices in the OSCE region, while taking into account the range of administrative traditions among participating States.

The guidelines provide a tool for practitioners, relevant authorities and political decision makers in OSCE participating States to use when assessing the efficiency of their national systems of population registration and, when necessary, reforming them.

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 13.00-15.00
Venue: Meeting Room 3
Title: Free and Fair Elections in Central Asia and Caucasus
Convenor: 1. National Association of Political Scientists of Tajikistan
2. Social Democratic Party of Tajikistan
3. Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan
4. Central Election for Elections and Referenda of Tajikistan
5. OSCE Office in Tajikistan

Working languages: English, Russian

Summary: On the occasion of forthcoming parliamentary and presidential elections in Central Asian and Caucasus pS, political party leaders, scholars, civil society and government officials will share their views on the state of democracy and free and fair election in the greater region and specific participating States. Short introductions on the topic will be made by selected speakers, while the opportunity for interventions and networking for all will exist.

Refreshments will be provided