



# ODIHR e-newsletter

OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights May/June 2009

## Upcoming events

Observation of parliamentary elections in Albania, 28 June

Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting: freedom of religion or belief, Vienna, 9-10 July

## Latest reports

[Parliamentary elections in Albania - interim report](#)

[Kyrgyzstan presidential elections - needs assessment report](#)

[European Parliament elections - exploratory mission report](#)

[Moldova elections - post-election interim report](#)

[Lithuania presidential elections - needs assessment mission report](#)

## Quick Links

[ODIHR homepage](#)  
[Elections homepage](#)  
[Legislationline.org](#)  
[TANDIS](#)

## Russian version

If you would prefer to receive this email in Russian, please send your request to:

[e-newsletter@odihr.pl](mailto:e-newsletter@odihr.pl)

## Hague tribunal chief addresses rule of law seminar

Judge Patrick Robinson, President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, gave the keynote speech at this year's [Human Dimension Seminar](#).



The theme of the three-day event, which opened on 12 May in Warsaw, was "Strengthening the Rule of Law in the OSCE Region".

"Judicial independence does not mean ... that judges are free to decide cases according to their own whims or prejudices," Robinson told the gathering in his keynote speech. "Judges ... have a responsibility to apply the law to the facts that have been established before them."

Representatives from 39 OSCE participating States, together with a large number of international experts and civil society groups, discussed ways to increase the independence and integrity of the judiciary and the judicial review of administrative decisions.

They also exchanged information and experiences concerning the fields of trial monitoring and the prevention of torture.

[Conference website](#)

## ODIHR pledges support for Kazakh chairmanship

ODIHR is ready to support Kazakhstan as it gears up to assume the 2010 OSCE chairmanship, ODIHR Director Janez Lenarčič has assured senior figures in the country's political leadership.

"Taking over the OSCE's chairmanship is an opportunity for Kazakhstan to demonstrate its achievements towards implementing the country's international commitments," Lenarčič said.

"This task is made easier if Kazakhstan leads by example, which would include further progress in putting into practice the country's commitments in the field of human rights, democracy and the rule of law."



The ODIHR chief met with Senate Chairman Kassym-Zhomart Tokayev, Foreign Minister Marat Tazhin (right), Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration Maulen Ashimbaev and other officials, as well as representatives of civil society.

[More](#)

## Labour migration part of solution, not problem, ODIHR head insists

Migrant workers can play a key role in reversing the worldwide

economic downturn.

That was ODIHR chief Janez Lenarčič's message to this year's [OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum](#) in Athens.

"Migration is part of our economic and social reality," Lenarčič told delegates. "It will not cease because of the economic crisis, but it can be one of the solutions for a more dynamic and efficient economy."

In the meantime, Lenarčič insisted, "migrant workers whose contribution to a destination country's economy was embraced in the years of booming economy should not suffer disproportionately in times of economic slump. In particular, their human rights must be protected vigorously."

The Forum meetings bring together leaders from government, civil society, business and other international organizations to engage in dialogue and consultations on issues of common economic and environmental concern.

[Full speech](#)

## Hard times breed hate crimes



In periods of adversity, minorities and vulnerable groups often become scapegoats for the ills of society, an ODIHR-organized conference heard at the start of May.

"The current economic crisis is possibly one exacerbating factor" in the reported increase in bias-motivated violence across the OSCE region, said Ambassador Mara Marinaki (centre, with ODIHR Director Janez Lenarčič), representing the Greek OSCE chairmanship at this year's first Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting, which focused on the effective implementation of hate crimes legislation.

"Even where this hostility does not translate into violence," noted Ambassador Lenarčič in his opening remarks, "many minority communities say they feel fearful and vulnerable."

At the two-day event, more than 130 experts and government and civil society representatives discussed obstacles facing police and prosecutors in bringing offenders to justice, and the challenges of combating violent hate groups.

A civil society roundtable side event held before the meeting formulated a series of [recommendations](#), which were presented at the opening of proceedings.

ODIHR published a [guide](#) on hate crime laws for governments and civil society earlier this year.

[Conference website](#)

## Freedom of assembly in Armenia - observers report back

The ODIHR Focal Point for Human Rights Defenders and National Human Rights Institutions held a debriefing session on 13-14 May for graduates of a [training programme](#) that it launched last autumn for Armenian human rights defenders.

Since attending the four-day September seminar on how to monitor and report on freedom of assembly issues, the 23 human rights activists - drawn from all over Armenia - have monitored a variety of demonstrations, protest marches, pickets and political gatherings, including the run-up to the 31 May municipal elections in the capital of Yerevan.

The monitors' findings, observations and recommendations will form the basis of a report to be presented to the Armenian authorities in September.

The training programme was based on materials developed for a 2008 [pilot project](#) in Moldova.

ODIHR further rolled out the training model with a course in [Kazakhstan](#) at the beginning of June.

## Human dimension crucial to Europe's security, Berlin confirms

Ambassador Janez Lenarčič arrived in Berlin on 6 May at the invitation of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss current challenges to election observation, as well as recent proposals for a new European security architecture.

He also visited the Bundestag for talks with the German delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and members of the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee.

Lenarčič's hosts expressed their support for the integration of the human dimension into any future dialogue on the European security architecture, and stressed the importance of ODIHR determining without interference the scope and personnel of its election observation missions.

## Skopje lawmakers target transparency

On 11-12 May, a roundtable on public participation in the law-making process was held in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The roundtable - the second of five such gatherings - was staged by the Board for Enhancement of the Lawmaking Process (BELMAP), an inter-institutional body comprising senior figures from government ministries, the government secretariat and the parliament.

"The goal of the meetings is to formulate a concrete set of recommendations to the government aimed at making the consultation process more consistent and systematic in the formulation of not only laws but also policies," commented Marta Achler Szelenbaum, of ODIHR's Legislative Support Unit.

ODIHR - together with the OSCE Spillover Mission to Skopje - helped to establish BELMAP in the wake of the November 2007 publication of the OSCE/ODIHR Assessment Report on Legislative Transparency and Regulatory Management in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

## Gender equality vital to security

A number of OSCE participating States have taken an additional step in confirming the important link between security and women's rights through the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation.

On 1 April, 17 participating States pledged to include information on women, peace and security when responding to the updated Questionnaire for the OSCE [Code of Conduct](#) on Politico-Military Aspects of Security.

"UN Security Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security - which emphasizes the need to guard against the violation of women's human rights - does not contain a built-in monitoring and reporting mechanism," commented Linda Öhman, who manages ODIHR's [Human Rights, Women and Security Programme](#).

"So this voluntary move is an important step towards the better collection of data for assessing national implementation."

All 56 OSCE participating States are due to submit their annual reports on the Code of Conduct by 15 June.

## ODIHR and OSCE PA committed to close co-operation on Albania poll

ODIHR Director Janez Lenarčič and Wolfgang Grossruck, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Vice President, have reaffirmed their strong commitment to working closely together during the observation of Albania's 28 June parliamentary elections.

Grossruck, whom the OSCE chairmanship appointed special co-ordinator of the OSCE short-term observers in Albania, [visited ODIHR's Warsaw headquarters](#) on 3 June.

Lenarčič and Grossruck emphasized that in view of the elections' importance for the consolidation of Albania's democracy and the country's further integration into European structures, effective collaboration between ODIHR and the OSCE PA, as well as with other international partners, will be essential if the assessment is to be fact-based and objective.

ODIHR deployed an [Election Observation Mission](#) to Albania in early May.

## Roma genocide book premieres

The ODIHR-supported book "The Tragedy of Roma Deported to Transnistria: 1942 - 1945" was launched in the Romanian Parliament on 7 April.

The publication - an initiative of the Sibiu-based Ion Cioaba Foundation - combines oral testimonies from 12 Roma survivors with an analysis of archival documents recording the systematic wartime persecution of Roma under the wartime Bucharest regime and the deportation to Transnistria of some 30,000 Roma, of whom one third died.

Given the generally scant coverage of this aspect of Roma history, ODIHR offered its assistance under the provision of the OSCE Action Plan on improving access to education.

## New publications and translations



- ODIHR Annual Report 2008 ([English](#))
- Countering Terrorism, Protecting Human Rights: A Manual ([Russian](#))
- Hate Crime Laws - A Practical Guide ([Russian](#))
- Compensation for Trafficked and Exploited Persons in the OSCE Region ([Russian](#))

[Download publications](#)