



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

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**DECISION No. 762
GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZING OSCE MEETINGS**

The Permanent Council,

Pursuant to Ministerial Council Decision No. 17/05 on strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE, in particular the task of continuing work on considering ways to improve the planning and efficiency of OSCE conferences,

On the basis of the work carried out to that end in the Working Group on Strengthening the Effectiveness of the OSCE,

Decides:

To approve the Guidelines for Organizing OSCE Meetings and the Template of a Proposal for Organizing an OSCE Meeting, contained in the annexes to this decision, as non-binding guidelines of a recommendatory nature for organizers of OSCE meetings, namely those meetings which are held by a decision of the OSCE participating States, as defined in subsection II (A) of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZING OSCE MEETINGS

These guidelines address OSCE meetings, which are: “A conference, seminar, workshop or other meeting, which is held by a decision of the participating States (...)” (Rules of Procedure, MC.DOC/1/06, II(A)11). These guidelines are not binding, but are intended to help organizers of OSCE meetings in preparing proposals for possible OSCE meetings, in planning them and in making events run more efficiently, while at the same time taking into account differences between OSCE meetings and the desirability to ensure flexibility where needed. These guidelines must be read in conjunction with the Rules of Procedure of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, especially with subsection (A) of Chapter VI, on “Conferences, seminars, workshops and other meetings”, and are not intended to modify any other applicable decision on the modalities of specific OSCE meetings.

1. A proposal to organize an OSCE meeting should include as much information as possible such as: name, time frame, venue, level, objective, desired participation, intended visibility (e.g., press coverage), a preliminary cost estimate, and the intended follow-up. The proposal should indicate if side-events are to be organized. The proposed agenda of the meeting should be focused and avoid overload. A proposal should be presented at least six months before the planned event to allow participating States to discuss it before taking a decision. The topic of any OSCE meeting should be generally related to aspects of OSCE’s comprehensive approach to security.
2. A decision on an OSCE meeting should include the full agenda and modalities and be taken at the latest four months in advance. The decision on any OSCE meeting should take into account the availability of funds. The decision on agenda and modalities should specify the support to be given by Conference Services, e.g., interpreters. Meetings should be properly structured in order to allow active participation in the discussion and to focus on action-oriented results, while ensuring that they are linked to the OSCE’s operational activities.
3. Venue of the meeting:

Among different considerations, the cost factor should be taken into account when deciding on the venue of an OSCE meeting. Another aspect to be considered when taking a decision on the venue is the need for geographical diversification and the desired level of participation.
4. Timing of the meeting:

In the process of planning a new event, the existing calendar of OSCE meetings should be taken into consideration. It is against good practice to convene meetings simultaneously, especially if the venue of the meeting is outside of Vienna since that would conflict with the objective of ensuring optimal participation in the events.

5. Participation in OSCE meetings:

- (a) Keynote speakers should be appointed two months before the meeting. The choice of keynote speakers should reflect the diversity of participation in the Organization and should be conducted in a transparent manner. There should be no more than two keynote speakers per session, and the time allocated for them should not exceed 25 per cent of the duration of the session. The scheduling of keynote speakers should respect the basic objective that they stimulate the discussion among participating States, which is the primary objective of OSCE meetings;
- (b) Moderators should also be appointed two months before the meeting. The choice of moderators should reflect the diversity of participation in the Organization and should be conducted in a transparent manner. They should adequately prepare themselves, including through close contacts with the keynote speakers. A preparatory co-ordination meeting between moderators, rapporteurs and keynote speakers prior to the meeting itself could help in this respect;
- (c) Parallel sessions during a meeting should be avoided;
- (d) Representatives of the press may observe OSCE meetings in accordance with their agreed modalities;
- (e) Representatives of international organizations, NGOs and academic circles are invited to participate in OSCE meetings in accordance with their agreed modalities;
- (f) If it is impossible for technical reasons to admit all representatives of NGOs and the press to the plenary hall, real-time closed-circuit TV transmission can, to the extent possible, be made available to them in a nearby location.

6. Procedure:

- (a) Keynote speakers should present the texts of their presentations, in writing, well in advance of the meeting, at least two weeks before the event, to allow participants to prepare for the discussion. Texts should immediately be made available to the participating States and, to the extent possible, to other participants. However, this does not preclude the keynote speakers from making additional points during their address;
- (b) Discussions should build on former events, where applicable, and should include directions for further follow-up, as appropriate;
- (c) When an outcome in the form of conclusions or a similar document is envisaged, the chairperson of the meeting should circulate the proposal in advance. Chairperson's summaries are encouraged when permitted under the modalities governing the meeting.

7. Language services and translation:

Regarding the use of languages, the OSCE Rules and Procedure will be applied, in particular the provisions of Chapter VI “Conferences, seminars, workshops and other meetings.”

When appropriate, the report or chairperson’s summary relating to an OSCE meeting should be translated into OSCE languages in order to increase the accessibility of documents in participating States.

These guidelines may also prove useful for organizing OSCE-related meetings as defined in subsection (B) of Chapter VI of the OSCE Rules of Procedure.

TEMPLATE OF A PROPOSAL FOR ORGANIZING AN OSCE MEETING

Name of the meeting	Proposed name
Time frame of the meeting	Proposed dates and duration of the meeting
Venue of the meeting	Proposed venue and brief explanation of the reason for considering this location
Level of the meeting	Estimated level, i.e., high-level, mid-level, expert-level
Objective of the meeting	Brief statement of the reasons why the OSCE should hold this particular meeting
Desired participation	As a rule, a meeting is open to all the participating States, but it should be indicated which NGOs and academic circles should participate and which international organizations should be invited
Outcome of the event	Outcome foreseen: e.g., conclusions, recommendations, declaration by the chairperson
Intended follow-up	What should follow the meeting, if this can be foreseen, e.g., next meetings, further discussion
Estimated cost of meeting	Preliminary budget of the meeting