

Roundtables with OSCE Institutions

Democracy, elections and the role of civil society organizations

Roundtable with Matteo Mecacci, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Tuesday, 27 September, 15:30-16:30, Meeting Room 1 (Belweder)

The Roundtable will offer an opportunity to discuss the essential role elections have in our democracies, and reflect on how the public confidence in the institutions and processes surrounding elections is essential to establishing the basis of authority for any democratic government. ODIHR's inclusive approach towards civil society extends to before and after the electoral process itself, working closely with OSCE participating States to ensure that the right to freedom of association is fully enjoyed. While realizing challenges that civil society continues to face, it is important civil society actors play an active part in public affairs, unlocking the potential of healthy cooperation with state authorities, and realizing mutual benefits this cooperation can bring.

Roundtable will be moderated by Meaghan Fitzgerald, Head of Elections Department, OSCE/ODIHR.

Media Freedom and Safety of Journalists

Roundtable with Teresa Ribeiro, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

Friday, 30 September, 15:30-16:30, Meeting Room 1 (Belweder)

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media chose the slogan "There is no security without media freedom" to mark the 25th anniversary of the creation of the mandate. With the military aggression against Ukraine, this slogan proved to be unfortunately very timely. Journalists across the OSCE region carry out their work under extremely difficult and often dangerous conditions. With the launch of a new project on the safety of journalists, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media aims to assist participating States in implementing their commitments in this regard. The project will provide concrete guidance by collecting good practices and developing a toolkit. This roundtable will provide an opportunity to discuss the diverse challenges to the safety of journalists and identify common actions to promote and ensure their safety.

Roundtable will be moderated by Jürgen Heissel, OSCE RFoM Director.

Effective integration and participation of national minorities as a conflict prevention strategy

Roundtable with Kairat Abdrakhmanov, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

Monday, 3 October, 14:00-15:00, Meeting Room 1 (Belweder)

The roundtable will discuss the challenges in the area of protection of the rights of all persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities as important ingredients to maintain peace and stability. It will provide a platform to discuss good practices and positive actions to counter the marginalization and exclusion of minorities, and to promote the integration of diverse societies, in line with the OSCE HCNM recommendations, especially The Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies and The Lund Recommendations on Participation of National Minorities in Public Life. The participants will be encouraged to share new perspectives that promote the integration of diverse societies and the effective participation of national minorities, and thereby complement the OSCE HCNM's conflict prevention work.

Roundtable will be moderated by Dr. habil. Elżbieta Kuzborska-Pacha, HCNM Senior Legal Adviser.

Parliamentary partnership with civil society for human rights

Roundtable with Margareta Cederfelt, OSCE PA President; Kyriakos Hadjiyianni, Special Representative on Civil Society Engagement; Nikoloz Samkharadze, Chair of the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions

Wednesday, 5 October, 15:30-16:30, Meeting Room 1 (Belweder)

The OSCE PA brings together more than 300 members of OSCE parliaments to debate topical issues. Democracy, human rights and democracy questions are top priorities for the parliamentarians, who pass a Declaration each year with a range of recommendations directed at OSCE Ministers and others. Strengthening dialogue with civil society actors, particularly on human rights topics, is of importance to the Assembly. Leading OSCE PA Members will take the opportunity of the WHDC to brief OSCE diplomats and civil society actors on the primary recommendations in the human dimension from the July 2022 Birmingham Declaration, and seek feedback and input particularly from representatives of civil society. Through a discussion with the OSCE PA's Special Representative on Civil Society, the event will also provide an opportunity to share ideas and experiences on how to promote parliamentary co-operation with civil society at the OSCE PA, as well as in parliaments of OSCE participating States.

Roundtable will be moderated by Andreas Baker, Head of Elections, OSCE PA International Secretariat.