

Joint Conference

by the Swiss OSCE Chairmanship and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) with the support of the incoming Serbian OSCE Chairmanship

The OSCE and Human Rights Defenders: The Budapest Document 20 Years On

10-11 June 2014

**Hotel Schweizerhof,
Berne, Switzerland
DRAFT AGENDA**

INTRODUCTION

At the Budapest Summit in 1994, the OSCE participating States committed to move “Towards a Genuine Partnership in a New Era”. They confirmed that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law is an essential component of security and co-operation in the region. They recognized that civil society organizations and free media play a vital role in this regard. They also emphasized the need for protection of human rights defenders.

Twenty years later, human rights defenders across the OSCE area continue to face numerous challenges despite the repeated reaffirmation by participating States of the right of individuals to know and act upon their rights and duties, as guaranteed for the first time by the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. Civil society organizations have consistently expressed their concerns to participating States and suggested that guidelines on their role in assisting participating States in the implementation of the Budapest 1994 commitment be developed.

In line with its mandate to assist participating States in the implementation of their human dimension commitments, the ODIHR has undertaken to develop the *OSCE/ODIHR Guidelines on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders*.

In recognition of the importance of the issue, the Swiss OSCE Chairmanship has identified the role of the civil society and human rights defenders as a priority topic. Protecting and promoting human rights and strengthening the rule of law are among Switzerland’s foreign policy objectives. These objectives can only be met when internationally recognized human rights standards and commitments are effectively implemented. Human rights defenders play an indispensable role in this process.

The conference will see the launch of the OSCE/ODIHR Guidelines and provide a platform

for discussion on how the participating States, together with OSCE, including ODIHR, can best provide support to human rights defenders in line with OSCE commitments to further promote human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law.

The conference will bring together approximately 100 participants. They will include senior experts or equivalent representatives of national authorities, national human rights institutions and civil society, in particular the human rights defenders involved in the process of developing the Guidelines.

The high-level opening session and the opening panel on 10 June (10.00 – 12.30) will be open to the press.

DRAFT AGENDA

Tuesday, 10 June

9.15 – 10.00 *Arrival and registration*

10.00 – 11.00 High level opening session

<i>Keynote speakers:</i>	H.E. Didier Burkhalter, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs Amb. Janez Lenarčič, ODIHR Director H.E. Ivan Mrkić, Advisor to the President of the Republic of Serbia, and former Foreign Minister, 2015 OSCE Chairmanship H.E. Stavros Lambrinidis, EU Special Representative for Human Rights
<i>Moderator</i>	Amb. Thomas Greminger, Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council

11.00 – 12.30 Opening panel

Following on from the keynote speeches, the session will focus on current trends affecting the situation of human rights defenders and – from the perspective of each of the panelists and their respective roles – the responses needed to ensure the effective protection of human rights defenders. The subsequent discussion will provide an opportunity for participants to highlight particular areas of concern and related recommendations for action at the national and international levels.

<i>Moderator</i>	Amb. Janez Lenarčič, ODIHR Director
<i>Panelists:</i>	Nils Muižnieks, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Michel Forst, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders Mary Lawlor, Executive Director, Front Line Defenders

Followed by interventions from the floor

12.30 – 14.00 LUNCH

14.00 – 15.30 Session 1: Presentation of OSCE/ODIHR Guidelines on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders

The session will focus on the background and key elements of the OSCE/ODIHR Guidelines in the context of international efforts to address persisting risks and challenges human rights defenders face. The panel and subsequent discussion will offer an opportunity for reflection on the main contents of the Guidelines from different perspectives and on their importance in strengthening the protection of human rights defenders across the region.

Moderator: Jonathan Conlon, Counsellor at the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Panelists: Snježana Bokulić, Head, Human Rights Department, ODIHR
Yuri Dzhibladze, President of the Centre for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights and member of the Advisory Working Group for the preparation of the OSCE/ODIHR Guidelines

Questions and answers by panelists & discussion

15.30 – 16.00 COFFEE BREAK

16.00 – 17.30 Session 2: Towards a Genuine Partnership

The session will focus on good practices and challenges in building effective partnerships between State authorities and human rights defenders in an effort to enhance human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national level. Following the remarks by the panelists the discussion will provide space for participants to share examples of good practices and challenges from their countries.

Moderator: Gerhard Doujak, Head of Department of Human Rights, Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs

Panelists: Ivana Ćirković, Director, Office for Cooperation with Civil Society, Government of the Republic of Serbia
Valeriya Lutkovska, Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights
Valeriu Nicolae, Regional Advocacy Director, Middle East and Eastern Europe, World Vision

Questions and answers by panelists & discussion

17.50 BUS DEPARTURE TO THE SURPRISE DINNER

Wednesday, 11 June

9.30 – 11.00 Session 3: Implementing the OSCE/ODIHR Guidelines on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders

The focus of the session will be on the elements needed for a solid framework of implementation of the OSCE/ODIHR Guidelines, at the national and international levels, in order to effectively protect and support human rights defenders. Following the introductory remarks by the panelists, participants are invited to share their recommendations on how to ensure effective implementation.

Moderator: Petter Wille, Ambassador and Special Envoy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway

Panelists: Boriss Cilevičs, Member of the Parliament of the Republic of Latvia and of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Florian Irminger, Head of Advocacy and HRHF Geneva Office, Human Rights House Foundation (HRHF)

Barbara Davis, Head, Human Dimension Department, OSCE Office in Tajikistan

Questions and answers by panelists & discussion

11.00 – 11.30 *COFFEE BREAK*

11.30 – 13.00 Closing session: The way forward

Based on the preceding discussion, the session intends to summarize main conclusions and recommendations of the Conference. Moderators of sessions 1-3 will briefly outline main conclusions and recommendations made during their session. In the subsequent discussion all participants are encouraged to highlight in short interventions additional key recommendations and those they consider most important, in particular as regards effective follow-up to support the implementation of the OSCE/ODIHR Guidelines. Following the closing remarks the Swiss Chairmanship will outline the Chairmanship Conclusions of the Conference.

Moderator: Jennifer Turner, Human Rights Researcher, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

Session moderators' summaries

Interventions by participants

Closing remarks: Amb. Dejan Sahovic, Head of Serbian Task Force OSCE Chairmanship

Snježana Bokulić, Head, Human Rights Department, ODIHR

Amb. Thomas Greminger, Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council

13.00 – 14.00 *LUNCH*