

SIDE EVENT

**To take place during the
SUPPLEMENTARY HUMAN DIMENSION MEETING ON:
“PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS:
RESPONSIBILITIES AND EFFECTIVE REMEDIES”**

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 on relevant issues of their choice.

The opinions and information shared during the side event convened by participants do not necessarily reflect the policy of the OSCE/ ODIHR.

Friday, 13 July
<i>Title: Strategies for protecting human rights defenders Convenor: IHF, HRW & United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office Time: 12.00 – 14.00 Venue: Segmentgalerie 1 Language: English, Russian</i>

OVERVIEW OF SIDE EVENT

As submitted by the organisers

12 – 13 July 2007

Hofburg, Vienna

The side event below has been exclusively organized and scheduled at the request of participants of the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting. The content for the meeting was prepared by the organization convening the event and does not necessarily reflect the views of the OSCE, ODIHR.

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Friday, 13 July

Time: 12.15 – 14.00

Venue: Segmentgalerie I

Title: Strategies for protecting human rights defenders

Convenor: *IHF, HRW & the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office*

Language: English, Russian

Summary: No government can effectively protect the human rights of its citizens without an independent civil society and without the specific activity of the independent monitoring of human rights being undertaken, i.e. the work of human rights defenders.

Despite the development of specific standards relating to human rights defenders, and a growing number of initiatives and steps by some OSCE governments towards addressing such issues in a more prominent manner, violations against human rights defenders remain common in a number of OSCE countries, and in some parts of the region their situation has deteriorated dramatically over the last few years.

This side event seeks to promote discussion on what can and should be done both at governmental and inter-governmental level to address these issues and reinforce the position of human rights defenders within societies. Views will be heard from human rights defenders and government representatives.

Refreshments will be provided