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**2010 OSCE REVIEW CONFERENCE,
Vienna, 18 – 26 October 2010
OSA Session 2**

**Enhancing the role and further strengthening the capabilities of the OSCE executive structures
Lessons learned from field activities**

Recommendations on the effectiveness of OSCE structures

The International Civic Initiative for the OSCE, an initiative of a number of civil society organizations and individuals, based primarily East of Vienna, welcomes discussions on the effectiveness of OSCE structures at this Vienna segment of the OSCE Review Conference.

We applaud the OSCE for its significant achievements in advancing the human dimension over the past thirty five years. Amongst these, the establishment and respect for mechanisms for participation of civil society has truly been a remarkable and unique achievement in the sphere of multilateral governance. In addition, we would like to commend the OSCE and its institutions on the work done by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, conduct of election observation missions, often in challenging situations, increasing recognition of the security of human rights defenders as an organizational priority, development of the guidelines on Freedom of Assembly, a resource guide for NGOs on addressing and responding to hate crimes, the ongoing process of developing a Guidebook on Freedom of Association, monitoring of trials, and the important work of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, and the HCNM's early warning work, especially with regard to the ongoing situation in Kyrgyzstan.

OSCE has a unique role in Central Asia. ICI welcomes the increased frequency visits of the HCNM and the Director of ODIHR to that part of the OSCE region. It also calls on the government of Kyrgyzstan, after conducting the freest election in its history, to accept the OSCE Police Advisory Group.

The OSCE is a unique organization. In 2003 at the Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council the participating States agreed to a Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century which states that "Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law is at the core of the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security". And in Moscow in 1991, the OSCE participating States "categorically and irrevocably declare(d) that the commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension...are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned." These principles set the highest standards of States' behavior.

Despite this, we have been disappointed, that while we believe in the ideas enshrined in the Helsinki Accords, it has been a disappointment, especially in the last 10 years, in particular in the former Soviet region. The OSCE has not been used to its full potential.

In order to achieve its potential, ICI recommends that OSCE should enhance the use of existing procedures and instruments, in particular by:

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- 1) Making better use of the role of the Chairman-in-Office in informing the Permanent Council of serious cases of alleged non-implementation of human dimension commitments, including dispatching of high-level special envoys. The Chairman-in-Office should further encourage participating States to make use of the assistance offered by OSCE institutions;
- 2) Increasing the openness of the Permanent Council and Human Dimension Committee to the civil society, for example, by introducing a practice of periodically inviting civil society experts to address these meetings;
- 3) Increasing the profile of heads of OSCE Field Presences, selecting them from ranks of diplomats with

experience in human dimension;

4) Increasing the level of awareness of OSCE standards and OSCE products (guidelines, legal opinions, handbooks) by increasing outreach to the civil society, including meetings with the civil society by OSCE officials from institutions developing these products;

5) Regularly holding Summits of Heads of States and Governments as a way to focus the organization's work, increasing its political significance and visibility, and promoting its unique notion of comprehensive security with human dimension at its core.

6) Organizing Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings and major conferences outside Vienna with a view towards raising the Organization's public profile/ownership. These conferences should discuss, as a matter of priority, matters of fundamental human rights: freedom of association, expression, peaceful assembly as well as freedom of movement.

7) Improving geographical balance and representation of fluent speakers of OSCE languages, especially Russian, among the OSCE staff, first of all in institutions focusing on Human Dimension, including adopting recruitment policies aimed at achieving this goal, given that expertise in Human Dimension is not confined to any geographical part of the OSCE region.

8) Finally, in the future, when making decisions about participating States being selected for position of Chairman-in Office, the implementation by these States of their OSCE human dimension commitment should be seriously considered, including progress in the lead up to the year of holding the Chairmanship. We call upon the OSCE to develop an official review procedure mechanism for assessment of potential Chairmanship, possibly initially on a voluntary basis, in order to strengthen the international standing of the Chairmanship.

Founding Members of the Initiative:	In Personal Capacity:
Georgian Young Lawyers Association, Georgia	Iva Dobichina
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International Network - Youth Human Rights Movement	
Moscow Helsinki Group, Russia	
Multinational Georgia Public Movement, Georgia	
Voice of Liberty Public Foundation, Kyrgyzstan	
Civil Defense Fund, Lithuania	
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Centre for Legal Policy Research, Kazakhstan	