



Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting

Vienna Austria, 13 - 14 March 2023

SCHEDULE AND OVERVIEW

OF SIDE EVENTS

as submitted by the organizers

This is a provisional schedule and overview of submitted side events subject to change.

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, governments, civil society and other participants are encouraged to organize side meetings at the Review Conference on relevant issues of their choice.

The side events below have been exclusively organized and scheduled exclusively at the request of participants of the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting. The below descriptions have been provided by the organizers. They have been lightly edited by ODIHR for language but not for content. Responsibility for the content remains with the organizers. Neither the text below nor the events themselves necessarily reflect the views of the OSCE.

Monday, 13 March

Time: **16:30-17:30**
Venue: **Bibliotheksaal**
Title: Media freedom in Ukraine: uncovering the truth during wartime and Russian aggression
Convenor: Human Rights House Foundation; Human Rights Centre ZMINA
Working language: English, Ukrainian

Summary: Media freedom is one of the pillars of modern democracy. Free expression of opinion contributes to the development of a safe and equal society. In times of war and armed conflict, journalists face huge obstacles and threats not only to their professional activities, but also to their own lives and the lives of their loved ones. The side event seeks to share knowledge on the obstacles Ukrainian media currently face in the context of Russia's full-scale war of aggression: threats from Russian military forces, forced disappearances, politically motivated imprisonment, and other measures designed to

silence them. We will share stories from across Ukraine, including Crimea, of the work done by journalists throughout the war and under occupation, persecution of the media and journalists, including war crimes, and the use by Russian forces of disinformation. This side event will bring together Ukrainian journalists and civil society representatives and address the following questions:

- What are the most pressing issues facing independent media and journalists in Ukraine, including occupied Crimea?
- Why is the work of journalists in Ukraine vital?
- How can participating States support independent Ukrainian media and journalists?

Panellists:

Tetiana Pechonchyk, Human Rights Centre ZMINA

Pavlo Kolotvin, Ukrainian journalist, representative of Institute of Mass Information in Odessa

Elmaz Akimova, citizen journalist from Crimea

Moderator:

Dave Elseroad, Human Rights House Foundation

Time: **16:30-17:30**

Venue: **Room 533**

Title: Kyrgyzstan: increased suppression of independent media and civil society.

Convenor: American Bar Association; Soros Foundation

Working language: English, Russian

Summary: Kyrgyzstan is moving towards authoritarian regime because its independent media, human rights defenders, activists, as well as political and public figures are facing unprecedented pressure from the authorities. The government is restricting freedom of speech, blocking the websites of media outlets and closing their bank accounts, starting criminal prosecutions of journalists and activists, and supporting smear campaigns via non-state actors and hate speech. In November 2022, Bolot Temirov, a well-known investigative journalist, was deported to Russia directly from the courtroom in apparent violation of the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan and international law. Another leading media outlet Azattyk (RFE/RL) is under the risk of shut down because of the groundless claim of being not objective. At the same time, the authorities have significantly tightened their policies regarding freedom of peaceful assembly by banning rallies in popular public places. In 2022, the authorities detained six times more peaceful protestors than they did in previous years. The government also introduced a new draft law on NGOs activities that severely restricted NGOs activities, and established stricter control over the NGOs. The draft law also provided the government bodies with many more opportunities to intervene in NGOs work as well as an option of forced liquidation of organizations. Soros Foundation-Kyrgyzstan, American Bar Association's Center for Human Rights and the Committee to Protect Journalists are co-organizing a side event where leading representatives of media, civil society and international organizations will discuss the current environment for the media and civil society, describe emerging challenges they are facing and offer recommendations on how to unite efforts to tackle the threats to freedom of speech and democracy.

Panellists:

Bektour Iskender, co-founder of Kloop, an NGO and leading news publication in Kyrgyzstan committed to freedom of speech and training young journalists

Bolot Temirov, Kyrgyzstani investigative journalist

Nurjan Musaeva, Deputy Director, senior lawyer at "Media Development Center" Public Foundation, Coordinator of the Factcheck

Gulnoza Said, Europe and Central Asia program coordinator at the Committee to Protect Journalists

Moderator:

Jasmine D. Cameron, Senior Legal Advisor for Europe and Eurasia with the American Bar Association's Justice Defenders Program

Time: **16:30-17:30**
Venue: **Room 531**
Title: New forms of censorship of new media
Convenor: Pantarey Foundation
Working language: English

Summary: Legal changes in Poland and other OSCE countries increase state control over public communication. The pandemic and the pretext of the armed conflict in Ukraine pose new threats to new media, social media and direct communication of citizens via messengers from OSCE member states. These countries use the pretext of fighting disinformation and information warfare for preventive and repressive censorship without judicial review. In Poland, as well as in other OSCE member states, laws are being introduced that are inconsistent with the obligations of OSCE member states, civil and human rights. At the seminar, we will present a case study of Poland in which special services block the domains of Polish media and want to disable communication in a specific territory without judicial control and have access to the content of messages on instant messengers.

Panellists:

Michael Specjalski, Vice-Chairman of the Council of Founders of the Pantarey Foundation

Leszek Szymowski, Polish investigative journalist, photographer, writer and entrepreneur

Christian Zeitz, Director of the Institute for Applied Political Economy and member of the Vienna Association of Academics

Tuesday, 14 March

Time: **09:00-10:00**
Venue: **Bibliotheksaal**
Title: Induction of Media and Digital Literacy into Formal Education
Convenor: OSCE Mission in Kosovo
Working language: English

Summary: The event will highlight efforts by the OSCE Mission and Kosovo and its local partner, the documentary and education group Dokufest, at introducing media and digital literacy education in formal education.

Panellists:

Dane Koruga, Deputy Director and Chief of the Media Section, OSCE Mission in Kosovo

Eroll Bilibani, Executive Director of DOKUFEST, International Documentary; Short Film Festival, Prizren, Kosovo

Time: **09:00-10:00**
Venue: **Room 532**
Title: Threats to media freedom in Georgia: the draft 2023 foreign influence law
Convenor: Human Rights House Foundation
Working language: English

Summary: In February 2023, the People's Power, a non-formal pro-government group of Georgian MPs that left the ruling Georgian Dream party in August 2022, registered a draft piece of legislation in Parliament. The "transparency of foreign influence" bill, which also has the support of the governing Georgia Dream party, is set to be debated in the Georgian Parliament in the coming weeks and months. The draft law would designate all media outlets, and non-governmental organisations, that receive more than 20% of their funding from foreign sources as 'foreign agents'. Since its introduction in Parliament, the draft law has been widely criticised by Georgian and international civil society actors. Authors of the bill are accused of replicating the practice of authoritarian states and seeking to severely restrict the freedoms of association and expression, posing a serious threat to democracy and civil society in the country.

This side event will bring together members of international and Georgian civil society to discuss the draft law and its potential impact on independent media and journalists in Georgia. The panel will focus on the following key questions:

- What are the implications of Georgia's draft "foreign influence" bill for independent media, journalists, and civil society?
- How is Georgian civil society responding to the draft bill?
- What steps can participating States take to support independent media and journalists in Georgia?

Panelists:

Natia Tavberidze, Human Rights House Tbilisi

Mariam Mkhatchvishvili, Rights Georgia

Andrey Shary, Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty Russia Service (*joining online*)

Moderator:

Dave Elseroad, Human Rights House Foundation

Time: **13:15-14:15**
Venue: **Bibliotheksaal**
Title: Conflict journalism and safety of journalists
Convenor: Media Development Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan (MEDIA)
Working language: English

Summary: Over the last few decades, the international community has taken important steps toward improving the safety of journalists. Last year marked the 10th anniversary since the endorsement of the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity (UN Plan of Action), aiming to create a safe and enabling environment for journalists to carry out their work. Since its inception in 2012, the UN Plan of Action has been a key instrument for the promotion of international standards and norms related to the safety of journalists, providing training and capacity-building for

journalists, and advocating for accountability and prevention of impunity for attacks against journalists. The UN Security Council adopted Resolutions 1738 (2006) and 2222 (2015) to ensure greater protection for journalists and media workers in conflict zones.

The OSCE has adopted a set of commitments regarding the freedom of the media and the safety of journalists, including in conflict-affected areas. Along with establishing the Institution of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, the adoption of Decision 3/18 on the Safety of Journalists by the OSCE Ministerial Council in December 2018 is a welcome development toward reinforcing efforts of the OSCE and participating States on the pressing issue of safety of journalists.

These documents condemn violations and abuses committed against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in situations of armed conflict and state that journalists, media professionals and associated personnel engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict shall be considered as civilians and shall be protected as such, provided that they take no action adversely affecting their status as civilians.

The OSCE is also taking practical steps in relation to the safety of journalists in conflict-affected areas which include raising awareness and advocating for greater protection for journalists, monitoring and reporting on attacks and threats against journalists in conflict areas, providing training and support to journalists, media organizations and other stakeholders on safety and security issues and promotion of legal frameworks for governments. The OSCE is well positioned to further increase the effectiveness of its activities and better coordinate efforts to protect journalists in conflict areas by closely working with other international organizations, including the United Nations and the Council of Europe.

Regretfully, notwithstanding the progress achieved so far, threats to the safety of journalists, in particular, those engaged in dangerous professional missions, remain a matter of urgent concern necessitating further efforts to improve national and international legal frameworks, enhance domestic capacities and international cooperation toward ensuring and strengthening the safety of journalists.

Against this background, the side event will focus on improving the safety of media representatives, particularly while performing their jobs in crises and emergency situations and supporting efforts in building capacities on developing national strategies, implementation of relevant documents adopted by international organizations, primarily the United Nations Security Council resolutions 1738 (2006) and 2222 (2015) and the OSCE Ministerial Councils Decision No. 3/18 on the Safety of Journalists.

Objectives

- To raise awareness of the dangers and challenges faced by conflict journalists
- To share experiences and insights from journalists and experts on the ground
- To explore strategies and best practices to support national efforts for building capacities to enhance the safety of conflict journalists

Format and expected outcomes

The event will be open to a wide audience and will provide an opportunity for participants, including journalists, media professionals and civil society representatives from the participating States, to share first-hand experiences, best practices and ideas for the promotion of safety in journalism. The panelists will share their insights on the challenges faced by conflict journalists, while the discussion will also explore potential strategies and best practices to enhance the safety and protection of conflict journalists. As an outcome, the event is expected to raise awareness of the challenges and risks faced by conflict journalists and to identify potential solutions to improve their safety and protection. It will also highlight the critical role of conflict journalists in providing accurate and reliable information from conflict zones and promoting human rights and justice.

Panellists:

Prof. Anis H. Bajrektarevic, Research fellow, Institute for Modern Political History Analyses

Dr. Harvey Dzodin, Senior Fellow, Centre for China & Globalization

Mrs. Yegana Hajiyevea, Board member for International Eurasia Press Fund

Mr. Adnan Huseyn, freelance journalist, blogger

Moderator:

Mr. Rasim Baghirov, Head of international relations and strategic planning group, Specialist on media development issues

Time: **13:15-14:15**

Venue: **Room 532**

Title: Freedom of the media in Europe in the context of the Ukrainian crisis

Convenor: Information Group on Crimes against the Person

Working language: English, Russian

Summary: The multi-year political crisis in Ukraine, and its escalation after February 2022, has become a challenge to many of the fundamental principles on which a modern democratic society is built. Including the right of access to independent objective information. Unfortunately, freedom of the media has become one of the victims of this conflict, we can see this in the example of pressure and even the closure of independent media in all European countries, the persecution of journalists who represent a point of view that is different from the mainstream. As part of our event, journalists from Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, the Baltic states will present facts of violations of media rights in Europe and suggest ways to protect the basic rights to freedom of information.

Time: **13:15-14:15**

Venue: **Room 533**

Title: Work of the media in an aggressor-country during the war: access to information about Russia and its impact on the global security

Convenor: OVD-Info

Working language: English

Summary: During the war, one of the first victims is information, especially in an aggressor country. Media freedom was the first thing killed in Russia, information is the main reason civil society organizations and media are prosecuted, information is an enemy of the state. At the same time, information about what is happening inside Russia is vital not only for Russians. Right now, the access to information directly influences the possibility to continue the invasion. A humongous autocracy won't disappear after the end of the war, and it already affects global security and development. Information about its work and collaboration with the actors that collect such information is crucial in the transformation of both global security and Russia. This side-event will cover the questions of the connection of global security with information, in particular about Russian authorities operating inside the country and its impact on the war and global security, how independent media and projects transformed their work to keep up the flow of information and reach out to different audiences, and what we can do to assist both them and the global development. The speakers are civil society organisations and independent media.

Panellists:

Ekaterina Golenkova, special projects producer in OVD-Info

Alesya Marokhovskaya, journalist in Important Stories

Galina Arapova, Head of Mass Media Defence Centre (*joining online*)

Ivan Kolpakov, editor-in-chief in Meduza (*joining online*)

Grigory Okhotin, co-founder of OVD-Info

Iryna Zemliana, Institute for Mass Information

Inna Varenysia, wife of the killed photo journalist Maksym Levin, freelancer for the Associated Press

Moderator:

Daria Korolenko, OVD-Info

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