

SCHEDULE OF SIDE EVENTS

**To take place during the
SUPPLEMENTARY HUMAN DIMENSION MEETING ON:
Freedom of Association, Assembly and Expression: Fostering full and equal
participation in pluralist societies”**

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 events convened by participants do not necessarily reflect the policy of the OSCE/ ODIHR.

Thursday, 29 March	Thursday, 29 March
<p><i>Title: IHF Annual Report: Human Rights in the OSCE Region: Europe, Central Asia and North America, Report 2007 (Events of 2006)</i> <i>Convenor: IHF</i> <i>Time: 13.00-13.45</i> <i>Venue: Segmentgalerie I</i> <i>Language: English</i></p>	<p><i>Title: Shrinking Space of Liberty: Contemporary Challenges to three Vital Freedoms in Russia</i> <i>Convenor: SOVA Center for Information and Analysis</i> <i>Time: 13.45-15.00</i> <i>Venue: Segmentgalerie I</i> <i>Language: English</i></p>
Thursday, 29 March	Thursday, 29 March
<p><i>Title: Issues of implementation of right on religious association in Russian Federation and Central Asian countries</i> <i>Convenor: Almaty Helsinki Committee, Kazakhstan</i> <i>Time :18.30-20.00</i> <i>Venue: Segmentgalerie I</i> <i>Language: Russian, English</i></p>	<p><i>Title: Presentation of the Annual Report of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (FIDH/OMCT)</i> <i>Convenor: International Federation for Human Rights and World Organisation Against Torture</i> <i>Time: 18.30-20.00</i> <i>Venue: Bibliotheksaal</i> <i>Language: English, Russian</i></p>
Friday, 30 March	
<p><i>Title: Briefing on the OSCE/ODIHR Guidelines on Freedom of Assembly</i> <i>Convenor: OSCE/ODIHR</i> <i>Time: 12.15 – 14.00</i> <i>Venue: Neuer Saal</i> <i>Language: English, Russian</i></p>	

OVERVIEW OF SIDE EVENTS

As submitted by the organisers

29 – 30 March 2007

Hofburg, Vienna

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

Thursday, 29 March

Time: 13.00-13.45

Venue: Segmentgalerie I

Title: IHF Annual Report: Human Rights in the OSCE Region: Europe, Central Asia and North America, Report 2007 (Events of 2006)

Convenor: International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights

Language: English

Summary: The International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF) will present its new Annual Report that covers human rights developments in 39 countries in the OSCE region.

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has been a main address for the IHF since our establishment in 1982.

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 13.45-15.00

Venue: Segmentgalerie I

Title: Shrinking Space of Liberty: Contemporary Challenges to Three Vital Freedoms in Russia

Convenor: SOVA Center for Information and Analysis

Language: English

Summary: Representatives of Russian human rights NGOs will provide up-to-date information about increasing restriction of three vital freedoms in Russia – freedom of expression, freedom of association, and freedom of assembly, and about growing use of the “fight against extremism” as a tool of political control of and persecution of independent political and social activism and thought.

Refreshments will be provided

Thursday, 29 March

Time: 18.30-20.00

Venue: Segmentgalerie I

Title: Issues of implementation of right on religious association in Russian Federation and Central Asian countries

Convenor: Almaty Helsinki Committee, Kazakhstan

Language: Russian, English

Summary: Freedom of religious association relates to the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. According to Article 18, this right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of personal choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching. In 2005 Kazakhstan made amendments to its legalization in order to “straighten national security”. As a result unregistered by the state religious activity is prohibited. In reality, authorities misinterpret this law and prohibit all religious activities for any group of people without legal entity. Since 2006 in Kazakhstan, in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan officials often raid private homes in order to halt all “illegal religious activities”. High fines for unregistered religious activities are being imposed; religious communities are being banned from operating. Thus, states do not respect the right for religious association leading to the lack of respect for freedom of conscience and religion.

In Russian Federation due to religious and legal ignorance, law enforcement agencies raid unregistered religious communities during religious services. Such actions contravene international legal standards and the Constitution of the Russian Federation (Article 30), which guarantee the right to association. Moreover, another serious problem, which religious communities face, is the issue of religious community property. For example, the majority of Protestant communities in Russia do not have their own place of worship and they have to rent a premise, which leads to serious problems. Religious communities are being denied the right to rent buildings under far-fetched excuses.

Thursday, 29 March

Time: 18.30 - 20.00

Venue: Bibliotheksaal

Title: Presentation of the Annual Report of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (FIDH/OMCT)

Convenor: International Federation for Human Rights and World Organisation Against Torture

Language: English, Russian

Summary: This side event is aimed at presenting the part on Europe and CIS of the annual report 2006 of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders. The report highlights the confirmation of strong tendencies of repression designed to hamper independent civil society's capacity for action – or even silence it completely – in many countries in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), in 2006.

Beverages will be provided

Friday, 30 March

Time: 12.15 – 14.00

Venue: Neuer Saal

Title: Briefing on the OSCE/ODIHR Guidelines on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

Convenor: OSCE/ODIHR

Language: English, Russian

Summary: The side event will present an opportunity to discuss the newly launched OSCE/ODIHR Guidelines on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly in greater detail. As the Guidelines are aimed at those involved in the drafting of legislation, those implementing it, as well as those affected by the implementation, the potential target audience for the side event may include practitioners in many sectors – legislative drafters, parliamentarians, legal professionals, police officers, local officials, NGO representatives and others.

Refreshments will be provided