



Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting

16-17 November 2017

Hofburg, Vienna

ACCESS TO JUSTICE AS A KEY ELEMENT OF THE RULE OF LAW

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Aim of the Meeting

According to the decision of the Permanent Council (PC.DEC/476, 23 May 2002), each year, the Chairmanship-in-Office organizes three informal Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings (SHDMs), in the framework of the OSCE Permanent Council, in order to discuss key substantive concerns raised at previous Human Dimension Meetings or Review Conferences. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and other OSCE structures and institutions, when required, assist the Chairmanship-in-Office in preparing the SHDMs.

The Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting (SHDM) on the topic of *Access to Justice as a Key Element of the Rule of Law* will take place in Vienna from 16 to 17 November 2017. The meeting is co-organized by the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the OSCE Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM).

Enjoyment of the right to access to justice by all is currently endangered by a number of threats, some of which are cross-cutting and affect the entire OSCE region. Legal, economic, cultural and practical obstacles to the full enjoyment of this right result in a disproportionate number of unreported cases. These so-called 'hidden figures' of crime are far higher among certain segments of the population and groups of individuals. Administrative and civil proceedings are no exceptions. Women, national minorities, including Roma and Sinti and persons with disabilities, especially persons with mental health issues and intellectual disabilities, are among the most disadvantaged groups with respect to the enjoyment of the right to access to justice. Failing to ensure equal access to justice undermines not only the rule of law but also the security and safety of our societies.

This Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting aims at providing a forum to identify the main current legal and practical challenges to access to justice in the OSCE area, and to identify good practices in addressing these challenges, to exchange information, and finally to articulate recommendations for OSCE participating States on improving access to justice as a key element of the Rule of Law. The participants will discuss best practices from across the OSCE area, with a focus on the following key areas:

- Current trends, challenges and opportunities in the area of access to justice
- Access to justice and conflict prevention
- Gender, diversity and access to justice

Additional information relevant to the SHDM, including the annotated agenda, which will be made available in due course, can be found on the SHDM website at http://www.osce.org/odihr/shdm_3_2017.

2. Participation

Representatives of OSCE participating States and OSCE executive structures, representatives of inter-governmental organizations, representatives of civil society and researchers having interest in the topic are invited to participate in the SHDM. The Partners for Co-operation are invited to attend and contribute with respect to their co-operation and links with the OSCE in the field. Civil society organizations can find more information in the document 'Information for Civil Society'.

3. Registration

Participants wishing to attend the meeting are requested to register online at <http://meetings.odihr.pl> latest by the deadline of **Wednesday, 8 November 2017, 12:00 (CET)**. Important note: **registration after this date will be closed and registration on-site will not be available.**

Registered participants will be able to **collect their badges at the meeting venue** as of Thursday, 16 November 2017, from 9 a.m. in the main entrance hall of the Hofburg Congress Centre. Those participants who experience problems with registration are requested to contact Ms. Anna Sierant (contact details below).

Participation in the meeting is free of charge, although all travel and accommodation costs should be borne by participants. Civil society organizations are kindly requested to make their own travel and hotel arrangements.

A list of selected hotels in Vienna is available on the SHDM website.

4. Side events

Side events (SE) may be held over the course of two days during the SHDM. To book a side event, please register first in the ODIHR Registration System (<http://meetings.odihr.pl>) and then proceed with the side event booking. The booking system will be open from Wednesday, 25 October at 12.00 (CET) until Monday, 30 October 23:59 (CET) at <http://meetings.odihr.pl>, and will be based on "first come, first served basis". If you do not manage to secure a slot, please contact ODIHR at ireneusz.stepinski@odihr.pl to inquire about potential availability as some cancellations of pre-booked events might occur. Additional information on the content and objectives of planned side events, timing and duration are available on SHDM website, in the 'Side Events Information' document.

5. Modalities and Logistics

The modalities of the meeting are set out in accordance with the decision of the Permanent Council (PC.DEC/476, 23 May 2002).

Venue: The meeting will take place in the Hofburg Congress Centre, on **16 and 17 November at the Neuer Saal**, located on the 2nd floor.

Schedule: The SHDM will start on Thursday, 16 November at 15:00.

The side events might take place on Thursday, 16 November between 13:00 and 14:45 and on Friday, 17 November between 12:00 and 13:45. For details please check the Side Events Schedule on SHDM website, prior to the meeting.

The opening session of SHDM will start on Thursday, 16 November 2017 at 15:00. During this session the representatives of the Chairmanship-in-Office, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the OSCE Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) as well as the key-note speaker will present their opening remarks. No comments or statements are foreseen from participants due to short time of the opening session.

Three working sessions will follow:

- Working Session 1: Current trends, challenges and opportunities in the area of access to justice
- Working Session 2: Access to justice and conflict prevention
- Working Session 3: Gender, diversity and access to justice

At the closing session, starting on Friday, 17 November at 16:00, the moderators of three working sessions serving as rapporteurs will present the reports from the working groups. There will be time for delegations of participating States to voice their comments and, finally, for the representatives of the Chairmanship-in-Office and OSCE institutions for their closing remarks. Only the delegations of participating States have a right to speak during the closing session.

The meeting will end on Friday, 17 November at 17:00.

Access to plenary and Seating: Access to the plenary hall will be permitted for up to five representatives at one time from each individual civil society organization. Civil society organizations with five or more registered participants will receive five transferrable special plenary access badges.

At the opening and closing session, the delegations of the participating States are seated at the main, plenary table. During the working sessions the name-plates will be taken down and all participants can sit wherever they wish, including the main plenary table.

Interpretation: The meeting will be interpreted into the six official OSCE languages: English, French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish.

Filming: Filming with cameras and video cameras is only permitted by accredited journalists. No other audio-visual recordings should be undertaken without the explicit permission of individuals being filmed.

Nursing facilities: Child nursing facilities and lactation room are available in the venue.

Guidelines for the debate: The intention is to develop a free-flowing discussion based on the keynote speeches, panelists' inputs, discussions, background information and written statements circulated in advance or during the SHDM. To this end a speakers' list is not envisaged. Participants wishing to speak should attract the moderator's attention and wait for the moderator to give them the floor. A representative of a registered organization/institution/participating State can speak only once during a session. If there is time left before the end of the working session, it might be made available for questions or for other participants who have not had a chance to speak on a particular issue addressed earlier.

The moderator will help to ensure that the participants engage in a constructive debate aimed at achieving the meetings' objectives, improving the implementation of OSCE human dimension commitments and formulating recommendations. To this end, moderators might decide about the order of speakers, ensuring that participants speak on the topic under discussion. The moderator might set a maximum speaking time.

To ensure a free and interactive debate, participants are strongly discouraged from reading out prepared statements. Prepared statements, background documentation, comments or written materials may be submitted in advance for circulation by the Documents Distribution Centre and hence can feed into the discussion.

ODIHR reserves the right, in case a large number of participants wish to speak, to introduce in the course of the session a list of speakers and a maximum speaking time.

Right of reply: At the end of working sessions as well as at the closing plenary participating States will have a right to exercise their right of reply. Participating States should indicate to the moderator early enough before the end of the session their wish to exercise their right of reply so sufficient time is allocated.

Display and distribution of documents: Participants may display information materials on the tables in the lobby of the main meeting room. They may also distribute documents during the SHDM by giving one copy of each document (maximum 3 pages in length) to staff of the Document Distribution Centre. There are no copying and translation services available at the venue.

Contact information:

Overall co-ordination of meeting:

Ms. Kamila Czerwinska at kamila.czerwinska@odihr.pl, Tel: +48 22 5200 657

Programme matters:

Ms. Carolyn Hammer at Carolyn.Hammer@odihr.pl or +48 22 5200 632

Coordination of side events:

Mr. Ireneusz Stepinski at ireneusz.stepinski@odihr.pl or +48 22 5200 658

Registration of participants:

Ms. Anna Sierant at hdim@odihr.pl or +48 22 5200 627