

# Migration and Human Rights at International Borders



## Strengthening migration management and integration across the OSCE region to protect migrant rights and promote social cohesion

Safeguarding the human rights of migrants and refugees is vital for the development of cohesive and stable democratic societies. ODIHR supports participating States (pSs) across the OSCE region both in protecting the human rights of migrants and refugees, and in working towards their integration in host countries. By fostering collaboration among governments, civil society and international organizations, ODIHR ensures that migration management and integration policies are effective and human rights-compliant, and strengthen social cohesion.

### Why is it important?

Migrant and refugee integration is, and will remain, both a significant challenge and valuable opportunity for host countries. Respect for human rights at international borders is an essential part of upholding the rule of law. The drivers and dynamics of migration are evolving rapidly and require States to be adaptable.

### How do we work?

ODIHR is uniquely placed to support national, regional and local authorities on migration and refugee integration, drawing on its wide-ranging expertise, the trust and credibility it has built with both civil society and human rights defenders, its long-standing partnerships with other international organizations and established coordination with OSCE field operations.

ODIHR supports participating States in fulfilling the commitments they have made on migration and displacement and helps civil society become stronger and more effective by:

- Identifying good practices and gaps in migration and integration policies and practices;
- Ensuring compliance with international human rights standards and OSCE commitments;
- Providing training, tailored guidelines and recommendations; and
- Developing peer networks and fostering the exchange of experiences among civil society organizations and national institutions.

### Key OSCE commitments

- **Vienna 1989:** pSs reaffirm the right of individuals to freedom of movement within their own countries and the right to leave and return to their country, while committing to simplify visa and exit procedures. States also agree to facilitate family reunification.
- **Istanbul 1999:** pSs pledge to respect the right to seek asylum, ensure the international protection of refugees, uphold human rights in migration settings, combat human trafficking and support coordinated, inclusive strategies for managing migration.
- **Maastricht 2003:** links migration and mobility with human security, emphasizing the need to address the root causes of migration, enhance integration policies and prevent trafficking and migrant smuggling through cooperation.
- **Ljubljana 2005:** pSs commit to promote the dignified treatment of all individuals wanting to cross borders.
- **Hamburg 2016:** States acknowledge the growing challenges of large migration flows, reaffirm commitments to international protection standards and pledge to promote safe, orderly and responsible migration through international cooperation.
- **OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Berlin Declaration (2018):** calls for upholding the rights of migrants and refugees, especially their freedom from arbitrary detention.

## Current areas of focus include:

- Helping civil society monitor and advocate for the human rights of migrants and refugees at international borders and domestically. ODIHR trains human rights defenders to carry out high-quality, objective human rights monitoring and promotes a safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders working on migration.
- Supporting national and local authorities with the design and implementation of sustainable integration policies that are human rights-compliant.
- Fostering policymaking that capitalizes on the contribution of diasporas to post-conflict reconstruction and development.
- Raising awareness about the human rights implications of new technologies used in border management.

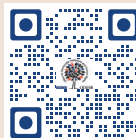
## COMPASS

In April 2025, ODIHR launched COMPASS: Comprehensive Assistance for Migration Policies in the OSCE Region. This almost four-year project aims to strengthen migration management and integration frameworks across the OSCE region, promoting social cohesion, protecting migrant rights and addressing emerging challenges in migration and border management. COMPASS delivers context-specific solutions and fosters collaboration to promote sustainable and human rights-compliant migration and integration policies.

COMPASS has three pillars:

1. **Strengthening integration and social cohesion** through training and guidance on how to enhance migrant and refugee integration, counter xenophobia and foster more resilient and cohesive societies.
2. **Promoting human rights-compliant border management** by training authorities and human rights defenders.
3. **Addressing emerging migration challenges** by equipping state officials and civil society with tools and strategies to help them adapt to the changing dynamics of migration, such as climate change and new technology.

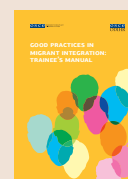
All ODIHR resources on migration are available at:  
<https://www.osce.org/odihr/migration>



## Key ODIHR resources available in English and Russian



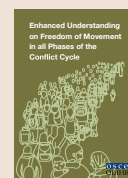
Border Management and Human Rights



Good Practices in Migrant Integration



Shaping Balanced Political Discourse and Constructive Narratives on Migration



Enhanced Understanding on Freedom of Movement in all Phases of the Conflict Cycle



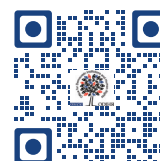
Opening Doors for Children: Prevention of Childhood Statelessness - Good Practices in the OSCE Area



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