



Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting
on International co-operation in service of human rights

14-15 March 2022
Vienna and online

ANNOTATED AGENDA

BACKGROUND

Co-operation among States at the international level towards the advancement and protection of human rights, democracy, the rule of law, and fundamental freedoms for all are central components of the OSCE comprehensive concept of security and of its engagement with and among participating States.

As a regional organization recognized under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the OSCE co-operates with regional and international organizations in line with their mandates. In numerous OSCE documents, the participating States have highlighted the importance of practical co-operation among OSCE participating States in advancing and protecting human rights. In Helsinki 1992, the participating States reaffirmed their commitments to the Charter of the United Nations and pledged “*to improve contact and practical co-operation with appropriate international organizations*”, and “*to expand its relations with all organizations and institutions that are concerned with the promotion of comprehensive security within the OSCE area*” (Maastricht 2003).

In Istanbul (1999), the OSCE participating States committed themselves to “*joint measures based on co-operation, both in the OSCE and through those organizations of which we are members, in order to offer assistance to participating States to enhance their compliance with OSCE principles and commitments. We will strengthen existing co-operative instruments and develop new ones in order to respond efficiently to requests for assistance from participating States [...]*”.

In keeping with the 2010 Astana Commemorative Declaration, the OSCE participating States reiterated the common vision that comprehensive and sustainable security is not possible without respect for human rights. OSCE’s co-operation with relevant international, regional, and non-governmental organizations is an important component to ensure synergies in programming and complementarity in potentially overlapping areas to reinforce instead of duplicate efforts.

Strengthened co-operation could also increase support by participating States on policies aimed at implementing OSCE commitments in the area of human rights. Making sure that a plurality of voices are heard and acknowledged, in particular those of women, young people and other under-represented groups, including minorities and persons with disabilities, close co-operation and consultation with civil society as well as national human rights institutions, and recognising the important role of independent media, equality bodies continue to play an important role in advancing international co-operation in addressing human rights challenges.

The Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting (SHDM) will examine the ways in which international co-operation can effectively advance and protect human rights for all in line with OSCE commitments. The SHDM will provide a platform for an exchange of views among OSCE participating States, OSCE institutions and other executive structures and a variety of international organizations, civil society and other stakeholders on the identification of good and promising practices for effective international co-operation in the service of human rights. The SHDM will also focus on identifying concrete aspects of the human dimension, which can be strengthened by more effective co-operation by OSCE participating States, with a view to improving the implementation of OSCE commitments.

Discussions are expected to result in recommendations for ways to build upon the co-operation between OSCE structures and other stakeholders to better assist OSCE participating States in implementing existing human dimension commitments and encourage further progress.

DAY 1, 14 MARCH 2022

13.30 – 14.30	Side Events
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15.00 – 16.00	<u>OPENING SESSION</u>
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Opening remarks
Introductory addresses
Technical information

16.00 – 18.00	<u>SESSION I: Role of OSCE institutions and structures</u>
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States have the primary responsibility for implementing the OSCE human dimension commitments, including in the area of human rights, and have established and mandated OSCE executive structures to assist them. These structures include the OSCE Secretariat, the OSCE Field Operations and the Institutions of the OSCE, namely the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the Representative on the Freedom of the Media (RFoM) and the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), as well as the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE. The mandates of OSCE structures often specifically include tasks to establish co-operation with regional and international organizations to avoid overlap and duplication and increase effectiveness.

ODIHR works closely with civil society, and actively co-operates with the UN, Council of Europe, and other regional governmental organizations, in line with its mandate “*to work closely with other institutions active in the field of democratic institution building and human rights, particularly the Council of Europe and the European Commission for Democracy Through Law (Venice Commission)*” (Prague 1992) and to “*consult and co-operate with relevant bodies of the Council of Europe and examine ways how they can contribute to*

ODIHR's activities" (Helsinki 1992). Regular co-operation with OHCHR, UN Special Procedures, UNODC, UNESCO, Council of Europe and its specialized bodies such as CPT, Venice Commission and GRETA has resulted in joint legislative reviews, drafting of guidelines on a number of fundamental freedoms, monitoring the observance of specific human rights and risks of statelessness associated with migration, offering a platform to human rights defenders and journalists, developing practical tools and capacity-building materials for State officials and civil society. At the same time, ODIHR's co-operation with non-governmental organizations is key in furthering the implementation of OSCE commitments, as acknowledged in the 1990 OSCE Charter of Paris.

HCNM uses quiet diplomacy and early action to seek resolution of ethnic tensions that might endanger peace and security. According to the mandate, in considering a situation, the High Commissioner will take fully account of democratic means and international instruments to respond to it, and their utilization by the parties involved. All nine sets of the HCNM's thematic Recommendations broadly refer to international standards, including human rights standards from the UN, OSCE and Council of Europe, as guiding principles for the protection of vulnerable groups, including national minorities. This approach calls for efforts that emphasize the importance of implementation of already existing international standards and the HCNM's recommendations and guidelines, to build more peaceful and cohesive societies. The HCNM's overall approach to international co-operation is to provide a co-ordinated response to create a sustainable and stable future for everyone, including national minorities. To that effect, the High Commissioner actively engages with participating States as well as with civil society, and actively cooperates with the UN, Council of Europe, and other regional governmental organizations.

The RFoM mandate underlines that, "*The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media will co-operate, on the basis of regular contacts, with relevant international organizations, including the United Nations and its specialized agencies and the Council of Europe, with a view to enhancing co-ordination and avoiding duplication*". The RFoM closely co-operates with a variety of international and regional actors across the OSCE region, in order to ensure, for example, a broad exchange of information on media freedom violations and developments, to compile substantiated legal reviews, develop comprehensive policy guidance and advance the implementation of recommendations and commitments. For instance, the RFoM collaborates with several UN structures such as UNESCO, the OHCHR and UN Special Rapporteurs, regional organizations such as the Council of Europe and various of its committees, and the EU and its institutions. Together with the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, the Organization of American States Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression, and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information, the RFoM annually issues a Joint Declaration on a pertinent issue pertaining to freedom of expression and media freedom. The RFoM also co-ordinates and cooperates with a wide range of civil society organizations and media representatives, on the international, regional and local level.

The OSCE Field Operations work closely on the ground with local and international non-governmental organisations as participants in programmatic activities across a broad range of issues, as stakeholders in field operations' work, and as implementing partners. They co-operate and co-ordinate closely with other actors including international and regional organisations. Field operations also co-operate closely with the OSCE institutions and, where appropriate, support their activities in the field.

Strengthened co-operation allows for coherent and co-ordinated response to specific threats and challenges faced by the 57 OSCE participating States in the implementation of their human dimension commitments and protecting fundamental human rights. This Working Session will focus on how the OSCE institutions and structures can better promote commitments in the area of human rights, by learning from and increasing their co-operation with international, regional and non-governmental organizations to better assist OSCE participating States in implementing existing human dimension commitments and encourage further progress.

Thus, participants could consider:

- How can the OSCE participating States better implement their human rights commitments based on the collaborative efforts of OSCE institutions and structures and how can they reinforce OSCE Field operations' work in this area?
- What role can OSCE Field Operations play in strengthening international co-operation with international, regional and non-governmental organizations to the benefit of other OSCE institutions and structures in service of human rights?
- How can OSCE institutions and structures increase co-operation with non-governmental organizations in advancing and protecting human rights?

DAY 2, 15 MARCH 2022

9.00 – 10.00

Side Events

10.30 – 12.30

SESSION II: Effective multilateralism: co-operation of and with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations

Effective multilateralism is mutually beneficial for all concerned, as it helps to avoid duplication and improves the exchange of information. Multilateral co-operation between the OSCE and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations takes place in a range of different areas, in different fora, at different levels and through various formal and informal mechanisms and arrangements.

Over the years, the OSCE has established a variety of formal or less formal mechanisms to co-operate and co-ordinate with international and regional organizations such as the United Nations, its special rapporteurs and specialized agencies, the Council of Europe and its sub-entities, the European Union, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, Interpol, and Europol, among others (see e.g., Maastricht 2003). Other co-operation mechanisms between the OSCE and international and regional organizations also exist, such as collaborative projects and regular consultations and staff meetings between the OSCE Field Operations and OSCE Institutions and the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the European Union. These international co-operation mechanisms substantially contribute to advancing and protecting human rights and comprehensive security in the OSCE region in accordance with the OSCE commitments.

Several OSCE human dimension commitments specifically recognize the complementary role that civil society plays in these efforts. Non-governmental organizations can contribute their expertise and experience to exploring how the OSCE and relevant regional and international organizations can better promote OSCE commitments, by making recommendations on how existing co-operation can profit from and better integrate information provided by civil society networks and build on their advocacy efforts with OSCE participating States. This contribution in return will “*enhance the ability of NGOs to make their full contribution to the further development of civil society and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms*” (Istanbul 1999).

Keeping in mind resource constraints and respective mandates, efforts to strengthen co-operation of and with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations should be further enhanced across the OSCE region. The work done by OSCE institutions and structures in the field of the digital transformations or on rights of the child and youth can provide in this regard a useful example of effective multilateralism.

Since 1990 in Copenhagen, the OSCE participating States decided to accord particular attention to the recognition of the rights of the child, including his or her individual freedoms, and right to special protection against all forms of violence and exploitation. OSCE commitments have been adopted to protect human rights of migrant children (Vienna 1989), protect trafficking of children and young people (Maastricht 2003), education of children especially in Roma and Sinti communities (Helsinki 2008), and safeguard against sexual and labor exploitation of children and young boys and girls (Brussels 2006 and Madrid 2007).

OSCE participating States have acknowledged the potential of young people to contribute to economic, political and social development, and their role in supporting participating States in the implementation of commitments in all three dimensions of the OSCE (Basel 2014; Belgrade 2015 and Milan 2018). OSCE participating States have also taken note of UN Security Council resolution 2250, which emphasizes young people’s positive contribution to peace processes and conflict resolution.

Humanitarian considerations also remain central in addressing situation of conflicts and their consequences on the civilian population, with the protection and promotion of human rights as indispensable to peace and security. To this end, the OSCE promotes international co-operation with a range of actors, including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), to better ensure humanitarian protection and assistance for victims of war and other situations of violence.

The session will highlight effective examples of multilateralism between OSCE structures and institutions and other intergovernmental and non-governmental bodies. By holistically viewing the work done by the OSCE the discussion will underline the benefit of multilateral co-operation towards improving the implementation of OSCE human dimension commitments by OSCE participating States, and to what extent the OSCE institutions can support this process.

Questions for participants to consider:

- What are the most effective instruments of multilateral co-operation and co-ordination and lessons learned in promoting OSCE commitments? What are the particular strengths and challenges?

- What are the challenges and what are the good practices we need to consider when promoting the establishment of multilateral co-operation platforms in the field of human rights in the OSCE region?
- Are there gaps in co-operation arrangements between the OSCE and key regional and international organizations? If so, how can they be best addressed?

13.00 – 14.00	Side Events
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14.30 – 16.30	<u>SESSION III: Digital diplomacy and activism for human rights</u>
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As new technologies increasingly affect our lives, the effective delivery of OSCE human dimension commitments requires consideration of both the opportunities and challenges for human rights posed by those technologies and their use. In many ways, digital technologies have strengthened the enjoyment of human rights and provided a new platform for democratic engagement, by facilitating sharing and access to relevant information, enhancing human rights education opportunities, and allowing to identify and document human rights violations. At the same time, digital technologies can also have a negative impact on a range of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The protections for human rights and fundamental freedoms need to be adhered to independent of the technologies applied.

International co-operation between national, regional and non-governmental organizations in the field of human rights is also increasingly shaped by digital technologies, posing opportunities and channels to the ways diplomacy and activism are conducted. Alongside traditional methods of diplomacy, digital technology has largely revolutionised the way diplomacy is conducted and international co-operation takes shape today, including with respect to human rights. State representatives use digital tools in their daily work, from negotiations and representation, to communication and policy analysis. Although the most common is the use of social media for public diplomacy (e.g. Twitter diplomacy), digital tools have a much more substantial impact on other functions of diplomacy – from online meetings to data analysis towards policy making.

At the same time, as increasingly witnessed in recent years, human rights activists have greatly benefitted from the use of digital communication technologies to amplify their message, build associations and networks, share opinions and ideas, learn and act upon their rights. Various digital human rights campaigns testify to the ways digital activism has proved to be a powerful means of grassroots mobilization and provides new ways to promote awareness and create support. However, there is a tension between the enhanced ability of people to defend rights and pursue justice claims and the ability of states and others to engage in unprecedented tracking and surveillance.

One of the positive aspects of digital technologies applied to diplomacy and activism for human rights is the ability to foster two-way communication between state representatives and human rights defenders. In the same way, social media has allowed diplomats and State leaders to easily extend their diplomatic networks and build strategic relationships. This is the case of the Digital Diplomacy Coalition (DDC), founded in 2012 to connect diplomatic representatives

and non-governmental communities, and of the numerous campaigns advanced under the #DiplomacyUnited initiative, launched in 2014 by an informal group of digital diplomats to share co-ordinated human rights campaign on social media with a common objective.

The session will offer an opportunity to discuss, on one hand, ways in which diplomacy has benefitted from the digital space and tools towards creating coalitions and advancing negotiations on human rights issues, while on the other hand, also looking at how human rights activists and campaigns have been able to effectively use digital technologies to advance their cause.

Questions for discussion:

- How can the OSCE make effective use of digital technologies to foster international co-operation in the field of human rights and at the same time alleviate the human rights violations that occur through technology and their use?
- What roles can digital technologies play in supporting human rights activism and its relevance at the level of international co-operation?
- Are there examples of successful digital diplomacy in ensuring the protection and advancement of human rights in the OSCE region?

16.30 – 17.30	CLOSING SESSION
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Rapports from the working sessions
Comments from the floor
Closing remarks

17.30 Closing of the meeting

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