

# ODIHR in Ukraine



## Making our societies stronger through democracy and human rights

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is the human rights institution of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and one of the key human rights bodies worldwide.

All OSCE countries have recognized that democracy and human rights are the bedrock of lasting safety and security across the OSCE area. ODIHR plays a unique role in the OSCE's overall mandate, assisting its 57 participating States in strengthening their

democratic institutions, upholding the rule of law, increasing respect for human rights, promoting gender equality, and working towards tolerant societies in which all citizens are able and encouraged to participate.

ODIHR has been working since its establishment in 1991 to create resilient societies whose democratic institutions work in the interest of the people, as well as supporting the engagement of civil society organizations with national and other state authorities in meaningful dialogue.

The Office has played an important role in strengthening democratic institutions and respect for human rights in Ukraine, particularly since launching a dedicated and ongoing project in the country in 2015.

Much of the work undertaken by ODIHR in Ukraine has focused on human rights monitoring, democratic governance and lawmaking, the rule of law, and combating discrimination, with a special emphasis on the protection and inclusion of Roma communities. ODIHR has observed 14 elections in Ukraine, most recently in 2020.

Further information on ODIHR's Ukraine project can be found [here](#).

Other human rights instruments of the OSCE include the **Moscow Mechanism**, which is supported by ODIHR.

All ODIHR's public statements on the ongoing conflict can be found [here](#).

## Activities

Since the Russian Federation's military attack in 2022 and the devastating consequences of the ongoing war, ODIHR has continued to provide strong support to Ukraine.

Its activities aim to empower all those working on human rights in the country, promote dialogue, raise awareness of the importance of strengthening democratic institutions, and assist the work of civil society.

The projects encompass a wide variety of initiatives. Key activities include:

- **Monitoring human rights:** Monitoring the impact of Russia's military attack and the resulting armed conflict on civilians and prisoners of war for violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. In 21 monitoring missions, ODIHR has so far conducted more than 450 interviews inside and outside Ukraine, and six **public reports** have been published to date.
- **Combating human trafficking:** Assessments of national referral mechanisms and strategies to prevent and counter human trafficking in the OSCE countries experiencing large refugee flows from Ukraine. ODIHR has provided training for frontline responders, and set up

a coordination platform that brings together hundreds of civil society organizations working to combat human trafficking.

- **Protecting Roma rights:** Training Roma civil society activists to strengthen their human rights monitoring skills, and increasing the meaningful participation, leadership and decision-making power of Roma women activists. Providing support to state authorities to assist them in upholding their commitments on Roma inclusion. ODIHR has also been **facilitating dialogue** between national authorities, Roma civil society and the international community to support joint action for Roma communities impacted by the war.
- **Training human rights defenders:** Comprehensive training for Ukrainian human rights defenders both in the country and abroad, providing the knowledge and skills to make advocacy efforts more effective and human rights monitoring safer.
- **Increasing gender sensitivity:** Support for Ukraine's network of gender advisers through awareness-raising and training, as well as potential assistance to the Ukrainian Parliament in becoming a more gender-sensitive institution.

- **Strengthening the rights of people with disabilities:** Training for civil society in Ukraine on disability rights and developing easy-to-read materials to increase the inclusion of people with disabilities in public life. Supporting the adaptation of key public documents for easy-to-read formats to increase the political participation of people with disabilities.
- **Hate crime monitoring:** Working with national authorities and civil society organizations to report on hate crimes taking place in Ukraine, in order to combat bias-motivated violence effectively and ensure victims receive the assistance they need.
- **Involving Ukrainians abroad:** With the Ukrainian diaspora proving crucial in mobilizing humanitarian assistance and other forms of support for the areas most affected by the armed conflict, ODIHR continues to analyse experiences and lessons learned from other diasporas involved in post-conflict reconstruction and development.
- **Strengthening democratic institutions:** Assistance to the Ukrainian Parliament to support the development of an integrity and parliamentary ethics mechanism, as well as potential assistance to

political parties in working on tools to increase ethical and public integrity.

- **Safeguarding electoral processes:** Support for election-related legal reforms, including consultation with national authorities and stakeholders on the legal framework and practical mechanisms to prepare for future elections and facilitate voting rights for all Ukrainians.
- **Legislative assistance:** Advice to the Ukrainian Parliament and other public institutions upon request on their ongoing legal reforms, including on political party regulation, public integrity and accountability, and civil society participation, as well as assistance in ensuring open, transparent and inclusive lawmaking.
- **Strengthening accountability:** Gathering experts and institutions from across the OSCE region to support the Ukrainian judiciary and legal professionals in advancing accountability and fair trial rights in war crimes cases. Assisting in the development of a practical guidance tool for judges on the adjudication of war crimes in Ukraine.

Planning for specific activities remains flexible in order to respond to the needs of all those engaged in protecting human rights in Ukraine.



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