



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

ODIHR Panel of Experts on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

The Panel

The ODIHR Panel of Experts on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly was established in 2006. The Panel consists of up to twelve independent experts from OSCE participating States selected on the basis of their expertise, experience, integrity and objectivity.

The Panel is an advisory and consultative body to ODIHR. It seeks to enhance the promotion and protection of the freedom of peaceful assembly in the OSCE region.

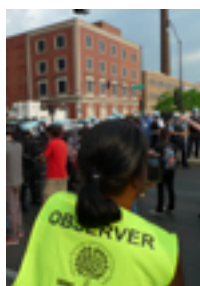
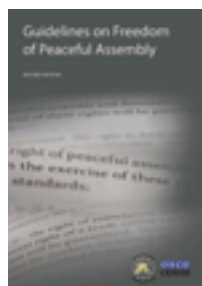
Freedom of peaceful assembly is a fundamental human right that can be enjoyed and exercised by individuals and groups, including registered and unregistered associations, legal entities and corporate bodies.

An assembly implies the intentional presence of a number of individuals in a public place to express a common purpose. **Only peaceful assemblies are protected by law.** An assembly is deemed peaceful if its organizers have professed peaceful intentions and if the conduct of the assembly participants is non-violent.

Activities of the Panel

In 2010, the ODIHR Panel of Experts on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly helped revise the *Guidelines on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly: Second Edition*, a publication developed jointly by the OSCE/ODIHR and the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe. The Guidelines draw on good practice examples from the national legislation of OSCE participating States, as well as on the case law of the European Court of Human Rights, to offer a practical toolkit for legislators and legal practitioners. Together with the Venice Commission, the Panel is responsible for updating the Guidelines on a regular basis. The second edition of the Guidelines is available in English, Russian and Arabic at: www.osce.org/odihr/73405.

The Panel of Experts on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly assists ODIHR in reviewing draft and adopted legislation of OSCE participating States on freedom of peaceful assembly, often in co-operation with the Venice Commission, to ensure its compliance with international standards and OSCE commitments. Such legislative reviews are uploaded onto ODIHR's online legislative database, www.legislationline.org.



Freedom of assembly commitments and human rights standards

OSCE, Copenhagen Document, 1990:

“Everyone will have the right of peaceful assembly and demonstration. Any restrictions which may be placed on the exercise of these rights will be prescribed by law and consistent with international standards.”

United Nations, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 21:

“The right of peaceful assembly shall be recognized. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order (ordre public), the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.”

Council of Europe, European Convention on Human Rights, Article 11:

1. “Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.
2. No restrictions shall be placed on the exercise of these rights other than such as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.”

Moreover, ODIHR draws on the expertise of the Panel when conducting capacity-building activities. These activities are aimed at enabling civil society representatives, including human rights activists, to improve their knowledge of standards on freedom of assembly, while also enhancing their ability to monitor and report on this issue. The Panel has been involved in various monitoring missions in OSCE participating States to observe and improve national practices. The experiences gathered during these projects were combined to produce a *Handbook on Monitoring Freedom of Peaceful Assembly* (2011). The Handbook is available in English, Russian and Arabic at: www.osce.org/odihr/82979.

Panel members have also contributed to ODIHR’s ongoing efforts to help ensure that the police meet their obligation to protect and facilitate assemblies effectively by assisting in and providing expertise towards the development of a handbook and corresponding training manual on the policing of assemblies.

More information

For more detailed information, please contact ODIHR at:

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