

SCHEDULE OF SIDE EVENTS

To take place during the
**SUPPLEMENTARY HUMAN DIMENSION MEETING ON:
Freedom of Religion or Belief**

The Helsinki Document of 1992 (Chapter IV) called for increasing the openness of OSCE activities and expanding the role of NGOs. In particular, in paragraph (15) of Chapter IV the participating States decided to facilitate during CSCE meetings informal discussion meetings between representatives of participating States and of NGOs, and to provide encouragement to NGOs organizing seminars on CSCE-related issues. In line with this decision, NGOs, governments, and other participants are encouraged to organize side meetings on relevant issues of their choice.

The opinions and information shared during the side events convened by participants do not necessarily reflect the policy of the OSCE/ ODIHR.

Thursday, 09 July	Thursday, 09 July
<i>Title: Roundtable for Civil Society Convenor: ODIHR/TND Time: 10.30 – 13.00 Venue: Ratsaal Language: English, Russian</i>	<i>Title: Secularism and the Rule of Law are a Guarantee of Freedom of Religion or Belief Convenor: European Humanist Federation Time: 13.30 – 14.45 Venue: Bibliotheksaal Language: English, French, Italian</i>
<i>Title: The OSCE Chairmanship and Kazakhstan Convenor: Freedom House Time: 13.45 – 14.45 Venue: Segmentgalerie I Language: English, Russian</i>	
Friday, 10 July	Friday, 10 July
<i>Title: Images of the rise of hatred against religious minorities in French speaking Europe in 2009 Convenor: European Raelian Movement Time: 12.00 – 14.00 Venue: Segmentgalerie I Language: English, French</i>	<i>Title: The Assault on Religious freedom in Central Asia Convenor: Freedom House Time: 12.00 – 14.00 Venue: Ratsaal Language: English, Russian</i>

OVERVIEW OF SIDE EVENTS

As submitted by the organizers

09 – 10 July 2009

Hofburg, Vienna

The side events below have been exclusively organized and scheduled at the request of participants of the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting. The content for each meeting was prepared by the organization convening the events and does not necessarily reflect the views of the OSCE/ODIHR.

Thursday, 09 July

Time: 10.30 – 13.00

Venue: Ratsaal

Title: Roundtable for Civil Society

Convenor: ODIHR/TND

Language: English, Russian

Summary: The purpose of the Side Event is to provide civil society with an opportunity to prepare recommendations, which will be presented at the opening of the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting.

The Roundtable will address the following three subjects:

- From Commitments to Implementation: Freedom of Religion or Belief in the OSCE Area
- Status of Religious or Belief Communities
- Places of Worship

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 13.45-15.00

Venue: Segmentgalerie I

Title: The OSCE Chairmanship and Kazakhstan

Convenor: Freedom House

Language: English, Russian

Summary: At the 2007 Ministerial Council Meeting in Madrid, Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister promised the participating States that his country would implement far-reaching domestic reforms before assuming the chairmanship of the OSCE. At this event a group of leading Kazakhstani civil society activists will provide an analysis of the steps Kazakhstan's government has taken to date and the steps it still needs to take in order to fulfill those obligations. Presenters will include: Yevgeniy Zhovtis (Kazakhstan International Bureau on Human Rights), Ninel Fokina (Almaty Helsinki Committee), Tamara Kaleyeva (International Fund for the Defense of Freedom of Speech "Adil Soz"), Zhemis Turmagambetova (Charter for Human Rights), and Vera Tkachenko (Legal Policy Research Center).

Refreshments will be provided

Time: 13.30-14.45

Venue: Bibliotheksaal

Title: Secularism and the Rule of Law are a Guarantee of freedom of Religion or Belief

Convenor: European Humanist Federation

Language: English, French Italian

Summary: *“The OSCE human dimension goes much further in linking human rights with the institutional and political system of a state. In essence, OSCE states have agreed through their human dimension commitments that pluralistic democracy based on the rule of law is the only system of government suitable to guarantee human rights effectively”*. (<http://www.osce.org/odihr/13492.html>)

The European Humanist Federation welcomes this Supplementary Human Dimension Implementation Meeting on Freedom of Religion and Belief as a great opportunity both for checking the implementation of FoRB and for monitoring present trends in how to interpret Freedom of Religion or Belief because, like all political concepts, FoRB may be viewed differently according to the eyes of the viewer and to the context to which it is referred.

In this side-event the European Humanist Federation will endeavour to answer the following questions:

- Rights belong to human beings. Are the attempts at applying them also to religions and beliefs and to religious institutions and communities of faith and conviction justified?
- Can a state that is not secular genuinely guarantee Freedom of Religion or Belief? Can it offer equality and non-discrimination?

The delegation of the European Humanist Federation wishes to discuss the above issues with government and NGO representatives as well as with ODIHR officers in the light of the *“commitment to the rule of law and in the way it is formulated, as a concept based on the dignity of the human person and a system of rights through law/legal structures”*. (<http://www.osce.org/odihr/13492.html>)

Vera Pegna,
EHF representative to OSCE

Andrew Copson,
EHF board member, Director of Education and Public Affairs at the British Humanist Association

Refreshments will be provided

Friday, 10 July

Time: 12.00 – 14.00

Venue: Segmentgalerie I

Title: Images of the rise of hatred against religious minorities in French speaking Europe in 2009

Convenor: European Raelian Movement

Language: English, French

Summary: Through few videos extracts of the national media in French speaking countries, we will show how the presumption of guiltiness and the fear of religious minorities are spread in population.

Time: 12.00 – 14.00

Venue: Ratsaal

Title: The Assault on Religious Freedom in Central Asia

Convenor: Freedom House

Language: English, Russian

Summary: Throughout Central Asia, governments have stepped up their assault on religious freedom. New legislation has given governments almost unrestricted ability to deny registration for religious groups and infringed citizens' rights of freedom of association, speech and religious choice. At the same time, the authorities continue to crack down on what they describe as "extremist" religious groups and religious "sects" and use state media to smear such groups before the public.

At this event, local activists from throughout Central Asia will describe the deteriorating situation in the region.

Refreshments will be provided