



Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting

On Effective Multilateralism in the OSCE Human Dimension

15-16 July 2019

Hofburg, Vienna

ANNOTATED AGENDA

BACKGROUND

Multilateralism and co-operation lie at the core of the OSCE comprehensive concept of security and of its engagement with and among participating States. The current challenges to effective multilateralism should be met through a renewal of the multilateral system. There is continued relevance of and need for multilateral institutions, to help states do together what they cannot or will not do alone.¹ While exacerbated unilateralism jeopardizes the implementation of OSCE human dimension commitments, there is an urgent need to have a more effective multilateralism, more co-operation, more dialogue and more consensus. At a time of scarcity of and competition for resources, more effective multilateralism is not only needed to avoid duplication of efforts, but also to ensure a more coherent approach to assistance at the international level and ultimately lead to a greater impact on the ground (see Vilnius, 2011). As emphasized in the conclusions of the [2014 OSCE Human Dimension Seminar on Improving OSCE Effectiveness by Enhancing Co-operation with Relevant Regional and International Organizations](#), co-operation is mutually beneficial, as it has a multiplier effect on the impact of projects and prevents beneficiary fatigue. At the same time, co-operation comes at a price and it is important that new co-operation mechanisms are supported by additional resources, while reinforcing informal co-operation, personal contacts and organizational culture.

In the words of the UN Secretary-General's Message on the first observance of the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace on 24 April 2019, there is not only a need for "networked multilateralism", with close co-operation among international and regional organizations. Acknowledging that governments and international organizations cannot do it alone, current challenges require more "inclusive multilateralism", with greater partnerships with civil society, businesses, the academia and other stakeholders, in particular women as well as young people and under-represented groups (including minorities and persons with disabilities). As state bodies that function independently from governments, often in close co-operation and consultation with civil society and international organizations, national human rights institutions also play an important role in this broader understanding of multilateralism.

In numerous CSCE and OSCE documents, OSCE participating States have highlighted the importance of practical co-operation among OSCE participating States in the human dimension and have agreed that promoting progress in the human dimension remains a key function of the OSCE. As early as 1992, participating States acknowledged that "the

¹ The future of multilateralism Crisis or opportunity? European Parliament, Briefing (May 2017) at [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/603922/EPRS_BRI\(2017\)603922_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/603922/EPRS_BRI(2017)603922_EN.pdf).

challenges facing Europe call for multi-faceted forms of co-operation” (Prague 1992). The participating States regularly reaffirm their commitments to the Charter of the United Nations and have agreed *“to improve contact and practical co-operation with appropriate international organizations”* (Helsinki 1992). In Istanbul (1999), the OSCE participating States also committed themselves to *“joint measures based on co-operation, both in the OSCE and through those organizations of which [they] are members, in order to offer assistance to participating States to enhance their compliance with OSCE principles and commitments”* while *“strengthen[ing] existing co-operative instruments and develop[ing] new ones in order to respond efficiently to requests for assistance from participating States [...]”*. They have further pledged the OSCE *“to expand its relations with all organizations and institutions that are concerned with the promotion of comprehensive security within the OSCE area”* (Maastricht 2003). Recognizing the major role played by non-governmental organizations, and other groups and individuals in implementing OSCE commitments, OSCE participating States have also committed to ensure their greater involvement in the activities of the OSCE and its executive structures (1990 OSCE Charter of Paris).

To tackle the challenges of implementing human dimension commitments, the OSCE’s effective co-operation with international and regional organizations, and with civil society, is a key element to ensure synergies in programming and complementarity in potentially overlapping areas. Strengthened co-operation also ensures increased political “buy-in” by participating States on policies aimed at implementing OSCE human dimension commitments.

The SHDM will examine specific actors and issues relevant to the topic of multilateralism in the human dimension, where multilateral approaches can be particularly advantageous. The discussions will touch upon the mutually supporting role between multilateral system and national human rights institutions, and the resulting benefits to overall delivery of OSCE human dimension commitments. Further focus will be given to online violence against women and girls, as a particular thematic where multilateral response is crucial, bearing in mind the emerging human rights challenges and risks presented by new technologies.

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 practices of effective multilateralism, with a view to improving the implementation of OSCE commitments. The SHDM will also focus on identifying concrete areas of assistance to OSCE participating States, which can be strengthened by more effective multilateralism.

Discussions should result in recommendations for immediate and mid-term improvements in co-operation between OSCE structures and other stakeholders to better assist OSCE participating States in developing new and implementing existing human dimension commitments.

The objectives of this SHDM are to:

1. Discuss possible challenges and good practices of more effective and inclusive multilateralism contributing to the better implementation of OSCE human dimension commitments by OSCE participating States.
2. Explore possible way forward for renewing the approach to multilateralism within the OSCE to address current challenges and emerging trends, and improve the implementation of OSCE human dimension commitments.
3. Identify concrete recommendations for the OSCE structures and OSCE participating States to ensure more effective and inclusive co-operation with all relevant international and regional organizations, civil society and under-represented persons, to better assist OSCE participating States in implementing their human dimension commitments.

DAY 1, 15 JULY 2019

15.00 – 16.00

OPENING SESSION

*Opening remarks
Introductory addresses
Technical information*

16.00 – 18.00

SESSION I: Encouraging more effective and inclusive multilateralism with the aim of improving the implementation of OSCE human dimension commitments

In the Helsinki Final Act, OSCE participating States have affirmed their “*full and active support for the United Nations and for the enhancement of its role and effectiveness in strengthening international peace, security and justice*”. While OSCE participating States are primarily responsible for implementing OSCE human dimension commitments at the national level, international and regional organizations, together with civil society, play complementary roles in supporting the states in their role to protect, respect and fulfil human rights and democratic governance principles. The mandates of OSCE institutions and other executive structures often specifically include tasks to establish co-operation with international and regional organisations to avoid overlap and duplication (e.g., Prague 1992; Helsinki 1992; Istanbul 1999; Maastricht 2003). Accordingly, the OSCE, its institutions and other executive structures co-operate with a wide range of international and regional organizations, but also with representatives of civil society including those working on the rights and concerns of women, minorities, youth and persons with disabilities, based on formally established and informal co-operation mechanisms.

Specifically, the OSCE participating States have recognised the “*important expertise of the Council of Europe in the field of human rights and fundamental freedoms*” (Copenhagen 1990). Furthermore, OSCE participating States have directed ODIHR “*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).

The OSCE has established a variety of formal or less formal mechanism to co-operate and co-ordinate with international and regional organisations such as the United Nations and its specialised agencies, the Council of Europe and its sub-entities, the European Union, Interpol and Europol to name a few (see e.g., Maastricht 2003). Other co-operation mechanisms between the OSCE and international and regional organisations also exist, such as 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 working level meetings focus *inter alia* on co-ordinating programming and policy making, strengthening existing links and identifying new approaches for co-operation between regional and international human rights mechanisms, on election observation, the governance of migration management, tolerance & non-discrimination, media freedom, the rule of law and democratic governance on national and local level, as well as women’s political participation and violence against women. The OSCE and international and regional organizations also co-operate in the form of information exchange with regard to UN treaty body reporting, judicial mechanisms and other human rights related instruments. These examples of co-operation between the OSCE and international and regional organisations have the goal to complement and support each other in promoting human dimension commitments and protecting fundamental human rights and democratic principles.

Co-operation between ODIHR and civil society is also key in furthering the implementation of OSCE commitments, as acknowledged in the 1990 OSCE Charter of Paris. Several OSCE human dimension commitments specifically recognize the complementary role that civil society plays, for instance in the field of preventing violence against women (2004 OSCE Gender Action Plan; and Milan 2018), promoting mutual respect and understanding and combating intolerance and discrimination (Brussels 2006) counter-trafficking (Helsinki 2008) and migrant integration and migration management (Athens, 2009)

Multilateral co-operation is particularly effective when various stakeholders co-ordinate their efforts and speak with one voice to promote the implementation of normative international standards and OSCE human dimension commitments. Examples of good co-operation practices include the regular co-operation between ODIHR and the Council of Europe’s Venice Commission on the issuance of joint legislative opinions in the human dimension and of guidelines,² which include good practices and international standards to support participating States and civil society in implementing human dimension commitments.

Multilateral co-operation may also focus on specific thematic issues, especially when addressing transnational, complex and multi-faceted threats such as violence against women in the context of trafficking, cyber space and counter-terrorism, or on providing comprehensive support to strengthen institutions at the national level, such as in the case of national human rights institutions.

² Such as the *OSCE/ODIHR-CoE Venice Commission Guidelines on Freedom of Assembly*, the *OSCE/ODIHR-CoE Venice Commission Guidelines on Political Party Regulation*, the *OSCE/ODIHR Guidelines on Freedom of Religion and Belief* and the *ODIHR-CoE Guidelines for Educators on Intolerance against Muslims*

The renewal of multilateralism to address current challenges and emerging trends should include focus on reinvigorating popular support for the multilateral order, while aiming for a more inclusive multilateralism and being open to opportunities for reform of organizations.³

This session will focus on how more effective, networked and inclusive multilateralism can contribute to the better implementation of OSCE human dimension commitments by OSCE participating States.

Thus participants could consider:

- What are the most effective instruments of multilateralism and lessons learned in promoting and implementing OSCE commitments? What are the strengths and weaknesses?
- How are the actions of other stakeholders, such as civil society, academia, human rights defenders successfully supplementing the actions of OSCE participating States and international/regional organizations for a better implementation of OSCE human dimension commitments?
- What are some innovative forms or good examples of effective multilateralism/inclusive co-operation between the OSCE structures and institutions, international/regional organizations and civil society and other stakeholders?
- How can the OSCE and relevant regional and international organizations better contribute to effective multilateralism?
- How could the creation of new tasks and mandates for OSCE structures and institutions by OSCE participating States make multilateralism more effective? Is more focus and prioritization needed?

18.00

Reception hosted by the Slovak Chairmanship

³ See e.g., The future of multilateralism Crisis or opportunity? European Parliament, Briefing (May 2017) – Way forward, at [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/603922/EPRS_BRI\(2017\)603922_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/603922/EPRS_BRI(2017)603922_EN.pdf).

DAY 2, 16 JULY 2019

10.30 – 12.30	<u>SESSION II:</u> Multilateral co-operation as a means to enhancing the effectiveness and independence of NHRIs in OSCE participating States
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National human rights institutions (NHRIs) are cornerstones of the international human rights system and the national human rights infrastructure, and play an important role in supporting participating States in implementing OSCE human dimension commitments at the national level. Already in Copenhagen in 1990, the participating States agreed to “(...) facilitate the establishment and strengthening of independent national institutions in the area of human rights and the rule of law”. The standards to ensure the independence and effectiveness of NHRIs were adopted by the UN 1993 in the Paris Principles.⁴

Participating States reiterated this commitment in Madrid, 2007, by encouraging “the establishment of national institutions (...) by the participating States which have not yet done so”. Moreover, the participating States have affirmed that NHRIs play an important role in promoting gender equality in the OSCE region, recommending in Sofia 2004 to “establish or strengthen existing mechanisms for ensuring gender equality, *inter alia* by making available the services of an impartial and independent person or body, such as an Ombudsman/Human Rights Commissioner.”

As part of their work on the promotion and protection of human rights at the national level, NHRIs are also instrumental in reporting for example to international human rights bodies on the national situation. Acting as eyes and ears on the ground, independent NHRIs provide reliable and objective findings and recommendations that serve as the basis for effective multilateralism. NHRIs also play a vital role in translating and applying international human rights standards and human rights treaties to the national context, and for raising awareness of international commitments, for example through collaboration with national parliaments and work with civil society.⁵

NHRIs function as a bridge between the national and international levels in multiple ways, providing participating States with an “additional form of co-operation” (Prague 1992) that strengthens the implementation of human dimension commitments and multilateralism in the OSCE region. Through international and regional network organizations, NHRIs work together to address shared human rights challenges and exchange good practices, effectively by serving “as focal points for co-ordination and collaboration between such institutions in the participating States” (Copenhagen 1990).⁶

NHRIs can serve as a bridge between national authorities and civil society as well. As evidenced by the recent adoption of the Marrakech Declaration during the 13th International Conference of NHRIs in October 2018⁷, NHRIs are also increasingly working with human

⁴ Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions (The Paris Principles), as adopted by General Assembly resolution 48/134 of 20 December 1993, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/StatusOfNationalInstitutions.aspx>.

⁵ See the 2012 'Belgrade Principles' on the Relationship between NHRIs and Parliaments, <http://www.theioi.org/loi-news/current-news/belgrade-principles-on-the-relationship-between-nhris-and-parliaments>.

⁶ Especially relevant for the OSCE region are the Global Alliance of NHRIs (GANHRI), *inter alia* responsible for the international accreditation of Paris Principles-compliant NHRIs; and the regional European Network of NHRIs (ENNHRI).

⁷ The Marrakech Declaration, “Expanding the civic space and promoting and protecting human rights defenders, with a specific focus on women: The role of national human rights institutions”.

rights defenders to support participating States in carrying out their human dimension commitments.

While NHRIs are important partners for participating States to further increase the effectiveness of multilateralism in the OSCE region, they also face a number of challenges. ODIHR and other international organizations have noted that the independence of NHRIs is increasingly under threat in the recent years, limiting their effectiveness both on the national and international levels, hampering their important bridging function, and their independence—one of the key criteria for NHRIs as set out in the Paris Principles.⁸

Participating States are primarily responsible for addressing these issues, for example by facilitating the establishment and strengthening of Paris Principles-compliant NHRIs, and by creating an enabling environment for human rights defenders, including NHRIs. The OSCE, including OSCE Field Operations, and ODIHR given its strong mandate to support participating States in the implementation of their human dimension commitments, can play important roles in supporting participating States and NHRIs in the OSCE region by providing technical support and expertise.

This Session will focus on how independent and effective national human rights institutions contribute to effective multilateralism in the OSCE region and improve 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:

- How does the engagement of NHRIs with regional and international human rights mechanisms to address the implementation of human dimension commitments in participating States effect multilateralism in the OSCE region?
- What are the challenges NHRIs are facing, and what are the good practices, when addressing human rights issues on the national, regional and international level?
- What measures can participating States and international organizations take in a multilateral context to address these challenges?
- How can multilateral co-operation by NHRIs contribute to safeguarding the independence of NHRIs, and how can international organizations support this process?

https://nhri.ohchr.org/EN/ICC/InternationalConference/13IC/Background%20Information/Marrakech%20Declaration_EN%2012102018%20-%20FINAL.pdf

⁸ <https://www.osce.org/odihr/341366>; <https://www.osce.org/odihr/310331>; <https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/paris-principles-at-25-strong-national-human-rights-institutions-needed-more-than-ever>.

Violence conducted through internet and other digital technologies is a growing global phenomenon that extends beyond state borders. While such violence can affect anyone, women and girls are often disproportionately targeted, and they suffer disproportionately serious results. The forms and manifestations of online violence should thus be seen as part of a larger continuum of other types and forms of violence against women.

Online violence against women and girls (VAWG) is often targeted to specific groups of women, such as women human rights defenders, women politicians, women journalists and young women. It prevents women and girls from enjoying their fundamental human rights, including rights to live a life free from violence, the right to freedom of expression, the right to privacy, and the right to have access to information, including that shared through new information and communication technologies. Furthermore, while the violence happens online, it often spills over to the “real world”, resulting in loss of jobs, damage to professional credibility, shrinking space for civil engagement and even in loss of life.

Further co-ordination, collaboration and multilateral engagement, including in partnership with technology companies, is needed to both conceptualize online violence against women and girls in the OSCE region and to develop and implement appropriate legislative measures to counter it. The OSCE participating States have highlighted co-ordination and collaboration with international organizations as an important element to preventing and combatting violence against women on three occasions, in Ljubljana (2005), Basel (2014) and Milan (2018). Furthermore, in Milan the Ministerial Council specifically called for “measures, in consultation with companies that work on information and communication technologies (ICT), to address specific forms of violence faced by women and girls through digital technologies” (MC.DEC/4/18), and condemned attacks, including those conducted through digital technologies, against women journalists (MC.DEC/3/18).

Other multilateral bodies, such as the UN, have also taken a firm stance against online violence. The UN Human Rights Council clearly stated in its Resolution 20/8 that rights that are protected offline, should also be protected online; and the UN General Assembly in its Resolution 68/181 expressed grave concern over the offline and online violence targeted at women human rights defenders, and called for due diligence and stronger accountability measures. Private intermediaries and their roles and human rights responsibilities in governing and regulating the contents in their platforms bring an added element to the discussions on online violence against women and girls. When violence against women and girls is perpetrated through these platforms, often by perpetrators with differing degrees of anonymity, the resulting human rights violations take place across multiple jurisdictions. At national levels some OSCE participating States have taken action in the form of legislative reforms, including adoption of specific laws. However, in many states the legal framework does not sufficiently cover such forms of crime, limiting women’s and girls’ access to justice as well as enhancing the sense of impunity for perpetrators. There are also other barriers for women and girls to report violence, even when the legal framework is in place. International safeguards and multilateral systems are also encountering different sets of challenges to adequately address the issue.

This session will discuss the role of multilateral collaboration in tackling the multiple forms of violence against women conducted through information and communication technologies. The session focus on particular groups of women commonly targeted by such violence, such as women human rights defenders, politicians and journalists. This session will also discuss the potential for multilateral frameworks and collaboration with technology companies, and other private intermediaries, and their roles and responsibilities to prevent online violence against women and girls.

Questions for discussion:

- What roles can multilateral organizations play in supporting national practices, policies and laws in the OSCE region to prevent and address online VAWG?
- Are there examples of successful trans-national co-operation to ensure adequate protection of women and girls online and to facilitate justice for violent crimes committed against women and girls?
- How can the OSCE work effectively together with others to address the increasing threats and harassment online faced by women working in the public sphere?
- How can a multilateral approach help address this with technology companies such as Facebook, Twitter etc. and what kind of initiatives are already underway with a view to protecting open democratic space based on full respect for women's human rights?

16.30 – 17.30

CLOSING SESSION

Rapports from the working sessions

Comments from the floor

Closing remarks

17.30

Closing of the meeting

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