



**SUPPLEMENTARY HUMAN DIMENSION  
MEETING**

**EDUCATION OF PERSONS BELONGING TO NATIONAL MINORITIES:  
INTEGRATION AND EQUALITY**

**22-23 July, 2010**

**Hofburg, Vienna**

**FINAL REPORT**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The second Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting in 2010 was devoted to the “Education of Persons Belonging to National Minorities: Integration and Equality” It was held in Vienna on 22 – 23 July 2010. A total of 141 participants attended. This included 103 delegates from 49 OSCE participating. There were also representatives of 25 non-governmental and international organizations as well as 6 OSCE Field Operations in attendance.

The main objective of the meeting was to assess achievements, gaps and challenges in the ways in which the education of persons belonging to national minorities promotes both their integration and equality while at the same time protecting their distinct cultural, linguistic or religious identity. The meeting discussed concrete actions for promoting integration and equality of persons belonging to national minorities in particular under three main headings

1) Facilitating Integrated Education in Schools, 2) Access to Higher Education and 3) Adult Education: Enhancing Minority Participation.

The meeting was opened by the High Commissioner on National Minorities, Ambassador Knut Vollebaek and by the representative of the Chairperson-in-Office, Mr. Usen Suleimenov. The keynote speaker was Mr. Alan Phillips, former president of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

In his opening remarks, the High Commissioner emphasised the central role that education plays in the work of his Institution and its crucial role in promoting cohesion and integration between different ethnic groups. He identified two particular issues which to be discussed at the meeting - firstly, the issue of language education and the need to balance the right of national minorities to be educated in their mother tongue with the need to acquire fluency in the State language to enable them to play their full part in society on an equal basis, and secondly, his concern at the increasing trend towards segregated education in many OSCE participating States.

The representative of the Chairperson in Office referred to the high importance attached by the Chairpersonship to interethnic relations. Education plays an important role in enabling minorities to pass on their culture to future generations and to preserve and develop their characteristics. Education can also foster integration of society by teaching values such as tolerance, pluralism, anti-racism and inter-communal respect. An integrated education system involves a balancing act whereby cultural and linguistic differences do not become an obstacle against learning on the one hand, while, on the other hand, maintaining a minorities cultural identity.

Mr. Phillips noted that the right to education for minorities was fundamental for their achievement of other rights, including to health care, social support, housing, land, and employment. He emphasised the need for an active and coherent minorities education policy. He noted the lack of adequate data on the educational situation of different communities living within their countries and the social standing of different components of minority communities which affected their access to quality education. Educational policies and programmes should be targeted in particular at those who are marginalised and excluded. Effective participation by minorities should be encouraged including in the development of education policies, strategies and programmes as well as by participating in their management and delivery.

## **II. SYNOPSIS OF SESSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This report summarizes the discussions held in the course of the three thematic sessions and the recommendations proposed by the participants of the meeting. The debates and

recommendations covered a broad range of issues and were directed towards a variety of actors, particularly the OSCE participating States, OSCE institutions and field operations as well as international organizations, political parties and civil society. The recommendations have no official status and are not based on consensus. The inclusion of a recommendation in this report does not suggest that it reflects the views or policies of the OSCE. Nevertheless, they provide useful basis for further action to ensure equality of access to educational opportunities by national minorities as a means to ensuring their full integration into the societies in which they live.

## **Session 1**

### **Session topic: Facilitating Integrated Education in Schools**

Agenda item/Sub-items: 'How can the structures and content of education ensure the balance between the aim of interaction between persons from various groups and the aim of preserving and promoting language, culture and identity of members belonging to various minority groups in order to achieve 'integration in diversity'?'

The introducer, Mr. Claude Kieffer, presented the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina where integrated education is highly politicised. He questioned whether Bosnia and Herzegovina is moving towards integration, pointing to segregation of the educational system and lack of a common vision among the constituent peoples. He, however, noted the positive role of the State-level Education Agency in developing curriculum with joint standards.

Italy said the negative international media coverage of its integration of foreign pupils did not reflect the real situation and outlined current strategies to facilitate integration of some 780 000 foreign pupils (1/3 school population): teacher training in intercultural co-operation; improving parent-school relations; Jewish-Islamic mediation; teacher and student exchanges; and to increase Roma/Sinti enrolment.

The representative of Greece informed about legislation for bilingual education of its Muslim minority and efforts from mid-1990s to improve the quality of text book development, teacher training for both majority and minority teachers ('cross-fertilisation'), community centres/mobile units and mixed youth groups. Statistically, a 65% national minority drop-out rate from compulsory education in 2000, was by 2006 reduced to 30% and girl attendance significantly improved.

Poland informed about the national system of integrative education and proposed that teachers should be given appropriate methodical advice; financial support for extra-curricular activities to maintain linguistic and cultural identity; and that teachers of minority languages develop text books in collaboration with experts.

Georgia outlined its education system and summarised current initiatives to raise national minority knowledge of the State language, incl. translation of text books from Georgian to minority languages, multilingual education policies (with HCNM support) and teacher training and the importance of pre-schools to foster language learning.

Belarus gave an overview of the Belarusian ethnic composition and educational system, including its legislation, and informed about its joint commissions with Poland and Lithuania, which meets annually.

Germany made the case for the use of separate schools for minorities, in particular in border areas, if this was the wish of the minorities, to ensure retention of minority language(s). Knowledge of the State/official language should also be ensured.

The representative of the General Council of US Department of Education expressed concern over the trend to re-segregate public schools in the US and explained the role of the Federal Government in countering this trend.

Romania described national programmes to prevent school-drop out, entitled '2nd chance programme', where a more flexible structure, shorter duration and model-specific assessments had proved productive. Babes-Bolyia University is a good example of multilingual education, in line with HCNM Recommendations.

The Russian Federation informed about the Federal education system and the availability of language instruction in mother tongue. The need for appropriate funding, training and material was emphasised and that educational reforms should undertaken in consultation with national minorities..

Tajikistan outlined the national educational situation for national minorities and the innovation of treating Afghan refugees as a national minority with concomitant linguistic rights.

Estonia shared the experience with transition to bilingual studies, initiated in 2007, whereby 60% of the curriculum was now taught in Estonian. Language immersion programmes are considered to be an appropriate model of education, enabling students to study some subjects in Estonian and some in Russian.

Azerbaijan outlined its legislation pertaining to education for citizens, highlighting the free choice of language (Azeri, Russian, Georgian) and of school.

Armenia emphasised the importance of education to fully integrate minorities and the interdependence with other rights. Called on pS to ensure the implementation of the right to education and make education in mother tongue accessible, keeping the numerical threshold for creation of classes at a low level. Minorities without a kin-State require special attention and protection.

There were several references to the particular problems affecting the Roma. The representative of ODIHR presented an overview of the limited education opportunities for Roma children and mentioned the importance of the European Court of Human Rights decision that segregation of Roma children constituted a violation of human rights. The Centre of Alipe – Bulgaria mentioned the high drop-out rate of Roma children from the Bulgarian education system. The European Roma Rights Center referred to widespread discrimination against Roma throughout Europe and requested a re-visiting of the OSCE's Action Plan on Roma and Sinti of 2003. Anti-Discrimination Centre "Memorial drew attention to the difficult situation of the Roma children at schools in the Russian Federation.

## **Session 2**

### **Session topic: Access to Higher Education**

The two introducers for this session were Mr. Sebastian Dworack and Ms. Jana Bacevic.

Mr. Dworack provided a brief overview of international legal framework concerning the right to education, in particular the right to education in the mother tongue. He argued that this framework is at the moment rather vague – there is no direct norm referring to higher education for minorities.

However, there is a possibility to draw certain conclusions based on existing standards (attention was drawn to the HCNM Recommendations in this regard). In addition, the existing framework leaves room to develop the most suitable models for particular situation.

Ms. Bacevic has raised two issues. The first concerned the necessity to provide quality education at third level. The second was the respective advantages and disadvantages as well as outcomes of different approaches to higher education for minorities - civic/integrative approach conducted in common premises and shared structures or a mono-cultural structure :providing education for a particular group.

During this session number of participating states outlined their own experiences in the provision of access to higher education for their national minorities. Generally, there were two methods of providing access: one is introduction of quota system up to 10 % at the state universities according to the “positive discrimination principle” and the second by supporting minorities in passing a state language test. In the latter case, this has been done by organising special training courses after graduation from secondary school and, in more systematic way, requiring learning the state language at the secondary schools level.

Some participants reported that in countries where national minorities have primary or secondary schools with their mother tongue as the means of instruction (with state language as a subject) are often are often unsuccessful in passing the admission tests to the universities as the quality of education overall and state language in particular is lower than in the schools of majority.

A number of participants referred to the particular problems of the Roma community in accessing higher education. What assistance they do obtain comes for the most part from NGOs and they criticised the lack of state involvement in this issue. In this regard they recommended the development of scholarship programmes for Roma students and to make greater efforts to raise awareness among Roma of the importance of Higher Level education.

Several Roma organisations also proposed that the Roma language be promoted and protected. Council of Europe Charter on Regional Languages be ratified

Several other aspects of the issue of access of minorities to higher education were mentioned in the course of the discussion and a number of recommendations or suggestions were made. Among these were the following:

The issue of access to higher education is very complex and cannot be discussed separately from the issue of primary and in particular secondary education. Many participants referred to the crucial period of transition between secondary and higher education and the various ways to support this transition

Affirmative action/positive discrimination: Several examples were mentioned: quota system, lower entry threshold, student counselling services (especially having in mind relatively high drop out rates among minority students), student financial assistance. Nevertheless, there is an understanding of the sensitivity of this issue. In this regard the attitude of majority community needs to be taken into account;

The language aspect is a key element – there is clearly a need to find a balance between the need to preserve and develop the identity of persons belonging to national minorities and the necessity to equip young people with the skills, including knowledge of the state language, which will enable them to function independently in the society;

The role of the state (political accountability, good governance, financial assistance) versus the role of communities, often combined with the assistance of the international community was mentioned as another important element;

The positive role of other actors, in particular civil society (NGOs, parents, teachers, students) was also referred to.

The need for integration and reconciliation activities after a conflict situation

The mobility of students – many of them study abroad, often at colleges in kin states, posing certain risks for their future integration in their country of residence e.g. segregation, poor knowledge of the state language, lack of diploma recognition, fewer employment opportunities after they return. For those who do not return the loss represents a potential ‘brain drain’ for the country of residence.

It was noted that there is no universally applicable model for successful integration and inclusion of minorities, but the specific context should be taken into account, in particular since each situation is different and might require a different approach. It is important to share experiences, draw from lessons learned, and apply and adapt existing models/best practices to other situations.

### **Session III**

#### **Session topic: Adult Education: Enhancing Minority Participation**

The moderator, Ms. Ilze Brand Kehris, noted that adult education is not only part of theory of life long education and therefore important in and of itself, but it is also key to enhancing effective participation of national minorities in education, public life and economic development and employment. This was also an important point that was regularly raised in the reports of the Advisory Committee established under the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

The Introducer, Mr. Piotr Dutkiewicz highlighted several lessons regarding adult education. Nation building processes always favour those who speak a majority language and those who speak minority languages are disadvantaged. Minority cultures face a certain choice: if all business is conducted in the majority language, then they may accept either integration or marginalization. Some states feel threatened when minorities are empowered as this could cause disloyalty. Adult education is a complex, expensive and uncertain issue: it involves many ministries which must be simultaneously engaged. This leaves an impression that it is too complex and should simply not be done at all. Sometimes, it was argued, doing less is wiser, but if it is done, it must be done properly. Adult education projects need a strong policy commitment because it involves two components: education and application in the sense of employment. Jobs must be available to the target group otherwise they can become disillusioned and a threat to the state. Education and employment are thus clearly linked. Among the issues he highlighted were such questions as whom and how we recruit for training, language training, curriculum and teacher training and the training experience. His presentation concluded by highlighting the problem of employment and he also raised the need to find the niches for training. These were all inter-locking blocks that all required attention. It was time to build and apply a model that could be used in a wider context so that adults could be better integrated.

The representative of the Georgian Ministry of Education highlighted the language houses, which remained free of charge. This was key in the areas where Armenians and Azeris lived. She

mentioned that problems had arisen over the effectiveness of the Zhvania School of Public Administration but that following an analysis and recommendations by the High Commissioner on National Minorities modifications had been made to the curriculum the school is now rehabilitated. This enables national minorities to acquire the state language so that they can obtain the skills needed to improve their employability. She highlighted the need for research and analysis in order to ensure that the intended outcomes are met.

The representative of the Greek Ministry of Education noted that their experience of adult education was not very successful to date. As regards the Muslim minority, one outreach was “second chance schooling”, which was a new and modern way of delivering adult education. Such education was for all members of society and not just minorities. She argued that this must be built on. State language classes were also highlighted, which attracted many women, who felt comfortable bringing even their children, which suggested that they understood the need. If analysis of the needs made clear that this was useful, then it must be offered. Affirmative action was needed to ensure that full and effective equality of education was also mentioned.

The representative of the Association of Schools with Uigher Language Kazakhstan highlighted the situation of the Uigher language in the country and the students who learn in that language. It is essential that they continue to receive mother tongue education and thus, a targeted programme has been introduced. The State language, Russian and the minority language is offered. He highlighted that it was necessary to enhance opportunities to provide higher education opportunities for those students. Human rights were also mentioned as being a key aspect of life for Uigher speakers. As to adult education, the role of distance learning was also raised.

The Amalipe Centre for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance in Bulgaria mentioned that adult education and “second chance” schools were very important, especially for the Roma population in Bulgaria. Questions of motivation were raised as without good motivation of the students, these programmes were bound to fail.

Mr. Alan Phillips said that the Council of Europe and the OSCE, amongst others have neglected this issue for too long. Adult education was complex and needed to be grounded in good quality data before any programme planning could be done. UNDP research, especially on Roma, provided alarming information on questions such as literacy.

The representative of the Federal Ministry of Interior in Germany said that it needed to be borne in mind that ethnically based data was problematic as some minorities did not want such data collected. Detailed data needed to be gathered in other ways, for example, through consultations with minority representatives, so that needs were made clear.

The representative of the US Department of Education welcomed the use of term “life long learning” as it was a key aspect when considering the issue of adult education. This was an economic issue. He referred to problems with adult education in the US, including an increasingly more diverse adult workforce which needed to be linked to education statistics reflecting high dropout rates amongst minority students. Such a pattern was clearly problematic. Community college networks were being used to address this issue due to their accessibility, provision of English as Second Language programmes and affordability.

The representative of the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina highlighted the Mission’s index for inclusion, which is an evaluation and planning tool for schools and communities and involves all relevant stakeholders. This helped to create a plan of action every year, which provided updated and valuable information each year. This also allowed schools to recognize that they needed assistance in some areas.



The representative of Kazakhstan said that adult education provided by the state ensured that ethnic identity was preserved through such training. The Diaspora needed particular attention as they have learned in a different language and/or alphabet. Thus, adaptation centres had been established to give language and literacy courses. He mentioned that that schools created throughout the country allowed national minorities to maintain their identity. Drawing on international experience, reintegration through learning of the state language was a key issue for adult education. This was provided by both the state and NGOs. However, the lack of specialists in this area was raised as a concern.

The representative of the Integration and Development Centre for Information and Research (Ukraine) referred to the situation in the Crimean region of Ukraine where those who resettled from elsewhere were traumatized and faced further discrimination from the majority Slavic populations. This created tensions and an uphill battle. Integrated courses which were introduced also received attention by the parents. Thereafter, some of the same methods used in the courses—role playing for example--were used between teachers and parents when they met.

The ODIHR Contact Point on Roma and Sinti, Dr. Mirga, noted similarities between the Roma and African American and Native American populations. The US experience was instructive: greater funding showed that minorities could improve their educational situation over time. Government contributions needed to be linked to political will, whereas policy without funding would have no results.

The representative of the Office of Intercultural Cooperation in Italy mentioned the lack of funding. The need for state action was emphasised as NGO interventions were not enough. As the Roma community in Italy grew, it would be difficult to give them separate/fixed establishments as they were “travelling” communities. In the face of increasing cuts in budgets, the greater definition of guidelines would be useful. This would set out all of the methodological tools needed for teaching Roma children. It was also essential that Roma and other non-Italians to learn the state language.

The National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Demographic Issues in Bulgaria said that a draft plan that underlined the role of parents in education was being developed. This role was a crucial one for the educational process, but it was rarely discussed. Literacy programmes for adults were also mentioned..

Concluding the discussion, the Introducer mentioned the importance of accurate data – without this data, it is not possible to assess what is needed. The practical delivery of adult education must be carefully considered, especially when it effects national minorities. Other points which he emphasised were the active involvement and participation of people, both in the planning and delivery of adult education, the need to have a good standard curriculum that takes account of working with different cultures and people of different ages, and the need to re-orient such programmes so that they focussed on practical aspects of employment and life.

## **Main Recommendations**

### **Recommendations to the OSCE participating States**

At the level of legal framework and policy development and administration

- Include in educational policy framework concrete standards in the area of intercultural education and diversity ;
- Support policies for integration of minorities with concrete action plans and financial means;
- Devote funds and human resources for research and study of the possible pathways for developing and implementing integrated education models within the specific context of the specific country;
- Analyze existing models of multilingual education in order to identify best options for a concrete educational system.
- Explore possibilities of enforcing and developing the cooperation and common action with neighboring countries in order to support the fulfillment of education rights of the national minorities / constituent people.
- Improve policy development in the area of ensuring quality of education for all and guaranteed best start for life and career development for all;
- Develop mechanisms to ensure that regional / local government representatives are trained and able to deal with issues related to management of diversity and promotion of intercultural education.
- Broaden partnership between governments and NGOs to avoid assimilation of minorities, including by providing state support to education on national languages.
- States should promote communication/relations between national minorities; these relations shall not be affected by political conditions).

At the level of educational learning outcomes and content development

- Ensure a common comprehensive curriculum and education quality standards for all schools and students, regardless of their main language of instruction
- Include into the school curriculum (for all schools and students, regardless of their main language of instruction) the objectives / students' competencies to be developed in the area of intercultural education and appreciation of diversity ;
- Focus on review of / inclusion into the core curriculum framework and school subjects curricula (for history, geography, civics and social studies, music, literature, etc.) of the objectives / competencies and content related to minority rights, cultures and traditions.
- Improve development and financial support for joint extracurricular activities for all students.

At the level of educational resources development

- Ensure opportunities for training of textbook authors belonging to national minorities in order to achieve development of qualitative materials;
- Ensure equal training opportunities for teachers from all schools (trainings in own language, as well as joint trainings for teachers with different ethnic backgrounds (cross-fertilization));
- Find ways to ensure diversification of opportunities for professional development of teachers, including joint programs with neighboring countries.
- Find possibilities to use the value added of various projects and product offered by / developed by NGOs.

- A preparatory programme for Roma was recommended to provide access to Higher Education financed through special fund. This should be combined with a mentorship programme to stimulate Roma access to Higher Education

### **Recommendations to OSCE institutions and field operations**

- Follow up on implementation of previously adopted documents in the targeted area, in order to foster fulfillment of commitment of involved actors;
- Offer support for ensuring the popularization of best practices in the domain to a larger extent;
- Support initiatives oriented to mutual exchange of experiences and learning from each other, both for governmental agencies and civil society representatives;
- Support expert assistance in areas of need related to intercultural education, integrated education, and strategies for educational actions in some specific situations (post-conflict situations; education opportunities for refugee children, etc.);
- Facilitate inter-governmental dialogue and joint actions focusing on ensuring quality of education for children from all ethnic, religious or cultural backgrounds;

### **Recommendations to others (NGOs, International Organizations and other actors)**

- Monitor the public policy developments in the area of ensuring exercise of minority rights and advocate for improvement;
- Explore possibilities for actions and projects that can create a critical mass of informed and skilled actors that can promote qualitative education and can influence the qualitative change at various levels (from grass roots to top level of decision making).
- Share best practices in the domain to a larger extent, and look for possibilities to promote their “products”;
- Foster mutual exchange of experiences and learning from each other, both for governmental agencies and civil society representatives;

Broaden partnership between governments and NGOs to avoid assimilation of minorities, including by providing state support to education on national languages. Importance of avoiding assimilation and retaining relations with national communities in/outside of a country are underlined particularly. Textbooks should be developed.

States should promote communication/relations between national minorities; these relations shall not be affected by political conditions).



**Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting**

**EDUCATION OF PERSONS BELONGING TO NATIONAL MINORITIES:  
INTEGRATION AND EQUALITY**

**22-23 July, 2010  
Hofburg, Vienna**

**AGENDA**

<b>Day 1</b>	<b>22 July, 2010</b>
15:00 – 16:00	<b>OPENING SESSION</b>
16:00-18:00	<b>Session I: Facilitating Integrated Education in Schools</b>
<b>Day 2</b>	<b>23 July, 2010</b>
10:00 – 12:00	<b>Session II: Access to Higher Education</b>
12:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00-16:00	<b>Session III: Adult Education: Enhancing Minority Participation</b>
16:00 – 16:30	Break
16:30 – 17:30	<b>CLOSING SESSION</b>



## **Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting**

### **EDUCATION OF PERSONS BELONGING TO NATIONAL MINORITIES: INTEGRATION AND EQUALITY**

**22-23 July, 2010**

**Hofburg, Vienna**

#### **ANNOTATED AGENDA**

##### **Background**

The protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities has been a central element of the OSCE commitments since the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. In the 35 years that passed since the adoption of this key instrument, the right of persons belonging to national minorities to maintain and develop their identity has been clarified and developed further. The education rights of persons belonging to national minorities are a crucial component in this regard as, on the one hand, education is instrumental in maintaining the distinct linguistic, cultural and/or religious identity of persons belonging to national minorities and, on the other hand, it is essential in enabling these persons to participate and engage on an equal footing in all spheres of public life.

International law and OSCE commitments guarantee the *right to education* and *the rights in education* for persons belonging to national minorities. The CSCE 1990 Copenhagen Document for example guarantees that persons belonging to national minorities, notwithstanding the need to learn the official language or languages of the State concerned, have adequate opportunities for instruction of their mother tongue or in their mother tongue. Moreover, the Copenhagen Document provides that in the context of the teaching of history and culture in educational establishments, the participating States should also take account of the history and culture of national minorities

The rights of persons belonging to national minorities are not only of special importance in themselves but are also instrumental as a precondition for the full enjoyment of many other rights, such as the right to participation, expression, association, etc. It is widely accepted that all aspects and elements of education should ensure a climate of tolerance and dialogue and should contribute to the integration and social cohesion of multi-ethnic societies. These goals cannot be achieved, however, if persons belonging to different groups never meet and never have an opportunity to interact with the rest of society, especially at schools. Nor can tolerance and mutual respect be promoted if majority and minority communities know nothing about each other's identities and daily experiences.

Focusing on practical implementation, this Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting will assess achievements, gaps and challenges in the ways in which the education of persons belonging to national minorities promotes both their integration and equality while at the same

time protecting their distinct cultural, linguistic or religious identity. The Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting will discuss concrete actions for promoting integration and equality of persons belonging to national minorities in particular the following three crucial areas of education:

- 1) Facilitating Integrated Education in Schools
- 2) Access to Higher Education
- 3) Adult Education: Enhancing Minority Participation

15.00 – 16.00            **Opening Session**

16.00 – 18.00            **Session I: Facilitating Integrated Education in Schools**

Education systems that do not support maintenance and development of the child's identity as a member of a minority group may contribute to the gradual disappearance of that group identity and, ultimately, to assimilation. If such assimilation is not voluntary but the result of State policy, this violates the rights of persons belonging to minorities. On the other hand, it is essential that children learn to interact and participate with other communities and society at large, so as to avoid the fracturing of society along ethnic, linguistic, cultural or religious lines. A segregated society will not only limit the individual's possibility to reach their personal and professional potential to their fullest, but will also endanger social cohesion, prosperity and stability of society at large, increasing tension and possibly leading to conflict.

The educational rights of persons belonging to national minorities to be taught the minority language or receive instruction in this language should not prejudice the learning and teaching of the official language of the State. A good command of the State language is the key to integration of all within societies and is essential for encouraging participation and maximizing life-time opportunities for individuals of minority background. The right balance between state and minority language(s), which should lead to sufficient proficiency in all relevant languages, may be achieved through various methods, including initial classes in the mother tongue and the development of modern approaches to bilingual and multi-lingual education techniques.

Integration also requires the promotion of awareness and knowledge amongst the majority population concerning the language, culture and traditions of minorities. In this context, it is essential to develop school curriculum and textbooks with multicultural and intercultural content and form. Measures should be applied widely and not limited to the geographical area where national minorities live. Integrated education, both in terms of the content and the structure, is beneficial for the entire society. Facilitating joint classes to the extent possible and joint extra-curricular activities are important for promoting mutual understanding and respect among children of diverse cultural backgrounds.

The core task is to organize the education system in a way which allows for interaction between persons from various groups in order to encourage respect of cultural diversity and plurality of views, while at the same time ensuring the successful maintenance and development of language, culture and identity of members belonging to various minority groups. The purpose of this session is to discuss how the structures and content of education can ensure the balance between the two aims outlined above in order to achieve "integration with respect for diversity".

The following issues can be considered for the discussion:

- Which types of minority language schools better ensure competence in both the mother tongue and the State language?
- How can education system best reflect and accommodate interests of diverse stakeholders, including State authorities, educators, minority groups, parents, and local authorities, especially when these interests appear to diverge?
- How to best ensure the proper training of multilingual and bilingual teachers so that lack of such teachers is not used as an excuse for not offering bilingual or minority language education?
- How to ensure that adequate financial and human resources are allocated for improving the standard of education, especially in poor, transition societies?
- How to ensure that textbooks of high quality are developed in minority languages? What support kin-state may or may not provide in this context?
- Should the content of textbooks and the curriculum be subject to periodic review with the aim of ensuring its pluralistic and multicultural nature?
- How to encourage acceptance of integrated forms of education in conflict and post-conflict societies?
- Fully integrated education may not always be possible and may be particularly difficult to achieve in regions where minorities live in compact settlements, especially in post-conflict areas. Some persons belonging to national minorities may also for religious or cultural reasons be strongly attached to separate education. In these cases, what efforts can States make to encourage contacts between minority and majority students, for example through extra-curricular activities and school exchanges

## **Day 2**

10.00 – 12.00

### **Session II: Access to Higher Education**

The question of access to higher education (University or polytechnic colleges) for persons belonging to minorities whose mother tongue is different from the State or official language is increasingly becoming a matter of concern. In places where an emphasis is put on mother tongue education, access to tertiary education can be severely restricted due to an inadequate knowledge of the state language. For the achievement of cohesive societies it is evident that all members of society should have access to third level education which is usually offered in the state or state languages if there is more than one.

Increasingly, knowledge of the state language is becoming a prerequisite for access to higher education. Different policies and practices have evolved in various countries, for example, the addition of an extra year of secondary education in order to enable state language acquisition or by emphasising multi-lingual education at primary and secondary levels. On the other hand, when the whole curriculum, including at the university level, is offered in minority languages, there is a risk of establishing parallel, segregated societies. This situation already exists in some countries. The issue of access to higher education for minorities is therefore recognised as a wider problem in a variety of countries bringing to the forefront a discussion on multilingual/multicultural universities; entrance requirements for higher education and the importance of university research departments in maintaining and protecting the culture and language of minorities, for example through minority language philology departments and teacher training institutions.

There is no right, strictly speaking, under international law to mother tongue education at tertiary level. It is, nonetheless, of interest what kind of policies may be recommendable. The session will provide an opportunity for participating States, especially those with significant national

minorities whose mother tongue is different to the State language, to explain the different approaches they take in dealing with this issue and the problems they encounter including ensuring that academic standards are maintained. Following on the discussion in the first session, the session can also address the types of secondary education systems that are more conducive to allowing access to the tertiary systems.

Questions that can be addressed include:

- What level of knowledge of the state language is needed to enable a student from a linguistically different national minority to pursue a course in third level education, whether this is in an academic field at a university or a polytechnic or vocational college?
- Should students from such minorities be allowed to sit entrance examinations to third level colleges in their mother tongue? In this case, additional classes in the state language would be required. What is the State's obligation in this regard?
- Is there any justification for a quota system for students from linguistically different national minorities.
- In what circumstances should persons belonging to minorities seek to establish their own third level educational institutions and what are the state's obligations in that regard in terms of financial and physical support.
- How can states ensure that minorities receive mother-tongue education and at the same time adequately learn the State language so that they can have access to third level education if they so wish and become active participants in the societies where they live?

#### **14.00 – 16.00 Session III: Adult Education: Enhancing Minority Participation.**

The minority protection commitments undertaken by participating States speak of 'persons belonging to national minorities'. It is clear that these 'persons' can be men or women, children or adults. The education rights of national minorities do not only refer to formal school activities, but refer to education and education systems in broader terms, including training activities and education institutions for adults. Policies to enhance minority integration and participation should include the group of adults.

This Session will, firstly, focus on the complex linguistic legacy often faced by multi-ethnic States in which many adult persons belonging to national minorities have an insufficient command of the State language (official language, majority language). Poor quality of State language education for minorities in schools sometimes perpetuates this situation. Experience in the OSCE region shows that the lack of proficiency in the State language is a major barrier to minority integration into the mainstream society. It hampers participation in public life, limits the opportunities in the employment sphere and may lead to marginalisation and exclusion of minorities. On the other hand, knowledge of the State language enables minorities to have equal opportunities in public and professional life.

Adult persons belonging to national minorities have a responsibility to integrate into the wider national society through the acquisition of a proper knowledge of the State language. Often there is also a considerable demand for such language training among minorities. States on their part have the duty to provide for adequate opportunities for adult persons belonging to minorities to study the State language. Minority adult education curricula need to respond to the specific needs of the learners, and be developed through collaboration and consultation with representatives and experts from the respective minority groups. Discussions in this Session will concentrate on ways to ensure that State language training for adults is of good quality, financially affordable, and practically accessible.



The second dimension of adult education to be addressed in this Session relates to promoting awareness of the multi-ethnic nature of society and providing the skills required to work in such a society. Those dealing with ethnic and cultural diversity in their professional life – persons belonging to national minorities as well as those belonging to the majority – would benefit from training opportunities enabling them to cope with the challenges of diversity. Such training programmes usually aim at promoting understanding and co-operation between groups, addressing stereotypes and prejudices, enhancing the sensitivity to the multi-ethnic and multi-lingual environment and providing participants with tools and skills to improve their interaction with representatives of different groups. A number of participating States have gained valuable experience in this regard.

The following issues could be considered during the discussion:

- What measures have participating States taken to raise the level of State language proficiency among adult persons belonging to national minorities?
- What methodologies exist for measuring the language needs of adults from different minority background and for adapting State language education opportunities to the needs identified?
- What examples of good practice can be identified and promoted in terms of ensuring consultation and co-operation with minorities on issues related to the studying of the State language by adults?
- What are the good practices for participating States in striking the balance between promoting State language proficiency among adults and ensuring the linguistic rights of minorities?
- How can the effectiveness of State language teaching programmes for minorities be improved, in terms of ensuring a consistent strategy, raising the motivation of the target group, ensuring quality and sustainability of the programmes?
- When are targeted language training opportunities for specific occupational or professional groups such as civil servants or elected officials warranted and how should they be designed?
- What lessons learnt and good practice can be drawn from the implementation of training programmes on the challenges of diversity? What elements of such trainings have proven particularly important? Which occupational and professional groups need or should benefit from such programmes?
- Should members of the majority and the minority groups attend all parts of such programmes together or is a differentiated approach warranted, taking into consideration the different situation and needs of the groups?
- What are the good practices in including diversity training elements into the system of mandatory or voluntary further education for specific professional or occupational groups?

- What methodologies exist to measure the practical and long-term effect training programmes on the challenges of diversity have upon participants?
- What are the institutional arrangements best suitable to provide for adult minority education? If the public authorities have no direct competence in the field of adult education, how can governments encourage and support the offering of training and education (State language training or training on diversity management) by private and non-governmental organizations?

16.00 – 16.30      Break

16.30 – 17.30      **CLOSING SESSION**

17.30                Reports by the Working Session Moderators  
Close of Day 2

## **ANNEX III. KEYNOTE SPEECH**

Keynote Speech by Alan Phillips, Former President of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention on National Minorities

Mr. Chairman, High Commissioner, Ladies and Gentlemen,

### **Prelude.**

“All human beings are born equal in dignity and rights,  
they are endowed with reason and conscience,  
and should act towards each other in a spirit of brotherhood”.

Many of you will recognise this as the beautiful language of Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948.

Today

- Are members of all minorities treated with dignity and Rights in education?
- Is reason and conscience, rather than emotion and political prejudice, our driving force for integration and social cohesion?
- Is there a spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood, rather than pragmatism, behind our determination to build stable multiethnic societies?

### **Introduction:**

Over the last four years the Council of Europe Advisory Committee on National Minorities<sup>1</sup> has enjoyed excellent relationships with the High Commissioner on National Minorities, while I have personally valued working with OSCE ODIHR on Roma issues. Consequently it is a great honour to be with you today and to be asked by the OSCE to make this speech.

The quality of their work can be seen by the excellent annotated agenda that was prepared which might be seen as a model of good practice raising crucial challenging issues. I will not attempt to gain say this document, which I am sure you have read, nor will I attempt to pre-empt the work of the three important working groups. Furthermore in the short time available I will not elaborate the education rights of minorities, delve into the complex issues of social exclusion, integration and social cohesion or detail why this is crucial for all of us in society.

The topics on the agenda of this conference includes integrated education in schools, which is highly relevant in preventing tensions and conflicts, while minority participation in Higher Education and Adult Education are rarely discussed at conferences such as this. It is remarkable that hitherto little attention has been given to adult education, particularly literacy programmes to promote empowerment, but also language programmes to promote inclusion. I will concentrate my remarks on a rights based approach to education, the effective participation of minorities, differentiation in approaches and models of good practice that are referred to in the annotated agenda.

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<sup>1</sup> Alan Phillips was the UK nominated independent expert on the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1998-2010) and latterly elected its President (2006-2010).

## **The Purpose of Education.**

In this conference I invite you have time for quiet reflection on your objectives and those of your organisations, as you focus on the realisation of the educational rights of minorities. Consider how these objectives prioritise the best interests of minorities among other objectives. In the Working Groups you may like to consider if proposal lead to members of minorities having a more satisfying and fulfilling lives. Do they lead to greater social, cultural and economic opportunities and do they reinforce social cohesion and equality of outcomes?

It is important to be realistic. Minority rights and inclusion policies may challenge the vested interests of many teachers, academics, school Directors, educational administrators, religious organisations, legislators and policy makers that are comfortable with the status quo.

Let me give you an example. Many of us know about the gross violation of human rights, judged by the European Court of Human Rights<sup>2</sup> and the Advisory Committee<sup>3</sup>, in placing many Roma children in special school for the “mentally handicapped”. Yet this practice continues, despite civil society activists and some good government ministers and officials, who want radical changes.

## **Rights based Education Policy.**

Education is a right but also instrumental in accessing other rights, including the health care, social support, housing, land, and employment. Education opens up the right to be an active citizen, including involvement in electoral processes.

An educational policy should be based on minority rights, but accepting the need to compromise to resolve tensions and manage conflicts, but ensuring the progressive realisation of rights. The best is the goal, but the best must not become the enemy of the good. Nevertheless any compromises must be made thoughtfully, using the passage of time to strengthen rights and bring communities together. Too often these sunset provisions were overlooked in the negotiations to end violent conflicts.

The preamble of the Framework Convention asserts that

*The creation of a climate of tolerance and dialogue is necessary to enable cultural diversity to be a source and a factor, not of division, but of enrichment for each society”.*

This climate of tolerance may need to be built over many years of challenging work after violent inter –ethnic conflicts.

An active and coherent long term minority educational policy is necessary on which the Working Groups may wish to make specific recommendations. This requires the support of clear and coherent legislative and funding guarantees. In order to implement these provisions all State need to have adequate data on the educational situation of different communities living within their countries as well as their needs and aspirations. In many States this data is not available and the Working Groups might consider recommendations to address this challenge.

## **Differentiation.**

In presentations like this there are often generalisations and there is a considerable risk of considering minority communities to be homogenous. It is often crucial to differentiate in education between boys and girls (where there can be double marginalisation), between younger

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<sup>2</sup> See for example, European Court of Human Rights, D. H. and others v. Czech Republic, judgment of 13 November 2007.

<sup>3</sup> See also the 2002 Advisory Committee Opinions on the Czech Republic [http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/minorities/3\\_FCNMdocs/Table\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/minorities/3_FCNMdocs/Table_en.asp)

and older children, between those with educated and uneducated (parents), between those with impoverished or affluent families, between those who use minority languages exclusively at home, those living in the capital or in urban or rural areas, those living in compact locations or dispersed regions and between those who are sedentary or mobile looking for seasonal work.

This differentiation is crucial to ensure that educational policies and programmes are targeted, emphasising those who need them in particular those, who are marginalised and excluded. This is not to be confused with discrimination. Any good teacher will always differentiate in their approach towards children depending on their needs, seeking the best educational outcome in each case.

### **Participation**

The **effective participation** of parents and minority communities in the education system is instrumental in the effective realisation of education rights.

The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities has produced a Commentary on how states should understand and develop the right to effective participation.

*“Effective participation should ensure a genuine and substantial influence on decision making.. in a regular, permanent and systematic way.. with a shared sense of ownership of the important decisions and a shared responsibility in rectifying any shortfalls.”*

It should not be confused with consultation, which is valuable but not empowering.

Effective participation may be perceived as threatening; it may take us out of our comfort zones but treating people with rights and dignity is challenging. It may lead to a questioning of aspects of education, which may be revealed in our forthcoming discussions. The OSCE is fully aware that Civil Society can play an important intermediary role, understanding the educational system while being able to reach out to minority communities.

Minorities should be involved in the development of policies, strategies and programmes as well as by participating in their management and delivery. National minorities, including Roma, have an important role to play in **monitoring and evaluating policies** and programmes, in particular those affecting them. This is a right, but also an effective way of enhancing the quality and cost effectiveness of programming. In my professional judgement, every project and programme should be evaluated in a participatory manner.

Effective participation crucially implies **transparency**, with the sharing of essential information, and involvement in decision making **on resources and budgets**.

This particularly important during economic crises which usually impact disproportionately negatively upon persons who are socially excluded and economically marginalised. It is essential that there should be no disproportionate impact on projects to promote minority rights and social cohesion. Furthermore it cost no more to listen to members of minorities and treat them with dignity.

### **Models of good practice.**

In the Workshops it may be valuable to see which rights are being realised through pilot projects, but also what measures are in place to extend these measures to benefit all those who need them in the minority community. Are the projects an end in themselves or are they the foundation of

new governmental approaches in Europe? It is not sufficient to have a set of **ad hoc projects** that are welfare based and unsustainable.

A **rights based approach** to pilot projects needs to review why education rights were denied before and what lessons can be learnt. It needs to review who remains educationally excluded and what institutional changes are needed to ensure that everyone's educational rights are met in future. Less successful aspects will often occur in pioneering projects and these should provide opportunities for further dialogue and development with the Roma communities

### **Conclusion:**

It is the experience of the Advisory Committee that many members of minorities want a high quality of education that celebrates their multiple identities, one that enable them to be educated to enjoy life in the wider society of their State but also an education that enables them to celebrate and enjoy their own culture. These are complementary aims not competitive ambitions. They lead to a robust society that recognises the reality of difference, combats discrimination in every form, provides access for all to relevant education and builds a strong state, based on consent and multiculturalism.

Our challenge today is to promote educational good practice so members of minorities become equal in dignity and rights by us acting with reason and conscience.

Thank you for your attention.

## **OPENING REMARKS**

By Knut Vollebaek, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to this OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on "Education of Persons Belonging to National Minorities: Integration and Equal Opportunities".

I would first like to thank the Kazakh OSCE Chairmanship for having proposed today's topic, which is a logical follow-up to the session on "Integrated Education" at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in October of last year. This is the first time that a Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting has been devoted entirely to an issue that is of such vital importance to persons belonging to national minorities.

My thanks also go to our colleagues at the ODIHR who have taken care of the logistical arrangements for this meeting and to the OSCE field missions, not only for their participation today and tomorrow, but also and most importantly for their contribution to promoting integrated education in their respective countries.

I also welcome the participation of international organizations and representatives of civil society from across the entire OSCE region. The issues to be discussed here can only be successfully addressed with input from a wide range of participants.

And finally, I want to thank our keynote speaker, Mr. Alan Phillips, and the introducers and moderators who have accepted my invitation to guide the discussions over the next two days. Education has been and continues to be central to the work of successive OSCE High Commissioners on National Minorities. It is crucial in all societies as it provides individuals with the means to realize their potential and ambitions. In a multi-ethnic society, however, it is

even more crucial because it also promotes cohesion and integration between different ethnic groups. It plays an essential role in breaking down stereotypes, explaining the richness of diversity and broadening understanding of universal human rights.

I anticipate that two issues will be the main running themes throughout this meeting. The first is language education. In almost all countries with national minorities, the mother tongue of the minority is almost invariably different from the State or official language of that country. If people from such minorities are to integrate successfully and achieve equality, they need to acquire fluency in the State language. At the same time, however, people from national minorities have the right to study and be educated in their mother tongue so as to protect their identity and cultural heritage. Indeed, if they are prevented from doing so, tensions or even conflict may be the result. A balanced education system needs to combine tuition in and through the minority language with tuition in the State language.

How to reconcile these two aspects of language education is the challenge facing many States with significant national minorities and especially those where the minority is geographically concentrated. "The Hague Recommendations Regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities", published 14 years ago by the HCNM, suggest practical ways of addressing this dilemma at all levels of education. Language classes, special regulations for entry examinations, extra-curricular activities and alike are just some examples of how this could be done, depending on the varying circumstances. It will be interesting to learn both from those who are implementing education policy and those educationists and teachers who are at the coalface so to speak, to what extent the guidance offered in these Recommendations is relevant and actually applied in practice.

The second issue, and one that gives me particular concern, is the increasing trend towards segregated education in many OSCE States. I have referred to this in my statements to the Permanent Council and again at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting last year. Regrettably, the situation is not improving.

As I have noted on previous occasions, international law does not prohibit the establishment of separate educational systems or institutions for religious or linguistic reasons. This is in fact a right protected by law based on freedom of choice, which is crucial to the development and maintenance of minority identities. It is the negative aspects of parallel school systems that concern me. Dividing students in schools along ethnic lines only reaffirms stereotypes and undermines the social cohesion that is essential in a multi-ethnic society. It is imperative that this downside be countered by ensuring that students can meet across the ethnic divide both in the classroom and during extra-curricular activities. Greater efforts must also be made to promote the State language and its learning, to develop textbooks that take account of the multi-ethnic nature of the country and to provide better training for teachers. All these measures can certainly have a positive impact on how students perceive one another and their own place in a given society.

As things stand now, such schools frequently lose out to majority schools in the competition for funding. The actual conditions in such schools are often bad – with overcrowded classrooms, poor sanitation, inferior textbooks and high dropout rates. Academic standards inevitably suffer as a result. In addition, the State language is often inadequately taught by teachers for whom that language is either not their mother tongue or who have little experience of teaching pupils whose mother tongue is different from that of the teacher.

As a consequence, young people from minority communities are disadvantaged in the labour market as in almost all cases the pursuit of higher education remains beyond their reach. Equality is impossible to achieve in such circumstances. Rather, it results in fragmented societies where resentment against real or even perceived discrimination creates a climate of tension where just one tiny spark can generate conflict.

This is why I am so concerned about the proliferation of parallel education structures, where children of different ethnicity do not interact and grow up in parallel worlds. It is the task of

governments, civil society activists and us as international organizations to stress the importance of integrated education at every opportunity. It is fundamental to building cohesive, integrated societies.

These and other issues will be addressed in the course of the three working sessions that will follow this opening ceremony. In the first session, the focus will be on education for national minorities at the primary and secondary school level. In the second session, we will concentrate on the question of access to tertiary education for national minorities. This is an area that is of increasing concern to me and one that is of increasing importance for young people from national minorities for whom tertiary education is the key to full integration and equality in their societies. And finally, the third session will look at the issue of education for adults from minority communities. The suggested parameters for the discussions are set out in the comprehensive, annotated agenda prepared for this meeting so I will not go into them here. A series of questions have been posed in the annotated agenda, which I hope we will be able to address during this afternoon and tomorrow. I have no doubt that the contributions from our distinguished keynote speaker and the various introducers and moderators will provoke additional questions. The answers to all the questions will certainly be important for my work on integrated education, but they will be of even greater importance to the many OSCE participating States dealing with these issues on a day-to-day basis and frequently in situations where financial or human resources available to their governments are severely stretched. I look forward to hearing how different countries are tackling the issue. What has worked and what has not worked for them. What good practices have been developed to enable persons belonging to national minorities to participate fully in all levels of education and become fully integrated into the society in which they live. What problems may have been encountered along the way. I am confident our discussion will be both fruitful and enlightening and thank you for your attention.



# OSCE Delegations / Partners for Co-operation

## Albania

**Mr. Artan CANAJ**  
Deputy Head of Mission  
E-Mail: [acanaj@mfa.gov.al](mailto:acanaj@mfa.gov.al)

**Permanent Mission of Albania to the Int'l Organizations in Vienna**  
Reisenerstrasse 27/6a; 1030 Vienna; Austria  
Tel: +43-1-328 87 10  
Fax: +43-1-328 87 11  
Website: <http://www.mfa.gov.al>

**Ms. Selvi BECAJ**  
First Secretary  
E-Mail: [selvi.becaj@mfa.gov.al](mailto:selvi.becaj@mfa.gov.al)

**Permanent Mission of Albania to the Int'l Organizations in Vienna**  
Reisenerstrasse 27/6a; 1030 Vienna; Austria  
Tel: +43-1-328 87 10  
Fax: +43-1-328 87 11  
Website: <http://www.mfa.gov.al>

**Dr. Detlev REIN**  
Head of Division  
E-Mail: [Detlev.Rein@bmi.bund.de](mailto:Detlev.Rein@bmi.bund.de)

## Germany

**Federal Ministry of the Interior; M II 4 - National Minorities; Measures to Promote Mutual Understanding; Tracing Services**  
Graurheindorfer Strasse 198; D-53117 Bonn; Germany  
Tel: +49-1888-681 37 66  
Fax: +49-1888-681 53 766

**Mr. Thomas LENK**  
Counsellor  
E-Mail: [thomas.lenk@diplo.de](mailto:thomas.lenk@diplo.de)

**Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany to the OSCE**  
Metternichgasse 3; 1030 Vienna; Austria  
Tel: +43-1-711 54 0  
Website: <http://www.osze.diplo.de>

**Ms. Janice HELWIG**  
Policy Advisor  
E-Mail: [Janice.Helwig@mail.house.gov](mailto:Janice.Helwig@mail.house.gov)

## United States of America

**U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (U.S. Helsinki Commission)**  
234 Ford House Office Building; Washington, DC 20515; U.S.A.  
Tel: +1-202-225-1901  
Fax: +1-202-226-4199  
Website: <http://www.csce.gov>

**Mr. Charles ROSE**  
General Counsel  
E-Mail: [charlie.rose@ed.gov](mailto:charlie.rose@ed.gov)

**U.S. Department of Education**  
400 Maryland Ave. S.W.; Washington, D.C. 20202; U.S.A.  
Tel: +1-202-401 58 77  
Fax: +1-202-205 26 89

**Mr. Timothy FINGARSON**  
Political Officer  
E-Mail: [fingarsontj@state.gov](mailto:fingarsontj@state.gov)

**United States Mission to the OSCE**  
Obersteingasse 11/1; 1190 Vienna; Austria  
Tel: +43-1-313 39 32 11  
Fax: +43-1-313 39 32 55  
Website: <http://osce.usmission.gov>

**Mrs. Maria UBACH FONT**  
Charge d'Affaires  
E-Mail: [office@ambaixada-andorra.at](mailto:office@ambaixada-andorra.at)

## Andorra

**OSCE Delegation of the Principality of Andorra**  
Karntnerring 2A/13; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel: +43-1-961 09 09  
Fax: +43-1-961 09 09 50

**Ms. Marta SALVAT**  
Special Envoy on Policy and Security Issues  
E-Mail: [amb.andorra@prioritytelecom.biz](mailto:amb.andorra@prioritytelecom.biz)

**OSCE Delegation of the Principality of Andorra**  
Karntnerring 2A/13; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel: +43-1-961 09 09 20  
Fax: +43-1-961 09 09 50

**Mrs. Liliya BALASANYAN**  
Leading Specialist of the General Education Division  
E-Mail: [liliyabalasan@mail.ru](mailto:liliyabalasan@mail.ru)

## Armenia

**Ministry of Education**  
Yerevan; Armenia  
Tel: +374-10-52 47 77, +374-93-45 48 14

**Mrs. Karine SOUDJIAN**  
Head of Human Rights and Humanitarian Issues Desk  
E-Mail: [k.soudjian@mfa.am](mailto:k.soudjian@mfa.am)

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs**  
2, Government Building, Republic Square; 375010 Yerevan; Armenia  
Tel: +374-10-54 40 41  
Fax: +374-10-54 39 25

## Austria

### **Dr. Harald W. KOTSCHY**

Minister Plenipotentiary; Head of Unit for Council of Europe & OSCE /  
Human Dimension  
E-Mail: harald.kotschy@bmeia.gv.at

### **Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs**

Minoritenplatz 8; 1014 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-5-011 50 36 74  
Fax:+43-5-011 59 3674  
Website: <http://www.bmeia.gv.at>

### **Ms. Doreen OSAMWONYI**

Member of Staf of Deputy Director General, Head of International Affairs,  
EU-Coordination, Public Relations, Procurement  
E-Mail: doreen.osamwonyi@bmi.gv.at

### **Federal Ministry of the Interior**

Herrengasse 7; A-1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-531 26 36 03  
Fax:+43-1-531 26 32 36  
Website: <http://www.bmi.gv.at>

### **Dr. Angela APEL**

Stabstelle Rechtsangelegenheiten, EU-Beauftragte  
E-Mail: angela.apel@noel.gv.at

### **Amt der Niederoesterreichischen Landesregierung - Abteilung Kultur und Wissenschaft**

Landhausplatz 1; A-3109 St. Polten; Austria  
Tel:+43-274-29 00 51 31 21  
Fax:+43-274-29 00 51 30 29  
Website: <http://www.noe.gv.at>

### **Mr. Elmar GASIMOV**

Deputy Minister  
E-Mail: qasimov@edu.gov.az

### **Ministry of Education**

Khatai Ave., 49; 1008 Baku; Azerbaijan  
Tel:+994-12-496 32 92  
Fax:+994-12-496 32 92

### **Mr. Azad AKHUNDOV**

Senior Advisor  
E-Mail: azad.akhundov@gmail.com

### **Ministry of Education**

Khatai Ave., 49; 1008 Baku; Azerbaijan  
Tel:+994-12-496 34 14  
Fax:+994-12-496 34 14

### **Ms. Aysel YAGUBOVA**

Second Secretary  
E-Mail: a\_yagubova@azembassy.at

### **Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the OSCE**

Huegelgasse 2; 1130 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-403 13 22 17  
Fax:+43-1-403 13 23

### **Mrs. Irina KARZHOVA**

Chief Inspector, Department of General Secondary Education  
E-Mail: korzhova@minedu.unibel.by

## Belarus

### **Ministry of Education**

9, Sovetskaya str.; Minsk; Belarus  
Tel:+375-17-222 66 47  
Fax:+375-17-200 84 83

### **Mr. Vladimir SOLOVYEV**

Second Secretary (Human Dimension Issues)  
E-Mail: solovyev\_osce@mail.by

### **Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Belarus to the OSCE**

Huettelbergstrasse 6; 1140 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-419 96 30 17  
Fax:+43-1-419 96 30 30  
Website: <http://www.austria.belembassy.org>

### **Amb. Genevieve RENAUX**

Ambassadrice; Head of Mission  
E-Mail: marianne.goyens@diplobel.fed.be

### **Permanent Mission of Belgium to the OSCE**

Wohllebengasse 6/3; 1040 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-505 63 64  
Fax:+43-1-505 03 88

### **Mr. Hendrik ROGGEN**

First Secretary  
E-Mail: marianne.goyens@diplobel.fed.be

### **Permanent Mission of Belgium to the OSCE**

Wohllebengasse 6/3; 1040 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-505 63 64 15  
Fax:+43-1-505 03 88

### **Mr. Frederic VAN KERREBROECK**

Intern  
E-Mail: marianne.goyens@diplobel.fed.be

### **Permanent Mission of Belgium to the OSCE**

Wohllebengasse 6/3; 1040 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-505 63 64 15

### **Ms. El Fassi CHIRAZ**

Attachee departement OSCE  
E-Mail: marianne.goyens@diplobel.fed.be

### **Permanent Mission of Belgium to the OSCE**

Wohllebengasse 6/3; 1040 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-505 63 64 50

## Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Mr. Igor DAVIDOVIC**  
Ambassador  
E-Mail: office@bhmission.at

**Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the International Organizations in Vienna**  
Heinrichsgasse 4/3; A-1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-812 22 56  
Fax:+43-1-526 47 41

**Dr. Georgi KRASTEV**  
Head of Department "Integration of Roma"  
E-Mail: g.krastev@government.bg

## Bulgaria

**National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Demographic Issues**  
Knyaz Dondukov blv. 1; Sofia 1000; Bulgaria  
Tel:+359-2-940 24 19  
Fax:+359-2-986 27 32  
Website: <http://www.nccedi.government.bg>

**Mrs. Genka GEORGIEVA**  
Counsellor  
E-Mail: g.georgieva@bulgvert.at

**Permanent Mission of the Republic of Bulgaria to the OSCE**  
Rechte Wienzeile 13/1; 1040 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-585 66 03  
Fax:+43-1-585 20 01

**Mr. Yves BEAULIEU**  
Counsellor  
E-Mail: yves.beaulieu@international.gc.ca

## Canada

**Delegation of Canada to the OSCE**  
Laurenzerberg 2; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-531 38 32 22  
Fax:+43-1-531 38 39 15

**Ms. Polly IOANNOU**  
Deputy Head of Mission  
E-Mail: pioannou@mfa.gov.cy

## Cyprus

**Permanent Mission of Cyprus to the OSCE**  
Parkring 20; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-513 06 30  
Fax:+43-1-513 06 32

**Ms. Katarina HODAK**  
Second Secretary  
E-Mail: khodak@mvpei.hr

## Croatia

**Permanent Mission of the Republic of Croatia to the OSCE, UN and Int'l Organizations in Vienna**  
Bartensteing. 16/7; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-535 01 37  
Fax:+43-1-535 01 34

**Ms. Lene AGGERNAES**  
First Secretary  
E-Mail: lensag@um.dk

## Denmark

**Delegation of Denmark to the OSCE**  
Fuehrichgasse 6/3rd floor; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-512 02 32 ext 14

**Mr. Pablo SANZ LOPEZ**  
Counsellor  
E-Mail: pablo.sanz@maec.es

## Spain

**Permanent Representation of Spain to the OSCE**  
Argentinierstrasse 34; A-1040 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-699-12 60 79 67  
Fax:+43-1-505 86 00 388

**Amb. Triin PARTS**  
Ambassador  
E-Mail: triin.parts@osce.estwien.at

## Estonia

**Permanent Mission of the Republic of Estonia to the OSCE**  
Fuehrichgasse 8/5; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-512 19 01 11

**Ms. Mai HION**  
Counsellor  
E-Mail: mai.hion@mfa.ee

**Permanent Mission of the Republic of Estonia to the OSCE**  
Fuehrichgasse 8/5; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-512 19 01 11

**Amb. Timo KANTOLA**  
Permanent Representative of Finland to the OSCE  
E-Mail: sanomat.wet@formin.fi

## Finland

**Permanent Mission of Finland to the OSCE**  
Gonzagagasse 16/2nd fl; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-535 10 34  
Fax:+43-1-533 69 82

**Ms. Anna ESKO**  
First Secretary  
E-Mail: anna.esko@formin.fi

**Permanent Mission of Finland to the OSCE**  
Gonzagagasse 16/2nd fl; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-535 1034 77

**Mr. Francois ALABRUNE**

Ambassador, Permanent Representative of France to the OSCE  
E-Mail: [adeline.tanon-dagou@diplomatie.gouv.fr](mailto:adeline.tanon-dagou@diplomatie.gouv.fr)

**Mr. Jeremie BLIN**

Counsellor  
E-Mail: [jeremie.blin@diplomatie.gouv.fr](mailto:jeremie.blin@diplomatie.gouv.fr)

**Ms. Charlene JOUVE**

Intern  
E-Mail: [charlene.jouve@diplomatie.gouv.fr](mailto:charlene.jouve@diplomatie.gouv.fr)

**Ms. Rusudan CHANTURIA**

Coordinator of Civil Integration Programs  
E-Mail: [rchanturia@gmail.com](mailto:rchanturia@gmail.com)

**Amb. Ian CLIFF**

UK Permanent Representative to the OSCE  
E-Mail: [Ian.Cliff@fco.gov.uk](mailto:Ian.Cliff@fco.gov.uk)

**Mr. Andrew PRICE**

First Secretary  
E-Mail: [andrew.price@fco.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.price@fco.gov.uk)

**Prof. Thalia DRAGONAS**

Special Secretary for Educational Planning, Education of Expatriated Greeks,  
Intercultural Education and Decentralization  
E-Mail: [drathal@ath.forthnet.gr](mailto:drathal@ath.forthnet.gr)

**Mr. Christos SOFIANOPOULOS**

Counsellor  
E-Mail: [sofianopoulos@osce-greece.at](mailto:sofianopoulos@osce-greece.at)

**Ms. Benticha ACHMET**

Teacher  
E-Mail: [bed\\_iha@hotmail.com](mailto:bed_iha@hotmail.com)

**Amb. Gyorgy MOLNAR**

Permanent Representative, Head of Mission  
E-Mail: [gymolnar@kum.hu](mailto:gymolnar@kum.hu)

**Dr. Csaba PAKORDI**

Head of Department for Hungarian Minorities

**Ms. Lilla BOSZ**

Second Secretary  
E-Mail: [lbosz@kum.hu](mailto:lbosz@kum.hu)

**Amb. Eoin O'LEARY**

Head of Mission  
E-Mail: [Ireland-OSCE@dfa.ie](mailto:Ireland-OSCE@dfa.ie)

## France

**Permanent Representation of France to the OSCE**

Schwarzenbergplatz 16; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-501 82 503  
Fax:+43-1-501 82 502  
Website: <http://www.delegfrance-at.org>

**Permanent Representation of France to the OSCE**

Schwarzenbergplatz 16; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-501 82 025 19  
Website: <http://www.delegfrance-at.org>

**Permanent Representation of France to the OSCE**

Schwarzenbergplatz 16; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-676-755 67 19  
Website: <http://www.delegfrance-at.org>

## Georgia

**Ministry of Education and Science**

52, D. Uznadze Str.; 0102 Tbilisi; Georgia  
Tel:+995-77-17 55 43  
Fax:+995-32-98 67 48  
Website: <http://www.mes.gov.ge>

## United Kingdom

**United Kingdom Delegation to the OSCE**

British Embassy, Jauresgasse 12; 1030 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-716 13 33 02

**United Kingdom Delegation to the OSCE**

British Embassy, Jauresgasse 12; 1030 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-716 13 33 03

## Greece

**Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs**

Andrea Papandreou 37; Marousi 15180; Greece  
Tel:+30-697-502 28 39  
Website: [http://www.ypepth.gr/en\\_ec\\_home.htm](http://www.ypepth.gr/en_ec_home.htm)

**Permanent Mission of Greece to the OSCE**

Trattnerhof 2/Top 305 (Am Graben 19); 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-503 39 30 63  
Fax:+43-1-503 39 20

**Third Primary School of Minority in Komotini**

Egnatias Adieksodos 1 176; 69100 Komotini; Greece  
Tel:+30-693-665 55 42

## Hungary

**Permanent Mission of the Republic of Hungary to the OSCE**

Bankgasse 6; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-533 03 76  
Fax:+43-1-532 84 82

**Ministry for Foreign Affairs**

Nagy Imre Ter 4; 1027 Budapest; Hungary

**Permanent Mission of the Republic of Hungary to the OSCE**

Bankgasse 6; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-533 03 76

## Ireland

**Permanent Mission of Ireland to the OSCE**

Rotenturmstrasse 16-18; A-1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-715 76 98 26  
Fax:+43-1-715 57 55

**Ms. Martina FEENEY**  
Deputy Head of Mission  
E-Mail: [martina.feeney@dfa.ie](mailto:martina.feeney@dfa.ie)

**Ms. Sinead HARVEY**  
Attache  
E-Mail: [sinead.harvey@dfa.ie](mailto:sinead.harvey@dfa.ie)

**Mr. Anthony CUTOLO**  
Head of Office  
E-Mail: [antonio.cutolo@istruzione.it](mailto:antonio.cutolo@istruzione.it)

**Mr. Giacomo GABBRIELLI**  
Assistant  
E-Mail: [internosce02.vienna@esteri.it](mailto:internosce02.vienna@esteri.it)

**Ms. Madina JARBUSSYNOVA**  
Ambassador-at-large  
E-Mail: [jarmad@mid.kz](mailto:jarmad@mid.kz)

**Ms. Sayagul KONAKBAYEVA**  
Head of Division  
E-Mail: [konakbayeva@mid.kz](mailto:konakbayeva@mid.kz)

**Mr. Zholymbet BAISHEV**  
Judge  
E-Mail: [ms@supcourt.kz](mailto:ms@supcourt.kz)

**Mr. Yermukhamet YERTYSBAYEV**  
Advisor of the President  
E-Mail: [a.kalkamanov@mfa.kz](mailto:a.kalkamanov@mfa.kz)

**Ms. Nazipa SHANAI**  
Inspector  
E-Mail: [shanai\\_ny@akorda.kz](mailto:shanai_ny@akorda.kz)

**Mr. Nikolay BELORUKOV**  
Member  
E-Mail: [a.kalkamanov@mfa.kz](mailto:a.kalkamanov@mfa.kz)

**Ms. Ainura UZBEKOVA**  
Referent  
E-Mail: [a.uzbekova@mfa.kz](mailto:a.uzbekova@mfa.kz)

**Mr. Artem KUZMIN**  
Third Secretary of the OSCE Department  
E-Mail: [a.kuzmin@mfa.kz](mailto:a.kuzmin@mfa.kz)

**Permanent Mission of Ireland to the OSCE**  
Rotenturmstrasse 16-18; A-1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-715 76 98 27  
Fax:+43-1-715 57 55

**Permanent Mission of Ireland to the OSCE**  
Rotenturmstrasse 16-18; A-1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-676-432 01 49

## Italy

**Ministry of Education**  
Viale Trastevere 76; Rome; Italy  
Tel:+39-06-581 67 50  
Fax:+39-06-584 92 471  
Website: <http://www.istruzione.it>

**Permanent Mission of Italy to the OSCE**  
Waechtergasse 1; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-713 89 20

## Kazakhstan

**Ministry for Foreign Affairs**  
Taulsizdik Str. 35; 010000 Astana; Kazakhstan  
Tel:+7-7172-72 02 73  
Website: <http://www.mfa.kz>

**Ministry for Foreign Affairs**  
Taulsizdik Str. 35; 010000 Astana; Kazakhstan  
Tel:+7-7172-72 05 40  
Fax:+7-7172-72 05 35  
Website: <http://www.mfa.kz>

**Supreme Court**  
Independence Str., bld 39; 010000 Astana; Kazakhstan  
Tel:+7-3172-74 78 17  
Fax:+7-3172-74 78 81  
Website: <http://www.supcourt.kz>

**Administration of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan**  
Akorda; Astana; Kazakhstan  
Tel:+7-7172-23 27 93  
Website: <http://www.akorda.kz>

**Administration of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan**  
Akorda; Astana; Kazakhstan  
Tel:+7-7172-74 56 51  
Fax:+7-7172-74 56 90  
Website: <http://www.akorda.kz>

**Constitutional Council of Kazakhstan**  
Verhovni Sud, Block A; Levoberezhie, 010000 Astana; Kazakhstan  
Tel:+7-7172-74 76 22  
Website: <http://www.constcouncil.kz>

**Ministry for Foreign Affairs**  
Taulsizdik Str. 35; 010000 Astana; Kazakhstan  
Tel:+7-777-311 00 13  
Website: <http://www.mfa.kz>

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs**  
Taulsizdik str., 35; 010000 Astana; Kazakhstan  
Tel:+7-7172-72 00 51  
Website: <http://www.mfa.kz>

**Ms. Larisa MARCHENKO**  
Head of Department of Monitoring and Strategic Planning  
E-Mail: marchenkol@rambler.ru

## Kyrgyzstan

**Ministry of Education and Science of Kyrgyz Republic**  
257, Tynystanova str.; Bishkek; Kyrgyzstan  
Tel:+996-312-62 05 29  
Fax:+996-312-66 35 97

**Mr. Maris KLISANS**  
Director of Department  
E-Mail: maris.klisans@mfa.gov.lv

## Latvia

**Ministry for Foreign Affairs**  
K. Valdemara Str. 3; LV 1395 Riga; Latvia  
Tel:+371-6-701 62 60  
Fax:+371-6-782 81 21  
Website: <http://www.mfa.gov.lv>

**Mr. Vitolds RUSIS**  
Counsellor  
E-Mail: edso@mfa.gov.lv

**Permanent Mission of the Republic of Latvia to the OSCE**  
Stefan Esders Platz No.4; A-1190 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-328 72 90 15  
Fax:+43-1-328 72 90 13

## the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

**Mr. Gabriel ATANASOV**  
Deputy Permanent Representative to the OSCE  
E-Mail: gabriel.atanasov@mfa.gov.mk

**Permanent Mission to the OSCE**  
Engelsberggasse 5/7; 1030 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-524 87 02  
Fax:+43-1-524 87 01

**Mr. Domenik WANGER**  
Deputy Head of Mission  
E-Mail: domenik.wanger@vie.llv.li

## Liechtenstein

**Permanent Delegation of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the OSCE**  
Loewelstrasse 8/7; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-535 92 11  
Fax:+43-1-535 92 11 4

**Ms. Emilia BREUSS**  
Adviser  
E-Mail: emilia.breuss@vie.llv.li

**Permanent Delegation of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the OSCE**  
Loewelstrasse 8/7; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-535 92 11 12

**Mr. Renatas NORKUS**  
Ambassador  
E-Mail: mission@lithuanianmission.at

## Lithuania

**Permanent Mission of the Republic of Lithuania to the OSCE**  
Operring 5; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-710 97 80  
Fax:+43-1-710 97 59

**Mr. Alfonsas EIDINTAS**  
Ambassador at Large OSCE Human Dimension  
E-Mail: Alfonsas.Eidintas@urm.lt

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs**  
J.Tumo-Vaizganto 2; LT-01511 Vilnius; Lithuania  
Tel:+370-5-236 29 69  
Fax:+370-5-231 30 90  
Website: <http://www.urm.lt>

**Mrs. Jurgita GERMANAVICIENE**  
Counsellor  
E-Mail: jurgita.germanaviciene@urm.lt

**Permanent Mission of the Republic of Lithuania to the OSCE**  
Operring 5; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-699-18 19 24 85

**Ms. Sonja RECCHI**  
Assistant  
E-Mail: sonja.ourecky@mae.etat.lu

## Luxembourg

**Permanent Representation of the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg to the OSCE**  
Wallnerstrasse 2/Stg. 1/2; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-478 21 68-23  
Fax:+43-1-478 26 43

**Ms. Jeanne ADAM**  
Intern  
E-Mail: vienne.osce1@mae.etat.lu

**Permanent Representation of the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg to the OSCE**  
Wallnerstrasse 2/Stg. 1/2; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-478 21 68

**Amb. Guttorm VIK**  
Ambassador  
E-Mail: enb@mfa.no

**Mr. Mads Halfdan LIE**  
Trainee  
E-Mail: mhl@mfa.no

**Mr. Frederik RANKE**  
Second Secretary  
E-Mail: frederik.gunnar.ranke@mfa.no

**Mr. Alisher USMANOV**  
Director; International Organizations Department  
E-Mail: alusmanov@yandex.ru

**Mr. Berdibek ALIBEKOV**  
Third Secretary of the Department for the United Nations and International Organizations  
E-Mail: OON@tiv.uz

**Mr. Joan COERT**  
Deputy Permanent Representative and Charge d'Affaires  
E-Mail: jw.coert@minbuza.nl

**Ms. Monique Jose DE GROOT**  
First Secretary  
E-Mail: monique-de.groot@minbuza.nl

**Ms. Malgorzata SKORKA**  
Chief Expert  
E-Mail: malgorzata.skorka@men.gov.pl

**Mr. Jerzy GIERASIMIUK**  
First Secretary  
E-Mail: jerzy.gierasimiuk@msz.gov.pl

**Mrs. Ana MARTINHO**  
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Portugal to the OSCE  
E-Mail: mail@portdelosce.at

**Ms. Paula VICENTE**  
Counsellor  
E-Mail: paulavicente@portdelosce.at

**Mr. Adrian DAVIDOIU**  
Deputy Permanent Representative  
E-Mail: adrian.davidoiu@mprom.at

**Ms. Ioana MURESAN**  
Third Secretary  
E-Mail: ioana.muresan@mprom.at

## Norway

**Permanent Delegation of Norway to the OSCE**  
Reisnerstrasse 55-57; 1030 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-715 66 92 315  
Fax:+43-1-712 65 52  
Website: <http://www.norway-osce.org>

**Permanent Delegation of Norway to the OSCE**  
Reisnerstrasse 55-57; 1030 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-664-966 94 16  
Website: <http://www.norway-osce.org>

**Permanent Delegation of Norway to the OSCE**  
Reisnerstrasse 55-57; 1030 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-715 66 92/330  
Fax:+43-1-712 65 52  
Website: <http://www.norway-osce.org>

## Uzbekistan

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan**  
9, Uzbekistanskaya Street; 700029 Tashkent; Uzbekistan

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan**  
9, Uzbekistanskaya Street; 700029 Tashkent; Uzbekistan  
Tel:+998-71-239 18 05  
Fax:+998-71-239 18 05

## Netherlands

**Permanent Representation of the Netherlands to the OSCE**  
Opernring 5/8th floor; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-589 39  
Fax:+43-1-589 39 266

**Permanent Representation of the Netherlands to the OSCE**  
Opernring 5/8th floor; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-589 39 254

## Poland

**Ministry of National Education**  
Al. Szucha 25; 00-918 Warsaw; Poland  
Tel:+48-22-347 46 91  
Fax:+48-22-347 42 53  
Website: <http://www.men.gov.pl>

**Mission of Poland to the OSCE in Vienna**  
Hietzinger Hauptstrasse 42 c; A-1130 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-870 15 320  
Fax:+43-1-870 15 331  
Website: <http://www.wiedenosce.polemb.net>

## Portugal

**Permanent Representation of Portugal to the OSCE**  
Opernring 3/1; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-585 50 51 46  
Fax:+43-1-585 50 51 66

**Permanent Representation of Portugal to the OSCE**  
Opernring 3/1; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-585 50 51 57  
Fax:+43-1-585 50 51 66

## Romania

**Permanent Mission of Romania to the OSCE**  
Seilerstatte 17/2nd floor, Top 8-9; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-676-774 22 48

**Permanent Mission of Romania to the OSCE**  
Seilerstatte 17/2nd floor, Top 8-9; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+40-1-512 90 31

## Russian Federation

**Mr. Yury IZBACHKOV**  
Deputy Director, Legal Department  
E-Mail: izbachkov@mkrf.ru

**Mrs. Aysa MUKABENOVA**  
Counsellor  
E-Mail: dgpch@mid.ru

**Ms. Elena MOLARONI BERGUIDO**  
Ambassador; Deputy Head of Delegation  
E-Mail: RSMvienna@gmail.com

**Msgr. Michael W. BANACH**  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative  
E-Mail: h.see.mission@aon.at

**Ms. Miroslava BEHAM**  
Ambassador; Head of the Mission  
E-Mail: mbehm@mission.srbije.net

**Ms. Sanja MILINKOVIC**  
Minister Counsellor; Deputy Head of Mission  
E-Mail: sanja.milinkovic@mfa.rs

**Mrs. Marija TRIFUNOVIC-LJUBOJEVIC**  
First Secretary  
E-Mail: mljubojevic@mission.srbije.net

**Mr. Miroslav WLACHOVSKY**  
First Secretary  
E-Mail: miroslav.wlachovsky@mzv.sk

**Amb. Stanislav RASCAN**  
Head of Mission  
E-Mail: mdu@gov.si

**Ms. Ana PETRIC**  
Second Secretary  
E-Mail: ana.petric1@gov.si

**Mr. Carl Magnus NESSER**  
Minister, Deputy Head of Delegation  
E-Mail: carl-magnus.nesser@foreign.ministry.se

**Ministry for Culture and Mass Communications**  
M-Gnezdnikovsky 7; 125009 Moscow; Russian Federation  
Tel:+7-495-629 80 32

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Dept. for Humanitarian Co-operation and Human Rights**  
32/34, Smolenskaya-Sennaya sq.; 119200 Moscow; Russian Federation  
Tel:+7-495-244 31 66  
Website: <http://www.mid.ru>

## San Marino

**Delegation of the Republic of San Marino to the OSCE Meetings in Vienna**  
Prinz Eugen Strasse 16/I/5A; 1040 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-941 59 69  
Fax:+43-1-941 59 75

## Holy See

**Permanent Mission of the Holy See to the OSCE**  
Theresianumgasse 33/4; 1040 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-505 85 01  
Fax:+43-1-505 85 01 75

## Serbia

**Permanent Mission of Serbia to the OSCE and Other IO in Vienna**  
Rennweg 3; 1030 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-714 13 45  
Fax:+43-1-714 13 41

**Permanent Mission of Serbia to the OSCE and Other IO in Vienna**  
Rennweg 3; 1030 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-714 13 45  
Fax:+43-1-714 13 41

**Permanent Mission of Serbia to the OSCE and Other IO in Vienna**  
Rennweg 3; 1030 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-714 13 45  
Fax:+43-1-714 13 41

## Slovakia

**Permanent Mission of Slovakia to the OSCE**  
Blaasstrasse 34; 1190 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-368 94 33 304  
Fax:+43-1-368 94 33 333

## Slovenia

**Permanent Mission of the Republic of Slovenia to the OSCE**  
Gumpendorfer Strasse 11/II/Top 18; 1060 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-581 34 08 25  
Fax:+43-1-581 34 18

**Permanent Mission of the Republic of Slovenia to the OSCE**  
Gumpendorfer Strasse 11/II/Top 18; 1060 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-581 34 08 20  
Fax:+43-1-581 34 17

## Sweden

**Permanent Delegation of Sweden to the OSCE**  
Obere Donaust. 49-51; 1020 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-664-383 02 05  
Fax:+43-1-21 75 33 80



**Ms. Anna BODA**  
First Secretary  
E-Mail: [anna.boda@foreign.ministry.se](mailto:anna.boda@foreign.ministry.se)

**Ms. Britta HJERTSTEDT**  
Second Secretary  
E-Mail: [britta.hjertstedt@foreign.ministry.se](mailto:britta.hjertstedt@foreign.ministry.se)

**Ms. Katharina STOFFL**  
Political Assistant  
E-Mail: [katharina.stoffl@eda.admin.ch](mailto:katharina.stoffl@eda.admin.ch)

**Mr. Khaydarali KADYROV**  
Chief Specialist of Constitutional Guarantees Department  
E-Mail: [gkhuseynova@osce.org](mailto:gkhuseynova@osce.org)

**Mr. Subkhon KOSHONOV**  
Senior Adviser to the President of the Republic of Tajikistan  
E-Mail: [gkhuseynova@osce.org](mailto:gkhuseynova@osce.org)

**Mrs. Lola GAYBULLAEVA**  
Third Secretary  
E-Mail: [tajikembassy@chello.at](mailto:tajikembassy@chello.at)

**Ms. Michaela MARKSOVA**  
Head of Department for Equal Opportunities in Education  
E-Mail: [michaela.marksova@msmt.cz](mailto:michaela.marksova@msmt.cz)

**Mr. Erdem OZAN**  
Counsellor  
E-Mail: [eozan@mfa.gov.tr](mailto:eozan@mfa.gov.tr)

**Ms. Christina HAYOVYSHYN**  
Second Secretary  
E-Mail: [christina@mfa.gov.ua](mailto:christina@mfa.gov.ua)

**Permanent Delegation of Sweden to the OSCE**  
Obere Donaustr. 49-51; 1020 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-217 53 236  
Fax:+43-1-217 53 380

**Permanent Delegation of Sweden to the OSCE**  
Obere Donaustr. 49-51; 1020 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-217 53 256

## Switzerland

**Swiss Delegation to the OSCE**  
Rooseveltplatz 4-5/8; A-1090 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-505 89 25 12  
Website: <http://www.eda.admin.ch>

## Tajikistan

**Apparatus of the President of RT**  
Presidential Palace, Rudaki, 80; 734049 Dushanbe; Tajikistan  
Tel:+992-918-33 33 76  
Fax:+992-37-227 38 02

**Apparatus of the President of RT**  
Presidential Palace, Rudaki, 80; 734049 Dushanbe; Tajikistan  
Tel:+992-37-223 19 22  
Fax:+992-37-227 38 02

**Delegation of the Republic of Tajikistan to the OSCE**  
Embassy of Tajikistan, Universitaetsstrasse 8/1A; 1090 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-1-409 82 66  
Fax:+43-1-409 82 66 14

## Czech Republic

**Ministry of Education**  
Novodvorska 1010/14; Prague 4; Czech Republic  
Tel:+420-725-03 81 31  
Fax:+420-2-34 81 16 50

## Turkey

**Permanent Mission of Turkey to the OSCE**  
Zieglergasse 5/2; 1070 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+43-676-357 15 04  
Fax:+43-1-523 38 07  
Website: <http://www.mfa.gov.tr>

## Ukraine

**Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the OSCE**  
Naaffgasse 23; 1180 Vienna; Austria  
Tel:+4314797172 ext.13  
Fax:+431479717247  
Website: <http://www.ukremb.at>

## International Organizations

1

### Community of Democracies

Al. Ujazdowskie 41; 00-540 Warsaw; Poland  
Website: <http://www.community-democracies.org>

Tel: +48-728-85 00 66

**Prof. Bronislaw MISZTAL**  
Executive Director  
E-Mail: [bronislaw.misztal@msz.gov.pl](mailto:bronislaw.misztal@msz.gov.pl)

2

### International Organization for Migration, Austria

Nibelungengasse 13/4; 1010 Vienna; Austria  
Website: <http://www.iomvienna.at>

Tel: +43-699-11 64 44 03

**Ms. Andrea GOETZELMANN**  
Researcher  
E-Mail: [agoetzelmann@iom.int](mailto:agoetzelmann@iom.int)

3

**Regional Cooperation Council**Trg Bosne i Hercegovine 1/V; 71000 Sarajevo; Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Website: <http://www.rcc.int>

Tel: +387-62-34 56 03

**Ms. Mimika LOSHI**Expert - Building Human Capital Unit  
E-Mail: [mimika.loschi@rcc.int](mailto:mimika.loschi@rcc.int)**OSCE Institutions/Field Activities**

1

**OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities**

P.O. Box 20062; 2500 EB The Hague; The Netherlands

**Mr. Knut VOLLEBAEK**High Commissioner on National Minorities  
E-Mail: [karin.gunnestad@osce.org](mailto:karin.gunnestad@osce.org)

Tel: +31-70-312 55 00

Fax: +31-70-363 59 10

**Ms. Trude ERTRESVAAG**Personal Adviser to the High Commissioner  
E-Mail: [trude.ertresvaag@hcnm.org](mailto:trude.ertresvaag@hcnm.org)

Tel: +31-70-312 55 03

**Ms. Sabine MACHL**Head of CIS and Baltics Section; Senior Adviser  
E-Mail: [sabine.machl@hcnm.org](mailto:sabine.machl@hcnm.org)

Tel: +31-70-312 55 09

**Mr. Robert SCHUPP**

Senior Political Adviser

**Mr. Aidar E. SHAKENOV**

Senior Adviser

E-Mail: [aidar.shakenov@hcnm.org](mailto:aidar.shakenov@hcnm.org)

Tel: +31-65-317 92 10

2

**OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, OSCE Parliamentary Liaison Office**

Neustiftgasse 3/8; 1070 Vienna; Austria

**Amb. Andreas NOTHELLE**Special Representative  
E-Mail: [specialrep@oscepa.at](mailto:specialrep@oscepa.at)

Tel: +43-1-523 30 02

Fax: +43-1-522 26 84

**Ms. Tahire Zumrut EKINCI**Research Assistant  
E-Mail: [ekinci.z@gmail.com](mailto:ekinci.z@gmail.com)

Tel: +43-1-523 30 02

3

**OSCE Centre in Astana**

10, Beibitshilik Str.; 010000 Astana; Kazakhstan

**Mr. Stefan BUCHMAYER**Human Dimension Officer  
E-Mail: [stefan.buchmayer@osce.org](mailto:stefan.buchmayer@osce.org)

Tel: +7-701-727 97 65

4

**OSCE Office in Baku**The Landmark III, 96 Nizami Str.; AZ1010 Baku; Azerbaijan  
Website: <http://www.osce.org/baku>**Mr. Vusal BEHBUDOV**National Democratisation Officer  
E-Mail: [vusal.behbudov@osce.org](mailto:vusal.behbudov@osce.org)

Tel: +994-50-255 61 06

5

**OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina**Fra Andjela Zvidovica 1; 71000 Sarajevo; Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Website: <http://www.oscebih.ba>**Ms. Polina KOZAK**Religious Education Officer  
E-Mail: [polina.kozak@osce.org](mailto:polina.kozak@osce.org)

Tel: +387-33-75 22 93

6

**OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje**QBE Makedonija Building, 11 Oktomvri Str. n.25; MK-1000 Skopje; the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia  
Website: <http://www.osce.org/skopje>**Ms. Emilija SIMONOVSKA JANACKOVSKA**Education Programme Assistant  
E-Mail: [emilija.simonovska-janackovska@osce.org](mailto:emilija.simonovska-janackovska@osce.org)

Tel: +389-70-35 89 41

Fax: +389-2-323 42 34

7

**OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan**Afrosiyab Str. 12. b, 4th floor; 100015 Tashkent; Uzbekistan  
Website: <http://www.osce.org/uzbekistan>**Mr. Ildar FAYZULLIN**Project Officer  
E-Mail: [Ildar.Fayzullin@osce.org](mailto:Ildar.Fayzullin@osce.org)

Tel: +998-71-140 04 70

Fax: +998-71-140 04 66

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### OSCE Office in Yerevan

64/1, Sundukyan Str.; 0012 Yerevan; Armenia  
Website: <http://www.osce.org/yerevan>

**Mr. Inna YERANOSYAN**  
Senior Human Rights Assistant  
E-Mail: [inna.yeranosyan@osce.org](mailto:inna.yeranosyan@osce.org)

Tel: +374-10-22 96 10  
Fax: +374-10-22 96 15

## Non-Governmental Organizations

1

### "Amalipe" - Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance

2 Hristo Botev Str, room 204, p.o. box 113; 5000 Veliko Turnovo; Bulgaria

**Mr. Deyan KOLEV**  
Chairman  
E-Mail: [deyankolev@mail.bg](mailto:deyankolev@mail.bg)

Tel: +359-888-68 11 34  
Fax: +359-62-60 02 24

2

### Anti-Discrimination Centre "Memorial"

7th Krasnoarmeyskaya 25/14, office 413; 190005 St. Petersburg; Russian Federation  
Website: <http://www.memorial.spb.ru>

**Mrs. Olga ABRAMENKO**  
Director  
E-Mail: [olgaabramenko@yandex.ru](mailto:olgaabramenko@yandex.ru)

Tel: +7 812 317 89 30; mob.+7-921-918 01 63  
Fax: +7-812-575 90 50

3

### Association of School with Uyghur Language

Sadvakasov str. 27; Almaty, mkr. Dostyk; Kazakhstan

**Mr. Shavkat UMAROV**  
Head in Chief  
E-Mail: [shavket61@mail.ru](mailto:shavket61@mail.ru)

Tel: +7-701-717 71 49

4

### Associazione EUROMED GIOVANI ONLUS

via F. S. Sprovieri; 53 00152 Rome; Italy

**Mr. Mauro FALCIONI**  
Vice President  
E-Mail: [euromedgiovani@gmail.com](mailto:euromedgiovani@gmail.com)

Tel: +39-06-588 07 47  
Fax: +39-06-972 59 448

5

### Center for Social Integration Policy

7 microdistrict, h.40, a.38; 720028 Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

**Mrs. Marina GLUSHKOVA**  
Program Director  
E-Mail: [mglushkova@gmail.com](mailto:mglushkova@gmail.com)

Tel: +996-543-17 27 05

6

### Center of Developing of Education

A. Temur Str.; SOK, Sayram region, Sayram village; Kazakhstan

**Mr. Bakhadir NURALIYEV**  
Director  
E-Mail: [nurbahadir@mail.ru](mailto:nurbahadir@mail.ru)

Tel: +7-7253-14 12 54  
Fax: +7-7253-14 11 48

7

### Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford

Richmond Road; Bradford, UK BD7 1DP; United Kingdom  
Website: <http://www.bradford.ac.uk>

**Dr. David G. LEWIS**  
Senior Research Fellow  
E-Mail: [d.lewis1@bradford.ac.uk](mailto:d.lewis1@bradford.ac.uk)

Tel: +44-1274-23 51 61

8

### Educational Center of Glafki; Xanthi Prefecture

Glafki-Xanthi 67300; Greece

**Mr. Orchan AZIZ**  
Teacher  
E-Mail: [orchan.aziz@gmail.com](mailto:orchan.aziz@gmail.com)

Tel: +30-25-44 02 31 66  
Fax: +30-25-44 02 31 66

**Ms. Belkis MECHMETALI**  
Teacher  
E-Mail: [mbelkis@eled.auth.gr](mailto:mbelkis@eled.auth.gr)

Tel: +30-25-44 02 31 66  
Fax: +30-25-44 02 31 66

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### Equal Opportunity Professional Services

P.O.Box 57032; Atlanta, GA 303043; U.S.A

**Ms. Shirley LEE**  
Equal Opportunity Consultant  
E-Mail: [eeops@aol.com](mailto:eeops@aol.com)

Tel: +1-404-668 24 95

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**European Center for Minority Issues Kosovo**Str Rexhep Luci, 16/3; 1000 Pristina  
Website: <http://www.ecmikosovo.org>

Tel: +377-44-12 55 35

**Mr. Adrian ZEQIRI**

Executive Director

E-Mail: [zeqiri@ecmikosovo.org](mailto:zeqiri@ecmikosovo.org)

11

**European Roma Rights Center**Naphegy ter 8; 1016 Budapest; Hungary  
Website: <http://www.errc.org>

Tel: +36-30-303 59 63

Fax: +36-1-413 22 01

**Mrs. Isabela MIHALACHE**

Deputy Director

E-Mail: [isabela.mihalache@errc.org](mailto:isabela.mihalache@errc.org)**Mr. Stanislav DANIEL**

Research Officer

E-Mail: [stanko.daniel@errc.org](mailto:stanko.daniel@errc.org)

Tel: +36-30-500 21 09

12

**Federation of Assyrian Organizations of Armenia "Khayadta"**

48 Gharibjanyan Str.; 0050 Yerevan; Armenia

Tel: +374-10-44 05 38, +374-91-43 29 61

**Mrs. Irina GASPARYAN**

President

E-Mail: [irinasg@yahoo.com](mailto:irinasg@yahoo.com)

13

**Integration & Development Center for Information and Research**13/1 Khatsko Str.; 95006 Simferopol; Ukraine  
Website: <http://www.integration.org.ua>

Tel: +380-50-563 05 61

Fax: +380-65-250 58 12

**Mr. Oleg SMIRNOV**

Head of the Board

E-Mail: [osmirmov@inbox.ru](mailto:osmirmov@inbox.ru)

14

**League of Human Rights**Buresova 6; 602 00 Brno; Czech Republic  
Website: <http://www.llp.cz>

Tel: +420-77-762 12 27

**Ms. Iva PIKALOVA**

Lawyer for the Field of Education

E-Mail: [ipikalova@llp.cz](mailto:ipikalova@llp.cz)

15

**Movimiento por la Paz el Desarme y la Libertad (MPDL)**

c/Martos 15; Madrid; Spain

Tel: +43-6998-157 23 42

**Mr. Voces GARCIA**

Economist

E-Mail: [voeces25@hotmail.com](mailto:voeces25@hotmail.com)

16

**Nansen Dialogue Centre Skopje**Naroden front 31/10; Skopje; the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia  
Website: <http://www.ndc.net.mk>

Tel: +389-2-329 69 06

Fax: +389-2-329 69 06 ext.108

**Mr. Sasho STOJKOVSKI**

Executive Director

E-Mail: [sasho@ndc.net.mk](mailto:sasho@ndc.net.mk)

17

**National Roma Centrum**

street "Done Bozinov" 11/5; 1300 Kumanovo; the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Tel: +389-31-42 75 58

Fax: +389-31-42 15 58

**Mr. Irfan MARTEZ**

Education Mediator

E-Mail: [martez@nationalromacentrum.org](mailto:martez@nationalromacentrum.org)

18

**Open Society Institute**400 West 59th Street; New York, NY 10019; U.S.A.  
Website: <http://www.soros.org>

Tel: +48-605- 25 12 99

**Dr. Vladimir SHKOLNIKOV**

Consultant

E-Mail: [vdshkolnikov@gmail.com](mailto:vdshkolnikov@gmail.com)

19

**Uzbek Culture Centre in YUK KAZ**

Shymkent; Kazakhstan

Tel: +7-701-497 61 54

Fax: +7-725-253 93 17

**Mr. Ikram KHASHIMZHANOV**

Chairman of Uzbek Culture Centre in YUK KAZ

E-Mail: [ikram\\_2209@mail.ru](mailto:ikram_2209@mail.ru)

**Mr. Sampachentin APTOURACHMAN**

Tel: +44-776-620 31 54

Member

E-Mail: [asebahattin@hotmail.com](mailto:asebahattin@hotmail.com)**OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights**

Al. Ujazdowskie 19; 00-557 Warsaw; Poland

Tel: +48-22-520 06 00

Fax: +48-22-520 06 05

Website: <http://www.osce.org/odihr>**Mr. WAKE Douglas**

First Deputy Director

**Mr. MIRGA Andrzej**

Senior Adviser on Roma and Sinti Issues

**Keynote speakers, introducers and moderators****Mr. Alan****Mr. Claude****Ms. Liliana****Ms. Jana****Mr. Sebastian****Mr. Marcin****Mr. Piotr****Ms. Ilze****PHILIPS****KIEFFER****NICOLAESCU-ONOFREI****BACEVIC****DWORACK****CZAPLINSKI****DUTKIEWICZ****BRANDS KEHRIS**

Keynote Speaker at the Opening Session

Introducer of Session I

Moderator of Session I

Introducer of Session II

Introducer of Session II

Moderator of Session II

Introducer of Session III

Moderator of Session III