

The Dynamic **CHANGE** Update

1 July - 31 October 2025

Good day to all supporters of gender equality and the CHANGE project!

We proudly bring you three highlights for the period from 1 July till 31 October 2025:

1. **Strengthening Gender-Responsive Security Oversight in Poland, Warsaw**
2. **Side event on the margins of Warsaw Human Dimension Conference: "Human rights infrastructure as a foundational element in countering backsliding on gender equality"**
3. **CHANGE Transnational Network Meeting**

1

Strengthening Gender-Responsive Security Oversight

Poland, Warsaw, 1-2 July 2025

ODIHR delivered a dynamic two-day training in Poland on mainstreaming gender in the work of internal and external security sector oversight bodies, as part of the CHANGE project. The training strengthened oversight bodies' capacities to integrate a gender perspective into monitoring, reporting, and advocacy—advancing more human rights-compliant and gender-responsive security delivery.

In her keynote, Katarzyna Kotula, Secretary of State, highlighted the momentum created by Poland's forthcoming National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and the opportunities it offers to advance gender equality across the security sector. The training also facilitated peer exchange and collaboration, leading to the identification of priority actions that will help inform the new WPS National Action Plan.

"It was an inspiration for me and I will take this work and present it to my colleagues. Thank you very much!"

Marta Krasuska, Chief Specialist for the Protection of Human Rights, Equal Treatment and Professional Ethics in the Police



Participants and Panellists from L to R: Mjr Nina Kaczmarek; Ministry of Defence; Mjr Piotr Korzunowicz; Ministry of Defence; Barbara Pauli; NPM, Ombudsman Office; Co. SG Piotr Sezonienko, Border Guards Headquarters, Dr Monika Wysocka, Naval Academy; Sanja Nikolin, CHANGE Project Officer; Johannes Heiler; Senior Human Rights Adviser; Katarzyna Kotula; Secretary of State



Participants of “Mainstreaming gender into the security sector oversight in Poland” training

2 Side event on the margins of Warsaw Human Dimension Conference: “Human rights infrastructure as a foundational element in countering backsliding on gender equality”, Poland, Warsaw, 10 October 2025



Panellists of the CHANGE project's side event from L to R: Mariam Gvartadze, Human Rights Lawyer, Georgia; Višnja Bacanović, Regional Gender and Good Governance Advisor, UN Women Europe and Central Asia; Aleksandar Sekulic, Human Rights Adviser, ODIHR, Tea Jaliashvili, First Deputy Director, ODIHR, Sanja Nikolin, CHANGE Project officer, ODIHR Igor Jadrovski; Member of the Commission for prevention and protection against discrimination; North Macedonia; Claudia Zygmunt, International Human Rights Lawyer, Poland

This event raised participants' awareness on ways in which systems, institutions, and legal frameworks that support and protect human rights can be used to counter backsliding on gender equality. Panellists highlighted the importance of transnational partnerships and solidarity as necessary elements of effective, new and innovative responses to backsliding on gender equality.

The side event conclusions are presented below:

1. Backsliding on gender equality threatens peace and democracy.

Regression in gender equality is closely linked to democratic backsliding and directly undermines the core commitments of the OSCE and ODIHR.

2. Civil society is leading the response despite growing challenges.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Human Rights Defenders remain at the forefront of efforts to prevent and address regress in gender equality. However, they are increasingly operating in a shrinking and more hostile civic space. A strong example of collective action is the CHANGE Transnational Network, which brings partners together to prevent, address, and reverse backsliding on gender equality.

3. Current responses are not keeping pace with the challenges.

There is a clear mismatch between the tools used to undermine gender equality and those used to counter such efforts. Stronger and more coordinated responses are needed.

4. Institutions require stronger support.

Both state and independent institutions need greater support and capacity to effectively prevent, address, and reverse backsliding on gender equality.

5. Human rights frameworks remain strong but are under pressure.

In many OSCE participating States, the human rights infrastructure remains robust. However, in others it is increasingly under threat.

6. Freedom of religion or belief and gender equality are mutually reinforcing.

Although often portrayed as conflicting, freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) and gender equality can and should reinforce one another. A strong human rights system must ensure that both rights are protected and upheld together.

7. International commitments remain essential tools.

OSCE commitments and other international frameworks on gender equality remain crucial for addressing contemporary challenges. To effectively counter backsliding, their implementation should also incorporate a stronger transnational dimension.

3

CHANGE Transnational Network Meeting, Poland, Warsaw, 7-8 October 2025



The CHANGE Transnational Network members generated recommendations regarding institutional responses to backsliding on gender equality, and they collaboratively reviewed a framework to monitor progress and regress on gender equality in the OSCE region.

They exchanged updates in respective areas of work to strengthen shared learning and understanding of the implications on progress/regress on gender equality.

GET IN TOUCH

Sanja Nikolin, CHANGE Project Officer,

sanja.nikolin@odihhr.pl

Justyna Zalewska, CHANGE Administrative Assistant,

justyna.zalewska@odihhr.pl