



## **Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting II (2026)**

Vienna Austria, 11 - 12 May 2026

### **SCHEDULE AND OVERVIEW OF SIDE EVENTS**

*as submitted by the organizers*

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

*The side events below have been exclusively organized and scheduled exclusively at the request of participants of the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting. The below descriptions have been provided by the organizers. They have been lightly edited by ODIHR for language but not for content. Responsibility for the content remains with the organizers. Neither the text below nor the events themselves necessarily reflect the views of the OSCE.*

### **Monday, 11 May**

Time: **17:15-18:15**  
Venue: **532**  
Title: **Disruptions, Civic Space and Democratic Resilience**  
Convenor: IFIMES - International Institute for Middle-East and Balkan Studies  
Working language: English

Since the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, OSCE participating States have reaffirmed that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms—including freedom of expression and media freedom—constitutes a cornerstone of comprehensive security. These commitments were further consolidated in Copenhagen (1990) and Moscow (1991), highlighting the essential role of independent media in sustaining democratic governance.

At the same time, the misuse of emerging technologies—particularly AI-driven systems, deepfakes, and coordinated disinformation campaigns—poses a paradigm-shifting challenge to democratic resilience, media integrity, and public trust. These developments raise urgent questions regarding compliance with international legal frameworks and the protection of civic space.

This panel will examine the dual role of AI and digital technologies as both a risk multiplier and a potential mitigation tool in relation to conflict prevention, human rights protection, and media freedom. It will explore practical responses to disinformation, strengthen resilience strategies, and assess regulatory and ethical approaches grounded in international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Overall, the discussion will serve as a tour-de-table for OSCE participating States, civil society, media professionals, international organizations, and policy experts. It will focus on actionable strategies to reinforce information integrity, restore trust in media ecosystems, enhance conflict prevention and reconciliation mechanisms, and promote digital and media literacy in the age of “deep technology”.

**Short pre-recorded messages** (3-4 minutes, requested)

OSCE and Human Rights, Genesis: Lamberto Zannier, OSCE Sec-Gen (2011-17)

**Panelists:**

**Keynote:**

OSCE Members States in Digital Age: Vladimir I. Norov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan (2006-10, 2022)

“Technology and Governance”, Jovan Kurbalija, Diplo Founder

“Digital Age and the Integrity in Civic Space”, Dr. Harvey Dzodin, media commentator and author, former vice president of ABC-TV and political appointee in Carter administration

“Technology and Social Responsibility”, Dr. Kat Zarychta, Tech-healthcare leader and business development expert

“Media, AI, Human Rights”, Dr. Philippe Reinisch, GAFG EO (Former Director, Cyber security programs, Kuratorium Sicheres, Austria)

**Moderator:**

Anis H. Bajrektarevic, prof. Intl. Law and Global Pol. Studies, Swiss

Time: **17:15-18:15**

Venue: **531**

Title: **Russia: Threats to civic space at home and abroad**

Convenor: Human Rights House Foundation

Working language: English

Shrinking or closing civic space is not a new phenomenon for the OSCE region. Civil society across the region has been raising the alarm about attacks on democracy, rule of law, and human rights for decades. Over the two years, the government of the Russian Federation has further consolidated its system of repression, systematically eliminating space for independent civil society, free expression, and dissent. Increasingly, repression includes the use of digital technologies to restrict the exercise of freedoms of assembly, association, and expression, among others and to target the work of civic actors, including human rights defenders. Abroad, Russian authorities are using digital technology to target dissenting and opposition voices and spread disinformation.

The panel will focus on the following key questions:

- How are digital technologies employed by Russian authorities to target human rights defenders and organisations and what is the implication for human rights work inside and outside of the Russian Federation?

- What impact is the use of digital technologies by Russian authorities having on civic space outside of the Russian Federation?
- What steps can participating States take to support the work of human rights defenders and organisations from Russia?

**Speakers:**

Dina Khaskelberg, Mass Media Defence Center

Philip Obaji, Jr, journalist

Stanislav Seleznev, Legal Consultant, Cyber Security Officer and Cyber Threats Researcher

Denis Shedov, OVD Info

**Moderator:**

Dave Elseroad, Human Rights House Foundation

Time: **17:15-18:15**

Venue: **Bibliotheksaal**

Title: **Surveillance of peaceful assemblies in the OSCE region: human rights implications and strategies for independent monitoring**

Convenor: OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Working language: English

The ODIHR has a well-established mandate to assist OSCE participating States in implementing their human dimension commitments, including the protection of the right to freedom of peaceful assembly. As part of this mandate, ODIHR monitors public assemblies, assesses national laws and practices against international human rights standards, and provides guidance aimed at ensuring that assemblies can take place freely, safely, and without undue interference. Building on this mandate, the side event will examine the growing use of surveillance technologies in the context of public assemblies and their implications for human rights. Recent technological developments, including the deployment of facial recognition, biometric identification, and other forms of digital surveillance, present new and complex challenges. While such tools may be justified on grounds such as public safety, their use raises concerns regarding legality, necessity, proportionality, and oversight, as well as the potential chilling effect on participation in assemblies. In this context, ODIHR is currently preparing a research paper examining the use of surveillance during public assemblies, as well as strategies for its independent monitoring. The study will analyse key issues identified across the OSCE region, with a particular focus on accountability. It will explore how effective oversight mechanisms, safeguards, and remedies can be established and maintained. It will also develop concrete, practical recommendations for participating States to align surveillance practices with OSCE human dimension commitments and international human rights standards. The side event will provide a platform to discuss the findings from the forthcoming paper, exchange experiences, and contribute to shaping policies that safeguard both security and fundamental freedoms.

**Opening remarks:**

Ms. Maria Telalian, ODIHR Director

**Speakers:**

Mr. Pete Fussey, Professor and Head of Department of Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology at University of Southampton

Ms. Natallia Satsunkevich, Human Rights Defender at Viasna Human Rights Centre

Mr. Rafael Ishkhanyan, Human Rights Specialist at the Armenian Center for Political Rights

Mr. Bernat Aragón Navarro, Project Officer on Strengthening HR Defenders & Prevention of Violent Conflicts, Novact, Spain

**Moderator:**

Ms. Anete Erdmane, ODIHR's Human Rights Adviser and Monitoring and Response Co-ordinator

**Tuesday, 12 May**

Time: **09:00-10:00**

Venue: **532**

Title: **From Vulnerability to Resilience: How to Protect Civic Space in the Digital Age and Preserve Community Voices**

Convenor: Human Rights Movement Bir Duino-Kyrgyzstan

Working language: English, Russian

The side event of Bir Duino Kyrgyzstan aims to comprehensively understand the transformation of civic space in the context of digitalization, where technology simultaneously acts as a tool for expanding participation and as a mechanism for exerting pressure, restricting rights, and exacerbating inequality. The discussion will explore how digital environments are reshaping civil society, human rights protection, labor rights, and the safety of human rights defenders across different regions, with particular attention to emerging risks such as surveillance, online harassment, hate speech, xenophobia, disinformation, and the increasing use of “security” narratives to justify restrictions on freedom of association and expression. Under the overarching theme “From Vulnerability to Resilience: How to Protect Civil Society in the Digital Age and Ensure Community Voices Are Heard,” the event will bring together leading international and regional experts to present evidence-based analysis, comparative perspectives, and practical recommendations. The opening remarks will be delivered by Ms. Anu Juvonen, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Civil Society, followed by an introduction of the session objectives by the moderator from OSCE ODIHR, Andrew Gardner, who will guide the discussion. Key interventions will include Murat Karypov, Executive Director of Bir Duino Kyrgyzstan, who will address the rise of pressure, hate speech, xenophobia, and coordinated digital attacks against human rights defenders in online spaces, highlighting regional trends and implications for civic engagement.

Dilrabo Samadova (Tajikistan) and Laiba Shukat (Pakistan) will share country perspectives on shrinking civic space, digital repression, and the lived experiences of activists under increasing online and offline pressure. Anar Ibraeva from Kadyr Kasiet (Kazakhstan) will present the Third Human Rights Defenders Protection Index, offering comparative data on risks, resilience factors, and protection mechanisms across the region. IT expert Stanislav Seleznev will focus on digital security, examining technical vulnerabilities, surveillance technologies, and strategies for protecting activists in high-risk environments. Ivan Milykh from the Labour Rights Monitoring Mission together with Maria Zharilovskaya of the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions will discuss workers’ and trade union rights in the context of digital and informational control.

Time: **09:00-10:00**  
Venue: **531**  
Title: **Digital Threats to Civil Society in Ukraine Amid War and Transformation**  
Convenor: Human Rights Centre ZMINA  
Working language: English, Ukrainian

Ukrainian civil society operates under exceptionally challenging conditions shaped by the ongoing Russian aggression. Civil society organizations and activists in Ukraine play a vital role in strengthening democratic institutions, advancing European integration, and upholding the rule of law and human rights. At the same time, they have suffered significant losses: many have been killed or injured, offices have been destroyed, and numerous activists have been internally displaced or forced to relocate abroad.

In addition to physical threats, Ukrainian civil society is systematically targeted by disinformation and discreditation campaigns. In the context of rapid digitalization, a growing range of digital risks has emerged: online harassment and coordinated abuse campaigns, the use of artificial intelligence to generate deepfakes, as well as digital stalking and unauthorized surveillance. Certain groups are especially vulnerable, including anti-corruption activists, environmental defenders, women journalists who often face gender-based harassment, and LGBTIQ+ activists.

These challenges require a comprehensive response involving national authorities, international partners, and civil society actors themselves. The event will provide a platform for the discussion and development of practical recommendations aimed at strengthening the protection of civic space in the digital age.

This side event will explore:

- Key challenges facing Ukrainian civil society in the context of war;
- The impact of digital threats and discreditation campaigns on activists' work;
- Personal stories of victims of digital harassment;
- Good practices for protecting civic space in the digital age;
- Recommendations for participating States and OSCE institutions.

**Speakers:**

Anastasiia Soloviova, Lawyer, Civil Society Protection Programme, Human Rights Centre ZMINA  
Kateryna Pityk, International Advocacy Officer, Anti-Corruption Center  
Olena Mudra, Investigative Journalist  
Anna Liudva, Legal Counsel, Digital Security Lab Ukraine

Time: **09:00-10:00**  
Venue: **Bibliotheksaal**  
Title: **Scrolling Stereotypes: Gender in the Age of Algorithms**  
Convenor: Permanent Mission of Ireland to the OSCE, Swiss OSCE Chairpersonship  
Working language: English

Ipsos' 2026 International Women's Day survey indicates a worrying shift in attitudes towards women and gender equality, with 52% of men and 36% of women of the over 23,000 surveyed across 29 countries holding the view that efforts towards promoting women's equality have gone 'so far that we now discriminate against men'. The figures are particularly stark among younger people with 57% of 'Gen Z' (those aged 14-30) men agreeing with the above statement and 31% of men in the same group believing that 'a woman should obey her husband'. The pressure to conform to patriarchal norms also contributes to poor mental health among men and boys, resulting in a markedly lower sense of optimism

about the future in young men than young women<sup>1</sup>. Such attitudes can in part be traced to the rise of the so-called ‘manosphere’ and the normalisation of misogynistic narratives online. This presents a new challenge to overcoming regressive attitudes to women’s role in society, particularly among the younger generation<sup>2</sup>.

The OSCE has been a consistent leader in challenging harmful gender stereotypes and participating States have, since 2018, formally recognised the risks of digital violence against women. Projects such as WIN<sup>3</sup> and CHANGE<sup>4</sup> have made strides in breaking down barriers to women’s full, equal and meaningful participation in public life, including in spheres traditionally dominated by men.

However, hard-won gains have come under threat in recent years as backlash against gender equality grows, particularly online, and among younger generations. This includes technology facilitated gender-based violence, which often targets women active in civic space with the goal of intimidating and silencing them. Such developments threaten the full implementation of participating States’ human dimension commitments, including to ensure equal rights and opportunities for all.

This side event will examine the gendered dimension of civic space in the digital age, how technology has impacted efforts towards gender equality, and outline recommendations for action for participating States and the OSCE.

### **Guiding Questions**

- How has digital technology impacted attitudes to gender equality?
- What are the possible long-term implications of digital technology for efforts towards achieving gender equality?
- How do these developments impact participating States’ implementation of their human dimension commitments?
- How can we as policy makers, businesses, civil society, and individuals mitigate threats to gender equality and civic space caused by digital technology?
- What role can the OSCE play?

**Opening Remarks:** Ambassador Raphael Nägeli, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the OSCE

**Moderator:** Ambassador Brian Flynn, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the OSCE

### **Panelists:**

Dr Darragh McCashin, Chair, Observatory on Cyberbullying, Cyberhate & Online Harassment, Dublin City University (online)

Ms. Julia-Silvana Hofstetter, Affiliate, Centre for Research for in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH), Cambridge University

Ms. Stefania Kafka, Member of the OSCE Pool of Young Experts (online)

**Closing Remarks:** Ambassador Eglantina Gjermeni, Permanent Representative of Albania to the OSCE

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<sup>1</sup> [Mind the Gaps: Global Attitudes Toward Gender Equality in 2026 | Ipsos.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [How to counter the manosphere’s toxic influence | UN Women – Headquarters](#)

<sup>3</sup> The WIN Project (Women and Men Innovating and Networking for Gender Equality) is the OSCE’s flagship gender equality project set up to implement the 2004 Gender Action Plan. [WIN for Women and Men](#)

<sup>4</sup> The CHANGE Project (Capitalizing on the Human Dimension Mandate to Advance Gender Equality) is coordinated by ODIHR and designed to address individual, collective, and institutional challenges to gender equality by equipping men and women with skills and abilities to challenge negative attitudes toward women’s leadership and empowerment and supporting civil society networks. [CHANGE Project | OSCE Projects](#)

Time: **13:15-14:15**  
Venue: **532**  
Title: **From Labels to Consequences: How disinformation and stigmatization lead to transnational repression**  
Convenor: ALLATRA International Public Movement  
Working language: English

In today's information environment, labeling is a powerful tool that can shape reality, influence rights, and test democratic resilience.

This side event explores how disinformation, labeling, and stigmatization function as powerful tools shaping public perception, undermining democratic principles, and, in some cases, enabling transnational repression. Moving from general patterns to concrete case studies, invited speakers will examine how targeted narratives—often dismissed as mere “gossip” or opinion—can evolve into systematic campaigns with tangible and harmful consequences.

Labeling individuals, groups, or entire communities as “threats”, “cults” or socially undesirable actors is rarely accidental. Such narratives are frequently intentional, strategic, and repeated across media and political discourse. When amplified, they can lead to social exclusion, loss of employment, deterioration of mental and physical health, and broader violations of fundamental rights—often without accountability for those who initiate or sustain these campaigns.

The discussion will address how similar mechanisms appear across different contexts, including political figures, religious minorities, and civil society actors. Particular attention will be paid to how labeling practices operate across different regions and political systems, and how their consequences vary depending on legal and institutional frameworks. The event will also consider how stigmatization can escalate beyond domestic contexts, contributing to international tensions and, in extreme cases, serving as a pretext for broader conflict.

The side event will also examine the policy dimension, including challenges related to accountability, proportionality, and the protection of open civic space while countering harmful content.

Particular attention will be given to identifying analytical indicators that help distinguish legitimate public discourse from patterns of disinformation and undue stigmatization. Participants will be introduced to practical tools for recognizing patterns of disinformation and stigmatizing narratives, especially in online spaces. By identifying early warning signs—such as repetitive labelling or coordinated messaging—societies can better respond to these challenges without undermining freedom of expression.

**Speakers:**

Vladimir Ivanov (Human Rights expert)

Mariia Anapreichyk (European law)

Taliy Shkurupiy (Certified in Open Source Intelligence (ZOOM))

**Moderator:** Karolína Hronová

Time: **13:15-14:15**  
Venue: **531**  
Title: **Serbia: Digital threats to civic space**  
Convenor: Belgrade Center for Human Rights  
Working language: English

The operating space for civil society organizations in Serbia is under severe threat, as human rights defenders and activists face escalating pressures ranging from smear campaigns to physical assaults.

Over the past three years, these threats have intensified within the digital sphere and through the strategic use of new technologies and digital tools for intimidation. The growing trend of spyware attacks is particularly alarming, especially as existing protection mechanisms have proven inadequate. This panel explores how digital tools are being weaponized to stifle activism and examines the urgent need for more effective defense strategies.

**Panelists:**

Jovana Spremo, YUCOM  
Ana Toskić Cvetinović, Partners Serbia  
Uroš Jovanović, Civic Initiative  
Dušan Pokuševski, Belgrade Centre for Human Rights

**Moderator:** Dave Elseroad, Human Rights House Foundation

Time: **13:15-14:15**  
Venue: **Bibliotheksaal**  
Title: **Navigating Digital Battlegrounds: Media Response to New Technologies and Disinformation**  
Convenor: Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media  
Working language: English

Hybrid threats—ranging from disinformation and cyberattacks to surveillance and online harassment—are increasingly targeting journalists and undermining media freedom across the OSCE region.

This is particularly evident in the context of the Russian Federation’s aggression against Ukraine, where the information environment, including the safety of journalists, has become a central dimension of the war, with direct consequences for media freedom and access to information. Journalists continue to report under conditions of heightened risk, including targeted disinformation campaigns, cyber intrusions, and physical and digital intimidation, where new technologies serve both as essential tools for reporting and verification and as instruments of manipulation and pressure.

This side event will examine how hybrid threats affect journalists in practice and explore responses that strengthen digital resilience while safeguarding freedom of expression.

The discussion will draw on the Ukrainian experience, and situate it within broader regional dynamics across the OSCE area, with a focus on actionable responses and policy-relevant lessons.

The discussion will focus on key policy considerations and emerging practices, including:

- Identifying, assessing, and responding to evolving digital and hybrid threats targeting journalists;
- Strengthening co-operation among media actors, public authorities, and civil society;
- Addressing unlawful surveillance, including the use of spyware and other forms of digital interference;
- Safeguarding editorial independence and reinforcing resilience in highly contested information environments;
- Enhancing institutional and newsroom-level preparedness to mitigate and respond to such threats.

**Opening Remarks** by Philippe Tremblay, Director of the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

**Panelists:**

- Yaroslava Do, Head of the Department for the Implementation of Projects on the Digitalization of Education Digital Innovations Development, Artificial Intelligence, Robotics and Robotization, and Semiconductor Technologies Directorate, Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine
- Yana Honcharenko, Chief Communication and Sustainability Officer, Starlight Media, Ukraine
- Snežana Bajčeta, Researcher, SHARE Foundation, Serbia
- Mamuka Andguladse, Chair of the Media Advocacy Coalition, Georgia

**Moderator:**

- Barbara Trionfi, Principal Adviser to the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media