



Warsaw Human Dimension Conference 2026

Warsaw Poland, 5 - 15 October 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, 5 October

Time: **17:30-18:30**
Venue: **Meeting Room 1 – Belweder**
Title: Domestic War Crimes Adjudication in Ukraine: A Driver of International Law and Justice
Convenor: OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
Working language: English, Ukrainian

Summary: As accountability for atrocity crimes increasingly shifts to national courts, international justice observers have posited that “the future of war crimes is domestic.” OSCE participating States’ efforts to fill voids left by international tribunals and mechanisms presents new and emerging legal issues before their courts. This is particularly true in Ukraine. Since 2022, Ukraine has registered over 250,000 potential cases of international crimes and issued more than 150 judgments. With the increased caseloads has come increased responsibility to uphold obligations under international law, as well as OSCE participating States’ commitments to hold individuals “personally accountable for war crimes and acts in violation of international humanitarian law” (Stockholm, 1992) and guarantee a fair trial through the provision of competent counsel (Ljubljana 2005). This side event will examine linkages between the domestic adjudication of war crimes and international law, including the principle of

complementarity; the importance of the appropriate qualification and documentation of violations; and the application of norms of international criminal law, humanitarian, and human rights law. It will reflect on increasing interest in Ukraine's national jurisprudence as a driver of enforcement and advancement of international humanitarian law and international criminal law. To this end, panelists will reflect on the types of international crime cases before Ukraine's domestic courts. The side event is convened by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and its Ukraine Project, titled "Supporting the Human Dimension of Security in Ukraine in Times of Crisis." Under its auspices, ODIHR has developed "The Benchbook on Practitioner's Guidance in the Adjudication of International Crimes Cases" in partnership with Ukraine's Supreme Court, which aims to support Ukrainian judges in the qualification of international crimes, the application of relevant sources of international law, as well as consideration of international norms and standards of fair trial at the domestic level.

Time: 17:30-18:30
Venue: Meeting Room 2 – Saski
Title: Mobilization Measures in the Russian Federation: A Security Threat for OSCE Member States
Convenor: Consuls of the Anti-War Committee (Consuls AWR CIC)
Working language: English

Summary: Russia's mobilization capacity constitutes both a direct and indirect security threat to Council of Europe member states. Forced conscription into the armed forces is driving new waves of emigration to countries in Europe, Central Asia, and the Caucasus, placing a strain on host states' capacity to receive and integrate refugees. In recent years, the Kremlin has expanded both the technical infrastructure and the legal framework necessary for full-scale mobilization — a capacity that could be deployed either to continue the war in Ukraine or, in a worse-case scenario, for aggression against the Baltic states or Poland. The event will examine the current state of Russia's mobilization apparatus, the migration dynamics it has generated, and the implications for security planning in Council of Europe states. Experts will discuss the legal and technical mechanisms enabling mobilization, migration patterns among those evading conscription, and recommendations for member states on managing both the humanitarian and military dimensions of this threat.

Time: 17:30-18:30
Venue: Meeting Room 3 – Krolewski
Title: The Human Security Impact of Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs) in Armed Conflict
Convenor: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF)
Working language: English

Summary: Private military and security companies (PMSCs) are increasingly present in situations of armed conflict. Their clients may be public governments or private entities. Sometimes they act independent of any client, pursuing their own interest. PMSCs are involved in a wide range of activities, typically including physical security and guarding, but increasingly reaching into the maritime and cyber domains. Contracting PMSCs to replace or support armed forces in combat roles is a further, controversial, practice. PMSC recruitment practices are another area of emerging concern. Many of these activities can significantly impact civilian populations. Particularly where state oversight and control are limited, the presence of PMSCs in situations of armed conflict can expose vulnerable populations to heightened risk of human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law. In connection with the first plenary session of the Warsaw Conference on Humanitarian Issues, DCAF

– Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance proposes a side event on the topic of “The Human Security Impact of Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs) in Armed Conflict”. This event will be held under the Montreux Document Forum which is co-Chaired by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Switzerland, with DCAF acting as its Secretariat. This side event will complement the first plenary session, increasing participants’ understanding of how PMSCs impact the human dimension of security in situations of armed conflict. Offering both legal and regulatory perspectives, the event will highlight States’ existing humanitarian legal obligations and OSCE commitments, together with national and international good practices that can help States fulfil them. This will include a presentation of the Montreux Document initiative, to which the OSCE and many of its participating States are participants. More broadly, the event aims to foster greater awareness and information exchange within the OSCE on the human dimension issue of PMSCs in situations in armed conflict.

Provisional list of speakers:

William Bennett, Senior Programme Manager, Business and Security, at DCAF (in person)

Romario Ferraro, Regional Legal Advisor, ICRC Regional Delegation Warsaw (in person)

Esther Kilchherr, Attorney at law, Export Controls and Private Security Services Section, Swiss Foreign Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) (in person)

Time: **17:30-18:30**

Venue: **Meeting Room 4 – Opera**

Title: Missing Persons from the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia – Humanitarian Challenge

Convenor: Commission on Missing Persons

Working language: English, Serbian

Summary: The right to know: Joint responsibility for resolving the issue of missing persons

Missing persons represent one of the most serious and enduring humanitarian consequences of armed conflicts. More than three decades have passed since the conflicts on the territory of the former Yugoslavia ended, but thousands of families of missing persons are still waiting for answers about the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones. Their right to know the truth about their missing family members is a matter of human dignity, human rights and international humanitarian law. The side event will present experiences, results and challenges that the Commission faces throughout the process of searching for, exhuming and identifying missing persons, as well as challenges in cooperation with the families of missing persons, their associations and relevant international and regional actors. Special focus of the discussion will be placed on the practical implementation of international human rights standards and international humanitarian law; the importance of modern technology and forensic methods in locating burial sites and identifying mortal remains; and the importance of systematic collection, preservation and exchange of information. Participants will discuss the remaining humanitarian challenges in the region and the importance of continued international support and engagement. Particular focus will be placed on the importance of more active participation by OSCE participating States that were present in the field during the armed conflicts, including through access to archives, documents and other relevant information held by institutions and archives outside the region. The exchange of this information can significantly contribute to uncovering new facts, locations and traces that can lead to resolving the remaining cases of missing persons. In this sense, resolving the issue of missing persons requires sustained political commitment, institutional cooperation and the responsibility of all relevant actors. The side event will provide an opportunity to exchange experiences and best practices, as well as to engage in a concrete dialogue on how OSCE participating States and international organizations can contribute to resolving the remaining cases of missing persons and ensuring the right of their families to know the truth.

Speakers:

Mr. Veljko Odalović, President of the Commission on Missing Persons;
Ms. Ljiljana Krstić, Head of Department of Missing Persons;
Ms. Mirjana Miodrag Božin, President of the Coordination of Serbian Associations of Families of Missing, Murdered and Killed Persons from the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia
Ms. Olgica Božanić, Secretary of the Association of Families of Kidnapped and Missing Persons in Kosovo and Metohija

Time: **17:30-18:30**
Venue: **Meeting Room 5 – Plenary**
Title: Moscow Mechanism report on Russia's militarization and indoctrination of Ukrainian children
Convenor: Permanent Mission of the Republic of Albania to the International Organizations in Vienna; Permanent Mission of Andorra to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of Austria to the OSCE; Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of Belgium to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the International Organizations in Vienna; Permanent Mission of the Republic of Bulgaria to the OSCE; Delegation of Canada to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of the Republic of Croatia to the OSCE, UN and International Organizations in Vienna; Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cyprus to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the OSCE; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark; Permanent Mission of the Republic of Estonia to the OSCE; Permanent Delegation of Finland to the OSCE; Permanent Representation of France to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of Georgia to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of Germany to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of Greece to the OSCE; Permanent Representation of Hungary to the OSCE, the UN and other International Organizations in Vienna; Permanent Mission of Iceland to the OSCE; Italian Delegation to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of the Republic of Latvia to OSCE; Permanent Mission of Liechtenstein to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of the Republic of Lithuania to the International Organizations in Vienna; Permanent Representation of Luxembourg to the OSCE; Delegation of Malta to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of the Republic of Moldova to the International Organizations in Vienna; Permanent Mission of the Principality of Monaco; Permanent Mission of Montenegro to UN, OSCE and IOs in Vienna; Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of the Republic of North Macedonia to the OSCE, UN and other International Organizations based in Vienna; Permanent Delegation of Norway to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of the Republic of Poland to the OSCE in Vienna; Permanent Representation of Portugal to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of Romania to the International Organizations; Permanent Mission of the Republic of San Marino to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of Slovakia to the OSCE; Permanent Representation of Slovenia to the UN, OSCE and other International Organizations in Vienna; Permanent Representation of Spain to the OSCE; Permanent Delegation of Sweden to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna; United Kingdom Delegation to the OSCE
Working language: English, Russian, Ukrainian

Summary: On 9 July 2026, the OSCE Permanent Council discussed the findings and recommendations of the Moscow Mechanism report on violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law related to Russia's militarization and indoctrination of Ukrainian children. Against

the backdrop of Russia's full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine, and in light of credible and mounting evidence that Ukrainian children in the temporarily occupied territories, as well as those forcibly transferred or unlawfully deported to Russia, are subjected to systematic indoctrination, militarization, coercion and forced assimilation, 41 participating States* invoked the Moscow Mechanism on 14 May 2026. The Mission of Experts concluded that Russia has developed a coordinated state system that intertwines education, youth policy, citizenship legislation and military-patriotic programmes to erase Ukrainian identity, suppress dissent and prepare Ukrainian children for service to the occupying power. The report further concludes that these practices, together with the forcible transfer and deportation of children, may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Following a presentation of the report's key findings and recommendations, this side event will provide an opportunity for participating States, international organizations and civil society to discuss concrete steps to facilitate the return of Ukrainian children, restore their identity, strengthen accountability and ensure practical implementation of the Mission's recommendations.

Co-Organisers: Ukraine, EU and all EU Member States, Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, San Marino, and the United Kingdom.

Moderator: Fiona Knab-Lunny, Permanent representative of the EU to the OSCE

Introductory remarks: Yurii Vitrenko, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the OSCE, Ambassador

Keynote speakers: Kateryna Rashevskya, Legal Expert – Lead on International Justice and Legal Analysis at Regional Center for Human Rights (RCHR), co-head of the Expert Council under the Representative of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights on Children's Rights

Tuesday, 6 October

Time: **09:00-10:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 2 – Saski**
Title: Georgia: Alleged usage of chemical weapons against protesters
Convenor: Human Rights House Foundation
Working language: English

Summary: In their statement invoking the Moscow Mechanism in January 2026, 24 participating States pointed to the steps taken by the Georgian Dream government since 2024 to silence dissenting voices, restrict space for civil society and independent media to operate, constraints on freedom of assembly and association, as well as freedom of expression, allegations of mistreatment, including torture of persons deprived of liberty, and harassment and intimidation of human rights defenders, including journalists, among other serious human rights violations. Among the startling allegations of human rights violations is the alleged use of toxic chemical agents by the Georgian authorities against protesters in November 2024. The Moscow Mechanism Rapporteur cited numerous reports of poisoning, skin burns, coughing, gagging, and other long-term symptoms by victims. Her report recommended to refer the case to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to “clarify the allegations concerning the use of chemicals against protesters”. In the time since, independent Georgian civil society have conducted thorough medical and legal research, including a quantitative study of individuals experiencing long-lasting health consequences to assess the alleged use of chemical weapons during November-December 2024 protests. This side event will explore the findings from this study, broader attacks by the Georgian authorities on freedom of assembly, and make recommendations to participating States to address human rights violations in Georgia and ensure accountability.

Speakers:
Baia Pataraia, Sapari

Giorgi Kamkamidze, Department of Immunology and Infectious Diseases, University of Georgia
Tamar Oniani, Georgian Young Lawyers' Association
James Lin, International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims
Moderator: Dave Elseroad, Human Rights House Foundation

Time: **09:00-10:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 3 – Krolewski**
Title: Universal Jurisdiction in Poland and the Wider Region: Opportunities to Expand and Ensure Justice for Survivors of International Crimes
Convenor: Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights
Working language: English

Summary: Universal jurisdiction has long been an important tool for addressing international crimes, and recent years have brought renewed momentum for its use. With millions of displaced persons across the OSCE region, national authorities may encounter on their territory victims, witnesses, and, in some cases, perpetrators of the most serious violations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law. These States therefore can play an important role in ensuring that international crimes do not go unpunished. This is particularly relevant in Poland, which hosts one of the largest communities of Belarusians fleeing political repression, as well as Ukrainian refugees fleeing Russia's war. However, gaps and uncertainties in national legislation and practice still need to be addressed to enable effective investigations and prosecutions. The side event will bring together experts and practitioners to discuss how Poland and other OSCE participating States can strengthen their national frameworks, clarify the role of universal jurisdiction, and learn from one another's experience. It will draw on ongoing cases to identify relevant developments, good practices and lessons that could inform Poland's future practice. When utilized to its fullest extent, universal jurisdiction can be a vital tool for effective redress and justice for survivors. It can also help close accountability gaps, particularly at a time when international mechanisms, including the International Criminal Court, face growing political and practical challenges. Strengthening the use of universal jurisdiction is therefore an important step towards ensuring that the current momentum for accountability is matched by the legal frameworks, capacity and political will needed to make it work in practice.

Speakers:
Alexandra Leibova, Program Officer at the International Federation for Human Rights
Andrea Huber, Head of the International Accountability Platform for Belarus
Daniil Ukhorskiy, Ukraine Programme Manager at Legal Action Worldwide
Zera Kozlyieva, Legal Director at Truth Hounds
Moderator: Ana Farifonova, Coordinator of the International Justice Programme at the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights

Time: **09:00-10:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 4 – Opera**
Title: From Tracing to Release and Return of Ukrainian POWs and Detained Civilians: The Role of Third Countries
Convenor: Media Initiative for Human Rights
Working language: English, Ukrainian

Summary: Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine has resulted in the unlawful deprivation of liberty of thousands of Ukrainian prisoners of war and civilians, the disappearance of Ukrainian citizens, and the

unlawful deportation and forcible transfer of Ukrainian children and adults. For many families, the whereabouts, legal status and conditions of their loved ones remain unknown. Despite existing international mechanisms, significant gaps persist. International organisations often lack regular and unrestricted access to places of detention. Information about detainees and missing persons remains incomplete, while Russia continues to restrict independent monitoring and obstruct effective communication concerning their status and whereabouts. As a result, families are left without reliable information, and thousands of Ukrainians remain at risk of prolonged detention, torture, ill-treatment and enforced disappearance. The international community has developed a number of mechanisms to address these challenges. However, their effectiveness remains limited by the lack of access, cooperation and sustained political engagement. The side event will explore how the existing diplomatic, humanitarian and institutional capacities of third countries can be better utilised and coordinated to help locate, protect, release and repatriate Ukrainian civilian detainees and POWs. The discussion will go beyond individual cases to examine whether third countries can play a more systematic role in addressing the widespread and ongoing practices of unlawful detention, enforced disappearance, deportation, and forced transfer resulting from Russia's war against Ukraine.

Event speakers:

Anna Rassamakhina, international humanitarian law specialist, leads the War and Justice Department at the Media Initiative for Human Rights

Iryna Abramova, Head of the Public Council under the Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War

Oleksandr Borysenko, Acting Director of the Department for International Law and International Legal Counteraction to Aggression, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine (TBC)

Tetiana Sytnyk, witness, sister of a detained civilian

Moderator: Christopher D. Russell, Rule of Law Officer at the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

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

Venue: **Meeting Room 5 – Plenary**

Title: Transnational Repression in the OSCE Region

Convenor: Permanent Mission of the Republic of Estonia to the OSCE; Permanent Delegation of Finland to the OSCE; Permanent Delegation of Sweden to the OSCE; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark; Permanent Mission of Iceland to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of the Republic of Lithuania to the International Organizations in Vienna; Permanent Mission of the Republic of Latvia to OSCE

Working language: English

Summary: Freedom of expression and media freedom are central to the OSCE's human dimension commitments and to comprehensive security, democratic governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights. OSCE participating States have recognized the essential role of free, independent and pluralistic media, as well as the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas regardless of frontiers. The mandate of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media reflects the need for early warning, engagement and coordinated responses to serious violations of media freedom. Across the OSCE region, journalists and media workers are facing increasingly complex threats, both online and offline. In several participating States, independent media space has continued to shrink, forcing journalists, editors and media workers into exile in order to continue their work and protect their safety. However, exile does not always provide security. Transnational repression, acts conducted or directed by a State, or its proxies, to deter, silence or punish criticism, dissent, investigative reporting or human rights advocacy outside its territory, has become a growing threat to media freedom. Journalists in exile face intimidation, surveillance, online harassment, threats against family members, politically motivated

criminal charges, misuse of extradition or counter-terrorism mechanisms, convictions in absentia, abductions and, in extreme cases, killings. Digital technologies have significantly expanded the reach and sophistication of transnational repression. Online harassment campaigns online gender-based violence, death threats, doxing, smear campaigns, disinformation and unlawful surveillance are used by home States to monitor, intimidate and silence journalists across jurisdictions. These practices undermine journalists' ability to report from exile, weaken access to independent information and challenge OSCE commitments on freedom of expression, media freedom, the rule of law and human rights. Against this backdrop, the NB8 and the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media will convene a side event during the 2026 Warsaw Human Dimension Conference to discuss transnational repression against journalists in exile, highlight concrete experiences and identify practical responses within the OSCE framework.

Time: **14:00-15:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 1 – Belweder**
Title: The Role of Police in Preventing Torture and Death Penalty: investigative safeguards, coerced confessions, reliability of evidence and the irreversible consequences of miscarriages of justice
Convenor: OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
Working language: English

Summary: The discussion will address safeguards during arrest, police custody and interviewing; professional training and accountability of investigators; reliability of evidence; and practical approaches to implementing non-coercive investigative interviewing. The event will also consider the particular importance of these safeguards in cases involving the death penalty, where coerced confessions, unreliable evidence and miscarriages of justice may have irreversible consequences. Bringing together experienced law enforcement practitioners and international human rights experts, the event will focus on practical approaches that can strengthen both the effectiveness of criminal investigations and the protection of fundamental rights.

Speakers:
Dr Susan Kerr Head of the Human Rights Department,
Elina Steinerte (Chair of the Board CDJI, member of SPT)
Ales Bialiatski. (via video), Founder and President of the Ales Bialiatski Foundation, President of HRC Viasna
Azamat Shambilov (President of CDJI organisation)
Gavin Seeley and Neil Rawlinson (UK MET Police)

Time: **14:00-15:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 2 – Saski**
Title: Education for and against human rights
Convenor: Amnesty International
Working language: English

Summary: Education, both formal and informal, plays a key role in determining the values of the next generation. At this side event, Amnesty International proposes to consider its positive and negative sides. On one hand, as a recent study shows, authorities in countries like Russia strive to “convert schools from temples of knowledge into factories of compliance”. They introduce political propaganda in educational

content, conduct covert surveillance of students and staff to identify potential dissenters and employ coercion measures to silence them. On the other hand, civic education is a powerful tool for promoting human rights and raising awareness about authoritarian practices. As an example of effective use of such tools, Amnesty International will present its new educational module, “Foreign Agents as an Authoritarian Practice”. Participants will also discuss the issue of proliferation of “foreign agent” legislation in the region and the ways in which the civil society and international community can challenge this process.

Moderator: Marie Struthers, Amnesty International, regional director, Eastern Europe and Central Asia
Oleg Kozlovsky, Amnesty International, Russia researcher with the report presentation: “Only Official Sources”: Indoctrination in the Russian Educational System” and other human rights defenders with New HRE Module on “Foreign Agents” Laws as an Authoritarian Practice”

Time: **14:00-15:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 3 – Krolewski**
Title: Climate and Environmental Justice: Human Dimension and Holistic Security
Convenor: Crude Accountability
Working language: English

Summary: Climate change is the existential problem of our time, and is closely linked to environmental justice, human rights, and holistic security, as well as to biodiversity conservation, healthy ecosystems, and thriving economies. Whether related to Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, glacial melt in Central Asia, fossil fuel impacts in the Caspian region, or efforts to circumvent sanctions on the energy industry, climate and environmental justice issues impact the entire OSCE region. As civic space shrinks throughout the region, addressing these concerns is fraught with security risks, but is more important than ever. Please join Crude Accountability for an examination of these issues in a discussion with regionally-based activists and international experts. We will discuss case studies from Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Ukraine, which highlight concerns related to conflict, fossil fuels, access to drinking water, and the impact of climate change on human well-being. Environmental defenders, legal experts, and academics will provide detailed information about the impact of climate decisions, and the risks to the region as a whole, and provide opportunities to discuss solutions

Time: **14:00-15:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 4 – Opera**
Title: Transnational Repression: Defending Human Rights, Sovereignty and Security Across the OSCE
Convenor: International Partnership for Human Rights
Working language: English

Summary: Transnational repression (TNR) - the use of coercive, abusive or unlawful practices by states to control, silence, punish or intimidate individuals beyond their borders - is an escalating threat across the OSCE region. It targets exiled activists, journalists, human rights defenders, political opponents, diaspora communities and their families, while also undermining the sovereignty, security and democratic institutions of host states. Over recent years, TNR has become more pervasive, geographically widespread and operationally sophisticated. A growing number of states are reportedly engaging in cross-border repression, while an increasing number of OSCE participating States are affected as host countries. Methods range from physical attacks, surveillance, intimidation and abuse of international legal or migration mechanisms to digital harassment, spyware, threats against relatives,

financial pressure, disinformation and the misuse of private-sector or public infrastructure. These practices often exploit gaps in institutional coordination and legal safeguards across borders. TNR lies at the intersection of all three OSCE dimensions. It constitutes a direct human rights challenge; threatens political independence, territorial integrity, the rule of law, and democratic resilience; and can involve the misuse of security, policing, border-management, migration, financial, and digital systems. Addressing it therefore requires a coordinated response that connects human rights protection with national-security and sovereignty considerations. This side event will convene TNR survivors, civil society representatives and experts to examine the evolving nature of TNR and its implications for OSCE participating States. It will identify concrete, practical measures the OSCE can advance to strengthen prevention, protection, accountability and cross-border cooperation. Discussion will focus on how the OSCE can support participating States in detecting and disrupting TNR, protecting those at risk, preventing the misuse of state and private infrastructure, and developing shared standards and response mechanisms across the region.

Time: **14:00-15:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 5 – Plenary**
Title: «Protecting Human Dignity in Armed Conflict: The Work of the IHL Progressive Development Platform»
Convenor: Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the OSCE
Working language: English

Summary: Objective Through this side event, Ukraine seeks to present to OSCE participating States, ODIHR and civil society the work developed by the International Humanitarian Law Progressive Development Platform (IHL PDP) over the first year of its operation, with a focus on the work of Working Group I (Human Dimension). The event aims to build cross-regional support for the Platform's concrete legal proposals ahead of the adoption of the White Paper on IHL Progressive Development, and to invite interested States, international organizations and experts to join its work.

Background: The full-scale armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine – the largest high-intensity international armed conflict in Europe since the Second World War – has exposed significant challenges at the intersection of IHL and the human dimension. The unlawful deportation, indoctrination and militarisation of Ukrainian children, practices of cultural erasure in the territories occupied by the Russian Federation, the systematic and large-scale ill-treatment of prisoners of war and unlawfully detained civilians, conflict-related sexual violence, as well as the enforced disappearance of civilians and the large-scale deprivation of property rights in the territories occupied by the Russian Federation, demand a coordinated international response and, in a number of areas, the progressive development of the applicable legal regimes and mechanisms. The OSCE human dimension – grounded in the Helsinki Final Act, the Copenhagen and Moscow Documents, and the mandate of ODIHR – makes the Human Dimension Conference a uniquely well-suited and singular forum for such a discussion, since the protection of persons in armed conflict lies directly at the meeting point of IHL and participating States' human dimension commitments. The Platform distinguishes between normative gaps, interpretive uncertainties, and deficits of compliance and enforcement, so that each proposal is targeted and none is intended to lower existing international legal protections.

Moderator: Yurii Vitrenko, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the IO in Vienna

Speakers:

Olena Khomenko - MP and speaker at IHL PDP

Nataliia Hendel - Leading Research Fellow, Institute of Information, Security and Law, National Academy of Legal Sciences of Ukraine

Kateryna Rashevskya - Regional Center for Human Rights, Legal Expert

Chiara Redaelli - University of Geneva, Research Fellow

Oleksandr Borysenko - MFA of Ukraine

Time: **15:30-16:30**
Venue: **Meeting Room 1 – Belweder**
Title: Countering Authoritarian Practices and Defending Human Rights in Hungary, Poland, and the United States
Convenor: Amnesty International
Working language: English

Summary: In Hungary and Poland, civil society has defended human rights and rule of law despite periods of intense pressure from authorities. In both countries, the work of countering authoritarian practices and building resilient institutions remains unfinished. Meanwhile, civic space and rule of law are under intense strain in the United States, with wide-ranging consequences for human rights safeguards both domestically and internationally. Panelists will assess progress and ongoing challenges in countering authoritarian practices in Hungary and Poland, and address whether civil society in these countries can provide a template for other countries facing a rise in authoritarian practices. They will also discuss how changing U.S. foreign policy affects rule of law and human rights in Hungary and Poland. Under the second Trump Administration, dramatic shifts in official U.S. conceptions of human rights have accompanied the closure of USAID and slashing of programs underpinning civil society and rule of law across the region. The Administration has also undermined the international institutions designed to uphold human rights worldwide. Such U.S. foreign policy approaches mirror the erosion of civic space and rule of law domestically in the United States. Panelists will discuss whether and how these changes have affected the response to authoritarian practices in Hungary and Poland, from the defense of LGBTI rights, to refugee and migrant rights, to the protection of independent media, judicial independence, and more.

Speakers:
Dávid Vig, Director, Amnesty International Hungary
Adam Ploszka, Research and Advocacy Manager, Amnesty International Poland
Ben Linden, Advocacy Director for Europe and Central Asia, Amnesty International USA
Anna Wojcik, Researcher, Constitutional Law and European Studies Department of the Institute of Legal Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences (Warsaw)
Edit Zgut-Przybylska, Assistant Professor, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology (IFIS) in the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN), and Research Affiliate, CEU Democracy Institute
Moderator: Jasmine Cameron, Founding Director, Juridia Global Rule of Law Foundation, and Visiting Scholar at American University's Washington College of Law

Time: **15:30-16:30**
Venue: **Meeting Room 2 – Saski**
Title: Attacks on First Responders: Emerging Patterns Across Ukraine and Other Conflicts
Convenor: Truth Hounds
Working language: English

Summary: Attacks on first responders and humanitarian workers in Ukraine have become an increasingly documented pattern in the context of the ongoing armed conflict. While such attacks involve different weapons and tactics, the growing use of short-range drones has created new and

particularly acute risks for emergency responders. The discussion will be based on the findings of the Truth Hounds report *Calculated Harm: Attacks on Emergency Responders in Ukraine*, which documents recurring patterns of attacks, including double-tap strikes, attacks on fire stations and emergency vehicles. The report also identifies a sharp increase in drone-related attacks and examines their impact on emergency response and civilian protection. The discussion will use these findings as a starting point for a broader exchange on emerging threats, protection measures, and accountability.

Speakers and interventions:

1. Anhelina Hrytsei, Truth Hounds researcher

Attacks on First Responders in Ukraine: Scale and Emerging Patterns An overview of attacks on emergency responders in Ukraine, examining their evolution and geographic spread, possible rationale, and key patterns and their broader implications for the protection of first responders and civilian safety.

2. Liliia Lakhnech, Truth Hounds Legal Qualification of Attacks against First Responders

An analysis of the legal framework applicable to attacks against emergency responders, including the status and protection of emergency personnel, vehicles, and facilities under international humanitarian law.

3. Oleksandr Kukharuk, Prosecutor of the Second Unit of the Second Department of Procedural Guidance and Public Prosecution, Department for Countering Crimes Committed in the Conditions of Armed Conflict, Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine (online)

Investigating and Prosecuting Attacks on First Responders: The National Accountability Perspective

4. Andrii Pozniakovich, Ukrainian Red Cross Society operations headquarters coordination manager
Short-Range Drone Attacks: Emerging Threats and Challenges to the Protection of First Responders (online)

A focused discussion of how short-range drones are changing the operational environment for first responders and humanitarian aid personnel. Particular attention will be given to the challenge of reconciling emerging protection needs with established Duty of Care approaches.

Moderated by Kateryna Mitieva, Truth Hounds Advocacy Manager

Time: **15:30-16:30**

Venue: **Meeting Room 3 – Krolewski**

Title: **Torture and Enforced Disappearances in Occupied Enerhodar: Civilian Hostages from the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, International Responsibility and Nuclear Safety**

Convenor: **Enerhodar City Territorial Community; Association of Relatives of the Kremlin Political Prisoners; Norwegian Helsinki Committee; Netherlands Helsinki Committee**

Working language: **English**

Summary: Since the Russian occupation of Enerhodar and the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) in March 2022, local residents, municipal representatives and nuclear power plant employees have been subjected to abduction, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, torture, coercion and unlawful prosecution. Many civilians have been held incommunicado for extended periods, without access to lawyers, independent monitoring or effective legal remedies. Their families often receive little or no official information about their whereabouts, health or legal status. The persecution of ZNPP personnel has consequences extending beyond individual human rights violations. The detention, torture and coercion of qualified nuclear professionals undermine the safe operation of Europe's largest nuclear power plant and create risks for regional and international security. Despite the scale of these violations, civilian detainees remain insufficiently represented in international release mechanisms, political negotiations and public discussions. Their situation raises complex legal questions concerning the application of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, the UN Convention

against Torture, accountability, reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence. Format: Moderated panel discussion with first-hand testimonies, expert contributions and questions from the audience.

Speakers:

Ivan Samoidiuk, First Deputy Mayor of Enerhodar and former civilian detainee;

Vladyslav Lavryk, son of imprisoned ZNPP employee Ruslan Lavryk;

Oksana Konyk, mother of detained ZNPP employee Oleh Morochovskyi;

Serhiy Petukhov, Norwegian Helsinki Committee

Olena Pashkowska, Truth Hounds

Natalia Yanchuk, Center for Civil Liberties

Yaroslav Bukhanenko, National University of Kyiv Mohyla Academy

Opening remarks: Vasyl Bodnar, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ukraine to the Republic of Poland

Moderation: Yaryna Borenko, human rights expert and International Advocacy Manager at the Association of Relatives of Political Prisoners of the Kremlin; Lene Wetteland, Head of Documentation and Accountability Hub at the Norwegian Helsinki Committee.

Time: 15:30-16:30

Venue: Meeting Room 5 – Plenary

Title: The Democratic Costs of Gender Backlash

Convenor: Permanent Mission of Ireland to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of the Republic of Poland to the OSCE in Vienna; United Kingdom Delegation to the OSCE; Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the OSCE

Working language: English

Summary: At May's SHDM, Ireland and the Swiss Chair convened an event examining the gendered impact of new technologies on civic space. Speakers examined how online platforms are being used to spread misogynistic content, including through the so-called manosphere, incite violence against women, and threaten hard-won gains fighting gender stereotypes. This event aims to build on these discussions and look more specifically at how gender narratives are being weaponised, particularly online, to drive division and polarisation, promote authoritarian sentiments. These narratives can also undermine women's opportunities for political engagement at various levels. At the same time democratic backsliding removes institutional safeguards that protect equal rights, thus potentially creating a mutually reinforcing cycle. The weaponization of gender narratives can thus ultimately undermine OSCE commitments on women's equal participation in political life, democracy and security OSCE participating States have consistently recognised that this participation is essential to achieve a more peaceful, prosperous and democratic OSCE area.

Opening Remarks: Ms. Jackie O'Halloran, Director of Human Rights Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland

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

Panelists:

Dr Kenny Doyle, Head of Programmes, Men's Development Network Ireland

Dr Elzbieta Bekiesza-Korolczuk, Researcher, Södertörn University

Closing Remarks: Ambassador Monique de Ruijter, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of The Netherlands to the OSCE

Time: **16:45-18:30**
Venue: **Meeting Room 4 – Opera**
Title: Preventing and Eradicating Torture in The OSCE Region: Launch of the Roadmap on the Implementation of OSCE Ministerial Council Decision 7/20
Convenor: 2026 OSCE Chairpersonship of Switzerland
Working language: English

This event will formally launch the Roadmap and present its main themes, proposed actions, and intended outcomes. Beyond introducing the Roadmap, the event will serve as a platform for dialogue and the exchange of views on its practical implementation within the work of the OSCE and its participating States. It will provide an opportunity for participants to discuss how the Roadmap can inform existing initiatives, identify areas for collaboration, share good practices and experiences at both the national and regional levels, and consider possible next steps for its implementation.

Wednesday, 7 October

Time: **09:00-10:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 1 – Belweder**
Title: Surveillance and civic space: protecting peaceful assembly and human rights defenders
Convenor: OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
Working language: English

Summary: Digital technologies are transforming how authorities facilitate assemblies, while also expanding their ability to monitor human rights defenders and civic activity. AI, advanced image analysis, and automated data processing allow law enforcement to track, observe and identify individuals involved in public or online activities on an unprecedented scale. Remote identification tools are also reshaping relations between police and the public, influencing how suspicion is formed and reducing the possibility of remaining anonymous in public. These developments have significant implications for the right to peaceful assembly, the safety and work of human rights defenders, and civic space more broadly, as surveillance can deter participation, expose activists and organisations to greater scrutiny, and create a chilling effect on advocacy, association and public debate. The side event will shed light to different forms of surveillance used during protests and to monitor human rights defenders, and will explore how the growing use of surveillance affects democracy and civic space, including by discouraging participation, limiting public scrutiny, and constraining activism. The discussion will also focus on what public authorities, national human rights institutions, independent monitors, and civil society can do to ensure that surveillance is used in line with international human rights standards, and is transparent, subject to public oversight and accountability. It will explore positive legislative initiatives in the OSCE participating States, reflect on work of NRHIs to ensure oversight over surveillance practices and note successful practices from civil society organizations. During the side event, ODIHR will launch its publication, Surveillance of peaceful assemblies in the OSCE region: human rights implications and strategies for independent monitoring.

Time: **09:00-10:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 2 – Saski**
Title: Hate Crime and Freedom of Religion or Belief in the OSCE Region. Responses to Anti-Religious Intolerance and Discrimination in a Multi-Faith Context

Convenor: European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ); Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe; Aid to the Church in Need International, Belgium; Observatory for Religious Freedom; UGCI Unione Giuristi Cattolici Italiani

Working language: English

Summary: Building on ODIHR's Regional Workshop on Responding to Anti-Christian Hate Crimes and Addressing the Security Needs of Christian Communities, the side event will examine the impact of anti-religious hate crime on freedom of religion or belief (FoRB), together with current challenges in data collection and in responding to such incidents. It will highlight relevant OSCE/ODIHR resources, including the recently published guide Understanding Anti-Christian Hate Crimes and Addressing the Security Needs of Christian Communities, alongside the guides on anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim hate crimes, and explore how capacity-building and multi-faith cooperation can strengthen responses across the OSCE region. The discussion situates these challenges within the OSCE's broader efforts to combat intolerance and discrimination against members of all religions and beliefs, recognizing the specificity of each form of intolerance while affirming a comprehensive approach.

Speakers:

Mikaela Christiansson, Adviser on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Intolerance against Christians and Members of Other Religions, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department, ODIHR
Anja Tang, Executive Director, OIDAC Europe Marcela Szymanski, Head of International Advocacy, ACN International
Thibault van den Bossche, Advocacy Officer for Religious Freedom, ECLJ
Carmen Lopez, Advocacy Officer, Europe, ADF International

Time: **09:00-10:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 3 – Krolewski**
Title: From Russian Disinformation to Narrative Laundering in Europe and the National Security Gap
Convenor: ALLATRA**
Working language: English

Summary: The Russian Disinformation Campaign Targeting ALLATRA: A Case Study of Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) and Its Impact on Civic Space. European security institutions increasingly recognise FIMI and the strategic exploitation of identity-based narratives as tools that may form part of hybrid threats. Yet a critical vulnerability remains difficult to detect and address: what happens when a narrative originating in a foreign information-manipulation campaign loses the visible markers of its origin and is recirculated through domestic actors as apparently independent analysis? The side event will explore how a disinformation narrative originating in the Russian political environment can cross borders, adapt to new national contexts, and acquire appearance of independent legitimacy through an established anticult narrative infrastructure. The universal processes of narrative laundering and escalation will be examined through a case study focused on ALLATRA. ALLATRA (allatra.org) is an international civic organization working on climate, environmental issues, and human rights. The discussion will trace how a disinformation campaign against ALLATRA emerged in Russia and how related Russian-origin narratives subsequently spread to Ukraine and across European and global information environments. It will examine how different actors repeat and adapt stigmatizing labels, and how such labels can move from media reports and expert commentary into political rhetoric and institutional perceptions. The discussion will also consider the emerging role of AI and search engines in reproducing narratives that have already become embedded

**) the participation of this organization has been contested

in online information ecosystems. The event will then turn from the case study to the broader institutional and human-rights question: How can democratic institutions identify and respond to transnational information operations before stigmatizing narratives become institutionalized and begin to restrict civic space, freedom of association and the legitimate work of human rights defenders?

Speakers:

Mariia Anapreichyk* - Legal researcher in International and European Law, ALLATRA Global Research Center; Switzerland

Jevgenija Malecka* - Lawyer, former law-enforcement officer, legal researcher; Latvia

Vladimir Ivanov* - Attorney, legal researcher, ALLATRA Global Research Center;

Bulgaria Maryna Ovtynova (online) - Expert in global security and counterterrorism, President of ALLATRA; USA

Time: 09:00-10:00

Venue: Meeting Room 4 – Opera

Title: Criminalization of LGBTIQ+ People and Shrinking Civic Space in Central Asia

Convenor: Human Rights Centre Glotion; Public Fund Nomad Rights; Human Rights Consulting Group Public Foundation; Qun Jelesi-feminist queer collective

Working language: English, Russian

Summary: Across Central Asia, pressure on LGBTIQ+ people, human rights defenders, and organizations working in the field of human rights is increasing. The criminalization of same-sex relations, legal restrictions on the dissemination of information about LGBTIQ+ people, censorship, website blocking, pressure on civil society, and harassment by law enforcement agencies are contributing to a broader regional trend of shrinking space for LGBTIQ+ activism. During the side event, human rights defenders and representatives of LGBTIQ+ organizations from Central Asian countries will present the current situation in the region, discuss emerging legislative and law enforcement risks and their impact on communities and civil society, and formulate key recommendations for governments, international organizations, and diplomatic missions. Organizers: “Glotion” Human Rights Center (Kazakhstan), Human Rights Consulting Group (Kazakhstan), Nomad Rights Foundation (Kazakhstan), REQUEST Human Rights LGBTIQ+ Initiative (Kazakhstan), “Qun Jelesi” Feminist Queer Collective (Kyrgyzstan), Invisible Rainbow Turkmenistan (Turkmenistan), Central Asian Council on Queer Rights, ECOM. For security reasons, not all co-organizing organizations and initiatives are publicly listed. Organizers: “Glotion” Human Rights Center (Kazakhstan), Human Rights Consulting Group (Kazakhstan), Nomad Rights Foundation (Kazakhstan), REQUEST Human Rights LGBTIQ+ Initiative (Kazakhstan), “Qun Jelesi” Feminist Queer Collective (Kyrgyzstan), Invisible Rainbow Turkmenistan (Turkmenistan), Central Asian Council on Queer Rights, ECOM. For security reasons, not all co-organizing organizations and initiatives are publicly listed.

Time: 09:00-10:00

Venue: Meeting Room 5 – Plenary

Title: Human Rights situation in the Russian Federation

Convenor: Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of Germany to the OSCE; Delegation of Canada to the OSCE; Ministry of Foreign

*) the participation of these participants has been contested

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Affairs of Denmark; Permanent Mission of the Republic of Estonia to the OSCE; Permanent Delegation of Finland to the OSCE; Permanent Representation of France to the OSCE; Italian Delegation to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of the Republic of Latvia to OSCE; Permanent Mission of the Republic of Lithuania to the International Organizations in Vienna; Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the OSCE; Permanent Delegation of Norway to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of the Republic of Poland to the OSCE in Vienna; Permanent Delegation of Sweden to the OSCE; United Kingdom Delegation to the OSCE

Working language: English, Russian

Summary: OSCE participating States remain deeply concerned about the further deteriorating human rights situation in the Russian Federation and its far reaching implications for the implementation of OSCE human dimension commitments. Over the past years, the international community has witnessed a persistent pattern of increasing state repression in the Russian Federation: extrajudicial killings of government critics, the systematic persecution of political opponents, and the labelling of NGOs, independent media and human rights defenders as ‘foreign agents’, ‘extremist’, ‘undesirable’ or ‘terrorist’, thereby in effect criminalizing the exercise of their freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association. Given the central importance of human dimension commitments in the OSCE’s comprehensive concept of security, this concern has prompted the use of key OSCE tools in recent years, including the invocation of both the Moscow and Vienna Mechanisms. In line with recommendations made in the 2022 Moscow Mechanism report and a decennia long call from international and Russian civil society, the UN Human Rights Council has established a Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation, who has now presented her sixth report, documenting systematic human rights violations, severe restrictions on fundamental freedoms, the shrinking of civic space, and the wider impact of repression inside Russia, including on its aggression abroad. This side event will examine findings and recommendations by the UN Special Rapporteur and place them in the context of OSCE human dimension commitments. It aims to foster an open discussion on how best to respond to the trends identified, strengthen protection for human rights defenders, journalists and other at risk groups, and ensure that OSCE instruments are used effectively and consistently.

PROGRAMME OUTLINE

Opening remarks by Chairperson of the OSCE Human Dimension Committee, Ambassador Monique de Ruijter, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the OSCE

Key note address by Mariana Katzarova, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation

Contribution from Russian civil society and Q&A

Closing remarks by Ambassador Jan Marian, Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the UN, OSCE and other International Organisations in Vienna

Moderator: Hugh Williamson, Human Rights Watch

Time: **16:00-17:00**

Venue: **Meeting Room 1 – Belweder**

Title: Immersive Experience: How technology shapes our society? Step inside the Toxic Triangle

Convenor: OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Working language: English

Summary: How much of my online experience is actually mine? Who, what, or whose interests are shaping it? In partnership with Tactical Tech, ODIHR invites you to step into the answers. This

immersive experience puts you directly inside the dynamics of the digital environment. Not just to hear about them but to feel them. Then, we will unpack what we saw and experienced and discuss how different stakeholders can help address emerging challenges and shape a safer online environment. This experience is part of the Toxic Triangle project, helping decision-makers and civil society understand how AI, social media, and commercial incentives shape young people's online experiences. Through six real-world scenarios, participants step into the shoes of a young social media user — from scrolling through AI-shaped content and deepfakes to navigating other harmful online environments. By stepping inside the “toxic triangle”, participants will gain a behind-the-scenes look at the technologies, business models, and systems that drive it, followed by a facilitated discussion on how these systems operate, generate profit, and affect young people's lives. This is not a briefing; it is an experience. We are moving past “What did we hear?” to “What did we see, feel and live?” That shift matters: understanding AI's impact on human rights and democracy is a shared responsibility and not something we can simply observe from the sidelines. It is also a chance to reflect on what this means for human rights defenders working at the intersection of human rights and technology, and to push for spaces where young people are not just discussed, but heard in shaping the policies that govern their digital lives. Bring your laptop or e-tablet and earphones. A limited number of e-tablets will be available in the room for your use. Refreshment provided.

Speakers:

Dominika Knoblochová, Tactical Tech,

Marine Constant, Human Rights Adviser, Capacity Building Co-ordinator ODIHR,

Adelisa Sejtanic, OSCE Pool of Young Experts

Time: **16:00-17:00**

Venue: **Meeting Room 2 – Saski**

Title: Mechanisms for Protecting and Advocating for the Rights of Religious Minorities in Central Asia

Convenor: Minority Rights Group International

Working language: English, Russian

Summary: The aim of the event is to develop tools for the protection and advocacy of the rights of religious minorities in Central Asia through the exchange of experiences between civil society organizations and international experts. This side event is dedicated to discussing effective mechanisms for protecting the rights of religious minorities in Central Asia. The Central Asian region is part of the OSCE; however, the development of state-religion relations in these countries differs significantly from one another and from the European experience. In the region, there is a wide range of practices for protecting the rights of religious minorities, and sharing these practices makes it possible to identify the most promising avenues for development. Particular attention will be paid to Kazakhstan's experience and the potential for applying it in other countries in the region. In the context of the crisis in international mechanisms, the systematic exchange of experience will help accelerate the implementation of effective mechanisms for the protection of the rights of religious minorities in all countries of the region. Speakers will share successful tools and lessons learned in areas such as organizing dialogue platforms, engaging women in interfaith dialogue, participating in interfaith advisory councils, combating discrimination and hate speech against minorities, promoting legal literacy, interacting with government agencies, and more.

Speakers:

Svetlana Buglova – Expert, Association of Religious Organizations of Kazakhstan (AROK)

Zhamal Frontbek kyzy – Chairperson of the Board, Progressive Public Association of Women “Mutakalim” (Kyrgyzstan)

Dilshod Juraev – Board member, Ibtido (Tajikistan)

Sebastien Peyrouse – Director, Central Asia Program, Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University

Moderator: Nurangiz Khodzharova, Programmes Coordinator, Central Asia and OSCE Region, Minority Rights Group Europe

Time: **16:00-17:00**

Venue: **Meeting Room 3 – Krolewski**

Title: Mapping the Link Between Online Disinformation, Political Statements, Media Coverage, and Real-Life Attacks Against Refugees: Case Study of Ukrainians in Poland

Convenor: Alliance 24/08 (Fundacja Alians Młodzieży Ukraińskiej 24 sierpnia)

Working language: English

Summary: Since the launch of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Poland has served as a primary sanctuary for millions of Ukrainian refugees and a critical geopolitical partner for Kyiv. However, this strategic alliance and social cohesion are under targeted, systematic assault. The final report of the monitoring project “Observatory of Hate - We See. We Monitor. We React” (August 2026), conducted by the Foundation “Alliance of Ukrainian Youth 'August 24th' (24/08)” (Alliance 24/08) with support from the European Union (CERV/Batory Foundation), reveals the mechanics of an escalating hostile Information Psychological Special Operation (IPSO). The research establishes an undeniable link between anonymous Telegram channels (e.g., Niezależny Dziennik Polityczny, NewsFront PL, Polska Grupa Informacyjna, Układ Warszawski), mainstream media framing distortions, political opportunism, and real-life physical aggression against Ukrainians and Ukrainian-linked infrastructure across Polish cities. To address the human dimension commitments, specifically concerning tolerance, non-discrimination, hate crime prevention, and combating propaganda for war, this side event brings together Ukrainian, Polish, and international experts to discuss findings, legal remedies, and joint policy responses. The following aspects of the subject matter are planned to be discussed: 1. How anonymous messaging platforms act as unregulated spaces where AI-generated disinformation is tested before spilling into mainstream media and triggering physical assaults. 2. How editorial choices in Polish and Ukrainian media inadvertently amplify threat perceptions, selective ethnic labelling, or false equivalence. 3. How the systematic manipulation of historical memory disrupts bilateral relations and support. 4. How we can move from passive monitoring to institutional action, working with law enforcement, prosecutor offices, and media ethics panels.

Time: **16:00-17:00**

Venue: **Meeting Room 4 – Opera**

Title: AI and Counter Hate Speech

Convenor: Solidarity With Others

Working language: English

Summary: This side event will explore how artificial intelligence is shaping the spread, detection, and prevention of hate speech. Bringing together experts, civil society, and relevant stakeholders, the discussion will examine both the risks posed by AI-enabled content and the opportunities offered by responsible AI tools to identify and counter harmful narratives. The event will highlight practical approaches, emerging challenges, and the importance of human rights, transparency, and multi-stakeholder cooperation in developing effective responses to online hate speech.

Time: **16:00-17:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 5 – Plenary**
Title: The Cost of Dissent: Political Prisoners in Russia
Convenor: Permanent Delegation of Norway to the OSCE; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark; Permanent Mission of the Republic of Estonia to the OSCE; Permanent Delegation of Finland to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of Iceland to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of the Republic of Latvia to OSCE; Permanent Mission of the Republic of Lithuania to the International Organizations in Vienna; Permanent Delegation of Sweden to the OSCE
Working language: English

Summary: In March 2024, 41 participating States invoked the Vienna Mechanism to formally question the Russian Federation over severe human rights violations and the treatment of political prisoners. The Russian authorities have not responded. Since that time, they have further consolidated patterns of repression across an expanding range of political, legal, and social spheres. According to OVD-Info, there are more than 2,100 political prisoners in the Russian Federation. While the total number of politically motivated criminal cases decreased in 2025, the average length of a sentence has increased and Russian authorities still convict three times more people in politically motivated cases than before their full-scale invasion of Ukraine. At the same time, conditions for political prisoners have continued to deteriorate. Reports of torture, prolonged punitive isolation, denial of medical care, deaths in detention, and the initiation of additional criminal cases against imprisoned individuals indicate the growing use of the penitentiary system as a continuing instrument of political repression. This side event will bring together experts and human rights defenders from Russian civil society to explore key repression trends regarding the treatment of political prisoners. It will explore key questions, including: 1) What are the current legislative and legal developments affecting politically motivated cases? 2) What are the current trends related to the arrest, sentencing and treatment of political prisoners in Russia, in particular in the aftermath of the invocation of the Vienna Mechanism in 2024? 3) How to work to ensure the best possible documentation of how political prisoners in Russia are being treated? 4) How can the OSCE and participating States best hold Russia to account?

Opening Remarks: H.E. Ellen Svendsen, Permanent Representative of Norway to the OSCE
Speakers:
Sergey Davidis, Project Director, Support for Political Prisoners Project, HRDC Memorial
Dina Khaskelberg, Head Russia and Belarus programmes at JX Fund
Polina Kurakina, Legal Advisor, OVD-Info
Moderator: Dave Elseroad, Human Rights House Foundation

Thursday, 8 October

Time: **09:00-10:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 1 – Belweder**
Title: Panel Discussion with the three Personal Representatives of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination
Convenor: Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the OSCE
Working language: English

Summary: OSCE participating States have repeatedly affirmed that tolerance and non-discrimination are essential to the protection and promotion of human rights, democratic principles and comprehensive security. Through their commitments, they have undertaken to combat racism, xenophobia, anti-

Semitism and intolerance and discrimination against Muslims, Christians and members of other religions. Across the OSCE region, prejudice and discrimination continue to affect relations within and between communities and are often exacerbated by polarization and social fragmentation. At the same time, the environment in which intolerance is expressed and spread are changing. Online spaces have become central to public debate, identity formation and social interaction. They amplify hateful narratives, reinforce prejudice and contribute to discrimination, harassment, violence and hate crimes offline. Addressing these challenges requires not only responding to such manifestations, but also strengthening dialogue, participation and mutual understanding within societies. Young people play an important role in these efforts: they engage in educational, civic, community and digital spaces in which attitudes are formed, contested and changed, and to which other generations often only have limited access. ODIHR's work with young people has highlighted their potential to promote equality, inclusion and social cohesion. Their meaningful participation can help challenge stereotypes, counter polarization and strengthen resilient and inclusive societies. Against this background, the panel discussion with the three Personal Representatives of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination will provide an opportunity to reflect on current challenges and explore practical approaches to prevention. The discussion will bring together the perspectives of the Personal Representatives, whose mandates address combating anti-Semitism; intolerance and discrimination against Muslims; and racism, xenophobia and discrimination, with a particular focus on intolerance and discrimination against Christians and members of other religions. Their complementary mandates allow for a discussion of both specific manifestations of intolerance affecting different communities and the broader drivers and dynamics contributing to polarization and social division.

In particular, the event will:

- Examine emerging manifestations and drivers of intolerance and discrimination across the OSCE region.
- Explore the impact of online spaces on polarization and intolerance.
- Identify practical recommendations to preventing intolerance and strengthening inclusive societies, including through the meaningful participation of youth.

AGENDA

09:00-09:05 Welcoming remarks: Ambassador Dagmar Schmidt Tartagli, Head of Human Rights, Democracy and Humanitarian Diplomacy, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland

09.05 – 09.35 Panel discussion

09.35 – 09.55 Questions from the audience

09.55 – 10.00 Closing remarks: Pierre Baussand, Head, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department, ODIHR

Speakers:

Rabbi Andrew Baker, Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Anti-Semitism

Ambassador Evren Dağdelen Akgün, Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Palaver, Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, also focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions

Moderator: Pierre Baussand, Head, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department, ODIHR

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

Venue: **Meeting Room 2 – Saski**

Title: Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Islamophobia: Strengthening Accountability and Protecting Human Rights

Convenor: Emisco - European Muslim Initiative for Social Cohesion

Working language: English

Summary: Across many regions of the world, racism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia are becoming increasingly normalized, fueling discrimination, exclusion, hate speech, and violence. Too often, these human rights violations occur with little or no accountability, creating a climate of impunity that further undermines social cohesion and the protection of fundamental freedoms. This conference will examine the factors driving these trends, their impact on affected communities, and the urgent need to strengthen accountability and uphold the universal principles of human rights.

Time: **09:00-10:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 3 – Krolewski**
Title: Pre-trial stage of criminal proceedings, Kazakhstan
Convenor: Public Association Dignity
Working language: English, Russian

Summary: The pre-trial stage of criminal proceedings is particularly sensitive for the implementation of the rule of law and fair trial obligations. It is at this stage that decisions directly affecting fundamental rights are made, including access to legal counsel, judicial review of the legality of detention, complaints against criminal prosecution authorities, and the foundations for a fair trial. A 2026 CSO monitoring study of the pre-trial stage in Kazakhstan, conducted by Dignity under an EU-financed project coordinated by the Legal Policy Research Centre (LPRC) and International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR), demonstrates that a formal system of procedural guarantees does not in itself ensure their effective implementation. The study identified a gap between official assessments and the practical experiences of lawyers, detainees' relatives, and independent observers. Key concerns included delayed access to defence counsel, incomplete judicial review of deprivation of liberty, limited opportunities to prepare a defence, restricted access to case materials, and ineffective appeal mechanisms. The monitoring further shows that although courts review the legality of pre-trial detention, such reviews often fail to provide an independent assessment of individual cases. The adversarial nature of proceedings is also frequently undermined, including through the failure to provide defence lawyers with access to case materials. The side event will discuss these findings not only as challenges within Kazakhstan, but also in the broader context of implementing OSCE commitments concerning the rule of law, judicial independence, and the right to a fair trial, and will explore practical steps to strengthen procedural safeguards during pre-trial proceedings. Organizers: Dignity, IPHR, LPRC, EU

Moderator: Karine Simonsen, Rule of Law Officer, ODIHR

Speakers:
Rachel Gasowski (IPHR);
Anara Ibrayeva (Dignity);
Tolekan Ismailova (BDK);
Dr. Stephen Eric Bronner (ACJCR)

Time: **09:00-10:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 4 – Opera**
Title: A State Policy on Accountability for Grave Crimes: Toward a Comprehensive Justice Architecture in Ukraine
Convenor: Ukrainian Legal Advisory Group
Working language: English

Summary: Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Ukrainian authorities have registered over 260,000 criminal proceedings for alleged conflict-related grave crimes, part of a larger caseload stretching back to 2014. Ukraine has a primary responsibility to ensure justice for these violations, and achieving this requires a comprehensive legislative and institutional framework: one enabling accurate classification of crimes, protection and participation of victims and witnesses, workable rules of evidence, and a clear strategy for case prioritisation and interagency coordination, among other aspects. For years, Ukraine's justice system has lacked the instruments to address conflict-related crimes in line with international standards. Domestic authorities, supported by international partners and civil society, are making significant efforts to investigate and prosecute these crimes, but the response remains largely fragmented. Strategic vision at individual agencies, while necessary, cannot alone secure the political will for legislative change or ensure long-term cross-institutional coordination – and no national authority currently holds a clear mandate to build a comprehensive justice system. It is in this context that the idea of a state policy on accountability for grave crimes in Ukraine emerged, drawing on experience of national strategies developed in other contexts such as Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. As a state-level strategic vision, such a policy can bridge differing institutional views, sustain political will, and set a long-term direction – not only for the domestic justice system, but for its coordination with foreign and international justice mechanisms. ULAG, together with other civil society organisations, has fostered dialogue on the need for such a policy and formed an expert group drafting its concept. This has since become a priority agenda item for the Dialogue Group on Accountability for Ukraine – a platform that unites justice system actors, international partners, justice mechanisms and civil society to advance accountability for grave crimes in Ukraine. The side event will make the case for a Ukrainian state policy on accountability for grave international crimes, drawing on analysis of current justice processes, reforms and initiatives, and examine the role of state actors, international organisations and civil society in building a comprehensive justice architecture.

Time: **09:00-10:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 5 – Plenary**
Title: Countering Discrimination Against Religious Communities in the digital era
Convenor: Permanent Mission of Italy to the OSCE in cooperation with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM)
Working language: English

Summary: Religious communities across the OSCE region are increasingly exposed to online hate speech, which can, over time, contribute to discrimination and, in some cases, to acts of intimidation or violence. Intolerance and discrimination tend to reinforce one another: unchallenged bias helps normalize exclusionary narratives, gradually lowering the threshold for discriminatory acts. Social media play an ambivalent role: capable of exposing intolerance, but also, at times, of amplifying stereotypes or entrenching polarized narratives through algorithmic curation. This convergence between the information space and religion-based hate is a topic of ongoing attention within the OSCE, notably through the work of the Personal Representatives of the Chairpersonship-in-Office on tolerance and non-discrimination covering antisemitism, intolerance against Muslims, and intolerance against Christians and members of other religions. Moreover, ODIHR's guides on hate crimes against religious communities span anti-Semitic, anti-Muslim and anti-Christian hate crimes, cast light on how to address their security needs. The analysis of how social media and AI can fuel discriminatory narratives is further investigated by the Representative on Freedom of the Media in his policy manual on Safeguarding Media Freedom in the Age of Big Tech Platforms and AI. This side event brings together ODIHR's and RFoM's work on hate crime prevention and digital/media freedom. Ultimately, just as media and digital platforms can be exploited to spread division, they can equally be harnessed, alongside traditional offline engagement, to sustain dialogue, amplify voices of tolerance and building lasting bridges of trust

between religious communities. Objectives The side event aims to: • explore links between online hate speech, discrimination and offline hate crimes targeting religious communities, including the role of media and emerging challenges linked to AI, disinformation and algorithmic amplification; • identify good practices for preventing, reporting and responding to religiously motivated hate crimes, in a balanced approach that safeguards freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression; • engage civil society and stakeholders on strengthening responses to religious-based hate crimes online. Guiding Questions • How does online hate contribute to discrimination and violence against religious communities, what role can media play in this dynamic, and what risks do AI and algorithmic amplification introduce? • What good practices exist for preventing, reporting and responding to hate crimes originating online? • How can civil society and stakeholders, often the first to detect online hostility, engage with social media and AI platforms to help reduce the risk of escalation?

Speakers:

Ms. Maria Telalian, Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)
Ms. Antonina Cherevko, Senior Adviser, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM)
Amb. Andrea Cascone, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Italy to the OSCE
Ms. María García, President, Observatory for Freedom of Religion and Conscience (Spain)

Time: **16:00-17:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 1 – Belweder**
Title: ODIHR’s practical guidance on intersectional approach to addressing hate crime and providing hate crime victim support
Convenor: OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
Working language: English

Summary: While hate incidents based on multiple bias motives are documented in ODIHR’s Hate Crime Report, most national and international institutions remain insufficiently equipped to effectively address the intersectional nature of hate crimes. Further strengthening is often needed to ensure that legislation protects those positioned at the intersection of protected groups, hate crime data effectively covers intersectional grounds, investigations consider different nuances of harm, and support to victims take into account their multiple individual characteristics. To assist OSCE pSs in meeting their commitments and ensuring better hate crime victim support, as well as to encourage more positive interactions between law enforcement professionals and victims of hate crimes, ODIHR is producing a guidance document exploring the practical ways to address intersectionality in hate crime and hate crime victim support work. The document will provide clear guidance on intersectionality in hate crime, developing a practitioner-friendly definition, explaining the concepts of intersectional targeting and intersectional impact, collecting good practices in applying the principles of intersectionality, and recommending concrete measures to strengthen institutional policies. This work is a result of ODIHR’s partnership with EEA and Norway Grants, which supports efforts to strengthen human rights, democracy and the rule of law across OSCE pSs. The purpose of the side event is to: • Raise awareness of the importance of intersectional approaches in addressing hate crime. • Present the upcoming guide and its practical steps that governments, in cooperation with civil society, can undertake to better address the needs of individuals affected by hate crime. • Share good practices and insights from OSCE pSs.

Time: **16:00-17:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 2 – Saski**
Title: The Armenia-Azerbaijan Peace Process: What Is Needed for Sustainable Peace in South Caucasus

Convenor: For Equal Rights Educational Center Non-Governmental Organization
Working language: English

Summary: This side event will examine the current stage of the Armenia–Azerbaijan peace process and discuss what is needed to transform political agreements, pre-signed peace agreement into sustainable and meaningful peace. Bringing together speakers from Armenia and Azerbaijan, alongside international think-tank researchers, the discussion will combine perspectives from both societies with a broader international and geopolitical view. After decades of conflict, creating a shared platform for Armenian and Azerbaijani voices to discuss future-oriented challenges, reconciliation and opportunities for cooperation carries particular significance. At the same time, the discussion will address the unresolved humanitarian and human rights issues that remain among the most serious obstacles on the path towards lasting peace. Beyond bilateral relations, the discussion will explore what a durable settlement could mean for the wider South Caucasus, and also consider Russia’s changing role in the South Caucasus. For decades, the unresolved Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict was closely intertwined with Russia’s political and security influence in the region and served as one of Moscow’s key instruments of leverage. The event will also consider the new political and security realities emerging in the South Caucasus, including both the opportunities and the unresolved risks they create. While new possibilities for cooperation, rights protection and development are opening, significant challenges remain and lasting peace will require sustained political, societal and institutional efforts.

Speakers: Gayane Abrahamyan – Former Member of Parliament of Armenia, President of “For Equal Rights” Educational Center NGO Emin Huseynov – Azerbaijani journalists, human rights activist, co-founder of the Switzerland-based Azerbaijani media International researchers from France and Germany

Time: **16:00-17:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 4 – Opera**
Title: Rise of Digital Authoritarianism in Georgia
Convenor: Human Rights House Foundation
Working language: English

Summary: Digital authoritarianism has become one of the key techniques through which authoritarian governments expand repression and control civic space. In Georgia, this dimension of authoritarianism has become increasingly evident amid the country’s massive democratic and human rights backsliding since 2024. Digital technologies have become integrated into broader mechanisms of intimidation, surveillance, and suppression of dissent, creating new tools for targeting individuals exercising their fundamental freedoms. Questions surrounding the capabilities of surveillance systems in Georgia, including facial-recognition features, have been raised in media reports, human rights documentation, and independent investigations, while the authorities have failed to provide adequate answers or transparency. The digital dimension of authoritarianism has also extended into the online sphere as social media platforms have increasingly become spaces of control, with the monitoring and policing of critical speech accompanied by coordinated pro-government disinformation. The side event will examine emerging forms of digital authoritarianism in Georgia and their role in restricting human rights. It will explore how surveillance technologies and the digital sphere are being instrumentalized to identify and target protesters, constrain freedom of expression, and strengthen broader systems of authoritarian control. The discussion will seek to answer the following questions: How are digital surveillance technologies being used to repress peaceful protest and dissent? What safeguards are necessary to prevent their misuse on? How can States and OSCE institutions respond to the growing use of digital tools for repression? How can international mechanisms promote accountability and transparency regarding surveillance technologies and their use?

Speakers:

Tamar Oniani - Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA)

Nastasia Arabuli – Radio Liberty (RFE/RL)

Levan Avalishvili - Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI)

Mariam Nikuradze – OC Media

Moderated by: Dave Elseroad, Human Rights House Foundation

Time: **16:00-17:00**

Venue: **Meeting Room 5 – Plenary**

Title: Promoting Religious Freedom, Tolerance, and Non-discrimination and Countering Antisemitism and Anti-Christian Bias in the OSCE Region

Convenor: United States Mission to the OSCE

Working language: English

Summary: OSCE participating States are committed to upholding religious freedom, tolerance, and non-discrimination as cornerstones of human dignity and foundational value. Across the region, individuals and communities of all faiths continue to face discrimination, harassment, and violence on account of their religious identity, underscoring the need for robust, coordinated frameworks to identify, monitor, and counter such bias. The Global Guidelines for Countering Antisemitism, launched in July 2024, are a landmark international framework designed to monitor and combat antisemitism, offering a shared, broadly recognized – and legally non-binding – set of twelve best practices for expanding and strengthening international cooperation on this issue. This framework complements the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism, which provides governments, institutions, and civil society a common understanding of antisemitism and its many manifestations. 23 OSCE participating States have not formally adopted or endorsed the IHRA Working Definition. Together, the Guidelines and the IHRA definition offer both a conceptual foundation and a practical policy template to identify, monitor, and counter antisemitism. Combatting anti-Christian bias remains an important, though often under-addressed, component of a comprehensive approach to religious freedom and tolerance within the OSCE region. It requires close engagement with governments to address the root causes of anti-Christian bias and other religious groups, encouraging stronger rule of law, more effective security responses, and genuine accountability for perpetrators. Encouraging OSCE participating States to strengthen data collection, education, and reporting mechanisms on antisemitism, anti-Christian bias, and other forms of religious intolerance would help ensure a more comprehensive and even-handed approach to protecting religious communities across the region.

Friday, 9 October

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

Venue: **Meeting Room 1 – Belweder**

Title: Inclusive Approaches to Countering Hate: The Granada Declaration

Convenor: University of Essex

Working language: English

Summary: The side event is co-sponsored by the Delegation of Canada to the OSCE.

The growing diversity of societies in the OSCE region, the transnational influence of online spaces, and increasing collaboration among those who disseminate hate all point to the value of developing inclusive approaches to counter rising hate. Recent international strategies to counter hate, including guides

published by ODIHR, have stressed the need to pursue whole-of-society approaches within a human rights framework. ODIHR has also offered guidance on coalition-building for civil society actors, and the work of several practitioners, and existing and emerging initiatives, including interfaith pursuits, recognise the value of solidarity and allyship. While all forms of hatred are on the rise everywhere, the Granada Declaration recognises that the current upsurge in antisemitism and anti-Muslim hate, including in the OSCE region, often highlights intersections in how these phenomena are manifested or represented. The Granada Declaration observes that such overlaps indicate that efforts to counter these forms of hatred can benefit from collaborative approaches. These can foster solidarity and allyship while also avoiding practices that can lead to zero-sum outcomes or trade-offs between these two forms of hate that further intensify polarisation. The Granada Declaration is a statement of solidarity and a commitment to combat both Islamophobia and antisemitism. It shares the OSCE's emphasis on a human rights-based approach to combating all forms of hate. The side-event seeks to present the collaborative vision of the Granada Declaration and highlight existing and emerging practices from the OSCE region that demonstrate both the viability and value of shared efforts.

Speakers:

Ahmed Shaheed, University of Essex (Chair/Moderator)

Elliot Steinberg, OSCE/ODIHR Special Adviser on Combatting Antisemitism: How valuable are inclusive approaches to countering hate?

Representative of Canada (tbc): What role can governments play in fostering allyship across communities?

Dr Linda Hyokki, Senior Policy and Advocacy Adviser, European Coalition of Cities Against Racism: What good practices can be identified from ECCAR's work in fostering allyship in countering different forms of hate? How can polarisation be overcome?

Iman Atta, Executive Director, Tell MAMA UK: For community-focused actors, what is the value added of cross-community collaboration?

Time: 09:00-10:00

Venue: Meeting Room 3 – Krolewski

Title: Human Rights in Kazakhstan Today: Between Reform and Emerging Restrictions

Convenor: Public Fund Nomad Rights; Human Rights Consulting Group Public Foundation; Human Rights Centre Glotion

Working language: English, Russian

Summary: Kazakhstan continues to announce efforts to modernize state institutions, improve accountability, and pursue legal reforms. At the same time, civil society representatives document both persistent and emerging restrictions on rights and freedoms. The gap between the official reform agenda and everyday practice remains a central issue in assessing Kazakhstan's implementation of its international human rights obligations. The side event will provide a cross-cutting overview of the current human rights situation in Kazakhstan. It will address freedom of expression and media independence, the digital environment, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, the operating environment for non-governmental organizations, judicial independence, the right to a fair trial, and protection from torture. The discussion will also cover equality and non-discrimination, as well as economic and social rights, including the right to adequate housing. Particular attention will be paid to the situation of human rights defenders, journalists, and activists, as well as groups that frequently face discrimination and barriers to protection, including women, LGBTQIA+ people, persons with disabilities, and people experiencing housing insecurity. Speakers will present concrete cases, independent assessments, and recommendations based on monitoring and practical work. For OSCE institutions, diplomatic missions, and international organizations, the event will offer an opportunity to

receive up-to-date information directly from Kazakhstani civil society representatives. The discussion will conclude by identifying practical steps to monitor legislation and reforms systematically, protect human rights defenders, support independent organizations, and integrate human rights into political dialogue and cooperation programmes with Kazakhstan.

Time: **09:00-10:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 4 – Opera**
Title: **Pardoned, Not Free: What Follows Release for Belarus's Political Prisoners**
Convenor: **Legal Initiative**
Working language: **English**

Summary: Since 2024 Belarus has pardoned over 900 political prisoners. More than 200 of them were taken straight from their cells to the border, some handcuffed and hooded, many without documents, and left in another country. Those who stayed are under police supervision, listed as “extremists”; unable to open a bank account or work in their profession. The releases are presented as an act of mercy. But a pardon in Belarus is not an acquittal: it ends the sentence, not the persecution. The International Committee for the Investigation of Torture in Belarus will present its new report on how pardons are granted, who is expelled and what happens to those who remain.

Aliaksandr Fiaduta, a political analyst pardoned and expelled from Belarus in December 2025, will give a first-hand account.

Enira Bronitskaya of Human Constanta will speak on the risk of statelessness for people left without valid Belarusian documents.

Dr Anaïs Marin, Head of Advocacy at Fundacja Partyzanka (Warsaw) and former UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus (2018–2024), will draw on Partyzanka's policy paper on Belarusians caught in administrative limbo in Poland. She will speak about delays in issuing residence permits and travel documents to released political prisoners, the rising number of rejected protection applications, and good practices that Poland and other host States could adopt.

The event is moderated by Legal Initiative. Delegations, international organisations and civil society are welcome.

Time: **09:00-10:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 5 – Plenary**
Title: **Keeping the Lights On: The Human Cost of Russia's Attacks on Ukraine's Critical Infrastructure**
Convenor: **U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe**
Working language: **English**

Summary: Last winter, Russia's systematic attacks on civilian energy infrastructure forced Ukrainians to endure record cold without reliable heat or electricity. Although Ukraine weathered the immediate crisis, nearly five years of attacks on its energy system have profoundly disrupted daily life, with particularly serious consequences for children, the elderly, and other vulnerable populations. Ahead of the coming winter, join us for a discussion of how attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure fit into Russia's broader war against Ukrainian society, and how Ukraine is adapting and responding—including extraordinary efforts to protect, support, and educate its young people. Speakers: TBC

Time: **14:00-15:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 1 – Belweder**
Title: Can Parliaments Win Back Public Trust?: From Codes of Conduct to a Culture of Integrity
Convenor: OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
Working language: English (with interpretation to Romanian and Ukrainian)

Summary: Across the OSCE region, declining public confidence in democratic institutions remains a significant challenge to democratic governance. Public confidence in parliaments is closely linked to the conduct of elected representatives and the ability of parliamentary institutions to uphold integrity and accountability.

Parliamentary Codes of Conduct and related ethical standards can establish clear expectations for Members of Parliament, help prevent and manage conflicts of interest and other integrity risks, and contribute to corruption prevention. Yet adopting a Code of Conduct is only the first step. Its effectiveness depends on how it is implemented and overseen, how breaches are addressed and whether there is sustained political commitment to upholding its standards.

What makes a parliamentary Code of Conduct work in practice? How should parliaments respond when ethical standards are breached? And what role should political parties play in promoting integrity among candidates and elected representatives?

Drawing on experiences from Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus, the discussion will explore these questions and consider how Codes of Conduct can become part of a broader culture of integrity, and whether this can help parliaments win back public trust.

The event is organized within the framework of “Stronger Democratic Institutions in Eastern Partnership Countries” – an ODIHR project supported and funded by the European Union, with support from France, Norway, Italy and Switzerland.

Opening remarks: Tea Jaliashvili – First Deputy Director, ODIHR

Keynote speaker:

Marcin Walecki – Independent Expert, University of Oxford

Panel:

Arusyak Julhakyan – Member of Parliament, Chair of the Committee on State and Legal Affairs, National Assembly of Armenia

Igor Chiriac – Member of Parliament, Deputy Chair of the Legal Committee on Appointments and Immunities, Parliament of Moldova

Viktoriya Podgorna – Member of Parliament, Deputy Chairperson of the Committee on Digital Transformation and Chairperson of the Subcommittee on Issues of Digital Society Development, Adaptation of Ukrainian Legislation to the European Union Acquis, and Fulfilment of Ukraine’s International Legal Obligations in the Field of European Integration, Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine

Liliana Palihovici – Co-Chair of the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, Former Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova

Giorgi Burjanadze – Legal Advisor, Civil Society Foundation, Georgia.

Moderator: Oleksandra Garshyna – Associate Project Officer, ODIHR

Time: **14:00-15:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 2 – Saski**
Title: “Killed, Watched, Sued: Kazakhstan's Systemic Campaign Against Its Critics Abroad”
Convenor: Freedom for Eurasia
Working language: English, Russian

Summary: In June 2024, Kazakh opposition journalist Aidos Sadykov was shot outside his home in Kyiv — the city he had fled to as a place of refuge. He died two weeks later. His murder was not an isolated act of violence. It is the most extreme expression of a systemic strategy that the Kazakh state, its beneficiaries, and its agents use to silence critics far beyond the country's borders. This side event lays out that strategy in full: assassination, physical attacks, digital surveillance, and Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs) — including the SLAPP suit brought against Sadykov's widow, journalist Natalia Sadykova, who has continued their work exposing the regime since his death. These are not disconnected incidents. They are a coordinated toolkit, deployed against journalists, activists, and dissidents wherever they try to rebuild their lives in exile. Join us for an evidence-based discussion of Kazakhstan's transnational repression apparatus — and what OSCE participating States can and should do to close the legal and political gaps that let it operate with impunity. Speakers: Natalia Sadykova, Kazakh journalist living in exile, founder of BASE media, widow of Aidos Sadykov Irina Petrushova, Kazakh journalist living in exile, founder of Respublika media Moderator: Leila Seittbek, Chairwoman, Freedom for Eurasia

Time: **14:00-15:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 3 – Krolewski**
Title: Political Persecution in Karakalpakstan and the Cross-Border Targeting of Dissidents
Convenor: Karakalpak Diaspora in the U.S.A
Working language: English, Russian

Summary: This side event will examine the widening system of political persecution in the Sovereign Republic of Karakalpakstan and how repression follows activists, journalists, human rights defenders, and dissidents both at home and across national borders. Following the violent suppression of peaceful protests in Karakalpakstan in July 2022, the Uzbekistani authorities have intensified censorship, politically motivated prosecutions, arbitrary detention, and the misuse of extremism-related charges against individuals who defend fundamental rights or challenge official narratives. The continued imprisonment and reported mistreatment of Karakalpak lawyer and journalist Dauletmurat Tajimuratov have become powerful symbols of this broader campaign of repression. For those forced into exile, crossing a border does not guarantee safety. Transnational repression takes many forms, including digital surveillance, threats, pressure on family members, prosecution and sentencing in absentia, abductions from foreign countries, intimidation through diplomatic and security networks, and attempts to secure detention, extradition, or deportation. Bringing together human rights defenders, survivors, legal experts, and civil society representatives, the discussion will expose how these practices operate across borders and consider their wider implications for Central Asia and the OSCE region. It will also identify concrete measures that participating States and international institutions can take to protect those at risk, hold perpetrators accountable, and prevent national borders from becoming instruments of authoritarian repression.

Time: **14:00-15:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 4 – Opera**
Title: The Cross-Border Reach of Injustice in the OSCE Region
Convenor: Norwegian Helsinki Committee
Working language: English, Russian

Summary: The Side Event will bring together former judges, lawyers, human rights defenders and civil society experts from Türkiye, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia and Kazakhstan. Drawing on concrete cases, speakers will examine how restrictive legislation, politically motivated prosecutions, weakened judicial safeguards, and pressure on independent lawyers interact across national contexts. The discussion will address the misuse of international legal and law-enforcement cooperation against exiles and dissidents, compare patterns across the OSCE region and explore responses from OSCE participating States, international institutions and civil society. When courts and cross-border cooperation in the OSCE region give a green light to repressive practices, the consequences for the rule of law extend beyond the country where the persecution originates. Addressing these practices before they become normalised is an urgent test of the OSCE's ability to uphold the human dimension commitments and to prevent authoritarian methods from gaining acceptance across the OSCE region. The International Legal Initiative (ILI) has developed an AI "copilot," a tool for drafting legal complaints and other legal documents relevant to international mechanisms and domestic legal systems. A recent decision by the European Court of Human Rights may also have contributed to the weakening of legal safeguards. The Court's decision in *Lebedova and Others v. Russia* to strike out 829 remaining non-conflict-related cases against Russia deprived hundreds of applicants of their final opportunity for an authoritative judicial ruling on alleged human rights abuses. It undermined efforts to document and formally establish Russia's responsibility for such abuses. According to lawyers from the Memorial Human Rights Defence Centre, this is "unprecedented in the history of international justice as a whole". The side event aims to present concrete recommendations to both the OSCE and Participating States to confront transnational repression and impunity for serious human rights abuses.

Speakers:

Mr Yavuz Aydin, Turkish judge in exile, Co-founder of Justice for Rule of Law Association

Ms Tamar Oniani, Chairwoman, Georgian Young Lawyers Association

Mr Emin Abbasov, Chairman, Independent Lawyers Network

Ms Aina Shormanbayeva, President of the International Legal Initiative (ILI)

Mr Grigory Vaypan, Senior Lawyer, Memorial Human Rights Defence Centre

Moderator: Marius Fossum, Head of Central Asia office, NHC

Time: **14:00-15:00**

Venue: **Meeting Room 5 – Plenary**

Title: Constitutional Reform and Human Rights

Convenor: Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the OSCE

Working language: English, Russian

Summary: The side event will examine Kazakhstan's 2026 constitutional reset and the first elections to the new unicameral legislature, the Kurultai, held on 23 August 2026. The discussion will place the referendum of 15 March, the entry into force of the new Constitution on 1 July, and the subsequent electoral process in the framework of OSCE commitments on democratic institutions and genuine elections. Participants will address three interrelated questions. First, whether the new institutional design — a 145-member Kurultai elected from closed party lists in a single nationwide constituency — expands or narrows political participation, including in light of the removal of independent candidacies. Second, how the legal framework adopted shortly before the elections, with limited public consultation, corresponds to OSCE commitments and prior ODIHR recommendations. Third, what the first sitting of the Kurultai means for democracy at the national level: separation of powers, parliamentary oversight, and the space for political alternatives. The event will draw on the ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission and the International Election Observation Mission's Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions of 24 August 2026. It aims to identify concrete follow-up steps that would strengthen pluralism, equal opportunity and public confidence in the new institutional architecture.

Keynote speakers:

Artur Lastayev - Human Rights Commissioner in the Republic of Kazakhstan

Nicholas Mazik - Senior Human Dimension Officer at the OSCE Programme Office in Astana

Ayim Shayahmetova - Judge of the Astana City Court

Time: **15:30-16:30**

Venue: **Meeting Room 1 – Belweder**

Title: Ensuring Judicial Independence and Accountability: Judicial vetting and other extraordinary reform measures in the OSCE Region

Convenor: OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Working language: English

Summary: An independent and accountable judiciary is a critical pillar of a functional democracy. ODIHR has noted increasing debate regarding and use in practice of judicial vetting and other extraordinary reform measures to address systemic challenges in within the OSCE region. While there may be legitimate grounds for implementing extraordinary reform measures, when vetting is used instead of established constitutional mechanisms, there appears a risk of undue interference in the independence and impartiality of the judiciary. International standards regarding the irremovability of judges and their due process rights may also be jeopardized. Other challenges include severe staff shortages, backlogs, the risk of politicization of the process, disbalance of power between the branches of government, and democratic destabilization when “cleaning house” upon change of government becomes normalized within political culture. This event will discuss the experiences regarding judicial vetting and other extraordinary reform measures within the OSCE region, map obstacles to addressing systemic challenges in judiciaries through the use of ordinary constitutional mechanisms, and grounds for resorting to extraordinary measures, such as vetting. The event will build on knowledge accumulated through the monitoring of integrity evaluation (vetting) and legal analysis of the experiences of participating States such as Albania, Moldova, Ukraine, Poland and Hungary. It will also aim to explore how the OSCE and other stakeholders can help support judicial reforms while ensuring that they comply with international standards and good practices.

Time: **15:30-16:30**

Venue: **Meeting Room 2 – Saski**

Title: Voices Against Digital Repression: Human Rights in Central Asia

Convenor: Human Rights Consulting Group Public Foundation; Human Rights Centre Glotion; Public Fund Nomad Rights; Public Foundation CIVICS

Working language: English, Russian

Summary: In Central Asia, digitalization is increasingly becoming a tool of control rather than development. Amid shrinking civic space and growing challenges, states across the region are deploying mass surveillance systems, facial recognition, and personal data collection, resorting to internet shutdowns, blocking, and digital censorship, while online expression increasingly becomes grounds for persecution. A new generation of human rights defenders is responding to these challenges with new ideas, strategies, and formats of work not only addressing local problems but also engaging more actively with international human rights protection mechanisms, preparing reports, recommendations, and analytical materials for global structures. Their work reflects both a commitment to change within the countries of the region and a readiness to engage in dialogue on the international stage. This side event will provide a platform for human rights defenders from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan to present key areas of their work through the lens of digitalization:

freedom of peaceful assembly and expression in the digital age; challenges related to access to the internet and information; issues of privacy and personal data protection; and the digital security of activists and vulnerable groups. For diplomatic missions and international organizations, this event will be an opportunity to directly hear voices from the region, access up-to-date information, and review independent assessments and practical recommendations. A key focus will be placed on partnership opportunities, including joint advocacy initiatives, resource mobilization, and building sustainable cross-border networks in defense of digital rights. The session will highlight the revitalization and broadening of the human rights movement in Central Asia amid digital challenges and will conclude with a discussion on concrete steps international partners can take to support its resilience, sustainability, and growing impact.

Time: **15:30-16:30**
Venue: **Meeting Room 3 – Krolewski**
Title: Developing Civil Society in the New Uzbekistan: Results of Reforms
Convenor: The Centre for the Analysis of Democratic Processes
Working language: English, Russian

Summary: This side-event will examine the dynamic evolution of civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Uzbekistan over recent years. Panelists will discuss key legal and policy reforms, the enhancing role of public councils, and the growth of state support mechanisms for CSOs. The session will highlight practical achievements, current challenges in institutional development, and strategic prospects for strengthening public participation and civic engagement in decision-making processes.

Time: **15:30-16:30**
Venue: **Meeting Room 4 – Opera**
Title: From Documentation to Justice: Key Challenges in Providing Systemic Support to Victims of International Crimes Committed by the Russian Federation's Armed Forces
Convenor: Ukraine without Torture; Netherlands Helsinki Committee; Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union
Working language: English

Summary: This side event will address key challenges in providing systemic support to victims of international crimes committed by the Russian Federation's armed forces. Particular attention will be given to the vulnerability of persons in places of detention in Ukraine and the challenges of ensuring their protection and access to remedies. The discussion will focus on the place of victims in transitional justice policy and on how their rights and needs can be effectively addressed within justice and accountability processes. Representatives of Ukrainian civil society, the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights and the Office of the Prosecutor General will share perspectives on existing challenges and approaches to strengthening victim-centred responses. A separate part of the discussion will focus on the international compensation mechanism as an important component of further support for victims, including challenges related to ensuring access to compensation for persons in places of detention. The event will bring together civil society, national institutions and international partners to discuss how documentation of international crimes can contribute to effective protection, access to justice and remedies for victims.

Programme:

Opening remarks (5 mins) Anhelina Shablovska, Junior Programme Officer, Netherlands Helsinki Committee War crimes against places of detention in Ukraine: the vulnerability of individuals and the challenges of protecting them (speaker, 5 mins)

Artem Volodin – Representative of the Human Rights Commissioner in places of detention Victims as a central element of transitional justice policy (panel, 30 mins)

Oleksandr Pavlichenko executive director of the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union

Veronika Cherkez, project manager at NGO “Ukraine Without Torture”/ Vladyslav Yehorov, project manager at NGO “Ukraine Without Torture”

Yaroslav Hlasov, Chief Specialist of the Third Division of the Victim and Witness Coordination Center at the Office of the Prosecutor General (panel, 10 mins)

Iryna Mykhailichenko - Deputy Head of the Third Division of the Coordination Centre for Victim and Witness at the Office of the Prosecutor General

Discussion / questions from participants (10 mins)

Monday, 12 October

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

Venue: **Meeting Room 1 – Belweder**

Title: “Advancing disability-inclusive parliaments: an assessment methodology and insights from the OSCE region” - publication launch

Convenor: OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights; OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Working language: English

Summary: Parliaments play a central role in representative democracies as institutions responsible for law-making, oversight and representation. Yet across the OSCE region, persons with disabilities continue to face barriers to full and effective participation in these institutions, despite widespread ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and recent data shows that representation of persons with disabilities in national parliaments remains low. Drawing on the gaps identified through a 2024 ODIHR/OSCE PA survey of national parliaments across the region, ODIHR has developed a comprehensive methodology for assessing disability inclusion in parliaments. Going beyond accessibility alone, the methodology addresses law-making, oversight and representation, offering parliaments a practical tool to identify barriers and take targeted, actionable steps towards reform. ODIHR and OSCE PAs new publication “Advancing disability-inclusive parliaments: an assessment methodology and insights from the OSCE region” presents this methodology alongside the survey findings, including good practices from across the OSCE region. This side event will launch the publication, present the methodology, and discuss its findings and practical application. Participants who require reasonable accommodations to participate in the event are kindly requested to contact disability-inclusion@odihr.pl by 28 September 2026.

Opening remarks: Tea Jaliashvili, First Deputy Director, ODIHR (TBC), Farah Karimi, Head of Delegation, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, OSCE PA (The Netherlands)

Speakers:

Zaruhi Batoyan, Member of Parliament at the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia

Dastan Bekeshev, Member of the Jogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic

Ainura Usupbekova, Director of Public Foundation “Civic Platform”, Kyrgyzstan

Presenter: Lisa Jacobsen, Associate Democratic Governance Officer, Democratization Department,

Moderator: Yulia Netesova, Chief, Democratic Governance and Gender Unit, Democratization Department, ODIHR

Time: **09:00-10:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 2 – Saski**
Title: From Findings to Action: Georgia After the Moscow Mechanism
Convenor: Netherlands Helsinki Committee; Human Rights House Foundation
Working language: English

Summary: Since the invocation of the OSCE Moscow Mechanism in January 2026, civic space in Georgia has continued to shrink. The fact-finding mission and subsequent report by OSCE Rapporteur, Professor Patrycja Grzebyk, documented serious and systemic violations. These included violence and other abuses against protesters, political opponents and journalists; increasing restrictions on freedom of expression, assembly and association, and the use of administrative and criminal measures against government critics. This side event will bring together Georgian civil society representatives and the OSCE Rapporteur to examine recent developments and priorities for international follow-up. Civil society will share first-hand perspectives on the situation and their protection and accountability needs, while the Rapporteur will reflect on the report's findings and recommendations at this stage. The discussion will focus on how OSCE participating States and other international actors can sustain support to civil society and take forward the recommendations into real sustained action.

Panelists:

Nino Dolidze, Democracy and election integrity expert
Tamta Mikeladze, Social Justice Center
Giorgi Burjanadze, Civil Society Foundation
Dr. Patrycja Grzebyk, OSCE Rapporteur on Georgia
Moderated by Ruth del Pino Bleijerveld, Netherlands Helsinki Committee

Time: **09:00-10:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 3 – Krolewski**
Title: Achieving Lasting Peace Between Armenia- Azerbaijan Societies
Convenor: Free Citizen Civic Initiatives Support Center NGO
Working language: English, Russian

Summary: Normalisation between Armenia and Azerbaijan has advanced at the intergovernmental level, but the two societies remain largely separated. Decades of conflict, closed borders and mutually hostile information environments have left few channels through which journalists, experts and civic actors on either side can speak to one another — or to their own publics — about what a durable peace would actually require. Public debate in both countries is shaped by narratives inherited from the conflict, with little room for the questions that determine whether a settlement holds: what justice is owed, who is included, and what neighbourly relations would look like in practice. This side event brings together Armenian and Azerbaijani journalists, researchers and civil society representatives, including those working in exile, to discuss what contact between societies contributes to stability in the South Caucasus, and what it currently costs those who pursue it. Participants will draw on their own recent joint work: how audiences in both countries react when familiar narratives are questioned by voices from the other side, which subjects remain unsayable, and where cross-border co-operation has been able to reduce tension rather than raise it. The discussion approaches these questions through the OSCE's concept of comprehensive security, in which the human dimension is a security dimension rather than an adjunct to it. It will close with concrete recommendations to participating States, the Swiss Chairpersonship and relevant OSCE structures on treating civic and professional contact between the two societies as conflict prevention, and on protecting those who carry it out.

Time: **09:00-10:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 4 – Opera**
Title: Indigenous Political Prisoners
Convenor: Indigenous of Russia Foundation
Working language: English

Summary: As of September, 2026, Russian human rights organisations, such as Memorial and OVD-info, list more than 5000 politically motivated persecutions in Russia. Those are people who are imprisoned, held under arrest or criminal investigation only because of their political opposition to the Russian government and its actions. Since 2022, many have been persecuted for publicly condemning the war with Ukraine, and for being proponents of peace. Some political prisoners are well-known to the public: it is usually those who had media presence before the imprisonment, such as politicians, bloggers, artists, journalists of big media outlets. Their cases are often mentioned in the media, they have international support and attention. Many political prisoners, though, remain almost invisible and unheard of. In accordance with the unequal distribution of political power and resources across Russia, most of the famous and well-supported political prisoners are people, who lived and worked in Moscow or Saint Petersburg. However, Russia is a huge country with most of its lands belonging to various Indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities. Today, Indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities in Russia are routinely subjected to unprecedented levels of state-supported violence: they are disproportionately pulled to the war in Ukraine, they are attacked by Russian neo-nazi groups, they have their culture and languages repressed and erased. For resistance to that, Russian authorities label them “foreign agents”; “extremists”; and “terrorists”; and imprison them. Unfortunately, names of political prisoners from regions and republics of Russia, indigenous activists and ethnic minorities often remain in the shadows. For a person held in Russian prison this means no public advocacy, no protection from violence which public attention can bring, no hope to be freed during exchange of political prisoners. During this event, we will share stories of Indigenous political prisoners in Russia and their current situations. We will discuss how racial and ethnic inequalities in Russia shape political repressions in ethnic republics and regions.

Time: **09:00-10:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 5 – Plenary**
Title: The resilience of democratic processes to threats arising from FIMI: the Case of elections in Armenia
Convenor: Permanent Mission of the Republic of Poland to the OSCE in Vienna
Working language: English, Russian

Summary: Foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) constitutes a serious threat to democratic and national security, human rights and the rule of law. FIMI operations are designed to distort democratic debate, erode public trust in institutions and the media, and undermine the integrity of electoral and political processes. They are deployed by various threat actors with a steadily growing intensity powered by AI and emerging technologies and by misusing vulnerabilities of democratic systems. The OSCE participating States face complex challenges in building resilience against FIMI since the region spans diverse political landscapes that malicious actors strategically exploit. The discussion will focus on the case of Armenia and examine typical vulnerabilities that occur while a country undergoes political and economic transition. The Armenian parliamentary election of June 2026 showcased how these vulnerabilities manifest under real-world political pressure. The discussion will feature expert insight on addressing electoral FIMI threats and examining responses that range from

real-time technical detection to long-term societal resilience. The discussion aims to contribute to the broader efforts of defending democratic values and promoting secure, transparent elections across the OSCE region. Guiding questions: 1. What instruments could countries use to limit operational space of FIMI, increase costs for the adversaries and shift from reactive to anticipatory approach? How to reduce the likelihood of future attacks? 2. Since prevention is key, how to build a long-term resilience of societies and countries most effectively? What are the immediate tools against FIMI that address vulnerabilities across all generations? 3. How has Armenia been targeted by FIMI? What vulnerabilities have been exploited, and what tools and tactics have been used? To what extent have these efforts been successful? 4. What lessons can be learned from Armenia's experience in addressing FIMI, particularly in the context of elections? How to apply these lessons across the OSCE region?

Speakers:

Ms. Meaghan Fitzgerald, Head of the Election Department, ODIHR

Mr. Davit Petrosyan, Yerevan Center for Security Policy, Armenia

Mr. Artur Papyan, Threat Research CyberHub, Armenia

Opening remarks: Amb. Marek Szczygieł, PermRep of Poland to the OSCE in Vienna

Moderator: Michalina Grzelka, Senior Analyst at the Research and Academic Computer Network (NASK), Poland

Time: **17:00-18:00**

Venue: **Meeting Room 1 – Belweder**

Title: Resilient & Crisis-Adapted Anti-Trafficking Systems: The Power of Survivor-Informed Response

Convenor: OSCE Secretariat; Office of the Special Representative/Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings; OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights; OSCE Secretariat Support Programme for Ukraine

Working language: English

Summary: Human trafficking is a cross-dimensional topic, which requires urgent and co-ordinated action, especially when happening in crisis or conflict contexts. Health emergencies, armed conflicts, natural disasters, and economic shocks continue to fuel conditions conducive to exploitation. Traffickers prey on the complex interplay of personal, social, and systemic vulnerabilities. Trafficking networks remain highly adaptive, quickly shifting into new physical and digital spaces and exploiting emerging opportunities created by instability. In contrast, victims continue to encounter significant and enduring barriers to identification, protection, and access to justice. Prosecutions remain limited. The persistent disparity between the scale of the crime and the comparatively modest scale of collective responses underscores the need for proactive, sustained, strategic, and well-resourced action. Since its first Ministerial Council Decision in 2000, the OSCE has emphasized the need to combat human trafficking in conflict and post-conflict situations. A quarter century later, stronger efforts are required to prepare the OSCE and participating States to respond to current and future needs and challenges, and to build resilient national and regional anti-trafficking responses. With crises and emergencies constantly affecting the OSCE region, it's high time to move from ad hoc and scattered anti-trafficking interventions to a well-planned whole-of-society anti-trafficking response. Developing effective anti-trafficking responses, particularly vital for crisis or conflict-related settings, requires the systematic inclusion of survivor expertise. Survivor leaders understand human trafficking from 'the inside-out' and, therefore, understand the perspectives of both the profit-driven traffickers and their victims. They can help develop proactive solutions in a field where misunderstandings and erroneous assumptions about the actions and behaviours of both traffickers and victims commonly result in failed or ineffective anti-trafficking responses, which can lead to double victimization in crisis contexts. This side event aims to

examine emerging trends and key challenges related to human trafficking in crises and conflict settings, and to highlight the importance of proactive, strategic, systematic approaches for integrating survivors' expertise into public policies and measures aimed at combating human trafficking throughout crises and post-conflict recovery.

Time: **17:00-18:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 2 – Saski**
Title: Refugees, Human Rights and Social Cohesion: Challenges and Pathways to Peaceful Coexistence
Convenor: Danube Dialogue Institute Foundation (Dunaj Instytut Dialogu)
Working language: English

Summary: What happens when the emergency is over? Asylum policies across the OSCE region are getting stricter, while much of the support available to refugees is still designed to respond to immediate needs rather than provide long-term support. This side event asks what protection and support should look like beyond the initial response, both for refugees and for the communities they live in.

Speakers (in person):

Ramazan Özgü, MLaw, Researcher, URPP Digital Religion(s), Faculty of Law, University of Zurich
“Human Dignity and Human Rights in Times of Restrictive Asylum Policies: What Can Asylum Chaplaincy Provide?”

Elmi Abdi, President, Fundacja dla Migrantów „Dobry Start” im. A.G. Farah “Built Together: What 19 Years of Dobry Start Says About Integration”

Dr. Dominik Wach, Jagiellonian University “Beyond Emergency Response: Building Sustainable Refugee Integration Systems”

Natalia Gebert, Founder and President, Fundacja Inicjatywa Dom Otwarty

Moderator (in person): Hubert Iwanow, Master’s Student in English Philology with Translation, University of Białystok Discussion is open to the floor.

Anyone working on asylum, anti-discrimination or refugee inclusion is welcome to join.

Time: **17:00-18:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 3 – Krolewski**
Title: The Systematic Practice of Enforced Disappearances as a War Crime Committed by the Russian Federation: Investigation Strategies and International Accountability
Convenor: Center for Civil Liberties
Working language: English, Ukrainian

Summary: Since the start of the Russian Federation’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the enforced disappearances of military personnel and civilians have become a large-scale and systematic state policy of the aggressor. The Russian Federation systematically conceals the fact that thousands of Ukrainians have been deprived of their liberty, holds them in inhumane conditions without the right to legal defense, and subjects them to torture and deprivation, while categorically ignoring its international obligations. During the event, human rights defenders and experts will propose measures to protect against enforced disappearances in the OSCE region, based on the findings of analytical studies on the legal classification of enforced disappearances as war crimes and crimes against humanity (in accordance with the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court). Participants will discuss the need to increase international legal pressure on the Russian Federation, the application of universal jurisdiction, as well as the

challenges facing the national investigation in Ukraine and ways to fundamentally reform the state system for locating missing persons.

Key Issues for Discussion:

The Systematic Nature of the Russian Federation's Crimes in the OSCE Region: Evidence of the Russian Federation's deliberate policy to conceal the locations where civilian hostages and prisoners of war are being held (based on data from the T4P submission). Legal classification of the aggressor's actions as war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Advocacy and engagement of the international community: Compelling the Russian Federation to provide lists of detained persons and to immediately cease the practice of enforced disappearances. Ensuring access for OSCE observers, the ICRC, and other international missions to places of detention in the temporarily occupied territories and in the Russian Federation. Applying mechanisms of universal jurisdiction to hold perpetrators accountable in foreign courts.

Event moderator: Anastasiia Ihnatenko - War Consequences Officer of the Center for Civil Liberties (CCL).

Speakers:

Oleh Martynenko - permanent expert at the Center for Civil Liberties (CCL);

Mykhailo Romanov - human rights defender, expert of the Kharkiv Human Rights Group (KHRG);

Kateryna Nazarii - the wife of the victim of an enforced disappearance

Time: **17:00-18:00**

Venue: **Meeting Room 4 – Opera**

Title: From Democratic Backsliding to Democratic Repair? Hungary After the 2026 Elections

Convenor: Hungarian Helsinki Committee

Working language: English

Summary: The April 2026 elections ended sixteen years of uninterrupted rule by Viktor Orbán and opened a new chapter for democracy and human rights in Hungary. The new government inherited institutions and a legal framework profoundly reshaped by more than a decade of democratic backsliding, as well as the challenge of restoring the rule of law without compromising the very principles it seeks to rebuild. Five months into the transition, this panel will take stock of the changes and outstanding challenges so far. Civil society representatives will discuss progress and shortcomings in restoring checks and balances, fundamental rights, equality and civic space, as well as emerging new issues. The discussion will also explore the role of independent civil society in democratic transition and the broader lessons Hungary's experience may offer for democratic repair across the OSCE region.

Tuesday, 13 October

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

Venue: **Meeting Room 1 – Belweder**

Title: Hate Crime Targeting Migrants

Convenor: OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Working language: English

Summary: Xenophobic, racist and intersectional hate crimes targeting migrants continue to pose a serious concern across the OSCE region. Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers may be subjected to a wide range of bias-motivated crimes, including physical assaults, threats, harassment, property attacks and degrading treatment. Such incidents occur against a broader backdrop of heightened societal polarization and the spread of anti-migrant narratives, including online. By targeting individuals because of characteristics such as their actual or perceived ethnic origin, nationality, language, religion or migration status, these crimes inflict lasting harm on victims and can send a wider message of exclusion and intimidation. They undermine social cohesion, deepen social divisions and pose a broader security concern. Addressing such crimes requires effective measures to prevent incidents, encourage reporting, ensure appropriate recording and investigation and provide victims with access to justice and support. Effective responses require co-operation among governments, law enforcement agencies, civil society organizations and affected communities. In particular, this side event will raise awareness of the nature, drivers and impact of hate crimes targeting migrants across the OSCE region; reflect on ODIHR findings and trends concerning hate crimes targeting migrants, including incidents occurring at international borders, in transit contexts and in countries of reception and examine challenges related to identifying, reporting, recording and responding to hate crimes targeting migrants, including barriers faced by victims in accessing justice and support.

Remarks: Ambassador Evren Dağdelen Akgün, Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims;
Tea Jaliashvili, First Deputy Director, ODIHR

Panelists:

Christine Chemutai Yegon, Board Member, Black Justice Poland
Myroslava Keryk, President, Ukrainian House
Doros Polycarpou, Executive Director, KISA
Mariliza Deftou, Assistant Coordinator, Racist Violence Recording Network

Moderators: Ella Dodd, Migration and Freedom of Movement Adviser, Democratization Department, ODIHR; Mikaela Christiansson, Adviser on Combating Racism and Xenophobia, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department, ODIHR.

Time: **09:00-10:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 2 – Saski**
Title: Russian attacks on moving targets in Ukraine: Legal implications of Russian attacks on civilian locations on the basis of a temporary military presence, and their destructive effects
Convenor: Project Expedite Justice
Working language: English

Summary: This side event presents the report Out of Control: Moving Target Attacks in Ukraine and the Law of Armed Conflict, produced by Project Expedite Justice and Truth Hounds ([link]). On 27 June 2023, a Russian cruise missile struck the Ria Lounge cafe, a popular pizza restaurant in central Kramatorsk, killing 13 people and injuring 60. Russian forces claimed the strike had hit a temporary military command post. The evidence tells a different story: the cafe was operating as an ordinary public restaurant, military personnel present were off-duty and unarmed, and of the 13 people killed only two were active servicemen. Truth Hounds investigated the attack and concluded it constituted a war crime as an indiscriminate attack. The report uses Kramatorsk as its anchor case and examines three further incidents in which Russian forces struck civilian locations on the basis of a temporary military presence: Vinnytsia (14 July 2022), Zlatopil (4 July 2023), and Chernihiv (19 August 2023). Each involved a

precision-guided cruise missile with a significant launch-to-impact interval and substantial destructive effects. The incidents differ in location, alleged target, and evidentiary record, but they share a common pattern.

Panelists:

Silvia Ottinetti (Project Expedite Justice): main speaker and presenter; presents the findings of the joint PEJ/TH report Out of control: 'Moving targets attacks in Ukraine and the Law of Armed Conflict'

Anhelina Hrytsei, speaker (Truth Hounds)

Liliia Lakhnech, speaker (Truth Hounds)

Catalina Gómez Angel, Colombian journalist and witness (online)

Moderator: Olena Pashkovska (Truth Hounds)

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

Venue: **Meeting Room 3 – Krolewski**

Title: Transnational Repression Trends from Russia to Central Asia: How to Protect Civil Society Beyond Borders

Convenor: Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights; Free Russia Foundation; Juridia Global Rule of Law Foundation

Working language: English

Summary: Across Russia and Central Asia, states are increasingly extending repression beyond their borders by using extremism designations, foreign-agent and foreign-representative laws, Interpol abuse, citizenship revocation, and direct harassment to silence journalists, lawyers, and human rights defenders who have fled abroad. According to Freedom House's 2026 report on transnational repression, at least 54 governments engaged in this practice in 2025. The report specifically notes that “governments in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Belarus have exploited deep security ties with Moscow”; to pursue opponents abroad, with the Kremlin assisting neighbouring states in tracking down dissidents. Russia has long established itself as an expert on transnational repression (TNR) practices across OSCE jurisdictions by intentionally setting up mechanisms of extra-territorial reach in order to achieve its repressive aims abroad. This trend is gaining traction among its Central Asian neighbours, OSCE participating States, who are learning to use and perfect these harmful practices to deal with opposing voices. For example, courts in Kyrgyzstan, in 2025, designated two of the country's leading independent outlets, Kloop and Temirov Live, as “extremist” and continue prosecution of their leaders in absentia. A Turkmen journalist in exile was denied entry to Türkiye in 2024 at Turkmenistan's request because of his work reporting on forced labor, arbitrary detention, and reprisals against those who speak out. Uzbekistan's reach also extends to journalists in exile: independent Uzbek media workers in exile have faced coordinated takedown campaigns and surveillance-linked pressure on staff and family tied to state security services. In Tajikistan, State Committee on National Security agents forcibly disappeared two members of the banned opposition movement Group 24 from Türkiye in February and March 2024; both are reportedly held incommunicado in Dushanbe. In Kazakhstan, a leading advocate against domestic violence fled the country in 2021 and was placed on an international wanted list in 2024, with agents believed to be working for the government surveilling her in exile in Montenegro. To summarize, these are not isolated incidents but rather a regional pattern that mirrors and reinforces the same authoritarian playbook used in Russia.

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

Venue: **Meeting Room 4 – Opera**

Title: No Safe Haven: Confronting Transnational Repression Across the OSCE Region

Convenor: Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Safety
Working language: English

Summary: Transnational repression has become an increasingly prominent tool used by authoritarian governments to silence critics beyond their own borders. Journalists, bloggers, human rights defenders, political opponents, activists, and other dissidents living in exile are facing a growing range of threats: surveillance and digital harassment, intimidation of family members, abusive use of INTERPOL and other international mechanisms, politically motivated criminal cases, passport cancellations, coercive pressure, unlawful renditions, attempted kidnappings, and, in the most extreme cases, physical attacks and assassinations. This side event will examine patterns of transnational repression originating from OSCE participating States, with particular attention to cases involving Azerbaijan, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and other countries where authorities have sought to extend domestic repression beyond national borders. The discussion will bring together affected individuals, civil society representatives, journalists, human rights experts, and policymakers to assess both the evolving methods of transnational repression and the gaps in the current international response. Speakers will highlight how authoritarian governments exploit legal cooperation mechanisms, migration and asylum systems, digital technologies, diplomatic networks, and cross-border security arrangements to target critics abroad. A central focus of the event will be the need for urgent and coordinated action by like-minded States. Participants will discuss practical measures that governments can adopt to improve protection for individuals at risk, strengthen early-warning and rapid-response procedures, prevent the misuse of international policing and judicial cooperation mechanisms, and ensure accountability for officials and institutions involved in transnational repression. The event will also put forward concrete recommendations for the Swiss OSCE Chairpersonship on how the OSCE can develop more practical and operational response mechanisms to transnational repression. These may include stronger monitoring and documentation, dedicated points of contact, improved coordination between participating States and OSCE institutions, rapid-response procedures in urgent cases, and greater integration of transnational repression into the OSCE's human dimension and security agenda. By bringing together testimony, policy analysis, and actionable recommendations, the side event aims

Time: 09:00-10:00
Venue: Meeting Room 5 – Plenary
Title: Under Fire: Journalists and Volunteers Facing New Challenges of Drone Warfare
Convenor: Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna;
Human Rights Centre ZMINA; Institute of Mass Information
Working language: English

Summary: Organised by the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna, Human Rights Centre ZMINA and Institute of Mass Information. Co-sponsor: EU Delegation to the OSCE

Description: Russia's war against Ukraine is transforming the nature of modern warfare, with drones becoming one of its defining features. Their widespread use, including against civilians, has created new risks for those operating in frontline areas. Journalists documenting the war and volunteers evacuating civilians or delivering humanitarian assistance are increasingly targeted by Russian drone attacks despite their civilian status. At least 134 Ukrainian media workers have been killed since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion, while 115 volunteers have also lost their lives. At least 27 civilian media workers remain in Russian captivity. Thus, the new realities of warfare also raise difficult questions for international humanitarian law. Journalists and volunteers may use drone detectors, electronic warfare and other protective technologies simply to protect their lives. At the same time, such measures may create a risk of their civilian status being questioned. Similarly, media and humanitarian markings intended to ensure protection may instead make vehicles more visible to attackers. The event aims to

provide a platform to present documented cases, discuss emerging challenges and develop recommendations for OSCE participating States, ICRC and the international community. The side event will explore: ● first-hand stories from journalists and volunteers operating in frontline areas; ● new security risks created by modern warfare; ● legal implications of civilians using protective technologies; ● recommendations based on documented cases.

Speakers:

Ana More, Head of the Civil Society Protection Program, Human Rights Centre ZMINA

Kateryna Diachuk, Head of the Freedom of Speech Monitoring Department, Institute of Mass Information Ukrainian journalist reporting from the frontlines Ukrainian volunteer providing support to communities in frontline areas

TBC

Time: **16:00-17:00**

Venue: **Meeting Room 2 – Saski**

Title: Rights in the Shadows: Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the System of Political Repression in Belarus

Convenor: Belarusian Helsinki Committee

Working language: English

Summary: While political repression in Belarus receives significant attention, its impact on economic, social and cultural rights often remains in the shadows. Denial of access to education, employment and professional opportunities, as well as restrictions on participation in cultural life, have become an important part of the repressive system. For a large part of Belarusian society, repression is experienced not through direct arrest, prosecution or other forms of overt political persecution, but through these less visible restrictions imposed on everyday life. This side event will examine how restrictions on economic, social and cultural rights function as an integral part of political repression and as a means of exercising broader social control, systematically excluding people from professional, educational and cultural life. Speakers from the Belarusian Helsinki Committee, PEN Belarus and the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions will discuss how these measures operate, whom they affect, and why their cumulative impact should be constantly in focus as an integral part of the broader system of political repression in Belarus.

Speakers:

Ekaterina Deikalo, Belarusian Helsinki Committee

Maryia Zharylouskaya, Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions

Taciana Niadbaj, PEN Belarus

Moderator: Anais Marin, former UN Special Rapporteur on Belarus

Time: **16:00-17:00**

Venue: **Meeting Room 3 – Krolewski**

Title: Russian Interference in Elections: Lessons from Armenia, Moldova, Romania and the Baltic States

Convenor: Union of Informed Citizens

Working language: English

Summary: This side event will examine the methods and tools used by Russia to influence electoral processes in Armenia, Moldova, Romania and Lithuania. Drawing on recent country experiences, speakers will discuss disinformation and information manipulation, political and media influence, covert

networks, and other forms of interference that affect public opinion and trust in democratic institutions. The discussion will also highlight common patterns, country-specific vulnerabilities, and possible responses to strengthen electoral resilience.

Speakers:

Daniel Ioannisyan, Union of Informed Citizens, Armenia

Tomas Kazulėnas, Civic Resilience Initiative, Lithuania

Andrei Rusu, WatchDog.md, Moldova

Sorin Ioniță, Expert Forum, Romania

Time: **16:00-17:00**

Venue: **Meeting Room 4 – Opera**

Title: Surveilled Sources, Silenced Voices: Spyware, Youth, and the Future of Press Freedom

Convenor: Youth for Privacy

Working language: English

Summary: Commercial spyware and digital surveillance tools are increasingly used to target journalists, activists, and civil society figures across the OSCE region, with well documented cases raising serious concerns for press freedom and freedom of expression. This side event examines the chilling effect of digital surveillance on free expression, with a focus on an under-discussed dimension: its impact on the next generation of journalists, student media, and youth activists. As encrypted communication becomes essential to safe reporting, and as young journalists and activists increasingly organize and report online, they face many of the same spyware threats as established press, often without the institutional protections, legal resources, or digital security training available to professional newsrooms. This session brings together digital rights experts, press freedom advocates, and youth-led organizations to discuss how surveillance technology threatens source protection and press freedom, what legal and technical protections exist (and are missing) for young and student journalists, and how youth-focused digital literacy and security training can build resilience against these threats. The discussion will draw on examples of commercial spyware use across Europe to ground the conversation in real cases, while keeping the focus on the youth angle and forward-looking solutions.

Speakers:

Joon Baek (Youth for Privacy)

Azamkhon Sultonov (Global Shapers Warsaw Hub)

Julia Biziuk Zuzanna Karcz (University of Warsaw)

Time: **16:00-17:00**

Venue: **Meeting Room 5 – Plenary**

Title: Reporting in Wartime: Safety of Frontline Journalists in Ukraine and Accountability for Russia's Violations of International Humanitarian Law

Convenor: Permanent Mission of the Republic of Lithuania to the International Organizations in Vienna; Permanent Delegation of Sweden to the OSCE; Permanent Representation of France to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of Austria to the OSCE; Delegation of Canada to the OSCE; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark; Permanent Mission of the Republic of Estonia to the OSCE; Permanent Delegation of Finland to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of Germany to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of Greece to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of

the Republic of Latvia to OSCE; Permanent Mission of Montenegro to UN, OSCE and IOs in Vienna; Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the OSCE; Permanent Delegation of Norway to the OSCE; United Kingdom Delegation to the OSCE; Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media; Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna

Working language: English, Ukrainian

Summary: Organised by the OSCE participating States that are members of the Informal Group of Friends on Safety of Journalists, the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and Ukraine. Background: Since the start of Russia's full-scale aggression against Ukraine, journalists have continued to report from the frontline and other high-risk areas under extremely dangerous conditions. While documenting the realities of the war and providing independent information, media professionals have faced targeted attacks, shelling, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, torture and killings. At least 26 Ukrainian journalists remain in Russian captivity, many of them unlawfully detained and prosecuted on fabricated charges. These violations of International Humanitarian Law not only endanger individual journalists but also constitute attacks on media freedom and the public's right to access reliable information. Ensuring the safety of journalists therefore requires practical protection measures and sustained international efforts to secure the release of detained journalists, credible investigations, effective prosecution and accountability for those responsible. The case of Ukrainian journalist Viktoriia Roshchyna, who died in Russian captivity underscores the extreme dangers faced by journalists covering Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the urgent need to end impunity for crimes committed against media professionals. Her case serves as a reminder of the human cost of reporting the truth from areas under Russian occupation. The side event aims to bring together representatives of OSCE participating States, the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, journalists, international experts and civil society to discuss practical measures for strengthening the protection of journalists in conflict situations and advancing accountability for crimes committed against media professionals.

Opening remarks: Ambassador Jan Braathu, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

Speakers:

Liudmyla Yankina, Chairperson of Civis Fortis NGO, human rights defender, Ukraine

Yuliia Surkova, journalist, war correspondent (TBC)

Vassili Golod, journalist with German public TV ARD, director of ARD's studio in Kyiv

Moderator: Katja Pehrman, Human Rights Ambassador of Finland

Closing remarks: Ambassador Kęstutis Kudzmanas, Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the OSCE

Wednesday, 14 October

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

Venue: **Meeting Room 1 – Belweder**

Title: Launching event: Handbook on Observing and Promoting the Participation of Roma and Sinti in Electoral Processes

Convenor: OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Working language: English

Summary: Roma and Sinti continue to face significant barriers to equal and meaningful participation in electoral processes across the OSCE region. ODIHR election observation activities have documented

challenges ranging from discriminatory and anti-Roma rhetoric during election campaigns, intimidation, pressure and vote-buying, to obstacles related to voter registration and identification documents. Roma and Sinti also remain significantly under-represented as candidates and elected representatives, while women and youth may face additional and intersecting barriers to participation. In response to these persistent challenges, ODIHR has developed the Handbook on Observing and Promoting the Participation of Roma and Sinti in Electoral Processes. Drawing on ODIHR's established election observation methodology, its longstanding work on Roma and Sinti participation, and consultations with election and Roma and Sinti experts, the Handbook provides practical guidance for assessing barriers to electoral participation and identifying opportunities to promote more inclusive electoral processes. It aims to inform ODIHR Election Observation Activities, as well as civil society organizations invested in observing or advancing the participation of Roma and Sinti. This side event will formally launch the Handbook and present its main objectives, methodology and practical applications. The discussion will highlight key challenges affecting Roma and Sinti participation as voters, candidates and political actors, as well as the importance of systematically examining these issues. The event will also provide an opportunity to discuss how the Handbook can be translated into practical action beyond its launch, including through election observation, civil society monitoring, voter education, advocacy and follow-up to electoral recommendations. Participants will be invited to reflect on how Roma and Sinti civil society, election observers, participating States, political actors, and other actors can use the Handbook to strengthen meaningful participation, support rights-based electoral engagement and ensure that the specific experiences and concerns of Roma and Sinti are more effectively reflected in efforts to promote democratic and inclusive elections across the OSCE region.

Time: **09:00-10:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 2 – Saski**
Title: Transnational Repression: R2P in Democracies
Convenor: Uigurisches Zentrum für Demokratie und Menschenrechte; World Uyghur Congress
Working language: English

Summary: Transnational repression enables authoritarian States and their proxies to reach across borders to intimidate, silence and punish dissidents, journalists, human rights defenders, whistleblowers and diaspora communities in democracies. Methods include surveillance, spyware, threats, harassment, reprisals against relatives, abusive extradition or INTERPOL processes, coercive consular practices, physical attacks, abduction and assassination. It creates fear and self-censorship, undermines rights and can violate host-State sovereignty. This side event will examine the responsibility of democratic host States to protect persons within their jurisdiction and make protection enforceable in law and practice. “Responsibility to protect” is used in a human-rights sense and does not expand the distinct 2005 UN R2P doctrine. The discussion will focus on existing human rights obligations to prevent foreseeable harm, protect life and physical integrity, safeguard freedoms, investigate credible threats, provide effective remedies and prevent international cooperation mechanisms from being weaponised. The first part will address legislation, including a common definition, offences or aggravating circumstances for foreign-state-directed conduct, appropriate jurisdiction, safeguards for extradition, mutual legal assistance and INTERPOL processes, and effective remedies. It will also consider digital surveillance, foreign-state proxies and accountability for facilitators. The second part will focus on practical protection: coordinated threat assessment and rapid response; national focal points for victims; emergency physical and digital protection; evidence preservation and cross-border cooperation; and mechanisms to turn intelligence into evidence. Protection should be accessible regardless of nationality or migration status, with independent oversight. The event will seek to develop a practical “Warsaw

Protection Framework” for OSCE participating States, moving from recognition to prevention, protection, investigation, prosecution, remedy and cooperation, and identifying minimum standards to make democratic territory safe for those pursued across borders.

Speakers:

Dolkun Isa - Uyghur Center for Democracy and Human Rights

Turgunjan Alawdun - World Uyghur Congress

Andrei Sannikov - Former Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus

Sharov Azizov - Just for All international

Emin Huseynov - Institute for Human Rights

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

Venue: **Meeting Room 3 – Krolewski**

Title: The State Business of Repression: Forced Labour in Belarus

Convenor: Human Rights Center Viasna

Working language: English, Russian

Summary: Forced labour in Belarus is not a collection of isolated abuses but a systemic human rights problem embedded in a range of State policies, institutions and practices. It affects prisoners, including political prisoners, persons confined in “medical labour centres” (LTPs), persons with disabilities living in social care institutions, young professionals subject to mandatory job placement, and other groups. Compulsory subbotniks and “social dependency” policies further illustrate the broader use of State-imposed labour obligations. The title “The State Business of Repression” reflects a particularly troubling dimension of these practices: the State does not merely tolerate forced labour but, in many contexts, creates, regulates, administers and benefits from the mechanisms through which people are compelled to work. This is especially visible in the penitentiary system, where compulsory labour forms part of State-organised economic activity while also serving punitive and disciplinary purposes. There are indications that prison labour is used for the production of goods serving broader State, including security-related, needs. In the case of political prisoners, economic exploitation and political repression intersect: compulsory labour is accompanied by discriminatory and degrading treatment, particularly harsh working conditions and punitive work assignments. The side event will bring together Belarusian independent trade unions and human rights organisations working with different affected groups to demonstrate the scale, interconnectedness and systemic nature of forced labour in Belarus. Combining legal and institutional analysis with first-hand testimony from former political prisoners, the discussion will examine how compulsory labour can simultaneously generate economic value and operate as an instrument of punishment, discrimination, social control and political repression. It will also consider opportunities for stronger and more coordinated international scrutiny and response, including through relevant OSCE, ILO and UN mechanisms.

Speakers will represent the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (BKDP), Human Rights Center “Viasna”, Legal Initiative, and the Office for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [organisations are listed alphabetically], alongside former political prisoners with direct experience of forced labour.

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

Venue: **Meeting Room 4 – Opera**

Title: Civilian Detainees: the Impact of the Russian State Policy and their Role in Achieving Lasting Peace

Convenor: Ukrainian Legal Advisory Group

Working language: English, Russian

Summary: Russia's enforced disappearance of Ukrainian civilians is a systematic, coordinated state policy, as confirmed by monitoring mechanisms, including OSCE Moscow Mechanism and the UN Commission of Inquiry, along with sustained investigations, legal and advocacy efforts by civil society and victims of grave crimes. This pattern is illustrated starkly by various cases, including the case of three OSCE staff detained since 2022 despite their immunity. In the context of intensifying ceasefire negotiations, this event examines the fate of civilian detainees and the role the guarantee of their release plays for achieving a credible peace framework.

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

Venue: **Meeting Room 5 – Plenary**

Title: On sustaining national and cultural identity in authoritarian Belarus. The Belarusization from a youth perspective

Convenor: Permanent Mission of the Republic of Latvia to OSCE; Permanent Delegation of Sweden to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of the Republic of Estonia to the OSCE; Permanent Representation of France to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of the Republic of Poland to the OSCE in Vienna; Permanent Mission of the Republic of Lithuania to the International Organizations in Vienna; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark; Permanent Mission of Germany to the OSCE; United Kingdom Delegation to the OSCE; Delegation of Canada to the OSCE; Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of Belgium to the OSCE; Permanent Representation of Luxembourg to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of the Republic of Bulgaria to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of the Republic of Croatia to the OSCE, UN and International Organizations in Vienna; Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of Montenegro to UN, OSCE and IOs in Vienna; Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the OSCE; Permanent Delegation of Norway to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cyprus to the OSCE; Permanent Delegation of Finland to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of Greece to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of Iceland to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of Ireland to the OSCE; Italian Delegation to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna; Permanent Representation of Portugal to the OSCE; Permanent Mission of Romania to the International Organizations; Permanent Representation of Slovenia to the UN, OSCE and other International Organizations in Vienna; Permanent Representation of Spain to the OSCE

Working language: Belarusian, English

Summary: The side event is organised by the OSCE participating states that are members of the informal Group of Friends of Democratic Belarus Group. This side event highlights a critical dimension of the crisis in Belarus: the intersection of systemic cultural repression and the long-term impact it has on the next generation. As documented by human rights organisations, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus the Belarusian authorities have been targeting not only political opponents, human right defenders or civil society activists. They are systematically reshaping the country's cultural space, where the Belarusian cultural, linguistic, and historical identity are increasingly treated as markers of political disloyalty and opposition to the state. The 2023 OSCE Moscow Mechanism Report issued a recommendation to the Republic of Belarus encouraging it to preserve and document the traditional Belarusian language, literature, music, dance, customs, and other cultural practices. Instead of implementing international recommendations the Belarusian authorities have continued with erasing

independent civil society, criminalizing cultural identity, and stifling fundamental freedoms. This side event will examine how the Belarusian authorities use language and culture as tools of oppression and ideological control; how they label historical memory and national symbols as threats to national security; how the education system became a hostage of the authoritarian system in Belarus and is used for reproducing state ideology and curtailing critical thinking, and how the politization and militarisation of education shall build the “Russian world” in Belarus. Against this backdrop the speakers will address priorities, challenges and opportunities that young people from Belarus and young people in Belarus face and discuss.

Keynote speaker: Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, National Leader of Belarus, Head of the United Transitional Cabinet

Speakers:

Mr. Ales Bialiatski, Belarusian human rights defender and chair of the Viasna Human Rights Centre

Ms. Aleksandra Dojnicz, Chairperson of the Board of the Belarusian National Youth Council (RADA)

Dr. Stsiapan Stureika, Associate Professor at the European Humanities University Opening remarks:

Amb. Patrik Svensson, Swedish Government’s official representative to the Belarusian democratic movement in exile and Ambassador to the Eastern Partnership

Time: **16:00-17:00**

Venue: **Meeting Room 1 – Belweder**

Title: Strengthening the Responsive Capacity of Roma and pro-Roma Human Rights Defenders in Ukraine

Convenor: OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Working language: English, Ukrainian

Summary: A key area of ODIHR’s intervention in Ukraine includes fortifying the potential of Roma and pro-Roma human rights defenders (HRDs) to respond to emerging human rights concerns facing Roma. In this respect, the Office, within the framework of the Programme on Support for and Engagement in Ukraine, has established a capacity development framework delivering specialised training and structured mentorship programmes for Roma HRDs. These initiatives focus on core thematic areas such as human rights monitoring, advocacy, gender empowerment, digital safety and security, and well-being. Crucially, ODIHR bridges theoretical training with practical application through dedicated follow-up measures. Such approach ensures that knowledge translates into tangible skills thus enabling Roma HRDs to effectively advocate for protection of the human rights of Roma. The event will discuss the experiences and perspectives of Roma rights activists in the context of the ongoing war following the Russian Federation’s invasion of Ukraine, focusing on both the challenges they face and opportunities to strengthen their work. Speakers will navigate the dangers confronting Roma and pro-Roma human rights defenders during this inter-state conflict and strategies to respond to these concerns. Discussions will also focus on activists’ current efforts to combat discrimination against Roma and advocate for robust redress measures. Particular emphasis will be placed on understanding activists’ needs and elaborating targeted measures to support their essential work on the ground.

Time: **16:00-17:00**

Venue: **Meeting Room 2 – Saski**

Title: Following the discussion on post-colonial future – how to avoid discrimination and ensure equity

Convenor: Anti-Discrimination Centre Memorial

Working language: English, Russian

Summary: Anti-Discrimination Centre Memorial Brussels proposes to integrate the human rights approach into the ongoing discussion among many Indigenous activists on the idea of overcoming Russian colonial oppression, guaranteeing the cultural, economic, environmental and political rights of each group. While there are sound voices of the peoples of the Caucasus, the Urals and Siberia insisting on the future as independent national republics based on the cultural and political heritage of the local peoples, there are also concerns about the rights of other groups living on the same territories – such as small-numbered Indigenous peoples and other minorities. Most anti-colonial activists agree that the future political models should be democratic and inclusive. However, the question is how to ensure non-discrimination and equity, how to protect the rights of those who can't form an independent state, but need their rights to be realised within those future new political subjects? Another burning question would be – how to solve the existing problem of Russian domination (language, political and economic resources, ideas of the past and historical heritage)? What examples of the European historical past should be considered or could serve as a warning against too radical (even violent in some cases) approach? The 20th century showed many waves of politically dominated relocation of ethnic groups: Soviet repressions against peoples and later their efforts to get back to their native territories; German attempts to replace the population of the occupied lands, that ended with the exile in 1945 of millions of Germans from some parts of Central Europe; the 1923 population exchange between Greece and Turkey, and other similar cases (Polish and Ukrainian minorities exchange treaty of 1944). Maybe thinking of the relevant cases of the past century, trying to avoid the mistakes and prevent the crimes could help to plan a non-discriminating and inclusive future, and bring the idea of human rights protection as the most necessary element to these actual discussions.

Speakers:

Ruslan Valiev, Aspects of Bashkortostan;

Maria Ochir-Goryaeva, historian, decolonial activist from Republic of Kalmykia;

Tavlan Salpagarov, Indigenous Peoples Global Unity (via Zoom);

Representative of Indigenous peoples of North (tbc, via Zoom);

Natalia Sineaeva-Pankowska, “Never Again” Association

Time: 16:00-17:00

Venue: Meeting Room 3 – Krolewski

Title: Karakalpakstan: Minority Rights, Political Persecution, and Accountability after the July 2022 Events

Convenor: Enel El

Working language: Russian

Summary: This side event will examine the human rights situation in Karakalpakstan, with particular attention to the rights of the Karakalpak ethnic minority, political persecution, restrictions on fundamental freedoms, and the continuing lack of accountability following the events of July 2022. The discussion will address concerns surrounding the use of force against protesters in July 2022 and subsequent arrests, prosecutions, allegations of torture and ill-treatment, restrictions on freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, and pressure on activists, journalists, human rights defenders, and members of Karakalpak civil society. It will also examine concerns affecting the preservation of Karakalpak language, culture, identity, and meaningful participation in public and political life. Particular attention will be given to the case of Karakalpak lawyer and journalist Dauletmurat Tajimuratov, whose detention and treatment have been the subject of repeated interventions by UN human rights mechanisms, as well as to the broader situation of individuals prosecuted in connection with the July 2022 events. More than four years after the events, important questions of truth, justice, accountability, and effective remedies remain unresolved. The event will bring together human rights

defenders, civil society representatives, survivors, and experts to discuss these concerns and identify concrete steps that OSCE participating States, international organizations, and civil society can take to support accountability, protect fundamental freedoms, and safeguard the rights of the Karakalpak people.

Speakers:

Koshkarbay Toremuratov - NGO Eren El;
Karlibay Bekmuratov - Karakalpak Info
Nauryzbay Menlibayev - NGO Oyan Karakalpak;
Berdimurat Pirnazarov - Media Freedom of Karakalpakstan

Time: 16:00-17:00

Venue: Meeting Room 4 – Opera

Title: Transnational Repression by the Lukashenka Regime: A Coordinated International Response is Needed

Convenor: Prospect Foundation / iSANS – The International Strategic Action Network for Security; Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of Belgium to the OSCE; Delegation of Flanders in Poland and the Baltic States

Working language: English

Summary: Panellists will present two new reports addressing a major and growing problem faced by thousands of exiled Belarusians who have fled repression in their country: transnational repression (TNR) by the Lukashenka regime. Report by iSANS, “Evolution of Transnational Repression by the Lukashenka Regime: A Coordinated International Response Is Needed”, examines the evolution of TNR by the regime in Belarus and the diverse mechanisms it employs to silence and punish its exiled critics. It analyses a significant increase in the use of certain dangerous types of TNR in 2025-2026. The regime uses successful cases of TNR to demonstrate that its reach is not limited by borders and that it enjoys impunity. Another report, “Wanted by Dictator: Red Notice State”, recently produced by Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya’s Office in cooperation with BELPOL and with support of Cyber Partisans. It analyses the abuse of Interpol mechanisms and the use of bilateral extradition and mutual legal assistance agreements, examines cases of detention and threats of extradition in various countries, and attempts to conceal the political nature of criminal prosecutions. Understanding the methods of TNR employed by the Lukashenka regime and anticipating its further evolution is essential not only for protecting Belarusians in exile and supporting their democratic and pro-European aspirations, but also to counter interference in domestic affairs and undermining of sovereignty of other states by Belarus. The reports provide comprehensive recommendations to intergovernmental organisations and states, covering legislation, policies, institutions, protection measures, and implementation of the recent European Parliament resolution on countering TNR.

Speakers:

Vlad Kobets – iSANS Executive Director
Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya – Head of the United Transitional Cabinet of Belarus
Dr. Natasza Krawczyk – iSANS Senior Researcher
Yuri Dzhibladze – iSANS Head of Human Rights and Rule of Law Unit
Leanid Marozau – Advisor on Legal Affairs to Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, Head of the Legal Department of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya’s Office

Time: 16:00-17:00

Venue: **Meeting Room 5 – Plenary**
Title: Transnational Repression and Enhancing Protection of Journalists under Severe Political Pressure
Convenor: OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media; OSCE participating States that are members of the Informal Group of Friends on Safety of Journalists (Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom)
Working language: English, Russian

Summary: In recent years, the governments of some OSCE pS have established highly restrictive political, legal, and security media environments that make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for independent journalists and media entities to carry out their work without fear of reprisal. As a result of extensive restrictive mechanisms, most independent media in the affected countries have closed, while many journalists and other media actors have either stopped reporting on sensitive issues of public interest or been forced in exile in pursuit of safety. While many of these media professionals remain committed to their mission and continue to provide independent reporting and journalistic investigations, thereby playing a vital role in shedding light on human rights issues in their countries of origin and challenging disinformation and propaganda, even in exile they face numerous problems and risks in exile that threaten their safety and hinder their professional activities. One of the major concerns associated with living and working in exile is the evolving and expanding phenomenon of ‘transnational repression,’ which encompasses a broad array of forms and tactics aimed at coercing and silencing free media, including digital attacks, surveillance, legal harassment, pressure on the family members at home, and etc. With the participation of delegates from OSCE participating States, including government officials, journalists, and civil society experts, the side-event will discuss the challenges and vulnerabilities faced by journalists and media in exile in the OSCE region, alongside changes and developments to support them and to address the risks of transnational repression. The side-event will particularly build on the findings of the new report “Transnational Repression and Enhancing Protection of Journalists under Severe Political Pressure,” commissioned by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

Speakers:

Ambassador Jan Braathu, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media
Representative of the OSCE Group of Friends on Safety of Journalists (TBC)
Andrei Richter, Professor Researcher at the Comenius University in Bratislava –
Nasta Rouda, Director of Nasha Niva online newspaper

Thursday, 15 October

Time: **09:00-10:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 1 – Belweder**
Title: Women’s Power Breakfast: Women and Men Working Together for Gender Equality in Politics
Convenor: OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
Working language: English

Summary: Over the past two decades, the Women’s Power Breakfast has become a regular space for dialogue on gender equality and women’s political participation within the OSCE human dimension community. Marking its 20th edition in 2026, this year’s Breakfast takes place at a time of both progress and persistent challenges. Women now hold 32 per cent of seats in national parliaments across the OSCE

region, yet progress towards gender parity remains uneven. Decision-making positions across parliaments, political parties and governments continue to be held predominantly by men. Stereotypes, discriminatory social norms and gendered political cultures also continue to limit women's political participation and leadership. Achieving gender parity requires addressing the additional barriers faced by women experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, who remain among the most under-represented. Under the theme "Women and Men Working Together for Gender Equality in Politics," the 2026 Women's Power Breakfast will bring together women and men political leaders, civil society, practitioners and diplomats to explore how to accelerate progress towards equal participation and leadership. Building on ODIHR's work on inclusive governance and its Sarajevo Tool for Engaging Male Politicians in Achieving Gender Equality in Politics, the discussion will focus on moving from commitment to action. It will examine how more men can become active allies and champions for gender equality, and how women and men can share responsibility for transforming political institutions and cultures. The event will highlight practical approaches to accelerating progress towards gender parity. RSVP/confirm your participation by registering at this link: <https://forms.gle/LJ9rc7k93Bm4SUCc9>

Time: **09:00-10:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 2 – Saski**
Title: Discrimination against women in Belarus in the "Year of the Belarusian Woman"
Convenor: Human rights organization Respect - Protect - Fulfill; Fundacja WeWiem
Working language: English, Russian

Summary: The Belarusian authorities declared 2026 the "Year of the Belarusian Woman"; However, this declaration has proved largely symbolic, while the state continues to ignore women's actual needs. Based on testimonies and requests received from Belarusian women, this presentation will expose the extent of discrimination in Belarus by focusing on two areas of particular concern: civil and family law institutions, and the penitentiary system. The speakers will demonstrate how everyday legal procedures – such as divorce, child support, or determining a child's place of residence – have turned into a zone of systemic obstacles and a source of heightened social vulnerability for women. This transformation has resulted in a deep legal vacuum with a pronounced gender dimension, affecting both women inside the country and Belarusian families in exile. The second part of the presentation focuses on discrimination against women in places of detention. According to the latest available data, the proportion of women in Belarus's total prison population reaches 10.8%, making it one of the highest figures on the continent. According to the World Female Imprisonment List, the country ranks first in Europe in terms of the female imprisonment rate. The gender dimension of detention has resounded with renewed force in Belarus since 2020, following a massive wave of political repression that continues unabated to this day. From video surveillance in cells and strip searches to giving birth in handcuffs, violations of the rights of female prisoners permeate the entire penitentiary system. The report will demonstrate this problem at all levels: from access to medical care to forced labor conditions in penal colonies. State institutions not only reproduce discrimination but also reject any attempts to defend gender justice. Complaints submitted in penal colonies by female prisoners entail additional punishment and repression. These facts paint a final, stark picture of horrific gender insecurity. Therefore, as part of the presentation, the speakers will focus on available international mechanisms to protect Belarusian women. Experts from civil society organizations will conduct the event:
Anastasiya Khomich-Bazar, Darya Dobrovoloskaya from WeWiem;
Lizaveta Matsveyeva from Respect-Protect-Fulfill and Nasta Loika from Human Constanta

Time: **09:00-10:00**
Venue: **Meeting Room 3 – Krolewski**

Title: Foreign agents laws and its impact on women, LGBTQI and other vulnerable groups
Convenor: International Federation for Human Rights
Working language: English, Russian

Summary: This side-event aims to shed light on the interrelation between “foreign agent” and related legislation and repressive laws targeting women, LGBTQ+ people and other vulnerable groups. It will examine how legislation introduced under the pretext of combating “foreign interference” affects vulnerable groups, restricts their access to support and protection, and exacerbates existing vulnerabilities. This includes “LGBT propaganda” bans that effectively criminalise the community, the failure to adopt comprehensive legislation on domestic violence, and measures that further undermine migrants’ rights. Both types of legislation are usually justified as a measure to uphold “traditional values”; Both types of legislation are often introduced almost simultaneously; Their combined impact further restricts access to support, protection and rights for vulnerable groups.

Time: **10:30-11:30**
Venue: **Meeting Room 1 – Belweder**
Title: Understanding the Inequalities of Roma and Sinti Women Through an Intersectional Lens
Convenor: OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
Working language: English

Summary: Intersectionality can provide as a valuable framework for understanding and recognising the lived experiences of women facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and inequality, including racism, sexism, misogyny, classism and systemic marginalization simultaneously. Applying this lens to Roma and Sinti women explains how overlapping forms of inequalities and oppression compound one another and why single-issue approaches fall short. Through its Fourth Status Report, ODIHR emphasised that intersectional discrimination facing Roma women should be both responded to at the policy level and integrated into broader equality and anti-discrimination frameworks. This event will provide a platform to discuss the strategies devised by Roma and Sinti women advocates to combat intersectional discrimination while promoting equal rights and equitable opportunities. Panellists will employ an intersectional lens to examine how gender-based vulnerabilities among Roma are deepened by emerging concerns, including growing societal polarization, armed conflicts, and digital threats. A central focus of these discussions will be the narratives surrounding gender-based violence, often oversimplified through a single analytical lens and mischaracterised as a ‘cultural behaviour’. Particular attention will be paid to technology-facilitated gender-based violence and its impact on Roma and Sinti women.

Time: **10:30-11:30**
Venue: **Meeting Room 2 – Saski**
Title: Accessibility of Polling Places, the Rights of People with Disabilities, and Independent Monitoring in Kazakhstan
Convenor: Equal Rights; Republican Public Association Mukalmas
Working language: English, Russian

Summary: The event will focus on the accessibility of polling places for people with disabilities, existing barriers, and the effectiveness of measures taken by the government. A separate segment will be devoted to the rights of children with disabilities and issues of discrimination, including questions of equal access

to education, social life, and public life. An important part of the event will be the results of independent observation of the elections to the Quryltay.

Speakers:

Alexander Danchev – Director of the “Equal Rights” Public Association, Head of the North Kazakhstan Regional Branch of the “Mukalmas” Republican Public Association

Gaziza Amirbekova – Chairwoman of the “Mukalmas” Republican Public Association

Marat Zhumakhmetov – Head of the Kyzylorda Regional Branch of the national public association “Mukalmas”

Time: 10:30-11:30

Venue: Meeting Room 3 – Krolewski

Title: Young displaced women and women human rights defenders: Shaping security and democratic futures

Convenor: The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation

Working language: English

Summary: Across Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus, protracted conflicts and displacement continue to shape the lives of millions. For many, displacement is no longer temporary but a long-term reality affecting rights, participation, social inclusion and prospects for peace. Young displaced women often face barriers to decision-making, economic opportunities and access to rights, while carrying the effects of conflict and intergenerational trauma. At the same time, women human rights defenders are operating in increasingly challenging environments. Findings from The State of Women Human Rights Defenders 2026 show how shrinking civic space, anti-gender movements, online violence, gendered disinformation, conflict and funding cuts are undermining their safety and ability to work. Many women’s rights activists supporting displaced communities are at the forefront of humanitarian response, peacebuilding and rights advocacy, while facing gender-specific threats and attacks. Despite their expertise and leadership, both young displaced women and women’s rights activists remain underrepresented in decision-making processes that directly affect their lives and communities. Yet they play a critical role in strengthening social cohesion, promoting democratic values and advancing sustainable peace. This side event will bring together young displaced women, women human rights defenders and policy experts to discuss how OSCE participating States, ODIHR, the EU and international partners can better protect rights, strengthen civic space and ensure the meaningful participation of conflict-affected women and girls in policy and peacebuilding processes.

Speakers: Tamta Mikeladze, Social Justice Centre, Georgia

Daria Kordonova, Ukraine

Dr Lara Scarpitta, OSCE Senior Advisor on Gender

Eva Zillén, Kvinna till Kvinna

Time: 10:30-11:30

Venue: Meeting Room 4 – Opera

Title: Safety of Women in Political and Public Sphere

Convenor: OSCE Mission in Kosovo

Working language: English

Summary: This Side Event will examine the safety of women in political and public life as a prerequisite for their equal, meaningful and effective participation in democratic processes. It will bring together representatives of ODIHR, the OSCE Secretariat, and three OSCE field operations in Southeast Europe,

i.e. the Mission in Kosovo, the Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Mission to Montenegro. Together, they will explore the issue from different, but complementary perspectives, sharing practical approaches and lessons learned from across the OSCE area. The OSCE Secretariat will examine the root causes of violence against women (VAW) and how they interplay in the social discourse, particularly focussing on its human rights and security dimension; ODIHR will address the implications of VAWiP for democratic participation and inclusive governance; the OSCE Mission in Kosovo will present its institutional approach to preventing and responding to VAWiP; the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina will focus on engagement with political parties to address barriers to women's political participation; and the OSCE Mission to Montenegro will highlight engagement with the media, including on safety of women journalists. Together, these perspectives will demonstrate the value of a comprehensive, multi-level approach to preventing violence against women in politics and creating an enabling environment for women's full participation in political and public life.

AGENDA

Opening Remarks: Dr Lara Scarpitta, OSCE Senior Adviser on Gender Issues/Head, Gender Issues Programme, OSCE Secretariat

Panel Discussion: Moderated by Yulia Netesova, Chief of Democratic Governance and Gender Unit, ODIHR

Violence Against Women: Root Causes and Societal Context - Elmaja Bavčić, Adviser on Gender Equality, Gender Issues Programme

Violence Against Women in Politics: Implications for Democratic Participation and Inclusive Governance - Ajla Van Heel Medranović, Democratic Governance and Gender Unit, ODIHR

Good Practice I: Addressing VAWiP through Institutional Engagement - Boshko Stankovski, Chief of Governance Section, OSCE Mission in Kosovo

Good Practice II: Addressing VAWiP through Media Engagement - Evan Eberle, Media Programme Manager, OSCE Mission to Montenegro

Good Practice III: Addressing VAWiP through Political Party Engagement - Fedra Idžaković, National Programme Officer, OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

Time: **10:30-11:30**

Venue: **Meeting Room 5 – Plenary**

Title: The Hybrid Cult: How the Lukashenka Regime is Turning Belarus into a Soviet-Style Russian Protectorate

Convenor: Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of Belgium to the OSCE; Prospect Foundation / iSANS – The International Strategic Action Network for Security; Embassy of Belgium - Delegation of Flanders

Working language: English

Summary: iSANS analysts will discuss how massive state propaganda in Belarus, indoctrination in the educational system, suppression of Belarusian identity, culture and language, building of Lukashenka's personality cult, reverence for the Soviet past and promotion of the concept of historical unity with Russia are used by the regime for the consolidation of its power but turn the country into a Soviet-style Russian protectorate. This leads to the growing influence of Russia in domestic affairs of Belarus, the steady following of Belarus in the wake of Russian foreign policy, complicity of the Lukashenka regime in the Russian aggression against Ukraine, and alignment of their efforts in carrying out hybrid security threats to the EU member states. Evidence of this multifaceted process is based on many years of documentation and research by iSANS. Understanding this evolution of the Lukashenka regime should inform strategies and policies of democratic states and intergovernmental organisations in respect of Belarus.

