Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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WARSAW
HUMAN DIMENSION CONFERENCE
2026

ROUNDTABLES

5 TO 15 OCTOBER 2026 | SOFITEL VICTORIA, WARSAW

ROUNDTABLE WITH THE OSCE OFFICE FOR DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS (ODIHR)

Wednesday, 7 October, 14.00 – 15.30

A Practical Partnership for Human Security: ODIHR Assistance on Human Rights-Compliant Legal and Policy Frameworks

Strong, human rights-compliant legal and policy frameworks governing democratic institutions, political participation, fundamental freedoms, equality and inclusion play a central role in building stable, secure and inclusive societies. When aligned with OSCE commitments, they help participating States protect rights, promote equality, address discrimination and exclusion, and strengthen public trust in institutions. Yet developing and implementing effective laws and policies is rarely a one-off process. It requires dialogue, expertise, evidence and sustained co-operation among public authorities, legislatures, civil society and international partners.

This roundtable will explore how ODIHR's practical assistance can support this process. Through concrete examples and first-hand experiences, it will showcase how ODIHR's legal and policy advice, dialogue with national stakeholders, capacity-building and follow-up co-operation can contribute to meaningful and sustainable improvements.

The discussion will also highlight how legal and policy advise is a core ODIHR service to States on human-dimension issues including elections and political participation, freedom of assembly and association, combating hate crime and intolerance, among others.

Civil society has an important role in informing, using and advocating for legal and policy reform. The roundtable will also consider how partnerships with civil society can help ensure that reforms respond to people's needs and are effective in practice.

The discussion will draw lessons from real experiences of co-operation and look ahead: what makes these partnerships work, what can be improved, and how ODIHR can further strengthen its assistance to participating States and civil society in responding to human dimension security challenges.

Opening:

*Maria Telalian**, Director of ODIHR*

Panelists:

- Viktoriya Podgorna, Member of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine; Member of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
- Vasilije Čarapić, Member of Parliament of Montenegro, and Co-chair of the Committee for Comprehensive Electoral Reform
- Vadim Vieru, Program Director, Promo-Lex in Moldova
- Eva Tzavala, Director, Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR)

Moderator:

Konstantine Vardzelashvili, Head, ODIHR Democratization Department

ROUNDTABLE WITH OSCE FIELD OPERATIONS

organised by OSCE field operations, the Conflict Prevention Centre and ODIHR

Thursday, 8 October, 14.00 – 15.30

Strengthening Equality Mechanisms and National Human Rights Institutions: OSCE Field Experiences in Supporting Inclusive Societies

Respect for human rights, equality and non-discrimination lies at the core of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. Across the OSCE area, field operations support host jurisdictions in implementing human dimension commitments by promoting equal access to rights, strengthening the protection of persons belonging to national minorities, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, and enhancing the effectiveness of independent national human rights institutions (NHRIs), including Ombudspersons, Human Rights Commissioners, Equality Bodies and National Preventative Mechanisms.

OSCE field operations have developed extensive practical experience in supporting legislative reform, institutional capacity-building, monitoring discrimination, promoting accessibility, and strengthening accountability and human rights mechanisms, such as NHRIs. These experiences offer valuable lessons for building more inclusive and resilient societies.

This panel discussion will showcase experiences of co-operation between OSCE structures and NHRIs, including ODIHR's OSCE-wide work, and explore how complementary institutional support can build the capacity of institutions to more effectively protect equality, prevent torture, and safeguard human rights.

Opening:

Margot Araujo, Acting Head of the Central Asia Desk, OSCE Conflict Prevention Center

Panelists:

- Feruza Eshmatova, Authorized Person of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights (Ombudsman)
- Faton Seljami, Ombudsman of the Republic of North Macedonia
- Caterina Ghobert, Head of Human Rights, OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Christopher Blair, Head of the Human Dimension Department, OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek

Moderator:

Priska Babuin, Human Rights Adviser, ODIHR

ROUNDTABLE WITH THE OSCE REPRESENTATIVE ON FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA (RFoM)

Tuesday, 13 October, 14.00 – 15.30

Media freedom as a cornerstone of information integrity and public trust

OSCE participating States have repeatedly recognized that media freedom and access to diverse sources of information are essential to democracy and comprehensive security. Independent journalism contributes to information integrity by verifying claims, exposing manipulation, scrutinizing those who exercise power and enabling informed public debate. It is therefore not only a target of information manipulation, but one of society's most important defences against it.

Disinformation cannot be addressed through content restrictions or reactive measures alone. Societies are more vulnerable to manipulation when independent journalism is weakened, reliable information is difficult to access, and media pluralism and public trust are eroded. Measures intended to counter disinformation can also be counterproductive when vague definitions, excessive restrictions or political interference constrain legitimate reporting and public debate. Strengthening information integrity therefore requires a broader, rights-based approach: protecting editorial independence, enabling public interest journalism to reach audiences, promoting transparency and accountability in the digital information environment, and ensuring that responses to manipulation do not undermine freedom of expression or media freedom.

This roundtable will examine how media freedom can be placed at the centre of strategies to strengthen information integrity and resilience to disinformation. It will explore how participating States can support independent journalism as part of this response; how legal, regulatory and policy measures can address manipulation without restricting legitimate expression; and how public institutions, media, regulators, platforms and civil society can contribute within their respective roles.

Panelists:

- Mariam Nikuradze, Journalist, Executive Director, Open Caucasus Media
- Stevan Dojčinović, Editor-in-chief of investigative media, KRIK
- Nazira Darimbet, President, Adil Soz Foundation for the Protection of Freedom of Speech
- Lola Islamova, Editor-in-Chief, Anhor.uz, Chair of the Board, Center for Contemporary Journalism Development, Uzbekistan
- Deniz Wagner, Advisor to the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

Moderator:

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

ROUNDTABLE WITH THE OSCE HIGH COMMISSIONER ON NATIONAL MINORITIES (HCNM)

organised by the HCNM with the ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues

Wednesday, 14 October, 14.00 – 15.30

National Minorities and National Equality Mechanisms: Fostering access and trust

Equality bodies and ombudsperson institutions are the first door many people knock on when their rights are infringed – yet persons belonging to national minorities, including Roma and Sinti communities, are markedly absent from their caseloads. Women belonging to those communities are particularly vulnerable in this context.

This gap matters beyond individual redress: where national mechanisms are accessible and trusted, grievances are addressed early and within institutions; where they are not, they risk going unheard, escalating to localised tensions or being exploited from outside. Equality bodies are therefore natural partners for institutions like the High Commissioner on National Minorities in early warning and conflict prevention.

This roundtable brings together WHDC participants to examine how national equality bodies and ombudsperson institutions reach - and are reached by - national minority communities, and how the HCNM engages and partners with them in practice, including through its thematic recommendations and country engagement. The discussion will consider what accessibility, trust and visibility mean in practice, with attention to the compound barriers faced by minority women, drawing also on the perspectives of Roma and Sinti civil societies.

Opening:

Christophe Kamp, High Commissioner on National Minorities

Beata Bislim Olahova, Senior Adviser on Roma and Sinti Issues, Acting Chief of ODIHR's Contact Point on Roma and Sinti Issues

Panelists:

- Michael O'Flaherty, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights
- Petra Roter, Professor of International Relations at the University of Ljubljana
- Elmira Otar, Director, Centre for Research on Family and Gender Policy
- Alba Hernández Sánchez, Executive Director and Co-founder of Feminist Collective of Romani Gender Experts

Moderator:

Elzbieta Kuzborska-Pacha, Senior Legal Advisor, HCNM