



## **Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting**

Vienna Austria, 13 - 14 March 2023

### **SCHEDULE AND OVERVIEW**

#### **OF SIDE EVENTS**

##### ***as submitted by the organizers***

*This is a provisional schedule and overview of submitted side events subject to change.*

*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, 13 March**

**Time:** 16:30-17:30  
**Venue:** Bibliotheksaal  
**Title:** Media freedom in Ukraine: uncovering the truth during wartime and Russian aggression  
**Convenor:** Human Rights House Foundation; Human Rights Centre ZMINA  
**Working language:** English, Ukrainian

**Summary:** Media freedom is one of the pillars of modern democracy. Free expression of opinion contributes to the development of a safe and equal society. In times of war and armed conflict, journalists face huge obstacles and threats not only to their professional activities, but also to their own lives and the lives of their loved ones. The side event seeks to share knowledge on the obstacles Ukrainian media currently face in the context of Russia's full-scale war of aggression: threats from Russian military forces, forced disappearances, politically motivated imprisonment, and other measures designed to

silence them. We will share stories from across Ukraine, including Crimea, of the work done by journalists throughout the war and under occupation, persecution of the media and journalists, including war crimes, and the use by Russian forces of disinformation. This side event will bring together Ukrainian journalists and civil society representatives and address the following questions:

- What are the most pressing issues facing independent media and journalists in Ukraine, including occupied Crimea?
- Why is the work of journalists in Ukraine vital?
- How can participating States support independent Ukrainian media and journalists?

Panellists:

Tetiana Pechonchyk, Human Rights Centre ZMINA

Pavlo Kolotvin, Ukrainian journalist, representative of Institute of Mass Information in Odessa

Elmaz Akimova, citizen journalist from Crimea

Moderator:

Dave Elseroad, Human Rights House Foundation

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Time: **16:30-17:30**

Venue: **Room 533**

Title: Kyrgyzstan: increased suppression of independent media and civil society.

Convenor: American Bar Association; Soros Foundation

Working language: English, Russian

Summary: Kyrgyzstan is moving towards authoritarian regime because its independent media, human rights defenders, activists, as well as political and public figures are facing unprecedented pressure from the authorities. The government is restricting freedom of speech, blocking the websites of media outlets and closing their bank accounts, starting criminal prosecutions of journalists and activists, and supporting smear campaigns via non-state actors and hate speech. In November 2022, Bolot Temirov, a well-known investigative journalist, was deported to Russia directly from the courtroom in apparent violation of the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan and international law. Another leading media outlet Azattyk (RFE/RL) is under the risk of shut down because of the groundless claim of being not objective. At the same time, the authorities have significantly tightened their policies regarding freedom of peaceful assembly by banning rallies in popular public places. In 2022, the authorities detained six times more peaceful protestors than they did in previous years. The government also introduced a new draft law on NGOs activities that severely restricted NGOs activities, and established stricter control over the NGOs. The draft law also provided the government bodies with many more opportunities to intervene in NGOs work as well as an option of forced liquidation of organizations. Soros Foundation-Kyrgyzstan, American Bar Association's Center for Human Rights and the Committee to Protect Journalists are co-organizing a side event where leading representatives of media, civil society and international organizations will discuss the current environment for the media and civil society, describe emerging challenges they are facing and offer recommendations on how to unite efforts to tackle the threats to freedom of speech and democracy.

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Time: **16:30-17:30**  
Venue: **Room 531**  
Title: New forms of censorship of new media  
Convenor: Pantarey Foundation  
Working language: English

Summary: Legal changes in Poland and other OSCE countries increase state control over public communication. The pandemic and the pretext of the armed conflict in Ukraine pose new threats to new media, social media and direct communication of citizens via messengers from OSCE member states. These countries use the pretext of fighting disinformation and information warfare for preventive and repressive censorship without judicial review. In Poland, as well as in other OSCE member states, laws are being introduced that are inconsistent with the obligations of OSCE member states, civil and human rights. At the seminar, we will present a case study of Poland in which special services block the domains of Polish media and want to disable communication in a specific territory without judicial control and have access to the content of messages on instant messengers.

## **Tuesday, 14 March**

Time: **09:00-10:00**  
Venue: **Bibliotheksaal**  
Title: Induction of Media and Digital Literacy into Formal Education  
Convenor: OSCE Mission in Kosovo  
Working language: English

Summary: The event will highlight efforts by the OSCE Mission and Kosovo and its local partner, the documentary and education group Dokufest, at introducing media and digital literacy education in formal education.

### Panellists:

Dane Koruga, Deputy Director and Chief of the Media Section, OSCE Mission in Kosovo  
Eroll Bilibani, Executive Director of DOKUFEST, International Documentary; Short Film Festival, Prizren, Kosovo

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Time: **09:00-10:00**  
Venue: **Room 532**  
Title: Threats to media freedom in Georgia: the draft 2023 foreign influence law  
Convenor: Human Rights House Foundation  
Working language: English

Summary: In February 2023, the People's Power, a non-formal pro-government group of Georgian MPs that left the ruling Georgian Dream party in August 2022, registered a draft piece of legislation in Parliament. The "transparency of foreign influence" bill, which also has the support of the governing Georgia Dream party, is set to be debated in the Georgian Parliament in the coming weeks and months.

The draft law would designate all media outlets, and non-governmental organisations, that receive more than 20% of their funding from foreign sources as ‘foreign agents’. Since its introduction in Parliament, the draft law has been widely criticised by Georgian and international civil society actors. Authors of the bill are accused of replicating the practice of authoritarian states and seeking to severely restrict the freedoms of association and expression, posing a serious threat to democracy and civil society in the country.

This side event will bring together members of international and Georgian civil society to discuss the draft law and its potential impact on independent media and journalists in Georgia. The panel will focus on the following key questions:

- What are the implications of Georgia’s draft “foreign influence” bill for independent media, journalists, and civil society?
- How is Georgian civil society responding to the draft bill?
- What steps can participating States take to support independent media and journalists in Georgia?

Panelists:

Natia Tavberidze, Human Rights House Tbilisi

Mariam Mkhatchvari, Rights Georgia

Andrey Shary, Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty Russia Service (*joining online*)

Moderator:

Dave Elseroad, Human Rights House Foundation

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Time: **13:15-14:15**

Venue: **Bibliotheksaal**

Title: Conflict journalism and safety of journalists

Convenor: Media Development Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan (MEDIA)

Working language: English

Summary: Conflict journalism, which is one of the main specializations in journalism, serves to bring human rights violations, war crimes, and other issues to the attention of the international community. In this regard, the development of reporting mechanisms and professional journalism at various levels to implement international humanitarian law and to prevent its violation, the protection of the media representatives’ safety, and the provision of the necessary equipment are vital. The presence of mechanisms to inform the public in crises and in case of force majeure, as well as ensuring the safety of journalists who play an active role in this process is on the agenda as one of the main issues of recent times. Journalists implement an important mission by collecting and disseminating reliable information in hot spots and conflict zones. During the event, the participants will discuss the development of effective and efficient communication relations of the state, and the establishment of multilateral relations through the media. The improvement of communication mechanisms in crises, the development of professional conflict journalism, and the issues concerning the safety of journalists will also be in focus.

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Time: **13:15-14:15**  
Venue: **Room 532**  
Title: Freedom of the media in Europe in the context of the Ukrainian crisis  
Convenor: Information Group on Crimes against the Person  
Working language: English, Russian

Summary: The multi-year political crisis in Ukraine, and its escalation after February 2022, has become a challenge to many of the fundamental principles on which a modern democratic society is built. Including the right of access to independent objective information. Unfortunately, freedom of the media has become one of the victims of this conflict, we can see this in the example of pressure and even the closure of independent media in all European countries, the persecution of journalists who represent a point of view that is different from the mainstream. As part of our event, journalists from Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, the Baltic states will present facts of violations of media rights in Europe and suggest ways to protect the basic rights to freedom of information.

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Time: **13:15-14:15**  
Venue: **Room 533**  
Title: Work of the media in an aggressor-country during the war: access to information about Russia and its impact on the global security  
Convenor: OVD-Info  
Working language: English

Summary: During the war, one of the first victims is information, especially in an aggressor country. Media freedom was the first thing killed in Russia, information is the main reason civil society organizations and media are prosecuted, information is an enemy of the state. At the same time, information about what is happening inside Russia is vital not only for Russians. Right now, the access to information directly influences the possibility to continue the invasion. A humongous autocracy won't disappear after the end of the war, and it already affects global security and development. Information about its work and collaboration with the actors that collect such information is crucial in the transformation of both global security and Russia. This side-event will cover the questions of the connection of global security with information, in particular about Russian authorities operating inside the country and its impact on the war and global security, how independent media and projects transformed their work to keep up the flow of information and reach out to different audiences, and what we can do to assist both them and the global development. The speakers are civil society organisations and independent media.

Panellists:  
Ekaterina Golenkova, special projects producer in OVD-Info  
Alesya Marokhovskaya, journalist in Important Stories  
Ivan Kolpakov, editor-in-chief in Meduza (*joining online*)  
Grigory Okhotin, co-founder of OVD-Info  
Moderator:  
Daria Korolenko, OVD-Info

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