



**SUPPLEMENTARY HUMAN DIMENSION MEETING
ON**

FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF
Side Event: Roundtable for Civil Society

9 July 2009
HOFBURG, VIENNA
Ratsaal

10:30-13:00

Background

From 2006 onwards, the OSCE human dimension events related to tolerance and non-discrimination have been preceded by civil society meetings where participants formulated recommendations to the OSCE participating States and to the OSCE institutions. These meetings gave civil society the opportunity to discuss current issues and priorities related to the topics of the OSCE conferences, to inform governments of the results of their activities, to share best practices and to engage in coalitions and networks across the region. Since the meetings resulted in pertinent and constructive recommendations, and since the OSCE has committed to strengthen the involvement of civil society at policy level, the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Freedom of Religion or Belief will also be preceded by a Roundtable for civil society.

Purpose of the Side Event

- To provide an opportunity to exchange information on how civil society can contribute to the protection and promotion of OSCE commitments on freedom of religion or belief.
- To enable discussion of civil society experiences in the area of freedom of religion or belief.
- To exchange information on best practices.
- To facilitate and enhance coalition-building across diverse communities and civil society groups throughout the OSCE region.
- To provide civil society with an opportunity to prepare recommendations to be presented at the opening of the Meeting.

For consideration

The main objective of the Side Event is to formulate recommendations for the Meeting to the OSCE participating States and OSCE Institutions. In order to maximise the discussions, participants were encouraged to submit recommendations beforehand to the ODIHR (see <http://tandis.odihr.pl/index.php?p=cs,event>).

After the side event, the moderator will prepare a written summary of the discussions and recommendations, which will be read at the opening session and will be made available online as part of the report of the Meeting.

To maximise the time available for discussion of the issues and formulation of recommendations, participants will be limited to brief contributions. Written statements are strongly discouraged, and the moderator will have discretion in both limiting the time of contributions and focussing discussion on the agenda.

Agenda

- 10.30– 10:40 **Opening Remarks**
Ambassador Janez Lenarčič, ODIHR Director
- 10:40-10:50 **Review of Written Recommendations**
The Rev. Roy Jenkins, Journalist, British Broadcasting Corporation, and Moderator of the Roundtable for Civil Society
- 10:50 – 11:00 **The Role of Civil Society in the Protection and Promotion of OSCE Commitments on Freedom of Religion or Belief**
Ms. Vera Pegna, Delegate for the OSCE, European Humanist Federation
- 11:00 – 11:20 **Discussion**
- What role can civil society play in improving implementation of OSCE commitments on freedom of religion or belief?
 - What challenges does civil society face in working in the area of freedom of religion or belief?
- 11:20 – 11:50 **Discussion**
From Commitments to Implementation: Freedom of Religion or Belief in the OSCE Area
- What steps have participating States taken to fulfil OSCE commitments on freedom of religion or belief?
 - How can political commitments be translated into effective action?
 - What are the good practices adopted by participating States and civil society?
- 11.50- 12.10 **Discussion**
Status of Religious or Belief Communities
- What are the main challenges arising from the implementation of OSCE commitments on recognition and autonomy of religious or belief communities?
- 12.10 – 12.30 **Discussion**
Places of Worship
- What are the main challenges arising from the implementation of OSCE commitments on places of worship?
- 12.30 – 12.40 Break
- 12:40-13:00 **Conclusions to be presented at the opening of the SHDM**