



## Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting I (2025)

Vienna Austria, 17 - 18 March 2025

### 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 Meetings. The below descriptions have been provided by the organizers. They may 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 and the organizers of Human Dimension Meetings.*

#### **Monday, 17 March**

Time: **12:30-13:30**  
Venue: **Bibliotheksaal**  
Title: Civil liberties under Russia`s attack  
Convenor: Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the OSCE  
Working language: English

Summary: The event will feature the testimony of Mr. M. Butkevych, a human rights activist, journalist, and public figure dedicated to defending human rights, supporting refugees, combating xenophobia and discrimination, and advocating for internally displaced persons. As a former POW, he will expose Russia`s key narratives and disinformation campaign used to justify the war.

Time: **12:30-13:30**  
Venue: **Room 533**  
Title: The role of media self-regulation during wartime  
Convenor: OSCE Secretariat  
Working language: English

Summary: In conflict and humanitarian crises, media plays a crucial role in informing the public, shaping narratives, and holding actors accountable. In the context of Ukraine, media has been at the center of both conflict dynamics and human rights advocacy, often walking a fine line between national security concerns and press freedoms. The Ukrainian experience, especially in terms of media self-regulation, highlights both the importance and the challenges of maintaining journalistic integrity and human rights standards in a conflict-ridden environment.

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## **SPECIAL EVENT**

Time: **17:30-20:00**  
Venue: **Stadtkino im Künstlerhaus Wien**  
Title: Reception followed by a film screening  
Convenor: Finnish OSCE Chairpersonship  
Working language: English

The Finnish OSCE Chairpersonship, in partnership with the Permanent Mission of Ukraine, is hosting a film screening of the documentary “He came back” by the Kyiv Independent, investigating sexual violence as war crimes. The screening will be followed by a discussion with Ms. Yevheniia Motorevska, head of the war crimes investigations unit of the Kyiv Independent.

- 17.30 – 18.15 Arrival and refreshments
- 18.15 – 19.30 Screening of “HE CAME BACK”
- 19.30 – 20.00 Discussion

**SHDM or OSCE badge will be required to access the event.**

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## **Tuesday, 18 March**

Time: **09:00-10:00**  
Venue: **Bibliotheksaal**  
Title: Shrinking Media Space: The Growing Threats to Independent Journalism and Democracy  
Convenor: Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Safety  
Working language: English

Summary: This event will address the alarming decline of media freedom in the OSCE region, where independent journalism faces increasing threats. Across multiple countries, governments are tightening control over the press through legal restrictions, censorship, economic pressure, and targeted attacks on journalists. These actions not only stifle free expression but also weaken democratic institutions and public accountability. The discussion will examine the main drivers behind the shrinking media space, including restrictive laws, censorship, and financial pressures that force independent outlets to close. The side event will address growing risk of information deserts, where citizens have ever narrowing channels of information and where journalists and active social media users face retaliation, including criminal prosecution. Speakers will also explore the broader consequences of media repression on democratic governance, corruption, and public access to reliable information. By shedding light on these

alarming challenges, the event seeks to raise awareness and propose concrete measures to safeguard press freedom in the OSCE region

Time: **09:00-10:00**  
Venue: **Room 531**  
Title: Support or suppression: the complex role of big tech in conflict reporting  
Convenor: Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media and ARTICLE 19  
Working language: English

Summary: Journalists play a critical role in documenting conflicts and holding parties to account. Social media platforms are essential for sharing their work, especially in restrictive environments where censorship or denial of access hinders reporting. Platforms also provide a space to document potential violations of international law. However, frequent removal of such content based on community standards and inconsistent platform policies pose significant challenges. Algorithms that amplify harmful content and failure to address propaganda further exacerbate the problem.

This side event will explore how platforms can better support journalistic efforts, preserve evidence, and uphold their responsibilities in conflict situations. Discussions will cover challenges faced by journalists, obligations of platforms in crises, regulatory interventions, and lessons learned to improve media operations in complex environments.

Speakers:

Chantal Joris, Article 19  
Olga Lubiv, Bellingcat  
Iryna Herasymova, Channel 5  
Elira Turdubaeva, International Ala-Too University  
Julia Haas, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

Opening Remarks:

Amb. Katja Pehrman, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland  
Philippe Tremblay, Director, Office of OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

Time: **13:15-14:15**  
Venue: **Bibliotheksaal**  
Title: Media Freedom and Captured Institutions in Georgia  
Convenor: Rights Georgia ; Georgian Young Lawyers' Association ; Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI)  
Working language: English

Summary: Over the past year, the human rights situation in Georgia has sharply deteriorated, reaching a crisis point following Georgian Dream Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze's announcement on 28 November 2024 to suspend EU accession talks. Mass protests erupted, met with systematic police brutality (including systemic torture and ill-treatment), arbitrary detentions, and politically motivated prosecutions. A key target of state repression has been the media. Since the protests began, around 100 incidents of violence, equipment destruction, and obstruction of journalists' work have been reported—overwhelmingly affecting independent and critical media. Georgian Dream officials have incited hostility against journalists, while thugs (Titushkies) affiliated with GD authorities have carried out attacks with impunity. Despite mounting evidence, no meaningful investigations have been conducted.

In response to these human rights violations, 38 OSCE participating States activated the Vienna Mechanism for Georgia. However, domestic authorities continue to ignore calls for accountability, leaving media freedom under siege. Key Discussion Points: □ Escalating repression against independent media in Georgia □ The role of institutional capture in shielding abuses from accountability □ How OSCE member states can respond to the deepening crisis Panelists: Tamar Oniani, Georgian Young Lawyers' Association Mariam Mkhatvari, Institute for Development of Freedom of Information Vladimer Mkervalishvili, Rights Georgia Moderator: Dave Elseroad, Human Rights House Foundation

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

Venue: **Room 533**

Title: Media, Disruptions (Conflicts, Technologies), Truth and Reconciliation

Convenor: IFIMES - International Institute for Middle-East and Balkan Studies; IFIMES Permanent Representation to Austria and Vienna-based IOs

Working language: English

Summary: Description of the panel: Ever since the Helsinki Decalogue is set in motion in 1975, the signatory states have recognized the universal significance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as the freedom of media. The essential importance of democratic institutions has been repeatedly reaffirmed by the OSCE forums and members as foundational commitments, in both Copenhagen of 1990 and Moscow of 1991, including the significance of independent media for democracy enhancement. Media is pivotal in promoting human rights, inclusion, equality, social cohesion – notably for the conflict prevention, tensions relaxation, and when conflicts are unavoidable for the fast and decisive truth and reconciliation. This was continuously stated by the OSCE Representatives on Freedom of the Media and other OSCE-affiliated and non-affiliated FORAs over the past decades. In the context of disruptions, coming through the societal polarisations, armed conflicts or disruptive (usage of) technologies, independent media play an essential role in informing the public about events and developments on the ground, in supporting the documentation of possible violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, and in contributing to accountability efforts. When comes to male fidei utilisation of technology, the OSCE-world faces a paradigm-shifting challenge as AI technologies simultaneously empower and undermine its core mandates in conflict prevention, human rights protection, and media freedom. Our panel examines AI's role as threat to global order and tool for threat mitigation through the prism of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, focusing on emergent threats like deepfakes while exploring disinformation mitigation. Because OSCE must quickly reconcile technological innovation with its foundational commitments to comprehensive security, panel members will discuss concrete examples of the use and misuse of AI and practical strategies for addressing them. Overall, our panel will serve as a tour-de-table platform for OSCE participating States, civil society, media professionals, state actors, and international organizations to discuss and address these complex challenges. Discussions will focus on strategies to ensure integrity and accountability, media trust restoration, conflict prevention and reconciliation, as well as to strengthen digital media literacy (of 'deep technology' involvement)– all aimed at the sustainable future.

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

Venue: **Room 531**

Title: The crisis of freedom of speech. Persecution of journalists and public activists in Europe

Convenor: Information Group on Crimes against the Person

Working language: English, Russian (no interpretation)

Summary: In recent years, the degrading situation with the realization of the right to freedom of speech in Europe has caused serious concern. There is a lot of evidence that media freedom in Europe and the fundamental right of citizens to freedom of access to information are in crisis. This is the result of years of ignoring the persecution of journalists, various forms of repressions against them and attempts to impose a sterilized point of view on world developments that doesn't tolerate alternative opinions. This approach dramatically hinders the work of the media in many European states. Under the justification of countering Russian propaganda, the basic, inalienable rights of citizens, including the right to freedom of information, are actually being eliminated. At the same time facts of the persecution of journalists and the closure of media outlets are recorded in almost all countries across the OSCE region. Unfortunately, in some of them, the process has taken on the character of the actual debunking of any manifestations of freedom of speech. Unfortunately, in a number of countries, in particular in the Baltic States, Moldova and Ukraine, the situation goes far beyond the legal framework. During 2022-25, the Government of Ukraine has completed the process of destroying independent media. Any media outlets critical of Zelensky's government are currently closed, their representatives are being harassed, arrested, physically abused and killed. Within the framework of the Round Table, experts, journalists and public figures from Russia, Ukraine, Germany, Australia and India will assess the current situation with the freedom of speech in Europe, present facts, discuss possible development prospects and ways out of the current situation.