



**Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting**  
online, 26 - 27 April 2021

**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, 26 April**

Time: **18:00-19:00**

Venue: online (Access info will be shared with registered SHDM participants at <https://meetings.odihr.pl/resources>. Please log-in to access the link.)

Title: Civil society's role in human rights-friendly law-making: experiences, successes and challenges

Convenor: Civic Solidarity Platform and Netherlands Helsinki Committee

Working language: English, Russian

Summary: A massive amount of advice is available to governments and law makers on producing laws that do not harm human rights and that will produce real human rights progress. Yet active and committed involvement of citizens is often needed for this advice to receive the necessary attention in

the law-making process. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the possibility for citizen involvement and proper discussion in society has suffered in many countries. This is true both for legislation specifically relating to handling the disease, and for the normal legislative process. In a number of cases it appears that governments have abused the cover of the Covid-19 emergency to push through repressive steps unrelated to the disease, adding to existing trends towards authoritarianism. The side event will review how in recent times in a number of countries civil society has been able or not been able to play a role in safeguarding human rights standards in new legislation. Speakers have been invited to participate (provisional list) from Russia, Ukraine, Turkey, Hungary, Poland and the Netherlands. A full agenda will be available closer to the event.

**Speakers:**

Elena Shakhova, Citizen's Watch, Russia  
Oleksandra Romantsova, Center for Civil Liberties, Ukraine  
Feraý Salman, Human Rights Joint Platform, Turkey  
András Kadar, Hungarian Helsinki Committee  
Marcin Wolny, Polish Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights  
Harry Hummel, Netherlands Helsinki Committee

**Tuesday, 27 April**

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

Venue: online (Access info will be shared with registered SHDM participants at <https://meetings.odihr.pl/resources>. Please log-in to access the link.)

Title: Enhancing democratic debate and legislative impact: from citizen assemblies to impact assessments

Convenor: OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, in cooperation with the Permanent Missions of the Federal Republic of Germany and Ireland to the OSCE

Working language: English, Russian

Summary: In making a decision to legislate, and in the design of laws, various avenues need to be explored to ensure that legislative processes are inclusive, transparent, and accountable. ODIHR has observed in its legislative assistance to the OSCE participating States that the quality of legislation is frequently reflective of the very process by which laws are discussed, developed, drafted, and adopted. Public consultations help to raise interest, awareness and transparency.

This side event will provide a platform to discuss recommendations and good practices starting from the inclusion of citizens and ranging to ODIHR's assessments for addressing common gaps or systemic shortcomings in legislative processes. This is all the more relevant as insight into the intended or unintended effects of legislation can lead to better, more human rights compliant legislation and to strengthening legislative processes. More specifically, the side event will look into good practices and innovative tools for law-making and highlight the use of human rights impact assessments. The event

will further provide an opportunity to discuss the role of citizens' assemblies in considering and debating policy issues, and hear about first-hand experience from Ireland and Germany on how their respective processes are working and how such forums can help to enhance the democratic process.

**Speakers:**

Mr. Murray Hunt, Director, Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law

Dr. Mary-Clare O'Sullivan, Secretary to Citizens' Assembly on Gender Equality, Ireland

Mr. Johannes Alber, campaigner in charge of citizens' assemblies at Mehr Demokratie e.V.

Mr. Konstantine Vardzelashvili, Chief, Legislative Support Unit, ODIHR

Time: **13:00-14:00**

Venue: online (Access info will be shared with registered SHDM participants at <https://meetings.odihr.pl/resources>. Please log-in to access the link.)

Title: Human Rights Violation in the Baltic Countries: an Exception or a Trend in the European Union?

Convenor: Information Group on Crimes against the Person

Working language: English, French, Russian

Summary: The Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 10, 1948, proclaims the freedom and equality of all people in dignity and rights. Accordingly, every person must have equal rights from birth, regardless of race, nationality, language, political opinion, etc. The States Members of the United Nations that have adopted this document formally undertake to protect these principles and to act in accordance with them. In today's world, the leadership of most countries, like the vast majority of public opinion, does not question these principles. It is also generally accepted that they are ensured through democratic institutions and the rule of law. However, we see an increase in human rights violations in a number of countries. This is especially dangerous when these countries declare their commitment to international UN principles. In this case, the example of the Baltic countries included in the European Union is indicative. Becoming part of a united Europe was positioned by the Baltic states as a process of strengthening and developing human rights and freedoms. In fact, the problem in this area has not yet been resolved in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Moreover, a number of measures taken by these governments raise serious concerns. Why are there countries in the European Union that have discriminatory policies? What goals does the state pursue by persecuting the language? The prohibition of communist parties as an element of infringement of rights on the political principle, and what danger does this carry for all left forces? Media censorship: how far can a violation of freedom of speech go? The glorification of Nazi criminals: an illegal action that has become state policy. These issues will be raised during the conference. Participants in the discussion will try to figure out whether these trends are specific to the Baltic states, or whether their existence has become possible due to the circumstances and situation in which the European Union finds itself today? Despite the concentration on a particular region, the topic was crucial because of the universality of the principles of inviolability of human rights and freedoms. Monitoring this issue is key to monitoring the situation in all countries of the world.

Speakers:

Mr. Jean Baptiste Malet

Mr. Vadim Kamenka

Dr. Vincent Boulet

Mr. Volodymyr Chemeris

Mr. Maksim Vilkov

Mss. Olesya Orlenko