



PERMANENT DELEGATION  
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

PRESENTATION OF THE PROGRAM  
OF THE HUMAN DIMENSION COMMITTEE IN 2022

As delivered by H.E. Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen  
to the Permanent Council,  
Vienna, 10 February 2022

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chair,

Thank you for the trust put in us, and me, to chair the Human Dimension Committee in 2022, and for this opportunity to present the work program of the Committee to colleagues.

I thank my Canadian and Austrian colleagues for their presentations. We fully support both programs and will participate actively in the work of the committees. The committees are different, but we share the goal of good and inclusive discussions and the need to involve OSCE field mission and other OSCE expertise.

Let me also thank Sweden for all the hard work you put in last year, and the excellent cooperation we had. Not least let me extend my thanks to your very competent human dimension experts for the efforts and contributions to the work of the Human Dimension Committee.

First, a brief report on our work in 2021. We organized 16 meetings, as well as a summer retreat. In these meetings, we heard speakers from 25 participating States and eight field operations, from all OSCE regions. 21 were men and 19 were women. The committee did not reach consensus in the drafting before the Stockholm Ministerial. However, the meetings and drafting sessions gave valuable insights in the positions of participating States, and which questions we should continue to discuss and elaborate on.

As Chair, we will actively use these experiences in the planning of our work for 2022. We will try to use relevant meetings to “unpack” some of the discussions we could not reach consensus on last year, for instance about relevant terminology. Our aim for the committee continues to be to provide for good discussions and an atmosphere conducive to finding common ground.

For this organization to remain relevant, we need to engage with society outside our own closed circles. We will continue to engage a wide range of stakeholders, including academic institutions, civil society, OSCE institutions and field operations, as well as other international organizations and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

Distinguished colleagues,

We will continue our thematic approach to the work of the committee. Our experience from last year, as well as the inputs we have received from you during the first month of this year, has led us to what I believe to be a well- balanced program which represents both differing views of participating States and the priorities of the Chairperson-in-Office. The work of the committee should be viewed in the context of the overall human dimension work program of the Chairpersonship. We believe that all participating States will find topics of interest within the Human Dimension in 2022.

In January, we had a fruitful introductory discussion in the committee about the priorities for 2022. We presented a draft overview of themes, which was well received. What I present to you today is a somewhat more detailed version of that program, with topics related to each theme.

- In February, the committee will discuss freedom of the media. We will focus on safety of journalists, the importance of trust in the media and the concepts of mis- and disinformation. I am happy to confirm that Ms. Ribeiro will participate as a speaker in this meeting.
- In March, the theme is gender equality, and we will focus the discussion on violence against women online.
- The April meeting will discuss the rights of children and youth. We have chosen to see these in connection, as we focus on civic education and participation. Approximately 40% of the OSCE region’s inhabitants are below the age of 30; In this lies a vast potential for democratic development.
- In May, we will look at human rights in the digital era. This is something we saw come up in many meetings last year and will probably continue to do so this year. For this particular meeting, we will follow up on the discussions in the drafting sessions last year and look at opportunities for and challenges to freedom of expression.
- In June, the focus will be on democratic institutions, and more specifically local democracy. We wish to look at representativity in this connection.

- In July, we will discuss the issue of tolerance and non-discrimination. We hope to make this a meeting about best practices across the region, and we encourage delegations and OSCE structures to contact us with suggestions for best practices to present to the committee.
- After the summer recess, in August, and as a preparation for the HDIM, we will look at civil society participation, more specifically participation in law-making processes.
- We then break for HDIM and the drafting period before the Ministerial in Łódź and have a final meeting in December on the issue of freedom of association for national minorities, other minorities, and vulnerable groups.

In the different meetings, we will integrate an overall framework of human rights into our discussions, including fundamental freedoms, civil and political rights, and economic, social, and cultural rights. Gender equality aspects will be important elements in many meetings throughout the year. Minority issues will also come up several times, as well as the situation for vulnerable groups. Political polarisation and challenges to modern democracy will be touched upon in several meetings. Detailed concept notes will be provided in due time before each meeting to give your experts ample opportunity to prepare and consult your capitals.

I should underline that although we have no intention to make changes to this programme, it is of course subject to possible needs for adjustments. We will consider organising informal events outside of the monthly meetings, but avoid overloading the calendar of colleagues. Joint committee meetings have also been proposed.

Dear colleagues,

It is important to make sure that the Human Dimension Committee can feed into the work of this Council and the different human dimension events. The human dimension is an integral part of the OSCE comprehensive security concept. Functioning democratic societies are vital for the well-being of all citizens of the OSCE area. I am delighted to chair the Human Dimension Committee this year, and in this way support the Polish chairpersonship. Our success as chair relies on the support and the active participation of all participating States throughout the year.

I look forward to comments from colleagues, which I will be happy to respond to.

Thank you