



Report on the work of the Human Dimension Committee in 2022

Delivered by Ambassador Anne- Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council
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Thank you, Mr. Chair. Distinguished colleagues.

I have come to the end of a two-year period as Chair of the Human Dimension Committee. These two years have been far from “normal”: We started off as chair of a fully digital committee, with meetings online for the better part of the year. We then met the challenge of chairing the committee in an unprecedented security situation, where drastic adjustments had to be made to the committee work due to the attack of one participating State on another.

I would like to thank the Swedish and the Polish CiO for the trust put in me and my team, and for excellent collaboration. You have been clear in your expectations to me, but at the same time given me the flexibility to chair the committee as I have seen fit.

Dear colleagues,

My report today will focus on 2022. My team started off from a different place this year, with the experience from 2021 and a deeper knowledge of the motivations the different delegations have for their participation in the committee. We continued consulting with the States, and after a good discussion in the first committee meeting in January, we presented a programme for the year to this Council in mid-February. It was our intention to draw on the discussions we had during drafting sessions in 2021 in the hope that we could perhaps bring the group closer to a common understanding of some issues that had proven difficult.

We had our first regular committee meeting on 22nd February. Only two days later, circumstances shifted drastically, due to the Russian attack on Ukraine. We had to re-think the work of the committee. We let the principal attitude of the CiO lead the way. It was obvious that the war in Ukraine caused immense human suffering, and we saw a particular need to follow up and relate the work of the Human Dimension Committee to this new reality.

In close cooperation with the CiO and the other committee chairs, and after discussions with many of you, we adjusted the approaches, but not the topics, of the original work programme of the HDC.

As such, we have had meetings this year on the following topics:

Safety of journalists; violence against women in conflict; the rights of children and youth in conflict; local democracy in times of crisis; the role of civil society along the conflict cycle;

accountability for war crimes; promoting tolerance and discrimination; human rights in the digital era; and freedom of association

As in our first year as chair, we have made efforts to ensure representation of the OSCE institutions and academia in the committee, and civil society have been represented in all but one meeting. We were also able to include the business sector this year. We have had gender balance with regards to speakers, with 13 men and 13 women participating, and five participating states in addition to Ukraine have been represented.

Contrary to our plans in January, the committee did not have drafting sessions this autumn. I do not agree with those who say that the value of the committee work is less for that reason. I see the committees as places for highly qualified and dedicated experts to bring their competence to the table and to increase understanding of the different issues on the agenda.

The committees take discussions forward, reveal where the political divergences are, and prepare for new commitments in a future when the topics have matured, and the circumstances are conducive. The committees are also excellent arenas for exchanges between participating States and the OSCE structures, particularly the autonomous institutions, which have contributed so competently to our meetings. I am particularly pleased that we have been able to include experts from almost all field operations in the HDC meetings in the space of our two years. They have shown us the capacity of the OSCE “on the ground”. Let me also thank the meeting assistance unit and the Hofburg staff, without which no meetings would have taken place.

Mr. Chair,

As I now step out of this role as chair of the Human Dimension Committee, I wish the best of luck to our successor. They will meet an engaged group of colleagues who contribute in an excellent way. I have learnt to deeply respect the competence and enthusiasm of them all, despite our differences. They are dedicated diplomats and experts, and a resource to this organization and to their respective delegations.

This year has shown very clearly why the human dimension is crucial to peace and security. This was also demonstrated by this year’s Nobel peace prize award ceremony last week. Norway will continue to be actively engaged, and we will follow up on some of the issues that have been prominent in the discussions of the committee.

I again thank the CiO - both you, Adam, and your human dimension team - for excellent cooperation.

Thank you