

**THE ROLE OF HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION  
IN PROMOTING MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING  
AND RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY IN  
ACCORDANCE WITH THE EXISTING OSCE  
COMMITMENTS**

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## Objectives

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- The main objectives of **human rights education** aim to enable each person to know their own rights, as well as obligations when it comes to other people's rights. It includes **promoting mutual understanding and respect for diversity and tolerance.**

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- Human rights education is a **lifelong process**. It includes formal, informal and non-formal forms of education about, for and through human rights.
  - It is an indispensable and **essential element for efficient, strengthened and comprehensive protection and promotion of human rights**.
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- Systematic human rights education can contribute to a **more tolerant society**, because it has the potential to play a significant role in **promoting universal respect** of human rights and fundamental freedoms.
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## OSCE Commitments

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- **Helsinki Final Act** (1975),
  - **Copenhagen Document**(1990),
  - **Moscow Document** (1991),
  - **Bucharest Plan of Action** (2001),
  - **OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the 21st Century** (2003),
  - **Ljubljana Ministerial Decision on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination** (2005)
  - **Ljubljana Ministerial Decision on the Promotion of Human Rights Education and Training** in the OSCE area (2005),
  - **Astana Declaration** (2010) and numerous PC Decisions.
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□ **Our common objective should be fulfilling OSCE commitments and their implementation .**

- All stakeholders should make efforts to implement this objective in good faith with the aim to contribute to comprehensive and sustainable security and peace.

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**Civil Society Preparatory Meeting - OSCE High Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination (Astana, 2010);** recommendations to participating States:

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- **to develop education programmes** for tolerance and mutual respect and understanding, including inter-cultural education, in domestic education systems and provide adequate teacher training in this field,
  - **to promote a better understanding of the »other«** and focus on learning about individuals in society in order to create a truly inclusive society respecting the equality and diversity of all,
  - **to acknowledge the contribution of youth** to the promotion of tolerance and mutual respect and understanding and foster their active participation in society, also through informal education and web resources.
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- As a social basis for establishing a value system human rights education for the generation of the young can be a **conflict prevention instrument.**
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- **In post-conflict societies** it can be very helpful in the **rehabilitation and reconciliation process.**

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- We should think of it as a **non-military confidence building measure, sustainable, long-term... and rewarding!**

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## WHY ENGAGE WITH THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH?

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- On the global level they represent 43 % of the world population.
- They are possible agents of change, some among them future leaders.
- We should not underestimate their potential, they should not be „forgotten“.

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- **The children and the youth** in the OSCE area could and should have a friendly access to quality human rights education in order to learn about universal values, including tolerance and mutual respect.

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- **Schools** still have an important role in the society, where almost everyone can be reached in the best age to internalise universal values.
  - **Human rights and tolerance education should reach all, every generation, everywhere.**
  - It is a **crucial investment in the social fabric** of our future societies and comprehensive security.
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## **WHY IMPLEMENT THESE OSCE COMMITMENTS NOW?**

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- Due to the current crisis the **socio-economic as well as political situations** are burdened with problems that affect many people, also the young generation, in some areas severely. The austerity measures and fatigue as well as social unrests can gain and bring us to an even more difficult momentum which can burst into many more forms of intolerance and even extreme radicalism.
  - **Not doing anything in this regard is a potential security threat.**
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**States have the primary responsibility** of educating their citizens, including the young, on human rights. There are **a variety of forms** and tools used for:

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- human rights education
  - tolerance education
  - civic or citizenship education
  - intercultural/multicultural education
  - teaching on ethnic/cultural/national minorities
  - anti-racism education
  - inter-religious education
  - diversity education
  - teaching on equality including gender equality
  - education combating anti-semitism
  - teaching on equality including gender equality
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- Many programmes and tools are already available** (ODIHR's Best Practice Guide, TND Unit and its programmes, Field Missions' projects, "Our Rights", many countries have numerous good practices). It is rather logical to cooperate on this issue with the civil society and with other international organizations (UNESCO, EU, Council of Europe, etc).
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- **OSCE could and should serve as a cross-dimensional hub**, programmes should be made for our children and youth in a systematic way, on a step by step basis - in cooperation with all stakeholders, including other international organizations and the non-governmental sector, academia etc.

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- Therefore, we should not spare efforts to **enhance our practical activities** to educate our young generation as systematically as possible in human rights, tolerance and non-discrimination.

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- Slovenia, my country that put forward its candidature for the Human Rights Council in the period from 2016 to 2018, will continue to pursue the promotion of human rights through education, which is our foreign affairs policy that has been consistent for the last 10 years in all relevant international organizations, including the OSCE, where we gained valuable experience with a concrete project "Our Rights" for children from many different cultures.
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## CONSENSUS NEEDED

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- The topic of empowering the young generation through human rights education and tolerance building should be **one of the topics where consensus in the OSCE can be reached**, as it is in the interest of us all and of our common goal: **comprehensive security**.
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## COOPERATION

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- We tend to look at the world around us with a microscope... but we should perhaps use the telescope... and address the important issues of our future in the most cooperative way.

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## Recommendation :

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- **to develop a comprehensive OSCE Action Plan for Human Rights Education and Tolerance Building and**
- **to implement our commitments systematically in empowering the young generation.**

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