

ODIHR Update

No. 4, 11 June 2015



Human Dimension Seminar focuses on role of NHRIs



Ambassador Sanja Milinković (c), Deputy Permanent Representative of Serbia to the OSCE, speaking at the Human Dimension Seminar.

More than 100 representatives of governments, international organizations and civil society met in Warsaw from 1 to 3 June to discuss the important role of national human rights institutions (NHRIs) in promoting and protecting individual human rights at the three-day OSCE Human Dimension Seminar, organized by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in co-operation with the 2015 Serbian Chairmanship of the OSCE.

Michael Georg Link, ODIHR Director, said that the contacts and co-operation made possible by events like the Human Dimension Seminar are central to the effectiveness of the institutions, such as ombudsman's offices, established by OSCE partici-

pating States to help safeguard human rights and freedoms.

"Whenever necessary, NHRIs ought to be uncomfortable partners for their governments," the ODIHR Director said. "Given this natural domestic tension, it is even more important that they support each other across borders. The co-operation between Ms. Ella Pamfilova, the Russian Federation Commissioner for Human Rights, and Ms. Valeriya Lutkovska, Ukraine's Human Rights Commissioner, is an excellent example. It is admirable how outspoken both are, given the difficult climate under which they operate. The statement by Ella Pamfilova on the recently adopted law on so-called "undesirable organizations" is a good example."

ODIHR and Ukraine's Human Rights Commissioner agree to co-operate



Michael Georg Link (r), Director of ODIHR, and Valeriya Lutkovska (l), Ukraine's Human Rights Commissioner, signing the memorandum of understanding on 3 June in Warsaw.

On the sidelines of the Human Dimension Seminar in Warsaw, ODIHR Director Michael Georg Link and Valeriya Lutkovska, Ukraine's Human Rights Commissioner, signed an agreement on 3 June for greater co-operation between ODIHR and Lutkovska's office in a broad range of activities in Ukraine, including the promotion of tolerance and gender equality and building greater capacity to monitor the protection and promotion of human rights.

"Our institutions are committed to expanding co-operation in work to support the further development of a democratic society, the implementation of the rule of law, and to foster the implementation of Ukraine's commitments in the human dimension of security," Director Link said.

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ODIHR limited observation mission joins parliamentary partners to present findings on Turkey's elections



Ambassador Geert-Hinrich Ahrens answering a question at the press conference in Ankara on 8 June.

Ambassador Geert-Hinrich Ahrens, Head of the OSCE/ODIHR limited election observation mission for the 7 June parliamentary elections in Turkey, joined with the heads of delegations from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Ankara on 8 June to present a joint preliminary statement of findings and conclusions.

The statement described the elections as characterized by active and high citizen participation. Voters could choose from

a wide range of political parties, but the 10 per cent threshold to enter parliament limits political pluralism, the observers said. They also highlighted media freedom is an area of serious concern, with media outlets and individual journalists critical of the ruling party being subject to pressure and intimidation during the campaign.

The report also noted that the President played an active role in the election campaign, even though the Constitution obliges him to be non-partisan.

“The results of our observation are not a black-and-white picture. I trust that the competent authorities will concentrate on the messages contained in the critical points and on the recommendations that will come in the ODIHR final report, rather than on the defense of sometimes-flawed practice,” Ambassador Ahrens told the press conference. “In this respect, rectification is better than justification or denial. All in all, these elections were an impressive exercise in democracy.”

Latest recruitment notices at ODIHR

Hate Crime Officer

Location: Warsaw

Grade: P3

Closing date: 30 June 2015

[Full details](#) on OSCE website

Senior Election Advisor

Location: Warsaw

Grade: P4

Closing date: 9 July 2015

[Full details](#) on OSCE website

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