



OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

**March/April
2009**

ODIHR e-newsletter

Upcoming events

Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting: hate crimes - effective implementation of legislation, Vienna, 4-5 May

Human Dimension Seminar on Strengthening the Rule of Law, Warsaw, 12-14 May

Latest reports

[Statement of preliminary findings and conclusions on the second round of presidential and municipal elections in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 5 April 2009](#)

[Statement of preliminary findings and conclusions on parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova, 5 April 2009](#)

[Statement of preliminary findings and conclusions on early parliamentary elections in Montenegro, 29 March 2009](#)

[Report by ODIHR director Ambassador Janez Lenarčič at the 755th Meeting of the Permanent Council, Vienna, 19 March 2009](#)

[Needs Assessment Mission Report ahead of early parliamentary elections in Iceland scheduled for 25 April 2009](#)

[Needs Assessment Mission Report ahead of parliamentary elections in Albania scheduled for 28 June 2009](#)

[Final report on the 4 November 2008 general elections in the United States of America](#)

[Assessment of the human rights situation of Roma and Sinti in Italy](#)

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ODIHR reports back to European Parliament on co-operation with Belarus

At a European Parliament conference on EU relations with Belarus on 31 March, ODIHR Director Janez Lenarčič briefed parliamentarians on the Office's co-operation with Belarusian authorities on drafting amendments to the country's electoral legislation.

The European Parliament had previously called on Belarus to work with ODIHR on improving its election legislation, and Lenarčič noted the positive steps taken by the Belarusian authorities since the parliamentary elections in September 2008.

Lenarčič expressed his hope that the good co-operation with Belarus will continue and lead in due time to changes in the electoral legislation that will be in line with its OSCE commitments. He also stressed that civil society and the political opposition should be included in the consultation process at the appropriate time.

ICTY president and ODIHR director review joint war crimes project

On 17 March, ODIHR Director Ambassador Janez Lenarčič met President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) Patrick Robinson, Chief Prosecutor Serge Brammertz and Acting Registrar John Hocking in The Hague to discuss developments regarding a joint project aimed at enhancing the capacity of local justice systems in South-Eastern Europe to properly investigate, prosecute and adjudicate war crimes cases.

ODIHR sought clarification on the Tribunal's involvement as partner for potential future phases of the project.

Tribunal President Robinson reaffirmed ICTY's appreciation for the project. It was agreed to discuss further steps after the finalization of the interim report, which will include best practices, lessons learned and recommendations gathered during the project's ongoing research phase.

ODIHR chief hails close partnership with Venice Commission

ODIHR Director Lenarčič participated in the plenary session of the Council of Europe's Venice Commission on 13 March, praising the excellent co-operation between the two institutions.

ODIHR and the Venice Commission have been working together to provide joint legal opinions on draft legislation of participating States, in particular in the areas of freedom of assembly, political parties, elections and freedom of religion and belief.

ODIHR, OSCE PA discuss improving co-operation on election observation

Representatives of ODIHR and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly met in Athens on 11 March to discuss improving co-operation relating to election observation.

Russian version

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The meeting, which was chaired by the Greek OSCE Chairmanship, resulted in a common understanding.

ODIHR welcomed the Chairmanship's *aide-memoire* recording the conclusions reached at the meeting as a contribution to the common endeavour of conducting OSCE election observation activities in partnership.

Ambassador Lenarčič: Link between human rights and security must remain at heart of Europe's security architecture

Speaking at a conference on the role of the OSCE in the European security architecture in Rome on 25 March, ODIHR director Janez Lenarčič said that the close linkage of human rights and security must remain an essential component of security arrangements in the continent.

"The link between security and human rights is not some sort of fancy fair-weather notion, dreamed up in the enthusiastic, 'anything goes' era immediately following the end of the Cold War," Lenarčič told the gathering.

"It is a pure necessity - no less important than 'hard' security - if we are to continue on the road to the 'new era of democracy, peace and unity' heralded by the Paris Charter in 1990."

Hate crimes guide debuts in Vienna

ODIHR officially launched its latest tool to help fight hate crimes at a launch event in Vienna on 19 March.

The publication "Hate Crime Laws: A Practical Guide" was developed to provide clear and relevant guidance to lawmakers, campaigners and law enforcement personnel involved in creating or implementing hate crime legislation.

The publication contains examples of practice from different states, and makes recommendations based on approaches that have proved to be the most effective. It highlights the impact of particular drafting choices on the eventual ability of law enforcement officials and courts to apply legislation effectively.

The guide has already been used by ODIHR as the basis for legislative reviews and training. In February, for example, ODIHR's Tolerance and Non-Discrimination department - together with the OSCE Spillover Mission in Skopje - delivered the first of a series of workshops on hate crime for government officials and NGOs.

Poles have new tool against anti-Semitism



ODIHR released the Polish version of its teaching materials on combating anti-Semitism for schools at a 5 March launch event attended by Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, Polish plenipotentiary for international affairs and former foreign minister (left) and the Office's Director, Janez Lenarčič.

The materials are designed to increase students' knowledge of historic and current anti-Semitism in Poland and in Europe, and to support Polish educators in addressing stereotypes and prejudice in general.

The Polish edition forms part of an international project aimed at combating anti-Semitism through education. Poland's Ministry of Education gave its backing to the latest edition of the tools and is hosting workshops for teachers drawn from all over the country on how to make best use of them.

The materials were developed by ODIHR and the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, in co-operation with experts from seven pilot countries, with each country adapting the package to reflect its own history.

Balkan policewomen seek higher profile

ODIHR Human Rights Officer Linda Öhman joined policewomen from Bulgaria, Montenegro, Serbia, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia at a meeting in Belgrade on 26-27 March to discuss ways of increasing the role and profile of women in policing.

The gathering - called by the South East Europe Police Chiefs Association (SEPCA) - constituted the inaugural meeting of an expert group that will press for the establishment of a network of policewomen who will advocate for a series of measures, such as ensuring equal career opportunities.

Öhman, who is running ODIHR's Human Rights, Women and Security programme and works to promote the Office's [Toolkit on Gender Security Sector Reform](#), will provide technical assistance and support to the expert group.

New publications and translations



- [Hate Crime Laws - A Practical Guide \(English\)](#)

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