



Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting III

Inclusion as a way to promote tolerance and non-discrimination

Vienna, 2-3 June 2025

ANNOTATED AGENDA

50 years ago, in the Helsinki Final Act, OSCE participating States reaffirmed the universal significance of respect for and effective exercise of equal rights and agreed to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion. In a series of Ministerial Council Decisions, OSCE participating States have since underlined the need for a comprehensive and cross-cutting approach to effectively address various forms of intolerance and discrimination, recognizing the threat they pose to the security of individuals and communities, and wider societies, while at the same time acknowledging their specificities, uniqueness and historical backgrounds.¹

Intolerance, discrimination, and hate remain serious and pervasive issues in the OSCE region, corroding democracy, and creating societal divisions and polarization. Persons, groups and communities in vulnerable and marginalized situations are particularly affected by hate-driven incidents. This includes national minorities, whose exclusion from full participation in society can deepen mistrust, weaken social cohesion, and – if left unaddressed – contribute to interethnic tension or conflict.

Understanding the interconnected nature of identities and experiences of intolerance, discrimination, and hate is essential to advancing tolerance and non-discrimination in an inclusive way. Individuals are not only defined by a single identity such as ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, or disability but by the converging and interwoven aspects of these identities. Advancing tolerance and non-discrimination for all requires concerted, systematic, and sustained efforts from governments, civil society, religious or belief communities, international organizations, private sector and other relevant stakeholders. Also, interfaith, interreligious, and intercultural dialogue and cooperation are vital to foster tolerance and combat discrimination. Similarly, participatory policymaking is important in creating more inclusive and resilient societies.

The third Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting will enable discussion of the progress made and steps still needed to effectively implement OSCE commitments related to tolerance and non-discrimination. In particular, the meeting will focus on (i) comprehensive and inclusive approaches to addressing intolerance and discrimination, (ii) promoting inclusion in and through interethnic,

¹ *Inter alia*, Ministerial Council Decisions Porto 2002, Maastricht 3/03, Maastricht 4/03, Sofia 12/04, Ljubljana 10/05, Brussels 13/06, Madrid 10/07, and Athens 9/09.

interfaith, interreligious and intercultural dialogue and cooperation, and (iii) devising inclusive policies to advance tolerance, non-discrimination and equality.

Day 1

14.00 – 15.00 OPENING SESSION

15.00 – 17.00 SESSION I: Respect: Addressing intolerance and discrimination in the OSCE region in a comprehensive and inclusive manner

A comprehensive, cross-cutting and inclusive approach to address intolerance and discrimination recognizes the interconnected nature of these issues, as intolerance often stems from similar root causes and drivers: fear, ignorance, prejudice, contempt, historical injustice, economic inequality, systematic marginalization and oppression, and the normalization of discrimination. A holistic strategy and well-coordinated, whole-of-society approach enable policymakers, educators, civil society actors, and other relevant stakeholders to address root causes and identify overlapping patterns of intolerance, discrimination and exclusion, and to build coalitions across groups and communities that might otherwise remain isolated or disconnected.

Inclusive and peaceful societies grounded in dignity, justice, equality, and respect require a sustained commitment to both shared and individual experience. Failure to consider this complexity can lead to policies and practices that overlook or inadequately serve those who face compounded forms of discrimination. By incorporating a holistic approach, we ensure that the unique challenges faced by individuals at the crossroads of multiple identities are not ignored, but are acknowledged and addressed with care, respect, and sensitivity. Such an approach is also a vital tool for conflict prevention, as addressing root causes of discrimination and exclusion strengthens social cohesion and reduces the risk of tensions escalating into open conflict.

This working session will explore comprehensive and inclusive strategies to address intolerance and discrimination and practical ways policymakers, educators, and civil society organizations can work together to build coalitions across different communities, addressing the interconnecting and overlapping patterns of intolerance and discrimination to build more inclusive and cohesive societies.

Questions for discussion:

- What concrete steps can OSCE participating States take to address the root causes of intolerance while fostering social inclusion and protecting affected individuals and groups?
- How can OSCE participating States and relevant stakeholders ensure that strategies addressing intolerance and discrimination are both comprehensive and inclusive?
- In what ways can policymakers, educators, and civil society organizations build coalitions across different communities, addressing the interconnecting and overlapping patterns of intolerance and discrimination to create more inclusive and resilient societies?

Day 2

10.30 – 12.30 SESSION II: Respond: promoting inclusion in and through interfaith, interreligious and intercultural dialogue and cooperation

Interfaith, interreligious, and intercultural dialogue can foster tolerance, combat discrimination, and promote peace and security when grounded in respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, particularly freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression. Meaningful conversation between individuals from different religious or belief communities can challenge stereotypes, counter conspiracy theories, reduce prejudice, and combat misinformation and disinformation. These dialogue processes are also vital drivers of inclusion because they create space for mutual respect, trust and understanding, solidarity, and empathy across diverse religious, belief, and cultural traditions. Mutual recognition and collaboration empower individuals, groups and communities to move beyond tolerance toward genuine acceptance and inclusion, where diversity is not just acknowledged but celebrated.

OSCE participating States have specifically committed to promoting, supporting and facilitating open and transparent interfaith and interreligious dialogue and partnership,² and in recent years a host of such dialogue initiatives have emerged across the region. For these initiatives to be truly inclusive, they must engage the full diversity of religious and belief communities, as well as active participation of those who are often underrepresented in such activities, including women and youth.

In 2024 ODIHR launched the **Belief, Dialogue and Security guide** in response to calls from participating States to provide guidance and practical tools to support the emergence of dialogue and partnerships across religious and belief boundaries.³

This working session will explore the vital role of interfaith, interreligious, and intercultural dialogue and cooperation in advancing tolerance, inclusion, and non-discrimination, and will also consider how to make these processes truly inclusive. Participants will examine both the opportunities and challenges involved in advancing this work, share best practices and lessons learned from current and past efforts, and discuss strategies to ensure that such initiatives remain inclusive across the OSCE region.

Questions for discussion:

- What are the most effective approaches to fostering interfaith, interreligious, and intercultural dialogue that promote genuine inclusion and mutual understanding?
- What are the key opportunities and challenges in advancing tolerance and non-discrimination through these initiatives? Which best practices or lessons from current and past efforts can be scaled or adapted to strengthen future cooperation in diverse religious, belief, and cultural contexts?

² Maastricht 04/03, Kyiv 03/13.

³ ODIHR's guide on *Belief, Dialogue and Security — Fostering dialogue and joint action across religious and belief boundaries* is Accessible at <https://www.osce.org/odihr/571789>.

- What strategies and tools can OSCE participating States and other relevant stakeholders employ to foster a culture of inclusivity within interfaith, interreligious, and intercultural dialogue and cooperation efforts?

14.30 – 16.30 SESSION III: Prepare: towards more inclusive approaches to policymaking to advance tolerance, non-discrimination and equality

Increasing gender equality and the participation of underrepresented groups in the policymaking process is essential to fostering a more inclusive and resilient society. When, youth, persons with disabilities, and minority communities are given a voice in shaping policies, it ensures that their concerns and needs are properly addressed. Policymaking that reflects the experiences of diverse individuals and populations can lead to more equitable laws and practices, helping to reduce social disparities and promote equality and justice for all. This is also true in times of crisis and war, as Ukraine's work on inclusive practices, even when facing the Russian war of aggression, highlights.

Incorporating underrepresented groups into the decision-making process promotes greater tolerance by challenging stereotypes and dismantling systemic biases. When policymakers actively include voices from different backgrounds, it sends a message of respect for diversity and an acknowledgment that all individuals, regardless of their gender, age, ability, ethnicity, religion or belief, or other identity characteristics, deserve a seat at the table. This visibility can encourage social inclusion and cohesion and reduce discrimination, as it fosters understanding and empathy among various groups. The resulting policies can help create a more equitable and tolerant society, where differences are respected. In general, inclusive societies also encourage economic inclusion and societal resilience, thus contributing to security and respect for human rights.

This working session will explore how policymakers can effectively increase the participation of underrepresented groups in the policymaking process and highlight the benefits of this inclusive approach.

Questions for discussion:

- What are examples of good practices to ensure that processes and resulting policies are inclusive and representative of the society in which they are applied?
- What are examples of inclusive approaches to policymaking that present innovative solutions to issues of tolerance and non-discrimination?
- What are effective ways to encourage increased participation of underrepresented groups in policymaking?

16.30 – 17.30 CLOSING SESSION

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