



## **Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting III**

### **Tolerance and Non-Discrimination and Gender Equality**

**Vienna, 24-25 June 2024**

#### **ANNOTATED AGENDA**

In the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, OSCE participating States committed to actively respect human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction. Subsequently, in a series of Ministerial Council Decisions participating States recognized that tolerance and non-discrimination are crucial elements in the promotion of human rights, democratic values and comprehensive security. They underlined the need for a comprehensive and cross-cutting approach to effectively address discrimination and intolerance, while remaining cognizant of their particular and unique forms, in recognition of the threat they pose to the security of individuals and communities, as well as wider social stability and security.<sup>1</sup>

Intolerance, discrimination, and hate remain serious and pervasive issues in the OSCE region, corroding democracy, creating societal divisions, and polarization, despite the progress made in recent years to prevent and counter these phenomena. Marginalized and vulnerable groups and communities are particularly affected by hate-driven incidents both offline and online, too often scapegoated for the mounting challenges societies face across the region.

These manifestations of intolerance have a notable gender dimension, as multiple biases intersect, negatively impacting the lives of women and girls, and men and boys in different ways. This added complexity to the already difficult task of countering intolerance and discrimination deepens inequalities between women and men, girls and boys, exposes vulnerabilities in all spheres of society and hinders the contribution of women and girls in advancing tolerance and non-discrimination for all in the OSCE region.

Combating discrimination, promoting gender equality, and upholding the principles of tolerance and non-discrimination for all, while recognizing the importance of cultural and religious diversity in promoting mutual respect and understanding, requires concerted, systematic, and sustained efforts from governments, civil society organizations, religious or belief communities, and international institutions. Policies, laws, and practices across the OSCE region should strive to achieve equal, open, and inclusive societies.

Against this backdrop of challenges and opportunities, the third Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting will provide a space to discuss the progress made towards effectively implementing OSCE commitments related to tolerance, non-discrimination, and gender equality. It will address the disproportionate impact of intolerance and discrimination on women and girls, particularly those in vulnerable communities, and highlight the role that women and girls play in advancing tolerance and non-discrimination. The meeting will also explore the importance of gender mainstreaming in preventing and responding to hate crimes.

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<sup>1</sup> *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.

## **Day 1**

14.00 – 15.00

### **OPENING SESSION**

15.00 – 17.00

### **SESSION I: Advancing tolerance and non-discrimination for all, including the role of women and girls**

Manifestations of intolerance and discrimination affect women and girls, and men and boys differently. Women and girls, particularly those from vulnerable communities, often face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Their voices are frequently excluded from the process of devising policies, laws, and practices intended to address these very issues. Without their critical perspective, which is based on their lived reality of discrimination, the differential impact of intolerance on women and girls, and men and boys is likely to be overlooked and minimized, undermining the effectiveness of such measures.

Advancing the values of tolerance and non-discrimination throughout society requires supporting and empowering women and girls to act as effective agents of change. Developing and implementing long-term measures that raise awareness and educate about peaceful coexistence and pluralistic societies grounded in respect for diversity cannot be meaningfully advanced without involving half the population. However, the role of women and girls in promoting tolerance and non-discrimination is frequently disregarded and underexplored. Understanding the reasons for this oversight is essential.

This first working session will examine the impact of intolerance and discrimination on women and girls, and men and boys. Discussions will consider the role and effectiveness of various initiatives involving women and girls' civil society actors in advancing tolerance and non-discrimination in the OSCE region. It will also provide an opportunity to share good practices related to activities and initiatives led by women and girls to promote tolerance and non-discrimination.

#### **Questions for discussion:**

- How does the gender dimension of intolerance and discrimination manifest in the OSCE region?
- What factors prevent women and girls from advancing tolerance and non-discrimination?
- What opportunities exist for women and girls to promote tolerance and non-discrimination in their societies? What are some examples of good practice and lessons learned when it comes to women-and girl-led initiatives addressing these phenomena?
- How can states, civil society, OSCE institutions, and other executive structures better assist and support women and girls in their efforts to promote tolerance and non-discrimination?

## **Day 2**

10.30 – 12.30

### **SESSION II: Disproportionate impact of intolerance and discrimination on women and girls in vulnerable communities**

In several Ministerial Council Decisions, participating States have recognized that addressing intolerance and discrimination requires a comprehensive and cross-cutting approach,

recognizing the backgrounds of different manifestations of intolerance and their implications on individuals and communities.<sup>2</sup>

Women and girls from communities with intersecting factors such as race and ethnicity often face a disproportionate impact from intolerance and discrimination. This perpetuates inequality, raises safety and security concerns, and threatens tolerance, cohesion and resilience. This is particularly true for women and girls from national minority backgrounds, including Roma and Sinti. OSCE participating States have recognized the need to counter prejudice against Roma and Sinti women and girls, to effectively elaborate policies to combat discrimination and racial violence, and to support their empowerment and address the rise of discrimination and violent manifestations of intolerance.<sup>3</sup>

Intolerance and intersectional discrimination towards women and girls in vulnerable communities manifest in various forms, including limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Such increased marginalization perpetuates discriminatory practices, and can lead to gender-based violence. This negative cycle critically hinders women and girls from reaching their full potential and participating meaningfully in society. In recent years these harms have been further exacerbated by the rise of online technologies, social media, and the use of artificial intelligence which often reinforce stereotypes and entrench power imbalances.

The protection of human rights, including minority rights, is inextricably linked with the preservation of peace and stability, as conflicts are often rooted in the denial of basic rights and the exclusion and alienation of entire communities. When states uphold their commitments to promoting tolerance, non-discrimination, and equality, especially for their most vulnerable communities, integration, cohesion, and stability increase. Marginalized communities often face discrimination on multiple and overlapping grounds, with minority women and girls disproportionately affected. The development and implementation of policies and laws to counter discrimination should take an intersectional approach in order to adequately address the multifaceted nature of identity and discrimination.

This session will focus on the issues and challenges faced specifically by women and girls in vulnerable communities, highlight good practices in combating intolerance and intersectional discrimination, and discuss strategies for upscaling and replicating positive experiences and models.

### **Questions to guide the discussion:**

- What challenges do women and girls from vulnerable communities, including Roma and Sinti, face due to intolerance and discrimination, and how do these manifestations disproportionately impact them?
- What are good practices, tools, and lessons learned for effectively combating intolerance and discrimination against women and girls in vulnerable communities and underrepresented groups, and how can participating States replicate these strategies?
- How can technology and social media platforms be leveraged to counteract the spread of harmful stereotypes and promote positive narratives about women and girls in vulnerable communities?

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> Maastricht 3/03, and Kyiv 4/13.

**SESSION III: Mainstreaming gender in preventing and responding to hate crime**

OSCE participating States have repeatedly acknowledged that hate crimes undermine security and social cohesion committing to prevent and respond to such egregious manifestations of bias.<sup>4</sup> They have also committed to collect data on all bias-motivated crimes, and many report data on gender-based hate crime as part of ODIHR's annual Hate Crime Report.<sup>5</sup> Collecting disaggregated hate crime data is essential for understanding patterns and trends in hateful offending, including the specific impact of hate crimes on women and girls. This data also ensures tailored policymaking to counter these problems.

Individuals have multifaceted identities. Hate crime victims often report being attacked based on multiple identity traits, such as gender and race, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation, age, gender identity, or migrant status. As such, a person's gender may affect the frequency and impact of their experiences of bias-motivated intolerance and hate crime. An intersectional approach to such crimes helps ensure that the various impacts of discrimination and violence targeting multiple identity characteristics are taken into account.

In addition, gender inequalities may result in gender-based hate crimes – criminal offences motivated by bias against a person's gender. Such crimes disproportionately affect women and girls. It is, therefore, important to understand and recognize the gendered aspects of hate crime to ensure that victims receive the necessary support and to improve targeted communities' experiences of reporting hate crimes to the authorities.

The third working session will examine the impact of bias-motivated violence on women and girls and explore a gender mainstreamed approach to addressing hate crime. The session will also provide an opportunity to share good practices and discuss future opportunities for improving hate crime responses in this area.

**Questions to guide the discussions for this session:**

- What are good practices and challenges in data collection, investigation, and prosecution of hate crimes based on multiple motives, including gender bias?
- What would a gender mainstreamed approach to addressing hate crimes include, and what would be its main benefits, including in advancing gender equality?
- What challenges do national authorities and civil society face in addressing gender-based hate crimes and hate crimes involving multiple biases?
- How can states and civil society provide better support, access to justice, and protection for victims of such crimes?

**CLOSING SESSION**

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<sup>4</sup> [Decision No. 9/09 on combating hate crimes | OSCE](#), and [Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE | OSCE](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Home | HCRW \(osce.org\)](#)