



Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting

Preventing Torture and Ill-Treatment: Strengthening Co-operation and Implementation

Vienna, 29-30 June 2026

AGENDA

Monday, 29 June

14.00 – 15.00

OPENING SESSION

Opening remarks

Ambassador Raphael Nägeli, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the OSCE, Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council

Ms. Maria Telalian, Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)

Keynote address

Technical information

15.00 – 17.00

SESSION I: Safeguards and accountability in criminal justice procedures

During criminal justice processes, the risk of torture and ill-treatment is highest during arrest, interrogation, and police custody, making safeguards at the outset of deprivation of liberty essential. These include immediate access to a lawyer and medical doctor, prompt notification of relatives, clear information on rights, and accurate custody records, alongside tools that can enhance accountability and transparency.

Relying heavily on confessions as evidence may encourage coercive or manipulative interrogation methods. The Mendez Principles on Effective Interviewing offer a rights-based alternative that focuses on ethical, effective, and evidence-based interviewing practices. The judiciary is essential in safeguarding fair trials by excluding evidence obtained through torture or ill-treatment.

This session will discuss the practical implementation of these safeguards and interviewing standards within the framework of OSCE commitments, in particular Tirana Decision No. 7/20, and obligations under the UN Convention against Torture. It will examine implementation gaps across the OSCE area and underline the importance of co-operation among national authorities, oversight and monitoring bodies, international organizations, civil society, and medical professionals to reinforce prevention, accountability, and compliance with fair-trial standards.

[17.15 – 18:15 – side events]

Tuesday, 30 June

[9.00 – 10.00 – side events]

10.30 – 12.30 **SESSION II: Preventing torture through training, monitoring, and enhanced oversight**

Preventing torture and ill-treatment requires more than legal prohibitions alone. Effective prevention depends on professional, rights-compliant policing and detention practices, strengthened accountability, and independent oversight.

The training and education of law enforcement and detention personnel are also important preventive measures, alongside measures to increase transparency and the external scrutiny of places of detention, as stated in the Tirana Decision. Prohibiting incommunicado and secret detention is grounded in the standards of the Council of Europe and the extensive case law of the European Court of Human Rights, which consistently require prompt access to legal counsel, judicial oversight of detention, communication with family members, and protection against arbitrary detention, torture, and enforced disappearance. Access to safeguards and enabling independent monitoring, including through the National Preventive Mechanisms is established under the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture (OPCAT), the Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) of the Council of Europe, and other oversight bodies, and is aimed at preventing abuse and strengthening public trust. During armed conflict, the Geneva Conventions also provide for external oversight through visits by the ICRC.

This session will examine the role of training, preventive monitoring, and access to places of detention across the OSCE region, highlighting both good practices and continuing challenges in implementing effective safeguards against torture and ill-treatment. The session will also provide an opportunity for authorities, monitoring bodies, and civil society to exchange experiences, identify operational challenges, and discuss recent developments in training and oversight practices.

[13.30 – 14.30 – side events]

14.45 – 16.45 **SESSION III: Justice for torture victims: Fighting impunity, and ensuring redress and rehabilitation**

This session will examine victim-centered approaches to the investigation and prosecution of torture, with a particular focus on ensuring fair-trial safeguards and the right to an effective remedy for victims, combating impunity, and strengthening accountability mechanisms to ensure that torture offences are prosecuted under domestic criminal law.

In this context, discussions will explore the implementation of the Istanbul Protocol as a key framework for the effective investigation and documentation of torture, focusing on the importance of independence, adherence to ethical and professional standards, and the protection of medical and legal professionals operating in custodial settings.

The right to a fair trial and the right to an effective remedy for victims of serious human right violations are key to a number of international human rights instruments, playing a crucial role in ensuring accountability for past abuses and preventing impunity.

The session may also reflect on the role of the judiciary in safeguarding these rights, including through ensuring meaningful participation of victims, protection and dignity throughout the justice process. Finally, session participants reflect on broader aspects, including access to justice and the importance of availability of high-quality legal aid services and other support measures aimed at assisting victims of torture in navigating complex judicial processes without the risk re-traumatisation.

16.45 – 17.45 **CLOSING SESSION**

Reports from the working sessions

Statements by participating States

Closing remarks from representatives of ODIHR, and the Swiss Chairpersonship

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