Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

ODIHR in Ukraine

"The crisis in and around Ukraine has underlined, once again, the value of the OSCE concept of comprehensive security. It has clearly shown that there can be no lasting security and stability in Europe without full respect for and strict implementation of all OSCE commitments across the three dimensions of security and, especially, in the OSCE's human dimension of security. ODIHR's substantial contribution to the OSCE's response to the crisis has underscored its relevance and operational capabilities."
Michael Georg Link, ODIHR Director

ODIHR is the human rights institution of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, working to promote democratic elections, respect for human rights, tolerance and non-discrimination, the rule of law, and improving the situation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE area.

ODIHR has played an important role in the OSCE reaction to the crisis in and around Ukraine from the beginning, conducting a Human Rights Assessment Mission (HRAM) in March 2014. The Mission, conducted jointly with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, published its report in May 2014, establishing that a number of serious human rights violations had occurred during the reporting period. In follow-up, ODIHR has carried out broad consultations with civil society actors, and provided human rights monitoring and security training for members of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, as well as two security workshops for Ukrainian human rights defenders. In July 2015, ODIHR conducted a follow-up to the March 2014 mission to assess changes to the human rights situation in Crimea and their impact on affected groups. Apart from assessing which recommendations of the HRAM had been implemented since the spring of 2014, the

follow-up mission examined a broad spectrum of human rights that might have been further compromised in a political landscape that had changed radically since the previous mission.

ODIHR deployed long-term election observation missions to both the 25 May 2014 early presidential election and the 26 October 2014 early parliamentary elections, issuing final reports that noted both elections showed the clear resolve on the part of the authorities to hold genuine elections largely in line with OSCE commitments and other international standards and, in the vast majority of the country, with respect for fundamental freedoms.

The Office also monitored the situation of Roma in Ukraine in 2014 and published the Situation Assessment Report on Roma in Ukraine and the Impact of the Current Crisis in August. ODIHR will continue co-operating with Ukrainian authorities on Roma issues.

ODIHR has also prepared a number of legal opinions on draft Ukrainian legislation to assess compliance with international human rights standards; all are available on ODIHR's legislative database www.legislationline.org.

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While co-operating closely with the Special Monitoring Mission, as well as with the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine and other international actors, ODIHR is continuing its work in Ukraine, which can be broken down into four basic programmatic areas.

Human Dimension Dialogue

Launched in April 2015, the **Strengthening Dialogue among Civil Society and with Key Government Stakeholders in Ukraine on human dimension issues** project is aimed at enhancing the effective mechanisms of multi-stakeholder dialogue, with civil society as a competent and trusted actor, to address key human dimension issues in Ukraine in line with OSCE commitments and other international standards. In 2015 alone, hundreds of Ukrainian stakeholders will benefit from training events, workshops, meetings and seminars across the country. These will focus on human rights monitoring, democratic governance and lawmaking, and tolerance and non-discrimination.

Elections

Following an invitation from Ukraine, issued in line with its OSCE commitments, ODIHR deployed an **election observation mission** for the local elections scheduled for 25 October in most areas of the country. ODIHR is also ready to deploy an election observation activity to observe local elections in some parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, pending agreement reached among the parties to the Minsk Implementation Package.

Freedom of Religion or Belief

ODIHR began the implementation of the **Promoting Security of Religious or Belief Communities and others in the regions of Ukraine** project in January 2015. The project is aimed at building the capacity of civil society, religious or belief communities and relevant state institutions on international standards on freedom of religion or belief, identifying and responding to hate crimes, and promoting dialogue among confessions, religions and between the state and religious or belief communities.

Implementation is taking place in two pilot regions, and is based on three main pillars: seminars on freedom of religion or belief and hate crimes for local and regional authorities, staff from regional Ombudsperson offices, prosecutors and police, civil society and religious or belief communities; training on hate crimes for law enforcement officials; and promoting dialogue among the representatives of these groups, at both the national and regional level, through roundtables and conferences.

Legislative Support

At Ukraine's request, ODIHR will continue to **review draft laws on human dimension** issues to assess their compliance with international standards and support Ukrainian lawmakers through workshops on policy-making, legislative planning, public consultation and evaluation of legislation.

More information

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