

OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)

**Addressing Intolerance and Discrimination against Indigenous Peoples:
Mapping the Situation in the OSCE Region**

CONCEPT NOTE

9 November 2021, 14:00–18:00 Central European Time, online conference

Intolerance and discrimination continue to be a concern across the region of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).¹ Racism and xenophobia, along with other bias motivations of intolerance and discrimination, negatively affect the lives of many members of different ethnic, religious or other groups. The impact is especially detrimental upon those who are also subject to other forms of intolerance and discrimination, including intersectional aspects of intolerance and discrimination when one or more protected characteristics intersect with gender, religion or belief, etc. Intolerance, discrimination and their manifestations negatively and differently impact the lives of both women and girls, men and boys, and others.

The OSCE participating States have committed to ensuring human rights and fundamental freedoms of everyone within their territory and subject to their jurisdiction, without distinction of any kind such as “race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”² The specific situation of indigenous peoples³ was initially acknowledged in the OSCE in the context of culture and heritage, within the principal areas of preservation and co-operation, in 1991. Participating States of the OSCE agreed to “accord due attention to strengthening the heritage of popular culture of the past, including indigenous [...] cultures, [...] within the framework of their overall efforts for the preservation, study, protection and promotion of mutual awareness of their cultural heritage.”⁴

Soon after, in 1992, the decisions of the OSCE Helsinki Summit of Heads of State or Government on enhanced commitments and co-operation in the human dimension explicitly confirmed that their commitments apply to indigenous peoples in the OSCE region. Recognizing that “persons belonging to indigenous populations may have special problems in exercising their rights,” OSCE participating States agreed that their “commitments regarding human rights and fundamental freedoms apply fully and without discrimination to such persons.”⁵ Furthermore, the Ministerial Council Decision on preventing and combating

¹ In Copenhagen (1990), participating States declared their firm intention to intensify the efforts to combat totalitarianism, racial and ethnic hatred, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and discrimination against anyone, as well as persecution on religious and ideological grounds in all their forms.

² Conference on European Security and Co-operation (CSCE), Concluding Document of the Vienna Meeting of 1986 of Representatives of the Participating States of the CSCE, Vienna, 1989, <<https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/a/7/40881.pdf>>.

³ For international human rights standards relating to indigenous peoples, see: <<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/SRIndigenousPeoples/Pages/InternationalStandards.aspx>>.

⁴ CSCE, Document of the Cracow Symposium on the Cultural Heritage of the CSCE Participating States, Cracow 1991, in: OSCE Human Dimension Commitments, Volume 2, Chronological Compilation, 3rd Edition, OSCE/ODIHR, 2011, <<https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/b/0/76895.pdf>>.

⁵ CSCE, Helsinki Document: The Challenges of Change (Summit of Heads of State or Government). Helsinki Decisions. Document of the First Additional Meeting of the Council (Helsinki Additional Ministerial Meeting of the CSCE Council), Helsinki, 1992, in: OSCE Human Dimension Commitments, Volume 2, Chronological Compilation, 3rd Edition, OSCE/ODIHR, 2011,

violence against women⁶ (Ljubljana, 2005) expressed deep concern “at the particular targeting or vulnerability to violence and hence the need for protection of girls and some groups of women, such as [...] indigenous women,” urging participating States to take all measures to “promote and protect the full enjoyment of the human rights of women and to prevent and combat all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls.”⁷

Nevertheless, across the world, including the OSCE region, indigenous peoples face intolerance and discrimination in various forms and expressions. The UN Special Rapporteurs on indigenous peoples expressed concern about the human rights situation of indigenous peoples in a number of OSCE participating States, including manifestations of intolerance and discrimination relating to civic, political and economic rights, as well as historic grievances and the vulnerability of indigenous women and girls to abuse.⁸

In order to open a discussion on this topic and provide a platform for an exchange of information, ODIHR will convene an online conference on “Indigenous Peoples: Mapping the Situation in the OSCE Region.” The online event will bring together representatives of indigenous communities, state institutions, civil society organizations, intergovernmental organizations, and the general public who will address the following questions:

- What are the current key concerns, trends and developments with regards to the manifestations of intolerance and discrimination against indigenous peoples in the OSCE region?
- How do manifestations of intolerance and discrimination affect the security of indigenous peoples? What are the different gendered experiences of those affected?
- How have participating States, as well as civil society organizations, effectively addressed these concerns? How can intersectoral and cross-border co-operation be improved to address intolerance and discrimination against indigenous people? What can we do to amplify the voices of women activists in these processes?

The conference will take place on Zoom, with simultaneous interpretation in English, Russian, and International Sign Language, as well as live stream on ODIHR’s Facebook page (in English). Registration is open to the public and available [here](#).

To submit a question to the panelists, please contact Tatjana Perić (tatjana.peric@odihr.pl), Adviser on Combating Racism and Xenophobia, OSCE/ODIHR.

<<https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/b/0/76895.pdf>>.

⁶ Gender equality has been described as an integral part of OSCE policies, both within the organization itself, as well as in its participating States (Istanbul 1999). The OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality (2004) reaffirmed this principle, and urged the participating States and institutions to “focus in particular on women’s empowerment and the participation of women as well as men in public, political and economic life in the context of democratic and economic processes in participating States.”

⁷ OSCE, Ministerial Council Decision 15/05, on preventing and combating violence against women, Ljubljana, 2005, <<https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/c/8/17451.pdf>>.

⁸ See country visit reports,

<<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/SRIndigenousPeoples/Pages/CountryReports.aspx>>.

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AGENDA

9 November 2021, 14:00–17:40 CET⁹

14:00–14:15 Keynote Remarks

Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

Mona Rishmawi, Chief, Rule of Law, Equality and Non-Discrimination Branch, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

14:15–15:45 Mapping the Situation in the OSCE Region: Manifestations of Intolerance and Discrimination against Indigenous Peoples

Moderator: Christie J. Edwards, JD, LL.M., Deputy Head, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, OSCE/ODIHR

This panel will discuss intolerance and discrimination against indigenous people regarding community-state relations, hate crime, access to justice, and the situation of indigenous human rights defenders, with an emphasis on intersectional aspects, including gender.

Panelists:

- Alexey Tsykarev, member of the Karelian indigenous people; Vice-Chair, United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues; Chair, Center for Support of Indigenous Peoples and Civic Diplomacy “Young Karelia,” Russian Federation

- Aviâja Egede Lynge, member of the Inuit indigenous people; social anthropologist, human rights defender and national children’s rights advocate, Greenland, Denmark

- Jonodev Chaudhuri, Ambassador, Muscogee (Creek) Nation; Principal, Chaudhuri Law, United States

15:45–16:00 Break

⁹ All times are given in Central European Time (CET).

16:00–17:30 **The Effects of Intolerance and Discrimination on the Enjoyment of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

Moderator: Tatjana Perić, Adviser on Combating Racism and Xenophobia, OSCE/ODIHR

This panel will address current and historical economic, social, cultural, and environmental concerns in the context of intolerance and discrimination, including language and education, cultural activities, employment, poverty, effects of climate change, with an emphasis on intersectional aspects, including gender.

Panelists:

- Yana Tannagasheva, Shor indigenous people, Russian Federation
- Chief Perry Bellegarde (Cree and Nakota), Former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Canada
- Oula-Antti Labba, Lawyer, Human Rights Unit, Saami Council/Sámiráđi

17:30–17:40 **Conclusions**

Christie J. Edwards, JD, LLM, Deputy Head, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, OSCE/ODIHR