



Consolidated Civil Society Space Report to the OHCHR

01 July 2017

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) was the first security organization that conceived of and adopted a concept of comprehensive and co-operative security. The vision of security as a series of interdependent and interconnected elements was viewed revolutionary at the time and remains innovative today.¹ Beginning with the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, the now 57 participating States of the OSCE region have adopted a large number of politically binding commitments relating to what has become known as the human dimension of the OSCE's comprehensive security concept.

With its mandate to promote the human dimension, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is tasked with assisting OSCE participating States to ensure full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; to abide by the rule of law; to promote principles of democracy; to build, strengthen and protect democratic institutions; and to promote tolerance throughout their societies². ODIHR observes elections, reviews legislation and advises governments on how to develop and sustain democratic institutions. The Office conducts training programmes for government and law-enforcement officials and non-governmental organizations on how to uphold, promote and monitor human rights.

The OSCE commitments recognize civil society as equal partners in the realization of each participating State's human dimension commitments. As such, ODIHR's engagement with civil society follows three main avenues:

- **Capacity building of civil society organisations:** ODIHR provides training, facilitates coalition building and information sharing and supports awareness-raising initiatives.
- **Programmatic support to civil society:** ODIHR works with civil society on measures that can be taken to improve implementation of commitments through collaboration with authorities, offering handbooks and guidelines, working in partnership and through direct field support.
- **Enhancing dialogue and participation of civil society:** ODIHR consults with civil society as stakeholders and experts during the preparation, implementation and evaluation of projects and interventions. Through workshops and meetings at national and regional levels, ODIHR provides opportunities for civil society to take part in topical dialogue. Additional consultations on policy and guidance documents regularly take place through civil society focus groups to guarantee that each step contributes to the comprehensive security of the participating State and the OSCE region.

¹ The OSCE concept of comprehensive and co-operative security An Overview of Major Milestones, available at: <http://www.osce.org/cpc/37592?download=true>

² Helsinki Document, 1992

1. Capacity building of civil society organisations

ODIHR provides training, facilitates coalition building and information sharing and supports awareness-raising initiatives.

ODIHR organises and delivers training:

- For human rights defenders, to enable them to independently carry out quality, objective and impartial human rights monitoring activities. An important component of such training is developing awareness and concrete skills related to risk and threat assessment, production of a security plan and addressing basic aspects of digital security. This work is often done jointly with international NGOs, such as Protection International and Front Line Defenders. In 2016 alone ODIHR trained more than 100 human rights defenders on monitoring human rights and safety and security.
- To lawyers and civil society representatives, on the right to Freedom of Religion and Belief (FoRB) in the case law and practice of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). It provides an opportunity for representatives of CSOs to learn about the main principles underpinning the right to FoRB and interrelated human rights in the European Convention on Human Rights and other international human rights instruments, and as interpreted and applied in the case law of the ECtHR.
- For civil society organizations, on the identification and monitoring of bias-motivated incidents, and the development of response mechanisms, including the annual [Hate Crimes Report](#). The 2016 Hate Crimes Report, which reflects data from the previous year, contained data from 120 civil society networks and individual organizations across the OSCE region. While some countries were well-represented, in general reporting by civil society remains a challenge with a lack of familiarity of the issue of hate crime among the contributing causes.
- For Roma and Sinti youth, in the areas of activism, security and participation in Croatia, Georgia, Hungary, Poland and Serbia as part of its project “Roma and Sinti Youth Initiative.” ODIHR also builds professional capacity of Roma and Sinti youth activists through six-month placements as Junior Experts within ODIHR’s Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues (CPRSI).
- For Roma civil society, to participate in and monitor the implementation of national, regional and local action plans and other measures to improve the situation of Roma communities. As part of ODIHR’s project “Roma Inclusion in Ukraine,” particular attention is paid to improve capacities of Roma women and empower them to take active part in design, implementation and evaluation of policies on Roma integration.
- On trial monitoring methodology and key principles, to civil society organisations engaged in judicial reform and trial monitoring activities in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia.
- On migrant rights and migrant integration, to specialist civil society working on migration issues, usually alongside government officials.
- To citizen observer groups, to develop the capacity of such groups in the areas of election observation methodology including specific topics (such as campaign finance and electoral dispute resolution), report-writing, reviewing the implementation of recommendations, and advocating for electoral reform. In particular, ODIHR regularly holds training courses on long-term and short-term election observation, which include participation of civil society representatives from a number of OSCE countries that do not regularly send election observers. In addition, ODIHR has developed a free [online training course for election observers](#).

ODIHR facilitates coalition building and information sharing by:

- Assisting a network for human rights defenders to regularly meet, discuss key issues of common concern and develop common strategies to address these issues. For example, in March 2017, ODIHR and the European Parliament jointly organized a networking event for 70 human rights defenders from the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe and Turkey.
- Bringing together civil society groups from across the OSCE region to the Conference on Advancing Tolerance and Non-Discrimination through Coalition Building and Co-operation. The conference enabled civil society to learn from each other's experience and develop good practices in coalition building to help foster tolerance.
- Co-training with the National Democratic Institution on interfaith and interethnic coalition building in Poland.
- Creating social media platforms for information sharing with civil society activists, such as a Facebook group Roma and Sinti Youth Initiative of the OSCE/ODIHR.
- Collaborating with Muslim, Jewish and Christian NGOs, as part of the German-funded "Words Into Action" project, to draft a best practices manual on the creation and maintenance of inclusive and effective interfaith coalitions.
- Maintaining a platform for regular information and best practices-sharing on judicial diversity and fair trial rights through the organization of Annual Trial Monitoring Meetings.
- Publishing works by young Roma and Sinti civil society activists on themes within the OSCE mandate, such as the report *Activism, Participation and Security of Roma and Sinti Youth*.
- Working with the Latvian migrant integration assistance NGO Shelter 'Safe House' to conduct several webinar presentations on good practices in migrant integration for municipal officials.
- Developing networks to systematically translate and disseminate ODIHR's legal reviews and legislative guidelines to NGOs and human rights defenders in support of their advocacy work for legal reform and more generally help raise awareness on key human rights issues in a country. The legal reviews and other relevant ODIHR documents are also systematically published on ODIHR's [free online legislative database](#) to ensure that they are widely accessible.

ODIHR supports awareness raising initiatives including:

- Sharing information and organizing discussions to support exchange of experience and perspectives among civil society actors on issues of migrants' rights, gender-sensitive labour migration and migrant integration. ODIHR also helps share how relevant domestic policies and practices can be strengthened in line with international standards and OSCE commitments.
- Engaged discussions of international standards and good practices concerning the human rights of servicemen and servicewomen and the state of the right of military personnel to form associations. One of ODIHR's long standing partners for project work involving capacity building of military associations in the OSCE area is the European Organization of Military Associations (EUROMIL).
- Continued awareness-raising and promoting education about and commemoration of the Roma and Sinti genocide during World War II. ODIHR co-hosts, with the Council of Europe, the website www.roma-genocide.org, which provides relevant information on curricula, available teaching materials, school textbooks, places of remembrance, and innovative practices.

2. Programmatic Support to Civil Society

ODIHR works with civil society on measures that can be taken to improve implementation of commitments through collaboration with authorities, offering handbooks and guidelines, working in partnership and through direct field support.

ODIHR's handbooks and guidelines relevant for civil society include:

- [Preventing and Responding to hate crimes: A resource guide for NGOs in the OSCE region](#), which provides information on hate crimes in the OSCE region, measures to combat them and examples of strategies that NGOs have found useful and effective. The handbook, originally published in English, has been translated into French, Russian and Ukrainian. Furthermore, handbooks entitled "Understanding Hate Crimes" have been specifically developed for [Albania](#), [Kosovo](#), [Ukraine](#), [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) and the [OSCE Mission to Skopje](#).
- The [Hate Crime Data Collection and Monitoring: A Practical Guide](#) was written in co-operation with national experts, partner international organizations and civil society organizations with responsibility for monitoring hate crimes at the national and international levels. It sets out 'Ten Practical Steps' that need to be taken to improve recording systems, to understand the extent of under-reporting and to encourage victims to report hate crimes. It aims to contribute to efforts to fill data gaps and gain a better understanding of the prevalence and impact of hate crime across the OSCE region. The handbook is available in English, Serbian, Russian and Ukrainian.
- The [Guide on Gender Sensitive Labour Migration Policies](#), produced in partnership by several OSCE institutions, which provides information on trends and international standards relevant to countries of origin and destination, offering useful material to support civil society advocacy. ODIHR's [Gender Equality in Elected Office: A Six-Step Action Plan](#), Comparative Study of Structures for Women MPs in the OSCE Region and [Handbook on Promoting Women's Participation in Political Parties](#) refer to the role and strategies that civil society organizations can employ to promote and advance women's participation in political and public life.
- Importance of cooperation between NHRIs and civil society organizations has been also featured in ODIHR's [Handbook for National Human Rights Institutions on Women's Rights and Gender Equality](#). Important resources on election-related topics for citizen observer groups, in particular a [Handbook for Domestic Election Observers](#) and most recently a [Handbook on the Follow-up of Electoral Recommendations](#).
- Guidelines on [Freedom of Association](#) and on [Freedom of Peaceful Assembly](#) respectively, prepared jointly by ODIHR and the Council of Europe's Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission).
- The [Handbook on Monitoring Freedom of Peaceful Assembly](#).
- Specific guidance materials on issues identified by human rights defenders themselves as important to address based on specific challenges they face in their work.

Examples of ODIHR's partnerships include:

- Ukraine, where ODIHR is co-operating with a CSO to conduct a study on the perception of security among Roma men and women in Ukraine. The study aims to provide a more detailed analysis on the security needs of Roma communities in the Transcarpathia and Odessa regions and to pay attention to the specific security concerns and needs of the most vulnerable groups and, in particular, Roma women and Roma IDPs. In addition to Roma communities, information is gathered from civil society actors, including Roma NGOs and mediators.

On the field level, ODIHR works directly with civil society by:

- Encouraging **civil society involvement in the reporting of hate crimes** throughout the OSCE region, ODIHR works with non-governmental organizations and community groups to enhance

their information gathering mechanisms and, based on our regional experience, gives advice on response to local incidents

- Supporting women's organizations in their efforts to **advance gender equality and protect women's rights**. In particular, ODIHR has supported the efforts of the Polish Women's Congress and the Hungarian Women's Lobby to strengthen the capacity of women leaders and highlight the importance of advancing women's political participation.
- Raising the profile of citizen observer groups by **advancing inclusive electoral reform** and where appropriate, highlighting their recommendations.

3. Enhancing dialogue and participation of civil society

ODIHR consults with civil society as stakeholders and experts during the preparation, implementation and evaluation of projects and interventions. Through workshops and meetings at national and regional levels, ODIHR provides opportunities for civil society to take part in topical dialogue. Additional consultations on policy and guidance documents often take place through civil society focus groups to guarantee that each step contributes to the comprehensive security of the participating State and the OSCE region.

ODIHR has engaged civil society in stakeholder and expert consultations by:

- Maintaining **open channels of communication**. ODIHR maintains close working relationships with international and national organisations active in the field of human dimension, including the Civic Solidarity Platform, a decentralized advocacy network of over 65 independent civic groups from across the OSCE region. ODIHR departments keep regular contact with civil society in order to discuss future plans and, if needed, respond to urgent interventions.
- Ensuring civil society participation in **expert forums, meetings and seminars**, such as those on access to identity and civil registration documents by Roma in Ukraine or those convened to identify specific needs of Roma in obtaining documents in different parts of Ukraine. Since 2008, ODIHR's Expert Forum on Criminal Justice in Central Asia has been a leading platform for dialogue and exchange of good practices for authorities, judiciaries and civil society in Central Asia to discuss law and policy reforms in the area of criminal justice and fair trial rights. ODIHR's Annual Trial Monitoring Meeting also serves as a regular platform for learning and exchange among civil society engaged in trial monitoring.
- Creating **Expert and Advisory Panels**, particularly in the fields of disability rights, freedom of religion and belief, freedom of peaceful assembly and political parties. These panels represent a geographical cross-section and play a crucial role in establishing and strengthening partnerships between ODIHR, academia and civil society organizations across the OSCE region. They also provide legislators from OSCE participating States with high-quality expertise and have assisted in developing legislative guidelines and providing examples of best practices. The Expert Panel on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly (FoPA) reviews legislation and works on developing, updating and disseminating [ODIHR-Venice Commission Guidelines on FoPA](#); the Expert Panel on Political Parties works in a similar manner, and is currently working on new edition of the [ODIHR Guidelines on Political Party Regulation](#). The Advisory Panel on Participation of Persons with Disabilities acts as a consultative body to ODIHR on matters pertaining to the rights and participation of persons with disabilities in the OSCE region and advises on project implementation. Meanwhile, ODIHR's Freedom of Religion and Belief (FoRB) Programme is assisted by the Panel of Experts on FoRB. A number of OSCE Ministerial Council decisions have reiterated the importance of this advisory body in providing advice to ODIHR, and through ODIHR to OSCE participating States, on matters pertaining to FoRB.
- Consulting local civil society organizations, activists and community leaders first during **needs assessment missions and at every stage of any activity or project**. The substance of national

trainings on hate crimes for law enforcement and prosecutors, for example, are in large part shaped by the experiences and recommendations of civil society organizations that monitor hate crimes and provide victim support. In the election observation cycle, regular liaison and information exchange is held with citizen observer groups from the needs assessment missions, through the observation activity and to post-election activities such as follow-up and potential electoral reform. Moreover, ODIHR draws on the expertise of representative from civil society to serve as core team members, long-term and short-term observers in its observation missions.

- Relying on civil society expertise in **the development of publications**. Ensuring that civil society input from the concept stage through to commentary on draft publications ultimately ensures the usefulness and relevance of the final document. These discussions also allow ODIHR to reflect in its publications the practical challenges faced by civil society, as well as possible solutions. For example, in 2016, when ODIHR worked on a tool on preventing and addressing sexual and gender-based violence in places of deprivation of liberty, several meetings, including peer-review meetings, were organized to formulate of the concept and discuss the draft publication.
- Involving organisations in **the training design process**. When creating new trainings, ODIHR regularly holds events that bring together civil society representatives as contributors and reviewers. For instance, ODIHR included Roma and Sinti activists in the creation of its two-day training "[Effective and Human Rights-Compliant Policing in Roma and Sinti Communities.](#)"
- Holding **special consultative meetings**. In light of its focus on gender mainstreaming, ODIHR sought the input of Roma and Sinti women activists. ODIHR pays particular attention to adequate and meaningful participation of Roma and Sinti women activists in its events and activities, and supports their participation in gender-related events of other OSCE institutions.
- Including NGOs in the **development of regional studies** such as the upcoming Study on Fair Trial and Victims' Rights in Criminal Procedure Reforms in South Eastern Europe.
- Providing recommendations in its legal reviews on enhancing the participation of associations, and civil society in general, in policy- and law-making processes through the organization of inclusive, extensive and effective public consultations and developing new tools in that respect (such as the [2015 Recommendations on Enhancing the Participation of Associations in Public Decision-Making Processes](#) and the development of Guidelines on Public Consultations in the Law Making Process in Ukraine (ongoing)).

ODIHR provides opportunities for civil society to take part in policy and topical dialogue by:

- Organizing the annual **OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM)** and its related side events, three supplementary meetings and a Human Dimension seminar. These meetings review governments' progress and give civil society platforms to freely voice their concerns. ODIHR regularly enables the participation of civil society in human dimension events. A special emphasis is placed on HDIM, where civil society representatives from all of ODIHR's areas of work participate as speakers in working sessions, in ODIHR-convened side events, in addition to their regular attendance. In order to make the best of civil society participation in human dimension meetings, ODIHR organizes special preparatory trainings for specific events.
- Organising regional platforms such as those which support **direct interaction and consultation between State representatives and civil society** on critical issues related to human rights defenders' work. Furthermore during its annual National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) Academy, ODIHR introduced a thematic session related to the interaction between NHRIs and human rights defenders, with invited human rights defenders as speakers. The session promoted good practice examples of how NHRIs and human rights defenders co-operate for mutual benefit.
- Inviting representatives from **civil society to directly address OSCE delegations** as keynote speakers. For example, as part of its Human Rights Discussion Series for the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation, ODIHR organized an event on Boosting the Reporting of the Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. Thirty-one participants, mostly from the OSCE delegations, discussed how reporting by the OSCE participating States on the United

Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325) can be encouraged and streamlined. One of the ODIHR's keynote speakers was Hannah Bond, Director of the Network Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS).

- Involving representatives of **civil society as speakers in roundtables**, for example the roundtable on enhancing institutional co-operation and co-ordination in implementation of national and regional action plans on the protection and integration of Roma in Ukraine, the conference discussing the return of migrants, OSCE commitments and international standards in Riga in March 2017, and the roundtable discussions of a unified state demographic register in Ukraine in November 2016.
- Involving representatives of civil society organizations in its meetings **to present and discuss policy documents**, such as the OSCE/ODIHR-Venice Commission Guidelines on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly, Freedom of Association and the Legal Personality of Religious or Belief Communities respectively, Guidelines on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and the initial drafts of ODIHR's Guidance Paper on FoRB and Security for OSCE participating States. These meetings provided platforms to discuss the main challenges pertaining to these topics, in light of relevant international standards, OSCE commitments and emerging good practices.
- Establishing **specialized expert groups and panels**. So far there are four of such groups/panels i.e., on freedom of religion or belief, political parties, freedom of peaceful assembly, and participation of persons with disabilities.

4. Challenges for civil society in the OSCE Region

ODIHR notices a clear trend of shrinking space for civil society. Throughout the OSCE participating States, representatives of civil society organizations face serious restrictions, threats, intimidation, attacks and other abuses. In addition, with the rise of government-organized non-governmental organization (GONGOs), the independence and integrity of civil society are increasingly called into question. This creates intense challenges for groups with whom ODIHR engages - notably citizen election observers, human rights defenders, citizen advocates, hate crime monitors as well as Roma and Sinti organizations.

Restrictions

Foreign agent laws in a number of countries affect civil society participation in ODIHR events. Even ODIHR funding to participants in order to ensure their participation in ODIHR events may be considered as foreign funding. If they are considered to undertake "political activities," civil society participants may then be potentially qualified as "foreign agents." While the definitions of such terms are often vague, the consequences are not. If deemed "foreign agents," civil society members may be subject to specific registration requirements, burdensome reporting obligations and, in the case of non-compliance, excessive sanctions.

Undue restrictions on the fundamental freedoms of association, assembly, expression and movement limit the ability of civil society, and particularly human rights defenders, to engage with ODIHR. Visa regimes and other restrictions on freedom of movement, particularly in Central Asia, undermine the right of civil society representatives to access ODIHR events or activities in order to raise concerns, including about their own security. Finally, there is a persistent lack of legislation regulating election observation and lack of access to all aspects of the electoral process.

Threats, intimidation and attacks

There is a concerning lack of progress in the improvement of protections for human rights defenders. Threats and attacks on these persons are conducted by State and non-State actors, often in a climate of impunity. In some cases, States directly subject human rights defenders to arbitrary detentions, torture and other ill-treatment while politically motivated prosecutions result in violations of fair-trial rights.

Human rights defenders, hate crime monitors and other civil society groups also face discriminatory smear campaigns related to their legitimate activities, arising not only from their opinions, but also the characteristics of the groups whose rights they defend. Those who face the most extreme campaigns and targeted attacks are frequently those protecting the rights of women, ethnic minority communities and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community.

5. Best Practices Example: ODIHR in Ukraine

In response to the crisis in and around Ukraine, ODIHR has been implementing the **Strengthening Dialogue among Civil Society and with Key Government Stakeholders on Human Dimension Issues in Ukraine Project**. The priority is given to enhancing 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 international standards. Since the early years of its existence, ODIHR has been the main institutional channel for contacts between the OSCE and civil society. In Ukraine, ODIHR seeks to build capacity, promote dialogue and support action between civil society organizations and state representatives. A key strength of ODIHR's on-going work in Ukraine has been a strong focus on partnerships that bring together state and non-state stakeholders with complementary resources and expertise, and enable wider scope and coverage of activities and the receipt of timely feedback on local needs.

The effectiveness of **human rights monitoring** initiatives lies within civil society's ability to not only monitor the human rights violations but also to influence government agendas and regulations to improve compliance with local legislation and international standards. ODIHR experts strengthened the capacity of 96 representatives of newly emerged human rights organizations from across Ukraine in human rights monitoring and 13 civil society projects were competitively selected for funding of their human rights monitoring and dialogue initiatives. During the period of 2015-2016, ODIHR progressed in promoting dialogue and cooperation between Russian and Ukrainian civil society and supported seven CSOs in the implementation of three joint projects devoted to human rights monitoring of conflict affected areas, educational campaigns targeted on increasing population's awareness of human rights and civil liberties and increasing the pool of trained community mediators and facilitators.

In the field of **tolerance and non-discrimination**, ODIHR has offered trainings and opportunities for dialogue and joint initiatives to civil society and criminal justice representatives on identifying and addressing hate crimes and on reliable hate crime data collection. The OSCE/ODIHR handbook *Understanding Hate Crimes* was enriched with Ukraine specific cases and recommendations from CSO experts and published in English, Russian and Ukrainian. In connecting ODIHR efforts in capacity-building, dialogue and action, five CSOs were supported by ODIHR in 2016 to carry out a

range of activities to increase understanding of hate crime across Ukrainian society, along with working to provide legal support to victims and promote co-operation with the National Police.

By assisting OSCE participating States in **building and consolidating democratic institutions** in Ukraine, ODIHR aims to help governments become more responsive, accountable and representative. ODIHR has provided expert support to the comprehensive reforms in the area of political party legislation and financing. ODIHR together with the Parliament of Ukraine (Verkhovna Rada) and its civil society and international partners has supported Parliamentary Ethics Dialogues. ODIHR has been working to build a strong coalition of civil society, politicians, public officials and international actors in support of this issue. As a result of this cooperation, the European Parliament's report and roadmap on internal reform and capacity building for the Verkhovna Rada³ of Ukraine makes a reference to the work supported by ODIHR and its civil society partners and the need for adopting a code of conduct.

³ European Parliament's Report and Roadmap on internal reform and capacity building for the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, recommendation 52, p.38, available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/resources/library/media/20160229RES16408/20160229RES16408.pdf>

Annex 1 – Departmental Descriptions

ODIHR's **Elections Department** realizes the benefits of co-ordinating with and supporting the development of citizen observer groups throughout the OSCE Region. ODIHR strongly supports the principle of citizen election observation, regularly liaises with citizen observer groups, reports on their rights and access to observe (in line with the 1990 Copenhagen Document), and brings together citizen observers to attend OSCE events and share experiences. This co-operation is important to ensuring consistent messages and interventions concerning election observation and the follow-up of electoral recommendations, as well as to assist in the development of sustainable and professional citizen election observation.

ODIHR's **Democratization Department** focusses on four main areas through the work of its Units. The Democratic Governance and Gender Unit designs and implements programmes to assist participating States to improve laws, institutions and democratic processes, promotes political participation of under-represented groups (including youth, women and persons with disabilities), and provides technical assistance and facilitation to promote women's political participation and gender equality in political parties and political institutions. The Rule of Law Unit works with justice institutions and civil society to support fair trial rights, criminal justice reform and trial monitoring, including the work on judicial independence and accountability and administrative justice. The Migration and Freedom of Movement Unit provides technical assistance and capacity building and supports policy reform in the areas of freedom of movement and human contacts (including population registration, identity management, travel documents, et.) and migration (including migrant rights, migrant integration, and management of labour migration). The Legislative Support Unit undertakes legislative review and issues opinions, disseminating and publishing them on the website legislationline.org. The Legislative Support Unit also co-ordinates the work of the Panels of Experts on Political Parties and Freedom of Peaceful Assembly, including the preparation of legislative guidelines and supporting States on strengthening democratic law-making processes.

In fulfilling ODIHR's mandate to assist OSCE participating States in meeting their human dimension commitments, ODIHR's **Human Rights Department** has three core functions: human rights monitoring, capacity building and expert advice. The Department engages civil society across these functions in the areas of protection of human rights defenders, gender and security, freedom of religion and belief, anti-torture, human rights education, promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, freedom of assembly and anti-trafficking.

ODIHR's **Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department** (TND) strengthens the capacities of participating States and civil society to address intolerance and hate crime. The department's programmes, publications and initiatives help participating States meet their commitments and develop comprehensive approaches to counter and limit the prevalence of hate crime and intolerance. From training dedicated to law-enforcement personnel, prosecutors and civil society to educational programmes raising awareness and promoting mutual respect and understanding, TND is active on all fronts.

In line with the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area, and through the work of its **Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues** (CPRSI), ODIHR closely co-operates with Roma and Sinti civil society organizations (CSOs), and facilitates dialogue between national and international institutions and Roma and Sinti civil society. ODIHR also seeks to develop relations with Roma and Sinti organizations and help them co-ordinate their efforts and resources, and to avail themselves fully of opportunities provided by existing national and international policies affecting Roma and Sinti people. In its practical work, ODIHR supports dialogue and the participation of Roma and Sinti civil society, and particularly women and youth activists, in all its programmatic activities.