

OSCE Commitments Relating to Human Rights Education and Training



A guide prepared for the OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension
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Note: This compilation includes OSCE commitments of particular relevance to the topic of human rights education and training. These include commitments on human rights defenders; freedom of expression; free media and information; prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; freedom of thought, conscience, religion, or belief; rule of law; independence of the judiciary; right to education; prevention of aggressive nationalism, racism, chauvinism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and ethnic-cleansing; prevention of trafficking in human beings; Roma and Sinti; migrant workers; and international humanitarian law. The list of commitments should not be considered exhaustive, as all commitments relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms are considered equally important in promotion of human rights education and training.

Human rights defenders

- **Vienna, 1989 (Questions relating to Security in Europe, par. 13.5, 13.6)**

[The participating States]

(13.5) - respect the right of their citizens to contribute actively, individually or in association with others, to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

(13.6) - encourage in schools and other educational institutions consideration of the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

(...)

- **Copenhagen, 1990 (par. 10, 10.1 to 10.4)**

(10) In reaffirming their commitment to ensure effectively the rights of the individual to know and act upon human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to contribute actively, individually or in association with others, to their promotion and protection, the participating States express their commitment to:

(10.1) - respect the right of everyone, individually or in association with others, to seek, receive and impart freely views and information on human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights to disseminate and publish such views and information;

(10.2) - respect the rights of everyone, individually or in association with others, to study and discuss the observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms and to develop and discuss ideas for improved protection of human rights and better means for ensuring compliance with international human rights standards;

(10.4) - allow members of such groups and organizations to have unhindered access to and communication with similar bodies within and outside their countries and with international organizations, to engage in exchanges, contacts and co-operation with such groups and organizations and to solicit, receive and utilize for the purpose of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms voluntary financial contributions from national and international sources as provided for by law.

- **Paris, 1990 (Non-governmental Organizations)**

We recall the major role that non-governmental organizations, religious and other groups and individuals have played in the achievement of the objectives of the CSCE and will further facilitate their activities for the implementation of the CSCE commitments by the participating States. These organizations, groups and individuals must be involved in an appropriate way in the activities and new structures of the CSCE in order to fulfill their important tasks.

- **Istanbul, 1999 (Charter for European Security, par. 27)**

27. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can perform a vital role in the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. They are an integral component of a strong civil society. We pledge ourselves to enhance the ability of NGOs to make their full contribution to the further development of civil society and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Freedom of expression, free media and information

Including the right to know and to act upon one's rights

- **Vienna, 1989 (Questions Relating to Security in Europe, par. 13.3, 13.4 and 26)**

[The participating States will]

(13.3) - publish and disseminate the text of the Final Act, of the Madrid Concluding Document and of the present Document as well as those of any relevant international instruments in the field of human rights, in order to ensure the availability of these documents in their entirety, to make them known as widely as possible and to render them accessible to all individuals in their countries, in particular through public library systems;

(13.4) - effectively ensure the right of the individual to know and act upon his rights and duties in this field, and to that end publish and make accessible all laws, regulations and procedures relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms;

(...)

(26) They confirm that governments, institutions, organizations and persons have a relevant and positive role to play in contributing to the achievement of the aims of their co-operation and to the full realization of the Final Act (...) They will (...) take effective measures to facilitate access to information on the implementation of CSCE provisions and to facilitate the free expression of views on these matters.

Prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment

- **Copenhagen, 1990 (par. 16.4)**

(16) The participating States

(16.4) - will ensure that education and information regarding the prohibition against torture are fully included in the training of law enforcement personnel, civil or military, medical personnel, public officials and other persons who may be involved in the custody, interrogation or treatment of any individual subjected to any form of arrest, detention or imprisonment;

- **Moscow, 1991 (par. 22)**

(22) The participating States will take appropriate measures to ensure that education and information regarding the prohibition of excess force by law enforcement personnel as well as relevant international and domestic codes of conduct are included in the training of such personnel.

- **Budapest, 1994**

Commitments and Co-operation

Prevention of torture

20. The participating States strongly condemn all forms of torture as one of the most flagrant violations of human rights and human dignity. They commit themselves to strive for its elimination. They recognize the importance in this respect of international norms as laid down in international treaties on human rights, in particular the United Nations Convention against

Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. They also recognize the importance of national legislation aimed at eradicating torture. They commit themselves to inquire into all alleged cases of torture and to prosecute offenders. They also commit themselves to include in their educational and training programmes for law enforcement and police forces specific provisions with a view to eradicating torture. They consider that an exchange of information on this problem is an essential prerequisite. The participating States should have the possibility to obtain such information. The CSCE should in this context also draw on the experience of the Special Rapporteur on Torture and other Cruelly Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment established by the Commission on Human Rights of the United Nations and make use of information provided by NGOs.

Freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief

- **Vienna, 1989 (Questions Relating to Security in Europe, par. 16, 16.6)**

(16) In order to ensure the freedom of the individual to profess and practise religion or belief, the participating States will, *inter alia*,

(16.6) - respect the right of everyone to give and receive religious education in the language of his choice, whether individually or in association with others;

Rule of law

- **Moscow, 1991 (par. 22)**

(22) The participating States will take appropriate measures to ensure that education and information regarding the prohibition of excess force by law enforcement personnel as well as relevant international and domestic codes of conduct are included in the training of such personnel.

Independence of the judiciary

- **Moscow, 1991 (par. 20, 20.1, 20.4)**

(20) For the promotion of the independence of the judiciary, the participating States will:

(20.1) - recognize the important function national and international associations of judges and lawyers can perform in strengthening respect for the independence of their members and in providing education and training on the role of the judiciary and the legal profession in society;

(20.4) - co-operate on an ongoing basis in such areas as the education and training of judges and legal practitioners, as well as the preparation and enactment of legislation intended to strengthen respect for their independence and the impartial operation of the public judicial service.

Right to education

- **Helsinki, 1975 (Questions Relating to Co-operation in Humanitarian and Other Fields)**

3. Co-operation and Exchanges in the Field of Culture

Fields and Forms of Co-operation:

To encourage the search for new fields and forms of cultural co-operation, to these ends contributing to the conclusion among interested parties, where necessary, of appropriate agreements and arrangements, and in this context to promote: (...)

the study of the possibilities for organizing international courses for the training of specialists in different disciplines relating to restoration.

4. Co-operation and Exchanges in the Field of Education

The participating States,

Conscious that the development of relations of an international character in the fields of education and science contributes to a better mutual understanding and is to the advantage of all peoples as well as to the benefit of future generations,

Prepared to facilitate, between organizations, institutions and persons engaged in education and science, the further development of exchanges of knowledge and experience as well as of contacts, on the basis of special arrangements where these are necessary,

Desiring to strengthen the links among educational and scientific establishments and also to encourage their co-operation in sectors of common interest, particularly where the levels of knowledge and resources require efforts to be concerted internationally, and

Convinced that progress in these fields should be accompanied and supported by a wider knowledge of foreign languages,

Express to these ends their intention in particular:

(e) Teaching Methods

To promote the exchange of experience, on a bilateral or multilateral basis, in teaching methods at all levels of education, including those used in permanent and adult education, as well as the exchange of teaching materials, in particular by:

- facilitating exchanges of experience concerning the organization and functioning of education intended for adults and recurrent education, the relationships between these and other forms and levels of education, as well as concerning the means of adapting education, including vocational and technical training, to the needs of economic and social development in their countries;

- encouraging exchanges of experience in the education of youth and adults in international understanding, with particular reference to those major problems of mankind whose solution calls for a common approach and wider international co-operation;

- encouraging exchanges of teaching materials - including school textbooks, having in mind the possibility of promoting mutual knowledge and facilitating the presentation of each country in such books - as well as exchanges of information on technical innovations in the field of education.

National minorities or regional cultures. The participating States, recognizing the contribution that national minorities or regional cultures can make to co-operation among them in various fields of education, intend, when such minorities or cultures exist within their territory, to facilitate this contribution, taking into account the legitimate interests of their members.

- **Vienna, 1989 (Questions Relating to Security in Europe, par. 14)**

(14) The participating States recognize that the promotion of economic, social, cultural rights as well as of civil and political rights is of paramount importance for human dignity and for the attainment of the legitimate aspirations of every individual (...) In this context they will pay special attention to problems in the areas of (...) education ...

- **Vienna, 1989 (Co-operation and Exchanges in the Field of Education, par. 63 to 70)**

(63) They will ensure access by all to the various types and levels of education without discrimination as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

(66) They will facilitate exchanges of schoolchildren between their countries on the basis of bilateral arrangements, where necessary, including meeting and staying with families of the host country in their homes, with the aim of acquainting schoolchildren with life, traditions and education in other participating States.

(67) They will encourage their relevant government agencies or educational institutions to include, as appropriate, the Final Act as a whole in the curricula of schools and universities.

(68) They will ensure that persons belonging to national minorities or regional cultures on their territories can give and receive instruction on their own culture, including instruction through parental transmission of language, religion and cultural identity to their children.

(69) They will encourage their radio and television organizations to inform each other of the educational programmes they produce and to consider exchanging such programmes.

(70) They will encourage direct contacts and co-operation between relevant governmental institutions or organizations in the field of education and science.

- **Moscow, 1991 (par. 42 to 42.6)**

(42) The participating States

(42.1) - affirm that human rights education is fundamental and that it is therefore essential that their citizens are educated on human rights and fundamental freedoms and the commitment to

respect such rights and freedoms in domestic legislation and international instruments to which they may be parties;

(42.2) - recognize that effective human rights education contributes to combating intolerance, religious, racial and ethnic prejudice and hatred, including against Roma, xenophobia and anti-semitism;

(42.3) - will encourage their competent authorities responsible for education programmes to design effective human rights related curricula and courses for students at all levels, particularly students of law, administration and social sciences as well as those attending military, police and public service schools;

(42.4) - will make information on all CSCE human dimension provisions available to their educators;

(42.5) - will encourage organizations and educational establishments to co-operate in drawing up and exchanging human rights programmes at the national as well as the international level;

(42.6) - will seek to ensure that activities undertaken with a view to promoting human rights education in the broader sense take into account experience, programmes and forms of co-operation within existing international governmental and non-governmental bodies, such as the United Nations and the Council of Europe.

(...) The participating States will “encourage measures effectively to ensure full economic opportunity for women, including non-discriminatory employment policies and practices, equal access to education and training, and measures to facilitate combining employment with family responsibilities for female and male workers; and will seek to ensure that any structural adjustment policies or programmes do not have an adversely discriminatory effect on women (...)

- **Helsinki, 1992 (The Challenges of Change)**

(...) The participating States emphasize the need for continuing co-operation and investment in human resources development in order to cope with problems of transition to market economies, rapid technological changes and the evolution of society. Recognizing the importance of education and training, including management and vocational training at all levels, they will intensify their dialogue on education and training systems and promote further co-operation in this area. (...)

Prevention of aggressive nationalism, racism, chauvinism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and ethnic-cleansing

- **Copenhagen, 1990 (par. 40.4)**

(40.4) - endeavour to ensure that the objectives of education include special attention to the problem of racial prejudice and hatred and to the development of respect for different civilizations and cultures...

- **Helsinki, 1992 (Decisions, Chapter VI, par. 34)**

Tolerance and non-discrimination

The participating States

(34) Will consider developing programmes to create the conditions for promoting non-discrimination and cross-cultural understanding which will focus on human rights education, grass-roots action, cross-cultural training and research...

Prevention of trafficking in human beings

- **Vienna, 2000 (Ministerial Council Decision 1)**

The Ministerial Council,

8. Undertakes to raise awareness, including with assistance from the ODIHR, non-governmental organizations and other relevant institutions, through, where necessary, establishing training programmes among public officials, including law enforcement, judiciary, consular and immigration officials, about all aspects of trafficking;

- **Declaration on Trafficking in Human Beings adopted in Porto, 2002**

The participating States (...) decided to “strive for adequate measures to prevent trafficking in human beings in our countries, taking the form, *inter alia*, of target-oriented awareness raising campaigns and education in countries of origin and transit, directed in particular towards youth and other vulnerable groups” and to “seek to develop appropriate campaign in the countries of destination (...).

Roma and Sinti

- **Moscow, 1991 (Par. 42.2)**

[The participating States]

(42.2) - recognize that effective human rights education contributes to combating intolerance, religious, racial and ethnic prejudice and hatred, including against Roma, xenophobia and anti-semitism.

Migrant workers

- **Helsinki, 1975 (Economic and Social Aspects of Migrant Labour)**

The participating States, (...)

are of the opinion that the problems arising bilaterally from the migration of workers in Europe as well as between the participating States should be dealt with by the parties directly concerned (...), with the following aims in view: (...)

to confirm the right of migrant workers to receive, as far as possible, regular information in their own language, covering both their country of origin and the host country;

to ensure that the children of migrant workers established in the host country have access to the education usually given there, under the same conditions as the children of that country and, furthermore, to permit them to receive supplementary education in their own language, national culture, history and geography (...).

International humanitarian law

- **Budapest, 1994 (Chapter VIII, par. 34)**

International humanitarian law

34. They commit themselves to ensure adequate information and training within their military services with regard to the provisions of international humanitarian law and consider that relevant information should be made available.

Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

- **Prague, 1992 (Prague Document on Further Development of the CSCE Institutions and Structures, par. 9 to 10)**

9. In order to extend practical co-operation among participating States in the human dimension, the Ministers decided to give additional functions to the Office for Free Elections which will henceforth be called the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

10. Under the general guidance of the CSO, the Office should, *inter alia*: (...)

- facilitate co-operation in training and education in disciplines relevant to democratic institutions (...)

OTHER RELEVANT EXTRACTS:

- **Istanbul, Charter for European Security, 1999**

IV. Our Common Instruments

(...)

36. Reflecting our spirit of solidarity and partnership, we will also enhance our political dialogue in order to offer assistance to participating States, thereby ensuring compliance with OSCE commitments. To encourage this dialogue, we have decided, in accordance with established rules and practices, to make increased use of OSCE instruments, including:

(...)

- Organizing training programmes aimed at improving standards and practices, *inter alia*, within the fields of human rights, democratization and the rule of law;

Police-Related Activities

44. We will work to enhance the OSCE's role in civilian police-related activities as an integral part of the Organization's efforts in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. Such activities may comprise:

(...)

- Police training, which could, *inter alia*, include the following tasks:

(...)

- Creating a police service with a multi-ethnic and/or multi-religious composition that can enjoy the confidence of the entire population;
 - Promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in general.
- (...)

- **Bucharest Plan of Action for Combating Terrorism, 2001**

Secretariat: Will further assist participating States, on the request and with their agreement, through provision of advice and assistance on restructuring and/or reconstruction of police services; monitoring and training of existing police services, including human rights training; and capacity building, including support for integrated or multi-ethnic police services (...).

- **Maastricht, 2003 (Meeting of the Ministerial Council):**

- OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-first Century (par. 32, 40)

The OSCE response

32. The Strategic Police Matters Unit was set up to improve the capacity of participating States to address threats posed by criminal activity and to assist them in upholding the rule of law. The aim is to enhance key policing skills, including respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The OSCE will, at the request of participating States, increase its focus on assistance to authorities, including at the local level, on fighting crime and criminal networks and will define and develop core competencies for police activities such as training and capacity-building activities.

40. The OSCE's efforts will in particular be targeted at the younger generation in order to build up their understanding of the need for tolerance and the importance of reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. Their outlook and perspective on the future are key. Where appropriate, the OSCE will therefore take on a stronger role in the field of education. An area such as human rights education would deserve particular attention.

- Decision on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination (par. 14)

The Ministerial Council,

14. Decides that the OSCE in addressing the issues contained in this document will increase its efforts towards the younger generation in order to build up their understanding of the need for tolerance. Human rights education merits particular attention.

- **OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings**

IV. Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings

Recommended action at the national level:

3.3 Whether in countries of origin or countries of destination:

- Encouraging gender sensitization and education on equal and respectful relationships between the sexes, thus preventing violence against women;

5. Training

- 5.1 Providing or improving training for border officials, law enforcement officials, judges, prosecutors, immigration and other relevant officials in all aspects of trafficking in persons.
- 5.2 Giving, in such training programs, consideration to human rights and child- and gender-sensitive issues, and encouraging co-operation with non-governmental organizations, other relevant organizations and other elements of civil society.

• **Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE area, 2003**

III. Combating racism and discrimination

Recommended action by participating States:

27. Develop training programmes to prevent excessive use of force and to promote awareness of and respect for human rights.

V. Improving access to education

Education is a prerequisite to the participation of Roma and Sinti people in the political, social and economic life of their respective countries on a footing of equality with others. Strong immediate measures in this field, particularly those that foster school attendance and combat illiteracy, should be assigned the highest priority both by decision-makers and by Roma and Sinti communities. Educational policies should aim to integrate Roma and Sinti people into mainstream education by providing full and equal access at all levels, while remaining sensitive to cultural differences.

57. In co-ordination with relevant international organizations (in particular UNDP and the World Bank), the ODIHR-CPRSI and the OCEEA will examine ways to stimulate better access by Roma and Sinti people to regular training programmes. Workshops or round-table discussions tailored to the needs of Roma and Sinti people can be organized, with a view to informing and educating community members regarding the economic and social rights of individuals and entrepreneurs.

67. Ensure that national legislation includes adequate provisions banning racial segregation and discrimination in education and provides effective remedies for violations of such legislation.

69. Actively promote equal opportunities in the field of education for Roma and Sinti children, particularly by providing them with language-related or other assistance.

70. Take special measures to enhance the quality and effectiveness of education for Roma and Sinti children. Encourage increased representation of Roma and Sinti people among school teachers.

74. Allocate financial resources for the transfer of the Roma children to mainstream education and for the development of school support programmes to ease the transition to mainstream education.

75. Facilitate Roma children's access to mainstream education by taking measures such as:

- (a) Taking measures to eradicate manifestations of prejudice against Roma and Sinti people in schools;
- (b) Training of educators regarding multicultural education and ways of dealing with ethnically mixed classes;
- (c) Developing strategies to gain wider community support for the desegregation of schools;
- (d) Providing support to bridge the gap between Roma and Sinti children and other pupils, including through pre-school programmes designed to prepare Roma and Sinti children for primary school;
- (e) Providing support to increase the number of mediators/trainers and teachers from within the Roma communities.

76. Develop and implement anti-racist curricula for schools, and anti-racism campaigns for the media.

Recommended action by OSCE institutions and structures:

85. The HCNM will encourage participating States to comply with their commitments to provide free and equal access to public education to all members of society, and will encourage them to take steps to improve the situation of Roma and Sinti people in this respect.

100. The ODIHR-CPRSI should help to organize training for and by Roma NGOs, including media organizations, for wider Roma communities on the issues of democratic processes and participation.