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## ODIHR's Contribution to Human Rights Education in the OSCE Area

### *Introduction*

Over the past 20 years, human rights education (HRE) has gained increasing recognition in the OSCE area as one of the main tools for spreading knowledge about human rights and imparting skills for their promotion. HRE plays a fundamental role in the enjoyment of all human rights and is for everyone: children, adolescents, and adults. HRE takes place in a variety of environments: in formal educational settings such as kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, universities, and pre-service and in-service training institutions where teachers and other professional groups (police, military, judiciary, other civil servants, etc.) are trained, as well as in non-formal settings outside of the formal education curriculum. HRE can serve to prevent conflicts and shape values, enrich skills, and broaden knowledge about how to live in a democratic society.

This article surveys ODIHR's contribution to HRE in the OSCE area. HRE is a field in which joint action and co-ordination by international actors has been exceptionally strong. ODIHR's work in this area should be viewed within the international framework of action aimed at adopting more effective educational approaches to building a human rights culture. The added value will be explored by looking at the way the Office has conducted its work in HRE and, in particular, its close co-ordination with OSCE field operations, civil society, and relevant intergovernmental organizations (IGOs). Finally, this piece will present specific examples of ODIHR's engagement in HRE in the past decade, notably *Human Rights Education in the School Systems of Europe, Central Asia and North America: A Compendium of Good Practice*, which was developed jointly with the Council of Europe (CoE), UNESCO, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the NGO Human Rights Education Associates (HREA).

### *What Is Human Rights Education?*

HRE is a constituent part of the right to education. Article 26 (2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulates that "education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strength-

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Note: The views expressed in this contribution are the authors' own and not necessarily those of OSCE/ODIHR.

ening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.”<sup>1</sup> Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recognized the right of everyone to education and confirmed that education should be directed towards the development of human dignity and personality, and should strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.<sup>2</sup> Other international human rights treaties also mention the importance of education in human rights.<sup>3</sup>

In their general comments and general recommendations, United Nations (UN) treaty bodies have stressed the key role of education in spreading human rights knowledge and skills.<sup>4</sup> The United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training stipulates that “everyone has the right to know, seek and receive information about all human rights and fundamental freedoms and should have access to human rights education and training” and that “human rights education and training is essential for the promotion of universal respect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, in accordance with the principles of universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights”.<sup>5</sup> Hence, the consideration of human rights should guide educational efforts in formal and non-formal settings, both as a thematic component in relevant educational programmes and as a set of principles upon which the educational process should be built. “Teaching and learning practices and activities should follow and promote democratic and human rights values and principles”<sup>6</sup> and empower individuals for the effective enjoyment of rights.

The UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training defines human rights education and training as “educational, training, information, awareness-raising and learning activities aimed at promoting universal re-

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1 *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Article 26 (2), at: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr>.

2 Cf. *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966, entry into force 3 January 1976, in accordance with article 27, Article 13 (1)*, at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cescr.htm>.

3 *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Convention on the Rights of the Child.*

4 See, for example, General Comment No. 13 by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 3 by the Human Rights Committee, General Recommendations V and XIII by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and others.

5 *United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training*, A/HRCRES/16/1, adopted by the Human Rights Council, 23 March 2011, Articles 1.1. and 1.2.

6 *Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 and explanatory memorandum*, Strasbourg, May 2010, at: <http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/Source/Pdf/Downloads/6898-6-ID10009-Recommendation%20on%20Charter%20EDC-HRE%20-%20assembl%C3%A9.pdf>.

spect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and thus contributing to, inter alia, the prevention of human rights violations and abuses by providing persons with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviours, to empower them to contribute to the building and promotion of a universal culture of human rights”.<sup>7</sup>

HRE is a relatively new educational approach that initially only meant teaching human rights in formal school education. Over time, the concept evolved to address teaching not only to primary and secondary students, but also to people of different ages as well as different professional groups. HRE became more action-oriented than had initially been conceived.<sup>8</sup> Human rights content and perspectives offered as part of HRE have been recognized within other educational approaches that are similar to HRE but have different focuses: peace education, conflict resolution education, multicultural education, development education, global education, civic education, and others.

### *Human Rights Education and ODIHR Programming*

A significant number of thematic or issue-based programmes operating within ODIHR have always contained components of HRE. This was especially the case in the areas of anti-trafficking, improving the situation of Roma and Sinti, human rights in the fight against terrorism, rule of law, and other programmatic fields. The training of different stakeholders in human rights standards and mechanisms has become an important part of relevant programmes in ODIHR.

At the same time, there was general agreement on the need for HRE to become a separate programme within ODIHR with a clear and distinctive focus. The decision to create a new programme was made following the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting (SHDM) dedicated to human rights education and training, which was organized by the OSCE Chairmanship and ODIHR in Vienna in March 2004.<sup>9</sup> Recommendations made within this forum endorsed greater involvement of ODIHR in the areas of HRE in schools and for public officials, as well as in the area of non-formal HRE, and delineated the field of engagement for the future programme. SHDM participants also stressed the importance of linking up with other international assistance providers in the field of HRE, particularly the OHCHR and the CoE, which had devised comprehensive frameworks for HRE ac-

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7 *United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training*, cited above (Note 5), Article 2.1.

8 Cf. Marcia Bernbaum/Nancy Flowers/Kristi Rudelius-Palmer/Joel Tolman, *The Human Rights Education Handbook*, at: [www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/hrhandbook](http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/hrhandbook).

9 OSCE, *Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on “Human Rights Education and Training”*, Final Report, Vienna, 25-26 March 2004, ODIHR.GAL/33/04, 4 May 2004, at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/31749>.

tion.<sup>10</sup> The new programme started to support the efforts of the governments to implement the relevant OSCE commitments and the universal HRE framework, and to further enhance the quality of HRE in the OSCE area. The programme built on past experiences in human rights training for civil society<sup>11</sup> and activities designed to increase the capacity of OSCE field operations in HRE.

### *Relevant Commitments and Taskings*

Unlike the UN or the CoE, the OSCE has no specific framework documents to guide the participating States and its institutions in the area of HRE. The work carried out by ODIHR in this field has therefore been based on various commitments adopted by the OSCE participating States. Most important, however, is the general mandate of ODIHR to assist participating States in implementing their commitments in the human dimension.<sup>12</sup> This mandated ODIHR to conduct HRE activities throughout the OSCE area, also at the request of state bodies.

Why is HRE important for OSCE as a security organization? HRE is the main tool for changing a society's perspectives and facilitating the transformation of a system of oppression and distrust into one in which human rights are at the centre of society's concerns. Such an approach diminishes the probability of conflicts inside the country and also limits the "aggressive potential" of such states.<sup>13</sup> As William W. Burke-White noted,

[...] a human rights culture would reject international aggression as a threat to the human rights of citizens in other states. Second, institutionalization of human rights protections expands the ability of citizens to voice opposition to aggressive state policy through freedoms of belief, speech, and assembly. Third, institutionalization erodes the ability of the state to coerce its citizens into providing the resources and human capital necessary for aggressive war.<sup>14</sup>

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10 At the level of the United Nations, there is a World Programme for HRE, and at the level of the Council of Europe, there is the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, cited above (Note 6).

11 Especially on ODIHR's programme "Human Rights Monitoring Training" for civil society in Central Asia and the South Caucasus, which was carried out jointly with the Polish Helsinki Foundation between 2001 and 2003.

12 Cf. CSCE Helsinki Document 1992: The Challenges of Change, Helsinki, 10 July 1992, Decisions, VI: The Human Dimension, in: Arie Bloed (ed.), *The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, Analysis and Basic Documents, 1972-1993*, Dordrecht 1993, pp. 701-777, here: pp. 743-753.

13 William W. Burke-White, Human Rights and National Security: The Strategic Correlation, in: *Harvard Human Rights Journal*, Spring 2004, pp. 249-280, here: p. 273.

14 Ibid.

The main purpose of HRE is to build respect for the rights of others as well as the skills to deal with conflicts using non-violent means, which is an essential part of empowering an individual. A necessary element of HRE is a change in the behaviour of individuals, who learn to undertake action in pursuit of human rights-compliant policies. On numerous occasions, OSCE participating States have acknowledged the value of HRE and made it part of the OSCE commitments. These commitments can be divided into two groups: those that provide direction for ODIHR in the area of HRE, and general commitments that stress the significance of HRE in the OSCE.

The Helsinki Final Act (1975) affirmed the right of individuals to know their rights. Fifteen years later, in the OSCE's Copenhagen Document (1990), the participating States expressed their commitment to

[...] 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 [...]<sup>15</sup>

The Moscow Document (1991) was the first OSCE document that explicitly mentioned human rights education, stressing its fundamental role and the importance of educating people on human rights and fundamental freedoms.<sup>16</sup> The same document also stressed that “effective human rights education contributes to combating intolerance, religious, racial and ethnic prejudice and hatred, including against Roma, xenophobia and anti-Semitism”.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, OSCE participating States have committed themselves to “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”.<sup>18</sup> The participating States have also agreed to disseminate information about the human dimension commitments to educators and to encourage co-operation in the field of human rights education within existing intergovernmental and non-governmental bodies.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the Helsinki Document (1992) states that the OSCE participating States “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 ac-

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15 Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE, Copenhagen, 29 June 1990, in: Bloed (ed.), cited above (Note 12), pp. 439-465, here: p. 447, para. 10.2; also available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/14304>.

16 See Document of the Moscow Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE, Moscow, 3 October 1991, in: Bloed (ed.), cited above (Note 12), pp. 605-629, here: p. 624, para. 42.1; also available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/143101>.

17 Ibid., para. 42.2.

18 Ibid., para. 42.3.

19 See *ibid.*, pp. 624-625, para. 42.4-42.6.

tion, cross-cultural training and research”.<sup>20</sup> The OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-first Century encouraged the participating States to take on a stronger role in the field of HRE aimed at the younger generation, in order to build up understanding of the need for tolerance and the importance of reconciliation and peaceful coexistence.<sup>21</sup>

OSCE documents also place a special emphasis on the need for OSCE institutions – and ODIHR in particular – to engage in HRE. As early as 1992, when ODIHR had just been established, the OSCE participating States encouraged the Office to “facilitate co-operation in training and education in disciplines relevant to democratic institutions”.<sup>22</sup> Other OSCE documents also task ODIHR with undertaking efforts in building the capacity of various stakeholders through human rights education.<sup>23</sup>

The Slovenian Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2005 played a special role in promoting HRE, one of the areas it had made a priority activity. Among other accomplishments, it encouraged OSCE field operations to translate the educational tool *Our Rights* (based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child) into local languages for use in schools in a wide range of countries.<sup>24</sup>

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20 Helsinki Document 1992, cited above (Note 12), Decisions, VI: The Human Dimension, p. 749, para. 34.

21 Cf. OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century, in: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Eleventh Meeting of the Ministerial Council, 1 and 2 December 2003*, MC.DOC/1/03, Maastricht, 2 December 2003, pp. 1-10, here: p. 7, para. 40. There are a number of other OSCE documents that do not mention HRE explicitly, but are essentially about it.

22 Prague Meeting of the CSCE Council, 30-31 January 1992, Prague Document on Further Development of CSCE Institutions and Structures, III. Human Dimension, para. 10, in: Bloed (ed.), cited above (Note 12), pp. 830-838, here: p. 831.

23 For example, in the OSCE Ministerial Council Decision on “Enhancing the OSCE’s Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings” (2000) the ministers undertake, “[...] 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”, in: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Eighth Meeting of the Ministerial Council, 27 and 28 November 2000*, MC.DOC/2/00, Vienna, 28 November 2000, p. 7-8, here: p. 8; the 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality states: “The ODIHR will assist in the development and implementation of specific programmes and activities to promote women’s rights [...] particularly through education in gender awareness”, Annex to Decision No. 14/04, 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, MC.DEC/14/04 of 7 December 2004, in: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Twelfth Meeting of the Ministerial Council, Sofia, 6 and 7 December 2004*, MC.DOC/1/04, 7 December 2004, pp. 38-53, here: p. 49; in the OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 5/06 on “Organized Crime”, the Ministerial Council tasks ODIHR “to consider facilitating training programmes [on criminal justice and organized crime]”, in: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Fourteenth Ministerial Council, 4 and 5 December 2006*, Brussels, 5 December 2006, pp. 20-23, here: pp. 22-23.

24 The English version – “Our Rights. Information for Teachers” – is included in the “Partners’ Resources” section of section III, “Teaching and Learning Tools for the Classroom” of the tool *Human Rights Education in the School Systems of Europe, Central Asia and North America: A Compendium of Good Practice*, Warsaw 2009, at: <http://tandis.odihr.pl/documents/hre-compedium>.

According to the evaluation of the project,<sup>25</sup> approximately 10,000 children and 250 teachers participated in the pilot project in Albania, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Ireland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Turkey, and Ukraine. The resource became widely supported by OSCE's field operations and, in 2007, the author of this article participated in lessons based on this tool in a secondary school in Baku (Azerbaijan). The project was the first HRE project in the OSCE area to involve nearly all OSCE field operations, motivating many of them to engage in HRE work for young people.

The second important contribution of the Slovenian Chairmanship in the area of HRE was its support for the adoption of Ministerial Council Decision No. 11/05 on "Promotion of Human Rights Education and Training in the OSCE Area", the only OSCE document to date which is dedicated specifically to HRE.<sup>26</sup> In this decision, the OSCE participating States recognized that the "promotion of human rights through education and training in the whole OSCE area could be viewed in the context of the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security and is vital for the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms".<sup>27</sup> The decision encouraged the OSCE community to increase its efforts in co-operating with other international organizations and non-governmental organizations to take necessary measures aimed at promoting human rights education and training, with special emphasis on young people in the OSCE area.

#### *Examples of ODIHR's Work in Human Rights Education*

Activities of ODIHR's human rights education and training programme can broadly be divided into three categories: human rights training for civil society representatives; efforts to improve human rights teaching at the policy level, including the development of specific HRE tools; and support for quality HRE work by OSCE field operations.

Over the past ten years, human rights training for civil society has become one of ODIHR's trademarks. It started in 2001, when ODIHR, in cooperation with the Polish Helsinki Foundation, carried out long-term human rights-monitoring training projects for members of human rights NGOs in Central Asia and the South Caucasus. The programme consisted of largely theoretical (human rights and human rights monitoring techniques) and pure-

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25 See Mitja Sardoč, *Evaluation of the OSCE Pilot Project on Human Rights Education "Our Rights" initiated by the Slovenian Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2005 Final Report*, Educational Research Institute, 15 March 2006, at: [http://www.mzz.gov.si/fileadmin/pageuploads/Zunanja\\_politika/Evaluation\\_Report\\_Final\\_15.3.2006.pdf](http://www.mzz.gov.si/fileadmin/pageuploads/Zunanja_politika/Evaluation_Report_Final_15.3.2006.pdf).

26 Decision No. 11/05, Promotion of Human Rights Education and Training in the OSCE Area, MC.DEC/11/05 of 6 December 2005, in: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Thirteenth Meeting of the Ministerial Council, 5 and 6 December 2005*, Ljubljana, 6 December 2005, pp. 40-41, here: p. 40.

27 Ibid.

ly practical parts (the monitoring of human rights issues and report writing). It created a new generation of dedicated human rights defenders and civil society leaders who are still among ODIHR's principal civil society counterparts in their respective countries.

In 2004, ODIHR's newly-established human rights education and training programme ran a series of long-term human rights monitoring and advocacy training projects for civil society organizations, such as a training project on the monitoring of human rights in places of detention for NGOs from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, with the participation of a few representatives of relevant governmental offices from these same states. The key element of the project's success that was identified by everyone during the evaluation period comprised the practical components of the project – the group conducted study monitoring visits to pre-trial detention centres in Almaty and carried out small monitoring projects (with participants from Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan). The visits to detention facilities in Almaty were prepared adequately in advance and a debriefing was held after the visits took place. One of the local monitoring projects in Kyrgyzstan was managed by Azimjan Askarov, a human rights defender from Kyrgyzstan, who monitored the pre-trial detention centre in Bazar-Korgon and became one of the most respected activists in the south of Kyrgyzstan.<sup>28</sup> The project increased the professionalism of civil society in the Central Asian states in monitoring the closed institutions and improved the understanding of the need to open up penitentiary systems to public control.

From 2006 to 2008, ODIHR supported civil initiatives in the regions of Armenia and Tajikistan to create strong, dedicated and sustainable human rights NGOs involved in the monitoring of their states' commitments to human rights and to advocate action to address human rights problems at community level. ODIHR supported several monitoring projects by the participants. Separate training on how to develop human rights NGOs strategically was added to the training schedule in order to strengthen the capacity of existing NGOs and provide motivation for the creation of new human rights groups. As a follow-up to these national projects, ODIHR conducted two training-of-trainers events – in 2006 and 2008 – for a mixed group of Armenian and Tajik participants. Training-of-trainers events became an enriching intercultural experience for the participants – many travelled abroad for the first time in their lives and spent time with people of different cultures and religions. Alumni of the project are still working as human rights trainers and experts in their own countries.

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28 In 2010, Askarov was sentenced to life imprisonment as an accessory to the murder of a police officer in June 2010. His appeal against the sentence is still being reviewed by the Supreme Court of the Kyrgyz Republic. ODIHR monitored the trial and raised concerns about the fairness of the process. Human rights activists from within Kyrgyzstan and from outside the country believe that Mr Askarov's sentence was in retaliation for his activities as a human rights defender.



From 2007 to 2010, ODIHR carried out a training project for Belarusian civil society representatives, secondary school teachers, and university lecturers to improve teaching about human rights in formal and non-formal educational settings, focusing on both the content and methodology of HRE. At a later stage, the training programme was expanded, and civil society organizations were trained in the development of civic participation and advocacy campaigns to promote human rights at local level. At the same time, ODIHR supported the development of the manual *Teaching Human Rights in School and Beyond*<sup>29</sup> as well as the handbook *Protecting and promoting human rights through civic participation*,<sup>30</sup> which were written by Belarusian experts and based on the Belarusian context. The manual, which was printed in Russian and Belarusian, contains a set of detailed lesson plans on human rights topics. It also includes a section on interactive methods of teaching and texts from international human rights documents. The manual was field-tested in Belarus and incorporates feedback from the Belarusian educational authorities. The handbook, which is also available in Russian and Belarusian, provides step-by-step guidance for teaching about how to initiate civic actions in schools and universities or in non-formal education to promote human rights at community level.

### *The Compendium and Further Challenges*

At the end of 2005, Ministerial Council Decision No. 11/05 also tasked ODIHR “to produce a compendium of best practices for participating States on enhancing the promotion of human rights education and training, including the promotion of tolerance, mutual respect and understanding, and non-discrimination in the OSCE area”.<sup>31</sup> With the Council of Europe, UNESCO, and the OHCHR joining the project, it became a unique endeavour by major international organizations involved in HRE. Work on the development of the resource *Human Rights Education in the School Systems of Europe, Central Asia and North America: A Compendium of Good Practice*<sup>32</sup> started in 2007 and took almost two years to complete. The NGO Human Rights Education Associates became the principal implementing agency for all stages of the project; it reached out with a call for submissions, defined the selection stages and organized the actual writing of the entries. A “good practice” was

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29 Ihar Kuzminich, *Navuchanne pravam chalaveka ū shkole i pa-za ěi* [Teaching Human Rights in School and Beyond], Warsaw 2010, at: <http://3sektar.by/library/navuchanne-pravam-chalaveka-u-shkole-i-pa.html>.

30 Ihar Kuzminich/Vitaut Rudnik, *Adstoyvanne i pashyrenne pravoŭ chalaveka praz hramadski ūdzel* [Protecting and promoting human rights through civic participation], Warsaw 2010, at: <http://3sektar.by/library/adstoyvanne-i-pashyrenne-pravou-chalav.html>.

31 Ministerial Council Decision No. 11/05, cited above (Note 26), p. 41.

32 *Human Rights Education in the School Systems of Europe, Central Asia and North America: A Compendium of Good Practice*, cited above (Note 24). The term “Compendium” will be used forthwith.

defined as a strategy resulting in the successful teaching and learning of human rights values and competencies that could be demonstrated through a learning activity, a methodological tool, an audio-visual resource or a documented programme design intended for the formal education sector. "HRE" was defined broadly to include education for democratic citizenship and education for mutual respect and understanding, which are all based on internationally agreed human rights standards.<sup>33</sup> The practices were organized into five areas of action: laws, guidelines and standards; approaches and practices to improve the learning environment; teaching and learning tools for the classroom; professional development for educators and other adults; and evaluation and assessment approaches.<sup>34</sup>

ODIHR received 237 practices from OSCE participating States and ultimately selected 101 practices from 38 countries.<sup>35</sup> The majority of practices came from Western Europe and North America as these countries were "the HRE pioneers" at a time when it was not possible to engage in HRE in Eastern Europe and the countries of the former Soviet Union. Translated into Russian<sup>36</sup> and French,<sup>37</sup> the Compendium became one of the most popular resources accessible through ODIHR's TANDIS website. In 2011, two workshops – in Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan – were conducted on the Compendium; more workshops are planned in 2012.

In Central and Eastern Europe, ODIHR has supported national and regional strategies for strengthening HRE in the schooling sector. In April 2009, the regional forum "Human Rights Education: Achievements, Lessons Learned and Perspectives" in Vilnius was held jointly with the Ministry of Education and Science of the Lithuanian Republic. The discussions at the forum were based on country reports, drafted in advance of the meeting by independent HRE experts, on the situation with regard to HRE in schools in Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine. The forum brought together HRE professionals to discuss regional trends and recommendations to help improve the quality of HRE.

In Istanbul in 2010, ODIHR organized a workshop called "Moving Towards Human Rights Education Standards" for a group of human rights edu-

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33 Cf. *Compendium*, p. 9.

34 The areas of action follow the Plan of Action for the first phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, at: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/PAActionEducationen.pdf>.

35 Practices from the following countries are represented in the Compendium: Albania (1 practice), Armenia (1), Austria (3), Belarus (2), Belgium (3), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2), Bulgaria (1), Canada (6), Croatia (2), Czech Republic (3), Denmark (1), Estonia (2), France (3), Georgia (1), Germany (6), Greece (1), Ireland (3), Italy (2), Lithuania (1), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (1), Moldova (2), Netherlands (6), Norway (1), Poland (2), Portugal (2), Romania (1), Russian Federation (5), Serbia (1), Slovakia (1), Slovenia (3), Spain (3), Sweden (2), Switzerland (1), Tajikistan (1), Turkey (2), Ukraine (2), United Kingdom (5), and United States (15). The Compendium also includes one practice from Kosovo.

36 At: <http://tandis.odihr.pl/documents/hre-compendium/rus>.

37 At: [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/CompendiumHRE\\_fr.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/CompendiumHRE_fr.pdf).

cators, many of whom had been participants in the Vilnius Forum. The workshop became the first stage in the development of three guidelines on HRE: for law enforcement officials, for public health professionals (as a category of civil servants), and for secondary school systems, as well as recommendations on HRE for human rights activists. The guidelines and recommendations – once finalized – will set benchmarks for quality human rights education programming and may become an effective evaluation tool for practitioners and policymakers. The practical value of the guidelines and recommendations was stressed by the majority of HRE professionals at the Istanbul workshop, something that serves as a motivational factor for the finalization of the documents.

The final type of activity carried out by ODIHR in the area of HRE is support for the work of OSCE field operations. Field missions often lack the expertise to ensure that HRE activities are effective. ODIHR has therefore organized regular meetings for field staff that deal with HRE for different professional groups and for young people. Workshops held in 2005 and 2010 provided an opportunity to discuss and share concrete experiences and to address challenges and needs for the further development of HRE activities. The workshops demonstrated that OSCE field operations expect ODIHR to be more active in the field of HRE and, in particular, recommended that the Office should serve as a “training house” for project managers within field operations, a resource centre for human rights materials and good practices, and a dynamic partner in implementing projects at national and regional level. Such demands, however, require increased ODIHR capacity in this field.

Another significant challenge is a lack of institutionalized policy approaches to evaluation. Recognizing that only quality work can bring about change on the part of the HRE beneficiaries, evaluation clearly stands out as the tool that has to be used more effectively by ODIHR. Institutionalized evaluation will enable ODIHR to measure and demonstrate the transformative effect of HRE and its power in effecting social change.<sup>38</sup>

A third challenge is that HRE has rather limited visibility at political level in the OSCE, despite the fact that the Organization has long endorsed human rights education in its body of commitments. One of the reasons for this is the very nature of HRE, which rarely produces immediate results: It is often very difficult to benchmark activities and determine progress quickly or to attribute impact to particular educational programmes. ODIHR’s contribution to HRE is also related to efforts to raise political awareness among governments and in civil society in order to increase the effectiveness of international assistance in this regard.

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38 See, for instance, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights/International Centre for Human Rights Education, *Evaluating Human Rights Training Activities. A Handbook for Human Rights Educators*, OHCHR Professional Training Series No. 18, Montreal 2011, at: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/EvaluationHandbookPT18.pdf>.

### *Conclusion*

ODIHR is uniquely placed to influence the quality of HRE, and with it the respect for human rights in the OSCE area. In these endeavours, the Office will need to partner with national education authorities.<sup>39</sup> While all governments publicly declare their support for human rights education, not all of them are ready to invest in HRE to the extent necessary to empower their citizens to actively and effectively claim human rights. Many governments also fail to see the obvious: A human rights culture can be inculcated only where educational systems themselves are based on human rights principles and norms. It is therefore crucial to make HRE activities effective and to continue supporting governments and civil society in providing quality human rights education.

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39 “States have the primary responsibility to promote and ensure human rights education and training”, *United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training*, cited above (Note 5) Article 7.