

OSCE Parallel Civil Society Conference, Basel 2014

RECOMMENDATIONS

on a wider civil society inclusion in the OSCE response to the crisis in and around Ukraine and challenges to the comprehensive security concept

We, the below undersigned representatives of Ukrainian, Russian and international civil society, are *gravely concerned* about the recent crisis that threatens the Helsinki principles and the efficiency of the existing OSCE mechanisms to address challenges in all the three dimensions of security, in particular the human dimension;

We express *particular concern* regarding the violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty, the ongoing violence and conflict in the East of Ukraine, as well as the growing militarization in the entire region, which has tested not only the viability of OSCE's comprehensive security concept, but also the ability of the Organization to involve all interested and necessary stakeholders in resolving an issue that has far-reaching consequences for the state of human rights and human security in its participating States;

While we *hope for the fastest resolution possible* of the current crisis, we assume that dealing with its direct consequences and reconciliation would require systemic medium- and long-term efforts by all the stakeholders.

Thus we *call upon* the OSCE Chairmanship to provide a mechanism allowing civil society to present its input and feedback on the actions taken by the Organization regarding the crisis in and around Ukraine, as well as to follow-up on the implementation of its recommendations, on a permanent basis and in a much more participatory way than what the existing fora currently allow.

To urgently address the current crisis that is threatening the very foundations of the Helsinki Accords and to promote wider inclusion of civil society in the way the OSCE addresses crises, we *urge* the OSCE political bodies, independent institutions and the participating States to:

1. Establish under the aegis of the Chairmanship a joint Task Force on Ukraine composed of independent regional experts representing civil society, particularly human rights NGOs, OSCE Chairman-in-Office, OSCE Conflict Prevention Center and independent institutions (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Representative on Freedom of the Media, High Commissioner on National Minorities). This Group should serve as a permanent platform for dialogue and joint actions by the OSCE and civil society on the current crisis in and around Ukraine.

The mandate of the Task Force should include:

- conducting an impartial assessment of the situation in the East of Ukraine and Crimea;
- a qualified subset of the task force should have a mandate to address the rights and the conditions of release of the prisoners of war and civilian hostages taken by different sides of the conflict in the East of Ukraine, also ensuring transparency of this process, as well as to conduct investigations on the cases of missing persons and reported cases of foreign soldiers killed during military actions in the East of Ukraine;
- reviewing and proposing actions on reported cases of the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security
- violations, including the cases of foreign military personnel and machinery breaking the borders of Ukraine and participating in military actions on its territory;
- engaging civil society groups from target countries and international civil society networks in selecting members for Special Monitoring Missions (SMM) deployed to those countries, as well as revising and tightening the criteria for this selection;
- forming joint mobile monitoring groups to be deployed to the areas affected by the crisis.

The proposed Task Force could become a testing model for a permanent forum for dialogue between the leading regional and international civil society organizations and the OSCE structures on monitoring human

dimension conditions in the context of crises, which would regularly provide recommendations for the relevant bodies of the OSCE, as well as the participating States.

2. Chairman-in-Office should urgently organise a summit, comprised of the OSCE actors, UNHCR and UNHCHR representatives, and regional stakeholders, including civil society, to address the situation of internally displaced persons in Ukraine and asylum seekers in the Russian Federation fleeing from military actions in the East of Ukraine.
3. Chairman-in-Office should form a working group, comprised of the OSCE actors and civil society experts, and mandate it to conduct comprehensive review of the OSCE mechanisms used to address security threats involving the human dimension, including during complex crises. This could be done either within the framework of the Helsinki +40 process or outside of it.
4. We commend efforts undertaken by the Representative on Freedom of the Media to deal with the propaganda issue. However, current extraordinary situation calls for more action and new approaches. The current Swiss Chairmanship, the incoming Serbian Chairmanship, and participating States should consider convening an expert meeting to discuss current threats posed by propaganda (manipulated information and media abuse). New approaches for putting limits to the use of propaganda by the participating States and upholding the standards of unbiased media reporting should be discussed.
5. The Chairmanship and participating states should ensure sustainability and continuity in the work of the existing Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine, while also raising the level of its transparency and providing channels for its close engagement with the Task Force described above, until the moment the crisis is fully resolved. With this purpose to discuss the necessity of establishing a group composed of the interested participating States in the status of an independent OSCE institution that could take over the mandate of the Contact Group and provide an appropriate framework for negotiating solutions to the crisis in the East of Ukraine and Crimea.

3 December 2014, Basel

Signed by:

Association of Ukrainian Human Rights Monitors on Law-Enforcement
Center for Civil Liberties
Centre for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights
Citizen and Army
Crimea SOS
Crimea Field Mission on Human Rights
Eastern-Ukrainian Center for Civic Initiatives
Freedom Files
Human Rights Documentation Center
Human Rights Center Memorial
Human Rights House Kiev
International Youth Human Rights Movement
Moscow Helsinki Group
Public Alternative
Public Verdict
Social Action Centre NGO (No Borders Project)
Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union

Civic Solidarity Platform Coordination Committee