

International Human Rights Day 2021: UK statement at OSCE

Mr Chair, we thank the Delegation of the European Union for raising this Current Issue.

International Human Rights Day on 10 December is an opportunity to reflect on the progress made on human rights since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

In the OSCE, it is also a chance to consider the progress we have made on our commitments in the human dimension. Unfortunately, the current record in the OSCE region is not good. Recent years have seen political polarisation, and democratic backsliding by some participating States.

In light of those challenges, the UK was pleased to join 47 other participating States at the recent Ministerial Council in [a joint statement on human rights and fundamental freedoms](#). It was a strong demonstration of our joint commitments to democracy based on the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms. The UK has a long, proud and diverse history of freedom, and we will continue to stand up for freedom and democracy, building a network of liberty and advancing the frontiers of freedom.

Mr Chair, International Human Rights Day also offers an opportunity to reflect on the importance of human rights defenders, civil society and the media in highlighting human rights violations and abuses. In an OSCE context, it is regrettable that a Human Dimension Implementation Meeting was not held this year. It is a chance lost for civil society to hold participating States to account, and to exchange best practice and to discuss how all participating States can live up to our commitments in the OSCE.

As we look ahead to 2022, the UK will continue to actively call out human rights violations and abuses wherever they occur, working with human rights defenders, civil society and the media to uphold democracy based on the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Thank you.