

# Report by OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights: UK response, October 2022

Mr Chair, I wish to thank the Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), Mr Mecacci, for his presentation. Matteo – your comprehensive comments remind us of the importance of ODIHR's work across all OSCE participating States in implementing our human dimension commitments. Thank you to you and your team for all you work on this, especially during this particularly challenging time, and for continuing to deliver on your mandate effectively and impartially.

As we are all aware, the OSCE has faced new challenges since Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine and I commend ODIHR's work in addressing these. Firstly, Director Mecacci, I welcomed your steadfast joint-statements responding to [the sham "referenda" in temporarily controlled territories of Ukraine](#) and [the attempted illegal annexation of Ukrainian territory](#) that followed.

Secondly, as you mentioned, ODIHR's Monitoring Initiative has provided important [interim reporting](#) into violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights in the course of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. We await the publication of the second report. Such monitoring and reporting are key to understanding the full scale of violations and abuses of international law.

Thirdly, the UK welcomes ODIHR's support to national and international human rights accountability processes and mechanisms – such as the provision of expert monitoring and reporting, and the facilitation of prosecution and investigation platforms.

Additionally, ODIHR has continued its critical work on the integration of migrants, anti-discrimination and hate crimes and human trafficking across the OSCE region – including the facilitation of practical training to those working on the ground in Ukraine – such as the recent course for civil society and frontline responders on addressing human trafficking.

This year, much of our time in this forum has rightly been used to discuss Russia's illegal war in Ukraine, but I wanted to take a moment to also highlight the important work of ODIHR in other parts of the OSCE region.

I'd like to thank the Polish Chair, Director Mecacci and all those who contributed to the success of this year's [Human Dimension Conference in Warsaw](#) which brought together over one thousand participants from international organisations, government and civil society from across the OSCE to assess our Human Dimension commitments. The plenary sessions, round tables and side events brought with them thought-provoking discussion and concrete recommendations – demonstrating the huge value of such a platform. I'd like to echo the Director's regret that consensus could not be reached on

the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting and share in his hope that this achievable next year.

Throughout 2022, ODIHR has continued assisting participating States through the provision of needs assessments and election observation missions, with 14 missions across the OSCE region.

We continue to support ODIHR's election observation methodology, which recognises an election is a process and considers the key elements of participating States' electoral systems, including the effectiveness and impartiality of the election administration, the legislative framework, the nature of campaigns (including the media environment), and the protection of fundamental civil and political rights. We continue to believe that strengthening our democratic institutions and practices is a continuous process, and ODIHR's clear recommendations to each country help all of us improve our electoral processes. They also provide a useful starting point to inform ODIHR's needs assessments for future election observation missions, helping ensure each of our individual democracies can be supported appropriately, and in a way that builds on past successes and addresses previous failings.

Director Mecacci, this year has demonstrated more than ever the huge importance of approaching security comprehensively – incorporating the politico-military dimension, the economic and environmental dimension and the human dimension. This year the actions of the Russian Federation and Belarusian regime have demonstrated the link between internal oppression and external aggression. This was clearly outlined in the most recent [Moscow Mechanism report in the case of Russia](#). We must learn from this and fund the crucial work of ODIHR accordingly. Any effort to restore peace in the OSCE region must be comprehensive and must include work in the human dimension.

Let us recognise now what we recognised half a century ago, security across the OSCE region can only be sustained when human rights, fundamental freedoms and democracy are guaranteed for all within it.

Thank you.