

National minority standards of the OSCE and the High Commissioner on National Minorities

I. General principles and minority rights commitments

The following CSCE/OSCE Documents set out the general principles of the OSCE and its specific commitments related to minority rights.

- **1. Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, Helsinki, 1975**
Final Act of the first CSCE Summit of Heads of State or Government.
For national minority standards, see Questions Relating to Security in Europe: 1(a) Declaration on Principles Guiding Relations between Participating States – Principle VII; Co-operation in Humanitarian and Other Fields: 3. Co-operation and Exchanges in the Field of Culture; and 4. Co-operation and Exchanges in the Field of Education.
Translations available in several languages
[Helsinki Final Act](#) | [OSCE](#)

- **2. Concluding Document of Madrid, 1983**
Concluding Document of Madrid Meeting.
For national minority standards, see Questions Relating to Security in Europe: Principles
Translations available in several languages
[Concluding Document of the Second Follow-up Meeting, Madrid, 11 November 1980 to 9 September 1983](#) | [OSCE](#)

- **3. Concluding Document of Vienna, 1989**
Concluding Document of Vienna Meeting.
For national minority standards, see Questions Relating to Security in Europe, principles 18 and 19; and Co-operation in Humanitarian and Other Fields, paragraphs 31, 45, 59 and 68
Translations available in several languages
[Concluding Document of the Third Follow-up Meeting, Vienna, 4 November 1986 to 19 January 1989](#) | [OSCE](#)

- **4. Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE, 1990**
The 1990 CSCE/OSCE Copenhagen Document outlines a number of human rights and fundamental freedoms, such as the right to peaceful assembly and demonstration, the right to enjoy one's property peacefully and the rights of the child. It introduces far-reaching provisions regarding national minorities, and broadens the scope of human rights matters to include election commitments.
For national minority standards, see paragraphs 30-40.7

Translations available in several languages

[Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE | OSCE](#)

- **5. Charter of Paris for a New Europe, 1990**

Second CSCE Summit of Heads of State or Government, Paris, 19–21 November 1990.

Supplementary Document to give effect to certain provisions contained in the Charter of Paris for a New Europe.

For national minority standards, see under Human Rights, Democracy and Rule of Law; Human Dimension; and Meeting of Experts on National Minorities

Translations available in several languages

[Charter of Paris for a New Europe | OSCE](#)

- **6. Report of the CSCE Meeting of Experts on National Minorities, Geneva, 1991**

The Meeting took place from 1-19 July 1991 in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter of Paris for a New Europe.

For national minority standards, see full report

[Report of the CSCE Meeting of Experts on National Minorities, Geneva | OSCE](#)

- **7. Document of the Moscow Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE, 1991**

Final Document of the Third Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE.

For national minority standards, see paragraph 37

Translations available in several languages

[Document of the Moscow Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE | OSCE](#)

- **8. CSCE Helsinki Document: The Challenges of Change, 1992**

Third CSCE Summit of Heads of State or Government, Helsinki, 9-10 July 1992. Includes Summit Declaration and Decisions.

For national minority standards, see Helsinki Summit Declaration, paragraphs 6, 12 and 20;

Decisions: Chapter VI. The Human Dimension (National Minorities), paragraphs 23-28,

(Indigenous Populations), paragraph 29, (Tolerance and Non-discrimination) paragraphs 30-35

Translations available in several languages

[The Challenges of Change | OSCE](#)

- **9. Concluding Document of Budapest: Towards a Genuine Partnership in a New Era, 1994**

Fourth CSCE Summit of Heads of State or Government, Budapest, 5-6 December 1994. Includes Summit Declarations and Decisions.

For national minority standards, see Decisions: Chapter VIII. The Human Dimension, paragraph 2; (National Minorities), paragraphs 21 and 22; (Roma and Sinti) paragraphs 23 and 24
Translations available in several languages

[Towards a Genuine Partnership in a New Era | OSCE](#)

- **10. Lisbon Document, 1996**

Fifth OSCE Summit of Heads of State or Government, Lisbon, 2-3 December 1996. Includes Summit Declarations.

For national minority standards, see Declaration on a Common and Comprehensive Security Model for Europe for the Twenty-First Century, paragraph 10

Translations available in several languages

[Lisbon Document | OSCE](#)

- **11. Istanbul Document, 1999**

Sixth OSCE Summit of Heads of State or Government, Istanbul, 18-19 November 1999. Includes Charter for European Security, Istanbul Summit Declaration, Vienna Document 1999, and Final Act of the Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe.

For national minority standards, see Charter for European Security, paragraphs 3, and 18-20; and Istanbul Summit Declaration, paragraphs 26, 30 and 31

Translations available in several languages

[Istanbul Document | OSCE](#)

- **12. Document of the Maastricht Ministerial Council, 2003**

OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century, OSCE Strategy Document for Economic and Environmental Dimension, Statement on South-Eastern Europe as a Region of Co-operation, Chairperson's Perception Statement, Decisions and Reports.

For national minority standards, see paragraph 39 and Decision No. 3/03: Action plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area

Translations available in several languages

[Final Document of the Eleventh Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, Maastricht, 1-2 December 2003 | OSCE](#)

- **13. Astana Commemorative Declaration: Towards a Security Community, 2010**

Commemorative Declaration of the Seventh OSCE Summit of Heads of State or Government, Astana, 1-2 December 2010.

For national minority standards, see paragraph 5

Translations available in several languages

[Astana Commemorative Declaration: Towards a Security Community | OSCE](#)

II. Mandate of the High Commissioner on National Minorities

The Mandate of the High Commissioner was established in the Helsinki Document of 1992. It describes the institution as “an instrument of conflict prevention at the earliest possible stage.” Subsequent Decisions of the OSCE participating States with reference to the Mandate are also referenced.

- **1. CSCE Helsinki Document: The Challenges of Change, 1992**

Third CSCE Summit of Heads of State or Government, Helsinki, 9-10 July 1992. Includes Summit Declaration and Decisions.

For mandate of the HCNM, see Helsinki Decisions: Chapter II. CSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

Translations available in several languages

[The Challenges of Change | OSCE](#)

- **2. Document of the Stockholm Council, 1992**

Summary of Conclusions and the Decision on Peaceful Settlement of Disputes.

For mandate of the HCNM, see Decisions: 3. High Commissioner on National Minorities

Translations available in several languages

[Final Document of the Third Meeting of the CSCE Council of Ministers, Stockholm, 14-15 December 1992 | OSCE](#)

- **3. Document of the Rome Council, 1993**

CSCE and the New Europe - Our Security is Indivisible (Summary of Conclusions), Decisions.

For mandate of the HCNM, see Decisions: III. High Commissioner on National Minorities

Translations available in several languages

[Final Document of the Fourth Meeting of the CSCE Council of Ministers, Rome, 30 November-1 December 1993 | OSCE](#)

- **4. Document of the Bucharest Ministerial Council, 2001**

Bucharest Ministerial Declaration, Decision on Combating Terrorism, Bucharest Plan of Action for Combating Terrorism, Statements by the Ministerial Council, Decisions and Reports.

For mandate of the HCNM, see Decisions: Decision No. 5

Translations available in several languages

[Final Document of the Ninth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, Bucharest, 3-4 December 2001 | OSCE](#)

- **5. Document of the Maastricht Ministerial Council, 2003**

OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century, OSCE Strategy Document for Economic and Environmental Dimension, Statement on South-Eastern

Europe as a Region of Co-operation, Chairperson's Perception Statement, Decisions and Reports. For mandate of the HCNM, see Decisions: Annex to Decision No. 3/03: Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area, III. Combating racism and discrimination (Legislation and law enforcement, Recommended action by OSCE institutions and structures), paragraph 21, (Police, Recommended action by OSCE institutions and structures), paragraph 35, (Mass Media, Recommended action by OSCE institutions and structures), paragraph 42; V. Improving access to education (Recommended action by OSCE institutions and structures), paragraphs 85 and 86; VI. Enhancing participation in public and political life (Recommended action by OSCE institutions and structures), paragraph 104 and VII. Roma and Sinti in crisis and post-crisis situations (Recommended action by OSCE institutions and structures), paragraph 117; and Decisions: Decision No. 4/03 Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, paragraph 10

Translations available in several languages

[Final Document of the Eleventh Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, Maastricht, 1-2 December 2003 | OSCE](#)

- **6. Document of the Sofia Ministerial Council, 2004**

Statement on Preventing and Combating Terrorism, Declaration on the Sixtieth Anniversary of the End of World War II, Statement on the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict, Decisions, Chairperson's Statement, Reports, OSCE-UNECE Memorandum of Understanding.

For mandate of the HCNM, see Decisions: Annex to Decision No. 14/04 2004: OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, V. Supporting OSCE participating States in implementing relevant commitments to promoting equality between women and men, paragraph 44 (Priorities) (d)

Translations available in several languages

[Final Document of the Twelfth Meeting of the Ministerial Council, Sofia, 6-7 December 2004 | OSCE](#)

- **7. Document of the Athens Ministerial Council, 2009**

Final Document of the 17th Meeting of the Ministerial Council, Athens, 1 and 2 December 2009
For mandate of the HCNM, see Decision No. 8, Enhancing Efforts to Ensure Roma and Sinti Sustainable Integration

Translations available in several languages

[Final Document of the Seventeenth Meeting of the Ministerial Council, Athens, 1 and 2 December 2009 | OSCE](#)

III. Thematic Recommendations and Guidelines of the High Commissioner on National Minorities

The High Commissioner's thematic Recommendations and Guidelines address recurrent issues that the successive High Commissioners have faced in their work. Intended for policymakers and States' representatives, they offer guidance on developing policies that may help ease inter-ethnic tensions.

- **1. The Hague Recommendations Regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities, and Explanatory Note, 1996**

Based on the experience of the OSCE HCNM and the advice of internationally recognized experts, these Recommendations seek to provide guidance to OSCE participating States on how best to ensure the education rights of national minorities within their borders. They cover the spirit of international instruments, measures and resources, decentralization and participation, public and private institutions, minority education at primary and secondary levels, minority education in vocational schools, minority education at the tertiary level and curriculum development. The Recommendations are accompanied by a set of explanatory notes.

Translations available in several languages

[The Hague Recommendations Regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities | OSCE](#)

- **2. The Oslo Recommendations Regarding the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities, and Explanatory Note, 1998**

Based on the experience of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the advice of internationally recognized experts, these recommendations seek to provide guidance to OSCE participating States on how best to ensure the linguistic rights of national minorities within their borders. These recommendations cover names, religion, community life and non-governmental organizations, the media, economic life, administrative authorities and public services, independent national institutions, the judicial authorities and deprivation of liberty. The recommendations are accompanied by a set of explanatory notes.

Translations available in several languages

[The Oslo Recommendations regarding the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities | OSCE](#)

- **3. The Lund Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities, and Explanatory Note, 1999**

Based on the experience of the OSCE HCNM and the advice of internationally recognized experts, these recommendations seek to provide guidance to OSCE participating States on how best to ensure the participation of national minorities within their States. The recommendations cover general principles; participation in decision-making, including arrangements at the central, regional and local levels, elections, and advisory and consultative bodies; self-governance, covering territorial and non-territorial arrangements; and guarantees, including constitutional and legal safeguards, and remedies. The recommendations are accompanied by a set of explanatory notes.

Translations available in several languages

[The Lund Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life | OSCE](#)

- **4. The Guidelines on the Use of Minority Languages in the Broadcast Media, and Explanatory Note, 2003**

Some states have taken steps to limit the use of minority languages in the broadcast media,

most commonly through quotas for broadcasting time in a certain language (typically that of the majority, and usually designated the official or state language) – a practice that has generated negative reactions among minorities in a number of countries. The purpose of the Guidelines on the Use of Minority Languages in the Broadcast Media is to encourage and facilitate the adoption by states of specific measures to alleviate tensions relating to national minorities and thus to serve the ultimate conflict-prevention goal of the HCNM. The Guidelines are divided into four sub-headings that group the 17 individual guidelines under general principles, policy, regulation, and the promotion of minority languages. The Guidelines are accompanied by a set of explanatory notes.

Translations available in several languages

[Guidelines on the Use of Minority Languages in the Broadcast Media | OSCE](#)

- **5. Recommendations on Policing in Multi-Ethnic Societies, and Explanatory Note, 2006**

In some states, a lack of interaction and co-operation between police and people belonging to national minorities can cause negative reactions among minority communities and even lead to conflict. In contrast, other states make the police service more representative of the community it serves and enhance communication between police and national minorities. This can strengthen inter-ethnic relations and increase the operational effectiveness of the police. To assist states in developing mechanisms to improve the interaction between police and minorities, the OSCE HCNM analysed international standards and practices in the area of policing with the support of international experts to develop these recommendations, which cover general principles, recruitment and representation, training and personal development, engaging with ethnic communities, operational practices, and prevention and management of conflict. The HCNM Recommendations are accompanied by a set of explanatory notes.

Translations available in several languages

[Recommendations on Policing in Multi-Ethnic Societies | OSCE](#)

- **6. The Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations on National Minorities in Inter-State Relations, and Explanatory Note, 2008**

Based on the experience of the HCNM and the advice of internationally recognized experts, these HCNM Recommendations seek to provide guidance to OSCE participating States on how best to manage their relations with neighbouring States when they concern the issue of national minorities. These HCNM Recommendations cover general principles, State obligations regarding persons belonging to national minorities, benefits accorded by States to persons belonging to national minorities abroad and multilateral and bilateral instruments and other mechanisms. The HCNM Recommendations are accompanied by a set of explanatory notes.

Translations available in several languages

[The Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations on National Minorities in Inter-State Relations | OSCE](#)

- **7. The Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies, and Explanatory Note, 2012**

Based on the experience of the HCNM and the advice of internationally recognized experts,

these HCNM Guidelines seek to provide guidance to OSCE participating States on how best to integrate diverse societies. They cover structural principles without which good integration policies are difficult to conceive as feasible; principles for integration, which include necessary basic theses and values that relate more specifically to integration; elements of an integration policy framework, which provide an architecture for the elaboration and implementation of integration policies, with mechanisms, processes and cross cutting themes; and key policy areas, which covers the main thematic considerations based on the HCNM's experience. The HCNM Guidelines are accompanied by a set of explanatory notes.

Translations available in several languages

[The Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies | OSCE](#)

- **8. The Graz Recommendations on Access to Justice and National Minorities, and Explanatory Note, 2017**

Based on the experience of the HCNM and the advice of internationally recognized experts, these HCNM Recommendations seek to provide guidance to OSCE participating States on access to justice and national minorities. Access to justice for national minorities is not only about minorities' enjoyment of rights but is also relevant to conflict prevention within and between states. These Recommendations include the principles underpinning access to justice for national minorities, and cover the scope of access to justice; language and cultural considerations; legal assistance; reflecting diversity in institutions related to justice; trust between law-enforcement agencies and minority communities; enforcing the law in an impartial and non-discriminatory manner; ensuring victim support services and witness protection measures are sensitive to minority needs; executing court orders and judgments effectively, impartially and within a reasonable time; treating minorities in detention or prison with respect; and providing effective redress in cases of human rights violations as a result of inter-ethnic conflict. The HCNM Recommendations are accompanied by a set of explanatory notes.

Translations available in several languages

[The Graz Recommendations on Access to Justice and National Minorities | OSCE](#)

- **9. The Tallinn Guidelines on National Minorities and the Media in the Digital Age, and Explanatory Note, 2019**

Diverse societies require space for inclusive and pluralistic interaction and debate. Media and information technologies can offer such spaces to allow different groups to interact with each other, explore their identities, and voice diverse perspectives without fear. This fosters dialogue and mutual understanding, strengthens societal integration and resilience, and reduces tensions. The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities offers guidance on how to create, nurture, and develop the role of the media and information technologies for conflict prevention. The High Commissioner's Tallinn Guidelines on National Minorities and the Media in the Digital Age advise on how to: Operationalize the right to freedom of expression in diverse societies and enable access to a wide range of media and information technologies without discrimination; Avoid hostility towards national minorities by refraining from and by countering hate speech, disinformation, propaganda or inflammatory discourse, within or across borders; Support and

stimulate media and information technologies so that they can better cater for the linguistic, cultural and other needs and interests of national minorities; and Create and sustain a favourable environment for pluralistic debate in the digital age in which members of all groups in society can participate.

Translations available in several languages

[The Tallinn Guidelines on National Minorities and the Media in the Digital Age | OSCE](#)

- **10. Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Social and Economic Life, 2023**

The inclusion of national minorities in economic and social life is a crucial element of democracy, particularly in multi-ethnic societies, as it fosters unity and breaks down societal divisions. These HCNM Recommendations aim to offer practical guidelines for policymakers to facilitate social and economic participation of national minorities at different levels and in various settings. The Recommendations include chapters on General principles; Policies, processes and institutions; Public goods and services; Digital inclusion; and Geographic and regional dimensions. The Recommendations especially aim to bring issues related to gender, youth and the elderly into the discussion.

[Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Social and Economic Life | OSCE](#)

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/minorities/osce-national-minority-standards>