The HDIM needs reform

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The Helsinki Monitor has consistently reported the Human Dimension Implementation Meetings (HDIMs) of the C/OSCE — their correct title being ‘Implementation Meetings on Human Dimension Issues’ — since their inception. Since the very first meeting (see ‘The First CSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting’, by the author et al in: Helsinki Monitor 1994, no. 1, pp. 64-74, and no. 2, pp. 68-80).

The year 2000 has already witnessed the fifth HDIM since its form and contents were first devised at the CSCE Helsinki Summit of July 1992. But implementation debates within C/OSCE have been in existence since the very beginning of this process — at Follow-Up Meetings — and are currently also part of Review Conferences in the years when no HDIM is held.

HDIM rules frozen

At present, the HDIM is still determined — apart from by the basic C/OSCE rules of procedure of the so-called ‘Blue Book’ of 1973 — by the provisions of the Helsinki Decisions 1992 as well as by their partial revision in July 1998 through a decision of the Permanent Council. In addition to this, for each HDIM, a separate — consensus-based — decision of the Permanent Council — or its predecessor body — was taken on the dates, organizational modalities, agendas and work programmes for the meetings. These decisions include, e.g., time-limits for speakers, possible financial assistance for ‘recently admitted

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2 Since the very first meeting (see ‘The First CSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting’, by the author et al in: Helsinki Monitor 1994, no. 1, pp. 64-74, and no. 2, pp. 68-80).


5 Chapter 6 (‘Rules of Procedure’), i.e. paragraphs 64-88, Final Recommendations of the Helsinki Consultations, 8 June 1973.

6 Chapter I, paragraphs 26-30 and chapter VI, paragraphs 9-16.

7 Decision No. 241, New modalities for OSCE meetings on Human Dimension issues, of 9 July 1998; OSCE Doc. No. PC.DEC/241. In mid-December 2000, the Austrian Chairmanship called for a ‘meeting of the friends of the HDIM’ in Vienna in order to start a process of reviewing form and contents of the HDIM, following similar meetings already held during the fifth HDIM in Warsaw (ref. OSCE Doc. No. CIO.GAL/107/00 of 30 October 2000). In February 2001, consultations were started by the Romanian Chairmanship in Vienna with a view to improving the HDIM.
participating States', rules on the participation of representatives of OSCE institutions as well as of international organisations and NGOs, and a detailed programme indicating which sub-topic will be dealt with during which half-day.\textsuperscript{8}

The necessity — or practice — of regulating these minuscule details through diplomatic negotiations had as a consequence that the final shape of the HDIM often did not appear until very late before its opening date. This not only made travel plans difficult but, more important, also the substantial preparations by prospective participants which in turn discouraged some from attending.

The basic features of the HDIM including its agenda have not changed since its first meeting in 1993: The HDIM is to thoroughly review the implementation of OSCE commitments in the Human Dimension (HD) field in a co-operative and comprehensive manner; it provides an opportunity to identify action which may be required to address problems; it is organised by ODIHR at its seat,\textsuperscript{9} Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation\textsuperscript{10}, Partners for Co-operation\textsuperscript{11}, international organisations and NGOs are invited to participate in the meeting — NGOs with the proviso that ‘persons or organisations which resort to the use of violence or publicly condone terrorism or the use of violence’ are excluded.\textsuperscript{12} All formal sessions are open, and since 1998 all participants — which include NGOs — ‘have equal access to the list of speakers’.\textsuperscript{13}

The HDIM does not produce a negotiated document but has two rapporteurs reporting to the closing plenary, from the working sessions.\textsuperscript{14} The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) traditionally presents a ‘Consolidated Summary’ on the meeting some time after its closing date. It usually includes an executive summary of the meeting, the modalities, the agenda and the work programme, details on participation and side-events, the reports by the rapporteurs, the Journals\textsuperscript{15} as well as a list of all documents distributed during the meeting.\textsuperscript{16}


\textsuperscript{9} Chapter I, paragraphs 26 and 28, as well as 30, and chapter IV, paragraph 9, Helsinki Decisions 1992.

\textsuperscript{10} Algeria (since 1992), Egypt (since 1992), Israel (since 1992), Jordan (since 1998), Morocco (since 1992), Tunisia (since 1992).

\textsuperscript{11} Japan (since 1992), the Republic of Korea (since 1994), Thailand (since 9 November 2000).

\textsuperscript{12} Chapter III, paragraph 2, PC.DEC/241, see above, and chapter IV, paragraph 16, Helsinki Decision 1992.

\textsuperscript{13} Chapter I, paragraph 3, PC.DEC/241.

\textsuperscript{14} Chapter VI, paragraph 11 see, Helsinki Decisions 1992; and chapter I, paragraph 5, PC.DEC/241.

\textsuperscript{15} See point 9 below.

\textsuperscript{16} On the fifth (17 - 27 October 2000); OSCE Doc. No. ODHR.GAL/54/00 of 22 November 2000, for the reports of the rapporteurs see PC.DEC/637/00 of 31 October 2000 and HDIM

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