

Requesting Legislative Assistance from ODIHR



Ensuring legislation is compliant with human rights

ODIHR reviews, upon request, draft and/or existing legislation to assess its compliance with OSCE human dimension commitments and international human rights standards. ODIHR legal reviews provide concrete recommendations for improvement and may also include examples of good practices from other OSCE participating States. Sometimes, ODIHR prepares reviews jointly or in close cooperation with other OSCE structures and international or regional organizations, notably the Council of Europe's Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission). In over 20 years of legislative assistance, ODIHR has issued more than 500 legal reviews, benefiting close to 40 OSCE participating States. On average, ODIHR delivers around 25 legal reviews each year.

Why request a Legal Review?

- To ensure that legislation aligns with international and regional human rights obligations and commitments and is gender-responsive and sensitive to the needs of diverse groups;
- To receive tailored, actionable recommendations to improve the quality, clarity, consistency and human rights-compliance of adopted legislation;
- To draw on regional knowledge and good legislative practices from across the OSCE region; and
- To demonstrate a clear commitment to openness, transparency and constructive international cooperation.

Types of Legal Review

- Opinions and Comments: in-depth, legal analysis of draft or existing legislation to assess its compliance with OSCE commitments and international human rights standards, with concrete, practical recommendations for improvement.
- Notes: tailored outlines, analysis or clarification of specific legal issues, or overviews of international norms and comparative good legislative practices in a certain legal area.
- Amicus Curiae Briefs: expert legal advice, information and analysis on the applicability of international human rights law, submitted to national or international courts, on the question(s) under their review.

How to request a Legal Review?

Send an official letter to the ODIHR Director at office@odihr.pl.

Please include:

- Clear identification of the existing or draft law(s) to be reviewed
- Preferred timeline for delivery of the review
- Text of the law(s), draft law(s) or legislative provisions for review (ODIHR will handle translation)

Who can request a Legal Review?

Authorities and public bodies of OSCE participating States, such as:

- Parliament (e.g., Speakers/Deputy Speakers/Heads and Deputy Heads of Committees including ad hoc parliamentary working groups)
- Executive branch (e.g., President/Heads of Presidential Administration/Ministers/Deputy Ministers/Heads of Departments/Chairperson of Inter-governmental commissions)
- Judicial self-governing bodies or national courts (including requests for Amicus Curiae Briefs from Constitutional or Supreme Courts)
- Election management bodies
- National human rights institutions/ombuds institutions or ombudspersons/equality bodies/anti-corruption or oversight bodies/other independent statutory bodies

OSCE field operations or institutions/bodies (directly, or on behalf of public authorities or bodies)

At the invitation of international, regional or inter-governmental organizations — following a request from an OSCE participating State public authority or body — or international/regional courts for Amicus Curiae Briefs

ODIHR cannot consider requests for legal reviews from individuals (including members of parliament), political parties, private entities or non-governmental organizations.

Topics of legal reviews

Human rights and fundamental freedoms, such as:

- Fair trial rights
- Freedom of peaceful assembly, association, expression and access to information, religion or belief, and inclusive political participation
- Right to private and family life and personal data protection
- Digital rights and Artificial Intelligence (AI) regulation
- Migration and freedom of movement
- Political party regulation
- Gender equality and non-discrimination
- Preventing and countering terrorism
- Preventing and combating trafficking in human beings
- Preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence
- Preventing and combating hate crimes
- Environmental human rights

Institutional reforms, democratic institutions and processes, such as:

- Constitutional reform and separation of powers
- Judicial and prosecutorial independence
- National human rights institutions and other self-regulatory bodies
- Parliamentary reform (including oversight and procedure)
- Public integrity, preventing and combating corruption

- Electoral reform
- Security sector governance and reform (SSG/R)
- Criminal law and procedure reform
- Post-conflict and transitional justice

How long does it take to prepare a Legal Review?

2 to 4 months, on average, depending on:

- The length and complexity
- The need for translation
- The urgency

In exceptional situations, ODIHR may deliver a review **in under one month**.

ODIHR's role

- Draft the review and offer practical recommendations
- Translate the review (if requested)
- Publish the legal review online

Preliminary / Final Opinions:

Sometimes, e.g., where the reform is significant, views diverge or the drafting process is ongoing, ODIHR issues a Preliminary Opinion, potentially followed by a visit to consult key stakeholders. ODIHR may then issue a Final Opinion reflecting the results of the consultations and/or reviewing the final draft of the legislation.

After the review

ODIHR works to support implementation. This can include:

- Meetings with legal drafters, online or in person, to give technical support and clarify recommendations

- Follow-up visits/events to discuss findings and recommendations with key stakeholders
- Participation in public events or consultations
- Other support with implementing recommendations, including progress monitoring, adjustments to recommendations and sharing of good practices and lessons learned from the OSCE region, etc.
- A follow-up legal review, e.g., to look at revised (draft) legislation or newly proposed amendments, or to assess progress on implementing earlier recommendations

For further information or to initiate a request, please contact: office@odihr.pl.

Key ODIHR resources ↓



Guidelines on Democratic Lawmaking for Better Laws



Guidelines on Political Party Regulation, Second Edition



Guidelines on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly (Third Edition)



Guidelines on Freedom of Association



[Legislationline.org](https://legislationline.org)

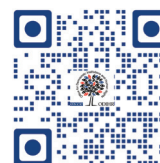
All ODIHR legal reviews and their translations can be viewed at:
<https://legislationline.org/legal-reviews> or <https://www.osce.org/odihr/legal-opinions-and-comments>



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