



OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

**Addressing Anti-Asian Racism and Xenophobia:
Challenges and Opportunities**

Online, 8 June 2021

OSCE/ODIHR Meeting Report

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The report should not be interpreted as comprising official OSCE recommendations based on a consensus decision, an opinion of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights or of any particular OSCE participating State. The content of this report provides a synopsis of the issues discussed during the meeting, which took place online on 8 June 2021.

Addressing Anti-Asian Racism and Xenophobia: Challenges and Opportunities

Public event held online, 8 June 2021

INTRODUCTION

Intolerance and discrimination continue to be a concern across the region of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).¹ Racism and xenophobia, including anti-Asian racism and xenophobia, negatively affect the lives of many members of different ethnic, religious or other groups. The impact is especially detrimental on those who are also subject to other forms of discrimination, including intersectional aspects of discrimination when one or more protected characteristics intersects with gender. Discrimination and its manifestations negatively and differently impact lives of women and girls, men and boys, and others. Minority women are disproportionately affected, making them increasingly vulnerable to social exclusion, exploitation, trafficking and different forms of gender-based violence against women.

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) continuously receives information on various potential hate crimes motivated by, *inter alia*, anti-Asian racism and xenophobia. Such manifestations of intolerance threaten both the security of individuals and societal cohesion, as discrimination and intolerant discourse can escalate into violence and wider-scale conflict. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic brought several challenges to the forefront of societies in the OSCE region. As the ODIHR publication on [State responses to the COVID-19 pandemic](#) noted,² numerous instances of intolerant discourse and hate-motivated attacks against Asians and people of Asian descent occurred across the OSCE region, particularly in the early phase of the pandemic. Asians and people of Asian descent also appear to have been particularly and highly disproportionately targeted in hate incidents³ in some OSCE participating States, particularly since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, civil society organizations reported significant numbers of hate incidents against people of Asian descent in some countries,⁴ while Nepali individuals had their cars set on fire and were targeted with racist and xenophobic insults in others.⁵ Prior to that, anti-Chinese

¹ The OSCE participating States have committed to ensuring human rights and fundamental freedoms of everyone within their territory and subject to their jurisdiction, without distinction of any kind such as “race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status” (Vienna 1989). In Copenhagen (1990), participating States declared their firm intention to intensify the efforts to combat totalitarianism, racial and ethnic hatred, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and discrimination against anyone, as well as persecution on religious and ideological grounds in all forms. At the same time, gender equality has been described as an integral part of OSCE policies, both within the organization itself as well as in its participating States (Istanbul 1999). The OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality (2004) reaffirmed this principle, and urged the participating States and institutions to “focus in particular on women’s empowerment and the participation of women as well as men in public, political and economic life in the context of democratic and economic processes in participating States.”

² See: <<https://www.osce.org/odihhr/human-rights-states-of-emergency-covid19>>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ See: <<https://www.sova-center.ru/racism-xenophobia/publications/2020/04/d42254/>>.

⁵ See: <<https://kathmandupost.com/national/2020/04/24/nepalis-in-london-on-the-receiving-end-of-xenophobia-amidst-covid-19-fears>>.

protests and incidents were reported in some States.⁶ In 2021, new incidents were reported, such as the shootings where most of the victims were women of Asian descent,⁷ or a number of anti-Asian hate incidents in the spring targeting the elderly.⁸

Participating States of the OSCE committed to a comprehensive framework for addressing racism, xenophobia, intolerance and discrimination at the 2003 Vienna Conference on Tolerance and the Fight against Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination. This framework includes numerous Ministerial Council declarations and commitments acknowledging the need to address these manifestations of intolerance, especially as they may give rise to conflict and violence on a wider scale, in addition to igniting feelings of exclusion and insecurity, not only among the communities targeted but in societies overall.⁹

Despite these important frameworks and commitments, anti-Asian racism and discrimination continue to manifest through various forms and expressions, often in an unchallenged manner, and including intolerant anti-Asian political and prejudicial public discourse. Perpetrators of racially motivated violence and hate crimes often benefit from impunity. These manifestations remain a major obstacle in the efforts to eradicate systemic racism and discrimination and to the capacity of Asians and people of Asian descent to equally exercise their rights as citizens.

Event description

To open a discussion on this topic and provide a platform for an exchange of promising experiences, ODIHR convened a public international online event on “Addressing Anti-Asian Racism and Xenophobia: Challenges and Opportunities”. In a conversation with representatives of state institutions, civil society organizations, intergovernmental organizations and the general public, the online event addressed the following questions:

— What are the current key concerns, trends and developments faced by women, men and others involving the manifestations of anti-Asian racism and xenophobia in the OSCE region?

— How do hate crimes, intolerant discourse, violations of economic and social rights, religion, conflict, migration and other phenomena additionally affect the security of Asians and people of Asian descent? What are the different gendered experiences related to these phenomena? How can we address the lack of data disaggregated by gender and ethnicity, which prevents policy makers and other actors from devising viable and meaningful policies and measures?

— How have States, as well as civil society organizations, effectively addressed these concerns? How can we improve inter-sectoral co-operation to address anti-Asian racism and xenophobia more effectively? What can we do to amplify the voices of women activists in these processes?

The event took place on Zoom, in English, with simultaneous interpretation in Russian and International Sign Language (ISL). Registration for the event was open to the public.

⁶ See: <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/10/16/why-are-there-anti-china-protests-central-asia/>>.

⁷ See: <<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/17/us/atlanta-spa-shootings.html>>.

⁸ See: <<https://www.npr.org/2021/04/25/990647008/asian-man-in-critical-condition-after-another-vicious-attack-in-new-york-city>>.

⁹ MC.DEC/[10/05](#), MC.DEC/[10/07](#), and MC.DEC/[13/06](#).

The meeting gathered over forty participants (14 men and 29 women) from civil society, academia, national institutions and intergovernmental organizations across the OSCE region, including at least 11 countries. The participants included representatives of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and officials from several OSCE participating States, in addition to civil society representatives and the public.

This summary of the event was prepared to further raise awareness of the issues discussed. The recording of the event is available to the public on the OSCE website.¹⁰

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

Opening session

The event was opened by **Ms. Katarzyna Gardapkhadze**, the then-First Deputy Director of the OSCE/ODIHR.¹¹ Ms. Gardapkhadze introduced the participants to the OSCE and ODIHR, and the OSCE's comprehensive framework of commitments for addressing racism and xenophobia. Despite these long-standing commitments, racism and xenophobia continue to be a concern across the OSCE region. As ODIHR's annual Hate Crime Reporting¹² shows, numerous physical and verbal assaults, including against Asians and people of Asian descent and their property, can be seen across the OSCE region. Such manifestations of intolerance threaten both the security of individuals and societal cohesion, as discrimination and intolerant discourse can escalate into violence and large-scale conflict.

Ms. Gardapkhadze noted that anti-Asian racism and discrimination often continue to manifest in an unchallenged manner and include intolerant anti-Asian political and prejudicial public discourse. Additionally, since 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated societal problems such as hate crimes and discriminatory measures against certain communities. As the ODIHR publication on *OSCE Human Dimension Commitments and State Responses to the Covid-19 Pandemic* noted,¹³ many sources indicate numerous instances of intolerant discourse and hate-motivated attacks against Asians and people of Asian descent across the OSCE region. Ms. Gardapkhadze hoped that this event would open a discussion on this topic and provide a platform for an exchange of promising experiences, regarding key concerns about the manifestations of anti-Asian racism and xenophobia in the OSCE region.

The next speaker was **Dr. Regina Polak**, Personal Representative of the OSCE Swedish Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, also focusing

¹⁰ See: <https://tandis.odihr.pl/explore?bitstream_id=1147250&handle=20.500.12389/22872&provider=video-streaming>.

¹¹ Ms. Katarzyna Gardapkhadze was the First Deputy Director of the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODHIR) from 2016 to 2021. In 2020, during a period without a politically appointed Director, she served as ODIHR's Director's Alternate. At ODIHR, Katarzyna oversaw the Office's programmatic work on elections, democratization, human rights, tolerance and non-discrimination and Roma and Sinti programmes. Before joining the OSCE, she served as a director of the Save the Children child protection programme in Georgia, worked as an evaluator for the Eurasia Foundation's South Caucasus media support programme, led a USAID-funded Georgia youth peace project and was a consultant for the United Nations Mission in Kosovo on community strengthening.

¹² See: <<https://hatecrime.osce.org/>>.

¹³ See: <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/human-rights-states-of-emergency-covid19>>.

on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions.¹⁴ Dr. Polak shared the concern that, since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Asians and people of Asian descent have become victims of stigmatization and blamed for the spread of the virus. She highlighted the situation of Asian women and girls (or those of Asian descent) who have been specifically subjected to violence, racial discrimination and hate crimes in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Polak called for co-operative action and inter-sectoral efforts on international and national levels — involving States, governments and civil society — and suggested the creation of National Action Plans against Racial Discrimination.

Furthermore, Dr. Polak emphasized several points of the OSCE approach to addressing racism and xenophobia. Firstly, this approach calls for investigating all hate incidents, punishing perpetrators with appropriate penalties and providing victims access to support, including effective protection and adequate reparation. Partnerships between participating States and civil society groups are important, especially when considering the role that civil society organizations can play in monitoring and reporting hate crime, including anti-Asian hate crime. There is also a need to raise awareness of the specific situation of women and girls, particularly of Asian descent, and the need to invite their participation in public and political discourse and in the media to allow them to contribute to the best of their potential. Finally, Dr. Polak invited participants to use ODIHR's tools and resources to comprehensively and effectively address anti-Asian racism.

Anti-Asian Racism and Xenophobia: An Overview of the Situation in the OSCE Region

The first panel session of the event provided an overview of the current manifestations of anti-Asian racism and xenophobia in various parts of the OSCE.¹⁵ The discussion was moderated by **Ms. Christie J. Edwards**, OSCE/ODIHR's Deputy Head of Tolerance and Non-Discrimination.¹⁶

¹⁴ Associate Professor Dr. Regina Polak is a Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, also focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions. Dr. Polak is head of the Department for Practical Theology at the Catholic-Theological Faculty at the University of Vienna. She is an expert and internationally recognized scholar and lecturer in interdisciplinary research on socio-religious transformation processes in Europe, religion in the context of migration and urbanisation and interfaith dialogue with a special focus on Jews, Christians and Muslims, including research on racism and all other forms of group-related hostility. She is also engaged in Christian-Jewish and Christian-Muslim Dialogue organizations. Dr. Polak is the theological advisor of the Commission on Migration of the German Bishops' Conference.

¹⁵ Mr. Suresh Grover, Co-Director of The Monitoring Group (United Kingdom) was unfortunately unable to speak at the event due to a last minute conflict.

¹⁶ Ms. Christie Edwards is an internationally recognized and published legal expert with over twenty-one years of experience working on international humanitarian and human rights law, gender, international policy and advocacy and international community development. Christie currently serves as the Deputy Head of the Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, addressing issues of racism, xenophobia, discrimination and hate crimes. Previously, as the Director of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) at the American Red Cross (ARC), Christie led ARC's legal education, public and youth outreach efforts on IHL. Finally, Christie serves as the Co-Chair of the International Organizations Interest Group of the American Society of International Law (ASIL), Co-Chaired the 2021 ASIL Annual Meeting, co-founded ASIL's Women's Mentoring Program, and serves on ASIL's Executive Committee and Executive Council.

In her opening intervention, the then-**Lord Mayor of Dublin Hazel Chu**¹⁷ spoke about key concerns with the manifestations of anti-Asian racism and xenophobia, focusing on Ireland. While the population of Asian descent is low in Ireland, the COVID-19 pandemic still created challenges due to associations with China and accusations of “bringing the virus over”. Individual hate incidents occurred, including physical assaults accompanied by racist slurs associated with the virus. Lord Mayor Chu advocated for addressing all forms of racism, since it currently affects generations of people and will continue to be detrimental to future generations if unchecked. In addition to popular anti-racist movements, such as Black Lives Matter, she also mentioned the importance of related legislative frameworks. Lord Mayor Chu’s office worked with the Department of Justice of the Government of Ireland on hate crime legislation and co-operated with the police on improvements to reporting hate crimes. Nevertheless, this is a punitive approach; the role of education remains important in teaching children to understand and accept differences.

As the first person of colour in this role, Lord Mayor Chu was subjected to trolling online, hate mail and threats against her property and family members that she believed were racially motivated. She suggested addressing the lack of diversity at high-level positions, by hiring more people of colour and other minority backgrounds in governing bodies, and thus normalizing people of colour in important roles. If people of colour are rarely in such roles, the racial harassment may continue. Lord Mayor Chu also spoke about the need to move away from racial and gendered stereotypes about Asian women as “submissive housewives”, to which she and many other women professionals of Asian descent were subjected and hoped that her role as Lord Mayor may assist in showing the power of Asian women.

The next speaker, **Dr. Yeow Poon** from the Volunteer Core Team of the COVID-19 Anti-Racism Group (CARG), compared previous and current manifestations of anti-Asian racism in the United Kingdom (UK).¹⁸ He referenced YouGov data from 2020 indicating that, among racialized communities, those identifying as Chinese most reported experiencing racist slurs. Dr. Poon spoke about these data as surprising in light of the “silent model community” perception of Chinese and persons of Chinese descent in the UK, where conversations about such incidents mainly do not occur, even within their communities. Data from the Metropolitan Police further indicated a sharp rise in anti-East Asian incidents in 2020 compared to the same months in 2018 and 2019. Within the 2020 data, in addition to a peak during the month of March, the data also indicated a rise in anti-Asian incidents every time that lockdown was eased. Examples of such incidents included racist abuse, attacks against Chinese restaurants and physical assaults against Chinese women, elderly Chinese persons, Chinese students and young people, etc.

¹⁷ Councillor Hazel Chu was elected the 352nd Lord Mayor of Dublin until June 2021 at the Annual Meeting of Dublin City Council held on 29 June 2020 in the Round Room at the Mansion House. In 2019, she became the first Green Party councillor to be elected in the local elections for the ward of Pembroke. In the same year she was elected Chair of the Party. After being called to the Bar in 2007 she worked in Sydney, Hong Kong, Guilin and New York. She has worked in various management roles and in 2013 became Diageo’s Head of Brand, Corporate and Trade Communications. In her spare time she lends her voice to promoting diversity and equality and is a regular media contributor.

¹⁸ Dr. Yeow Poon is a consultant in public management and governance. He is the Chair of the Chinese Community Centre in Birmingham, the President of England China Business Forum, Chair of Arts in the Yards and a Trustee of Chinese Welfare Trust. Dr. Poon is also the Chair of Policy for West Midlands Liberal Democrats and the Chair of Chinese Liberal Democrats. He was the 2018 winner of TheBusinessDesk Midlands Leadership Award: Public and Third Sector Leader.

Dr. Poon also spoke about the continuity of anti-Asian incidents in the UK, and its impact on the community, with elderly members becoming reluctant to go outside, particularly due to more frequent news on attacks against the elderly in the UK and in the United States. On the other hand, racist attacks appear to have motivated many of the younger generation of people of East Asian descent to engage as social activists in the past year. Dr. Poon particularly mentioned the role of gender and the increased activism of groups founded and led by Chinese or other East Asian women, where many such activities are led by young women.

In the next presentation, **Dr. Felix B. Chang**, Professor of Law at the University of Cincinnati,¹⁹ described how anti-Asian racism plays out in the context of economic and social rights. In the United States, anti-Asian racism developed through the historical enactment of Asian exclusion laws, such as the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, the first federal law that targeted a specific ethnic group and restricted their immigration. Recently, scholars have pointed out that Chinese and broader Asian exclusion accompanied the development of US administrative law. This long history is particularly important considering that it impacted a large Asian population of the United States. Considering the contemporary situation, Dr. Chang spoke of ethnically segmented markets where Asian entrepreneurs frequently interact with communities where producers are drawn from one ethnic group and consumers from another. Those markets, such as convenience stores, green groceries or ethnic beauty suppliers, can be sources of friction and were unfortunately periodically targeted during anti-racist demonstrations.

Dr. Chang's research also involved differences in the situations in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. For example, in Serbia, China plays a large role due to the country's interest in Chinese investments where the community of new Chinese migrants started growing in the early 2000s. Chinese merchants who operated small consumer goods stores often complained that administrative laws were used against them in a discriminatory manner, and usually as a means to extort bribes, following the same pattern of enforcement of legislation against ethnic and racial minorities. The Russian Federation also has a long-standing presence of some East Asian communities, such as Chinese and Korean, as well as Central Asians who may be native or labour migrants to the country. Applying race broadly, in terms of power structures, anti-Asian racism manifests itself in both Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Finally, **Dr. Arjun Singh Sethi**, a civil and political rights writer and human rights lawyer from the United States,²⁰ spoke about how the COVID-19 pandemic affected manifestations of anti-Asian racism, including hate crime, and the experiences of Sikh Americans and other

¹⁹ Dr. Felix B. Chang is a Professor of Law (College of Law), an Associate Dean of Faculty, Co-Director of the Corporate Law Center and Director of the Corporate Law Concentration at the University of Cincinnati. He also works with comparative law and has written on the parallels between Roma inclusion and the US Civil Rights Movement, as well as the redistributive potential of legal rules in trusts and estates. Previously, he directed the Institute for the Global Practice of Law, which designed training programs for attorneys from around the world. Professor Chang has received the Goldman Prize for Excellence in Teaching and the University Award for Faculty Excellence. He is the author of the following books: *Roma Rights and Civil Rights: A Transatlantic Comparison* and *Chinese Migrants in Russia, Central Asia and Eastern Europe*.

²⁰ Dr. Arjun Singh Sethi is a community activist, author and law professor based in Washington, D.C. His work has appeared in numerous national outlets, including CNN, The Guardian, Politico Magazine, USA Today and The Washington Post, and he holds faculty appointments at Georgetown University Law Center and Vanderbilt University Law School. In the wake of the 2016 presidential election, Arjun travelled the country and met with a diversity of people and documented the hate they experienced in connection with the election. *American Hate: Survivors Speak Out* was named an NPR Best Book of 2018.

communities of Asian descent. In Dr. Sethi's opinion, in addition to the tragic history of racial discrimination, injustice and white supremacy in the United States, the years of the Trump administration had a particularly strong impact. He stated that the administration's actions and rhetoric, starting from restrictions in trade with China to the COVID-19 pandemic, were reflected in various manifestations of anti-Asian hate. Examples included young people reporting bullying in schools, adults reported discrimination in the workplace and numerous instances of violence targeting the Asian American community. Several incidents targeting the Sikh American community also took place recently, such as the April 2021 FedEx facility shooting in Indianapolis, leaving eight dead, half of them Sikh. Generally, Dr. Sethi pointed to 11 September 2001 as the demarcation point in the lives of Sikh Americans. Sikhs may be targeted for different reasons — e.g., because of their skin colour, beards or head wraps — and sometimes because they are perceived as Muslims. The Sikh communities, nevertheless, took the approach of collective solidarity with Muslim Americans.

When examining the role that gender, religion and migration play in anti-Asian racism in the United States, Dr. Sethi's work indicates that members of multiple-impacted communities tend to be disproportionately vulnerable to hate crime. As much as the broader Asian American community is disproportionately vulnerable to hate and hate violence in the United States currently, those who are e.g., a transgender Asian person, or a recent Sikh immigrant with an accent are even more vulnerable. Dr. Sethi also shared an example of the Atlanta shooting spree in March 2021, where eight people — including six Asian women — were killed. Assessments of this crime as motivated by misogyny and patriarchy rather than anti-Asian hate were compared with opinions that the misogyny, patriarchy and sexism Asian women experience, as misrepresented and exoticized in popular culture, are essentially rooted in anti-Asian racism.

In the ensuing discussion, participants queried how to increase the representation of minorities in general, particularly in government institutions, as well as the importance of minority women in high profile positions, such as then-Lord Mayor Hazel Chu, as role models. Questions also touched on the role of China and its potential impact on East Asian minorities elsewhere. The role of communicating allyship, expressing solidarity and exploring restorative justice approaches were emphasized when considering manifestations on anti-Asian racism displayed by other minority communities. Panellists even referred to anti-Asian hate crimes during the COVID-19 pandemic as an unfortunate wake-up call for many on the need to raise more awareness of anti-Asian racism, including within Asian communities themselves. In the United States, the "model minority" stereotype was mentioned as one of the tools directed against Asian Americans in this regard. At the same time, the diversity of Asian communities, as well as intra-Asian tensions, need to be considered in addressing anti-Asian racism. The role of survivors of hate crime and their testimonies, and the need to support survivors and affected communities were highlighted. The panellists also answered questions on addressing the underreporting of hate crime, possible incentives for the police, methods for improvement in data collection, police–civil society co-operation on data collection and obstacles raised in some contexts by the sensitivity and unavailability of race-related data.

Addressing Anti-Asian Racism and Xenophobia: Examples of Inspiring Practice

Responses to anti-Asian racism and xenophobia, including inspiring practices on how communities but also institutions addressed anti-Asian racism, were the focus of the second

session, moderated by **Ms. Tatjana Perić**, OSCE/ODIHR’s Adviser on Combating Racism and Xenophobia.²¹

In his opening intervention, **Dr. Adil Kaukenov**, Director of the Centre for Chinese Studies in Kazakhstan,²² spoke about different layers of anti-Asian racism and xenophobia in Central Asia, both by and against Central Asians. Two Central Asian states, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, have majority populations that are East Asians. These groups encounter anti-Asian racism when abroad — including hate incidents against children, women and the elderly — which was particularly true in 2020, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. In general, Central Asians frequently experience anti-Asian racism and discrimination in housing and employment as labour migrants in the Russian Federation. In response, Central Asian migrants often resort to isolation by creating their own communities and infrastructures in the Russian Federation. Dr. Kaukenov shared that, at the same time, such Central Asian groups also display racist anti-Asian attitudes against East Asians — Chinese, Japanese or Koreans. The latter East Asian communities are sometimes even blamed for anti-Asian sentiments of Europeans, which can affect Central Asians by association. Furthermore, February 2020 also saw ethnic violence against the Dungans, a Central Asian ethnic group in Kazakhstan, involving murders, property destruction and forced displacement.

According to Dr. Kaukenov, more research is needed on anti-Asian racism in the region. There is not much awareness of anti-Asian racism, and not enough activists and scholars address this issue. Inability to see a problem, however, makes it difficult to resolve. Whereas there is consciousness of anti-Asian racism against Central Asians in the Russian Federation or Eastern Europe, anti-Asian racism is considerably less visible within Central Asian communities.

Following an overview of the situation in Central Asia, **Ms. Jo-Ann Yoo**, Executive Director of the Asian American Federation,²³ spoke about responses to anti-Asian racism in the United

²¹ Ms. Tatjana Perić is an Adviser on Combating Racism and Xenophobia, including intolerance against Christians and other religions, at the OSCE/ODIHR. She has been engaged professionally and academically in the human rights field since 1994. In her extensive international experience, she advised various intergovernmental organizations, including the United Nations Development Programme, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Council of Europe and others. Tatjana was also active within civil society, having worked for award-winning CSOs such as the European Roma Rights Centre and the Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization. She studied human rights and gender studies. Since 2014, she has worked for the OSCE at the Warsaw-based ODIHR offices.

²² Dr. Adil S. Kaukenov is the General Director of the Centre for Chinese studies, a Kazakh researcher, political scientist and expert on international relations. He is the co-author of three collective monographs on the problems of China’s foreign policy, domestic policy and socio-economic development as well as the author of many articles and publications on international relations and public topics in scientific publications and the media. He worked in the leading scientific and analytical centres of Kazakhstan: the Kazakhstan Institute of Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Institute of World Economy and Politics under the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Foundation, the Agency for Investigation of Return on Investment and the Nazarbayev Centre. Over the years, Dr. Kaukenov has published more than 150 pieces in the scientific and public media. Dr. Kaukenov worked in the media and headed the information portals “Today.kz” and “Quorum.kz”.

²³ Ms. Jo-Ann Yoo is the executive director of the Asian American Federation (AAF), a membership organization that works with the nearly seventy non-profits that represent and support the pan-Asian community. Jo-Ann’s professional experiences include program management and operations, fundraising and advocacy in the fields of community development and immigrant rights. Jo-Ann currently serves on the New York City’s Racial Justice Commission for New York City’s Charter revision, and on Governor Andrew Cuomo’s Racial Equity Task Force for Vaccine Distribution, as well as on the boards of Nonprofit New York and the Advocacy Institute. Jo-Ann was named to City and State NY’s 2021 Power 100, acknowledging the impact of New York’s nonprofits and

States. Education, according to Ms. Yoo, is key, along with conscious efforts to bring people together to understand each other's histories and to dispel stereotypes that hinder people from really seeing each other. Ms. Yoo emphasized that hate crimes against Asian Americans are not a new phenomenon. Throughout US history, Asian American women were stereotyped, considered immoral and not allowed to immigrate. Years later, Chinese men were not allowed to enter the country, as only one of the constant laws and policies implemented to exclude Asian Americans. To this day, Asian Americans are considered non-Americans who do not belong, in parallel to the "model minority" myth. Ms. Yoo stated that former President Trump's references to the "China virus" during the COVID-19 pandemic additionally exacerbated the situation. Still, in response to the recently heightened violence, Asian American communities are raising their voices, demanding action and support. According to Ms. Yoo, US leaders need to understand what Asian American communities have endured. Very little Asian American history is taught in schools, and rich cultures and histories of Asian communities are rarely shared. Ms. Yoo considered that the current situation creates an opportunity for honest conversations about racism.

In the course of 2020, when anti-Asian hate crime started appearing in press headlines, Asian American civil society organizations displayed an impressive self-organization and coalition building in reporting anti-Asian hate crime. Ms. Yoo spoke about the work of her organization, the Asian American Federation, in New York City. Early in the pandemic, their partners in the small businesses programme complained of imminent closure due to the lack of customers and restaurants experienced similar hardships. Asian American communities faced economic devastation in this period, with unprecedented unemployment. At the same time, anti-Asian racism particularly affected individuals who had to go to work and interact with others to support their families. Hate crime, including violent incidents, verbal harassment or spitting, took place. The situation clearly required a mechanism to track and report such incidents, and to engage with elected officials. In New York alone, around seventeen thousand hate incidents were reported, and this was just from Asian American communities with sufficient language skills to report these incidents. According to Ms. Yoo, many Asian American communities are currently affected by anxiety, with indication that this mental health concern may continue in light of anti-China institutional positions.

Dr. Yeow Poon joined this conversation as well, offering valuable examples of addressing anti-Asian racism from civil society organizations in the United Kingdom. He highlighted the work of CARG, End the Virus of Racism, BESEA.n and Stop Asian Hate UK, which were all grass-roots groups established during 2020. Dr. Poon is a member of CARG, a volunteer group that focuses on the way media report and use images of Asian countries and communities, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Community members wrote letters lodging complaints to main media sources, often receiving apologies and having images replaced in response to requests for removal. To address the underreporting of anti-Asian hate crime, as the communities largely do not trust the police or the prosecution, CARG provides a bridge with the Crown Prosecution Service. To address issues where young Chinese people were subjected to hate crimes that were recorded as merely a crime, such as assault, CARG ran a campaign with police urging them to record such cases as hate crimes, creating change.

their leaders on the city. Jo-Ann is particularly proud of her immigrant heritage and loves to hear others' immigration stories.

The Chinese Welfare Trust was another example Dr. Poon provided of an organization that was already operational for several years yet was now also active in addressing racism. The Trust obtained funding to run a capacity building project for Chinese and other South East Asian associations and community groups on recognizing and reporting hate crime, and providing support for the victims from 2020 to 2025. The project has helped establish a network that is now active in providing recommendations on how to move forward.

Lastly, **Dr. Elżbieta Kuzborska-Pacha**, Senior Legal Adviser with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM),²⁴ addressed responses to anti-Asian racism from the conflict prevention angle. From the HCNM perspective, anti-Asian racism and xenophobia and other forms of discrimination are clear warning signs of the need to improve support and integration processes in our societies. Effective policy approaches that address racism and xenophobia should be designed to fit the specific circumstances of the given society. Dr. Kuzborska-Pacha introduced the participants to the HCNM's recommendations and guidelines on national minorities that draw authority from the experience of their office in implementing their conflict prevention mandate, including specific elements that could help address racism and discrimination.²⁵ The HCNM considers education a powerful instrument in promoting positive narratives and countering stereotypes, hatred and ignorance by teaching young people about cultural diversity, societal pluralism to foster tolerance and non-discrimination. Youth are at the forefront of the HCNM's long-term conflict prevention efforts. The HCNM also encourages participating States to include the histories and cultures of minorities in the general compulsory curriculum as it strengthens understanding, tolerance and mutual acceptance within the society. Additionally, last year, the HCNM published a set of recommendations on streamlining diversity during the COVID-19 pandemic, which encourages the OSCE participating States to tackle and prevent discrimination of minorities.

When it comes to the actors addressing anti-Asian racism, a holistic approach is needed involving authorities, civil society organizations, grass-roots communities and academia. To illustrate this approach, Dr. Kuzborska-Pacha presented a practice from Canada, showing the Government's response to anti-Asian racism. In May 2021, during Asian Heritage Month, the Government published information on how to address anti-Asian racism, including a list of recommendations such as learning about Pan-Asian diversity, challenging stereotypes, showing solidarity with the Asian community in Canada, being an ally, actively support the victims of anti-Asian racism, etc. Dr. Kuzborska-Pacha emphasized the recognition by Canadian authorities that anti-Asian racism is a daily reality for many Asian communities in Canada. She also provided good practices from the Elementary School Teachers Federation in Ontario, which collaborated with a team of educators of Asian descent and developed training materials on "Addressing Anti-Asian Racism Research for Educators" and a webinar series on addressing anti-Asian racism in schools and communities. Dr. Kuzborska-Pacha concluded by saying that racism is unacceptable in any form and has no place in the OSCE region, noting a collective responsibility to step up, be allies and stand together against racism and xenophobia, including anti-Asian racism.

²⁴ Dr. Elżbieta Kuzborska-Pacha is the Senior Legal Adviser to the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. Among other responsibilities, she leads the thematic work on non-discrimination and tolerance as well as on the socio-economic participation of national minorities. Dr. Kuzborska is also a human rights lecturer and author, and a former OHCHR Senior Minorities Fellow. In her books and articles she looks closely at the contemporary challenges of the protection of minority rights. Since 2006 Dr. Kuzborska has spoken at more than twenty conferences and participated in many more.

²⁵ See: <<https://www.osce.org/hcnm/thematic-recommendations-and-guidelines>>.

In the discussion that followed, participants spoke of actions needed to amplify the voices of women activists in addressing anti-Asian racism, such as providing speaking opportunities. Recent anecdotal evidence was presented of young women of Asian descent actively engaging and taking leadership roles in civil society while the danger to activists of burnout and exhaustion, and their need for support, were highlighted. Furthermore, details on the Dungan situation in Kazakhstan were provided by civil society activists and academics. Participants also spoke on the need for actual application of existing OSCE recommendations and guidelines on addressing intolerance against minority groups.

Conclusion

The event closed with main conclusions, summarized by **Ms. Christie J. Edwards**. Considering the current key concerns in the OSCE region on contemporary manifestations of anti-Asian racism and xenophobia, the impact of hate crimes and intolerant discourse on the security concerns of Asians and people of Asian descent needs was discussed. The COVID-19 pandemic additionally fuelled anti-Asian racism and xenophobia. In describing the historical and present situations of various Asian and Asian-descent communities across North America, Europe and Central Asia, the event's panellists also investigated the roles that gender, religion and migration play in anti-Asian racism and xenophobia.

Various responses to this type of racism were outlined, including some inspiring practices and useful guidance. Valuable guidance was shared on what participating States, as well as civil society organizations and intergovernmental organizations, have done — or could do — to effectively address the concerns around anti-Asian racism. There is a need to improve intersectoral co-operation to address anti-Asian racism and xenophobia more effectively as the resolution of this complex phenomenon requires multiple perspectives and co-ordinated efforts involving all stakeholders. Moreover, the important role of civil society organizations and human rights defenders, including women, in these processes needs to be emphasized.

Finally, Ms. Edwards informed the participants that ODIHR publishes hate crime data every year on 16 November.²⁶ This data provides an overview of hate crimes reported by governments and hate incidents reported by civil society organizations, international organizations and the Holy See across the OSCE's 57 participating States. Information submitted to the ODIHR by civil society is essential, as it complements official data and highlights the potential under-recording of hate crimes by states. Ms. Edwards invited civil society groups to join this effort²⁷ and report hate incidents that took place in 2020 to the ODIHR, including anti-Asian racist and xenophobic hate incidents.

²⁶ See: <<https://hatecrime.osce.org/hate-crime-data>>.

²⁷ See: <<https://hatecrime.osce.org/civilsociety>>.

ANNEX: AGENDA

Addressing Anti-Asian Racism and Xenophobia: Challenges and Opportunities

8 June 2021

14:00–14:15 Opening Statements

Ms. Katarzyna Gardapkhadze, First Deputy Director, OSCE/ODIHR

Dr. Regina Polak, Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, also focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions

14:15–15:30 Anti-Asian Racism and Xenophobia: An Overview of the Situation in the OSCE Region

Moderator: Ms. Christie J. Edwards, JD, LLM, Deputy Head, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, OSCE/ODIHR

Lord Mayor of Dublin Hazel Chu, Ireland

Dr. Arjun Singh Sethi, civil and political rights writer and human rights lawyer, United States

Mr. Suresh Grover, Co-Director, The Monitoring Group, United Kingdom

Dr. Felix B. Chang, Professor of Law, College of Law, University of Cincinnati, United States

15:30–15:35 Break

15:35–17:05 Addressing Anti-Asian Racism and Xenophobia: Examples of Inspiring Practice

Moderator: Ms. Tatjana Perić, Adviser on Combating Racism and Xenophobia, OSCE/ODIHR

Mr. Adil Kaukenov, Director, Center for Chinese Studies “China Center”, Kazakhstan

Ms. Jo-Ann Yoo, Executive Director, Asian American Federation, United States

Dr. Yeow Poon, Volunteer Core Team, COVID-19 Anti-Racism Group (CARG), United Kingdom

Dr. Elżbieta Kuzborska-Pacha, Senior Legal Adviser, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

17:05–17:15 Concluding Statement

Ms. Christie J. Edwards, JD, LLM, Deputy Head, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, OSCE/ODIHR