



Helsinki+50
People's Initiative

Helsinki+50

People's Initiative - actions
and official event July 30 - 1
August, Helsinki 2025

Report part I: preparations and events



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Nordic Peace Alliance (NPA) Helsinki+50 working group, from the top left Palle Bendsen, Forbyd Atomvåpen - ICAN Denmark, Tord Björk, Artister för fred, Mika Böök, webmaster, Einar Braathen, Fredslaget. Also Teemu Matinpuro, Suomen Rauhanpuolustajat was a member.



This report has been compiled by Tord Björk on behalf of the NPA Helsinki+50 working group.

Tord Björk, is a member of the International Peace Bureau Council and World Social Forum International Council. Coordinator of the Nordic Peace Alliance Helsinki+50 working group cofounder of Network Peace and Climate Justice and coordinator of Friends of the Earth Sweden EU committee.

The opinions in this report are not necessarily the same as NPA positions or that of cooperation partners.

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The Helsinki+50 People's Initiative

The world again needs cooperation, détente, and a commitment for human rights which since 1975 and the Helsinki Accords has been connected to what is called the Helsinki spirit. The states have failed to commit themselves for this even when humanity is facing a severe global poly-crisis. It is now necessary that peoples movements and the civil society gives the spirit of Helsinki new life. See background materials.

Behind this initiative is the Nordic Peace Alliance (NPA) together with International Peace Bureau, World Beyond War, and World Assembly of Struggles and Resistances of World Social Forum and other cooperation partners.

The initiative has three parts: an online declaration process, activities in Helsinki July 30 – August 2 and follow up actions.

The Helsinki+50 People's Declaration

The Declaration process together with all interested people's movements and civil society organizations started on June 17 2025 with an online conference. Check the declaration!

Activities in Helsinki July 30 – August 1

The Helsinki+50 People's Initiative carried out a number of activities in Helsinki in the end of July and beginning of August 2025.

Follow up actions

CONTACT: info@helsinkiplus50.org
(The text above to be updated)

Below: The participants at the Nordic Peace Alliance conference 2024 where it all started





The Helsinki+50 workshop

A workshop was held at the 2nd NPA conference on Helsinki+50.

We concluded by the following:

- There is an interest in Finland and places nearby for some kind of event or Helsinki 2.0 process
- One idea has been to have a gathering about movement internationalism
- Take contact with IPB and other actors planning activities

The other core cooperation partners were:

IPB - <https://ipb.org>

WBW - <https://worldbeyondwar.org/>

World Social Assembly of Struggles and Resistances of World Social Forum.
<https://www.facebook.com/WSAofStrugglesandResistanceWSF>

Nordic Peace Alliance

Nordic Peace Alliance (NPA) is a network of peace organizations in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. The decisions are made in consensus. The member organizations meet yearly to decide on content and organizational matters in connection to a conference open to all interested. A coordination committee with members elected by the organizations in each country has the responsibility between the annual general assemblies.

The overall purpose is to increase the contact and cooperation between Nordic peace organizations and thereby develop and promote a Nordic non-military sustainable peace and security policy. The alliance formulates joint policy statements and resolutions addressed to relevant decision makers as the Nordic Council, organize meetings and seminars, online as well as physical. Member organizations are free to suggest the establishment of working groups and committees, as well as joint initiatives, conferences, webinars, policy statements and resolutions to be discussed and adopted at member organization meetings.

<https://nordicpeacealliance.org/>

*To the right from the top:
 The Nordic meeting in Oslo 2021 where the idea to start Nordic Peace Alliance was presented, the first NPA conference in Helsingør in Denmark 2023 when the network was founded, the second NPA conference in Mariehamn in Finland 2024 and the third in Höör in Sweden 2025.*





The preparation

Preparations in the autumn in 2024 by e-mail. Tord Björk becomes the coordinator of the NPA Helsinki+50 working group. Meeting in person place a special role when such broad new initiatives are taken. There were no funds so travels were limited.

Above: Tord Björk to the left meets Natalia Zelewska from United for intercultural Action and Leo Gabriel from World Social Assembly of Struggles and Resistances and a member of World Social Forum International Council in October 2024.



On the same interrailtour Tord Björk met the IPB director Sean Conner to the right and the former IPB director Reiner Braun in Berlin.



From the left: Michelle Clemente, Emily Molinari, Sean Connor and Tord Björk at the IPB office in Berlin.



Above: Heikki Patomäki at a debate on Peace policy April 14 in Helsinki. He discussed Helsinki+50 with Tord Björk, Bradley Reynolds, Historians without Borders in Finland, and Anu Juvonen, Executive Director of Demo Finland, Civil Society Special Representative for the OSCE Presidency. This became the only occasion when actors from the different initiatives and politicians met in a discussion during the whole process.



Visiting the old Jewish ghetto during the Peace and Climate Justice conference in Vilnius April 24-27 converging issues preparing for Helsinki+50

Below: meeting the directors of IPB and WBW - Sean Connor and David Swanson in Brussels during the International Forum for Peace June 24-25.



The invitation to the Forum included — Renew the principles of the Helsinki Accords on the occasion of their 50th anniversary



.In the discussions Hans He-drich, Olga Karatch and Tord Björk addressed Helsinki+50



To the left: Public Action for Peace Organized by the Belgian platform Stop Militarisation including a "Die-in" action with giant PACE flag, alarm siren, placards with slogans, music, peace songs

Olga Karatch resting at the Quaker's House in Brussels where the Quaker's EU Office Migration Policy was a useful human rights tool



Timeline Helsinki+50 relevant activities June - August 1

Launching the Helsinki+50 People's Initiative:

June, A website and a draft declaration was published.

21-22 June
No to Nato summit and manifestation, the Hague, the Netherlands
<https://thehaguepeace.org/tegentopcoalitie/english/>

23-24 June
Brussels, Belgium: Peace conference in partnership

Ingeborg Breines
Peace and climate justice: Joyle Thomas

Activities in Helsinki

30 June



Morning. Bike tour at 9 am to OSCE embassies handing over the Helsinki +50 People's declaration



Afternoon at 12 am Helsinki+50 seminar organized by the Finnish Peace Committee with Noora Kotilainen, professor Heikki Patomäki, and professor Markku Kangaspuro



Philosophical von Wright and Wittgenstein



17 June, First online conference starting the NPA initiated Helsinki+50 People's declaration process by and especially addressing the need for putting the Helsinki+50 in a global context with special emphasis on migrants and climate concerns and other current issues.

Webinar in three sessions on the Global importance of Helsinki+50 and the declaration. In the first Asia session voices from Finland, South Korea, Mongolia, Nepal, India, and Armenia participated. In the second on Europe and Africa voices from Finland, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Romania, Hungary, Austria, Italy, Germany, France, and Senegal took part. In the third Latin and North America session voices from Mexico, The US, Canada and Austria participated.

with IPB, WBW and other European peace and anti-war organizations including Helsinki +50 on the agenda.
<https://internationalforum-forpeace.org/>

4-6 July. Peace and Climate Justice summer camp, Lindsberg, Sweden with Helsinki+50 on the agenda

July 7. The last day for sending comments on the draft Helsinki+50 People's Declaration

July. Collection of organizational and individual signatures started online

25-27 July
3rd Nordic Peace Alliance Conference, Höör, Backagården, Sweden
Key note speakers: Helsinki+50 Reiner Braun, IPB Toxic masculinity, Drude Dahlerup, Markus Holdo Arctic and Nordic US bases,

seminar at 4 pm. Marianne Laxén, Claus Montonen and Mikael Bööck commenting on the pamphlet on peace by G.H. von Wright



Evening Gathering at the Peace station

31 July



Helsinki+50 Conference: Respecting the Legacy, Preparing for the Future
Official conference including civil society



side events:
<https://um.fi/osce25fi/helsinki-50>

1 August

OSCE 50th Birthday picnic at Finlandia Hall
at 11 am



*Above:
Hans Hedrich
honouring
OSCE at
the birthday
picnic*



Helsinki+50 People's Conference at 1pm
Introductions:

Einar Braathen, Nordic Peace Alliance
Hans Hedrich, World Beyond War
Olga Karach: Our House and the Vilnius conference for Peace and Climate Justice
Philip Polak: United for Intercultural Action
Leo Gabriel: World Social Assembly, member of World Social Forum International Council
Karmapriya Muschött, chair Friends of the Earth Sweden
Ulla Klötzer and Vera Zalka, Global Women United Against NATO
Keynote speech: Sean Conner, IPB director

Birthday cake for the participants

Group discussions on:
Security in Europe
Environment and Economy
Human rights

Evening Gathering at the Peace station





Helsinki+50

People's Declaration

Speakers on the Global Importance of Helsinki+50 for common security and Human Rights June 17

Asia

Language: English only

Introduction.



Markku Kangaspuro
professor, Helsinki University, Finland

Expertise: Political history, especially the former Soviet Union and new Russia; political development of Russia; identities and nationalism; modernization and development problems.

Research Director, Russian and Eurasian Studies Aleksanteri Institute, Helsinki, Finland

Publications: <https://researchportal.helsinki.fi/sv/persons/markku-kangaspuro>

Speakers:



Enkhsaikhan Jargalsaikhan,
Blue Banner, Mongolia

Enkhsaikhan Jargalsaikhan was involved with CSCE and OSCE and negotiated with the US, Russia and other participating states. As a result a consensus was formed to accept Mongolia as an Asian partner in OSCE becoming its 57th member. As representing a partner for cooperation and a participating state he attended many meetings. A meeting was organized in Ulaanbaatar on the possibility of the Asian states to learn from the CSCE and OSCE starting with confidence meetings mindful of the situation in Asia. Enkhsaikhan Jargalsaikhan believes that we can learn from the half century Helsinki process.



Anuradha Chenoy,
India

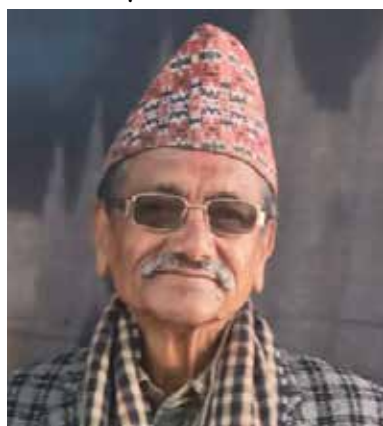
Anuradha Chenoy is Adjunct Professor at the Jindal School of International Affairs, Jindal Global University (Haryana, India). She retired as professor and dean of the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi after many years as an engaged scholar. She completed her studies with scholarships from the Indian Council for Social Science Research and Fulbright Fellowship, University of Columbia, New York. (1983-1985) She is actively engaged with the Asia Europe People's Forum and the International Peace Bureau.

Anuradha has been an honorary consultant to many institutions including the International Committee for the Red Cross; UN Women, South Asia Expert Group of Peace and Se-

curity, 2012-2014; Action Aid International (India) 2009-2010. Anuradha has written several books including: Maoist and Other Armed Conflicts, (Co-authored), Penguin, New Delhi: 2010; Human Security: Concept and Implications, (Co-authored), Routledge, United Kingdom: 2006; Militarism and Women in South Asia, Kali Books, New Delhi: 2002; Re-emerging Russia, Institutions, Structures, Processes, (co-authored) Palgrave, New Delhi: 2017; The BRICS in International Development, Palgrave Macmillan, (Co-authored, edited): 2016.

Areas of expertise
International Relations,
Non-traditional and alternative security; Gender, Militarisation and International Relations.

Publications: <https://www.tni.org/en/profile/anuradha-chenoy>



Keshab Khadka,
All Nepal Peasants' Federation/Via Campesina, Nepal

Has held several position in organizations as All Nepal

Peasants' Federation (AN-PFa), a member of La Via Campesina as head of the research department, World Social Forum 2024 in Kathmandu, Nepal Agriculture Food Security Project, The South-South Cooperation Forum, and National Alliance for Tax and Fiscal Justice Network, Nepal.



Arthur Khachikian,
Armenia

Dr. Arthur Khachikian, an International Relations expert from Stanford University His dissertation and research focused on great power politics and intervention in the international system as well as international history. He currently teaches at the Russian Armenian University in Yerevan.

Recent interview on Neutrality Studies youtube channel: Washiongton in detsorying USDA to rule the world, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rU5LCKGUtyw>

Francis Daehoon Lee,
South Korea
Francis Daehoon Lee has been professor for peace studies at SungKongHoe



University, Ritsumeikan University, and the International University of Japan. He served as legal advisor to the Special Rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Sub-commission in 2005 and worked with the Center for Peace Museum in Korea. He is the former executive director of ARENA (Asian Regional Exchange for New Alternatives, Asia-wide) and the director of the Center for Peace and Disarmament, Korea. He has coordinated CENA (the Civil Society Education Network in Asia), a collaborating network of universities committed to peace, human rights, and democracy studies. Francis has been actively involved in facilitating UNESCO and APCEIU teacher training workshops since 2006. In 2012, he joined the Peace Education Project MOMO (PeaceMOMO) to provide school teachers and peace activists in Korea with peace education training that is based on new, learner-oriented pedagogical principles. He is also the director of the Trans-Education for Peace Institute (TEPI).

Europe&Africa
language English and
French/Francais

Introduction:



Olga Karach,
Belarus, Nash Dom/Our
House

Olga Karach is an activist for peace and human rights. She is the leader of the organization Our House, which campaigns for disarmament and human rights in Belarus. This work has led to her being labeled a terrorist by the Belarusian state and her organization being seen as extremist. She therefore now lives in Lithuania.

Her organization works primarily to change conditions in Belarus, but also works for Belarusian and Russian refugees who have fled oppression in their home countries to Lithuania. These were initially received as regime critics worthy of support, but have over time faced discrimination. The

fact that Our Home has also criticized this discrimination has made Lithuanian authorities suspicious.

Olga Karach writes that she has devoted almost 20 years to peace-building efforts:
- As a feminist, educator and human rights defender, I lead the human rights organization Our Home, which is currently active in exile in Lithuania. Like many Belarusians, I have been deeply affected by the war in Ukraine. The shock of this conflict has forced me, like others, to confront painful truths and illusions about our world, and the lessons we must learn are crucial to charting a path to peace. Before the war, I, like many others, held onto certain comforting illusions about human nature, conflict resolution, and the role of war in our societies. The outbreak of hostilities between Russia and Ukraine shattered these notions and revealed unpleasant and unexpected truths.

Link to the organization Our House, <https://news.house/>
Olga Karach, Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Volha_Karach



Heikki Patomäki,
Professor at Helsinki University, Finland

Heikki Patomäki studied political science at the University of Turku, where he received his PhD in 1993. After working in several university positions including as a Professor of World Politics and Economics at Nottingham Trent University in the UK from 2001 to 2003, Patomäki has been a professor at the University of Helsinki since 2003 and is today professor of World Politics. From 2006 to 2007, he was also Research Director at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies and from 2007 to 2010, he was a professor at RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia. Patomäki has been a member of the Finnish Academy of Sciences since 2018 and a founding member of the Helsinki Centre for Global Political Economy. Patomäki's research interests include philosophy and methodology of social sciences, peace studies, futures studies, economic theory, global political economy, and global political theory. He is a founding member of the Network Institute for Global Democratization and has been active in the international ATTAC movement from its beginnings, partly as chair of ATTAC Finland.

His personal website: <https://patomaki.fi/en/>

Speakers:

Ardo Sow,
Senegal, World Social Forum
2026

Ardo Sow (Elhadji Samba Sow), is a dedicated advocate for human rights and social justice with a strong focus



on land rights, water access, and the struggle against resource appropriation in West Africa. A founding member of the Global Convergence of Struggles for Land, Water, and Seeds (CGLT AO in French) in West Africa, Elhadji contributes actively to this influential platform, which will host the upcoming World Social Forum in Cotonou, Benin in 2026. In this role, Elhadji collaborates with diverse stakeholders to mobilize support for resource equity and to advance sustainable development strategies across the region. Elhadji holds a Master's in Territorial Development from Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar, Senegal. Through his 10 years' work with Enda Pronat and Now with the Association of the maoyrs of Sénégal, he is championing community rights, sustainable resource governance, and policy advocacy across Senegal and the ECOWAS region. Known for his strategic insight and effective communication skills, Elhadji engages in regional dialogues and international forums to foster policies that promote social equity and resilience. Representing CGLTE, Elhadji joins the panel to share experiences and to discuss the

preparations for the upcoming World Social Forum in Africa, following the successful event in Kathmandu last February. His participation highlights a commitment to building cross-sectoral partnerships and mobilizing collective action to secure equitable access to land, water, and resources for communities across West Africa.”



Hans Hedrich,
World Beyond War Romania

Hans Hedrich (53) is a political scientist, environmentalist and civil rights activist from Transylvania, Romania. He is also a member of the Romanian branch of World Beyond War. With his regional German-Hungarian family background, he sees politics and society from a typical minority perspective: constructive, but critical, self-reflective and aware that a good life and peaceful coexistence require mutual trust. Historically, minorities are often the first and hardest hit by hegemonic aspirations and conflicts. At the same time, all peoples, religions and cultures in the world are actually minorities among minorities – which means that we are all dependent on each other in our pursuit of a good life and peaceful coex-

istence across borders. Read more from Hedrich here: <https://neutralitystudies.com/2024/03/a-peace-congress-for-the-healing-of-the-old-continent/>



Yurii Sheliashenko,
Ukrainian Pacifist Movement.

Yurii is the Executive Secretary of the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement, board member at the European Bureau for Conscientious Objection, and at the World Beyond War. Furthermore, he was lecturer and research associate at the Faculty of Law, KROK University in Kyiv, Ukraine, where he defended his PhD dissertation in law in December 2021. He also obtained a master's degree in law in 2016 as well as a master's degree in Mediation and Conflict Management in 2021. Yurii authored tens of scholarly articles, taught courses in constitutional and human rights, comparative and international law, legal theory and history. Also, he is a public intellectual, blogger, and human rights defender. He is a Quaker and Member of the Council, International Peace Bureau. War and Nonviolent Intervention Tracking Russia-Ukraine conflict escalation and finding possible

ways to peace
<https://wissenschaft-und-frieden.de/blog/sheliazhenko-war-non-violent-intervention/>
 Future peace in Ukraine depends on civil society
<https://peacenews.info/author/yurii-sheliazhenko>



Neringa Tumenaite
 Lithuania, United for intercultural action

Neringa Tumėnaitė specialises in international cooperation within the field of education and youth. Her current research examines whether EU-funded youth initiatives advance development and climate justice, with a particular focus on the role of participatory governance in shaping these efforts.

Her work also draws inspiration from ancient traditions from her own region, the Baltics (in Eastern Europe), highlighting how these epistemologies could contribute to decolonial environmental action and thinking. e.

In addition, Neringa is a member of the Pool of European Youth Researchers and has co-led research on youth-led climate litigation

for the EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership. She is also Advocacy Advisor for the human rights network, UNITED for Intercultural Action, and Climate Action Advisor for the Mediterranean Youth Foundation. Neringa is also the founder of the community interest company, Humanity Consulting CIC.

United for intercultural action: <https://unitedfia.org/>



Vera Zalka,
 Hungarian Social Forum

Vera Zalka is active in the Hungarian and Central and Eastern European social forum movement and one of the organizers of Left Island festivals in Budapest. She is also active in World Social Assembly of WSF and GWU-AN – Global Women United against NATO: <https://womenagainstnato.org/>



Patricia Pol,
 Attac, France

Patricia Pol is active in the struggle to protect water against corporate capture in France and solidarity with struggles world wide. She is a member of Attac France international mobilization group and in the organizing of World Social Forum in 2024 and 2026.
<https://france.attac.org/>



Sergio Bassoli,
 CGIL, Italy

Sergio Bassoli is a veteran in the struggle for peace and solidarity in the Italian trade union CGIL engaged in cooperation with other movements via World Social Forum and other fora.



Peter Degischer,
 Abfang, Austria

Neutrality activist and member of AbFaNG-Aktionsbündnis für Frieden, Aktive Neutralität und Gewaltfreiheit. One of the organizers

of the International Summit for Peace in Ukraine 2023
– Peace by peaceful means
(peacevienna.org)
<http://abfang.org/>



Thomas Wallgren,
professor Helsinki University, Finland

Thomas Wallgren is a Swedish-speaking Finnish philosopher, activist and politician. He studied philosophy at the University of Helsinki where he is serving as professor of philosophy since 2019.

He was active in the Koijärvi environmental Movement and the building of the Finnish solidarity movement in the 1980s. He opposed Finnish membership of the European Union and has written about his doubts about the validity of the EU as a postwar "project of peace", arguing furthermore that the EU today suffers from a "democracy deficit". Wallgren came to public attention through his "environmental stunts", which included buying shares in large Finnish corporations, such as Nokia, only for the purpose of gaining the right to speak at their shareholders' conferences, where he would then raise the issue of the company's lack of environmentalism.

He has been elected several times to the Helsinki City Council as a Social Democrat (SDP), representing its centrist wing. He has been active in the opposition against NATO membership and for asylum rights and is a member of the Gandhian network Vasudhaiva Ktum-bakam and World Social Forums. He is a board member of Corporate Europe Observatory and Friends of the Earth Finland.

His New Year message for 2025: Many now believe, as darkness spreads, that the power of darkness is the greatest. But it may actually be that humanity is only at the beginning of a bright history. It may be that man, as an individual and in his communities, ultimately perhaps in his planetary community, has a capacity to learn and to grow, and it may be that non-violence is the strongest force in the universe. We now live and breathe, together with many, many others, for peace and solidarity.

Americas

Languages English and Spanish/español

Introduction



Leo Gabriel
World Social Assembly of WSF

journalist, peace activist, International Council of World Social Forum: with long term commitment to solidarity struggles in Latin America. Has been active in peace building initiative in this region as well as Syria, Ukraine and Palestine



David Swanson,
World Beyond War, US

David Swanson is an American anti-war activist, blogger and author. He currently resides in Virginia and is the Executive Director of World Beyond War.

As an author, David Swanson has written several books; Daybreak: Undoing the Imperial Presidency and Forming a More Perfect Union[6] (2009), War Is a Lie (2010), When the World Outlawed War (2011) and War No More: The Case for Abolition (2013). Swanson is the host of the radio show Talk Nation Radio. Swanson currently blogs through various political sites, including his own co-founded site, War IsA-Crime.Org and Democrats.com, where he serves as the Washington Director. In 2018, the US Peace Memorial Foundation awarded

ded The US Peace Prize to Swanson "[w]hose inspiring antiwar leadership, writings, strategies, and organizations help to create a culture of peace.



Miguel Alvarez,
SERAPAZ, Mexico

He co-founded Services and Consulting for Peace (Serapaz), became its first director (1996 to 2006), and has served as president of the organization since 2008. Alvarez received the National Human Rights Prize. 1971 The process of ecclesial base communities began in 1970. That year, he began a bachelor's degree in technical information sciences at the Universidad Iberoamericana and graduated in 1976. He later completed master's degrees in sociology, political science, and education at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). He has been a promoter, mediator, and advisor to civil, social, academic, and ecclesial movements, organizations, and networks, both in Mexico and Latin America, on issues related to peace, conflict resolution, justice, human and indigenous rights, and

democracy. He participated in the dialogues between the federal government and the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, as well as in the talks between the government and the families of the disappeared Ayotzinapa student teachers. He served as secretary to the late Bishop Emeritus of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Samuel Ruiz García, and as executive secretary of the National Intermediation Commission (CONAI) from 1994 to 1998. In the 1970s and 1980s, he worked with indigenous communities. In the 1990s, he served as executive secretary of the Group of Bishop Friends, coordinated by José Laguno, Bishop of Tarahumara.



Steven Staples,
Canada, vice president IPB

Steven Staples is IPB Vice President and former Board member. He is currently the National Director of Policy and Advocacy of the Canadian Health Coalition, an accomplished policy and research strategist, published author, and award-winning peace and social justice advocate with over 25 years of experience in community organizations and the labour movement. As a communications and policy advocate, he has worked with a wide range

of leaders including Nobel Laureate Jody Williams, former U.S. Senator Tom Hayden, Senator Roméo Dallaire, Council of Canadians Chairperson Maude Barlow, Unifor President Jerry Dias, and Ontario Federation of Labour President Sid Ryan. Steven Staples is the owner of Public Response, a digital agency that services non-profit organizations and trade unions in the fields of online engagement and government relations. He is the founder of the Rideau Institute, a non-profit, independent research, advocacy and consulting group based in Ottawa. It specializes in defence and foreign affairs policy. Its public engagement and advocacy arm is Ceasefire.ca. He is also serving his third consecutive term on the Members' Council of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. In 2018, he was elected to the Board of Directors of the Council of Canadians, the country's largest social justice organization.

Aida Garcia Naranjo, Migration Forum, Peru and Joseph Gerson, Campaign for Peace, Disarmament and Common Security, US could not participate as planned.

The Helsinki+50 People's Declaration on common security and human rights

Preamble

Inspired by the Helsinki Final Act signed on the 1 st of August 1975, we, civil society organizations and individuals from Europe and beyond, call for the reinvention and revitalization of cooperation for common security and human rights in Europe. The conference in Helsinki paved the way for several positive achievements, serving as the closest thing to a peace agreement for post-World War II Europe during the continued Cold War period. The allied victory in WWII led to the formation of the UN and the adoption of indivisible human rights and the UN Charter which is the basis of international law. The Helsinki Final Act built on these achievements and promoted economic, social, cultural, environmental, scientific, and humanitarian cooperation. Thus, the Helsinki Final Act created the necessary environment for détente, arms reduction, and a dynamic peace and human rights movement of global importance.

Today the world and Europe once more need a revival of the Helsinki spirit. We, civil society organisations and people's movements, commit ourselves to build upon the whole Helsinki Final Act to address the issues of today. The need for renewed and expanded cooperation on the issues addressed in 1975 as well as the issues of the modern age is even more necessary today and must include the questions of migration, climate and women's rights.

We call for renewed efforts for the revitalization and expansion of a European security and peace architecture and a commitment to indivisible human rights without double standards. We are likewise committed to the creation of a Eurasian architecture for peace, cooperation, and security that is based on the Helsinki principles and is capable of addressing regional and global conflicts in the world in accordance with international law.

We acknowledge that there was an overwhelming dominance of male diplomats, state leaders and journalists when the Helsinki Final Act was signed. In a renewed Helsinki spirit, women must have a central role in the development of a modern security and peace architecture that acknowledges the necessity of gender representation in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction.

We call especially upon democratic membership organizations open to anyone sharing their goals to take up the torch from 1975 and use it once more in the interest of humanity and all life on this planet.

We, the undersigned, inspired by the principles of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act and the UN charter,

- Reaffirming our commitment to peaceful coexistence, common security, disarmament for social well-being and environmental protection, and respect for human rights,
- Reasserting our commitment to the inviolability of State borders as guaranteed by international law and obligation to refrain from the use of force or the threat thereof in international relations.
- Guided by the belief in the equal value of all human beings and the indivisibility of their rights,
- Recognizing the inherent dignity of every person and the urgent need to uphold shared commitments in both word and deed, and
- Committed to international cooperation that is free from double standards and driven not by the short term interests of states or corporations but by a common duty to humanity and future generations,

Declare the following:

1. We see the right to equal sovereignty for all states including both security, environmental, economic, cultural and other aspects in accordance with international law as central for a renewed Helsinki spirit as long as it does not cause harm to others.
2. We support the development of frameworks for common security, in which the security of one is understood to be inseparable from the security of all.
3. We reaffirm that all human rights—civil, political, economic, social, and cultural—are interdependent and often also indivisible, while recognizing their political nature and need for pluralism and democratic processes in determining them.
4. We especially emphasize the social rights of workers and family farmers, indigenous peoples and migrants as a fundamental pillar of common security.

5. We emphasize the right to conscientious objection to military service as a fundamental human right and call for it to be enshrined in international human rights' frameworks.

6. We call for proactive and early conflict prevention and resolution efforts, emphasizing the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women at all levels, including through the effective use of OSCE mechanisms and gender-responsive peace-building tools.

7. We recognise the rights and protection of refugees and asylum seekers; proposing neutral humanitarian corridors for divided families and guarantees of the right of keeping family ties, visa arrangements and safe travels.

8. We recognise the right to truth-seeking and the importance of memory transmission and intergenerational and international healing with our common history as humanity as cornerstone.

9. While we fully and in good faith commit to the Helsinki Final Act 'Principle vii' on human rights we reject the instrumentalization or selective invocation of human rights as justification for interference driven by strategic, geopolitical, or economic interests. Advocacy for human dignity must remain free from co-optation by national or corporate agendas.

10. We recognize the right and the responsibility of civil society and social movements to raise concerns across borders in defense of human rights.

11. We affirm that authentic internal democracy in a country cannot be separated from the freedom of speech and freedom of association, nor from recognizing the global disparities in military power, control of natural resources, economic influence, and technological control that shape national and international policy.

12. We affirm the principle of non-intervention from one or more states in the internal affairs of other states.

13. We urge all actors—governments, international institutions, corporations, and civil society—to align their actions with their professed commitments, ensuring consistency between stated values and lived realities.

14. We call for renewed dialogue with all governments, especially those that are neutral and non-aligned, as well as with the United Nations and regional organizations, to strengthen multilateral security, economic, and cultural cooperation on the basis of mutual respect and develop better common institutions

15. We underline the importance of regional agreements while emphasizing that such agreements do

not allow those signing such regional agreements to act against international law in other regions.

16. We emphasize that peace, security, and global disarmament are essential for social well-being, environmental sustainability, and the protection of future generations. The militarization of international relations poses a grave threat to humanity and the planet.

17. We stress the need to address the climate crisis and the loss of biological diversity as fundamental human security challenges requiring global solidarity and immediate action.

18. Since the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, a majority of the world's states have taken an important step forward toward common security through the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, (2021). We urge all states to sign and ratify that treaty and thereby abstain from nuclear deterrence.

19. We emphasize that digital and cyber security are essential components of human security and sovereignty. The militarization of cyberspace and the use of autonomous weapon systems, disinformation, mass surveillance, and AI-driven inequality threaten fundamental freedoms, democratic governance, and international peace. We call for the development of human rights-based, transparent, and globally coordinated frameworks for digital governance and cyberpeace.

20. We recognize that all of the above are interdependent claims that require simultaneous efforts to do away with the immense economic inequalities and the concentration of power.

21. We pledge to contribute to a peaceful, just, and ecologically sustainable world order, grounded in equality, nonviolence, dialogue, and respect for the integrity of all life.

In witness whereof, we endorse this declaration as an expression of our shared values and intentions, and invite others—governments, organizations, and individuals alike—to join us in its spirit.

More information at: <https://helsinkiplus50.org>

Signatories

International Peace Bureau

World Beyond War

World Assembly of Struggles and Resistances of WSF

Naiset Rauhan Puolesta – Kvinnor för Fred – Women for Peace, Finland

Suomen Rauhanliitto – Peace Union of Finland

Folk mot DCA – för fred, demokrati och klimaträttvisa, Sweden

17 Basområden, Sweden

Forbyd Atomvåben – ICAN i Danmark

Fredsministerium, Denmark

International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR)

Center for Civil Liberties, Ukraine

WILPF Switzerland Switzerland

Nej til Oprustning – Ja til Bæredygtig

Sikkerhedspolitik, Denmark

Århus mod Krig og Terror, Denmark

WILPF Finland, Finland

Swedish Peace Committee (Svenska Fredskommittén), Sweden

The International Centre for Civil Initiatives “Our House”, Nash Dom, Vilnius

AWMR Italia – Donne della Regione Mediterranea, Italy

Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice, Canada

NGO Committee for Disarmament, Peace and Security, International/UN

Kvinnor för Fred, Sweden

Ohne Rüstung Leben, Germany

Hamburger Forum für Völkerverständigung und weltweite Abrüstung e. V., Germany

Naturefriends Greece, Greece

Beyond Nuclear, USA

Arab Human Security Network, Palestine

WILPF UK, UK

Colonie des Pionniers de Développement, Canada

Peace Movement Aotearoa, New Zealand

Aotearoa New Zealand Campaign on Military Spending

Aotearoa New Zealand Network on Explosive Weapons

ICAN Aotearoa, New Zealand

Women, Peace and Security (WPS) NGO Network

Aotearoa New Zealand

Blue Banner, Mongolia

Hardangerakademiet, Norway

Nuclear Ban US, USA

Latinamerikagrupperna / Solidaridad Suecia –

América Latina, Sweden

Internationaler Versöhnungsbund, Austria

Zukunftskonvent Germany

Heartpolitics, Scotland

WILPF Norway

Global Action – People and the Planet before profit, Denmark

Institut for Diapaxis, Denmark

The Irish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament Ireland

Organization VPGL (Volontaires des Pays des Grands Lacs), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

FriedensATTAC, Austria

AbFaNG – Aktionsbündnis für Frieden, aktive Neutralität und Gewaltfreiheit, Austria

Aldrig Mere Krig, Denmark

Pax Christi Toronto, Canada

Rete Italiana Pace e Disarmo, Italy

WILPF Danmark, Denmark

Nordic Peace Alliance Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland

Fredsinitiativet Roskilde, Denmark

Frauennetzwerk für Frieden e. V. / Women's Network for Peace, Germany

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Canada

Esbjerg Peace Movement, Denmark

Environmental association Za Zemiata, FoE Bulgaria

Amigas de la Tierra España, FoE Spain

World Without Wars and Violence, Greece

Jordens Vänner, FoE Sweden

Norges Fredslag, Norway

You will find individual signatories here:

<https://helsinki50.org/the-helsinki-2-0-civic-declaration-on-common-security-and-human-rights/declaration-with-signatures/>



June 30

The Bike Action

Delivering the declaration to OSCE member state embassies



The declaration was also delivered in Vienna, here by Irmgard Ehrenberger and Peter Degischer to the Liechtenstein embassy



June 30 Helsinki+50 seminar

Noora Kotilainen
speaking online
above to the left: Heikki
Patomäki, to the right
Marku Kangaspuro
Organizers:
Finnish Peace Committee



Philosophical café

discussing Georg H. von Wright's peace movement ideas

Intro by Marianne Laxén, Claus Montonen, and Mika Böök



The moderator Thomas Wallgren proudly showing the sign Philosophers for peace in Finnish



The pamphlet on peace by G.H. von Wright, published by the Finnish Architect Society in 1983. The pamphlet is in Swedish and is available here

<https://www.sls.fi/wp-content/uploads/mfiles/2858/2858.pdf>

at pages 377 - 396.





Marianne
Laxén



Claus
Montonen



Swedes preparing themselves for the seminar on the ferry, Maria Mutt with von Wright's Myten of framsteget and Tord Björk, (the photographer) with a book including the text on peace by von Wright discussed at the café.





June 30

Social gathering at the Peace station



June 31

Official Helsinki+50 Conference



The official venue: Finlandia hall
Photos from the official conference from
the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland
and Tord Björk

Protests at the venue -

To the left: Protests against allowing
Russians at the conference

To the right: Demanding solidarity with
Palestine written at the entrance stone



Helsinki+50 Conference: Respecting the Legacy, Preparing for the Future

To mark the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, Finland organized a high-level conference at Finlandia Hall on 31 July 2025. The purpose of the conference was to "respect and pay tribute to the legacy of Helsinki 1975" and provide an opportunity to discuss how we can "better safeguard European security for all participating States and have a vision for the future of the OSCE". The aim was to highlight the role of civil society in advancing respect for OSCE principles and commitments, and provide a platform to discuss how different actors can work together to address threats to peace, human rights and democracy.







More information:
<https://um.fi/osce25fi/helsinki-50>

Participants arriving

Above: president Alexander Stubb

To the left: At the registration desk

Side events

During the Helsinki+50 Conference, there will be side events organised by civil society organisations. The organisers of the conference have allocated civil society organisations side event slots according to criteria emphasising the proposals' alignment with the Helsinki Principles. In the selection process, attention was given to the diversity of the proposals in terms of themes, organisers, speakers, and geographical focus. The below descriptions have been provided by the organizers of the side events and the responsibility for the content remains with them. Neither the text below nor the events themselves necessarily reflect the views of the Finnish Chairpersonship or the OSCE. All side events are organised at Finlandia Hall.



Human suffering and systematic persecution caused by Russia's war of aggression

The event will highlight the human suffering and systematic persecution caused by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and its violations of the Helsinki Final Act. Ukrainian civil society will discuss patterns of human rights violations, war crimes, and crimes against humanity since 2014. The event will also feature testimonies from former Ukrainian prisoners of war.

Organised by: Media Initiative for Human Rights
Side Event Venue 1

Persecution of human rights defenders in Belarus

This event highlights ongoing persecution of human rights defenders in Belarus and shares insights on democracy and international solidarity. Marking 50 years of the Helsinki Final Act, it calls for urgent action to support Belarusian civil society against repression and for renewed international accountability.

Organised by: Finnish Helsinki Committee and Netherlands Helsinki Committee
Side Event Venue 2

Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

this side event will explore how governments, civil society, and survivor leaders can jointly strengthen responses against human trafficking. It will highlight survivor-led initiatives, OSCE guidance on meaningful inclusion, and collaboration between civil society and survivor-led NGOs.

Co-organized by the Freedom Fund, together with the Office of the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights/ODIHR,
Side Event Venue 3



Decalogue and Dialogue for the Future

The panel discussion draws from the foresight and future-oriented analyses on European security and cooperation that have been carried out by the member institutes of the international Expert Network on the OSCE during the past year. It brings together views from different corners of Europe and offers innovative thinking on both the decalogue and dialogue for the future of European security and cooperation.

Organised by: OSCE Expert Network and Finnish Institute of International Affairs
Side Event Venue 4



Helsinki+50 Reflection Project and the Civil Society Manifesto

The Civic Solidarity Platform, an OSCE-wide NGO coalition built on the achievements and traditions of the international Helsinki movement, presents recommendations of its Helsinki+50 Reflection Project and the Civil Society Manifesto resulting from it. This vision of the future of the Helsinki process was developed by dozens of civil society representatives and combines key principles for the implementation of the Helsinki concept in the current challenging security situation and recommendations both on steps to be taken by states and on the essential role of civil society.

Organised by: Civic Solidarity Platform
Side Event Venue 1



Innovating Approaches to Engage Civil Societies in Peacebuilding and Mediation efforts.

As the OSCE region faces unprecedented challenges, including open conflicts, enduring and new threats that pose a challenge to national and regional stability and resilience, the role of civil society in promoting a positive and peaceful agenda has never been more crucial. As part of the 50th-anniversary commemoration of the Helsinki Final Act, CMI – Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation is organizing a panel discussion on “Innovating Approaches to Engage Civil Societies in Peacebuilding and Mediation efforts.” This side event aims to bring together leading experts and practitioners actively engaged on the ground in the OSCE area (e.g., Ukraine, South Caucasus, Central Asia) to share their experiences and insights on how to creatively and effectively involve civil society in global peacemaking efforts, both complementing and enhancing official efforts by states and international organisations.

Organised by: CMI – Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation
Side Event Venue 2



Above: The first side event in the list on Russia's war of aggression

Repressive Trends and Civil Society Responses

The side event, aims to examine the major repressive trends and tools used against human rights defenders and civil society actors across the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region. It will also provide a platform for sharing best practices, coping strategies, and innovative approaches developed to navigate and resist these challenges. Issues to be discussed include “foreign agent” legislation, smear campaigns, and transnational repression. Organised by: Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint initiative by the World Organisation against Torture (OMCT) and International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

Side Event Venue 3



Crimea: 11 Years of Occupation - Restoring Justice, Reinforcing OSCE Commitments

The side event highlights Russian aggression against Ukraine since 2014, particularly the occupation of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, as a direct challenge to the core principles and values of the Helsinki Final Act. The discussion focuses on strengthening OSCE mechanisms to counter authoritarian threats and to promote justice and lasting peace, using the example of the devastating impact of human rights abuses, propaganda, and the manipulation of international law and justice standards in temporarily occupied Crimea. The event underscores that collective OSCE action is essential to uphold the rules-based international order.

Organised by: Human Rights Centre ZMINA, Crimean Human Rights Group, CCE "Almenda" and Regional Center for Human Right

Side Event Venue 4

Rejected proposals for side events

Overcoming Mental Blockades, Creating Peace in Ukraine: Why Europe Needs an OSCE Peace Summit

World beyond War - Chapter Romania

Peace with the Earth - Peace on Earth: building comprehensive peace and environmental justice by Maan ystävät ry - the Finnish member organisation of Friends of the Earth International

Youth as Peacebuilders: From the Grassroots to the Decision-Making Tables

Youth, Peace and Security Network of Finland with member organisations

50 Years After Helsinki: Repressive Trends and Civil Society Responses

Across Eastern Europe and Central Asia

World Organisation against Torture (OMCT) and International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) within the framework of Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders

LAW not War: The International Court of Justice and the OSCE

Cosponsored by Citizens for Global Solutions, World Future Council and the World Federalist Movement-

Institute for Global Policy, supported by the Global Challenges Foundation

AN EVENT OF THE LAW NOT WAR: LEGAL ALTERNATIVES TO WAR PROJECT

Common security approaches to prevent nuclear war & facilitate nuclear disarmament

Organised by Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND)

Cosponsored by Basel Peace Office, UNFOLD ZERO, World Future Council

(and Peace Union of Finland- invited)

Russian trials of Ukrainian prisoners of war and civilian detainees as a tool of persecution
Media Initiative for Human Rights;

Untapped potential - OSCE and civil society in questions of war and peace

German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP)

Equal Rights and Self-Determination of Roma People in Ukraine: Turning Commitments into Implementation and Change
Organizers: Deaconess Foundation
International Charitable Organization Roma Women Fund "Chiricli"

Department for Monitoring for Equal Rights and Freedoms, Rights of National Minorities, Political and Religious Beliefs, The Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman)

The Movement to End War as an Imperative for Planetary Survival

Organizer:

Climate Reality Leaders Finland

The Climate Reality Project (CRP)

Comprehensive Security Perspectives - Civil Society's Contribution in a Changing OSCE Region of Austausch e.V

HELSINKI +50: CSP Side event

contribution from Heidi Meinzolt/WILPF

We are here to express our civil society commitment for peace and justice in the spirit of the Helsinki agreement and principles. We are here to raise also our critical voices of problems and deficits and include some recommendations for OSCE to function better. We have well prepared our reflections towards the future of OSCE this year in multiple group discussions, on-and offline seminars, and exchanges with institutions and Think Tanks.

What I would especially like to underline is, that civil society is not (no longer?) a neutral definition for critical dissidents towards existing mainstream and power politics. We used to define our activism as the guarantee of delivering ideas from our rich grass root experiences, we might sometimes even be convinced supporters of decision makers if they understand the real needs of people. But I say this explicitly in times where more and more "artificial", (partly well payed) civil society is occupying the floor around us, GONGOS take the shrinking space and new laws restrict our influence on a minimum. These organisations are on the best way to dismantle the principles of "Common Security" (as the founding principle of CSCE/OSCE) for new and dangerous (authoritarian) nationalisms.

I want to emphasize also that women have a specific approach on the basis of their long-term gendered and feminist conflict analysis and understanding of all forms of violence in the triangle of militarism, patriarchy and capitalism. We women reclaim having broad experiences



Heide Meinzt during her speech at Side event the Helsinki+50 Reflection Project and the Civil Society Manifesto

on the ground on how societies can and should function more peacefully.

If I would ask you all, coming from conflict zones or wherever you live in this crazy world, “what makes you feel safe?”, your answers would certainly be very complex and diverse, but I am sure that you all agree on the urgency of stopping war as the ultimate violence that makes us suffer, feel terrible insecurity and helplessness. War is stealing our future! War is destroying what we love, what we need: basic social security, a financial situation that allows a decent living for all and be an active member of our societies, and an environment that grows what we need for our health. War steals our rights and freedoms and, the more authoritarian societies and their leaders get, the more we have to pay with our rights and freedoms. Women are paying a higher price – as (grand) mothers and activists. We can only lose in war.

But as we are not just victims, we are here to request solidarity: We strengthen, on all levels, local and international connections, education, cross-border dialogue, diplomacy and negotiations. We talk less on victory or defeat, on enemies, less on geo-strategy and (military) power. So how do we see the emergency:

1. We raise our voices against the horrible militarisation – for the profit of just a few! and for the pain of the majority of the people. All our lives are militarised, our thinking poisoned in enemy categories and fake solution with weapons which cannot protect us as humans. We request

disarmament now, no to strengthening military alliances, such as NATO – I deeply admire the activities of the Global Women against NATO and their commitment.

2. We formulate preventive agendas, locally, cross-border to (re-)build trust and confidence on all levels. Hate doesn't have a space anymore – but peace-education (in schools, universities, clubs, wherever we live and work) and peace-building as essential part of the WPS agenda.

3. We request a say in early warning structures in all conflict phases - on the basis of our connections on the ground, as care givers. Climate justice is an essential part of our awareness raising. We are not sitting in ivory towers but share concrete ideas.

4. We advocate for peace-building as a primary educational tool. We know that preparing for peace is a long way to go, it is much more than a cease-fire or even a peace treaty – to which we of course need to contribute meaningfully and equally. Peace-building is the soft power that decision makers need and must support. As feminists, we know about the diversity of self-defence mechanisms and anti-violence prevention: Self-defence includes the respect for others, of refugees, vulnerable people, diaspora in despair.

5. In our recommendations we have compiled the need for stronger, also institutionally supported cross-dimensional approaches. We plead for women's/feminist spaces that OSCE could support by the revival of a women's conference as it happened in 1990 in Berlin. Inspiration and good will is needed to let this organisation survive. and the founding idea of common security recognized.



Above: President Stubb
Below: ex-president Halonen



Keynote speech by president Zelensky



Below: The men's choir in black shouting the Helsinki principles at the opening

Below: Panel on How can states and civil society jointly address threats to peace, human rights and democracy?



08.45-09.30 Side events
organised by civil society

10.00-10.15

Opening of the Conference



*Above:
Elina
Valtonen*

Opening Address by OSCE
Chairperson-in-Office, Mi-
nister for Foreign Affairs of
Finland Ms. Elina Valtonen

10.15-11.15

High-level Key Notes

President of the Republic of
Finland,
Mr. Alexander Stubb

President of Ukraine,
Mr. Volodymyr Zelenskyy
(online address)

United Nations Seceta-
ry-General,
Mr. António Guterres (video
message)

*Below:
Fedrico
Borello*

OSCE Secretary General,
Ambassador Feridun H.
Sinirlioğlu



United Nations High Com-
missioner for Human Rights,
Mr. Volker Türk

Interim Executive Director
of Human Rights Watch,
Mr. Federico Borello

11.15-12.15

RESPECT: How to st-
rengthen respect for the
foundational principles of
European security? Panel
discussion

Moderator: Mr. Stephen
Sackur

OSCE Chairperson-in-Of-
fice, Minister for Foreign
Affairs of Finland,
Ms. Elina Valtonen

Minister for Foreign Affairs
of Ukraine,
Mr. Andrii Sybiha



Batmunkh Battsetseg

Minister of Foreign Affairs of
Mongolia,
Ms. Batmunkh Battsetseg

Minister of State for Europe,
North America and Overse-
as Territories of the United
Kingdom,

Mr. Stephen Doughty

President and CEO of Radio
Free Europe/Radio Liberty,
Mr. Stephen Capus

12.15-13.45 Lunch break

12.30-13.15 Side events
organised by civil society

13.45-14.45

RESPOND: How can sta-
tes and civil society jointly
address threats to peace, hu-
man rights and democracy?
Panel discussion

Moderator: Ms. Katri Mak-
konen

Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of Foreign and Eu-
ropean Affairs of Slovenia,
Ms. Tanja Fajon

President Emerita of the
OSCE Parliamentary Assem-
bly
Ms. Pia Kauma

Secretary-General of Inter-
national IDEA,
Dr. Kevin Casas-Zamora

Head of Center for Civil
Liberties, Nobel Peace Prize
Laureate
Ms. Oleksandra Matviichuk

14.45-15.15 Coffee Break

15.15-16.15

PREPARE: What can we
learn from the past 50 years,
and what are our aspirations
for the next 50? Panel discus-
sion

Moderator: Mr. Stephen
Sackur

Deputy Prime Minister and

Minister for Foreign Affairs
and Tourism of Malta,
Dr. Ian Borg

Minister for Europe and Fo-
reign Affairs of Albania,
Mr. Igli Hasani

Minister delegate for Europe
of France,
Mr. Benjamin Haddad

A former Czech dissident, an
academic and a member of
the Board of the Institute for
Study of Totalitarian Regi-
mes in Prague,
Dr. Martin Palouš

Environmental and human
rights defender
Ms. Helena Gualinga

16.15-16.45

Principles in Action: The
impact of the OSCE and
Launch of Helsinki+50 Fund

Moderator: Ms. Katri Mak-
konen

OSCE Chairperson-in-Of-



Minister for Foreign
Affairs of Finland
Ms. Elina Valtonen

OSCE Secretary General,
Ambassador Feridun H.
Sinirlioglu

Director of OSCE Office for
Democratic Institutions and
Human Rights,
Ms. Maria Telalian

OSCE Representative on
Freedom of the Media,

Ambassador Jan Braathu

OSCE High Commissioner
on National Minorities,
Ambassador Christophe
Kamp

16.45-17.00 Closing of the
Conference

17.00-18.00 Reception

18.00-19.30 Screening
of The Helsinki Effect do-
cumentary film

*Above:
Helena
Gualinga in
the midst of
the panel on
the future.*

*Below:
Arthur
Franck
presenting
his film The
Helsinki
Effect*



The dialogue that did not happen

By Mikael Böök

The CSCE, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe held in Helsinki in July-August 1975, was a successful dialogue between states. At the celebratory conference organised by the Finnish Foreign Ministry at Finlandia Hall in Helsinki on July 31, 2025, the dialogue with civil society and citizen movements would be the central theme.

Under my name on the name tag handed out at the entrance was the name of a peace organization (The Peace Union of Finland).

Today, the OSCE, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which has carried on the principles of the CSCE with varying degrees of success, certainly needs help from civil society and citizens' movements. The organization is in a state of deep confusion and disintegration.

But I would argue that the dialogue with civil society and citizen movements did not happen.

There was a wall between official Finland and international civil society. However, there were some interesting cracks in that wall.

Among the participants were many people from so-called GONGOs, non-governmental organizations run or sponsored by states. Several people from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are neither run nor sponsored by states were also given access, but unfortunately, the latter were not allowed to speak.

A few exceptions should be noted, however.

One of them was Heidi Meinzolt from the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). She spoke about the nuclear threat and was thus perhaps the only speaker during the entire conference to break a taboo that is absurd if the dialogue is to be about common security. Meinzolt's

speech was part of one of the hand-picked side events between the official panel discussions.

Human rights defender Olga Karatch was present at another side event (on the persecution of human rights defenders in Belarus). Accused and convicted of "extremism" in Belarus, Karatch has had to flee with her family to Lithuania, where she runs the organization "Our House," which helps conscientious objectors in Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine and opposes the ongoing arms race in the East and West including, of course, the Russian deployment of nukes in Belarus. Karatch does not fit into the usual state narratives. She did not have a slot in the official program, but she was nevertheless present at Finlandia Hall and at the citizen events outside.

One panel discussion focused on how states and civil society can jointly address threats to peace, human rights, and democracy. Panelist Kevin Casas-Zamora from the organization International IDEA (where D stands for democracy) highlighted the immense power of large American tech companies and suggested that they should be expropriated by the state. He also noted that the growing gap between the richest and the poorest threatens democracy and that action should have been taken years ago to tackle tax havens. Another breath of fresh air from the other side of the wall!

What can we learn from the past 50 years, and what are our ambitions for the next 50 years? These questions were posed in another official panel discussion. A young environmental and human rights activist, Helena Gualinga from Ecuador/Amazonas, who attended school in Finland, was allowed to speak. "Over the past two years, we have witnessed genocide—something that has not been discussed enough here today," she said. "We all support Ukraine and can speak freely about it, but we are so afraid to mention Israel..." – here the audience applauded, but



journalist Stephen Sackur, the panel's moderator, interrupted her and reminded her that the OSCE states are not unanimous in calling the events in Gaza genocide. Gualinga replied: "It is precisely because we are unable to express ourselves clearly about these most horrific events that we are failing. What democratic values do we have then?" With this response, Gualinga drew further applause and seemed for a moment to cause the moderator to lose his composure.

Gualinga revealed the simple truth that today's OSCE operates with double standards. Thus, the dialogue with civil society ends precisely where it could and should begin.



*Above:
Helena
Gualinga
speaking to a
participant*

Shortly before Gualinga's speech, Sackur had asked the panel participants to "speak the truth" and called Russia "an actual enemy" that will need to be excluded from the OSCE if the organization wants to avoid becoming a "useless club for fishermen." He might as well have asked what the OSCE is needed for when NATO is already taking care of European security.

On the day before and after the conference at Finlandia Hall, we, the people from NGOs not run or sponsored by states, organised our own events and conferences outside the venue on the initiative of the Nordic Peace Alliance. Among other things, we cycled to the 37 embassies of the OSCE countries in Helsinki to deliver our People's Declarations "calling for "The spirit of the Helsinki Accords 1975" to be carried forward. We To



*the right Mika Böök and Olga Karach,
to the left Hans Hedrich*

organized two public discussions on the future of the OSCE and on philosopher GH von Wright's 1983 pamphlet "The Threat of War, the Arms Race, and the Peace Movement" at the Forest House in Helsinki.

The morning after the official conference, we congratulated the OSCE with a picnic outside Finlandia Hall. Then we held an open conference in the auditorium of a big public library to conduct thought experiments in a "peace laboratory." More about all this, including our declaration (with first signatures from some 60 organisations), can be found on the website helsinkiplus50.org.



*Above: Arm Ukraine - then dialogue on the
back of one of the participants suit. The
amount and quality of the food was not to
complain about*

*Next page:
Protesters against lack of support for Gaza*



SPEAK
UP FOR
GAZA!

FINNISH GOVERNMENT
YOU HAVE BLOOD
IN YOUR HANDS AND IT
CAN'T BE WASHED AWAY



A young journalist in 1975:

As a participant in the official Helsinki+50 conference, I am also bitterly disappointed. As a young journalist in 1975, I experienced the hopeful spirit of optimism in Finlandia Hall after the Final Act was adopted. Now, in the same place, I had to learn that a whiff of the Cold War has stifled the much-cited spirit of Helsinki. In fact, none of the official speakers on the day of Zelensky's proclamation contradicted the notion that regime change in Moscow was a prerequisite for peace in Ukraine. Nor did any of the numerous speakers make a constructive proposal for resolving this conflict. This sad outcome had already become apparent in July at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Porto. In a 40-article declaration, 30 deal with support for Ukraine, and even in the remaining 10, there is no mention of a peace-keeping initiative. Finally, both Foreign Minister Valtonen and President Stubb invoked the role of civil society organisations in shaping peaceful international relations at Finlandia Hall. But on the same day, my political friends in Helsinki told me that the right-wing government had cut financial support to progressive associations, including the Finnish Peace Committee.

Hugo Braun

Unanimous unilateral condemnation of Russia

From my understanding, a serious effort to establish the new security architecture, which Russia, amongst others, have been advocating for since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, cannot begin with, and be framed by, what I perceived as unanimous unilateral condemnation of Russia. It must begin with a tone of strategic empathy and a serious conversation about the "causes of the causes" of the Ukraine conflict (for instance, how the parties view NATO's expansion). None of the speakers, for example, mentioned the Charter of Paris (1990) or the Istanbul Declaration (1999), which emphasised the concept of "indivisible security" and the security dilemma—something you describe so accurately on your blog: "A nation's security cannot be achieved at the expense of another's." I found it remarkable that not even Alexander Stubb referenced this, as he brought up the 1992 Helsinki meeting, which specifically underscored the importance of respecting "indivisible security."

In my view, none of the speakers truly lived up to the conference's motto: "Respect for the legacy – preparing for the future." Stubb's plea for dialogue came across more as a pursuit of monologue—echoed by "Zelensky's call for regime change in Moscow and the confiscation of Russian assets." Quite surprising for a security conference, none of the opening speakers reflected on a possible peace process or the kind of security guarantees both Ukraine and Russia would require. As you rightly point out in your blog, referring to the London meeting (March 2, 2025), the UN and OSCE should play a significant role—not NATO, as is currently being discussed.

Equally striking was the absence of any mention of Israel's ongoing genocide in Gaza—even from Frederico Borello of Human Rights Watch!

Hans Abrahamsson

Borellos speech:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/07/31/upholding-the-spirit-of-helsinki>

*Photos from the conference 1975 -
Previous page to the left from the top: The US delegation, Ford and Breschnew signing the final act, both happy during the conference,*

To the right from the top: President Kekkonen and others in the happy Finnish delegation, the Soviet delegation, the hall



Helsinki+50 Discussions

Finland organized an event on 1 August under the title Helsinki+50 Discussions, and representatives of the organization from different parts of the OSCE region also participated in the discussions. The topics of the discussion were commitment to OSCE principles and the development of OSCE functionality. Both topics were also very prominent at the Helsinki+50 conference held on 31 July.

The majority (about 2/3) of the participants were official delegations from OSCE participating States and Partner States. The representatives of the organizational side were organizations and individuals working with various OSCE institutions, mainly from the OSCE field offices and key project areas, such as Central Asia and Ukraine.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs was responsible for the invitations.

The program

09.00-9.30 Opening of the event

09.30-10.30 Small group discussions

10.30-11.00 Coffee break

11.00-12.15 Small group discussions continue

12.15-13.15 Lunch

13.15-14.45 Joint closing discussion and next steps

14.45-15.00 Minister Elina Valtonen's closing speech

15.00-15.30 Coffee break

15.30-17.30 Opportunity to present national speeches

The press release for the event can be found here <https://www.osce.org/chairpersonship/595546> and <https://www.osce.org/chairpersonship/595921>

The event was also referred to in the speeches at the conference held on 31 July, for example in the opening speech by Foreign Minister Valtonen, which can be found publicly on the Ministry for Foreign Affairs website https://um.fi/current-affairs/article/-/asset_publisher/iYk2EknIlmNL/content/ulkoministeri-elina-valtosen-avauspuheenvuoro-helsinki-50-konferenssissa

From the foreign ministry website:

HELSINKI, 30 July 2025 – The Helsinki+50 Discussions on the Future of the OSCE will take place on 1 August 2025 at Finlandia Hall in Helsinki. The Discussions, conducted in connection with the Helsinki+50 Conference, bring together all participating States, partner countries, and representatives of civil society.

The aim of the discussions is to provide a platform for open reflection and to contribute to strengthening the respect for the foundations of European security and to building a vision for the OSCE.

“Throughout this anniversary year, the OSCE has clearly reaffirmed its commitment to the Helsinki principles. Finland has called for strengthening the OSCE to ensure it is equipped to meet tomorrow's challenges. We have involved the civil society in the discussions on how to do this, also considering that all ten Helsinki principles are being blatantly violated by Russian Federation,” said the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland Elina Valtonen.

The process started with small group discussions at Ambassadorial level in Vienna in April 2025. The conclusions of those discussions will form the basis for the deliberations on 1 August, which in turn will be reported at the Ministerial Council of the OSCE in December 2025.

There was a specific invitation by the appointed CS representative, Anu Juvonen.

Helsinki+50 Discussions 1 August 2025

List of organisations

CMI

NGO Keyik Okara

CAPS Unlock

Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia

The National Youth Council of Serbia

Bishkek School of Contemporary Art

Netherlands Helsinki Committee

Swiss Helsinki Committee

NGO Yenme

Human Rights House of Banja Luka, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly

Belarusian Helsinki Committee

Kosova Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims Human rights and healthcare in conflict zones

UN Youth of Finland

I4P Association

Public Foundation for the Support and Development of the Mass Media

Perseus Strategies

Kitabistan Research Center

Public Association Dignity

Human Rights Movement "Bir Duino-Kyrgyzstan"

JIA Business Association JIA

Association of Women with Disabilities Shyrak

Media Initiative for Human Rights

CONSENT -Secretariat of the Women's Peace Dialogue Platform

Ukrainian Women Lawyers Association- Jurfem

Regional Center for Human Rights

All-Ukrainian Public Organisation Commission for Journalistic Ethics

Hungarian Helsinki Committee Refugee Programme

Norwegian Helsinki Committee

Moscow Helsinki Group

Article 19

Center for Civil Liberties (CCL)

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)

Swedish OSCE Network

Radio Romano Avazo and Durmish Aslano

NGO STAN

Hungarian Helsinki Committee

Ukrainian Helsinki Union

Human Rights Center ZMINA

Truth Hounds

Human Rights Monitoring Institute

Network by Consensus



Dimitry Markarov from the Moscow Helsinki Group at the Civic Solidarity Platform side event, he also participated in the Helsinki+50 Discussions and visited the Helsinki+50 People's Conference

Historians without Borders

Austausch

Helsinki Citizens' Assembly – Vanadzor Advocacy in human rights and democracy

Human Rights Center "Viasna"

NGO Democracy Today

Albania Helsinki Committee

Amnesty International

Public Verdict Foundation

UNRCCA

UCIPR

Crimean House foundation

NGO Civic Platform

Youth Group for Protection of the Environment

Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights

Facilitators:

Demo Finland

Saferglobe

Wider Security Network WISE

EU4Dialogue



Hans Hedrich honours OSCE and the Helsinki Conference which ended by signing the final act 1st of August 1975



Helsinki+50 People's Conference

Pasila library

Keynote speech by

Sean Conner, IPB director





Remarks for Helsinki +50 Civil Society Forum

Dear colleagues, friends, advocates for peace everywhere,

This month we mark fifty years since the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. It could not come at a more vital moment, as the Russian invasion of Ukraine and genocide in Gaza – as well as the more general increase in conflicts and military tensions from Sudan and DRC to the South China/West Philippines Sea and the Korean peninsula – force us to question the role of Europe in peace, solidarity, and diplomacy in the continent and indeed internationally.

Fifty years ago, during the high tensions of the Cold War, the Helsinki summit recognized the need to reduce political and military tensions between the East and the West and to set guiding principles for relations between countries in the Helsinki Accords – a quite comprehensive document emphasizing the importance of sovereign equality, peaceful settlement of disputes, territorial integrity, human rights and freedoms, self-determination of peoples, international cooperation, and adherence to international law.

Seven years later, in 1982, the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues, known as the Olof Palme Commission, published “Common Security: A Blueprint for Survival” outlining concrete steps for disarmament and trust building which expanded on the spirit of the Helsinki Accords by clearly underlining the interconnectedness of security in the East and West blocs.

Sadly as we are all too aware, the spirit of Helsinki and of Common Security has completely disappeared in the post-Cold War era. As centers of power in geopolitics shift, a return to nationalism and national defense accompanied by shrinking democratic spaces has led to stark conventional and nuclear rearmament and proliferation and a deliberate diminishing of diplomacy, international institutions and international law. Zero-sum game understandings, black and white thinking, and strategic competition have replaced international cooperation and solidarity.

It is clear that if we leave our governments to their own devices, we can expect this trend to continue and we can expect the European and global political climates to worsen – that war and militarism will expand, costing countless lives and endanger the very future of our entire planet, the environment and climate included.

Therefore, it is on us, on civil society across Europe and across the globe, to raise our voices for the revitalization and expansion of the principles and spirit of the Helsinki Accords. We must come together to pressure our leaders– as was done in 1975 – to recognize the risks of the present moment and take urgent action to prioritize diplomacy, dialogue and trust-building as essential tools to address the polycrisis and pull us back from the brink.

We do not need a mere commemoration of 50 years since the Helsinki Accords – we need to revitalize the peace and security architecture in Europe and to reimagine Europe’s role in the world based in solidarity, anti-imperialism, anti-militarism, and international law.

European leaders now dismiss such an approach as naïve, or impossible. But we know it’s not. If in the height of tensions of the Cold War, global leaders could recognize the dangers and choose another path, there is no doubt that this can be done again. But as the political will is not there, that is our responsibility.

That is why our gathering this week in Helsinki is of vital importance – both as a symbol and a practice. It is proof that the spirit of Helsinki has not been forgotten by the people of Europe and beyond – that there is a thirst and passion for justice and for alternatives.

It is proof that civil society can move beyond narrow silos and recognize the interlinkages in our struggles and advocacy; that we understand the challenges ahead of us are bigger than any one issue, and that true peace must be based in justice, solidarity, and equality.

On behalf of the International Peace Bureau I wish you all the utmost success with this commemoration and may we continue this work together – as we fight for a just transition, a peaceful Europe, and a peaceful world.

Thank you.

Sean Conner



OPENING WORDS

Welcome to Helsinki

I am a professor of philosophy from here working on the diagnosis of modernity, especially on the self-understanding of commitment to reason and truth. I am also an activist in the peace movement, the social democratic party and in many social movements.

We meet in times of war, confusion and securitisation. It is also a time of weakness of the peace movement

OR: so it may seem.

But one line of thinking which has surfaced more in our informal conversations during the past days than during some years before this is - so it seems to me - that we are needed and that our time may come sooner than we have thought.

Activists, intellectuals, but also people with power and above all, all those whose lives are being destroyed by war and aggression, are looking for new ideas and ways forward that can bring peace and justice.

We meet here to develop, create, and cooperate and we meet knowing that also before it has happened that ordinary people like us have been able to deliver the wisdom and initiative, the power of truth, that the world needed.

I am happy that you have come to Helsinki and to Pasila. I look forward to learning from your wisdom and proud to share with you, today and through our lives, the search for peace and for justice for all.

Thomas Wallgren
One of the Finnish hosts of the meeting



Leo Gabriel



Olga Karach



Karmapriya Muschött



Philip Polak



*From left: Vera Zalka and
Ulla Klötzer*



Below: Hans Hedrich





Romanian democratic guidance and Swedish beehive methods makes a conference lively



How do we manage the legacy of a successful peace process?

In the Pasila district, the Helsinki City Library has a large and well-organized branch on two floors. At lunchtime on Friday, August 1, the friendly librarians give us permission to put up a temporary sign at the entrance, so that anyone who wishes to participate in the People's Movements Peace Laboratory that day can find their way to the second-floor auditorium. Next to the short directions in three languages, I have drawn the usual peace sign, and just as I am putting up the paper, a tall and powerful older gentleman approaches.

- Oh my. Excuse me, but can someone knowledgeable tell me what kind of symbol that is? he asks a bit cleverly in a beautiful Finnish dialect, which to my ears speaks of a hometown other than the capital.

The advantage of behaving like you should

I politely inform about the Security and Cooperation Conference that took place in Helsinki exactly 50 years ago and welcome him to the seminar that will soon begin in the library auditorium to draw attention to the historical event. The uncle says he is not familiar with it, and continues surprisingly: - But I know what ETYK is (CSCE acronym in Finnish): - I myself am a war veteran and have indeed been awarded a medal by President Martti Ahtisaari.

He tells you in detail about where and when he fought at the front and what injuries he suffered. Relieved to be able to agree with the foreign interlocutor about Ahtisaari's excellence as a peace broker, I dare say something like "Since you have experienced the horrors of war, you probably know best how important peace is" and tell you that today's free Peace Lab is certainly open to all interested people.

- Yes, I support that wholeheartedly, that's awesome! says the happy war veteran and goes off to make photocopies.

When a few minutes later I'm standing on a chair in a clumsy attempt to hang the banner "Don't kill our children" made by Women for Peace on the door to the auditorium, I suddenly notice someone's strong hands helping on the other side of the door. It's the same man, who with his arms

in the air happily shouts: - Just tie it up tight, I'll hold it in place.

No rush, I can stand here for a long time! This is a good message, and a nice picture with this embroidered lady...

- The message became even nicer when you came into the picture! I answer completely truthfully and honestly.

A world order based on rules rather than the right of the strong Fifty years ago, 33 leaders from almost all NATO and Warsaw Pact countries, as well as Gerald Ford of the United States and Leonid Brezhnev of the Soviet Union, gathered for the Helsinki Conference on European Security. The result was that on 1 August 1975, all 35 states signed the so-called Helsinki Final Act, to guarantee peace, security and respect for fundamental human rights from Vancouver to Vladivostok. The conference is considered by many to be one of Finland's greatest diplomatic successes on the world stage. It had been preceded by a process of multilateral talks, and was continued in 1995 by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). It is defined as a regional organization within the United Nations, headquartered in Vienna, according to Chapter Eight of the UN Charter, which can be said to be the basic rulebook for the international community. Among other things, the OSCE has over time established so-called Helsinki Committees in various member states, which monitor compliance with the Helsinki Agreement's articles on fundamental human rights.

This year, the OSCE chairmanship is held by Finland, which organized an official anniversary conference on July 31 in the same Finlandia Hall where the conference was held in 1975. It was an attempt to recall history and find ways forward, according to a comment that the chairman of the Swedish OSCE network, Björn Lindh, wrote afterwards in the publication Dagens Arena, August 4, 2025, <https://www.dagensarena.se/essa/helsingfors-tog-vi-strid-en-regelbaserad-varldsordning/>. He believes that the Helsinki+50 conference was part of the protection of the idea that we are shaping a world order where states negotiate, meet and agree on common rules of the game. According to Lindh, both Putin and



Trump are examples of authoritarian leaders who threaten a rules-based world order, the one with the greatest military power and the most money does as it pleases.

Women want to revive multilateral structures

The central theme of the conference was civil society and citizen movements. This was highlighted by Thursday's so-called side event, which was prepared during a year-long process among several organizations affiliated with the OSCE. Such a 45-minute group discussion was held, among others, by the Civic Solidarity Platform, which is a coalition of citizen movements (so-called NGOs) affiliated with the international Helsinki process. One of these organizations is the long-standing WILPF (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom), which was represented at Helsinki+50 by Heidi Meinzolt from Germany. In her report from the conference, she points out, like Björn Lindh, that not many political decision-makers were visible at the entire conference, and that most of the few who were visible wore suits and ties. Meinzolt finds that the OSCE's potential as a bridge builder, negotiator and mediator has disappeared in the shadow of geostrategic conflicts over power and influence.

Together with other European civil society organisations, WILPF advocates détente and disarmament instead of military alliances, and feels compelled to remind us that the OSCE should be a forum for cooperation as much as security. From various dialogues, a piece of wisdom worth noting has been gained: the way of dividing the world into what lies east and west of Vienna is no longer workable; what are usually called "Western" values or ideals do not exist - values are universal.

Less talk and more workshop

Many other civil society and people's movements had applied to contribute to the program, but were rejected by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, which was the official organizer of the conference. This was not surprising given its, to say the least, ambivalent relationship with civil society organizations, whose scope and resources have been severely limited by Finland's current

government. That is why we ordinary people gathered at Pasila Library to continue the peace work the day after the conference itself.

The initiative, which has come to be called The Helsinki+50 People's Initiative, was taken by the Nordic Peace Alliance (NPA), which brings together over 30 peace organizations in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. They started a process together with the International Peace Bureau IPB, World Beyond War and a permanent network for people's movement cooperation within the global World Social Forum family. Representatives of peace organizations, human rights movements, the environmental movement, anti-racist networks, trade unions, the Via Campesina peasant organization, and the host organization of the World Social Forum 2026 participated in online discussions.

Time for people's movements to take over the torch

The result of the discussions was the forward-looking Helsinki+50 People's Declaration (see fact box below). In Helsinki, activists cycled around and handed it over to the embassies of the OSCE participating states on Wednesday morning, 30 July, followed by an afternoon seminar at the University of Helsinki. Happily, twice the expected 25 participants came to take advantage of the expertise of academics Noora Kotilainen, Heikki Patomäki and Markku Kangaspuro on "Future of the European security & spirit of Helsinki: OSCE 50 years". The activities became a gathering place for many movements that see the need for common security and to demand human rights without using double standards.

All such forums for community are more important than ever in a Finland where people's movements are currently gasping for air. The lungs actually manage to do that from time to time, for example at the Olympic Stadium in Helsinki where 80,000 Finns made their voices heard for two cold August evenings in a row in the music group Ultra Bra's apolitical but subtle songs about pikes, horses or the joys and tribulations of family life. Ordinary people in their yellow raincoats finally got a singing and dancing breather from the demands of the powerful for militarization and war readiness.



A Birthday cake also makes a conference in a good mood



Group discussion 1: Security



BASKET 1

SECURITY

- OSCE = Police Commission = Common S.
 - 31.07.: \emptyset "Common security"
 - OSCE = security for RUS + UKR
 - "comprehensive sec." \rightarrow 3 fields
 - NATO vs RUS neoimperialism
 - timeline: years (also in civil society?)
 - \emptyset deterrence \rightarrow common conflict resolution
 - comprehensive S. = TRUST / DIALOGUE
 - \emptyset every picture.
 - media responsibility \rightarrow problem / propaganda
 - politicians left - right \rightarrow pro war
 - NATO vs OSCE after 1989
 - nuclear weapons Belarus. \Rightarrow (Common security)
 - \hookrightarrow stopping the Western propaganda
 - channels of cur soc. f. dialogue w. establishment.
 - nuclear arms: North campaigning for
 - naming the enemy: RUS. TRUST does not work with
 - identify concrete small steps.
- What small steps? - nuclear free Nordic region / - all mid powers to sign the TPNW. / - FIN: 64 F35 & / USA not to get entangled in EU affairs / - people to put politicians
- FIN gov. was negative / - overtaxing war profits.
 - ceasefire in UKR. \rightarrow peace talks.
 - including NATO + USA \rightarrow rejoining OSCE
 - start process. it takes time



Group discussion 2: Economy and Environment

Karmapriya Muschött addressed the Peace and Climate issue already in her speech at the start of the conference. She stated the appeal for action that came out of a summer-camp for Peace and Climate Justice Sweden in early July. The workshop shared similar experiences and focused upon coming actions, you find much in the Follow up section of the report.



Peace on and with Earth

Today we live in a world that is heading towards climate collapse, the collapse of international law and the threat of nuclear war. The world is rearming – not only militarily, but people are turning against each other. Hatred is growing, conflicts over resources, power and dominance are tearing apart societies. At the same time, we are losing time, resources and energy to face the real threats: climate change, ecological collapse, inequality and social insecurity. We share this Earth, water and air with all living beings. We only have one planet. The future is shared – or not at all. Resistance is now being formulated all over the world

through initiatives for peace and climate justice, such as STOP ReArm Europe (stoprearm.org). For the second year in a row, the Global Week of Action for Peace and Climate Justice will be held, 15–21/9, 2025.

This year's theme is "Divest from war – invest in the just transition", with a clear call: that our movements come together to act for a demilitarized just transition. (climatmiliarism.org/weekofaction)

A new era is here

Around the world, a movement for peace, care and responsibility, for each other and for the planet is growing. A world in peace, freedom and equality, with fair access to food, water and the necessities of life is possible. It is not a dream, but a choice. We are faced with a historic opportunity to shape a sustainable future, built on solidarity and justice. This is a call to action:

to dismantle the war economy and invest in a just transition – for peace, climate justice and common security.





We do it together

Let's create recurring days of action– locally, nationally and globally – where people, movements and communities unite in action. Let's turn despair into hope and action. The starting point will be the global week of action 15–21 September 2025, with the UN International Day of Peace on 21 September as the highlight. After that, we will continue – untiringly!

The aim is to:

- Awaken faith in the future through concrete solutions.
- Strengthen cooperation for Peace, environmental and climate justice.
- Inspire a demilitarized and just transition with respect for people and nature.
- Celebrate our ability to cooperate, compassion and change.

Our common ground

Under the slogan Peace on Earth & Peace with the Earth, we agree on:

- The equal value of all people – human rights, equality and solidarity.
- Peaceful cooperation – conflicts are resolved through dialogue, not violence.
- Care for the Earth – we take care of and protect our only home.
- The power of hope – hope is created through action.

A living movement for life

We want to build an open, non-partisan platform where diversity is seen as a strength.

- We choose life.
- We choose peace.
- We choose the future.

Together we create a world where both humans and nature can flourish.

We welcome art, conversations, school action: church services, concerts, peaceful manifestations and marches, where everyone contributes with their expressions under our common slogan.

Come along – for Peace on Earth & Peace with Earth!



**GLOBAL WEEK OF
ACTION FOR
PEACE AND
CLIMATE JUSTICE**

Human Rights in migration

Starting remarks and suggestions:

3 points amendments to HUMAN RIGHTS DECLARATION

The right to peace. / violation has to be accountable

If peace is not there - the right to human mobility!

In line with SDGs

The right conscious objections.

General reflection on the issue of HR compliance and peace efforts:

“All wars of today are composed out of the violation to the self-determination of the people”.

Main issues identified on migration:

1.) Problems in reception and means to claim access to asylum (pushback, reception and detention conditions)

2.) Problems concerning inadequate procedures (prolonged / inadequate judgements, lack of integration procedures)

3.) Problems in Return and Readmission (safe country of origin typology, lack of sufficient appeal instruments)

4.) What do we do now with the challenges (stronger unity on reporting, shared advocacy material, better awareness in the general public).

Other noteworthy issues:

The right for family reunification.

(no mechanism for reunification provision.)

rights for dissidents.

Conclusion:

What is happening with refugees in the EU is working in the favour of Russia.

What needs to happen:

Stronger movements in the countries of aggression.

Change official narratives against refugees and migrants.

Intersectional toolset approach (think additions such as: hate speech monitoring).

Long term statecraft solutions by Leo Gabriel:

“El Arraigo” - Concept of rootedness.

solidarity among institutions within regions. (various social fields need to collaborate by territory).

Not only aid via humanitarian assistance but through cohesive integration plans.

note taker Philip Polak

*To the right:
The migration forum in Honduras in April 2025 were the concept of rootedness “El Arraigo” was launched.*





Group discussion 3: Human Rights in migration



Above: The family photo
Below: The host Thomas Wallgren close the conference

One more birthday celebration: Peace and solidarity veteran Leo Gabriel 80 years



THE PEACE LAB

01. AUG. 2025

1. 13.00 - 13.30 : INTRO
2. 13.30 - 14.00 : EUROPE
3. 14.00 - 14.15 : BREAK
4. 14.15 - 14.45 : BEYOND EU.
5. 14.45 - 15.30 : MAXI BREAK
6. 15.30 - 16.30 : WORKING GROUPS

BASKET 1 : SECURITY

2 : ECONOMY-ECOLOG

3 : HUMAN RIGHTS

4 : FOLLOW UP

7. 16.30 - 17.00 : CONCLUSIONS
+ FOLLOW UP

↓

↓ PEACE STATION



Social gathering in the room outside the sauna at the Peace station



Meeting with Russian conscientious objectors

Ever since the offensive war against Ukraine began, media and public discussions have remarkably often conveyed a generalised image of the Russian people, as a more or less willless grey mass in the service of the war machine. A unique opportunity to get to know some Russian citizens who do not correspond to that image was provided in connection with the people's movements' own peace laboratory Peace Lab on Friday 1 August, when several of the participants held an evening gathering at the Peace Station in Pasila to continue developing friendship and cooperation in freer forms.

Enemy images are only destructive

Thanks to the flexible language assistance of the journalist living in Finland, Oksana Chelysheva, it will be a rewarding chat with four very different individuals, who nevertheless all have in common that they actively refuse to participate in the war and are therefore trying to create an existence for themselves in Finland in different ways. With varying success, it must be added.

During the interview, the uncomfortable feeling grows that Russian conscientious objectors are not particularly well received in our country. On the contrary, the immigration authorities should welcome them, considering how both the authorities and ordinary people in Finland condemn the Russian war of aggression. Ekaterina Arapova, whose nickname is Katja, grew up in the Karelian city of Petrozavodsk. Due to its complicated history, Petroskoi, as the town is also called in Finland, today has a mixed population of Russians, Karelians and Finns. When Katja's grandfather married a Finn, some expressed disapproval that he was allying himself with the "enemy" from the last war. - But he said he was used to such accusations, as his family had already been branded and expelled from their previous place of residence on unclear grounds, says Katja. She finds that all enemy images that are created are very harmful and destructive to people's lives. That is why she is a peace activist and fondly remembers the friendship meetings with other schoolchildren from Finland in the 1990s: "they came to visit and we traveled to Finland and greeted them". Katja's commitment to peace work is now of great use in Finland;

after 15 months of vocational training as a nurse, she has participated as a Red Cross volunteer and expert by experience in a rehabilitation project for women injured in the Ukrainian war. Katja's husband Sergei Arapov, on the other hand, does not consider himself particularly knowledgeable or committed to social issues, and he has never been politically active. - For example, I had no idea what to expect from this conference, I didn't even know if I should wear a suit... But now I have seen that the other participants in today's peace laboratory are also just ordinary people. Sergei explains why the couple are in Finland at all: - I absolutely cannot bring myself to serve in this war! We managed to escape to Finland, but many have never had the chance and are forced to act against their ideals.

Contacts and local friendships are essential

They now live in Kaskö, where they have actively tried to create friendships by volunteering in the local museum association. They express great gratitude that many Kaskö residents have been so friendly and helped in contacts with the Finnish migration authority Migri.

- When our first application for a residence permit was rejected, our new friends started a petition on their own initiative, there were 3 or 4 lists! And another friend made a recommendation that led to me getting a job at a kindergarten, says Katja.

Violetta Kholodkina, who has also come to Finland with her husband and three children, agrees. - If ordinary Finns support us who refuse to fight, we become visible and get attention from the local media. Back home, we are criminalized for refusing to fight and are forced to live under the threat of being sent to the front. As migrants in Finland, we often end up in difficult situations, but if we are accompanied by a Finnish friend who vouches for us, things usually get sorted out.

While Violetta's family has a background in the Jehovah's Witnesses movement, which consistently rejects military service, young electrician Daniil Mukhametov's refusal to fight stems from his strong opposition to the war in Ukraine. Knowing that several recruits have simply been forced to sign a draft order, he has traveled from his hometown in the Moscow region to relatives in Bashkortostan, where he has found a job. When, after a few months, his employer found out that Daniil was going to be called up for military service, he decided to leave Russia. He did so by taking the train from Adler to Kaliningrad, and jumping off as the train passed through Lithuania. By hitchhiking with cars and taking

local trains, Daniil managed to reach Finland that same day, where he was first registered as an asylum seeker.

But like the three others sitting and chatting on the Peace Station sofa, Daniil's life is also uncertain. At the moment, he only has permission to stay in Finland for a month and a half. In the entire region affected by the Ukraine war, many men live in great danger every day. Can you compare Sergei's and Daniil's experiences? - Yes, there is a big difference between us, but we are here for exactly the same reason! We don't want to get involved in a criminal war and do something that is so completely morally wrong, says Sergei, who will soon turn 50 and has completed his mandatory military service. Daniil, on the other hand, has not done military service as he was supposed to, and has been the subject of the authorities' attention at various times.

Just during the time we are talking, the media flow on Oksana's phone has time to show at least one notice that partly highlights the spectacularity of Daniil's escape from a moving train and partly claims that he is being detained in Lithuania, while he is sitting with us here in Pasila. He himself wearily waves the "news" away and seems to take it all in stride. The worst thing is the concern that family members who remain at home in Russia will be subjected to reprisals and harassment from various quarters, a concern that he shares with thousands of other conscientious objectors, not just from Russia.

The right to refuse weapons is a path to peace

One of three working groups or workshops during the previous day's peace laboratory, inspired by the "baskets" of cases that appeared during the Peace and Cooperation Conference in Helsinki in 1975, dealt with the topic of "Human Rights in Migration". There, the refusal to bear arms as a human right was also discussed. Violetta, among others, participated in that group. - My experiences did not really match what was said about the current legislation in that area. Many states simply do not seem to follow their own laws. Here in Finland, too, there are constantly new regulations on immigration. This creates impossible obstacles for asylum seekers to integrate. - Now I understand a little better what it is about, says Daniil, who says he has only heard a little about the OSCE before. The intentions are right and proper, I hope they are followed too. I learned a lot, and have met good people who are friendly and willing to help. Above all, Daniil has now developed contact with Belarusian opposi-

tion circles in Lithuania.

Fredsposten has previously reported on the organization Nash Dom or Our house, which is currently defending several other similar cases in contact with the Finnish Migration Agency. At the end of August, Oksana Chelysheva announced that Migri had an initial conversation with Daniil to determine whether he should be categorized as an asylum seeker, and that he was assisted by a lawyer who specializes in migration matters. Migri's decision will be made in a few weeks.

The asylum seeker's vicious circle

Katja can only describe Migri's general behavior as "ironic". All four Russian asylum seekers agree that they all want to contribute to society, but asylum seekers end up in a vicious circle. - Technically, many asylum seekers are usually offered some kind of work after some time in the country. I have the right to seek work and to be employed, says Katja. In order to obtain identity documents, we should present written employment contracts, and that is already too complicated for many employers. Now both Sergey and

I happen to have jobs at the moment, but that is only thanks to the leadership of the educational unit in our municipality standing up for us. Before that, I had made three applications in a row.

Violetta also has experience of a strange cycle when, while she was an asylum seeker, she started studying and was offered a job straight after graduating.

- But when the negative decision came, I was banned from working. Now, I have presented several projects but am not allowed to implement them either, so I am continuing to study to become a nurse at the university of applied sciences.

The declaration, which was one of the concrete results of the people's movements' democratic awareness of Helsinki +50, emphasizes in its points 4-7 that the rights of both migrants and conscientious objectors are fundamental for a common security concept to be developed. It is then vital that precisely such voices as these four are heard and taken into account.

Jonna Kevin



Final goodbye: To the left Philip Polak, to the right Thomas Wallgren

The Peace
Station



The day after at the top of the new library with a view of Finland Hall



Helsinki+50 report part II

This first part of the Helsinki+50 report will be followed by Part II. It will include an extensive analysis of the preparations and the activities in Helsinki as well as follow up activities and plans. Both for the official, semiofficial and people's levels.

These categories are formally defined by the following criteria: The official category is determined by the government with regards to content and with regards to who can participate in what capacity. Semiofficial being formally independent but primarily dependent on government funding and including a variety of actors not necessarily having a democratic base in local groups. Finally independent people's movements formally or informally organized in a democratic manner using a range of methods and building on all levels from local to national and international.

These categories are of course generalizations. Which one is more important in immediate or long term has to be empirically verified in each case. The Helsinki conference 1975 was only an official event and yet most actors including popular movements agree that the outcome was good.

The analytical part II will make an extensive analysis of all accessible texts, photos and videos from the website Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Finland to enable a comprehensive view of how the OSCE chairmanship has been managed. The same for semiofficial processes managed by Civic Solidarity Platform, European Network Remembrance and Solidarity and Historians without borders in Finland. The independent popular movement part will mainly address Helsinki+50 People's Initiative but briefly also separate activities by women's peace and anti-NATO efforts and others as pro-Ukraine antiwar and pro-Palestinian demonstrators.

After analysing each category a summary will look at three dimensions using the baskets in the Helsinki Accords on security, cooperation and human rights.

The construction of space and time by the different actors will get special attention including the use of both emotional and cognitive impulses. This includes also interplay between different activities whether done by the same or different actors

As the different actors achieved remarkably small attention in mass media no extensive study will be made of this aspect. More interest has been seen in intellectual magazines, by academics, think tanks, and popular movement organizations as well as podcasts. Arguments that have caused attention among organizers of events will be listed and if they contribute significantly to the main conflicts included in the analysis.

The empirical material will be tested in relation to main theoretical views on international relations as realism, liberal rule based order, world system theory, epistemic communities, resource mobilisation, sociological, and social anthropological approaches.

It is the hope that the extensive empirical material using both illustrations and text will make it easier for each and everyone to make their own opinion with the help of facts and theory. Focusing on such a combination of facts both in terms of quantity and quality and general theoretical categories applicable regardless if the actor can be defined in normative notions of good or bad might be useful in better understanding how to come to mutual understanding in spite of not being like-minded actors. Using narratives instead may be less useful.

The author of this report has a long experience in analyzing popular participation at summits and in world politics. Recently he was commissioned by civil society organizations cooperating with UNEP in Nairobi to make an extensive study of the UN Conference on Human Environment in Stockholm 1972 including the varied forms of independent and semiofficial activities which then occurred and shaped the way governments and movements addressed the issues afterward.

Tord Björk



Going home by ship passing the last
of Finland and the Åland islands