OSCE Human Dimension Seminar

THE ROLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS

CONSOLIDATED SUMMARY

Warsaw, 18-20 May 2011

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I. OVERVIEW

The Human Dimension Seminar on *The Role of Political Parties in the Political Process* (Warsaw 18-20 May 2011) provided an opportunity for representatives of the participating States, experts, and civil society actors to review the unique role of political parties in democratic political processes. The Seminar took the OSCE's body of commitments as a starting point for discussion, and examined how far these commitments were being implemented and what challenges existed in their implementation. In so doing, participants were called upon to consider how political parties are grounded in the OSCE commitments' overall vision of pluralistic democracy. The Seminar also offered participants an opportunity to consider three crucial issues from a closer perspective: the equal participation of women and men in political life as mediated through political parties; the legal regulation of political parties; and the growing importance of e-democracy tools as means of increasing participation and representation in the political process. Seminar participants – from all three branches of government, as well as academia and civil society – shared their experiences and proposed solutions to help address these challenges. The Seminar participants were aided by the expertise and insights of the keynote speaker as well as the introducers and moderators of the four working group sessions.

It was noted during the Seminar that despite the centrality of the issue to the OSCE's body of human dimension commitments, this was in fact the first Seminar devoted exclusively to the topic of political parties. Nevertheless, the role of political parties in the political process has been addressed before in human dimension events with a different emphasis. It is worth highlighting that the 2006 Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Strengthening Democracy through Effective Representation included a working session on political parties. More recently, the 2010 Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Promoting Gender Balance and Participation of Women in Political and Public Life included a session on measures to promote women as political party members and decision-makers.

Discussions during the Seminar highlighted that greater awareness is needed of the importance of political parties for observance of the overall set of commitments that the OSCE participating States have undertaken, and for the vision of institutions and practices which these commitments describe. Many speakers raised specific issues regarding the implementation of concrete OSCE commitments, particularly with respect to the need to protect the pluralism of political organizations at all stages of the political process. While much of the discussion focused on the differences in legal cultures regarding the operating frameworks of political parties, the importance of reconciling the need for regulation of political parties with the human dimension commitments was evident. In this regard, discussions were enhanced by the recent release of the OSCE/ODIHR – European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) *Guidelines on Political Party Regulation*.

Political parties are often referred to as the "gatekeepers" of democracy. Accordingly, throughout the Seminar participants highlighted how political

parties play a key role in facilitating women's access to political leadership and decision-making in public office. Seminar discussions also highlighted the importance of a comprehensive approach to ensuring the equal participation of women and men in political parties. Such an approach requires that political parties pay attention to the internal functioning of their party structures and systems and that they actively adopt practices and procedures that promote gender equality and women's leadership. Participants highlighted that any measures adopted to increase women's representation should result in their "meaningful" participation.

The Seminar was also the first opportunity – in an OSCE context – to consider in-depth the emerging and increasingly important topic of technology in the democratic process, often referred to as "e-democracy." This broad discussion allowed participants to share different experiences and case studies of new technologies being used to broaden access, participation, transparency, and representation in political life. While many perspectives were offered on this issue, a consensus among participants was also evident: communication, social networking, and internet-based applications are transforming the political process and political parties. At the same time, many participants underlined the need for fundamental democratic values, including those enshrined in the OSCE commitments, to be respected online as well as offline. Many calls were made for further engagement of the OSCE in this area.

The Seminar was not mandated to produce a negotiated text. The main conclusions and recommendations of the Seminar are included in Section II of this Summary. Recommendations put forward by delegations of OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation, international organizations, and NGOs are wide-ranging and addressed to various actors including OSCE institutions and field operations, governments, parliaments, courts, and civil society. Seminar conclusions and recommendations have no official status and are not based on consensus; however, they should serve as useful indicators for the OSCE in setting priorities and planning its programmes aimed at democratic governance and effective participation and representation. Documents from the Seminar are available at: http://www.osce.org/event/hds_2011

II. CONCLUSIONS AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2011 Human Dimension Seminar was chaired by Ambassador Janez Lenarčič, Director of ODIHR. The Chair addressed the opening and the closing plenary sessions (see Annex II), underlining the need for strong, accountable, and independent political parties in guaranteeing multiparty democracy and pluralism. He expressed appreciation to the participants for their contributions to the Seminar, and thanked the speakers from non-governmental organizations who were able to foster dialogue on political parties in the political process. The Chair made the point that political parties play a fundamental role in ensuring the full implementation of OSCE commitments, and expressed the view that the Seminar provided an excellent forum for exchanging experiences and good practices. He recalled that the

rationale behind holding Human Dimension Seminars is facilitation of such exchange on particular human dimension issues between experts and practitioners of the participating States. Therefore he called on participating States to demonstrate their commitment to making future seminars a success by attending and sending experts to participate. Moreover, he promised that ODIHR will continue providing assistance to the participating States in the areas discussed throughout the Seminar. The following conclusions and key recommendations emerged from the plenary and working group sessions.

Conclusions

Multiparty political landscapes help ensure the observance of principles of equality and effective participation in democratic institutions. In many participating States, there are still challenges to promoting pluralism, recognizing the value of political parties, and fulfilling the commitment to integrating opposition parties into the parliamentary system.

Protecting multiparty democracy requires that participating States abide by their commitments and put in place safeguards for pluralism. Arbitrary decisions of executive and judicial authorities should not undermine the clear obligations of States to protect the fundamentals of democracy, particularly fair electoral competition among both candidates and political parties. Level playing fields between political parties and candidates should also be guaranteed in order to promote and increase overall political participation.

The encouragement and promotion of equal opportunity for full participation of women and men in all aspects of political and public life is a key OSCE commitment. Political parties play a key role in realizing this commitment. It requires that political parties pay attention to the internal functioning of their structures and systems and adopt initiatives to enhance women's equal access to party resources.

Measures to support internal democracy may include developing clear and transparent rules of procedure for selecting candidates, nominating members to decision-making roles, and determining access to party resources and opportunities. These measures will prove most successful when complemented by targeted initiatives to promote women's participation, such as the adoption of voluntary quotas, gender equality policies, and capacity building programmes.

While legal regulations concerning political parties vary greatly amongst OSCE participating States, OSCE commitments should be reflected in such regulation where enacted. Moreover, implementation and realization of key elements of pluralism, including preventing the abuse of state resources for the benefit of ruling parties, should be ensured. Excessively rigid or non-transparent regulation should be avoided so that real competition can exist.

Increasing participation and representation further requires providing citizens the tools necessary to hold politicians and government accountable. Citizens also need access to non-classified data in order to contribute to society and enhance the democratic process. Participation can also be enhanced through

new e-tools and technologies, particularly providing access to information on political parties and the electoral process in the participating States.

Key recommendations

To the participating States

- Human dimension commitments, including those on fundamental rights and freedoms, need to be respected in order to allow for a vibrant multiparty democracy
- OSCE/ODIHR – Venice Commission Guidelines on Political Party Regulation, as well as the Copenhagen and Moscow Documents, should be considered and respected in practice when developing new legislation
- Where enacted, political party regulations should serve the development of multiparty democracy and not curtail it
- Participating states should seek ODIHR expertise in undertaking legislative reforms on political parties
- The importance of public financing in creating a level playing field for political parties needs to be considered
- Opposition parties need to be integrated into parliamentary systems, for instance by giving them important oversight chairmanships as well as appropriate funding to support their work in parliaments
- More thought needs to be devoted to how to encourage, facilitate, and where appropriate support practical cooperation between political parties across borders, including the sharing of information, ideas and expertise
- OSCE participating States should explore different types of quota systems, both legal (legislated quotas) and voluntary (internal political party quotas) to increase women's meaningful participation in political parties
- OSCE participating States and civil society should strengthen their co-operation in supporting women political candidates, by facilitating networking as well as equal access to skills and resources
- Full respect for freedom of association for minority women should be ensured
- OSCE participating States should promote e-democracy tools that can be used to reach out to women and vulnerable groups, and contribute to the achievement of gender equality in democratic processes

To the OSCE, its institutions and field operations

- The OSCE should deal more intensively – through meetings or projects – with the issue of political and parliamentary culture, including through developing recommendations on political parties in the political process.
- The OSCE should support participating States to ensure that political parties have access to and contact with relevant international organizations and parties abroad

- ODIHR should stand ready to provide assistance and expertise on the variety of measures available for promoting women's participation in political parties as well as in political and electoral processes more broadly
- OSCE/ODIHR should support further democratization of all internal processes within political parties
- OSCE/ODIHR should facilitate the establishment of initiatives to support solidarity among women and promote networks of women in civil society for the advancement of gender equality in politics
- The OSCE should support gender equality education for youth members of political parties and promote girls' active participation
- The OSCE should co-operate more actively with international organizations such as Council of Europe, UNDP and International IDEA, among others, to promote women's participation in local politics and create opportunities for women within political party structures
- In considering e-democracy, OSCE should address how its commitments can be guaranteed and implemented online as well as offline

III. AGENDA AND ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS

The Seminar on *the Role of Political Parties in the Political Process* was organized in Warsaw on 18-20 May 2011 by ODIHR in cooperation with the Lithuanian Chairmanship of the OSCE in accordance with PC Decisions No. 988 of 10 March 2011 (PC.DEC/988) and No. 994 of 31 March 2011 (PC.DEC/994).

This was the 27th event in a series of specialized Human Dimension Seminars organized by ODIHR further to the decisions of the CSCE Follow-up Meetings in Helsinki in 1992 and in Budapest in 1994. The previous Human Dimension Seminars were devoted to: Tolerance (November 1992); Migration, including Refugees and Displaced Persons (April 1993); Case Studies on National Minorities Issues: Positive Results (May 1993); Free Media (November 1993); Migrant Workers (March 1994); Local Democracy (May 1994); Roma in the CSCE Region (September 1994); Building Blocks for Civic Society: Freedom of Association and NGOs (April 1995); Drafting of Human Rights Legislation (September 1995); Rule of Law (November /December 1995); Constitutional, Legal and Administrative Aspects of the Freedom of Religion (April 1996); Administration and Observation of Elections (April 1997); the Promotion of Women's Participation in Society (October 1997); Ombudsman and National Human Rights Protection Institutions (May 1998); Human Rights: the Role of Field Missions (April 1999); Children and Armed Conflict (May 2000); Election Processes (May 2001); Judicial Systems and Human Rights (April 2002); Participation of Women in Public and Economic Life (May 2003); Democratic Institutions and Democratic Governance (May 2004); Migration and Integration (May 2005); Upholding the Rule of Law in Criminal Justice Systems (May 2006); Effective Participation and Representation in Democratic Societies (May 2007); Constitutional Justice (May 2008);

Strengthening the Rule of Law in the OSCE Area, with a special focus on the effective administration of justice (May 2009); Strengthening Judicial Independence and Public Access to Justice (May 2010).

The Annotated Agenda of the Seminar is supplied in Annex I. The Seminar was opened on Wednesday 18 May 2011 at 10:00 and closed on Friday 20 May 2011 at 17:00. All plenary and working-group sessions were open to all participants. The closing plenary session in the afternoon of 20 May focused on practical recommendations emerging from the four working group sessions. The plenary and working group meetings took place in accordance with the Work Programme. Ambassador Janez Lenarčič, Director of ODIHR, chaired the plenary sessions. The Rules of Procedure of the OSCE and the modalities for OSCE meetings on human dimension issues (PC.DEC/476) were followed, *mutatis mutandis*, at the Seminar. The guidelines for organizing OSCE meetings (PC.DEC/762) were also taken into account. Discussions were interpreted into all six working languages of the OSCE.[1]

IV. PARTICIPATION

The Seminar was attended by 235 participants, among them 110 representatives of 41 OSCE participating States,[2] seven participants of two Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation (Algeria, Morocco), and ten representatives of five international organizations (Community of Democracies, Council of Europe, International IDEA, UNDP, World Bank).

The Seminar was also attended by 27 representatives from 14 OSCE field operations (OSCE Presence in Albania, OSCE Centre in Astana, OSCE Office in Baku, OSCE Centre in Bishkek, OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, OSCE Mission in Kosovo, OSCE Mission to Moldova, OSCE Mission to Montenegro, OSCE Mission to Serbia, OSCE Mission to Skopje, OSCE Office in Tajikistan, OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan, OSCE Office in Yerevan). Seventy-eight representatives of 69 NGOs[3] took part in the Seminar.

V. SUMMARY OF THE PROCEEDINGS

Ambassador Janez Lenarčič, Director of ODIHR, opened the seminar. Welcoming remarks were made by Deputy Foreign Minister **Evaldas Ignatavicius,** on behalf of the Lithuanian OSCE Chairmanship, and Ms. **Grażyna Maria Bernatowicz**, Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland.

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[1] According to paragraph IV.1(B)1. of the OSCE Rules of Procedure (MC.DOC/1/06), working languages of the OSCE are English, French, German, Italian, Russian, and Spanish.

[2] This number includes experts from Ministries of Justice, courts and judicial councils of the participating States.

[3] This number includes political party representatives, universities, advocacy groups, democracy support foundations, research and academic institutes, and schools.

The keynote address was delivered by Judge **Alexandru Tanase**, of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldova. He stressed the importance of fair competition among political parties and of providing a true "level playing field." The development and stabilization of democracy requires the continual evaluation by participating States of political party regulations and levels of internal party democracy. Judge Tanase argued that political parties should be open to internal renewal and change, while higher levels of accountability and openness towards the media, civil society, and the public are required of today's political parties.

The keynote speaker further emphasized that beyond legal barriers, real representation can be hindered by the effect of different political systems on different groups in society. Specifically, women remain under-represented in political life and decision-making in most OSCE countries. Political parties have the capacity to be key vehicles for representation, but they can also be obstacles to change if they do not abide by the tenets of pluralism and multiparty democracy. Political parties are anchored within the overall institutional architecture and processes of the democratic state. Nevertheless, fundamental conditions must be in place in order to ensure that the interests and ideas of party members and supporters are made known to party leaders. These conditions include mandating that regulatory authorities remain neutral and objective in dealing with political party registration, political party finance, and the overall regulation of party activities.

According to Judge Tanase, political pluralism requires that parliaments find a role for opposition parties to contribute to the policy process. Parliament is the institution where political parties should be able to compete and collaborate for the good of society. Equal and fair participation in parliament requires all parties – government and opposition – to be responsible stakeholders in important public debates. The keynote speaker made it clear that there are sensitivities in regulating political parties but only free, vigorous, and vibrant political parties can give a voice to the people, and in turn give meaning to democracy.

After the opening plenary session of the Seminar, discussions took place in four consecutive working groups. The following reports are prepared on the basis of notes taken by ODIHR staff and presentations of the Rapporteurs, who summarized the working group discussions at the closing plenary session. These reports cannot exhaustively convey the details of the working group discussions but rather aim to identify their common salient points. The recommendations from working groups were not formally adopted by the Seminar participants and do not necessarily reflect the views of any participating State.

The Seminar also provided for informal **side-events** during lunch breaks. A schedule as well as titles and descriptions provided by the organizers of the side events are available at: http://www.osce.org/odihr/77445.

Working Group I
Political Parties and the OSCE Commitments

Moderator: **Prof. João Carlos Espada**
Chair of European Civilization, College of Europe, Warsaw, Poland
Director, Institute for Political Studies, Catholic University of Portugal

Introducer: **Dr. Aleksander Kynev**
Head of the Regional Programme, Foundation for Information Policy Development, Russia

Rapporteur: **Mr. Thomas Lenk**
Counsellor, Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany to the OSCE

The first working session addressed the OSCE commitments that relate to the role of political parties in the political process. Participants discussed the degree to which commitments have been implemented in OSCE participating States and addressed challenges related to their implementation.

To begin discussion on the topic, the introducer stated that a form of "mimicry" of political pluralism had emerged in some states, in which political parties were simply cosmetic and did not reflect the reality of social diversity. He stated that political party laws can be an instrument of party system development in one country but a method for stifling parties in another. As the introducer explained, there are ways in which party regulations can hinder political party emergence: registration requirements, restrictions on regional or minority party formation, and party funding requirements – in particular, public funding. In some cases such instruments have been used by ruling parties to monopolize political power and abuse state resources. The introducer called for the OSCE/ODIHR – Venice Commission Guidelines, as well as the Copenhagen and Moscow Documents, to be observed and respected in practice. He emphasized that these commitments should be utilized to specify and focus participating State regulations and legislation on political party regulations, while also restricting excessive state interference in political party activities.

A number of speakers found that the right legal framework alone did not suffice to guarantee democracy. They emphasized the need for it to be complemented by the appropriate political culture, which includes the relationship between majority and opposition parties, parliamentary speaking and debate culture, as well as the way in which politicians deal with failures and mistakes. They underlined that opposition parties need to be integrated into the parliamentary system. Some participants pointed out that their countries had made important progress in this respect. One speaker cited the measures in the new constitution of his country to restrict domination of the system by one party, which apparently had increased the legitimacy of the system. Others said their governments had made efforts to implement the

OSCE commitments, citing a variety of indicators, such as the number of political parties and the constitutional and legal framework on political parties in their countries. By contrast, some noted that the development of a genuine multiparty democracy was a historic process that required substantial time. Furthermore, they argued that not all commitments could be implemented one by one, as ethnic, security and economic considerations need to be simultaneously taken into account. One speaker observed that some parties in his country were not interested in seeking power, but happy to stay in opposition only to criticize.

Some participants questioned whether the leaders of their countries had sufficient good will to tolerate the emergence of real political parties. They described a situation in which multiple parties were registered formally, but where meaningful pluralism was belied by legal and other limitations of party formation and party work, and threatened by arbitrary decisions of executive and judicial powers. One participant argued that many OSCE participating States pretend to strive towards multiparty democracy, and the OSCE pretends to believe them.

Another participant concluded that party regulations were a critical element of multiparty democracy but that there exists no universal rule for such regulations. He considered that the aim should always be to regulate while not curtailing unnecessary the work of political parties. He called on the OSCE to remember and enforce those commitments expressed in the Copenhagen Document that explicitly call for international support for the development of political parties, noting that it had become very difficult in some countries to conduct party activities.

A number of speakers mentioned the current movement for greater democracy in the Arab world, and asked how popular energy could be channeled into the party system instead of into creating an anti-party culture. On a more general note, participants agreed that dissatisfaction with democracy was widespread, and could also be found in established democracies. Speakers reflected on how this could be countered. Guaranteeing internal democracy in political parties was cited as crucial to engaging citizens in political parties. Other speakers underlined the need for generational changes in politics, a broad social dialogue and ways of including marginalized groups, such as women, minorities, youth, and rural populations. Attention was draw to the fact that national political parties cannot deal with problems of a transnational nature alone. There was also some discussion regarding the relative merit, as well as impact on political pluralism and the dynamism of political parties, of proportional and majoritarian electoral systems.

In his concluding remarks, the introducer stated that too much focus on the electoral system was not useful; rather, the key issue in need of attention was access to the system itself. He underlined that political parties are the product of several factors and political party legislation is only one of them; the separation of powers/institutional design, electoral system, political culture and political traditions also matter. He noted that all OSCE commitments need to be respected to ensure a free multiparty system that respects basic

human rights such as freedom of association and freedom of assembly. Finally, he called on participating States to reference the OSCE/ODIHR – Venice Commission Guidelines in drafting legislation.

Specific recommendations included:

To the participating States

- Human dimension commitments, including those on fundamental rights and freedoms, need to be respected in order to allow for transparent, accountable multiparty democracy
- OSCE/ODIHR – Venice Commission Guidelines on Political Party Regulation, and the Copenhagen and Moscow Documents in particular, should be taken into consideration by participating States, political parties, and other stakeholders in developing new regulations
- Opposition parties need to be integrated into the parliamentary system, for instance by giving them important oversight chairmanships as well as appropriate funding to support their work in parliament
- The importance of public financing based on objective, fair and reasonable criteria in creating a level playing field for political parties needs to be considered
- Political party regulations should serve the development of multiparty democracy, and not curtail it
- More thought needs to be devoted to how to increase political parties' co-operation across borders
- Ways to increase political participation of women, youth and of marginalized groups should be looked into

To the OSCE, its institutions, and field operations

- ODIHR assistance should be made more specific and more focused in order to prevent excessive state interference in political parties
- The OSCE should deal more intensively – through meetings or projects – with the issue of political and parliamentary culture, including through developing recommendations on political parties in the political process.
- The OSCE should consider compiling good practices from participating States for enhancing political parties' accountability to the electorate
- The OSCE should provide real, practical support to ensure that political parties can receive international assistance
- ODIHR election observers should objectively describe the situation and not shy away from criticism
- The OSCE and other multilateral organizations should take a look at voter education and advocacy as a way of consolidating democracy in the longer-term

Working Group II
Equal Participation of Women and Men in Political Parties

Moderator: **Prof. Alla Kuvatova**
Executive Director, Association of Women's NGOs on Gender Equality and Prevention of Violence against Women, Tajikistan

Introducer: **Ms. Maria Rauch-Kallat**
Vice-President of the European People's Party Women's Group
Former Federal Minister for Health and Women, Austria

Rapporteur: **Ms. Anna Esko**
First Secretary
Permanent Mission of Finland to the OSCE

The second working session addressed the equal participation of women and men in political parties. As a starting point, the moderator, Ms. Alla Kuvatova, highlighted the role of political parties as "gatekeepers" of democracy, emphasizing a political party's ability to limit and facilitate access to power.

The introducer, Ms. Maria Rauch-Kallat, described the political participation of women in her country, Austria. She stressed the importance of encouraging solidarity among women politicians who are supportive of gender issues. Moreover, she emphasized the need to be vigilant, as gains in gender equality in the political sphere can be easily lost. The introducer listed several challenges that women face in politics. These include female modesty and lack of self-confidence, negative public opinion about the presence of women in politics, division of labour within families, and the predominance of male-oriented structures in political parties. The introducer highlighted that efforts to promote women's participation within political parties must be matched by initiatives to transform public opinion about women's presence in politics and combined with training of women to help facilitate their access to politics. Moreover, the introducer addressed the question of quotas and recommended their use while highlighting the importance of strategic career and/or campaign planning, not hiding one's achievements, identifying a mentor, consistently seeking and applying for good opportunities, being well prepared and well trained, building and using networks, and nurturing political ambition.

The subsequent discussion of the working group was lively, and a number of speakers drew attention to the need to provide education and training for women, so that they can improve their political skills and gain confidence in the political arena. It was also noted that there is a need to transform political culture and to improve the image of politics, thereby making politics more appealing and accessible for women. One speaker also referred to the role of the media and the need to improve how women are portrayed in the media.

Participants discussed different quota systems and other measures and targets in national strategies intended to increase gender equality. Whilst often effective, it was emphasized that quotas may sometimes be used for the wrong reasons. A number of speakers underlined that mentoring and identifying promising women to enter politics are important additional measures to ensure a comprehensive approach to increasing women's political participation and work in political parties.

Speakers in the second working group also addressed the role of parties as gatekeepers, and different ways to support women's participation were discussed. It was mentioned that there is a need to work both inside and outside the parties, to cooperate with men, with civil society, and across party lines. The importance of local-level capacity building was stressed, as were opportunities for women's participation at local and regional levels. Participants debated bottom-up versus top-down approaches, highlighting the need for parties to function bottom-up in order to be representative, whereas top-down change is also required to ensure and enforce equal opportunities for women within political party structures.

It was emphasized that women need to learn from each other, become pro-active, and use the support from different institutions and the international community. One speaker also pointed out that it is important to analyze why the situation has not changed and why women have not made use of all the available opportunities.

A number of NGO representatives referred to shortcomings and challenges in some OSCE participating States regarding their election system and political party legislation and regulations.

Specific recommendations included:

To the participating States

- Different types of quota systems, both legal (legislated quotas) and voluntary (internal political party quotas) to increase women's meaningful participation in political parties should be explored
- Political parties should be encouraged to develop clear and transparent criteria for candidate selection based on merit
- Political parties should be encouraged to organize capacity development training for women, both candidates and active politicians, in the area of public speaking, campaigning, and negotiation
- Respect for freedom of association for minority women should be ensured
- Efforts to improve women's representation in the media should continue
- Electronic democracy [e-democracy] tools that can be used to reach out to women and vulnerable groups, and contribute to the achievement of gender equality in democratic processes, should be promoted

To the OSCE, its institutions, and field operations

- The OSCE/ODIHR should aim to increase its programme support for the democratization of internal processes within political parties
- The OSCE should facilitate the establishment of women's networks at civil society level

- The OSCE should co-operate more actively with international organizations such as UNDP, NDI, and IDEA, among others, to promote women's participation in local politics and to create opportunities for women within political party structures
- The OSCE field operations should support female political party members to put forward their proposals on how to increase women's participation in political life
- The OSCE should support gender equality education for youth members of political parties and promote girls' active participation
- The OSCE should continue supporting political parties, NGOs, women's networks and participating States to empower women

To NGOs, international organizations, and other actors

- Women and girls' participation in educational and professional initiatives, such as political leadership academies, should be supported
- Political parties should have clear and transparent criteria for candidate selection, specifically with the aim of promoting equal opportunities for men and women.
- Study visits for female political party members to exchange experiences and good practices should continue to be supported
- Political parties should be encouraged to adopt voluntary gender quotas and to take other positive action measures at party level, particularly regarding decision-making structures and nomination processes

Working Group III
Regulations Regarding Political Parties in National Legislation

Moderator: **Prof. Daniel Smilov**
Programme Director, Center for Liberal Strategies, Bulgaria

Introducers: **Justice Andrzej Rzepliński**
President, Constitutional Tribunal, Poland

Mr. Sergej Muravjov
Executive Director, Transparency International, Lithuania

Rapporteur: **Mr. Hendrik Roggen**
Belgium

The first introducer of this Working Group, Justice Andrzej Rzepliński, President of the Polish Constitutional Tribunal, stated that since political parties stand at the heart of pluralistic democracies, legislation should allow for a wide spectrum of political parties. He stressed the need to prevent parties from having too much control over the State bureaucracy because parties that are too strongly linked with the State authorities may have the

power to transform the legal system in a way that eliminates political competition.

Justice Rzepliński also touched upon the question of the prohibition of political parties. In his view, political parties are a fundamental component in realizing the right to freedom of association. The law should be tolerant even to radical, anti-systemic parties, as long as they reject violence and accept a system of regular, free elections and do not militate against fundamental rights and freedoms. The best way to monitor and support political parties is by keeping them registered within the legal field.

The second introducer, Sergej Muravjov, Executive Director of Transparency International Lithuania, stressed that political party regulation is not a goal in itself. He highlighted that the general public has a low level of trust in politicians and invited discussion on accountability and transparency. Thought should also go into finding ways to motivate people to follow rules on transparency and accountability. He stated that the regulation of political parties cannot be done through a patchwork approach: a comprehensive platform is necessary. Sergej Muravjov concluded by asking whether the participating States are genuinely interested in making the regulatory framework on political parties work effectively in practice.

One speaker noted that the regulation process is an evolving one and that it aims at strengthening political parties and making sure they represent the various groups in society. Another speaker pointed out that strategies regarding political party regulation should be adapted according to the level of democracy in a country.

An additional speaker pointed to the need for trust between society and the State, and emphasized that a state that is opposed to political parties is detrimental to society. The danger of rigid regulation was also noted, as this can lead to the elimination of real competition.

The OSCE and the United Nations were called upon by another speaker to pool efforts in ensuring that international standards are implemented in national legislation.

Many participants gave examples of the registration processes for political parties in their countries, which often involve the collection of a number of signatures. Some speakers suggested that the numbers of required signatures are too high and disproportionate to the number of inhabitants. Others disagreed with this assessment.

A speaker pointed out that a holistic approach is needed to ensure effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in public life, and considered that this should not be confined to mere representation, but should also include influence on the decision-making process. This speaker argued that the goal of effective representation of persons belonging to national minorities in political life can be achieved through making electoral systems more minority friendly, for example by introducing open party lists.

While one speaker was of the opinion that electoral thresholds hamper effective participation of minorities, another disagreed, pointing out that minority candidates can be part of broader political parties and still defend their beliefs adequately.

Several participants made reference to the work and guidelines of the Council of Europe's Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO) and valued its work on political party funding. It was recommended that ODIHR carry out a comparison of the different pension systems for politicians in order to get a full picture of their earnings.

ODIHR was also asked to stipulate in its recommendations that state funding should be sufficient to enable parties to operate in a meaningful way.

Specific recommendations included:

To the participating States

- Political parties should be prevented from abusing state bureaucracy and resources
- Political party laws should be tolerant even to radical, anti-systemic parties, as long as they reject violence and accept a system of regular, free elections and do not militate against fundamental rights and freedoms
- Participating states should seek ODIHR expertise in undertaking legislative reforms on political parties
- When amending political party regulations and laws, participating States should consider the OSCE/ODIHR – Venice Commission Guidelines on Political Party Regulations

To the OSCE, its institutions and field operations

- The OSCE and other main international organizations should pool their efforts to ensure that international standards on political party regulations are implemented in national legislation
- ODIHR may recommend that state funding should be at sufficient levels to enable parties to operate in a meaningful way

Working Group IV
E-democracy: Increasing Participation and Representation

Moderator: **Mr. Simon Delakorda**
Director, Institute for e-Participation, Slovenia

Introducers: **Ms. Sheila Krumholz**
Executive Director, Centre for Responsive Politics, United States

Mr. Vladimir Churov

Chairman, Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation

Mr. Hannes Astok
Expert, e-Governance Academy, and former Member of Parliament, Estonia

Rapporteur: Mr. Simon Deignan, Attaché, Permanent Mission of Ireland to the OSCE

In the fourth working group, the introducers spoke on a variety of topics relating to the connections between new technologies and participation in political processes. First, increasing citizens' access to non-classified data should be a goal for every government and a variety of examples of how data can be used by groups to positively contribute to society was provided to the participants. The introducers further outlined the ways in which technology can be used in the electoral process, from giving access to information on party platforms, expenses and results, to e-voting. The introducers also noted the growth of citizens groups on social forums and asked whether these should be given a more important or more formal role in decision making.

In the discussion itself, all participants agreed that e-democracy can increase access to information, allow for better transparency and trust, augment the level of discussion and debate, and allow for more accountability and participation. Some stressed the importance of social networks, while others underlined the need for education in order to allow effective access to the internet across society.

A number of participants intervened to showcase examples of e-democracy in their countries. These included:

- Micro-democracies on social networks
- E-tools for public procurement
- Online questionnaires for people to assess what party best represents their voting interests
- The introduction of e-parliaments in national assemblies
- Automatic legislative procedures
- E-participation to increase youth involvement and translation into different languages
- Legislative tracking systems for voting and spending.

There was a comprehensive debate on whether the internet leads to democracy or simply enhances it. A number of participants felt that e-democracy could not transform authoritarian regimes into democratic ones and that e-democracy could not be a substitute for real democracy. They made the point that online activity does not automatically lead to action and that without proper identification it is difficult to negotiate with online movements as political forces. They stressed that e-democracy primarily improves the quality of democracy in established democracies. Others called for optimism and noted that the internet has reduced the transaction costs for social

actions; they gave examples of how social media and e-resources have been used by opposition parties in democratizing countries. There was also some discussion about the pros and cons of e-voting. Two advantages are that it can reduce costs and allow for voting from inaccessible areas for people with low levels of mobility, while the main disadvantage is that it can sometimes fail to guarantee voter secrecy.

Specific recommendations included:

To the participating States

- Citizens should be provided with tools to hold politicians accountable, which will in turn increase credibility and trust
- Investment should be made to explore possible uses of social media because its role in democracy is increasing steadily
- Political analysis capacity should be built in order to better assess the impact of e-democracy on democratic governance

To the OSCE, its institutions, and field operations

- Advice should be offered to countries wishing to introduce e-voting and more e-democracy applications
- The OSCE should act as a platform for discussion on how to use technology to increase participation and build a better quality democracy
- Online activity should be monitored for signs that governments may be using the internet as a surveillance tool
- A seminar dedicated to e-democracy should be organized
- Accountability and transparency in the OSCE region and openness of public organizations through e-tools should be promoted
- Best practice guidelines on government data availability should be provided
- The OSCE should act as a knowledge centre for e-voting
- The OSCE should partner with Transparency International to make e-tools more relevant

To NGOs, international organizations, and other actors

- Political parties and civil society should utilize e-democracy in the fight against corruption
- These organizations should advocate for data to be placed online, and commend politicians who take an online platform
- Academia should be encouraged to set up online voter aids

ANNEX I: ANNOTATED AGENDA

2011 HUMAN DIMENSION SEMINAR

The Role of Political Parties in the Political Process
Warsaw, 18-20 May 2011

I. Introduction

Human Dimension Seminars are organized by the OSCE/ODIHR in accordance with the decisions of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) Summits in Helsinki (1992) and Budapest (1994). The 2011 Human Dimension Seminar will be devoted to *The Role of Political Parties in the Political Process* in accordance with PC Decisions No. 988 of 10 March 2011 and No. 994 of 31 March 2011.

In numerous CSCE and OSCE documents, the participating States have confirmed the importance of political parties for a pluralistic democracy and a lasting order of peace, security, justice and co-operation. Importantly, in the Copenhagen Document (1990), participating States committed themselves to "*pluralism with regard to political organizations*" and "*a clear separation between the State and political parties; in particular, political parties will not be merged with the State.*" (Paragraph 5.4)

In the Copenhagen Document, the participating States further committed themselves to "*respect the right of citizens to seek political or public office, individually or as representatives of political parties or organizations, without discrimination; respect the right of individuals and groups to establish, in full freedom, their own political parties or other political organizations and provide such political parties and organizations with the necessary legal guarantees to enable them to compete with each other on a basis of equal treatment before the law and by the authorities.*"(Paragraphs 7.5 and 7.6)

In the Moscow Document (1991), participating States further affirmed that "*democracy is an inherent element in the rule of law and that pluralism is important in regard to political organizations*." In relation to women's access to public and political life, the OSCE Ministerial Council, in Athens in 2009 (Decision No. 7/09), called on participating States to promote the equal participation of women and men in political parties and to ensure more balanced participation of women and men in political and public life, especially in decision-making.

Political parties, as collective platforms for the exercise of individuals' fundamental rights to association and expression, act as "bridges" between citizens and the institutions of the state. Through the active engagement of their members and supporters, political parties develop and formulate policy

positions and programmes. Likewise, through internal processes, they act as mechanisms for the selection of candidates for election to democratic institutions. Thus, they help to ensure that the will of the people is reflected in democratic processes. At the same time, political parties provide clear means for people to exercise their right to hold those in power to account, by offering alternative policy options and the possibility of a peaceful change of government through democratic elections. Indeed, democracy derives its essential dynamism, openness and capacity for innovation from competition among political parties and candidates.

The OSCE's commitments and its past deliberations have also underlined the interaction between political parties and the political process. The Moscow Document clearly underlined that legislation must be formulated in a way that reflects "*the result of an open process reflecting the will of the people, either directly or through their elected representative.*" (Paragraph 18.1) This "open process" and its relationship with the political parties have been considered in previous Human Dimension events. For instance, at the 2004 Human Dimension Seminar on Democratic Institutions and Democratic Governance, former ODIHR Director Christian Strohal noted in his conclusions that political parties help to "*effectively articulat[e] the aspirations of significant parts of the population"* and that the "*extent to which political parties function democratically both internally and in relation to one another is critical in making democracy work.*"

This seminar on the role of political parties in the political process thus follows up on previous OSCE meetings on Electoral Processes (SHDM 2004), Democratic Institutions and Democratic Governance (HDS 2004), Strengthening Democracy through Effective Representation (SHDM 2006), Effective Representation and Participation in Democratic Societies (HDS 2007), Democratic Lawmaking (SHDM 2008), and Gender Balance and Women's Participation in Political and Public Life (SHDM 2010).

II. Aims

The 2011 Human Dimension Seminar on *The Role of Political Parties in the Political Process* will review mechanisms for ensuring the unique role of political parties in political processes, based on OSCE commitments. The seminar will review existing and new challenges to, and opportunities for, strengthening the role of political parties in the OSCE region, thereby assessing the lessons learned in over two decades of OSCE assistance to democratization processes.

The overall goal of the Seminar is to reinforce and recall the importance of political parties to the OSCE's notion of pluralistic democracy, accountability and participation in political life. Seminar participants may offer recommendations for participating States and the OSCE, in particular on such issues as political party legislation/regulation, internal party democracy, women's equal participation in political life, e-democracy, political parties in parliaments, as well as political parties and civil society.

The Seminar will focus especially on how political parties, as fundamental democratic actors, relate to citizens, resident non-citizens, other components of civil society, and state institutions such as parliament. One of the OSCE objectives, according to Article 26 of the Copenhagen Document and other commitments, is to support participating States in developing political parties and multiparty systems and to ensure that all political actors work to preserve this system regardless of which party is in power.

The Seminar will discuss relevant experiences and recommendations in four Working Groups. By means of introduction, the first Group will recall the unique standards contained in the OSCE commitments on political parties. The second Working Group will look in detail at the implementation of OSCE commitments for the equal participation of men and women in political life, through political parties and processes. The third Working Group will consider the policy challenges inherent in regulating political parties, and how regulations can be reconciled with the OSCE commitments in this field. Finally, the last Working Group will consider a new topic in the OSCE context, looking at how e-democracy tools can increase participation and representation in political parties and political processes.

This Human Dimension Seminar can be a platform for exchanging good practices among the participants regarding political parties and their role in the political process. It will build on the OSCE's innovative commitments concerning democracy and political parties. Furthermore, it will provide an opportunity to review OSCE experiences and to analyse lessons learned thus far from OSCE activities related to the role of political parties in participating States. The Seminar may also provide an opportunity for experts to discuss potential reform efforts and areas for possible future OSCE engagement.

III. Participation

Representatives of OSCE participating States, OSCE institutions and field operations, and inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations will participate in the Seminar.

The Seminar will be especially enriched by the participation of:

- Authorities responsible for drafting, regulating, overseeing, enforcing or adjudicating disputes in the field of political party legislation;
- Representatives of political parties;
- Bodies responsible for monitoring gender equality and encouraging women's participation in public and political life;
- Experts on democracy and governance support from national ministries or development agencies;
- Representatives of bodies involved in implementing e-democracy projects.

For this purpose, participating States are requested to publicize the Seminar widely and to include, wherever possible, such representatives in their delegations.

The Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation as well as other Partners for Co-operation are invited to attend and share their experiences concerning the role of political parties in the political process.

All participants are encouraged to submit in advance written interventions on their respective work and proposals regarding the subject of the Seminar, which will be distributed to delegates. Participants are also encouraged to make oral interventions during the Seminar. While prepared interventions are welcomed during the Plenary Sessions, free-flowing discussions and exchanges are encouraged during the Working Group sessions.

IV. Organization

The Seminar venue is the "Novotel Warszawa Centrum" Hotel in Warsaw, Ulica Marszałkowska 94/98.

The Seminar will open on Wednesday 18 May 2011 at 10 a.m. It will close on Friday 20 May 2011, at 6 p.m.

All plenary sessions and working group sessions will be open to all participants. The plenary and working group sessions will take place according to the Work Programme below. Four working group sessions will be held consecutively. They will focus on the following topics:

1. Political parties and the OSCE commitments
2. Equal participation of women and men in political parties
3. Regulations regarding political parties in national legislations
4. E-democracy: increasing participation and representation

The closing plenary session, scheduled for the afternoon of 20 May 2011, will focus on practical suggestions and recommendations for addressing the issues discussed during the working group sessions.

A representative of the ODIHR will chair the plenary sessions.

The Rules of Procedure of the OSCE and the modalities for OSCE meetings on human dimension issues (Permanent Council Decision No. 476) will be followed, *mutatis mutandis*, at the Seminar. Also, the guidelines for organizing OSCE meetings (Permanent Council Decision No. 762) will be taken into account.

Discussions during the Plenary and Working Group sessions will be interpreted from and into the six working languages of the OSCE.

Registration will be possible during the Seminar days from 8:00 until 16:30.

By prior arrangement with the OSCE/ODIHR, facilities may be made available for participants to hold side events at the Seminar venue. A table for display/distribution of publications by participating organizations and institutions will also be available.

WORK PROGRAMME
Working hours: 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. and 3 – 6 p.m.

	Wednesday 18 May 2011	Thursday 19 May 2011	Friday 20 May 2011
Morning	Opening plenary session	Working Group II	Working Group IV
Afternoon	Working Group I	Working Group III	Concluding plenary session

WORK PLAN

Wednesday 18 May 2011

10:00-13:00 Opening Plenary Session

Welcome and introduction from the Seminar Chair

Ambassador Janez Lenarčič
Director of the OSCE/ODIHR

Welcoming Remarks

Ms. Grażyna Maria Bernatowicz
Under-Secretary of State
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Poland

Mr. Evaldas Ignatavicius
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
Lithuania

Keynote Speaker:

Judge Alexandru Tanase
Judge of the Constitutional Court and Former Minister of Justice of Moldova,

15:00-18:00 Working Group I:
Political parties and the OSCE commitments

Moderator: **Prof. João Carlos Espada**
Chair of European Civilization, College of Europe, Warsaw, Poland
Director, Institute for Political Studies, Catholic University of Portugal

Introducer: **Dr. Aleksander Kynev**
Head of the Regional Programme, Foundation for Information Policy Development, Russia

Rapporteur: **Mr. Thomas Lenk**
Germany

OSCE participating States have undertaken commitments by which they recognize the central role that political parties play in democracy and its processes. They have specifically committed themselves to respect the rights to establish political parties and organizations,[4] seek political and public offices as representatives of political parties and organizations,[5] fair electoral competition among candidates as well as political parties, and access to the media.[6] In this regard, political parties can be seen as structures through which individuals join together and collectively exercise their recognized rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly.[7] These are specific commitments related to the establishment and activities of political parties.[8] Furthermore, the Copenhagen Document encourages practical international co-operation for the shaping of "vigorous democracy" (Paragraph 26). The OSCE has been guided by this *acquis* in its actions and programmes to support and strengthen political pluralism. The commitments have also served as an example for other actors at the global level and in the OSCE region.

The role of political parties as vehicles for participation, political debate and competition is sensitive and complex. Nevertheless, the importance of political parties to the health of political participation and democracy makes it important to assess the advances that have been made and challenges faced in the implementation of these commitments. This discussion can be the basis for recommendations and action by participating States as well as OSCE structures. Issues that can be covered in this session include:

- Implementation: How has the implementation of the commitments on political parties been monitored and reported on? How has implementation of these commitments advanced and improved? Which commitments have been particularly challenging in their implementation? How have these challenges shaped our understanding of the commitments? Are additional commitments and guidance/advisory documents needed to help participating States tackle these challenges?
- The political process: How can greater participation in the political process be encouraged? What is the link between multiparty systems, pluralism in institutions and processes, and the OSCE commitments? What steps can be taken to ensure that there is a clear separation between the state and political parties?
- The OSCE, its Institutions and Field Operations: What work has been done by the OSCE to strengthen awareness and implementation of

[4] Copenhagen Document (1990), Paragraph 7.6.
[5] Copenhagen Document (1990), Paragraph 7.5.
[6] Istanbul Summit Declaration (1999), Paragraph 26.
[7] Copenhagen Document (1990), Paragraphs 9.1, 9.2, and 9.3; Istanbul Summit Declaration (1999), Paragraph 26.
[8] These commitments should be considered along with the general recognition of the importance of pluralism with regard to political organizations in OSCE States. *See* Copenhagen Document (1990), Paragraph 3.

OSCE commitments on political parties and the political process? How has this work evolved? In what directions should programmatic assistance move?

Thursday, 19 May 2011

10:00-13:00 Working Group II
Equal participation of women and men in political parties

Moderator: **Prof. Alla Kuvatova**
Executive Director, Association of Women's NGOs on Gender Equality and Prevention of Violence against Women, Tajikistan

Introducer: **Ms. Maria Rauch-Kallat**
Vice-President of the European People's Party Women's Group
Former Federal Minister for Health and Women, Austria

Rapporteur: **Ms. Anna Esko**
Finland

OSCE commitments emphasize that inclusive, democratic governance requires the equal participation of men and women in political and public life. Yet across the OSCE region, women are systematically under-represented in political and public office. Furthermore, their particular needs and concerns often go unaddressed in policy platforms. As "gatekeepers" of democracy, political parties play a critical role in facilitating women's equal access to and participation in the political process.

Legislated gender quotas constitute an effective "fast-track" method for increasing the number of women in elected public office, particularly as political party candidates. However, in the absence of a holistic approach to their implementation, quotas can actually serve to marginalize women within political processes and institutions. Furthermore, it is often the internal regulatory frameworks governing political parties themselves that create direct and indirect barriers to women's effective participation. A comprehensive approach to increasing women's participation and representation should therefore include a variety of voluntary measures focused specifically on addressing internal party barriers. These may include capacity building, awareness raising of political party members, coalition-building, developing equal opportunities policies and gender equality strategies, and designing targeted interventions to create a truly equal playing field for both male and female political party members.

This session will present an opportunity to discuss the range of voluntary measures beyond legally binding quotas to increase women's participation as political party members, leaders and candidates for public office, in line with representative democratic principles. Session participants will also explore conceptual differences between women's "representation" and women's "participation" in political parties, and the consequences of these differences on women's political engagement. Drawing on good practices from participating States, the session will focus on exploring both "supply- and

demand-side" factors that may incentivise political parties to prioritise women's participation as a critical component of a pluralistic political process.

15:00-18:00 Working Group III:
Regulations regarding political parties in national legislation

Moderator: **Prof. Daniel Smilov**
Programme Director, Center for Liberal Strategies, Bulgaria

Introducers: **Justice Andrzej Rzepliński**
President, Constitutional Tribunal, Poland

Mr. Sergej Muravjov
Executive Director, Transparency International, Lithuania

Rapporteur: **Mr. Hendrik Roggen**
Belgium

The role of political parties in the democratic process is well-known and established. However, in striving for the effective implementation of the OSCE commitments on political parties and pluralism, one of the key issues in implementation arises over the regulation of political parties. Legislation on political parties is still a relatively recent phenomenon, even in states with an established history of multiparty democracy. Thus, different traditions, with varying degrees of, and emphases in, regulation have emerged, without however precluding the possibility of common elements, derived from democratic principles. Regulation customarily covers such points as: party registration and territorial representation requirements, decision-making procedures on registration and appeals, sanctions, obligations and rights of membership, party funding, internal party democracy, and the supervision of political parties.

In this session, participants will look at the way in which OSCE commitments have been implemented through national, legal, and regulatory frameworks on political parties. They will look at how regulations can affect pluralism, equal representation, participation, and transparency. The session will encourage discussion on how to strike a balance between the non-interference of states in internal operations of political parties and introducing regulations that would ensure a level playing field.

Issues such as financing, registration, membership and territorial requirements have been regulated in various ways by OSCE participating States; the session will provide an opportunity to survey good practices in the regulation of these and other matters. In this regard, the Guidelines on Political Party Regulation, developed over the last two years by ODIHR together with the Venice Commission, can provide varied examples of state practice on the regulatory frameworks applied in participating States as well as offer a clear outline of the relevant human rights obligations. The Guidelines also deal with issues that can be discussed in this session, such as the role of independent candidates and their right to run for office free from

political party association and the issues related to the funding of political parties, particularly receiving of public funds.

In addition, this session can feature the efforts of civil society to analyze and monitor the implementation of political party regulatory frameworks in OSCE participating States. Participants may also wish to discuss and consider the impact on political pluralism of inadequate, unclear, or excessive regulation of political parties. In this latter context, participants may also want to consider the benefits and drawbacks of different models of political party regulation, administration, and enforcement.

Friday, 20 May 2011

10:00 – 13:00 Working Group IV
E-democracy: increasing participation and representation

Moderator: **Mr. Simon Delakorda**
Director, Institute for e-Participation, Slovenia

Introducers: **Ms. Sheila Krumholz**
Executive Director, Centre for Responsive Politics, United States

Mr. Vladimir Churov,
Chairman, Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation

Mr. Hannes Astok
Expert, e-Governance Academy, and former Member of Parliament, Estonia

Rapporteur: **Mr. Simon Deignan**
Ireland

Few areas of our societies have not been affected by the rapid emergence of new information and communication technologies. In recent years, there has been in particular a marked acceleration in the use of social, interactive, and participatory internet-based technologies that allow the average online user – and citizen – to easily generate, share, and discuss information. These innovations have also affected the mechanisms of democracy to the point where there is a growing body of practices that is collectively referred to as "e-democracy", difficult to ignore in any discussion on democratic life. Part of this "e-democracy" has been observed in the way political parties and the political process operates.

This session will look at how political parties and the political process are changing through the introduction of new information and communication technologies, creating opportunities for greater participation, representation, accountability and transparency. At the same time, participants should consider the impact that these innovations could have on the implementation of OSCE commitments, and what role the OSCE and ODIHR might have in

developing an understanding of the possibilities and challenges of such new tools.

Thus, participants could consider:

- How e-democracy tools have been able to increase internal party democracy, in particular by increasing citizen input into (party) policy and manifesto development, and candidate selection;
- The impact of e-tools on political campaigning, including through tools for citizens to compare and contrast party programmes, for citizen grass-roots organizing within political campaigns
- E-tools for increasing accountability and transparency; for instance, monitoring political and campaign finance; keeping track of parliamentarians' assets, interests, activity and voting records;
- How e-tools have increased possibilities for citizen input into policy making, legislation drafting and decision making processes (e.g. through e-petitions, public commenting on draft legislation);
- The possible impact of e-tools on the participation of groups that are socioeconomically, geographically, culturally, or physically disadvantaged, and are as such often under-represented in public and political life; Whether or not e-tools are actually able to reach out to otherwise excluded groups of citizens or if they are only "engaging the already engaged";
- What lessons can be learned from projects to use e-democracy tools; what potential pitfalls should be considered; How this work has evolved, and in which direction it should go.

15:00-18:00 Closing Plenary Session

Rapporteurs' summaries from the Working Groups

Statements from Delegations

Closing Keynote Speaker

Ms. Lina Petroniene
Head of Division for Political Party and Campaign Funding Control
Central Election Commission of Lithuania

Closing Remarks

Amb. Janez Lenarčič
Director of the OSCE/ODIHR

Closing of the Seminar

ANNEX II: OPENING AND CLOSING REMARKS

OPENING REMARKS

Ambassador Janez Lenarčič
Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me extend a very warm welcome to everyone here at the 2011 Human Dimension Seminar on the role of political parties in the political process. I believe it is only fitting that vital topics of pluralism and multiparty democracy are discussed as we celebrate the 20th anniversary of ODIHR.

I am delighted that we have a large number of participants here, including many distinguished members of parliaments and representatives of NGOs and political parties. I am confident that they will contribute with authority on questions relating to democratic institutions, effective representation, and women's participation in political life.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Lithuanian OSCE Chairmanship, and in particular the Chairman of the Permanent Council, Ambassador Renatas Norkus, for promoting this Seminar as an opportunity to evaluate to which extent our commitments on political pluralism and political parties are being implemented.

During these three days, we will have the opportunity to discuss important issues such as pluralism, multiparty democracy, the equal participation of women and men in political parties, and e-democracy. You all will be able to analyze the unique role that political parties play in democratic processes, recognizing that democracy goes beyond democratic elections and that political parties must form its foundation.

We all know that without strong and independent political parties, societies cannot ensure stability and good governance. Political parties should protect effective representation and participation through vibrant debate and competition. This requires a political environment in which political parties are developed and political awareness among citizens promoted.

It has been said that a primary criterion for democracy is equitable and open competition for votes between political parties without government harassment or restriction of opposition groups. And indeed, the vibrancy of political parties in modern democratic societies determines how effectively people are represented in government.

Yet we are holding this Seminar at a time when political parties throughout the OSCE region are facing serious obstacles, including the lack of adequate

financing, weak legitimacy among citizens, unequal access to media and other resources, and restrictions on their public activities. We often hear that "political parties have little capacity to effect change in society" – this criticism is still pervasive. All of us face the continued challenge that political parties are perceived as corrupt and dominated only by narrow interests. In many countries, there is a common view that all political parties are the same; they have vague platforms, or do not represent vulnerable groups.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The WG this afternoon will address the implementation of OSCE commitments related to political parties. Starting from the OSCE's Copenhagen Document, the OSCE has set clear obligations to protect democracy. Among them is notably the recognition that there should be fair electoral competition among both candidates in elections and political parties. Respect for the role of political parties contributes substantially to the likelihood that governments will reflect the will of the people.

The WG tomorrow morning will deal with equal participation of women and men in political parties. Also here, we have a clear normative basis: OSCE Ministers have stressed the importance of gender equality in all aspects of the political process most comprehensively in *MC Decision No. 7/09 on Women's Participation in Political and Public Life*. This WG should reflect on the progress that has been achieved thus far, the persistent challenges that hinder women's access to decision-making in political parties, and measures political parties can adopt to promote women's participation as leaders, decision-makers and candidates for public office.

The third WG will be devoted to the regulation of political parties in national legislation. Participants will focus on how OSCE commitments should be reflected in the regulatory and operating frameworks of political parties. Let me only add here that OSCE/ODIHR together with the Venice Commission recently developed Guidelines on Political Party Regulation which we will present during this Seminar, and we invite all those present to carefully consider this document in their future activities.

In our fourth and final WG we will, for the first time in a Human Dimension Meeting, discuss the issue of participation in - and representation through - new technologies and e-tools. The average person is increasingly able to bring change to all levels of government through increased online information sharing and networking tools; political parties are learning to adapt as well. This WG will reflect on the relationship between OSCE commitments and new tools of technology that can have a direct impact on democratic participation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Political parties and political pluralism are central to ODIHR's work in the field of democratic governance and elections. Our work has focused on assisting states in putting in place the elements of a multi-party democratic system, in particular through legislation. For instance, ODIHR's opinions on

political party laws and related legislation have helped a number of participating States reform their legal framework.

Upon request from participating States and OSCE Field Operations, we have provided expertise on various issues related to political parties, including on party finances and the abuse of state resources. In a number of countries, our Office has worked with local think tanks to foster dialogue on reforming political party legislation and regulation. We have also carried out expert assessments of legislative systems and provided recommendations on improving the openness, transparency, and efficiency of democratic lawmaking.

My hope for this Seminar is twofold: first, that we will openly discuss the role of political parties for political pluralism and the challenges they sometimes face; and second, that this conversation will provide real momentum for implementing concrete steps to guarantee the promises of democracy that the OSCE participating States have made to their citizens and to each other.

Thank you.

OPENING REMARKS BY JUDGE ALEXANDRU TANASE

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to start by thanking the Lithuanian Chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, as well as the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, for giving me the honour to deliver the keynote address at the opening of this Human Dimension Seminar on "The Role of Political Parties in the Political Process".

It is a point of special pride for me that I am able to participate in this Seminar in the context of a number of auspicious anniversary celebrations in the OSCE: twenty years of the work of ODIHR, and two decades of the ground-breaking declarations and documents – including the Paris Charter, and the Copenhagen and Moscow Documents – which deepened and expanded the base of political principles that shape this organization's work in the field of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. These anniversaries – and their coincidence with the twentieth anniversaries of the momentous changes in Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, - reflect how deeply the work of the OSCE organization has been entwined with this period. I deeply hope that my remarks may do justice to this occasion, and may be a valuable contribution to this seminar.

With your permission, I would like to shape my remarks around some reflections that grow out of the milestones of my career. I am especially fortunate to have looked at, and dealt with "political parties in the political process" as a lawyer, political party leader, and as an official in all three branches of government. I worked as a lawyer, advocating cases all the way to the European Court of Human Rights, which had an effect on political parties in Moldova. I have also been involved as a leading founder of a political party, and as a candidate, and later MP, for that party in parliament. Later, as Minister of Justice, I had direct responsibility for the oversight of political party regulation. Thus, I have litigated for parties, participated and lead a party, and been a regulator of parties.

If we look back twenty years, to 1990 and 1991, we will find that many countries in the OSCE region were in Moldova's position: attempting to start anew on the path of multi-party democracy, but faced with the legacy of systems that enshrined fundamentally different ideas about parties and their role in the political process. To illustrate this, I can recall the way in which the Constitution of Soviet Union enshrined the Communist Party as the "core of the political system" and as the "leading and guiding force of Soviet society". Similarly, here, in Poland, the Constitution, specifically recognized that "the Polish United Worker's Party" would have the "leading role among political forces in society". It is remarkable to consider how far we have come since these days. Twenty years' later, no participating State of the OSCE has such "leading party" provisions in its constitution. This must be seen as a major achievement. Nevertheless, as the saying goes, "old habits die hard". While leading parties are no longer inscribed in our constitutions, the idea that the

party of those in power counts more than other parties still unfortunately echoes in our minds and practices. This must change.

In many transition countries, moving away from the idea that the ruling party is "*the* Party" or is "first among equals" has not always been easy. Too often, we have seen situations where parties, once they gain power, use the power of the state to intimidate, harass, and obstruct the work of other political parties. In my own career, I became involved with the launching of a party – the Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova. As a former political party leader and politician, I can assure you that the thought that one is entering an "unfair competition" with a dominant party or parties can be a major deterrent to political participation and engagement. Thus, I call on you today to keep in mind how our democracies can be strengthened to provide a true "level playing field" for all political parties, and in which the tools of office are used to govern in the name of all, and not to attack in the name of few.

In terms of the party system and political parties, the transformation took place at at least two levels. The first level would be the introduction of the idea of equal and fair competition among several political parties – "pluralism in political organizations", as the OSCE Moscow Document of 1991 refers to it. Thus in many other countries, the transition to democracy brought with it a dynamic increase in the number of political parties registered and operating in the political system. This led to new challenges – not least, how to regulate the registration, operation and role of these parties in the democratic system. These are issues which continue to be contentious and crucial to the right development and stabilization of democracy, and I hope and expect that this Seminar – in particular Session III, on the regulation of political parties – will address some of these key issues in depth.

The relationship of the public, to the party has also changed. With the changes twenty years ago, the notion of "top-down leadership" disappeared, to be replaced with the idea that political parties should be based on the impulses and activities of its members from below, and should be open to internal renewal and change. In other words, not only is democracy defined by political parties, but political parties should be defined by "internal democracy". I would argue that the emergence of this idea in post-communist countries is only part of a wider phenomenon seen in all democracies. Parties are less and less seen as "machines" with "bosses", "oligarchs", and "barons", and more as transparent organizations in which individual members – and their voices and votes – carry greater weight. Parties are also less frequently seen as closed private clubs, but rather as public goods, from whom much is expected and demanded. Higher levels of accountability and openness towards the media, towards civil society, and the public at large are all required of parties today.

Both of these levels – the relationship between parties, and the relationship between the public and parties – are crucial to how we think about political parties in the political process. Parties – we often hear – are vehicles to transmit the ideas and interests of citizens from the grassroots into the institutions of governance. Indeed, the relevance of political parties has now been firmly anchored within the overall institutional architecture and processes of the democratic state. Modern elections, parliamentary systems,

and the way in which governments are formed out of these, are unthinkable without political parties.

Speaking as someone who has helped to establish a party, run as its candidate, and won an election, I can say that I have been part of this mechanism of transmitting "ideas and interests" from citizens to governance. However, if this mechanism is to work, I would argue that three fundamental conditions need to be in place. First, there needs to be a way for the ideas and interests of party members and supporters to actually make themselves known to party leaders. In other words, internal party democracy is a key vehicle for generating genuine political choice that has roots in society. Second, choice must be varied: unless real political pluralism exists, political parties cannot be said to represent the people. In this context, we have to think carefully about why we restrict the formation and registration of political parties – do unnecessarily high or arbitrary barriers exist for creation and registration of new political parties? Let us be honest about the way in which such barriers can limit and deter participation, and think carefully about how regulation can be designed that does not hinder the rights of citizens to participate in the political process. Parties must be able to compete and win freely and fairly in elections. This is crucial if multi-party democracy is to have any meaning at all.

Third, beyond legal barriers, we should also think about the ways in which real representation can be hindered by how our political systems impact differently on diverse groups in society. For instance, women remain under-represented in political life in most OSCE countries – not enough women are elected into institutions from political parties. We must ask ourselves some tough questions about how political parties – as key vehicles of representation – can be obstacles to change as well as forces for reform in this aspect, and I hope that the Second Working Group of this Seminar will address these issues in depth.

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Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Once within the institutions of government, parties do indeed have a crucial role to play in shaping the political process. As a former member of parliament, I would suggest that a crucial and complex element is the relationship between parties and parliaments. I would offer a number of reflections in this regard.

Parties are fundamental to structuring the work of modern parliaments, providing discipline and clarity in debating and voting procedures. At the same time, as parties offer choice and a contrast of policies in society at large, so parties in parliament must represent a spectrum of voices, ideas and interests in the political process. In modern democracy, the legislature is the only branch of government where the multi-party system is permanently recognized.

How parliaments deal with the political parties sitting within them should thus be a key measure of how pluralism is respected as a whole. Genuine pluralist parliaments need to find a role for the opposition parties to contribute to the policy process – and that also means having an actual legislative and policy process with parliaments at its core. A parliament in which draft laws can be analyzed, debated and amended, backed up by genuine expertise and the input of civil society. A parliament in which all members can ask questions - to hold the government and other members to account. All too often, however, parliaments are subjected to a "winner-takes-all" approach, in which the ruling party, from the commanding heights of the executive, uses parliament merely as a formal mechanism for approving laws. Laws are "rubber stamped" onto the statute book with little real discussion, consultation, evaluation, or compromise. One of the side effects of this is that quality loses out to efficiency in the lawmaking process – laws are adopted simply too quickly.

Parliament is the institution where political parties should be able to compete and collaborate for the good of society. Where one party dominates, and the opposition is excluded from policy processes in parliament, politics can become tense, polarized and "zero-sum". As a result parliament becomes its worst caricature – a chaotic arena of bitter confrontation, leading many to question its use. Worse still are situations where the opposition is not even in parliament. Such situations in the long-term damage both political parties as well as the institution of parliament itself. Multi-party democracy and pluralism – its wealth of ideas, diversity of views, and tolerance of dissent - cannot be said to fully exist, I would argue, if it is not reflected in parliament. And parliament cannot fulfil its role if this diversity of views is not adequately reflected in it.

Furthermore, parliaments as forums of debate, discussion, and decision are crucial for helping to shape the essence of multi-party democracy – alternatives and choices. Where parliaments do not debate and decide, parties outside government cannot have a chance at presenting themselves to citizens as alternative stewards of the people's trust. Equal and fair participation in parliament requires *all* parties – government and opposition - to be responsible stakeholders in public debates. We must think of parliament as one of the great stabilizing mechanisms of democracy – where parties in opposition have participated fully and fairly in parliament, the more likely they will be to act as stakeholders in the system of government as a whole. On the other hand, when the opposition is shut out of parliamentary debates and procedures, or even out of parliament as a whole, the opposition is only likely to grow weaker or more radical. Weak parliaments and weak parties thus feed on each other in a vicious circle. I would urge you – in your deliberations over the coming days – to consider this essential relationship between parties and parliament, and what recommendations and good practices can be formulated to create robust multi-party democracy with plural and strong parliaments.

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Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I have mentioned earlier that the proper regulation of political parties has been one of the key challenges in building pluralistic party systems. Indeed, I believe this issue is fundamental, and I strongly welcome the fact that the OSCE ODIHR has in 2010, together with the Venice Commission, published *Guidelines for Political Party Regulation*.

In my career – as a lawyer and as a Minister of Justice – I have had to engage deeply with this issue, and would like to share some thoughts on it. As Minister of Justice, I worked hard to ensure that regulatory authorities remain neutral and objective in dealing with the process of political party registration, political party finance, and regulation of party activities. It was, and still remains, my strong belief that regulations must always be applied in an objective and non-discriminatory manner, and that parties should be subject to the same regulatory provisions and be provided equal treatment in the implementation of regulations. It is also crucial to ensure that parties have the right to appeal decisions by regulatory bodies before a court of law, and that authorities can be held accountable for their decisions.

The sanctions, if any, which are applied to political parties must at all times be objective, enforceable, effective and proportionate to their specific purpose. We should be mindful, in this context, of what the European Court of Human Rights ruled in the case of *Christian Democratic People's Party (CDPP) vs. Moldova*, which concerned a temporary ban on an opposition party from holding "meetings" in front of the seat of government, which authorities had classified as unauthorized demonstrations. The Court's judgement in this case very well illustrates the sensitivities in regulating political parties. The Court found a violation of Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights, stating in particular that even a temporary ban on the party's activities can have a "chilling effect" on the party's freedom to exercise its freedom of expression and to pursue its political goals (especially if enforced on the eve of the local elections) and thus be unjustified in a democratic society.

Speaking in a more personal capacity – not as a former Minister but rather as a former party member and candidate MP – there is one more case before the European Court of Human Rights which I would like recall, a case which concerned me in a very direct and personal way. I was an applicant in the case of *Tanase v. Moldova*, which concerned the introduction in 2008 of a prohibition on Moldovan nationals holding other nationalities, and who had not started a procedure to renounce those nationalities, from taking their seats as members of Parliament following their election. I argued before the European Court that this prohibition interfered with my right to stand as a candidate in free elections and to take my seat in Parliament if elected, thus also inhibiting the free expression of the opinion of the people in the choice of legislature. The case eventually reached the Grand Chamber of the Court, which in its April 2010 judgment reiterated that in a democracy, only loyalty to the State, and not to the Government, can constitute a legitimate aim justifying restrictions on electoral rights. To assess the proportionality of the impugned prohibition, the European Court undertook a review of practice across Council of Europe member States, which revealed a consensus that

where multiple nationalities were permitted, the holding of more than one nationality should not be a ground for ineligibility to sit as an MP. Referring also to international reports by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance and by the Venice Commission, the Court recalled that according to its case-law, no restriction on electoral rights should have the effect of excluding groups of persons from participating in the political life of the country. In the light of these considerations, the Court found the provisions preventing elected MPs with multiple nationalities from taking seats in Parliament were disproportionate and unanimously held that there had been a violation of the right to free elections as guaranteed by Article 3 of Protocol No. 1 to the ECHR.

I believe the Court's judgment in this case serves as an important reminder that States should never unduly restrict the right of candidates to seek political office, but rather should always, and fully, ensure the free expression of the opinion of the people in the choice of the legislature.

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Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

In this keynote speech I hope to have given you a series of reflections – based on my own career as lawyer, leader, legislator and regulator – that underlined the importance of the topic which you will consider in these days to come. I hope they will be of use to you, and I wish you every success in your deliberations. I am very conscious – and very encouraged – by the fact that many of the thoughts I have shared with you are very clear reflections of the values that are enshrined in the OSCE's commitments. These commitments – and my own personal beliefs – revolve ultimately around a key fact: only free, vigorous and vibrant political parties can give voice to the people and thus, meaning to democracy.

Thank you very much.

CLOSING REMARKS

Ambassador Janez Lenarčič
Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank our Rapporteurs for so comprehensively and accurately capturing our discussions over the last few days. I am very pleased with the level and tenor of debates during this seminar. Allow me to offer a few closing reflections.

We have been able to discuss, in this Seminar, issues that lie at the very heart of the human dimension. We have been able to explore and debate the fundamental role that political parties play in the democratic political process as envisaged by the OSCE commitments. We have, in particular, been reminded that the respect for, and protection of, political pluralism is key to the development of democratic processes and institutions.

In this seminar, our moderators and introducers have asked fundamental questions, such as:

What are the key obstacles to the full implementation of OSCE commitments related to political parties and pluralism?

How can political parties aid and advance the full and equal participation of women and men in the political process?

How can political pluralism and basic human rights be protected in the regulation of political parties?

How can electronic tools and applications increase and deepen citizen participation and representation in democracy and its processes?

Many excellent answers and solid recommendations were heard. We took note of these and will make them available in summary report of this meeting; we will analyze them and take them into account in our continuing assistance to participating States in these areas.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have been reminded, throughout this Seminar, of the diversity of legal and political cultures surrounding political parties in the OSCE area, and the different approaches that exist to tackle some of the issues that were raised. It is in such Seminars, such meetings, that we truly appreciate what the OSCE can offer us: an exchange of experiences and insights that can help and support reform efforts in our participating States.

I have already mentioned that pluralism lies at the heart of our OSCE commitments on political parties. 20 years ago many of our participating States moved away from a single party state system, and there were high expectations of what multiparty democracy could deliver by way of development and pluralism.

Unfortunately, 20 years later and looking back on our original expectations, many promises have not been fulfilled. Political parties have not always pursued inclusive policies or maintained high levels of integrity. Moreover, there has not always been true representation of many segments of society.

The popular perception is often that narrow interest groups receive special treatment and are able to control political parties. Scandals surrounding political parties and their leaders have had a negative impact on the level of trust and confidence society places in democracy. Political parties need to rebuild their relations with voters in order to protect the pivotal role they have in democracy and preserve their function. Ensuring vibrant political parties is one of the major challenges to the foundation of multiparty democracy in the 21st century. Multiparty democracy, however, is only as good as its individual parts and the extent to which transparency and accountability can be ensured.

Here at the Human Dimension Seminar, we were able to see a form of pluralism in action. The debate in this room was made richer and more interesting by the wide variety of participants, with different points of view, coming from NGOs, think tanks, academic institutions, but also parliaments, courts and other state bodies. I am particularly grateful for their practical recommendations and suggestions in our discussions.

Indeed, seeing such a broad and diverse group of participants, we were reminded that the rationale behind this seminar is to support and facilitate exchanges on issues in the human dimension between experts and practitioners. The more such experts are brought together by the participating States – the more successful human dimension seminars will be.

I therefore would like to express my gratitude to all those – participating States, OSCE Field Operations, and civil society organizations – that supported the participation of experts in this Seminar.

On a closing note, let me thank each and every participant for your contribution which made this Seminar a vibrant and vigorous discussion. I would like to extend special thanks to those participants who made it from the Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation.

Thank you. I hereby declare this Human Dimension Seminar closed and wish all participants a safe return journey.

ANNEX III: INFORMATION ON SPEAKERS, MODERATORS, AND INTRODUCERS

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Judge Alexandru Tanase
Constitutional Court of Moldova

Judge Alexandru Tanase has extensive legal and political experience in his native Moldova and beyond. He holds a law degree from Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iaşi (Romania). Since 1995 he worked as an independent legal practitioner, occasionally being involved in projects aiming to support the strengthening of the legal, judicial and governance framework implemented by international organizations and civil society in Moldova. Judge Tanase has successfully argued numerous cases before Moldovan courts as well as before the European Court of Human Rights, being one of most prominent Moldovan human rights and democracy defenders.

Judge Tanase started his political activity by actively participating in mass movements fighting for the independence of the Republic of Moldova from the Soviet Union in the late '80s, as one of the founders of the first clandestine youth organization struggling for independence. He is one of the leading founders of the Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova, the largest political Party within the current governing coalition. He served as its first deputy chairman from December 2007 to April 2011. From 2007 to 2009 he was an elected member of the Chisinau municipal council, leading the Liberal Democratic fraction in the Council. In April 2009, he was elected for the first time to the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, and in September of that same year he was appointed as Minister of Justice, a position he held until April 2011, when the Government of Moldova appointed him as judge to the Constitutional Court of Moldova. Judge Tanase has contributed extensively to publications on human rights, judicial independence and democracy in Moldova.

WORKING GROUP I - POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE OSCE COMMITMENTS

Moderator
Professor João Carlos Espada
Geremek Chair of European Civilization at the College of Europe, Natolin (Warsaw)
Director, Institute for Political Studies, Catholic University of Portugal

Professor João Carlos Espada holds the European Parliament / Bronisław Geremek European Civilization Chair at the College of Europe, Natolin (Warsaw). He is the director and founder of the Institute for Political Studies at the Catholic University of Portugal, where he is university professor of Political Studies. He was political adviser to two Presidents of the Portuguese Republic, Mario Soares and Aníbal Cavaco Silva. Professor Espada earned his D.Phil from the University of Oxford, under the supervision of Lord Dahrendorf, and has taught at Brown, Stanford and Georgetown Universities.

He has authored and edited 19 books in political theory, and regularly publishes opinion columns. He co-founded the European Partnership for Democracy, and sits on the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Democracy*, as well as the steering committee of the Council for a Community of Democracies. Professor Espada is a member of the Academy of Sciences of Lisbon and president of the Churchill Society of Portugal. He was awarded the Medal of Gratitude by the European Solidarity Centre, based at Gdansk, in "appreciation of [his] involvement in organizing assistance for [the] Solidarity [movement]", as well as the "*Grande Oficial da Ordem do Mérito*" of the Republic of Portugal.

Introducer
Dr. Aleksander Kynev
Head of the Regional Programme,
Foundation for Information Policy Development, Russian Federation

Dr. Kynev is a specialist in regional political processes in Russia and CIS countries, as well as in party and electoral systems. Dr. Kynev graduated with honours from the Department of Political Science at Moscow State University in 1997, and has a PhD in Political Science. In 1996-2000 he worked in the central office of "Yabloko" and the Office of the State Duma, and from 2000 to 2007 he was an expert with the International Institute of Humanitarian and Political Studies. From 2008 to 2010, Dr. Kynev was an associate professor at the State University Higher School of Economics. He has also headed the Research Division of the Association for the Rights of Voters' Voice, and has been a member of the Inter-Regional Electoral Support Network. As a political consultant and analyst, he has collaborated on a number of projects, including with the Center for Political Technologies, the Institute for Election Systems, the INDEM Foundation, and the Moscow Carnegie Center. Dr. Kynev is a regular participant in seminars and conferences in Russia and abroad and also contributes to the Russian media. He is the author of several books and hundreds of scientific and journalistic publications on subjects such as elections, electoral fraud and regional politics.

WORKING GROUP II - EQUAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND MEN IN POLITICAL PARTIES

Moderator
Prof. Alla Kuvatova
Executive Director of the Association of Women's NGOs on Gender Equality and Prevention of Violence against Women, Tajikistan

A former Fulbright Scholar, Professor Alla Kuvatova completed her Ph.D in Philosophy and Sociology. She currently serves as Executive Director of the Association of Women's NGOs on Gender Equality and Prevention of Violence against Women in Tajikistan. Ms. Kuvatova has over 20 years of academic research and teaching experience in the field of gender sociology, public opinion, civic education and journalism. A well-established gender equality expert, she has also conducted extensive studies related to women's participation in politics, political parties and electoral processes. Ms.

Kuvatova is the author of over 60 articles and has presented her work at 47 scientific conferences.

Introducer
Ms. Maria Rauch-Kallat
Federal Chairwoman, Women's Section, Austrian People's Party

Ms. Maria Rauch-Kallat is federal chairwoman of the Austrian People's Party's women section and vice-president of the women's organization of the European People's Party. She is a former Austrian federal minister with over twenty-five years of political experience. She has held two portfolios in government: Minister for Environment, Youth and Families between 1992 and 1995 and Minister for Health and Women from 2003 to 2007. Under her second appointment, she started a women-in-business mentoring program to support women in their professional lives and to facilitate networking. Ms. Rauch-Kallat also holds the *Great golden order of merit for services rendered to the Republic of Austria*.

WORKING GROUP III - REGULATIONS REGARDING POLITICAL PARTIES IN NATIONAL LEGISLATION

Moderator
Dr. Daniel Smilov
Programme Director at the Centre for Liberal Studies, Bulgaria

Dr. Daniel Smilov is a comparative constitutional lawyer and political scientist with professional interests in comparative constitutional and administrative law, legal theory, party funding, corruption, and political parties. He is Programme Director at the Centre for Liberal Studies in Sofia, Bulgaria and also holds academic posts at the Central European University in Budapest and the University of Sofia. He has published widely in Bulgarian and international journals and books, and has co-authored and co-edited several works on political finance, anticorruption and administrative law. Dr. Smilov is Member of the Committee on Party Funding and Corruption of the International Political Science Association (IPSA).

Introducer
Judge Andrzej Rzepliński
President, Constitutional Tribunal of the Republic of Poland

Judge Andrzej Rzepliński is President of the Polish Constitutional Tribunal. He graduated from the Faculty of Law of the University of Warsaw in 1971, was awarded his juris doctor's degree in 1978 and obtained his habilitated doctor's degree in 1990. He has a long and distinguished judicial and academic career, having published, lectured and worked in the fields of human rights, the judiciary, criminology, the prison system, state crime, the death penalty, comparative penal policy, police law and corruption career. As a constitutional lawyer, he was chosen by the President of the Republic of Poland to co-draft the Polish Constitution between 1992 and 1993. In addition to his numerous publications, he has also prepared legal opinions for parliamentary committees, the Supreme Court, the European Court of Human

Rights and the Constitutional Tribunal. He has served as an expert for the Human Rights Monitoring Department of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, the United Nations, and the OSCE/ODIHR. In December 2007 the Sejm of the Republic of Poland elected him judge of the Constitutional Tribunal. In December 2010 the President of the Republic appointed him President of the Constitutional Tribunal.

Introducer
Mr. Sergej Muravjov
Executive Director, Transparency International Lithuania

Mr. Sergej Muravjov is the executive director of Transparency International (TI) Lithuania. He sits on the TI International Board of Directors and currently also leads the development of the international TI Summer School on Integrity in Vilnius, Lithuania. Mr. Muravjov has been involved in numerous cross-regional TI initiatives and represented the movement internationally. He has published extensively on transparency, corruption and good governance, and is also the editor of a number of books on public and private sector accountability. Mr. Muravjov has conducted consultancy tasks for the European Commission, UN Development Programme and the UK Department for International Development. Mr. Muravjov holds Bachelor's degrees in Social Sciences (International Law and International Relations) from University College Utrecht at Utrecht University (The Netherlands) and English Philology from Vilnius University (Lithuania), as well as a Master's degree in Political Science from Leiden University (The Netherlands).

WORKING GROUP IV - E-DEMOCRACY: INCREASING PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION

Moderator
Mr. Simon Delakorda
Managing Director, Institute for Electronic Participation, Slovenia

Mr. Simon Delakorda, M.Sc., is a full time eDemocracy and eParticipation practitioner and researcher and founding director of the Institute for Electronic Participation in Ljubljana. Starting in 2000, he participated in most early internet democracy projects within the university and NGO sector in Slovenia. He is an author and co-author of articles and case studies and conference speaker on democracy, political participation, active citizenship, non-governmental organizations and governments on-line. He received a political science B.Sc. degree on e-democracy in 2002 and M.Sc. degree on e-participation in 2009. He worked as an e-democracy course associate and researcher at the Faculty of Social Sciences in Ljubljana, as co-founder and head of the Centre of Electronic Democracy at the Institute of Ecology and as an e-democracy associate at the Arctur IT Company. During 2006-2007 he coordinated and managed the E-participacija web portal and facilitated the first successful e-democracy project in Slovenia - the Citizen's Forum. In 2007 he founded the Institute for Electronic Participation (INePA). His current projects and research focus include e-participation in the EU institutions and civil society. He is a member of the Slovenian Political Science Association, Demonet: the eParticipation network of Excellence, the Central and Eastern

Europe CN eParticipation experts group and the Association of Slovene NGO managers. He received awards and experts recognitions as an e-democracy student and facilitator.

Introducer
Ms. Sheila Krumholz
Executive Director of the Center for Responsive Politics, United States

Since 2006, Ms. Sheila Krumholz has been Executive Director of the Center for Responsive Politics (CRP), a nonpartisan research group based in Washington, D.C. that tracks money in politics and the effect of money and lobbying activity on elections and public policy. As the watchdog group's chief administrator and spokesperson, Ms. Krumholz appears regularly in news stories around the United States as a money-in-politics analyst. She has also testified before the US Congress on issues related to government transparency and regularly makes presentations to scholars, government officials, activists and researchers, and at meetings of professional news organizations. As CRP's research director for eight years, Ms. Krumholz supervised data analysis for OpenSecrets.org and CRP's clients in the media and elsewhere. She first joined the CRP staff in 1989. Ms. Krumholz was included on Business and technology magazine *Fast Company*'s "Most Influential Women in Technology" list for 2010.

Introducer
Mr. Hannes Astok
Independent expert and former Member of the Estonian Parliament

Mr. Hannes Astok is a specialist in development of the information society, with a particular interest in the promotion of the role of local government. From 2007 until March 2011, Mr. Astok was a Member of the Estonian Parliament for the Reform Party, where he sat on the Parliamentary Committee for Economic Affairs. From 2005–2007, he was Director of the Municipal and Regional e-Government Program in the Estonian e-Governance Academy, providing training and consultancy for Central Asia, the Caucasus and South-East European central and local governments. In his earlier capacity as Deputy Mayor of Tartu, Estonia's second largest city, he also developed a municipal e-Government program. Mr. Astok has a degree in journalism from the University of Tartu (1990). He can be contacted at hannes@astok.ee.

Introducer
Mr. Vladimir Churov
Chairman of the Central Electoral Commission of the Russian Federation

Since 2007, Vladimir Churov has been the Chairman of the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) of the Russian Federation. Mr. Churov's academic background includes a graduate course in Journalism (1973) as well as a physics degree at Leningrad State University (1977), as well as later studies in programming. He has taught at the Saint Petersburg Trade Unions University for the Humanities and at Saint Petersburg State University. In 1991-2003, he served in different positions at the Committee for Foreign Relations of the

Saint Petersburg Administration; including as Deputy Chairman and Head of the International Cooperation Department.

In 1990, he was elected People's Deputy of the Leningrad Soviet of People's Deputies. In 2003, he was elected as a member of the Fourth State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation for the Liberal Democratic Party. He was elected Deputy Chairman of the State Duma Committee for the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Affairs and Relations with Compatriots, member of the State Duma's delegation in the Nordic Council, and member of the Political Commission of the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly. He has extensive election observation experience with the CIS, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and the State Duma. He is the author of about 30 scientific papers, several hundred publications on different socio-political subjects. He has received Letters of Commendation from the Chairman of the State Duma and the Mayor and Governor of Saint-Petersburg. He was awarded the Order of Friendship of the Russian Federation, and numerous other awards.

CLOSING SPEAKER

Ms. Lina Petronienė
Head of Division for Political Party and Campaign Funding Control,
Central Election Commission of Lithuania

Ms. Petronienė has a master's degree in law from Mykolas Romeris University in Vilnius and a bachelor and master's degree in informatics, from Vilnius University. Her master's thesis focused on a comparative analysis of legal regulation of political advertising. Since 2007, she has been Head of Division for Political Party and Campaign Funding control at the Central Electoral Commission of Lithuania. Prior to that, she worked with the Parliament of Lithuania and the European Parliament.