

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

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Working session 10 "Democratic Institutions

Contribution of the Council of Europe

Venice Commission

I. The Council for Democratic Elections

Most activities of the Venice Commission in the electoral field take place within the framework of the Council for Democratic Elections, a joint body of the Venice Commission, the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. The Council for Democratic Elections is a core instance on electoral matters within the Council of Europe.

II. Co-operation with the OSCE

Representatives of the OSCE/ODIHR and the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE are observers at the Council for Democratic Elections. The Venice Commission co-operates extensively with OSCE/ODIHR in electoral matters, in particular, in drafting opinions on electoral legislation.

III. Activities

• **Opinions and recommendations on electoral legislation and practice**

The Venice Commission provides joint opinions with the OSCE-ODIHR on electoral legislation, in order to improve the quality of electoral legislation as well as its implementation.

• **Electoral assistance**

In addition, the Venice Commission offers its knowledge and assistance to those in charge of organising elections.

• **Studies and other transnational activities**

- The Venice Commission regularly drafts comparative studies on subjects such as referendums in Europe or political parties and elections

- The Venice Commission organises international (UniDem – Universities for Democracy) seminars in which the OSCE/ODIHR is invited to take part. Recent

seminars addressed the issues of the preconditions for a democratic election and of the European standards of electoral law in contemporary constitutionalism.

- **Vota, electoral database of the Venice Commission – the Forum**

The *Vota* database includes a collection of electoral legislation of the Venice Commission's member states, indexed according to a systematic thesaurus => <http://www.venice.coe.int/vota/>. Also, a forum has been established to create a permanent and interactive network between electoral management bodies.

- **Electoral Trainings for trainers**

The Venice Commission provides training (to trainers) in the electoral field.

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Appendix: Code of Good practice in electoral matters (English version)