



No open society can exist without free and fair elections.¹ The challenge, however, is how to guarantee that an election meets international democratic standards. The Institute for International and Democratic Electoral Assistance (IDEA)², a British non-governmental organization that promotes sustainable democracy worldwide, suggests several general guidelines:

- ▶ *Make institutions more effective representatives of the diverse composition and interests of the population (including gender equality)*
- ▶ *Delegate more power to local institutions*
- ▶ *Recognize opposition parties as essential elements of the political system and create mechanisms for co-existence and mutual respect between ruling and opposition parties*
- ▶ *Encourage the development of a sustainable party system*
- ▶ *Recognize and involve civil society, including critical lobby groups, such as human rights and minority groups, women's groups and women's political leagues as partners in the political and general development of each country*
- ▶ *Introduce laws and procedures that enhance the creation of a democratic environment in which political parties, local institutions, non-governmental organizations and media can operate freely.*

ELECTIONS

A government gains its legitimacy from having won a mandate from the people. Elections that lack legitimacy can quickly breed civil unrest and instability, an environment in which corruption and human rights abuses can quickly establish themselves. The way in which this mandate is won is, therefore, crucial. Elections ought not only to be fair, but manifestly and openly be seen to be fair.

AN INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION

The moral authority of the incoming government is greatly enhanced if the electoral processes have been efficiently and effectively overseen by an electoral commission that is seen to be independent.

Many countries have constitutional provisions for electoral commissions; others provide for them in legislation.³

Usually, such a commission consists of a group of persons drawn from across the spectrum of political parties, civil society and gender. The credibility of a commission depends largely on the manner in which its members are appointed. If appointed simply by the government and without consultation, the commissioners risk looking like government “stooges” with all that this implies for the acceptability of the results of any election. Therefore, it is generally thought best for political parties to consult with each other, and, if possible, agree upon commissioners before their appointment. Naturally, if political parties insist on the appointment of their own active supporters, it serves only to undermine the public's confidence in the commission to do its job impartially.

IDEA places paramount importance on the independence of a competent commission. They point out that election administration can be highly politicized and emotional, and that control over the electoral apparatus and manipulation of the process have been primary tools in the hands of non-democratic governments which seek to preserve their time in office. Election staff, too, can be seen as agents of the government, a particular party, or a sector of society.

In transitional regimes or new democracies, opposition parties often fear that incumbent parties will use their eventual control of the electoral apparatus to serve their own benefit.

Inexperienced commissions can also be suspect. Commissioners may be unknown or untested. Seasoned politicians and parties can exploit this inexperience. Such was the case in Cambodia's 1998 elections. Although the law called for a neutral election apparatus the ruling party still managed to

place its partisans, including government officials, into the system at many different levels.

Worldwide, distrust of elections is one of the primary reasons for the prevalence of additional safeguards during elections and for careful monitoring by both political parties and civil society. If participants or voters believe that an election is administered by one partisan group or is manipulated for political gain, they will not take part in the ballot or will call for its results to be rejected.

For an election to be perceived as free and fair, a well-organized, credible and neutral commission is essential. Such a commission can eliminate many of the opportunities for those opposed to an election to manipulate the process. This, in turn, builds trust in the elections and the institutions involved.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF AN ELECTORAL COMMISSION

The commission should be responsible for all matters affecting the election in order to reduce the ability of a government to manipulate its results. Their responsibilities include:

- ▶ *Running civic education programs together with like-minded civil society organizations that will ensure that voters understand what the election is about, their role in the election as voters and how to cast their ballot*
- ▶ *Monitoring political party and candidate compliance with election rules*
- ▶ *Registering voters and preparing the electoral roll. The process should be an open one, able to be observed by the political parties and the public. Once complete, the roll should be made available for public inspection. Political parties should be able to file objections, as need be.*
- ▶ *Registering nominations and verifying the eligibility of candidates. This should also be a public process and candidates who are refused by the commission should have the right to appeal to the courts to review any decision that has been made against them.*

- ▶ *Overseeing the composition of the ballots, their printing and distribution. Ballot papers should be numbered to allow their use to be recorded and monitored by party agents and reconciled with the papers in the ballot boxes when they are opened for the vote count.*
- ▶ *Overseeing the poll's logistics, including polling stations, polling materials, ballot boxes, transportation, recruitment and training of polling station staff and other election workers. Polling stations should be designed to guarantee privacy for voters marking their ballots. Voters should have full confidence that their vote is secret.*
- ▶ *Overseeing the administration of the poll on the election day. This includes providing access to the polling stations for party officials; organizing separate vote counts at each polling station; seeing that results are certified by party agents; presenting a copy of the results to each of the party agents in attendance.*

Compiling and announcing the election's results

- ▶ *Publishing a full election report. Results of the vote counts for each polling station should be tabulated separately. Necessary recommendations should be made for reform for the next election.*

TRANSPARENCY IN THE ELECTION PROCESS

Transparency is guaranteed to build voter confidence in an election. There will always be complaints during the campaigning phase of an election; generally to the effect that the governing party has the advantage of being in power and, thus, of having access to state resources. To this, the usual reply is that the governing party also has the liability of being responsible for their country's state of affairs.

It is widely accepted that elections are generally won or lost before the actual poll takes place. However, the mechanics of the poll itself are often open to corrupt practices. Results can be distorted in a variety of ways:

- ▶ *Voters' rolls can be inaccurate, with names of government opponents missing and "ghost" names included*
- ▶ *Voters can be prevented from voting, or intimidated as they go to the polling stations*
- ▶ *Ballot boxes can be exchanged, before the count, with boxes which have been stuffed in favor of a particular party or candidate*
- ▶ *Election officials can mis-mark ballots for voters with disabilities or for elderly people*
- ▶ *Vote counts can take place in secret*
- ▶ *The compilation of results can be fraudulent.*
- ▶ *Minor irregularities can be used as a pretext by a losing ruling party to call for fresh elections.*

The solution to these various problems is simple: transparency. Given that balloting must take place in secret, there are still many aspects of the election and its organization that can, and should be, open to scrutiny; especially by contesting candidates and political parties and, also, international and local civil society observers.

Areas for openness include the appointment of members of an independent electoral commission and polling officials. Each party should have a list of proposed appointments prepared well ahead of time to ensure a reasonable opportunity for their competitors to object when individuals with known or suspected politically partisan agendas are suggested as commission members. Obviously, the whole process is assisted when parties propose candidates as officials to whom their opponents cannot reasonably object.

The distribution of election materials should also be a completely transparent process. Parties should know the destination and serial numbers of ballots. As voting takes place, the officials in charge of individual polling stations should inform so-called "poll watchers" – party agents appointed by competing parties to attend the vote in each polling station. – These agents should know which ballots are, or are not, being used, and in what order. Copies

of electoral lists should be made available. Party agents should be able to keep their own checklists as to who is or is not voting. Unless all of the political parties agree that assistance should be given by polling officials, there should be limits to the number of voters which any one person can assist. It may also be necessary to keep the actual design of the ballot a secret until the very last minute, in order to minimize the chances of fraud.

At the end of voting hours, party agents should know, based on their observations, precisely how many papers should be in the ballot boxes (give or take the odd ballot paper that a voter may have taken away) and the serial numbers involved. This makes it difficult even to attempt to substitute the boxes. The party agents should then be entitled to be with the ballot boxes from the time polling ends to the time counting begins. After the vote count, they should be required to certify its accuracy. A copy of the poll results, certified by officials and the representatives of other parties, should be given to each agent. In this way, each party is equipped with documentation which enables it to compile its own, independent and accurate assessment of the final result. Even if the documentation is incomplete, it can still provide a random check on the official results, which can be extremely effective if these have been seriously distorted.

The number of people involved in the mechanics of the election process is directly related to the process's degree of transparency and accountability. The more people that are involved, the more difficult it becomes to suppress information and to manipulate figures. Involving civil servants who represent a broad cross-section of society can help increase voters' trust in the election process.

Best practice suggestions designed to address problems in the area of elections and campaign financing include the following items. The examples are drawn from a wide range of election observers' reports of elections in several parts of the world:

- ▶ *There should be a mutually acceptable code of conduct between political parties as to how they will conduct themselves during an election campaign. This ensures that the process is seen as being free and fair.*

- ▶ The electoral commission should, where possible, establish a forum for debate and consultation between the political parties. It should ensure that the political parties fully understand their rights and responsibilities with regard to all aspects of the election process.
- ▶ Contributions (in cash or in kind) by private individuals and corporations should be limited to reasonable amounts that would fall short of an amount likely to be perceived as buying influence. These limits should not extend to volunteer work.
- ▶ Candidates guilty of a false declaration or over-expenditure should forfeit the positions to which they have been elected.
- ▶ All parties and candidates should be required to declare their assets and liabilities before the start of the campaign and immediately after the poll. Some countries require income tax returns and asset declarations to be filed when a politician registers as a candidate for the election.
- ▶ Fee-based radio and television advertisements should be kept at acceptable levels, if not altogether banned. In addition, the electoral commission should determine how much free time on public radio and television should be made available to each party during the election campaign.
- ▶ Election advertising by special interest groups and others not authorized to do so by particular candidates or parties should be banned. This will stop circumvention of spending limits. All officials of the electoral commission should declare their assets, income and liabilities both before and after every national election.
- ▶ Campaign periods ought not to be too long. By truncating them, campaign costs can be reduced. If they are too short, however, the ruling party will have advantages over the opposition parties.
- ▶ Restrictions should be placed on political parties' and candidates' expenditures (in both cash and in kind) in the course of an election campaign.

Declarations of these expenditures should be made public and filed with the electoral commission within two months of the date of the election. Each declaration should be accompanied by an audit certificate certified by a qualified auditor. Also, political parties should file audited accounts annually detailing income at the local, regional and national levels.

- ▶ Anonymous donations and donations through "front" organizations should be banned.
- ▶ Grants from public funds should be made, either in accordance with a party's most recent election performance, or according to an agreed formula administered by an independent electoral commission. The grants can relate not only to immediate electioneering needs, but also to assist a party during a forthcoming parliamentary term.

MONITORING THE POLL

Active monitoring is essential to ensure fairness, and takes place in all functioning democracies. Opposition political parties should themselves actively monitor all aspects of the poll, and document and report any irregularities they may detect. As noted above, their role should be incorporated into the election process from the start.

On top of this, civil society has an important part to play by monitoring elections in a politically non-partisan manner. As a matter of policy, citizens' groups should be legally and physically enabled to observe elections. This is a role that international observers are able to pursue, and which domestic civil society groups rightly assume with them.

In most countries where civil society organizations take on this responsibility, some change in the electoral laws will be required to enable accredited local observers to be present inside polling stations and to observe the count. When such groups are barred by law from being involved officially in the election processes, they can still make their presence felt. Information can be compiled by monitoring electioneering and by questioning voters after they leave polling stations. Exit polls of voters, when accurately performed, can serve as an additional check on the manipulation of vote results. The broadcast of exit

poll results has been cited as effective in pre-empting government attempts to falsify election results.

International observer teams also play particularly important roles in new democracies. They can provide help and guidance and build confidence in the election process, when judged to be fair, and they can draw attention to shortcomings in polls that fail to meet international standards. Groups drawn from local civil society, however, should also take part. In the long-term, the integrity of a country's voting system depends on the judgements of its own citizens.

FOREIGN DONOR ASSISTANCE

Foreign donors can not only help meet the costs of elections, but, also, they can provide mediation in case of dispute. In Cambodia, foreign donors extended aid in exchange for the creation of a Constitutional Council, a supreme court that helps resolve election disputes.

On the question of cost, however, it is important that the sustainability of the electoral process be borne in mind. Mechanisms for insuring the vote's integrity should be adopted with an eye to costs. Transparency, should not add to an election's costs.⁴ Effective planning and the development of good systems depend primarily on the time and knowledge of competent election monitoring experts.

STATE-OWNED MEDIA

State-owned media is almost invariably an election battleground. There should be clear rules regarding opposition parties' access to publicly-owned media. If need be, allotted air time and the order of appearance on radio or television can be determined by lot. Similarly, clear rules are needed on the content of news broadcasts. Such reports should be objective, based on the known facts of a story, and devoid of the reporter's own political opinion.

POLITICAL PARTY FINANCING

It is in the public interest that political parties be adequately funded and held accountable to society; not only through the ballot box, but also in terms of their electoral practices.

Too many political parties, as in the case often with newly emerging democracies, can cause confusion and divide rather than unite a society. In countries with a plethora of small parties, it is more likely that political parties that are effectively owned by individuals or state interests will dominate political discourse and power. The establishment of thresholds for party registration or for a vote to be deemed legitimate can provide an opportunity for a governing party to easily cripple opponents. Requirements that winning candidates receive at least 50 percent of the vote in a single election district system will lead to votes concentrating around major candidates. Similarly, the requirement that parties make a financial deposit to submit candidates for election poses a significant hurdle for parties representing the poor and dispossessed.⁵ To avoid such scenarios, a 4-5 percent threshold for parties to secure seats in a proportionally elected legislature or to receive state funding for their campaigns should be sufficient.

Without proper checks and balances, ruling parties can gain a significant and essentially non-democratic grip on public life and political power. In some countries, efforts to avoid this situation have focused on empowering electoral commissions to also preside over free and fair elections within party congresses. This is to separate the functions of a political party from those of the government, and to avoid a *de facto* administrative merger⁶ of political parties with the state. Elected ad-hoc party commissions can play a similar role.

HOW SHOULD PARTIES FINANCE THEIR CAMPAIGNS?

The Roman Emperor Vespasian (9-79 AD) once observed that "money has no smell." But when it comes to elections, money can smell very badly indeed. Political parties are expensive to run. They need adequate funding for offices, staff, and for communication with the electorate.

It is generally considered legitimate for those involved in political activities to raise money from their supporters – at least to some extent. Yet at the same time, donations from large numbers of individuals can be expensive to collect. In most democracies, therefore, the principal source of funding for political parties lies within the private sector. This is particularly critical when a general election is called. Individuals or companies often agree to fund a political party with the expectation that they will benefit in some way if the party is elected to office. This can come in the form of appointment to public office or the award of a lucrative contract for execution of a state-funded project.

Often, much of the money that finds its way into the coffers of political parties is illicitly acquired or not declared to tax authorities. In some countries, criminal elements have found it more attractive to run for office if they will enjoy immunity from prosecution upon election.

There are two models for political financing – the public model (for example, Japan, France and Spain) and the private model (for example, the United States and the United Kingdom). However, few systems are exclusively one or the other. Their definition by category is essentially one of degree. Private funding still takes place within the public model, and public support for campaigns exists within the private model. However, as in Spain, there is no essential contradiction between there being spending limits within the public funding model.

State funding, however, carries risks if it leads to a profusion of small, weak parties, which can hinder the development of a country's political institutions. Certainly, the threshold for access to the electoral landscape should not be so high as to be unrealistic. However, thresholds can also raise questions about the constitutionality of an election process. In South Africa, for instance, the argument was made that the country's 1998 Public Funding of Represented Political Parties discriminated against parties that failed to meet the required threshold.

Whatever the fundraising process may be, it is important that it does not distort the political system so as to skew democratic structures in favor of those with access to money. Many countries have

implemented mechanisms to monitor this situation, but these mechanisms have often been ineffective. As has been noted, even long-established democracies with generous state funding of political parties have been wracked by scandals. In one country, an outgoing head of government persistently refused to disclose the identities of funders on the grounds that he had promised to keep their names confidential.

Certainly, a requirement to disclose the source of donations can give rise to claims that the right to privacy has been violated. The provision of confidentiality for donations up to a certain modest level can usually assuage this concern. In cases of disclosure, rights of freedom of association can also be asserted. For example, should public servants be required to disclose the fact that they are donating funds to an opposition party? Are spending limits imposed on candidates an infringement of their right to free speech?

If the funding process is not transparent and political parties are not required to disclose the sources of sizeable donations, then the public is left to draw its own conclusions when it sees those suspected of funding political parties openly benefiting from handsome contracts and other government business.

The election process can quickly degenerate into an auction of political power. Aspiring parties raise funds from supporters who believe them likely to win. Individuals do the same when legislators have "executive" powers in the granting of contracts. Transparency in political donations has become a major issue in virtually every democracy.

In some countries, the costs of political campaigning have become so high that they are well above the limits prescribed by law. Therefore, in some, if not many countries, political parties quietly flout campaign finance laws. Political opponents frequently complain to international election observers about this practice, but few are willing to raise the matter officially.

Donations by foreign donors to political parties can often raise greater concerns among democratically minded citizens than outside assistance with the financing of an election. Such donations can easily

be represented as an attempt by foreign powers, companies or individuals to place in power a party most likely to do their bidding. Political parties in the US, Britain, Germany and Australia have all been asked to explain why foreign individuals and corporations have given them massive donations. Some countries, such as Poland, avoid the problem completely by simply prohibiting foreign contributions to political parties.

HOW SHOULD PUBLIC FUNDING FOR PARTIES BE APPORTIONED?

Treating every party equally is, of course, not an option. It is hardly democratic – or feasible – to fund a very small party to the same extent as one which is a major national institution.

There is a limit to the size of the financial “cake” which a society can afford to invest in its democratic structures. So how can this be most evenly distributed? In some countries, public funds are allocated to parties in proportion to the votes they have won at the preceding election, or win in the current election. The latter enables parties to borrow funds from supporters with the reasonable expectation of how much they will be able to repay.

“TRADING IN INFLUENCE”

Although a relatively new concept to many, the offense of “trading in influence” has long been recognized in such countries as France. “Trading in influence” constitutes a corrupt relationship in which a person with real or supposed influence “trades” this influence for money. The intermediary is not being “bribed” as a public official, but is merely serving as a link. For example, politicians and high officials, in exchange for the secret funding of their political activities, can “trade” their influence, distorting the proper function of a democratic system, violating the principle of equality and eroding principles of merit.

The European Convention prohibits this offense and similar restrictions were featured in early drafts of the UN Convention Against Corruption.

In practice, the line between “trading in influence” and mere sponsorship can be difficult to define.

THE IMPORTANCE OF IDENTITY

During the 1990's, the Government of South Korea took a unique approach to stamp out not only political corruption, but other forms of financial abuse. Decree No. 13957 banned the use of fictitious or “borrowed” names in financial deals. Previously, fictitious names were often used to hide assets, avoid taxation, bribe officials and make illegal campaign contributions.

Under the decree, all financial transactions, including deposits and savings, and stocks and bonds, had to be registered in the real name of the holder. Those Koreans holding assets under false names were required to convert their assets into accounts registered under their real names within two months. Citizens intending to open bank accounts – or to withdraw large sums – had to register their real names by presenting their national identity cards. Failure to do so resulted in investigation by the tax authorities and substantial penalties imposed on the financial assets held by those found in violation.

A WAY FORWARD

In April 2003, The Council of Europe recommended the following Common Rules Against Corruption in the Funding of Political Parties and Electoral Campaigns to its member states⁶:

I. External sources of funding of political parties

Article 1 – Public and private support to political parties

The state and its citizens are both entitled to support political parties.

The state should provide support to political parties. State support should be limited to reasonable contributions. State support may be financial.

Objective, fair and reasonable criteria should be applied regarding the distribution of state support. States should ensure that any support from the state and/or citizens does not interfere with the independence of political parties.

Article 2 – Definition of donation to a political party

Donation means any deliberate act to bestow advantage, economic or otherwise, on a political party.

Article 3 – General principles on donations

a. Measures taken by states governing donations to political parties should provide specific rules to:

- *avoid conflicts of interests;*
- *ensure transparency of donations and avoid secret donations;*
- *avoid prejudice to the activities of political parties;*
- *ensure the independence of political parties.*

b. States should:

- i. provide that donations to political parties are made public; in particular, donations exceeding a fixed ceiling*
- ii. consider the possibility of introducing rules limiting the value of donations to political parties*
- iii. adopt measures to prevent established ceilings from being circumvented.*

Article 4 – Tax deductibility of donations

Fiscal legislation may allow tax deductibility of donations to political parties. Such tax deductibility should be limited.

Article 5 – Donations by legal entities

a. In addition to the general principles on donations, states should provide:

- i. that donations from legal entities to political parties are registered in the books and accounts of the legal entities; and*

ii. that shareholders or any other individual member of the legal entity be informed of donations.

b. States should take measures aimed at limiting, prohibiting or otherwise strictly regulating donations from legal entities which provide goods or services for any public administration.

c. States should prohibit legal entities under the control of the state or of other public authorities from making donations to political parties.

Article 6 – Donations to entities connected with a political party

Rules concerning donations to political parties, with the exception of those concerning tax deductibility referred to in Article 4, should also apply, as appropriate, to all entities which are related, directly or indirectly, to a political party or are otherwise under the control of a political party.

Article 7 – Donations from foreign donors

States should specifically limit, prohibit or otherwise regulate donations from foreign donors.

II. Sources of funding of candidates for elections and elected officials

Article 8 – Application of funding rules to candidates for elections and elected representatives

The rules regarding funding of political parties should apply mutatis mutandis to:

- *the funding of electoral campaigns of candidates for elections;*
- *the funding of political activities of elected representatives.*

III. Electoral campaign expenditure

Article 9 – Limits on expenditure

States should consider adopting measures to prevent excessive funding needs of political parties, such as, establishing limits on expenditure on electoral campaigns.

Article 10 – Records of expenditure

States should require particular records to be kept of all expenditure, direct and indirect, on electoral campaigns in respect of each political party, each list of candidates and each candidate.

IV. Transparency**Article 11 – Accounts**

States should require political parties and the entities connected with political parties mentioned in Article 6 to keep proper books and accounts. The accounts of political parties should be consolidated to include, as appropriate, the accounts of the entities mentioned in Article 6.

Article 12 – Records of donations

a. *States should require the accounts of a political party to specify all donations received by the party, including the nature and value of each donation.*

b. *In case of donations over a certain value, donors should be identified in the records.*

Article 13 – Obligation to present and make public accounts

a. *States should require political parties to present the accounts referred to in Article 11 regularly, and at least annually, to the independent authority referred to in Article 14.*

b. *States should require political parties regularly, and at least annually, to make public the accounts referred to in Article 11 or as a minimum a summary of those accounts, including the information required in Article 10, as appropriate, and in Article 12.*

V. Supervision**Article 14 – Independent monitoring**

a. *States should provide for independent monitoring in respect of the funding of political parties and electoral campaigns.*

b. *The independent monitoring should include supervision over the accounts of political parties and the expenses involved in election campaigns as well as their presentation and publication.*

Article 15 – Specialised personnel

States should promote the specialisation of the judiciary, police or other personnel in the fight against illegal funding of political parties and electoral campaigns.

VI. Sanctions**Article 16 – Sanctions**

States should require the infringement of rules concerning the funding of political parties and electoral campaigns to be subject to effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions.

Further guidance comes from the 50 heads of state and government of the Commonwealth of Nations, which developed a “Commonwealth Framework Principles on Combating Corruption.”⁷⁷ This document includes provisions for the funding of political parties. These provisions are designed to:

- ▶ *Prevent conflicts of interest and the exercise of improper influence*
- ▶ *Preserve the integrity of democratic political structures and processes*
- ▶ *Proscribe the use of funds acquired through illegal and corrupt practices to finance political parties*
- ▶ *Enshrine the concept of transparency in the funding of political parties by requiring the declaration of donations exceeding a specified limit*

A ROLE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY IN MONITORING CAMPAIGN FINANCE

As we have discussed, added credence is given to elections where they are monitored not just by official organs of the state but also by civil society. Particularly in Latin America, civil society groups

have gone further than simply watching the poll. They have developed methodologies for monitoring campaign expenditures by recording obvious expenditures (television advertisements, poster sites, brochures, etc.) and comparing this with the spending reported by parties.

Allegations of widespread public sector corruption in Argentina were endemic in the 1990's and campaign finance corruption was no exception. To address this situation, one civil society organization, Poder Ciudadano, or Citizens' Power, initiated a program in one federal district in which candidates

provided certified financial disclosure of their assets and a written statement of their position on campaign issues. Substantial media attention helped facilitate this campaign; candidate participation was strong. A subsequent initiative included monthly monitoring and reporting of actual campaign expenditures. Eventually, this package of initiatives, termed the "Integrity Pact," resulted in substantial campaign reform throughout Argentina.⁸ Similar initiatives are now being taken in several other countries in the region and the approach has attracted interest throughout the world.

ENDNOTES

- 1** Major resources: The Project on Political Transformation and the Electoral Process in Post-Communist Europe, based at the (UK) University of Essex (UK), includes an online database of relevant electoral codes as well as laws related to campaign finance, media law and mass media. Countries include Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia and Ukraine. See: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/elections/>; The University of Michigan (US)'s Comparative Study of Electoral Systems allows users to analyze election experiences in 50 countries worldwide. See: Comparative study of electoral systems: <http://www.umich.edu/~cses/>; IDEA's State of Democracy Project . See: http://www.idea.int/ideas_work/14_political_state.htm; For information on administration and cost of elections, see the ACE project at <http://www.aceproject.org/>; For information on media coverage of elections, see the Center for Public Integrity <http://www.publicintegrity.org/dtaweb/home.asp>; K. D. Ewing (ed.) *The Funding of Political Parties: Europe and Beyond* (1999) (Bologna; ISBN 88-491-1269-6); Williams, R, *Party Finance and Political Corruption* (Palgrave, London, 2000)
- 2** IDEA: http://www.idea.int/thematic_b.htm
- 3** The United Kingdom has only recently taken this step, establishing an Electoral Commission and providing for the control of party financing under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, following recom-

mendations from the (UK) Committee for Standards in Public Life.

- 4** For more on costs, see <http://www.aceproject.org/main/english/ei/ei40.htm>
- 5** Election deposits are a controversial subject matter. In 2001, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights recommended to Ukraine that "The deposit system will avoid the very many practical problems of regulating and verifying in a fair manner the collection of signatures in support of a candidate or party." However, in June 2003, the UK's electoral commission recommended the abolition of the £500 (roughly \$927; rate of conversion as of March 8, 2004) election deposit required of all general election candidates.
- 6** Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers, Recommendation Rec(2003)4: http://www.cm.coe.int/stat/E/Public/2003/adopted_texts/recommendations/2003r4.htm
- 7** Commonwealth Heads of Government 1999 meeting, Background paper Fighting Corruption Requires Good Government by Nihal Jayawickrama: <http://www.chogm99.org/bgpapers/f2.htm>
- 8** Keeping Accounts: A Case Study of Civil Initiatives and Campaign Finance Oversight in Argentina (Working Paper 248, Center for Institutional reform and the Informal Sector, University of Maryland, USA): <http://128.8.56.16/docs/docs/wp248.pdf>