



503rd Plenary Meeting

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**DECISION No. 605
AGENDA, TIMETABLE AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL
MODALITIES OF THE 2004 HUMAN DIMENSION SEMINAR**

Democratic Institutions and Democratic Governance

(Warsaw, 12 to 14 May 2004)

I. Agenda

1. Opening of the Seminar
2. Opening plenary: Keynote interventions
3. Discussion in four working groups
4. Closing plenary: Summing up and closing of the Seminar

II. Timetable and other organizational modalities

1. The Seminar will open in Warsaw on Wednesday, 12 May 2004, at 10 a.m. It will close on Friday, 14 May 2004, at 6 p.m.
2. All plenary and working group sessions will be open.
3. The closing plenary, scheduled for Friday afternoon, will focus on practical suggestions and recommendations for addressing the issues discussed during the working group sessions.
4. The plenary and working group sessions will take place in accordance with the work programme below.
5. An ODIHR representative will chair the plenary sessions.
6. Standard OSCE rules of procedure and working methods will be applied at the Seminar.

7. Discussion during the plenary and working group sessions will be interpreted from and into all six working languages of the OSCE.

Working Group I
Democratic Political Frameworks and Processes

- Measures and institutions to best advance inclusive democracy at the national, regional and local levels so as to ensure pluralism with regard to political organizations, including best practices; transparency of political proceedings; intra-party democracy; rules and procedures guaranteeing the democratic functioning of political parties;
- Checks and balances through political, institutional and external oversight mechanisms/bodies (e.g., courts, parliamentary committees, ombudspersons, public audit, anti-corruption commissions, etc.) as guarantees for an open and democratic political process;
- Challenges to equal opportunity for participation in political processes and effective access of women to political spheres, including high-level positions;
- Specific measures to enhance the inclusion of minorities and under-represented groups such as youth in the overall political process.

Working Group II
Strengthening Law-Making and Oversight Capacities and Practices in Democratic Structures

- Parliaments as guarantee for representative democracy through, *inter alia*, political pluralism, tolerance of diversity, consensus-building and civic dialogue with the public, including best practices and possible standards;
- Securing legislative independence from — and parliamentary oversight over — the executive, including asserting legislature prerogatives in regular law-making and its oversight functions; methods that legislatures can use to assert these prerogatives *vis-à-vis* influences, interferences and pressures of the executive;
- Internal structures and rules of procedure to ensure balanced representation of elected members and public opinion in all stages of the legislative process as well as optimal law-making capacities, including venues to include public opinion in the legislative process (in particular of under-represented groups); improving access to law (e.g., publications of legal acts, public parliamentary debates), parliamentary support (e.g., professional secretariat and available expertise); domestic monitoring and evaluation of legislation;
- Measures fostering equal opportunity for women and men to participate in the legislative process.

Working Group III

Public Administration as a Democratic Institution: the Link between Government and Citizens

- Measures and institutions to best advance an impartial, effective, ethical and meritocratic public service, including de-politicization of public administration; laws on civil servants; reform of schools of public administration and curriculum development;
- Promoting cohesion and inclusiveness in society through democratic public administration, including role of local vs. central administration; minority recruitment; language issues; measures fostering equal opportunity for women and men in employment at all levels;
- Mechanisms for increasing accountability of public administration, including classifying, declassifying and public access to information, public scrutiny, transparency and fighting corruption.

Working Group IV

Civil Society Participation

- Challenges to participation of civil society in governance, including legislation allowing effective civil society participation; developing an environment and mechanisms for ensuring equal participation of the whole society (in particular under-represented groups) in shaping public policies;
- Promoting public confidence in democratic governance and institutions and sustained civic involvement in public affairs between elections, including citizens' access to information; involving and informing citizens outside the capital; the role of new information technologies and effectiveness of civic education and awareness building;
- Effective approaches to ensuring women's equal opportunity for participation in public life as a driving force for democratization;
- Role of the media in supporting a system of inclusive, open and responsive democratic governance;
- Monitoring democratic standards by civil society: methodology, instruments and indicators.

WORK PROGRAMME

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

	Wednesday 12 May 2004	Thursday 13 May 2004	Friday 14 May 2004
Morning	Opening plenary session	WG II	WG IV
Afternoon	WG I	WG III	Closing plenary session