DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS ASSISTANCE

Democratic Governance Programme (1300494)

FUNDED THROUGH EXTRABUDGETARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Warsaw, September 2012

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Current budget: EUR 460,000[1]

1. Background

In their commitments OSCE participating States have underlined that democracy is inseparable from and essential to the fulfillment of fundamental freedoms, human rights, and the rule of law. ODIHR's Democratic Governance Programme promotes the development of institutions, policies, and legislation that comply with these commitments.

2. Approach

The programme aims to improve compliance with the OSCE's unique Human Dimension commitments. Special focus will be put on legal and policy frameworks for political pluralism, political parties, parliaments, civil society's capacity for analysis and advocacy as well as women's and youth's participation in political life. To promote democratic governance, ODIHR will work with a variety of national and local governance institutions, civil society organizations, political parties and other stakeholders. Wherever relevant, the programme will tailor its work to follow up on the recommendations of ODIHR Election Observation Missions (EOMs) and activities will be implemented in close co-operation with OSCE field operations.

2.1 Planned activities for 2012-2013 (funds permitting)

Strengthening policy and regulatory frameworks for political pluralism
In the field of political party regulation, ODIHR will offer assistance regarding policy and legal frameworks for political pluralism. ODIHR will raise awareness among parliamentarians, policymakers, political party and civil society leaders on OSCE standards in the field of political party regulation and practices, building on recommendations stemming from Human Dimension events. ODIHR will promote the use of the 2010 OSCE/ODIHR-Venice Commission *Guidelines on Political Party Regulation*, which can serve as a resource for locally-driven reform processes. ODIHR will facilitate these processes by partnering with think tanks to develop recommendations for reform (see below).

Parliaments: Developing knowledge and practice tools and strengthening parliaments
ODIHR will develop publications such as hand-books and studies (e.g. on parliamentary ethics and e-democracy) that present parliamentary practice and standards from across OSCE participating States in a user-friendly way. Upon request, ODIHR will work directly with parliaments to strengthen these institutions based on their own specific needs. ODIHR will continue to provide expertise and collect lessons learned/good practices to assist OSCE field operations to implement parliamentary strengthening projects. For this purpose, ODIHR will co-operate with relevant partners through the international parliamentary strengthening web portal *Agora* (www.agora-parl.org). ODIHR also offers expertise and training/seminars for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff in close partnership with OSCE field operations.

Building capacity for analysis and advocacy on democratic governance
ODIHR will work with think tanks to build their expertise and analytical skills so they can contribute to policy debates and help participating States comply more closely with the OSCE's

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[1] For the period 1 January 2009 to 31 December 2013.

democratic governance commitments. Where appropriate, ODIHR will support locally-driven analysis and advocacy, drawing on ODIHR expertise and providing access to regional networks. Thematic focus areas will be political pluralism (including political finance and abuse of state resources), e-democracy, as well as participation of women, youth and migrants in political life.

2.2   Indicators of achievement (examples)

* A higher number of OSCE field operations, OSCE participating States, their parliaments and civil society draw upon resources collected and developed by ODIHR (comments/guidelines on political party legislation, best practices in parliamentary strengthening, skills and techniques);
* There is an increase in participating States that amend policies, practices and legislation in line with ODIHR EOM recommendations on political parties and women's participation;
* Across the OSCE region, think tanks visibly spearhead national reform efforts and influence policy changes in line with OSCE democratic governance commitments.

2.3   Strategy/methodology

As a neutral partner, ODIHR will facilitate debates and analysis of the essential frameworks that are needed for a pluralistic political system. ODIHR will highlight parliament's role as an accountable and representative body. The imperative of increasing women's participation in democratic governance will be mainstreamed into all activities. Working with OSCE field operations and Institutions (in particular, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly), and other relevant stakeholders, ODIHR offers subject expertise, a regional perspective, access to international networks and convening power. This unique set of strengths allow ODIHR to respond to local demands and needs in partnership with other key actors.

2.4   Assumptions and risks

Political will is essential to democratic reform, but it results from varying combinations of political risks, opportunities, costs and expected benefits for political actors. ODIHR cannot control these factors, but will build political analysis into its actions to deliver targeted assistance. Primarily, this involves identifying the key stakeholders for reform in a specific context and moment in time. Where political will may not be sufficient, ODIHR will continue to work with civil society and local experts. ODIHR's mix of OSCE-wide and in-country projects mitigates the risks inherent in an individual country's situation.

2.5   Quality factors

The programme uses ODIHR's key strengths and achievements in democratic governance and capitalizes on synergies with other ODIHR activities, e.g. election observation, legislative support and relationships with OSCE field operations. Close co-operation with other relevant ODIHR staff ensures a heightened focus on women's participation.