



EUROPEAN UNION

Human Dimension Seminar Warsaw, 18-20 May 2011

EU closing statement 2011 Human Dimension Seminar on ‘The Role of Political Parties in the Political Process’

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the end of this interesting and valuable seminar, the EU would like to reiterate its gratitude to the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights for organizing this important event.

Our thanks go also to the key-note speakers, introducers and moderators and to all those who actively participated in this seminar, especially to the representatives of civil society, who have enriched our discussions. The EU believes that their participation is of key importance and that their concerns should be addressed in a proper way.

The EU would like to recall once again the outstanding work done by the ODIHR and the OSCE field missions through various projects to support the participating States in strengthening democratic institutions and promoting human rights.

The European Union has formulated several recommendations to support and encourage further strengthening of democratic institutions and promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the OSCE area. We invite participating States and ODIHR to study these recommendations closely

and would welcome further discussion of their implementation at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting and in the Human Dimension Committee.

The EU calls on OSCE participating States:

- to ensure the promotion and protection of all human rights and all fundamental freedoms, including through enabling their relevant national authorities, the civil society and NGOs to effectively carry out their roles;
- to draw on the expertise of ODIHR and its field missions and take concrete action to enable individuals to effectively exercise the right to freedom of association and the right of peaceful assembly;
- to consider possible constitutional or legislative changes, or temporary special measures, which would facilitate a more balanced participation and representation of women and men in political parties;
- to encourage political parties to remove obstacles to women's participation and to pursue positive measures to promote gender equality in its membership, including in positions of decision-making within the party structures, and to achieve equal representation in elected public offices at all levels of decision-making;
- to increase the awareness of gender equality among all stakeholders, the analysis of trends and dissemination of information, the promotion of networking, the exchange of good practices and data collection;
- to live up to all OSCE commitments in the area of political parties, and in particular to guarantee political pluralism at all stages of the political process;
- to recognize the growing role of the internet in democratic governance and to guarantee and respect all OSCE human dimension commitments online as well as offline.

The EU values the important work of ODIHR and calls on the Office:

- to examine good practices and to support participating States in pursuing and strengthening pluralism in parliament, lawmaking processes, and in the functioning of independent bodies and regulatory authorities;
- to 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;
- to advice and assist interested participating States in introducing electronic voting in their electoral processes;
- to consider the development - with appropriate extrabudgetary support - of good practice manuals on e-democracy tools and applications.

The candidate countries TURKEY, CROATIA*, the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ICELAND**, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA and SERBIA, the European Free Trade Association country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and ANDORRA align themselves with this statement.

*Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

**Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and the European Economic Area.