



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

ODIHR Core Group of Experts on Political Parties

“To ensure that the will of the people serves as the basis of the authority of government, the participating States will respect the right of individuals and groups to establish, in full freedom, their own political parties or other political organizations and provide such political parties and organizations with the necessary legal guarantees to enable them to compete with each other on a basis of equal treatment before the law and by the authorities.

(Copenhagen Document, 1990)

Political parties play a key role in the political life of any modern democratic society. The freedom to establish political parties and their fair and transparent regulation are vital to ensuring a level playing field for political competition and to prevent the abuse of state resources.

selected on the basis of their broad and diverse experience in different regions of the OSCE area. Representatives from the Council of Europe’s Venice Commission and the Council of Europe’s Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) participate in the Core Group of Experts as observers.

What is the ODIHR Core Group of Experts on Political Parties?

The ODIHR Core Group of Experts on Political Parties was established in 2011 as part of ODIHR’s continuous efforts to assist OSCE participating States in developing and maintaining political party regulations that are in line with OSCE commitments and relevant international and regional standards.

The Core Group of Experts on Political Parties consists of up to 12 senior experts on political party regulation,

What does the ODIHR Core Group of Experts on Political Parties do?

The Core Group of Experts on Political Parties provides vital support to ODIHR’s legislative assistance programme, which includes reviewing draft or enacted political party legislation of OSCE participating States, upon request. When compiling such reviews, special consideration is given to standards as established by international human rights conventions and case law, as well as relevant constitutional provisions of the state in



question. ODIHR's reviews are complemented by positive recommendations on how to make the respective draft or enacted legislation more compliant with international standards and OSCE commitments. ODIHR legal reviews on political party regulation, as well as examples of legislation from different OSCE participating States, can be accessed at www.legislationline.org.

Drawing from its members' rich and varied professional backgrounds, the Core Group of Experts on Political Parties assists ODIHR in performing comparative analysis and highlighting examples of good practice from the OSCE region. This ensures that legislative assistance is not only in line with international best practice, but also correctly tailored to the needs of the specific OSCE participating State requesting a review.

The members of the Core Group of Experts on Political Parties also participate in ODIHR events related to political party regulation and provide expertise and assistance to state authorities and other national stakeholders, as well as OSCE field operations.

The Guidelines on Political Party Regulation

The OSCE/ODIHR – Venice Commission *Guidelines on Political Party Regulation* were published in 2011 following a broad and inclusive process, involving several consultative round tables and experts meetings. A living document to be continuously adapted to new developments in OSCE participating States related to political party regulation, the *Guidelines* provide support for the drafting of legislation and regulation on political parties. Furthermore, the *Guidelines* present an overview

of good practices from across the OSCE region that can be useful for a broad range of policy makers and academics. The *Guidelines* also pay special attention to incorporating a gender perspective into political party regulation, to ensure that both women and men are able to access political party structures and decision-making on equal footing. The Core Group of Experts on Political Parties, whose members were also involved in the preparation of the *Guidelines*, serves to promote its good practices in all OSCE participating States, as well as to update the *Guidelines* as new developments occur.

As political parties are integral vehicles for political activity and expression, their formation and functioning should not be limited, nor their dissolution allowed, except in extreme cases as prescribed by law and necessary in a democratic society.

(The Guidelines on Political Party Regulation, 2011)

More information

For detailed information about ODIHR's rule of law work and to view its full range of resources and publications, please visit:

www.osce.org/odihr/rol.

or contact ODIHR at:

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