**OSCE Chairmanship Seminar
on Present State and Prospects of Application of
Electronic Voting in the OSCE participating States**

Vienna, 16-17 September 2010
Neuer Saal, Hofburg Conference Center

DRAFT AGENDA

Day 1   **16 September 2010**

15.00 – 15.30   **OPENING REMARKS**

Representative of the OSCE Chairmanship
Director of the OSCE/ODIHR

15.30 – 18.00   **WORKING SESSION I:**

**Existing Approaches to Electronic
Voting**

This session will include the discussion on the use of the
remote as well as non-remote electronic voting equipment
and the current state of practice in the OSCE area with
regard to electronic voting. Participants will discuss the
forms, means and methods of electronic voting; various
electronic voting systems in use and the experiences with
the systems; operational and technical standards of
electronic voting. In addition, participants will consider cases
in which participating States have chosen not to use or to
discontinue use of electronic voting systems.

Points for discussion:

- What are the forms, means and methods of electronic
  voting?

By definition of the recommendation on legal, technical and
operational standards on electronic voting of the Council of
Europe, electronic voting is defined by 'using electronic
means in at least the casting of the vote'. This leads to a
series of forms of electronic voting including polling station
electronic voting machines, Internet voting or remote

electronic voting, kiosk voting, etc. However new forms emerge every day and it is to be discussed what forms are in use in the OSCE area.

- What factors have influenced the choice to use electronic voting systems and what factors have caused some participating States to reconsider the use of electronic voting? What are the experiences and challenges of electronic voting at polling stations and of remote electronic voting?

Within elections there are three key stakeholders: election management bodies, candidates and voters. In a holistic analysis one should consider whether electronic voting is beneficial to all three groups. Also public discussion of these systems should be considered.

- What are the roles and responsibilities of election administration bodies in implementing and overseeing electronic voting?

The use of electronic means in elections poses the a special problem as not only knowledge of information and communication technologies is needed to use electronic voting but even more it is needed to operate it. It is the task of the EMBs to balance the hiring of external experts and using resources of the electronic voting system providers. Also the challenging task for EMBs is to decide on how to give access to source code of electronic voting systems.

- How have the challenges in educating voters and training members of election administration bodies been addressed?

Inherent to electronic voting is the fact that electronic information in contrast to paper ballots cannot be touched. As such increased efforts to educate voters and with it rising ICT literacy are a challenge to EMBs.

- How does electronic voting affect access to voting?

A certain level of ICT literacy is needed to use electronic voting. Effective methods are needed to address this need by the population.

- In what ways has electronic voting affected public confidence? How can the electronic voting technical equipment be standardized and certificated? How do you see the role of the OSCE in this process?

Transparency of electronic processes is a special challenge to EMBs. It can be lost easily but gained only in small steps.

Recent examples have shown that the use of electronic means led to decisions in favor of the average voter which was not expected by EMBs. Open access to certification, evaluation, and auditing are central methods to support the building of public confidence. Discussion of electronic voting systems in public is another way how public support and confidence can be attained.

18.00 – 19.30   **Chairmanship Reception**

Day 2   **17 September 2010**

10.00 – 13.00   **WORKING SESSION II:**

International standards, legal regulation, and observation of electronic voting

Participants will discuss the ways in which legal regulation can ensure that electronic voting does not undermine principles for democratic elections or the integrity of election processes, as identified in OSCE election-related commitments. International standards, such as those developed by the Council of Europe, will also be considered, as will the principles and practice of observation of electronic voting by international election observation missions and by domestic political party and non-partisan observers.

Points for discussion:

- What is the experience with applying existing international standards to electronic voting? Are existing international standards sufficient with respect to electronic voting? How can national electoral legislation for electronic voting best take into account international election commitments and standards?

The field of electronic voting has long been limited to technical discussions. Only recently it has been recognized that electronic voting also influences the legal and political sphere. Based on the experiences with the Council of Europe recommendation on legal, operational, and technical standards on electronic voting it is to be discussed whether similar documents can help the implementation and acceptance of electronic voting.

- How can legislation ensure secrecy of the vote, transparency and accountability of electronic voting?

While the basic problem of electronic voting is the separation of identification of the voter and the secret ballot it is important which procedures legislation can introduce to raise transparency and accountability while still maintaining the separation.

- What are the issues relating to certification and audit of electronic voting systems? How can data protection and information security issues be addressed?

The evaluation and audit of electronic voting systems is of crucial importance as it involves a lot of control mechanisms for EMBs as well as the interested public. The challenge here is to balance intellectual property rights and the legitimate interest of the public to access the results of such analysis. The same problem faces the balancing of data protection and information security.

- To what extent can electronic voting be observed? What methods exist for observation of electronic voting? What are the experiences of domestic observers? What have been the key recommendations of OSCE/ODIHR on electronic voting issues?

The source of many challenges with electronic voting is that information is stored electronically instead on paper. Paper can be touched, can be seen. As such paper based election are better suited for observation means. Therefore electronic voting poses special requirements to observation. OSCE/ODIHR is currently working on a methodology on how to observe electronic voting.

13.00 – 15.00   Lunch

15.00 – 17.30   **WORKING SESSION III:**

Future developments in electronic voting in the OSCE region

This session will consider potential future developments in electronic voting regarding legislation, international standards, and technical and operational issues.

Points for discussion:

- What are the prospects for the organizational and technical development of electronic voting?

With more and more experience in the field of electronic voting, usability as well as technical maturity will lead to better user experiences on the side of the administration

and the citizens. Business process reengineering will allow for better organizational development. However it stays to question in which way the electoral context allows for such changes. However the movement towards electronic voting is not be seen as a one way stream and developments in other directions should also be considered.

- What are the lessons learned regarding legal regulation of electronic voting? Should international standards and requirements for electronic voting be further developed?

Based on the discussion in the first session the discussants should consider possible improvements of and new approaches to develop international standards for electronic voting.

- How can the reliability and security of electronic voting systems be ensured? Is there a need for international standardization and certification of equipment and software for electronic voting?

The issue of transparency is crucial when it comes to elections. In the recent years several researchers have proposed schemes (end-to-end verifiability) to provide additional transparency, reliability and security in elections. These schemes use cryptography to mathematically proof that a vote was cast as intended, recorded as cast, and counted as cast. However it needs again knowledge of advanced mathematics to understand the properties of these schemes. It is clear that such systems can not replace the need for proper certification, evaluation, and auditing of electronic voting systems.

- What are the prospects for education of voters on the forms and methods of electronic voting?

Inherent to electronic voting is the fact that electronic information in contrast to paper ballots cannot be touched. As such increased efforts to educate voters and with it rising ICT literacy are a challenge to EMBs.

17.30 – 18.00   **CLOSING REMARKS**

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