



## **Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting**

# **DEMOCRATIC LAW-MAKING: ENSURING PARTICIPATION**

**26-27 April 2021**

**(online)**

# **FINAL REPORT**



**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....3**

**II. SYNOPSIS OF THE SESSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....3**

**OPENING SESSION .....4**

**SESSION I: Open and Inclusive Law-Making .....5**

**SESSION II: Recent Challenges and Opportunities of Law-Making .....7**

**SESSION III: Public Participation and the Digital Space .....9**

**CLOSING SESSION .....11**

**ANNEX 1: AGENDA.....13**

**ANNEX II: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Speakers, Introducers and Moderators15**

## **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The second Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting (SHDM) of 2021, organized by the Swedish OSCE Chairpersonship and OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), was on “Democratic Law-making: Ensuring Participation”. The meeting was held online on 26-27 April 2021. The SHDM served as a platform for an exchange of views on democratic law-making, as well as ways in which OSCE participating States (pSs) can ensure their laws are in line with international human rights standards. Participants explored recent trends in law-making and the particular challenges that arise during periods of crisis, focusing on the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. They also discussed the need to increase public participation in the law-making process and the benefits that digital tools can bring.

The meeting brought together 379 registered participants (188 women, 191 men), including 113 representatives from 49 pSs, 161 representatives of 125 civil society organizations, 17 participants from international organizations, as well as 7 representatives from National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI) and 66 participants from OSCE institutions.

The meeting was organized around three working sessions:

- Session I: Open and Inclusive Law-Making;
- Session II: Recent Challenges and Opportunities of Law-Making;
- Session III: Public Participation and the Digital Space.

## **II. SYNOPSIS OF THE SESSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This section summarizes the discussions which took place during the opening session, the three thematic sessions and the closing session, and presents recommendations made by introducers and participants. The recommendations were directed towards a variety of actors, including OSCE pSs, OSCE institutions and field operations, civil society organizations and tech companies. While these recommendations have no official status and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the OSCE, they serve as useful indicators of how pSs can effectively meet their OSCE commitments pertaining to democratic law-making, as well as what follow-up activities could be implemented.

## OPENING SESSION

### *Opening remarks:*

**Ms. Annika Ben David**, Ambassador-at-large for Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, 2021 Swedish OSCE Chairpersonship

**Mr. Matteo Mecacci**, OSCE/ODIHR Director

**Mr. Peter Lord Bowness**, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

### *Keynote address:*

**Ms. Simona Granata-Menghini**, Director/Secretary of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe

### Summary of opening and keynote remarks:

**Ms. Annika Ben David**, opened the conference by noting that political and economic rights, rule of law and human rights are interconnected. She observed that democracies are undermined throughout the region. She referred to the Drive for Democracy Initiative which aims to address this unfortunate trend. The speaker emphasized that the review of laws to respect the OSCE commitments is key to fulfilling pSs' international commitments, including on gender equality. OSCE pSs must also strive to protect human rights online.

In his opening address, **Mr. Matteo Mecacci**, Director of ODIHR, noted that when legislation is passed it must not discriminate groups such as Roma, Sinti, and minorities. Hasty adoption process often lead to bad legislation being passed and thus become discriminatory because minority aspects are not addressed. He called on gender considerations to be part of any legislative process as well as public consultation processes. He observed the positive experience of an increasing number of pSs request legislative reviews from ODIHR.

In his opening statement, **Mr. Peter Lord Bowness** expressed concern regarding developments that have taken place during the COVID- 19 pandemic. He noted that most pSs have derogated from normal processes and that there is a significant increase in power for the executive branch. He emphasized that it is vital that democratic legislative processes are restored after the pandemic, with an inclusive consultation process and the parliamentary opposition being involved. In closing, a positive outcome, he observed, due to the pandemic is the development of secure electronic voting processes. However, he cautioned that there is still long a way to go to replace offline parliamentary/legislative processes and procedures such as debates and consultations.

Following the three introductory remarks, the opening session concluded with a keynote address by **Ms. Simona Granata-Menghini**, Director/Secretary of the Venice Commission. Ms Granata-Menghini distilled in her remarks key principles of democratic law-making. She noted that all important legislation should be passed by the parliament and that parliaments should decide procedure for law-making themselves. Further, a meaningful deliberation in the parliament between opposition and majority. The keynote speaker also stressed that there must be reasonable time and opportunity

for the public to provide feedback on draft legislation, especially on constitutional reform and electoral codes. The keynote speaker continued to note that states of emergencies present great challenges, but cautioned that these should not become “the new normal”. She stressed that citizens must be included in the decision-making processes as not all groups are represented in parliaments. These elements can increase the confidence in the legislative process.

## **SESSION I: Open and Inclusive Law-Making**

*Introducers:*

**Mr. Yves Doutriaux**, Councillor, Conseil d’État, France

**Ms. Anita Ramasastry**, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Corruption

*Moderator:* Mr. Konstantine Vardzelashvili, Chief of Legislative Support Unit, OSCE/ODIHR

Summary of introductory remarks:

In his introductory remarks, **Mr. Yves Doutriaux** noted that weak legislative processes undermine the public confidence of the legislation. He observed that MPs complain of a “legislative traffic jam”, as too many legislative processes are initiated. New legislation is often needed, but often new legislation is also passed without proper process because of media pressure following recent events, such as criminality or terrorist attacks where the government is pressured to react and propose legislation. The result is often a situation of “legal confusion” as it is harder to understand the content of the law as the language has not been properly scrutinized and the legislation becomes fragmented and contradictory to other legislation. The speaker remarked that to improve measures for better legislation it is important to conduct inclusive consultation processes with all relevant stakeholders and the general public. He noted that this is time consuming, but most necessary. He concluded that the challenge is to find a balance between transparent and open consultations leading to better accepted decisions and an efficient administration able to quickly deliver better services to citizens in line with their needs.

**Ms. Anita Ramasastry** noted in her introductory remarks that it is critical that the public have confidence and have a real ability and opportunity to participate in the political process and to have their voices and views considered with respect to legislation. To achieve this, there must be equal opportunity for women and men to contribute to the legislative process. She noted that a combination of codes of conduct as well as different rules relating to conflicts of interest, lobbying and disclosure of assets as well as of political contributions, all help the public to understand which potential influences may impact a member of parliament or a minister’s decision making. She referred to good practices in corruption prevention in legislative processes which ensure that parliamentarians and elected representatives are acting independently and with integrity. One of these good practices is the development of ethical standards for parliament members in the form of a “code of ethics” or a “code of conduct”. The speaker observed that ODIHR is working actively with different States on codes of conduct, which can guide parliamentarians to avoid conflicts of interest. Other examples of good practices are rules or legislation relating to lobbying, asset and income disclosures, and rules concerning political donations and transparency of such.

Participants highlighted the importance of including specific human rights angle in the law-making processes, by referring to the impact on the right to freedom of religion or belief due to closure of places of prayer, and the challenge to include minority views in these processes. They further noted how legislation that includes diverse groups can result in legislation that are sensitive to the needs of vulnerable groups.

Introducers and participants made the following specific recommendations in Session I:

#### *Recommendations for the OSCE pSs*

##### *General recommendations*

- Conduct inclusive and impartial consultation processes with all relevant stakeholders and the general public, paying specific attention to vulnerable and marginalized groups;
- New technology is useful and should be used in open and inclusive legislative processes, however, its use does not guarantee inclusion of some groups in the consultative processes. Such groups must also be provided the possibility to express views on (draft) legislation;
- To ensure equal opportunities for women and men to contribute to the legislative process;
- To ensure sufficient time to react and provide inputs during consultative processes;
- To conduct impact assessments of draft legislation;
- Parliamentary committees must have sufficient time to discuss and propose legislation;
- Monitor the implementation of laws during a defined time to assess its impact after adoption;

##### *Preventing corruption*

- Introduce codes of conducts for members of Parliaments (MPs);
- Introduce rules on the role and registration of lobbyists; and
- Registration of donations to political parties and politicians.

##### *Judgments and recommendations from international bodies*

- PSs must implement the judgments of international courts; and
- PSs should implement recommendations from legal reviews and reports and assistance for implementation should be provided to pSs by the international community.

#### *Recommendations for the OSCE institutions and field operations*

- OSCE Missions should assist host state authorities on rules on political lobbying;
- OSCE should investigate linguistic discrimination in pSs;
- OSCE should investigate restrictions on regional autonomy.

#### *Recommendations for civil society, international organizations and other actors:*

- Civil society is strongly encouraged and should be supported to participate in legislative consultation processes to influence legislation.

## **SESSION II: Recent Challenges and Opportunities of Law-Making**

*Introducers:*

**Mr. Akmal Saidov**, Deputy Speaker, Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis, Uzbekistan

**Ms. Viktoriya Podgorna**, Member of Parliament of Ukraine

**Ms. Ilaria Bottigliero**, Director of Research and Learning, International Development Law Organization

*Moderator:* Ms. Meaghan Fitzgerald, Acting Head of Democratization Department, OSCE/ODIHR

Summary of introductory remarks:

In this session introducers addressed the challenges and opportunities for better and effective law-making and specifically focused on how the rule of law can bring balance between the executive and legislature in the legislative process, and what the elements are that contribute to a good law-making environment, what the challenges are for pSs when legislating during times of crises, and, which good and innovative practices can be discerned from national legislative processes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Mr. Akmal Saidov** referred to the impact of the COVID--19 pandemic on the functioning of parliaments. In the OSCE region and globally some parliaments ceased their work, temporarily, others, continued their work as usual and a third group work remotely or opted for a blended work format. In regard to the latter some parliaments had to adopt new rules or amend existing regulations to continue to their work and saw the strengthened role of committees coming to the forefront. Some of the challenges that were noted include the need to enhance knowledge and skills of lawmakers; practical challenges, including gathering of relevant material (and linguistic challenges). Some pSs have used audits that allow governments to analyze compliance of legislation to international commitments gender, anti-corruption measures, and interests of youth.

**Ms. Viktoriya Podgorna** addressed the increased importance played by the parliamentary committees. She noted that inclusiveness remains a challenge in law-making process, especially where consultations of the public are not mandatory. She provided an example of a legislative initiative on which involvement of both local and international experts has been facilitated with success.

**Ms. Ilaria Bottigliero** noted that even prior to the pandemic a steady decline in rule of law indexes was observed. In the context of COVID-19, many States have introduced broad and sometimes disproportionate measures curbing freedoms of movement, speech and assembly in the name of public health and we have observed that discrimination and violence against women and girls have spiralled upwards and exacerbated pre-existing injustices, including gender-based violence, intimate partner violence and other forms of domestic violence and discrimination against women at work. Reversing these worrisome trends and finding paths for just and equitable responses to the pandemic is imperative and a necessary condition for a sustainable recovery.

In general, it was underlined that the pandemic has proven even more the importance to strengthen rule of law in emergency and crisis situations. In particular, the use of expedited procedures, and omnibus legislation showed how ensuring the balance between executive and legislature must always be safeguarded.

Introducers and participants reflected on recent trends in democratic law-making from a gender perspective, noting the lack of gender parity in pandemic response related decision-making. The exclusion of women in decision-making bodies has led to legislative responses that negatively and disproportionately impact women. The world has witnessed the sharp increase in discrimination in violence against women and girls.

Participants engaged in discussions on the challenges of minorities and other vulnerable groups in participating in law-making processes, in particular during emergency situations, and stressed the importance of protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms. Participants highlighted the important role that democratic law-making plays in protecting and promoting the rule of law. They noted that pSs have attempted to strike a balance between the powers of the executive and the work of the legislature in the context of the legislative process, as well as a bit about some of the elements which contribute to a good law-making environment.

Many participants emphasized the link between inclusive democratic law-making processes and the guarantee of human rights and fundamental freedoms, noting that the pandemic has only made this link more obvious. They also noted the various ways in which both pSs and civil society have responded to the need to work remotely during the pandemic, noting that this brings with it challenges, including those connected to the “digital divide”, but also opportunities for different forms of inclusion.

Introducers and participants made the following specific recommendations in Session II:

#### *Recommendations for the OSCE pSs*

- Ensure that restrictive measures during public health emergencies are rule of law-based;
- Foster participation, involve and empower individuals in decision-making processes;
- Focus on women and girls – women’s participation in the justice sector, elimination of discriminatory laws, prevent and respond to gender-based violence;
- Prepare for the next public health emergency and promote fair legal frameworks for aftermath and recovery;
- Establish a repository to share information among Parliaments of 57 pSs;
- Mitigate the impact of the crisis on justice systems and justice seekers to leave no one behind, by prioritizing and triaging cases and promote alternatives to ensure essential justice services, strengthening alternative justice services, and expand digital justice innovation, while addressing the digital divide.

#### *Recommendations for civil society, international organizations and other actors*

- Provide protection services during times of crisis, foster participation and empower individuals in law-making processes to prevent and eliminate gender-based violence.



## **SESSION III: Public Participation and the Digital Space**

*Introducers:*

**Ms. Inese Voika**, Member of the Parliament of Latvia

**Mr. Andy Williamson**, Senior Researcher, Inter-Parliamentary Union

**Ms. Eka Gigauri**, Executive Director, Transparency International Georgia

*Moderator:* Mr. Jacopo Leone, Chief of Democratic Governance and Gender Unit, OSCE/ODIHR

Summary of introductory remarks:

**Mr. Andy Williamson** noted that digital tools as such do not necessarily motivate people to participate, but they can help lower barriers for participation. In terms of accessibility, these tools give parliaments and citizens more opportunities to connect. Digital tools can also help parliaments build trust. For example, digital tools allow people to access information and understand how to get involved and make democracy more engaging and accessible. The speaker noted that participatory, deliberative and direct processes of engagement can complement and extend existing forms of representative democracy. By informing, educating and engaging, parliaments can reach new audiences and increase understanding

**Ms. Inese Voika** highlighted the importance to institutionalise public consultations in the law-making process. It was stressed that in addition to formal democracy, informal ways of engagement with citizens play an important role in raising the quality and legitimacy of legislation in the eyes of the public. Further, all introduced innovations should be accompanied by raising awareness campaigns in order to allow citizens to use provided tools and mechanisms aimed at increasing their participation. The introducer also pointed to the fact that open committee hearings, accessible for everyone interested, with all inputs provided in a transparent manner contributes to better engagement, proper feedback mechanisms. The more interactive such processes are the more engaged and proactive the citizens can become during the decision-making processes – those decisions that would have imminent impact on their life.

**Ms. Eka Gigauri** stressed that inclusiveness and pluralism while conducting public consultations are essential in order to reflect the views of all facets of the society. Citizen participation in the legislative decision-making processes allow citizens to contribute to decisions that may have an impact on their lives. It is an opportunity for them to communicate their legitimate interests. At the same time, in some countries citizens may also be rather passive as they do not believe that their participation can impact the ultimate decision or that their voices will be counted. Another challenge may be to convince citizens. Nevertheless, during the COVID-19 pandemic governments claimed that it has become more difficult to involve the public in the law-making process. However, global pandemic proved that digitalization of different processes is not just another possibility but a tool that brings even more tangible results in cases where they are done in a proper and adequate way. There are illustrative examples how the challenges presented by pandemic could be turned into new opportunities to increase the engagement of ordinary citizens and also reach underrepresented or

vulnerable groups, including women, the youth, people with disabilities or aliens, bringing their insights into the decision-making processes.

The introducers and participants stressed that e-parliament in the end may prove to be very positive for the purpose of transparency, accessibility and accountability, as illustrated by the examples from Latvia and Georgia. Among the useful tools may be e-petitions and citizen-driven campaigns that can feed directly in the legislative process. The participants also noted that while expanding digital solutions, traditional ways of conducting consultations should not be put aside..

The participants further deliberated on this topic and stressed participation in consultations of those who can be directly affected by would-be policies and regulations is crucial in terms of equality and justice. Further, the participants referred to some examples where NGOs could effectively provide their opinions and comments in relation to deliberated draft laws and regulations in their respective countries.

Further, the participants mentioned a worrying trend in some pSs of excluding dissenting voices and opinions and labelling them in some instances as “extremist”. Blocking of internet was referred to as another challenge.

The participants highlighted that creating certain platforms and tools could facilitate better engagement. Such tools could include, for instance, encompassing youth parliaments or engaging young people into politics and helping them understand how the democracy works in practice. Further, the participants pointed that trust grounds also in meaningful participation and that adequate and appropriate feedback mechanisms are also required in order to contribute to building trust towards the institutions and the consultation process. Otherwise, lack of such mechanisms may affect the public trust towards the respective institutions.

Introducers and participants made the following specific recommendations in Session III:

*Recommendations for the OSCE pSs*

- Ensure that dissenting voices, as well as views of minorities, vulnerable and marginalized groups are also heard at the local and national levels of the executive authorities, e.g. through establishing respective public councils;
- PSs and international organisations should introduce effective mechanisms encouraging minorities, including national minorities and people with disabilities, to participate in law and decision making processes;
- Ensure that minorities are consulted in all cases where the authorities are legislating minority-related issues;
- Ensure that while organizing and conducting public consultations, the process should be transparent, inclusive, accessible and accountable, proper feedback mechanisms should be also safeguarded in order to ensure public rapport and avoid frustration and consultation fatigue;
- Safeguard unimpeded online access to information related to various aspects of public life;
- Ensure that anti-extremism legislation is not instrumentalized in order to silent opponent or dissenting voices, also in the social media, during the public consultations or decision making;
- PSs that have adopted laws and regimes imposing personal sanctions for human rights violators, should establish online transparent mechanism for civil society organisations to nominate people suspected in serious human rights violations to be put on the sanction lists;

furthermore, OSCE pSs should also establish a proper feedback mechanism in relation to these nominations;

- While legislating on certain issues, respect and follow the relevant international standards, encompassed, *inter alia*, in joint Venice Commission-ODIHR Guidelines, such as Guidelines on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly<sup>1</sup>;
- Ensure interaction with a wide spectrum of NGOs, including those that voice dissenting opinions;
- Encourage use of digital tools in a wide spectrum of public life, including arrangement of online events, including educational ones, online voting procedures, online submission of documents;
- Extend the benefit of the ICT solutions to invest also on the side of the traditional ways of conducting consultations in order to minimize the generational gap and ensure that all citizens have equal opportunities to participate

#### *Recommendations for the OSCE institutions and field operations*

- OSCE operations and ODIHR should support CSOs in conducting comprehensive research that could help them get effectively engaged with the authorities in decision and policy making.

## **CLOSING SESSION**

### *Closing remarks:*

**Ms. Katarzyna Gardapkhadze**, First Deputy Director, ODIHR

**Mr. Tobias Lorentzson**, Deputy Permanent Representative, 2021 Swedish OSCE Chairpersonship

The meeting concluded with brief reports by the working session moderators, who summarized the main points and key recommendations from the discussions during the sessions. The meeting was then closed with concluding remarks by representatives of the Swedish Chairpersonship and ODIHR.

### Summary of closing remarks:

**Ms Katarzyna Gardapkhadze** noted that the law-making process is not linear, and in fact, it is a cycle, even repetitive - and noted that once the law is adopted, it requires monitoring, and ongoing post-legislative scrutiny. Public consultations should ideally be introduced in several stages of the law-making process. She noted that from ODIHR's experience in providing technical assistance to pSs it could be discerned that many of the flaws or defects in legislation could be prevented, and risks of discriminatory impacts of legislation can be significantly mitigated, if certain points of engagement and assessment of potential pitfalls are made part of the legislative process. Therefore, she remarked, that the making of laws is not merely about ideas and ambitions being translated into legislative

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<sup>1</sup> Accessible at [guidelines 1.indd \(legislationline.org\)](#)

outcomes. Their implementation, effectiveness and successful functioning are equally dependent on the process of their development being firmly rooted in the rule of law. She noted how speakers stressed the importance of civil society and independent institutions, including special interest groups and echoed the significance of the inclusive and open nature of the law-making process as reflected in OSCE commitments. She concluded that law-making is inherently complex, it is inherently political, yet it must inherently be democratic.

**Mr Tobias Lorentzson** expressed his appreciation of the ODIHR for organizing the event. Thanking all speakers and participants for sharing their experiences and knowledge, he highlighted their important insights on how to safeguard open and inclusive law-making process to ensure that enacted laws are human rights compliant. He noted that speakers highlighted how transparency in legislative processes can combat corruption and ensure gender-sensitive legislation. Mr Lorentzson concluded that full respect of human rights and pluralistic democracy and rule of law are important prerequisites for lasting peace, security, justice and cooperation.

## ANNEX 1: AGENDA



### Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Democracy Law-making: Ensuring participation

26-27 April 2021 (Online)  
AGENDA

#### Day 1

15.00 – 16.00

#### OPENING SESSION

*Opening remarks:*

**Ms. Annika Ben David**, Ambassador-at-large for Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, 2021 Swedish OSCE Chairpersonship

**Mr. Matteo Mecacci**, Director, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR)

**Mr. Peter Lord Bowness**, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

*Introductory address:*

**Ms. Simona Granata-Menghini**, Director/Secretary of the Venice Commission

*Technical information:* Ms. Katarzyna Gardapkhadze, First Deputy Director, OSCE/ODIHR

16.00 – 18.00

#### SESSION I: Open and Inclusive Law-Making

*Introducers:*

**Mr. Yves Doutriaux**, Councillor, Conseil d'État, France

**Ms. Anita Ramasastry**, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Corruption

*Moderator:* Mr. Konstantine Vardzelashvili, Chief of Legislative Support Unit, OSCE/ODIHR

## **Day 2**

10.30 – 12.30

### **SESSION II: Recent Challenges and Opportunities of Law-making**

*Introducers:*

**Mr. Akmal Saidov**, Deputy Speaker, Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis, Uzbekistan

**Ms. Viktoriya Podgorna**, Member of Parliament of Ukraine

**Ms. Ilaria Bottigliero**, Director of Research and Learning, International Development Law Organization

*Moderator:* Ms. Meaghan Fitzgerald, Acting Head of Democratization Department, OSCE/ODIHR

14.30 – 16.30

### **SESSION III: Public Participation and the Digital Space**

*Introducers:*

**Ms. Inese Voika**, Member of the Parliament of Latvia

**Mr. Andy Williamson**, Senior Researcher, Inter-Parliamentary Union

**Ms. Eka Gigauri**, Executive Director, Transparency International Georgia

*Moderator:* Mr. Jacopo Leone, Chief of Democratic Governance and Gender Unit, OSCE/ODIHR

16.30 – 17.30

### **CLOSING SESSION**

*Rapports from the working sessions Comments from the floor*

*Closing remarks:*

**Ms. Katarzyna Gardapkhadze**, First Deputy Director, OSCE/ODIHR

**Mr. Tobias Lorentzson**, Deputy Permanent Representative, 2021 Swedish OSCE Chairpersonship

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## **ANNEX II: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Speakers, Introducers and Moderators**

### *Opening remarks:*

**Ms. Annika Ben David**, Ambassador-at-large for Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, 2021 Swedish OSCE Chairpersonship. She has 25 years of experience in the Swedish diplomatic service and served earlier as Head of Section for Central, Eastern and Southern Africa, as Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission to the embassy of Sweden to Israel and as Counsellor for the department for Human Rights and International Law and Treaty Law at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sweden. Furthermore, she has been first secretary for the embassy of Sweden to Tanzania, served as Second Secretary for the embassy of Sweden to Israel and has also worked for UNHCR. She holds a Master's degree in Political Science, Uppsala.

**Mr. Matteo Mecacci**, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) since December 2020. Prior to that he spent 7 years as President of the International Campaign for Tibet. He headed the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission to Georgia in 2013 and was a Member of the Italian Parliament, Foreign Affairs Committee and of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly from 2008–2013. From 2000 to 2008 he was Representative to the United Nations in New York of “No Peace Without Justice” and the “Transnational Radical Party”. He holds a JD in International Law at the University of Florence.

**Mr. Peter Lord Bowness**, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, has been a member of the United Kingdom's Delegation to the OSCE PA since 2007. He has served as Chair of the OSCE PA's Sub-Committee on the Rules of Procedure and also has chaired the drafting committee that prepares the Assembly's Declarations at the conclusion of each Annual Session. He was first elected Vice-President in 2015 and re-elected in 2018.

Mr. Bowness was one of the UK Parliamentary Representatives for the Convention responsible for drafting the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. He's been in the House of Lords since 1996.

### *Keynote speaker:*

**Ms. Simona Granata-Menghini**, Director/Secretary of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) since 1 February 2021. She was previously Deputy Secretary, since 2010. Ms Granata-Menghini started her career at the Council of Europe in 1994 as a legal officer at the European Commission of Human Rights of the Council of Europe. From 1997 to 1999, she was Senior Deputy Ombudsman for Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Sarajevo and Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina. From 1999 to 2000, she was a legal officer at the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights. She joined the Venice Commission in 2001 as Head of the Constitutional Cooperation Division.

Countries she has worked on include Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Georgia, Egypt, Hungary, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Poland, Russian Federation, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, Venezuela. Topics covered include constitutional and legislative reforms relating to the separation of powers, the rule of law, independence of the judiciary, codes of judicial ethics, protection of minorities, freedom of expression, assembly, association, non-discrimination, regulation of political parties, ombudsman institutions, ratification of international treaties, enforcement of international court judgments, electoral law, state of emergency, oversight of

security services, ratification of the powers of national delegations to the Parliamentary Assembly, parliamentary immunity.

She is the author of numerous publications on the case law of the European Court of Human Rights and on the work and role of the Venice Commission. Simona holds a Master's degree in law from the University of Milan, Italy, and other diplomas in comparative law (1992, 1993, 1994) from the Faculty of Comparative Law in Strasbourg. She was admitted to the bar in 1995.

*Session I:*

**Mr. Yves Doutriaux** is a judge in administrative cases and legal adviser to the Government (inter alia on International treaties); has an extensive experience and knowledge of the OSCE region. Previously he was an Ambassador to the OSCE (2003-2006) Vienna and the Deputy Ambassador to the UN (1998-2002) New-York; Counsellor to the French Permanent Mission to the European Union (1988-1992); Counsellor to the MFA Cabinet office Paris; etc, *First Secretary Embassy of France in Tunisia 1981-1984*. He was a Member of the Advisory Committee against Discrimination with the Defender of Rights / “Défenseur des Droits”. He is also an Associated Professor in Public Law and Public Management Université Paris 1 Panthéon- Sorbonne; and Professor in Geopolitics Université Paris-Dauphine.

**Ms. Anita Ramasastry** a U.S and Irish citizen, is the Henry M. Jackson Professor of Law and the Director of the Sustainable International Development Graduate Program at the University of Washington School of Law. She is an expert in the fields of anti-corruption, commercial law, sustainable development and business and human rights. She is one of the leading academics and a pioneer in the field of business and human rights and the linkages between corruption and human rights. She currently serves as a member and the immediate past chair of the United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights, having been appointed as rapporteur by the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2016. She leads the Working Group’s thematic work on corruption. From 2009 to 2012, Ramasastry served as a senior advisor in the International Trade Administration of the US Department of Commerce where she led a special initiative focused on anti-corruption and international trade, with engagement with APEC, the G20, the OECD, and in other multilateral fora. As of 2019, Ramasastry is a member of the World Economic Forum’s Global Future Council on Transparency and Anti-Corruption.

**Mr. Konstantine Vardzelashvili** (moderator), Chief of Legislative Support Unit, OSCE/ODIHR, , providing assistance to pSs on compliance of legislation within the Human Dimension in relation to international commitments and standards. He joined ODIHR in 2018. Previously, he has held several positions, including serving as the Vice-President of the Constitutional Court of Georgia and as Deputy Minister of Justice of Georgia. Furthermore he has been a substitute member of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe and a Vice Chair and member of the United Nations Human Rights Committee. Konstantine Vardzelashvili holds degrees in Law and History from the Tbilisi State University, and a degree in History from the Central European University in Budapest.

*Session II:*

**Mr. Akmal Saidov** is a First Deputy Speaker of the Uzbekistani Parliament’s Legislative Chamber and a Director of the National Human Rights Centre. Holding a PhD Degree from the Moscow Institute of State and Law, he has more than 35 years of experience in the legal sphere and some 25 years in the field of law making. During his professional career, Professor Saidov was the Ambassador of Uzbekistan to France and the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the



UNESCO, the Chairperson of the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission of the Organization of Islamic Co-operation, and the Deputy Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

**Ms. Viktoriya Podgorna** is a People's Deputy of Ukraine (MP - Verhovna Rada as of 2019, a member of the Committee for digital transformation, and Head of the Subcommittee on e-democracy). She is also a Co-head of the Working Group of the Parliament for development of a bill on political parties in Ukraine. Education: kandidat nauk (Phd of Philosophy) – 1998. Kharkiv state University – 1994 (political science and history). Previously, she worked as a political analyst at the National Institute of Strategic Studies, as a political consultant for UDAR political party, as a member of civic initiative Reanimation Package Reforms-Kyiv and as lead expert on smart city and strategic development for cities and regions at Hi Tech Office Ukraine.

**Dr. Ilaria Bottigliero** is an international civil servant, academic and expert practitioner with 25 years' experience in international law, justice and human rights. She currently serves as the Director of Policy, Research and Learning at IDLO, where she leads IDLO's knowledge generation, research and learning, as well as the gender, climate justice and customary / informal justice thematic clusters. Prior to joining IDLO, Dr. Bottigliero has lectured and researched in over 25 countries on key human rights, humanitarian law and gender issues, including at the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law in Lund, Sweden, and the Chinese University of Hong Kong and at the University of Hong Kong Faculty of Law. Dr. Bottigliero has published widely on victims' rights, gender and international criminal justice, including the seminal book "Redress for Victims of Crimes under International Law".

**Ms. Meaghan Fitzgerald** (moderator), Acting Head of Democratization Department, OSCE/ODIHR, is a lawyer with a background in international affairs, Russian studies, human rights, and elections. In her career she has worked for the US State Department, OSCE offices in Belarus and Tajikistan, the United Nations, and managed a number of election observation missions around the world for ODIHR and the Carter Center. As acting head of the democratization department she oversees ODIHR's work in the fields of migration and freedom of movement, rule of law, democratic governance and gender as well as the support they give to pSs on drafting legislation that complies with international standards.

### *Session III:*

**Ms. Inese Voika** is a good governance expert and a member of the 13th Saeima, and the Chair of the Parliamentary Working Group on Lobbying Transparency Regulation. She has more than 20 years of experience in transparency of state administration and corruption prevention in Latvia and elsewhere and has cooperated with various international organizations such as the Council of Europe, the UN Development Program, NATO, Transparency International and others.

**Mr. Andy Williamson** is a Senior Researcher in the Inter-Parliamentary Union's Centre for Innovation in Parliament. He is lead author of the World e-Parliament Report and also wrote the IPU's guides to social media. Andy is an expert in citizen participation and digital democracy, having worked with numerous public bodies and with the UNDP and Council of Europe.

**Ms. Eka Gigauri** is the Executive Director at Transparency International Georgia. Previously, she was working in Governmental, Non-governmental and Private sectors, mainly in the fields of Foreign Relations (including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs) and Marketing and Communications Consultancy (Marriott International, Institute for Polling and Marketing). Ms. Gigauri is a former Deputy Head of the Border Police of Georgia. Since 2010 Eka is the Executive Director at Transparency International Georgia. During November 2019–November 2020 Eka Gigauri was serving as a member of the board of directors at Transparency International global movement. Eka holds LLM in International Law from VU University Amsterdam, Master's Degree in Business Administration from the Caucasus School of Business and the Bachelor's degree in International Relations from Tbilisi State University. Eka Gigauri is a Stanford University Democracy and Development Programme fellow.

**Mr. Jacopo Leone** (moderator), Chief of Democratic Governance and Gender Unit, OSCE/ODIHR, has been working as a political analyst for over eight years in the field of democracy assistance and governance, with a strong focus on parliamentary strengthening, political party assistance, anti-corruption, public integrity, and civil society development. Currently working as a Chief of Democratic Governance and Gender Unit at the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), he provides analyses of political developments and delivers assistance to OSCE pSs on democratic governance issues, with particular attention on strengthening integrity in parliaments and political party systems, promoting inclusive political institutions and youth and women's political participation. Before joining ODIHR, he worked among others for the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, NATO, the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) and the European Parliament. Mr. Leone holds an MSc in International and European Politics from the University of Edinburgh.

*Closing remarks:*

**Ms. Katarzyna Gardapkhadze** is the First Deputy Director of ODIHR, where she oversees activities of the Election, Democratization, Human Rights, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, and Roma and Sinti programmes. Prior to her current appointment in August 2016, she was the Head of ODIHR's Human Rights Department. Ms. Gardapkhadze is an expert in strategic planning and change management, conflict resolution and mediation, with a thematic expertise in human and children rights and gender equality. She has more than 20 years of professional experience from Poland, the United States, Western Balkans, the South Caucasus and Central Asia. In 2003–2011, Ms. Gardapkhadze led conflict resolution, human rights and child/social welfare reform programs in the South Caucasus, also advising similar programs in Central Asia. In 2000–2002, she managed initiatives focused on human rights, minorities and inter-ethnic dialogue in Western Balkans. Fluent in Polish, English and Russian, Ms. Gardapkhadze holds a Master's Degree in social sciences.

**Mr. Tobias Lorentzson**, Ambassador, has over 16 years of experience in the Swedish diplomatic service and served as Deputy Head of Mission and Head of Political Section at the Embassy of Sweden in Moscow. Prior to that he was Desk Officer for Belarus, Armenia and Azerbaijan at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Stockholm, served as First Secretary at the Swedish Mission to the UN in Geneva and as Second Secretary at Swedish Embassy in Guatemala. He holds a Master in International Relations, Sciences Po, Paris.