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29 May 2015

PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RIGHT TO FREE ELECTIONS: the challenge of applying election legislation and the Council of Europe standards

organised in co-operation with
the National Assembly of France
and the Venice Commission

DRAFT PROGRAMME

PARIS

4-5 June 2015

Venue:

*Assemblée nationale
Immeuble Jacques Chaban-Delmas
(Salle Lamartine)
101 Rue de l'Université – 75007 Paris*



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*Programmatic Cooperation Framework
in the Eastern Partnership countries*

Funded
by the European Union



Implemented
by the Council of Europe

1. OBJECTIVES

Starting from 2015, the Parliamentary Assembly participates in the implementation on Parliamentary level of a joint framework agreement between the Council of Europe and the European Union, the so called **2015 – 2017 EU-CoE Eastern Partnership Programmatic Co-operation Framework (PCF)**. This programme aims at providing assistance to the reinforcement of democratic reforms in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus.

Under the priority '**promoting democratic governance**', the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) will undertake activities on ways and means to improve (regional) parliamentary co-operation in electoral matters by organising regional parliamentary seminars and conferences. This conference will be the first of this series of conferences and will focus on:

- the standards of the Council of Europe concerning democratic elections and monitoring mechanisms in this field ;
- possibilities for improving legal frameworks and electoral practice with regard to certain recurrent issues identified during observation missions by the Parliamentary Assembly ;
- best practice in the field of elections.

2. PARTICIPANTS

Members of Parliaments of six countries, beneficiaries from the Eastern Partnership, and members of the Parliamentary Assembly from other Council of Europe member states will meet representatives of election administrations, non-governmental organisations involved in election observations as well as experts from the Venice Commission and other Council of Europe relevant bodies and representatives from other international organisations at this first parliamentary conference on elections.

Simultaneous interpretation in French, English and Russian will be provided.

3. DRAFT PROGRAMME

Thursday, 4 June 2015

8.30 – 9.00 am

REGISTRATION OF PARTICIPANTS

9.00 – 9.30 am

OPENING SESSION

Welcome by:

Mr Harlem DESIR, Secretary of State for European Affairs of France

Mr René ROUQUET, Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and Chairperson of the French Delegation to the PACE

Mr Jean-Claude FRÉCON, Chairperson of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

Mr Gianni BUQUICCHIO, President of the European Commission for the Democracy through Law - Venice Commission, Council of Europe

Mr Michael Georg LINK, Director, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE/ODIHR)

9.30 am – 12.30 pm

INTRODUCTORY SESSION – The Council of Europe standards in the field of elections

Chairperson: Mr René ROUQUET, Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and Chairperson of the French delegation to the PACE

Ensuring greater democracy in elections

Mr Jean-Charles GARDETTO, former PACE member and Rapporteur on “Ensuring greater democracy in elections”

Soft law of the Council of Europe in the field of elections

Mr Peter PACZOLAY, Professor of Constitutional Law, Honorary President of the Venice Commission, Former President of the Constitutional Court of Hungary

Council of Europe Electoral Assistance Programmes

Ms Claudia LUCIANI, Director of Democratic Governance, Directorate General of Democracy, Council of Europe

The standards of the European Union in the field of democratic elections

Mr Giancarlo DEFAZIO, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, European Commission

Exchange of views

10:45 - 11:15 *Coffee break*

Chairperson: Mr René ROUQUET, Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and Chairperson of the French delegation to the PACE

The case-law and execution of judgements of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in the field of elections

Ms Inna SHYROKOVA, Lawyer, Registry of the European Court of Human Rights

Exchange of views

12:30 - 2:15pm *Lunch offered by the Parliamentary Assembly*

2.15 – 3.30 pm

SESSION 2 Election legislations: challenges and implementation

Chairperson: Mr Stefan SCHENNACH, Chairperson of the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States (Monitoring Committee), PACE

Monitoring mechanisms of the Parliamentary Assembly

Mr Stefan SCHENNACH, Chairperson of the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States (Monitoring Committee), PACE

Opinions of the Venice Commission

Mr Thomas MARKERT, Director, Secretary of the Venice Commission

Reports of the election observation missions of the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the OSCE

Ms Beata MARTIN-ROZUMIŁOWICZ, Head of the Election Department, (ODIHR/OSCE)

Exchange of views

03:30 – 04:00 pm Coffee break

4.00 - 5.15 pm

SESSION 3 Election campaigns and the use of administrative resources: challenges and good practices

Chairperson: Mr Thomas MARKERT, Director, Secretary of the Venice Commission

Mr Serhii KALCHENKO, Lawyer, Election Expert of the Venice Commission

Mr Richard GHÉVONTIAN, Professor of Constitutional Law, Vice-President of the University of Aix-Marseille (France), Election Expert of the Venice Commission

Exchange of views

Friday, 5 June 2015

9.00 - 10.15 am

SESSION 4 Inaccuracies in voter lists and difficulties related to the vote of citizens residing abroad

Chairperson: Mr Christopher CHOPE, PACE member, Chair of the ad hoc committee for the observation of elections in Ukraine

Mr Evgeni TANCHEV, Vice-President of the Venice Commission, Professor, Judge and Former President of the Constitutional Court of Bulgaria

Ms Tatyana BOGUSSEVICH, Deputy Head of the Election Department, OSCE/ODIHR

Mr Jos WIENEN, Chairman of the Council for Democratic Elections,
Congress' Thematic Spokesperson on observation of local and regional
elections

Exchange of views

10.15 am – 10.45 pm Coffee break

10.45 – 12.00 pm

**SESSION 5 Functioning of electoral administrations: the challenge of
neutrality and impartiality**

*Chairperson: Mr Andreas KIEFER, Secretary General of the Congress of Local and Regional
Authorities*

Ms Tamar ZHVANIA, Chairperson of the Central Election Commission of
Georgia

Ms Daria PAPROCKA, Election Expert of the Venice Commission

Exchange of views

12.00 – 12.30 pm

CLOSING SESSION

Conclusions and closing remarks by:

Mr Nicolas KACZOROWSKI, Country Director, International Foundation for
Electoral Systems (IFES) Tunisia

Exchange of views

12:30 -2:00 pm Lunch break

*2.00 pm Departure for the Constitutional Council of France (meeting point: 126, rue
de l'Université, 75007 Paris, Bus company "Transdev VISUAL")*

2:30 – 4:30 pm Visit of the Constitutional Council of France

4. SECRETARIAT

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