



# **REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON MONEY IN POLITICS**

**Marriott Tbilisi, Georgia**

**February 18-19, 2016**

**Summary Report**

## Conference Background

From February 18-19, 2016, the *Regional Conference on Money in Politics* – organized jointly by the Council of Europe, the International IDEA, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the State Audit Office of Georgia, the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) – brought together political finance experts from across the region. The purpose of the conference was to provide a forum for practitioners to highlight areas of political finance regulations in the region in need of reform; exchange information on the effective enforcement and monitoring of political finance legal frameworks; and identify approaches, mechanisms and procedures for improving the implementation of existing regulations.

During the conference, four major themes were discussed:

1. Leveling the playing field for political parties and candidates;
2. Transparency in political financing;
3. Monitoring of compliance and enforcement of political finance laws; and
4. The future of political finance

As was highlighted throughout the conference during panel discussions, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to regulating political finance either globally or within the region, and it is vital that rules and regulations be tailored to fit the political culture and traditions of a specific country. However, there are benefits from regional experience-sharing in enhancing the integrity of the electoral process through increased transparency and accountability of the political finance system. It is through discussions amongst a regional peer network on political finance, such as the assembled community of experts through the *Regional Conference on Money in Politics*, that successes will be shared and innovative solutions will be developed and adopted.

## Leveling the playing field for political parties and candidates

### Role of public funding

Within the region, approximately 86 percent of countries have adopted some form of public financing for political parties. This has yielded several positive results, including 1) a reduced dependence on private funding, which in turn reduces the risk that parties will “sell” political favors; 2) a decreased disparity of financial resources between parties; and 3) an increased focus by political parties in developing political platforms that are responsive to the needs of the citizenry. However, there is some concern about an over-dependency on public funding, which is contrary to the Council of Europe recommendations. It is unclear what will happen in the future if political party systems are too reliant on public funding. Panelists expressed a need to re-examine the balance between public and private funding throughout the region in order to maintain a healthy equilibrium between the two. Several guiding documents address this issue, including Council of Europe Recommendation 2003(4) Article 1, and OSCE/ODIHR & Venice Commission “CDL-AD(2010)024 Guidelines on political party regulation” Article 160.

When establishing provisions for public funding, it is important to consider what the country is trying to achieve by providing public funding, and evaluate both the benefits and risks of various approaches. For example, when should a country provide funding – before or after an election? Post-election provision of funds might be problematic for smaller parties because they have to raise funds ahead of elections from private sources. The UK and Sweden were highlighted as good examples of where public funding

disbursement rules served to strengthen opposition and smaller parties, while preventing bias towards incumbent.

The primary role of public funding should be to strengthen the transparency and fairness of the political party system, rather than benefitting political parties' individual interests. Subsequently, the allocation of public funds should be contingent on compliance with requirements for transparency and gender equality within parties and among candidates. It can be questioned if parties that do not subscribe to principles of democracy or gender equality shall have the right to public funds.

It is also important to establish monitoring and control mechanisms when introducing provisions for public funding to monitor both the intended and potential adverse effects. Through panel discussions, speakers highlighted the need for monitoring mechanisms to involve effective institutions with an adequate mandate and functions to fulfil their remit. For example, in Latvia, the Corruption Preventing and Combating Bureau (KNAB) was established in 2002 with the mandate for monitoring and control of public funding. The establishment of this agency was a pre-condition for Latvia to join the EU and NATO, and this agency has shown to be effective. In Poland, if a political party's annual financial report is rejected, the party is deprived of the right to public subsidies for three years – this serves as an effective deterrence, and causes parties to be very cautious in submitting their reports. The combining compliance and investigative functions seems to have led to successes in Latvia and Poland.

### Regulation on Contributions and Spending

In Europe, about half of the countries use contribution limits, and about half place limits on the amounts that can be spent (both types of limits are more common in the Eastern part of the region).

Overall limits on contributions and spending can be valuable in reducing the undue influence of money on the electoral process. However, it is important that limits on contributions and spending be designed carefully, or else restrictions could have a negative effect – for example, setting expenditure limits that are too strict to enable a party or candidate to run an effective campaign might result in these political actors filing inaccurate reports or changing their structures to circumvent the law, resulting in less transparency in the process. Additionally, it was stressed throughout all of the presentations the importance of *enforcement* of these regulations; the only way that these limits will be effective is if political parties and candidates are held accountable for compliance.

Bans on foreign donations and anonymous donations were discussed as becoming increasingly important in the region. Foreign donations were flagged as difficult to enforce. Anonymous donations are banned in many European countries in the interest of transparency as well as to make sure political parties and candidates cannot hide donations from illegal sources. However, anonymous donations can have the adverse effect of discouraging small, legitimate donations from average citizens if the volume of paperwork needed for the smaller donation outweighs its value in the eyes of the party or candidate. There should be solutions sought, such as setting minimum thresholds, to allow for small individual contributions while minimizing the potential adverse effect of anonymous donations.

### Political Finance and Gender Equality

There were several barriers identified by the panelists to the political participation of women pertaining to political financing – ranging from a lack of financial resources generally to men being put higher on party lists because they are able to contribute more financially to the party. Unless women have access to funding – either through public funding or some other means – their ability to compete as equals to their male counterparts might continue to pose a challenge.

Gender quotas are often used to mitigate obstacles to women’s political participation, and they have been shown to be more effective in certain situations than others. Albania, which has instituted a gender quota system since 2008, was highlighted to demonstrate this phenomenon. For Parliament, it is legally mandated that one of the first three names on the multi-name electoral list (as well as 30% of the total names on the list) must be female in each electoral zone. Panelists attributed the success of this quota to it being accompanied by monetary sanctions for non-compliance. However, quotas for local government elections – for each municipal council – where there is a requirement one in every two consecutive names in ranking to be female have not been as effective given that this change has not been accompanied by changes in funding available for female candidates. In general, panelists agreed that gender quotas were beneficial in starting the process of breaking down barriers to women’s participation; however, quotas should either be coupled with other interventions (such as sanctions for non-compliance or making additional funding available). Alternative approaches and more creative steps are required to address the challenges to women’s participation in politics and to achieve gender balance in politics. There is a need to collect gender disaggregated political finance data, evaluate how funds are allocated and ensure that public funds are not used in a discriminatory manner. Civil society should also support micro finance funds for female candidates and high profile networks of support for women running for office.

## **Transparency in political financing**

### **Disclosure**

Through panel discussions, speakers examined ways to increase the effectiveness and use of political finance information. Disclosure was described in the panels as a cornerstone of any political finance regulation system; and indeed, in Europe, most countries require financial disclosure by both political parties and candidates. However, transparent disclosure remains a problem in many European countries, with many political parties failing to disclose all of their financial transactions.

Developing and maintaining transparent systems for financial reporting and disclosure should be the main priority of all political finance systems in the region. When determining what level of contributions must be disclosed by the regulated community, it is important to find an appropriate balance between transparency and the right to privacy, particularly when it comes to smaller donations. Citizens have the right to know who funds political parties and candidates. However, a balance can be achieved through establishing thresholds, reducing the administrative burden on political parties and candidates, encouraging grassroots fundraising and protecting the privacy of ordinary citizens making small donations. In some cases, countries can consider a level of donations which must be reported but are not made public.

The role of ICT in increasing transparency in political finance was highlighted by panelists when discussing disclosure. Electronic submission of financial information by political parties and candidates – particularly of campaign finance returns – facilitates a more effective review by the political finance regulator and increased public access to relevant data. These online solutions should be standard across the region. The principle of open data should apply to enforcement agencies developing online reporting and disclosure systems and political parties developing software allowing them to share their income and expenditures statements as well as facilitating for internal oversight. Countries like Latvia and others are taking innovative steps in increasing the use of technology to both submit disclosure statements but also have this information cross-checked by other sources, such as a tax authority. Additionally, providing this data in a searchable website allows civil society and others assist the political finance regulator in the “watchdog” role; where possible, civil society organizations should make use of

technology to monitor and provide easily understood analysis of financial data. It should be noted that few countries have established such systems.

### Campaign Finance Monitoring

Through panel discussions, speakers examined the important role that non-governmental actors – namely civil society – can play in promoting transparency. Civil society organization representatives from Georgia, Armenia, Romania, Moldova, Ukraine and other countries presented their various approaches to campaign finance monitoring in their respective countries. In some countries throughout Europe, CSOs monitored political party and candidate spending and disclosure as new laws were coming into effect; some discussed monitoring under strong legal systems regulating political finance, while others discussed the inherent weaknesses in their respective legal frameworks, especially regarding availability of detailed financial records from electoral contestants.

Civil society organizations can provide poignant insight as to weaknesses in the current laws and regulations. Representatives stressed the need to engage in strong, evidence-based analytical reporting to effectively influence public opinion and campaign for reforms. Verification of information was stressed by many of the panelists as critical. Graphic representation of findings was discussed as an effective way to engage an audience in reporting.

Publishing and analyzing financial reports online should be a priority by the oversight agencies in the field of political finance in the coming years, allowing civil society to play a critical role in monitoring political financing.

In order for civil society organizations to maximize the effectiveness of their monitoring, they need to have access to a broad array of information on public institutions. In Georgia, Transparency International can proactively engage in parallel monitoring of campaign expenses and provide a check on the information being disclosed by the state and political players in party because they have good access to comparative information by the State. Parallel election tracking can be used as an effective tool for assessing the information provided to the State Audit Office by political parties. In other countries, civil society organizations to seek to gain access to as much information as possible to inform their analysis, such as requesting using the FOIA to obtain information from public institutions.

In countries where there is no social demand for better accountability of politicians and no demand to increase the use of political funding as a means to increase accountability, civil society organizations must play a critical role to increase this demand. However, as the Armenia experience illustrates, approaches to political finance monitoring must be tailored to fit these environments.

### Preventing the abuse of state resources

There are many ways that that state resources can be used for political gain, ranging from unequal access to the media to funding requirements that eliminate the opposition to biased enforcement of the law. The abuse of state resources destroys public confidence in the political process, prevents equal opportunity for political parties and candidates, and can serve to undermine the effectiveness of public administration. In order to preserve the integrity of the electoral process, this issue must be addressed in all countries throughout the region.

What can be done? Regulating the use of state resources through law and codes of conduct can help curb violations. The recently adopted Venice Commission and OSCE/ODHIR *Joint Guidelines for Preventing and Responding to the Misuse of Administrative Resources During Electoral Processes*

<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/227506?download=true>) can be used as a resource in this regard. Also, civil society and media monitoring can help work towards implementing public pressure that the abuse of state resources is unacceptable. For example, in Romania, civil society has been able to document e 1) the chance of getting funding from central government increases if local authority is of same political party as ruling party, 2) instances where national budget funding has been given “without strings” to Mayors of same political party, and 3) instances where reserved funds have been used to influence the outcome of elections. However, there are some limitations to the effectiveness civil society monitoring can have on preventing the abuse of state resources.

More research should be done in how to detect electoral motivated spending. Additionally, although illegal use of state resources is a crucial problem, there are also many *legal* yet questionable areas where state resources are being used for partisan purposes. Subtle yet widespread examples of this in need of increased attention include official advertising and the use of state officials in campaigning by incumbents. Better definitions and more sophisticated methods are needed to counter the grey zones of abuse of state resources. Panels also raised the possibility of states requiring public institutions to report information to reduce abuse of state resources.

### Reducing the influence of illicit financing

Illicit financing of political campaigns in the region continues to be an important issue to address. Businesses and other powerful entities are using their money to influence politics in a way that goes unchecked. Gaps in legislation can increase the risks of corruption and space for nontransparent donations to political parties. Additionally, insufficient reporting and review of submitted disclosure information by political parties and candidates can also provide an opportunity for illicit financing to go undetected.

There were several interventions recommended by panelists to reduce the influence of illicit financing. Increased transparency is needed through the disclosure of all contributions (including in-kind donations), as well as sufficient resources by the oversight body to review disclosed information and investigated alleged violations as needed. Speakers noted that agencies are often understaffed/under-resourced in comparison with what the laws require of them, which affects their ability to fulfil their remit.

An enforcement strategy that is integrated with the judiciary and law enforcement agencies is also critical. Sanctions should be in place for those who violate the law, as well as a functioning avenue for filing complaints to facilitate effective enforcement. Any sanctioning system should also be proportional and consistently applied.

In Moldova, GRECO recommendations were taken into account when developing their systems in an effort to prevent the influence of illicit funds on the political process. Moldova has adopted several strict regulations: donations from entities outside of Moldova to political parties and candidates are forbidden; provisions on public funding and to prevent the abuse of state resources have been introduced; and the introduction of a new enforcement mechanisms as well as an independent implementing body. Disclosure information can be reviewed among the various ministries so that different government bodies can see who donated how much and when.

In Ukraine, several normative changes have been instituted that are designed to help address this issue: new anti-corruption laws; the establishment of a new Anti-Corruption Agency that is responsible for political finance monitoring; a new requirement for political parties to submit detailed quarterly reports; the provision of public party financing for parties with substantial electoral support that are able to

provide valid financial reports and undergo an external audit; and available sanctions for violations by political parties and candidates. Panelists highlighted additional steps that should be taken in Ukraine to ensure transparency in political financing, such as new laws, more effective control mechanisms and instruments and more public access to information.

If there is no political will by parties to comply, there is space for illicit financing to continue. Therefore, countries must engage in building understanding and trust with both political parties and the public to jointly tackle the issue of preventing illicit funding. Political parties should be supported in their efforts to abide by political finance regulations, and systems should make it as easy as possible for electoral actors to comply.

In addition, a regional commitment to fighting organized crime and illicit funding of parties and candidates should be sought. While politics is generally local, organized crime is an increasingly transnational and globalized phenomenon. This means that while domestic measures to minimize the risks of illicit funding are necessary, regional cooperation – for example, on joint law enforcement to combat money laundering – is essential. Since some of the key characteristics of organized crime are its dynamism, sophistication and adaptability to the context, a regional commitment to fighting this phenomenon is critical.

## **Enforcement of political finance laws**

Effective enforcement was one of this biggest obstacles identified through panel presentations to effective systems of political finance regulations. Issues in enforcement range from a lack of political will to lack of perceived or instated mandate of the responsible oversight body to lack of resources available to fulfil oversight body's remit.

Panelists discussed several elements that are required for effective implementation of political finance legislation. First, a robust legislative framework is needed that is clear, complete, and enacted in a timely way. Legislation should not have major loopholes or gaps, and should be instated well in advance of an electoral event. There should be a mix of sanctions available against different types of breaches to the applicable regulation, which should be proportional and timely. Available sanctions should discourage corrupt practices, and be higher than a tolerable 'cost of doing business' to dissuade non-compliance with applicable regulations.

Second, there should be an independent body or bodies responsible for enforcing the legislative framework that has the mandate and the authority to do so. The regulatory responsibility of oversight bodies should be clear, they should be given adequate investigative powers, and individuals invested with this authority must have the capacity and commitment to identify practices of corruption. Oversight bodies should engage meaningfully with all stakeholders and share the responsibility of effectively implementing the political finance regulations. They must aim to control expectations by communicating effectively the reach and limits of their mandate and by clarifying the legal requirements to all internal and external stakeholders.

Third, there should be a robust operational framework in that there are sufficient and effective policies, procedures and resources to enforce the law. There should be a process for receiving and investigating allegations of wrongdoing and a facility for the public to report possible breaches of the law. The oversight body should be given adequate funding and allocation of the appropriate staff with sufficient capacity to fulfil their mandate.

The international community can contribute to improving the effectiveness of political finance regulations by filling information gaps, expanding the knowledge on the topic and developing the appropriate assessment tools to provide adequate technical assistance.

## Future of political finance

### Importance of the GRECO evaluations and need for follow-up

Assessments completed by the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) through their monitoring of States' compliance with anti-corruption standards have served as an important benchmark for European countries. In their third round of evaluations which focused in part on the transparency of Party Funding, recommendations were given to the countries evaluated that provide a valuable roadmap on what steps should be taken towards improving their legal structures as well as more effectively implementing of the systems put in place.

However, as panelists discussed, there is variation within the region as to how much progress has been made in implementing GRECO's recommendations. For example, in Armenia, all 11 of the GRECO recommendations have been fully implemented, while in Austria, Georgia and Ukraine, over 50% of the recommendations have yet to be implemented.

To maximize the effectiveness of the research and analysis conducted to date, there should be regional discussions on how to build on GRECO's evaluations moving forward. Panelists recommended that the international community establish a more permanent mechanism for monitoring the strength of states' political finance regulation. Panelists also highlighted the need to encourage countries to utilize the expertise of the Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR to request reviews of legislative reforms.

### Stakeholders working together to support reform efforts

To maximize effectiveness, stakeholders should collaborate on reform efforts, rather than leave the process in the sole hands of the political decision-makers can prove a useful means to achieve ambitious progress. There are examples in Europe where working groups have been open to invested stakeholders while drafting legal and institutional reform recommendations. Invested stakeholders have included:

- **Representatives in Parliament**, e.g. from individual progressive MPs sponsoring reforms. These individuals can be essential to counter the resistance of self-protective traditional elites perceived as corrupt in certain countries.
- **Domestic groups**, e.g. civil society organizations. These representatives can play a key role in advocacy for certain reforms, and can play an active role in promoting improvements instead of exclusively relying on pressure from international actors.
- **Political parties**. Political parties are critical in the promotion of transparent internal controls and mechanisms, and could explore the possibility of adopting political finance codes of conduct.
- **Academia**. Academics can also play an important role in explaining to the public where the needs for reforms lie, what are the gaps (especially on such technical matters as financial reporting and sources of funding), what are the expectations of the international community and the implications of draft changes, etc.
- **International political finance experts**. International experts, as individuals or through organizations, can play a vital role in providing comparative political financing expertise.

It is important, particularly when working towards reaching a consensus amongst various stakeholders, to define key priorities when drafting legislation so as to be able to address trade-offs when there is a conflict between various priorities. Additionally, it is recommended that the sequencing of reforms be taken into account, i.e. examining in which order reforms should be introduced. There should also be continuous discussion on potential improvements.

Above all, the importance of prevention and creating a culture of integrity should be acknowledged by all stakeholders. This entails going beyond the scandal-reform-scandal cycle and investing in a constant, permanent effort to educate and build the capacity of monitoring bodies and political parties as well as improve the quality of the compliance with the system in place.

## ICT

New media and technology have the power to change political finance spending, monitoring and regulation in the medium and long term. Social media provides inexpensive means for political parties and candidates to share their messages, and as a fund-raising mechanism. Technology provides an opportunity for electronic submission of financial information by political parties and candidates, and a user-friendly way for civil society, the media and the public to analyze reported data. Latvia, Lithuania and the UK are a few countries in the region who are experimenting with using new technology, interactive databases, and making sure civil society organizations and media can access information in real time.

The potential for ICT is promising. However, there is a growing need to use innovative ICT solutions to increase transparency in political and campaign financing. Additionally, countries will need to draft and adopt new legislation dealing with social media and new technologies and their role in political financing.

## **Appendix 1. The conference organizers' work on money in politics**

### **THE STATE AUDIT OFFICE OF GEORGIA (SAOG)**

The SAOG represents the modern, independent and successful audit institution with the highest professional standards, the interference in the activity of which is prohibited by the law. With its work SAOG supports the parliament in overseeing the activities of the government and significantly contributes to the Parliamentary oversight over the government. On December 30, 2011, legislative amendments in the Georgia's organic law "On Political Unions of Citizens" came into force. According to the law, monitoring implementation on legality and transparency of the political parties registered in Georgia was entrusted to the SOAG. Visit <http://sao.ge/en/> to learn more about the work of the SAOG.

### **THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organization. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states. Visit <http://www.coe.int/en/> to learn more about the work of the Council of Europe.

### **THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY AND ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE (IDEA)**

Over the past fifteen years, International IDEA has provided direct technical assistance to a range of actors working on political finance and has worked in countries as diverse as Bhutan, Ecuador, Kenya, Mongolia, Myanmar, Sweden and Peru. International IDEA produces knowledge resources on political finance legislative frameworks and their practical implementation, which guide both researchers and reformers around the world. The Political Finance Database (<http://www.idea.int/political-finance/>), for example, offers the most up-to-date and comprehensive information on political finance regulations from 180 countries. In 2014, International IDEA and published a new handbook on political finance: Funding of Political Parties and Election Campaigns, while its study on Political Party Finance Regulation after the Arab Spring provides rich regional overviews on how such regulation works in practice at national level. Visit <http://www.idea.int/> to learn more about the work of International IDEA.

### **OSCE OFFICE FOR DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS (ODIHR)**

OSCE-ODIHR is one of the world's principal regional human rights bodies. Based in Warsaw, Poland, ODIHR is active throughout Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and North America. The office promotes democratic elections, respect for human rights, tolerance and non-discrimination, and the rule of law. Established in 1991, ODIHR employs nearly 150 staff from 30 countries. The office's activities are funded through a core budget, which is approved annually by participating states, as well as through voluntary contributions. Visit <http://www.osce.org/odihr> to learn more about the work of OSCE-ODIHR.

### **INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTORAL SYSTEMS (IFES)**

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) supports citizens' rights to participate in free and fair elections. Its independent expertise strengthens electoral systems and builds local capacity to deliver sustainable solutions. As the global leader in democracy promotion, IFES advance good governance and democratic rights by: Providing technical assistance to election officials; empowering the underrepresented to participate in the political process; Applying field-based research to improve

the electoral cycle. Since 1987, IFES has worked in over 145 countries – from developing democracies, to mature democracies. Visit [www.ifes.org](http://www.ifes.org) to learn more about the work of IFES.

### THE NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE FOR MULTIPARTY DEMOCRACY (NIMD)

The Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) is a democracy assistance organization that promotes the deepening of democracy through interparty dialogue and capacity strengthening of political parties. Based in the Netherlands, NIMD works with over 200 political parties in more than 20 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and South Caucasus. Together with the political parties and the local implementing partners, NIMD contribute to inclusive and stable political systems in these countries. Furthermore, NIMD assist political parties to become more responsive and policy-focused. Special attention is paid to empowering members of marginalized groups. To foster the democratic culture in a country, NIMD also provides political education programs for (aspiring) politicians. These programs focus on democratic values, knowledge and skills. Visit <http://nimd.org/> to learn more about the work of NIMD.

## Appendix 2. Conference Programme



Netherlands Institute for  
**Multiparty Democracy**



# MONEY IN POLITICS

Regional Conference  
Tbilisi 2016

# AGENDA

**Marriott Tbilisi, Georgia**

**18-19 FEBRUARY, 2016**

## **18 FEBRUARY, 2016**

**09:30-10:00**      **Registration and Welcome Coffee**

**10:00-10:10**      **Welcoming Remarks**

- **Lasha Tordia**, Auditor General, State Audit Office of Georgia

**10:10-11:00**      **Keynote Addresses**

- **Yves Leterme**, Secretary-General, International IDEA
- **François Friederich**, Head of Division of Electoral Assistance, Council of Europe
- **Dr. Marcin Walecki**, Head of Democratization Department, OSCE/ODIHR
- **H.E Jos Douma**, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Georgia and Armenia
- **Peter Erben**, Senior Electoral Advisor of IFES

**11:00-11:30**      **Coffee Break**

**11:30-13:00**      **Regulating Money and Politics, a Regional Overview**

Moderator: **Keti Maisuradze**, IFES Deputy Chief of Party, Georgia

Speakers:

- **Dr. Magnus Ohman**, IFES Senior Political Finance Adviser and Director, Regional Europe Office
- **Lisa Klein**, IFES Political Finance Consultant
- **Prof. Daniel Smilov**, Associate Professor at the Political Science Department, University of Sofia
- **Christophe Speckbacher**, Head of Section, Secretariat of the GRECO, Council of Europe

**13:00-14:30**      **Lunch**

**14:30-16:00**      **Parallel working sessions**

**Session 1: How to effectively increase transparency of political party financing and make politicians more accountable?**

Moderator: **Nermin Nisic**, IFES Chief of Party, Georgia

Speakers:

- **Dr. Magnus Ohman**, IFES Senior Political Finance Adviser and Director, Regional Europe Office
- **Levan Natroshvili**, Project Manager, Transparency International Georgia
- **Varuzhan Hochtanyan**, Executive Director, Transparency International Armenia
- **Septimius Parvu**, Expert on Political Party Finance, Romania

Topics:

- How to increase the disclosure and use of political finance information?
- How can the role of citizen monitoring be strengthened to promote transparency?

**Session 2: Discussion on the influence of illicit finance over politics and the relationship between policy making, corporate elites, and organized crime**

**Moderator:** **Levan Tsutskiridze**, NIMD representative in the Eastern European Neighborhood.

**Speakers:**

- **Natalia Iuras**, Director of Center for Continuous Electoral Trainings and Research, CEC Moldova
- **Ostap Kuchma**, Analyst and political finance expert at Chesno Movement, Ukraine
- **Khachik Harutyunyan**, Transparency International; Anti-corruption Center of Armenia
- **Ketevan Chachava**, Chairwoman, Center for Development and Democracy, Georgia

**Topics:**

- What are the measures that need to be enacted in order to curb illicit financing of political parties? How big is the problem?
- How to find a balance between enabling campaign finance and political party development on the one hand and curtailing the overbearing influence of money in politics and corporatization of public policies on the other?
- Are legal measures (i.e. sanctions) enough to achieve this? What else is needed?
- What are some of the experiences - challenges/best practices in Armenia, Ukraine, Georgia or elsewhere?

**16:00-16:30**      **Coffee Break**

**16:30-18:00**      **Parallel working sessions**

**Session 3. Discussion on the challenges to women's participation in politics, on the importance of money for competing in elections and on how to move forward**

**Moderators:**

- **Jacopo Leone**, Democratic Governance Officer, OSCE/ODIHR
- **Nana Kalandadze**, Gender Officer, International IDEA

**Speakers:**

- **Diane Bunyan**, Gender equality expert, Council of Europe
- **Leterjie Luzi, Chairwoman**, Central Electoral Commission of Albania
- **Vadim Pistrinciu**, Member of Parliament, Moldova
- **Helene Rusetskaya**, Director of Women's Information Centre in Tbilisi

**Topics:**

- How can public funding support women candidates during political campaigns?
- Rules of the Game: How to address the gender funding gap?

**Session 4: Increase disclosure and use of political finance information as a way to prevent kleptocracy and abuse of state resources?**

**Moderator:** **Levan Natroshvili**, Election Project Manager, Transparency International Georgia

**Speakers:**

- **Ken-Marti Vaher**, Member of Parliament, Estonia
- **Manuel Gonzalez Oropeza**, Justice at the Federal Electoral Tribunal of Mexico, Substitute Member of the Venice Commission

- **Viktor Chumak**, Member of Parliament, Ukraine
- **Dusan Drakic**, Head of Department for Oversight of Political Parties, Anti-Corruption Agency of Montenegro

Topics:

- How to detect electorally motivated spending of public money
- How to balance the interests of political party donors in public procurement process
- What are the opportunities for financial reporting by political parties and electoral candidates to be used to prevent kleptocracy and abuse of state resources, and what are the limits of such reporting in these fields?
- What activities need to be conducted to prevent kleptocracy and abuse of state resources? Could reporting by state institutions and restrictions on their activities during pre-electoral periods be valuable in this regard?

## 19 FEBRUARY, 2016

09:00-09:30      Coffee

09:30-11:00      Parallel working sessions

### Session 5: How to design effective financial monitoring bodies for the enforcement of political finance law?

Moderator: **Gaël Martin-Micallef**, Administrator, Legal Adviser, Election Division of the Venice Commission

Speakers:

- **Lina Petroniene**, Head of the Division of Political Parties and Campaigns Funding Control, Central Election Commission of Lithuania
- **Prof. Luis de Sousa**, Chairman of Transparency International Portugal
- **Lisa Klein**, IFES Political Finance Consultant

Topics:

- What makes for effective implementation of political finance legislation?
- How should monitoring bodies enforce effective sanctions?
- "What are our expectations of monitoring bodies and are they realistic"?

### Session 6: Monitoring of campaign finance and the role of international and citizen observers, the importance of civil society

Moderator: **Steve Martin**, Senior Adviser on New Voting Technologies, OSCE/ODIHR

Speakers:

- **Pavel Postica**, Director of Monitoring Democratic Processes Program, Promo-LEX Moldova
- **Olga Aivazovska**, Election Program Coordinator, OPORA
- **Lela Taliuri**, Election Projects Coordinator, Georgian Young Lawyers Association
- **Olga Macujeva**, Senior Officer of the Division of Control of Political Parties Financing, Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau, Latvia

Topics:

- How does campaign finance fit within larger issues of political finance (funding of parties, anti-corruption efforts etc.)?

- What are the differences in approach of international observers in campaign finance? Which are the similarities?
- How are civil society organizations undertaking campaign finance observation? How are observation results presented?
- How can recommendations on campaign finance be implemented and monitored?

**11:00-11:30 Coffee Break**

**11:30-13:00 Parallel working sessions**

**Session 7: An assessment of the GRECO evaluations on political financing and recommendations follow-up**

Moderator: **Christophe Speckbacher**, Head of Section, Secretariat of the GRECO, Council of Europe

Speakers:

- **Zurab Sanikidze**, Head of Delegation of Georgia to GRECO, Secretary of Anti-Corruption Council of Georgia, Ministry of Justice of Georgia
- **Hubert Sickinger**, Political scientist at the University of Vienna, Head of the Advisory board of Transparency International - Austrian Chapter
- **Tigran Babikyan**, Head of Oversight-Audit Service, Central Election Commission of Armenia
- **Sergii Leshchenko**, Member of Parliament, Ukraine

Topics:

- What are the factors of success (and failure) of reforms in the area of political financing?
- Are certain changes more difficult to implement than others?
- Are an adequate level of transparency and an effective supervision sufficient to limit risks of political corruption, and what would be the other/next challenge(s)?

**Session 8: Discussion on the role of public funding in rooting out big donations**

Moderator: **Elin Falguera**, Acting Senior Programme Manager, Political Parties team, International IDEA

Speakers:

- **Lolita Cigane**, Chairperson, European Affairs Committee, Parliament of Latvia
- **Krzysztof Lorentz**, Director, Department of Controlling of Political Party and Campaign Finance, Polish National Election Commission
- **Katarina Dakic**, Head of the Department for Oversight of Financing Political Parties, Anti-Corruption Agency of the Republic of Serbia
- **Tanya Tzaneva**, Member of the Central Election Commission of Bulgaria

Topics:

- What do we know about the effectiveness of public funding to political parties in reducing the dependency on large private donations?
- Where there has been reform of public funding, what key components made it a success/failure in terms of reducing the dependency on large private donations?
- How have intended and adverse effects of public funding to political parties been monitored?
- Is there a healthy balance between private and public income?

**13:00-14:00 Lunch**

**14:00-15:30 Conclusive discussion on The Future of Political Finance in the XXI Century**

Moderator: **Zurab Aznaurashvili**, Head of Financial Monitoring Service of Political Parties, SAOG

Speakers:

- **Lolita Cigane**, Chairperson, European Affairs Committee, Parliament of Latvia
- **Dr. Alexander Kynev**, OSCE/ODIHR Core Group of Experts on Political Parties, Russia
- **Dr. Marcin Walecki**, Head of Democratization Department, OSCE/ODIHR
- **Rovzat Gasimov**, Head of Secretariat, Central Election Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan

**15:30-16:00**

**Closing Remarks**

- **Lasha Tordia**, Auditor General, State Audit Office of Georgia
- **François Friederich**, Head of Division of Electoral Assistance, Council of Europe