



**HUMAN DIMENSION
S E M I N A R**

2007 HUMAN DIMENSION SEMINAR

Effective Participation and Representation in Democratic Societies

Warsaw, 16-18 May 2007

ANNOTATED AGENDA

I. Introduction

The Human Dimension Seminars are organized by the OSCE/ODIHR in accordance with the decisions of the CSCE Summits in Helsinki (1992) and Budapest (1994). The 2007 Human Dimension Seminar will be devoted to "Effective Participation and representation in democratic societies" in accordance with PC Decisions of 25 January 2007 (PC.DEC./06/07) and of 26 April 2007 (PC.DEC./793).

The OSCE participating States have confirmed the importance of democratic participation and representation for a vigorous democracy and a lasting order of peace, security, justice and co-operation in numerous OSCE documents, most notably in the 1990 Copenhagen Document, the 1990 Charter of Paris and the 1999 Istanbul Charter for European Security.

At the 1991 Human Dimension Expert Seminar mandated by the Charter of Paris on "Democratic Institutions", the participating experts noted that *"States choose different means for the implementation of democratic government, in response to their particular characteristics and traditions and to the circumstances of their constitutional history. As long as the core values of democratic government were assured, no single approach to the institutions and procedures of democratic government could be considered as having universal validity"*.

It was observed at the 2004 Human Dimension Seminar on "Democratic Institutions and Democratic Governance" that *"citizens must be engaged in governance in a continuous manner. This engagement can be ensured through a wider and deeper understanding of people's day-to-day experience of living democracy. A well-informed public is a prerequisite for democratic processes to work. The public should not only be provided with different mechanisms to interact with government authorities but should also be motivated to do so."*

Also, in November 2006, at the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on "Democratization: Strengthening Democracy Through Effective Representation", it was reiterated that *"there is a wide variety of democratic governments and democracy is always unfinished business. Nevertheless, democracy does have a number of core features common to all, such as effective representation of the public by elected officials. Increasing this effectiveness requires a holistic approach where citizens, NGOs, media, political parties, parliament and government are mobilized as stakeholders in a common democratic project."*

Democracy and its manifestations through participation and representation have therefore not developed in similar ways throughout the OSCE region. Rather than an end in itself, democracy provides a large, transparent and flexible framework based on a number of ground rules within which ways of interaction between rulers and governed are allowed to develop and improve. As noted in the 2004 Seminar, in practice then, democratization is a continuous effort of “fine-tuning” democratic structures and processes as well as nurturing a democratic culture – no matter in which democracy - in the pursuit of respect for human rights, the rule of law, peace and security.

The OSCE participating States have affirmed their commitment to democracy as “*the only system of government of [their] nations*” (Paris Charter, 1990). They have adopted a number of specific commitments in this regard, which are being made available to participants in a background document. The Organization has a clear mandate to promote democratic institutions and processes; some of its key activities are summarized in another background document.

II. Aims

The 2007 Human Dimension Seminar on "Effective Participation and Representation in Democratic Societies" will review concepts as well as challenges in developing and established democracies for ensuring an authentic democratic process.

This Seminar will not focus solely on participation and representation in terms of institutionalized structures *per se* but will also examine how they work and evolve in practice and contribute to the development of a democratic culture.

More specifically, it shall concentrate throughout on experiences and concrete recommendations towards: 1) establishing and securing the space that any democratic system must provide for an open, fair and broad participation in public affairs and 2) ways to increase the effective participation and representation of all institutional and public actors, as well as different groups of society, to make optimal and equitable use of that space.

The Seminar shall discuss relevant experiences and recommendations in four Working Groups. While the first Group will seek to identify current and possible future trends in political participation and representation, the second Group shall aim to find ways to increase their effectiveness. The two last Groups will concentrate in more detail on two fundamental issues related to effective participation and representation namely, the role of electoral systems and the political empowerment of underrepresented groups. The Seminar shall concentrate on political participatory processes to supplement independent judiciary (HD Seminar '02), electoral processes (SHDM '04) and democratic institutions (HD Seminar '04 and SHDM '06).¹

Because the Seminar considers democracies as dynamic and ever-improving societal systems, it will enable an in-depth practical examination of the strengths and shortcomings within democratic processes of ‘established’ and ‘developing’ democracies alike. It will also provide a focus on democracy-building in post-conflict societies.

¹ Respectively: ODIHR.GAL/0027/02; PC.SHDM.GAL/0011/04; ODIHR.GAL/0072/04 and PC.SHDM.GAL/11/06 to be found at <http://www.osce.org/odihr/documents.html>

The Seminar will provide an opportunity to review OSCE experiences and to analyze lessons learned thus far in assisting the overall democratization process in OSCE participating States, and to discuss further steps to improve the efficiency of democratization programs.

III. Participation

Representatives of OSCE participating States, co-operation Partners, OSCE institutions and field missions, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations will participate in the Seminar.

The participation of representatives of the Government, Legislature and Public Administration of OSCE participating States, the media as well as the specialized NGOs in the field of analysis and promotion of democratic structures and processes, democratic governance and democratization will be particularly encouraged. In this connection, participating States are requested to publicize the Seminar widely and to include wherever possible such representatives in their delegations who can contribute most to the discussions.

The Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation as well as the Partners for Co-operation are warmly invited to attend and share their experiences in the field of establishing and promoting democratic institutions and democratic governance.

All participants are encouraged to submit in advance written interventions on their respective work and proposals regarding the subject of the Seminar, which will be distributed to delegates. Participants are also encouraged to make oral interventions during the Seminar. While prepared interventions are welcomed during the Plenary Sessions, free-flowing discussions and exchanges are encouraged during the Working Group sessions.

IV. Organization

The venue for the Seminar is the "Sofitel Victoria" Hotel in Warsaw, ul. Królewska 11.

The Seminar will open on Wednesday 16 May 2007 at 10.00 hrs. It will close on Friday 18 May 2007 at 18.00 hrs.

All Plenary and Working Group sessions will be open to all participants. The Plenary and Working Group sessions will take place according to the Work Programme below.

The four Working Group sessions will focus on the following topics:

- 1) Participation and representation: trends in contemporary political life
- 2) Ways to improve the environment for political participation
- 3) Role of democratic electoral processes in enhancing participation and representation
- 4) Participation of persons belonging to national minorities and underrepresented groups in democratic societies

All Working Group sessions will be held consecutively in single sessions.

The concluding Plenary session, scheduled for the afternoon of May 18th shall list practical recommendations emerging from the four Working Group sessions.

An OSCE/ODIHR representative will chair the Plenary sessions.

Standard OSCE rules of procedure and working methods will be applied at the Seminar.

Discussions will be interpreted into all six working languages of the OSCE.

Registration will be possible during the Seminar days from 08.00 hrs. to 18.00 hrs.

By prior arrangement with the OSCE/ODIHR, facilities may be available for participants to hold side events at the Seminar venue. A table for display/distribution of publications by participating organizations/institutions will also be available.

WORK PROGRAMME

	Working hours:	10 a.m.-1 p.m. 3 p.m.-6 p.m.	
	Wednesday, 16 May 2007	Thursday, 17 May 2007	Friday, 18 May 2007
Morning	Opening plenary session	WG II	WG IV
Afternoon	WG I	WG III	Concluding plenary session

Side events may be scheduled between 13.15 and 14.45, or after 18.15, in order not to compete with the Plenary or Working Group sessions.

V. Workplan

Wednesday 16 May 2007

10.00 - 13.00 Opening Plenary Session

Welcome and introduction from the Seminar Chair

Amb. Christian Strohal
Director of the OSCE/ODIHR

Welcoming remarks

Mr. Janusz Stańczyk
Undersecretary of State
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Warsaw, Poland

Representative of the Spanish OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (to be confirmed)

Keynote Speaker:

Mr. Andreas Gross

Head of the Delegation of Switzerland to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe; Rapporteur on the State of Democracy in Europe, Political Affairs Committee

15.00 - 18.00 Working Group I:

Participation and representation: trends in contemporary political life

Moderator: **Mr. Ivan Doherty**
National Democratic Institute
Washington, the United States of America

Introducer: **Mr. Olexiy Haran**
Kyiv-Mohyla Academy
Kyiv, Ukraine

Rapporteur: **Mr. Ted Kontek**
Permanent Delegation of the United States to the OSCE
Vienna, Austria

Contemporary political life shows contradictory trends. Never before has there been such high level of political awareness, education and engagement, especially of the younger generation. On the other hand, popular trust in and use of democratic institutions and mechanisms is being increasingly questioned. The days of writing to the Parliamentarian of one's local constituency as a method of effective participation and representation appear to be waning. Inspired and aided by international movements, by the increasing professionalism of civic organizations, by the spread of new technologies, individuals and groups are developing new and more direct forms of participation in governance. Presentations and discussions in this Working Group will seek to identify these new forms of participation and representation as well as determine in how far they are fair and effective.

The role of political parties as focal points of political engagement will also be of particular interest to this Working Group. Political parties are still an indispensable instrument in today's democratic societies for aggregating and representing citizens' interests and priorities in a common policy platform. Nevertheless, declining membership raises the question as to the relevance and effectiveness of parties to continue to function as rallying points for civic and political participation. As policy formation is increasingly shaped by institutions other than political parties (such as civil service, NGOs, universities and think tanks), another fundamental question that needs to be addressed is who *effectively* "owns" the political mandate. Participants will be discussing the appeal of today's political parties, the foundation upon which they are managed or created today (from social movement to single issue) and their relevance to the needs of the contemporary citizen.

Participants will also be encouraged to discuss trends in gender mainstreaming in today's politics as well as the impact and consequences of increasing linkages in international party politics with the aim of identifying OSCE region-wide trends, policies and lessons learned.

19.00 Reception hosted by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
Venue: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Palace, Foksal Street 6, Warsaw

Thursday 17 May 2007

**10.00 - 13.00 Working Group II:
Ways to improve the environment for political participation**

Moderator: **Mr. Eric Bjornlund**
Democracy International
Bethesda, the United States of America

Introducers: **Ms. Gulnara Ibraeva**
Agency for Social Technologies
Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Ms. Suzana Dobre
Romanian Academic Society
Bucharest, Romania

Rapporteur: **Ms. Yevheniia Filipenko**
Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the OSCE
Vienna, Austria

Contemporary politics poses a challenge of (re-)connecting the *body politic* with its constituents. Changing dynamics in political life appear to call for the development of a legal, social and technological framework conducive to more effective participation and representation. Participants will address these three overlapping fields with the aim of building a coherent picture of an environment that would ensure that all constituents can take effective part in politics.

Participants will discuss political party legal frameworks, including political party registration and freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, to exchange the best legal context for effective participation and representation. With regard to participation within parties themselves, participants will exchange experiences of best practices in transparency of political proceedings, intra-party democracy as well as rules and procedures guaranteeing the fair participation of party members. One of the main issues to be addressed is the challenges to equal opportunity for participation in political processes and effective access of women and youth to political spheres, including high level positions.

Participants will also be encouraged to discuss possible measures that can be taken in order to enhance the role of political parties by rooting them more firmly in the constituents' daily lives and leading to a more wide-spread modern political culture. A first step would be emphasizing the role of political parties as instruments for the

public good. Are traditional functions of political parties such as advancement of education and of citizenship, community development, promotion of civic responsibility and volunteering still relevant today? In how far do they still manage to mobilize constituents?

Finally, participants will have the opportunity to discuss the current impact and potential offered by modern technologies as it increasingly determines participatory dynamics not only during the more high-profile election periods but also during day-to-day politics (such as through interactive campaign websites, blogs as well as other e-democracy tools).

**15:00 – 18:00 Working Group III:
Role of democratic electoral processes in enhancing participation and representation**

Moderator: **Mr. Roel von Meijfeldt**
Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy
The Hague, the Netherlands

Introducer: **Mr. Andrew Ellis**
International IDEA
Stockholm, Sweden

Rapporteur: **Mr. Alastair Long**
Permanent Delegation of the United Kingdom to the OSCE
Vienna, Austria

Any model of government requires an electoral system which ensures effective representation of the electorate, and which provides a solid foundation for stable government. Key to effective representation is active citizen participation in elections and in democratic processes in general. Participants will be encouraged to discuss these aspects of democratic electoral systems that are intrinsically linked to effective participation and representation.

Participants will also concentrate on measures and improvements to make election systems an effective tool for increasing public confidence in democratic institutions in general and in political representation in particular (such as proportional vs. majoritarian representation, thresholds, effective election observation as well as complaints and appeals processes). In addition, participants can discuss in more depth electoral legal frameworks including rules for electoral campaigning activities and campaign financing as well as procedures and practices improving women's as well as other underrepresented groups' participation and representation. Ways to overcome identified obstacles to effective participation in electoral processes will also be addressed.

Participants will also discuss experiences and best practices on how to increase voter turnout, including through measures such as new voting technologies (e-voting), absentee voting, out-of-country voting, etc. Anticipating the fourth and final Working Group, participants will also discuss actions to promote inclusive elections such as through the compilation of accurate voter lists, combating unjustified or unfair

disenfranchisement, the participation of the marginalized, discriminated and underprivileged citizens.

Friday 18 May 2007

**10.00 - 13.00 Working Group IV:
Participation of persons belonging to national minorities and underrepresented groups in democratic societies**

Moderator: **Mr. Krzysztof Drzewicki**
Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities
The Hague, the Netherlands

Introducer: **Ms. Kate Fearon**
Office of the High Representative to Bosnia-Herzegovina
Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Rapporteur: **Mr. Mustafa Turan**
Permanent Delegation of Turkey to the OSCE
Vienna, Austria

The participation in political life of persons belonging to national minorities represents an ongoing test for the principles upon which democratic societies are built. Inclusion of ethnic and other groupings in the overall political process has been demonstrably beneficial not only for the groups concerned but also on the whole for the stability and security of democratic societies. In this context, the electoral process serves as a conflict resolution mechanism, and therefore electoral system design may play a key role.

Participants will discuss specific experiences and measures to enhance the inclusion of minorities and under-represented groups in the overall political life. The role played by civil society and the independent media in creating and shaping the space for effective participation of these groups will be closely examined. Participants are also encouraged to take stock of achievements and lessons learned from the implementation of articles and recommendations of international documents ensuring minority participation (such as the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the Lund Recommendations)

This Working Group will seek to identify the challenges posed by cultural differences in political participation as well as adaptable forms and methods that could stimulate established and new immigrant communities to take active part in mainstream political life. Of particular interest would be the discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of creating minority-based political parties as an alternative to their inclusion in mainstream political parties.

15.00 - 18.00 Closing Plenary Session

Introduction from the Chair

Amb. Christian Strohal

Director of the OSCE/ODIHR

Closing keynote speech:

Ms. Anastasia Crickley

Department of Applied Social Studies

National University of Ireland

Maynooth, Ireland

Rapporteurs' Summaries from Working Groups

Statements from Delegations

Seminar Chair's Conclusions:

Amb. Christian Strohal

Director of the OSCE/ODIHR

Closing of the Seminar