PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE ON MEDIA FREEDOM AS A CORNERSTONE FOR DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS

Hosted by the Parliament of Germany

and organised by

the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

in cooperation with the Venice Commission

Berlin, 4 July 2016

DRAFT PROGRAMME

Venue:
Meeting room of the European Affairs Committee
Deutscher Bundestag
Platz der Republik 1
11011 Berlin

Background and rationale

Beginning in 2015, the Parliamentary Assembly has participated in the implementation at parliamentary level of the 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) undertakes 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 second in this series: it strives to encourage peer-to-peer parliamentary dialogue and will focus on evaluating strategies for ensuring media freedom, media transparency and access of political parties and candidates to the media in the context of democratic elections.

1.   Participants

National parliamentary delegations from Eastern Partnership member states of the Council of Europe (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine) and Belarus; members of the Parliamentary Assembly, in particular of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media

Representatives of central electoral commissions and media regulators

Representatives of media and NGOs

2.   Languages

The documents of the conference will be available in English, French and Russian.

Working languages will be English, French, German and Russian with simultaneous interpretation provided.

3.   Background documents

PACE Resolution 2065 (2015) on increasing transparency of media ownership

PACE Recommendation 1878 (2009) on the funding of public service broadcasting

Recommendation (2007) 15 of the Committee of Ministers on measures concerning media coverage of election campaigns

Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters by the Venice Commission, 23 May 2003 (CDL-AD(2002)023rev)

Guidelines on media analysis during election observation missions by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) and the Venice Commission, 16 June 2009 (CDL-AD(2009)031)

Election observation reports on Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus

8h30 - 9h00   Registration of participants

Opening session
(9h00 - 9h30)

Opening speeches by
- Representative of the Bundestag
- Representative of the German government and OSCE Chairmanship 2016
- Mr Volodymyr ARIEV, Chairperson of the PACE Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media and PACE General Rapporteur on media freedom and safety of journalists, Member of the Supreme Council of Ukraine
- Mr Thomas MARKERT, Director, Secretary of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe

Session 1: Standards for media in the context of elections
(9h30 - 11h00)

Moderator: **Mr Axel E. FISCHER, Head of the German delegation to the PACE, Member of the Bundestag**

Speakers: Ms Katharine SARIKAKIS, Professor of Media Governance, Department of Communication, University of Vienna, Expert of the Venice Commission, Austria

Discussion

11h00 - 11h15 Coffee break

Session 2: Media ethics and transparency regarding party political interests
(11h15 - 12h45)

Moderator: **Ms Gülsün BILGEHAN, Chairperson of the PACE Sub-Committee on Media and Information Society, Member of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey**

Speakers: Mr Mogens Blicher BJERREGÅRD, President, European Federation of Journalists

Mr Dominique LOUVEAU, Representative of the French Higher Audiovisual Council (CSA), on behalf of the Venice Commission, France

Representative of the European Broadcasting Union

Discussion

12h45 - 14h00 Lunch hosted by the German Parliament

Session 3: Role of parliaments in ensuring media freedom in the context of elections
(14h00 - 16h30)

Moderator: **Sir Roger GALE, Head of the UK delegation to the PACE, Member of the House of Commons (tbc)**

Speakers: Mr Alexander SHLYK, Acting Head of the Election Department, OSCE/ODIHR, Warsaw

Mr Nicos ALIVIZATOS, Lawyer, Professor of Constitutional Law, University of Athens, Member of the Venice Commission, Greece

Chairpersons or representatives of the national parliamentary committees dealing with media issues from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus

Discussion

16h30 Summary of the conference by Mr Rasto KUZEL, Executive Director of MEMO 98, Bratislava

[Possible social event: Visit to the RBB or ZDF studio in Berlin]