



Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

FINLAND

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

17 April 2011

OSCE/ODIHR NEEDS ASSESSMENT MISSION REPORT

25-27 January 2011



Warsaw
15 February 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION	1
II.	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
III.	FINDINGS.....	3
A.	BACKGROUND.....	3
B.	ELECTION SYSTEM.....	4
C.	METHODS OF VOTING	4
D.	LEGAL FRAMEWORK.....	5
E.	ELECTION ADMINISTRATION.....	6
F.	VOTER AND CANDIDATE REGISTRATION	7
1.	<i>Voter Registration</i>	7
2.	<i>Candidate Registration</i>	8
G.	PARTY FUNDING AND CAMPAIGN FINANCING.....	8
H.	ELECTION CAMPAIGNING AND THE MEDIA	9
IV.	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION	10
	ANNEX: LIST OF MEETINGS.....	11

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I. INTRODUCTION

On 16 December 2010, in line with OSCE commitments, the Permanent Mission of Finland to the OSCE invited the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) to observe the 17 April 2011 parliamentary elections. The OSCE/ODIHR undertook a Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) to Finland from 25 to 27 January 2011. The OSCE/ODIHR NAM comprised Nicolas Kaczorowski, Head of the OSCE/ODIHR Election Department, Richard Lappin, OSCE/ODIHR Election Adviser, and Igor Dolgih, OSCE/ODIHR Election Adviser.

The purpose of the mission was to assess the pre-election environment and the preparations for the parliamentary elections. Based on this assessment, the NAM should recommend whether to deploy an OSCE/ODIHR election-related activity for these elections, and if so, what type of activity best meets the identified needs. The OSCE/ODIHR NAM met with representatives of the state and election authorities, the Supreme Administrative Court, the media, representatives of political parties and non-governmental organizations. A full list of meetings is included as an annex to this report.

The OSCE/ODIHR would like to thank the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland for its assistance and co-operation during the course of the NAM. The OSCE/ODIHR would also like to thank all of its interlocutors for taking the time to meet with the mission.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Legislative power in Finland is vested in the Parliament (*Eduskunta*), a unicameral body that consists of 200 members elected for four years through regional proportional lists.

There is no legal threshold to gain parliamentary seats. However, the large difference in the number of seats to be elected in each of the 15 electoral districts ('district magnitude') causes major variation in the "effective" thresholds¹ ranging from 2.5 to 14.3 per cent. These discrepancies also raise the issue of the equality of the vote as the number of votes required to be elected varies greatly from one electoral district to another. The Finnish government has proposed an electoral reform to remedy this imbalance, where seats will be allocated in a single, nationwide constituency with a three per cent threshold. The parliament has not adopted the reform yet and it will therefore not be in force for these elections.

A distinctive feature of Finnish elections is the high number of ballots cast early; in 2007, over 40 per cent of citizens voted before election day. For these elections, voters will be

¹ The effective threshold is the minimum number of votes required to win one mandate. It is obtained by dividing the total number of voters by the number of seats to be allocated in one electoral district.

able to cast their ballot in advance in any of the 901 advance polling stations nationwide or at 241 out-of-country polling stations. Strong safeguards are in place in order to protect the integrity of early voting and avoid multiple voting.

The conduct of parliamentary elections is primarily regulated by the Election Act. The most recent amendments to the electoral legal framework are the adoption of the Act on a Candidate's Election Funding and the amendments to the Act on Political Parties. They lay down provisions on the funding of political parties and disclosure of election funding of candidates. These provisions will be applied for the first time during the 2011 elections.

The Election Act provides the right to attend meetings of election committees at all levels by political parties and constituency associations as well as other persons upon authorization from the Ministry of Justice. The provision presumably covers international and domestic observers from civil society organizations.

Electoral appeals and complaints can be lodged only after the announcement of the results. The only exception is appeals against a decision of a local register office on the exclusion of a voter from the voter register or refusal to introduce the corrections. The inability to submit electoral complaints on the most important aspects of an electoral process before the announcement of election results might hinder the right to seek a timely and effective remedy, and is therefore inconsistent with paragraph 5.10 of the 1990 Copenhagen document.

The Ministry of Justice acts as the highest electoral authority. It provides general coordination of the election administration in the country, as well as regulations and guidance to other election authorities. At the sub-national level the Ministry is supported by a three-tiered election administration. All election committees are multi-party and are appointed on the basis of nominations from the registered political parties that nominated candidates in the previous parliamentary elections. All OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed a high level of trust in the impartial and professional administration of the elections.

The right to vote is granted to all Finnish citizens who are at least 18 years old without any restriction. Voter registration is passive and voter lists are extracted by the Population Register Centre from the central and computerized Population Information System. The voter lists are subject to public scrutiny. OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors underscored their confidence in the accuracy of voter lists.

Candidates may be nominated either by political parties registered by the Ministry of Justice, or by a constituency association established by 100 eligible voters. This latter possibility provides the opportunity for independent candidates to stand for office.

The media environment in Finland is open and pluralistic, which is reflected in the variety of media outlets operating in the country. Newspaper readership is one of the highest in the world; some 90 per cent of adults read at least one newspaper a day. Newspapers play an important role in providing political information to a large audience. Contestants are also planning to use a wide range of options to reach voters including door-to-door campaigning, public rallies, and media debates.

Some interlocutors met by the OSCE/ODIHR NAM expressed a concern that smaller parties with no parliamentary representation have fewer opportunities to present their views

than parliamentary parties. At the same time, media outlets emphasized their commitment to offer possibilities to all contesting parties to take part in debates and to be featured in news broadcasts.

All OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed a high level of confidence in the conduct of elections in Finland and did not raise any major concerns. Nevertheless, most interlocutors welcomed a potential OSCE/ODIHR activity for the 17 April 2011 parliamentary elections recognizing that election processes can always be improved and acknowledging that the OSCE/ODIHR may contribute to these efforts.

In this regard, the election process could benefit from closer scrutiny in a few areas, including the current electoral system and its potential shortcomings, the mechanisms for election disputes, the implementation of the newly-adopted regulations on party funding and campaign finance, and access of non-parliamentary political parties to the media. The fact that the OSCE/ODIHR has not previously conducted an election mission in Finland is an additional reason to consider such an OSCE/ODIHR activity. As none of the interlocutors expressed any concerns related to the conduct of election day procedures, the OSCE/ODIHR NAM recommends the deployment of an Election Assessment Mission for these parliamentary elections.

III. FINDINGS

A. BACKGROUND

The Prime Minister, Mari Kiviniemi, who has been holding the office since June 2010, presides over a coalition government formed by the Centre Party (*Suomen Keskusta*) with 50 parliamentary seats, the National Coalition Party (*Kansallinen Kokoomus*) with 51 seats, the Green League (*Vihreä liitto*) and the Swedish People's Party (*Svenska Folkpartiet*) with 14 and 10 seats respectively. Other parliamentary parties include the Social Democratic Party (*Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue*) with 45 seats, the Left Alliance (*Vasemmistoliitto*) with 17 seats, the Christian Democrats (*Kristillisdemokraatit*) with 7 seats, and the True Finns (*Perussuomalaiset*) with 6 mandates.²

In addition, there are nine registered political parties that do not have representation in the parliament: the Communist Party of Finland, the Senior Citizens' Party of Finland, the Communist Workers' Party – For Peace and Socialism, the Workers Party of Finland, the Independence Party, For the Poor Party, the Pirate Party, the Change 2011 Party, and the Liberty Party.³

The OSCE/ODIHR has not previously observed or assessed elections in Finland, although it did deploy a Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) in the country ahead of the March 2007 parliamentary elections.⁴

² Source: <http://web.eduskunta.fi/Resource.phx/parliament/parliamentarygroups/index.htm>.

³ Source: <http://www.vaalit.fi/15485.htm>.

⁴ The report of the OSCE/ODIHR 2007 NAM to Finland is available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/finland/24126>.

B. ELECTION SYSTEM

Legislative power in Finland is vested in the Parliament (*Eduskunta*), a unicameral body established in 1906 consisting of 200 representatives elected for a four-year term on the third Sunday of April⁵ in the election year.

Members of Parliament (MPs) are elected through a regional proportional list system without a legal threshold. For this purpose, the country is divided into 14 multi-member electoral districts and one single-member district.⁶ According to the Electoral Act, the number of parliamentary seats allocated to each electoral district should be proportional to the number of citizens registered as residing in the district. The allocation of seats is carried out by the Council of State⁷ ahead of each parliamentary election on the basis of data in the Population Information System.⁸

There is no legal threshold in parliamentary elections in Finland. Thus, the differing magnitude (the number of seats allocated to a district) between electoral districts in both rural versus urban and southern versus northern areas causes major variation in the “effective” thresholds parties need to overcome to obtain a seat. Many electoral districts have lost population in recent decades; some districts now elect as few as six representatives,⁹ which establishes an “effective” threshold of about 14.3 per cent. In contrast, the biggest district, Uusimaa, has 35 representatives and therefore a low “effective” threshold of about 2.5 per cent. These discrepancies also raise the issue of the equality of the vote as the number of votes required to be elected varies greatly from one electoral district to another.

These issues have been widely discussed for several years in Finland and, in 2009, the government presented a proposal for electoral reform which aims to remedy these imbalances and improve proportionality. The reform of the electoral system will require constitutional amendments. According to the proposal, seats will be allocated proportionally between parties who collect at least three per cent of the votes cast in the whole country. The new provisions could only become effective for the 2015 parliamentary elections at the earliest, as two consecutive parliaments have to adopt the same proposal before it can enter into force.¹⁰

C. METHODS OF VOTING

A distinctive feature of Finnish elections is the high number of ballots cast in advance: for example, in the 2007 parliamentary elections over 40 per cent of Finnish citizens voted before election day. In Finland early voting begins 11 days before election day, and

⁵ The Election Act was amended in 2010 to hold elections on the third Sunday of April instead of the third Sunday in March. This change was intended to positively influence voter turnout due to better weather conditions.

⁶ The district of Åland – an autonomous Swedish-speaking region of Finland – is entitled to one seat in the parliament regardless of its population.

⁷ The Council of State (*Valtioneuvosto*) is Finland's government.

⁸ The allocation of seats in electoral districts for the 2011 parliamentary elections was ordered by the Council of State on 11 November 2010 (958/2010).

⁹ For example, electoral districts of Etelä-Savo and Pohjois-Karjalan.

¹⁰ A simple majority is necessary for the outgoing parliament to adopt the law while a two-thirds majority in the next parliament is required for the law to enter into force.

finishes 5 days before election day (6–12 April 2011). Finnish citizens abroad can cast their vote for four days between 6 and 9 April.

A single, nationwide electronic voter list is used for early voting, allowing voters to cast their ballot in any early polling station. Election officials are obliged to immediately mark those who vote in advance on the electronic voter list so as to prevent possible multiple voting. Voters can cast their votes in advance in any of the 901 advance polling stations¹¹ nationwide or at 241 out-of-country polling stations located in embassies and consulates. On election day a voter can cast a ballot only at his/her own polling station.¹²

In the 2008 municipal elections, the Ministry of Justice arranged electronic voting in three municipalities in the electoral district of Uusimaa for the first time. In these municipalities, voters were able to vote electronically at polling stations either on election day or in advance. Traditional paper voting was also allowed.

The objective of the pilot was to enable voting from a networked electronic voting terminal at the polling station to speed up the voting procedure from the point of view of the voter. The pilot also was aimed to enhance the security of early voting (by eliminating the need to transport or handle the sealed ballots), enable a faster vote count, reduce the work of the election authorities and, in the long run, achieve possible cost savings.¹³

Acting on a complaint, the Supreme Administrative Court cancelled the results in these three municipalities because of flaws in the electronic voting procedures and instructions, and ordered new elections. Based on a subsequent assessment and audit conducted by the Ministry of Justice, the government decided on 13 January 2010 that the development of electronic voting will for now be discontinued.

D. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The conduct of parliamentary elections is primarily regulated by the Election Act (714/1998). Other election-related legislation includes relevant provisions of the Constitution (731/1999),¹⁴ the Act on Political Parties (10/1969), and the Act on a Candidate's Election Funding (273/2009).

The most recent amendments to the electoral legal framework, the Act on a Candidate's Election Funding, which entered into force on 1 May 2009, and the amendments to the Act

¹¹ Normally organized in post offices, municipal government offices and libraries.

¹² A notice of a right to vote (also called a "polling card") is sent to each eligible voter by post at least 24 days prior to election day. The card states the polling station (PS) where the voter can vote on election day, all early PSs in the voter's electoral district, address of the Municipal Central Election Committee in the voter's municipality, and local register office. The polling card also contains general voting instructions.

¹³ The report "Electronic Voting Pilot in the 2008 Municipal Elections in Finland" is available at http://www.coe.int/t/dgap/democracy/Activities/GGIS/E-voting/E-voting%202010/Biennial_Nov_meeting/GGIS%282010%2914_Finland%20e-voting%20report%20E.asp#TopOfPage.

¹⁴ Including the Section 14 (Electoral and participatory rights), Section 24 (Composition and term of the Parliament), Section 25 (Parliamentary elections), and Section 26 (Extraordinary parliamentary elections).

on Political Parties, which entered into force on 1 September 2010, lay down provisions on the funding of political parties and the disclosure of election funding of candidates.¹⁵

In line with the Election Act, voting rights are extended to all Finnish citizens aged 18 or older without any restrictions. The right to stand as a candidate is granted to all eligible voters, except individuals under guardianship and professional soldiers. The positions of the Chancellor of Justice, the Parliamentary Ombudsman, the Justice of the Supreme Court or Supreme Administrative Court and the Prosecutor General are also incompatible with candidacy.¹⁶

Electoral appeals and complaints can be lodged only after the announcement of the results. The only exception is the appeal lodged by a voter against a decision of a local register office on exclusion from the voter register or refusal to introduce the corrections. Such an appeal could be filed with the Provincial Administrative Court (PAC), the decision of which is final.¹⁷ All other appeals, including those related to candidate registration, implementation of early voting and polling day procedures can be filed with the PAC only after the confirmation of electoral results.¹⁸ PAC decisions could be challenged in the Supreme Administrative Court (SAC) within 30 days.

The inability to submit electoral complaints on the most important aspects of an electoral process before the announcement of election results might hinder the right to seek a timely and effective remedy, and is therefore inconsistent with paragraph 5.10 of the 1990 Copenhagen document.¹⁹

E. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

The Ministry of Justice acts as the highest electoral authority. It provides general coordination of the election administration in the country, as well as regulations and guidance to other election authorities. The Ministry is also responsible for registering political parties, maintaining the Election Information System, printing and delivery of election materials (including ballots), providing voters with information on the forthcoming elections, and other procedures.

At the sub-national level it is supported by 15 Electoral District Committees (EDCs) and 336 Municipal Central Election Committees (MCECs). The EDCs and MCECs are permanent bodies appointed for a four-year term by the State Provincial Offices in each of the 15 electoral districts and Municipal Councils respectively. In addition, some 500 electoral commissions administer early voting in social institutions, hospitals and prisons, and 2,361 election committees are appointed for each polling station. All election committees and commissions are multi-party and are appointed on the basis of nominations from registered political parties that participated in the previous parliamentary elections.

¹⁵ Please see “Party Funding and Campaign Financing” section of the report.

¹⁶ Section 27 of the Constitution.

¹⁷ An appeal to the Supreme Administrative Court is, however, possible through extraordinary appeal (Chapter 1, Section 2 of the Supreme Administrative Court Act (1265/2006)).

¹⁸ The Election Act, Section 102: “The appeal shall be sent to a competent Provincial Administrative Court within 14 days from the confirmation of the election results”.

¹⁹ The 1990 Copenhagen document, paragraph 5.10: “Everyone will have an effective means of redress against administrative decisions, so as to guarantee respect for fundamental rights and ensure legal integrity”.

The MCECs are mostly responsible for the technical preparations for the election as well as the intermediary handling of early electoral documents. The EDCs have a broader range of duties including the responsibility to process candidate applications submitted by political parties and constituency associations, verification of signatures submitted in support of independent candidates, issuance of confirmations to successful candidates, and compilation of combined lists of candidates to be used as a reference by voters on election day.

The Election Act provides for the right of representatives of political parties, alliances or joint lists, constituency associations as well as other persons, upon authorization from the Ministry of Justice to attend EDC, MCEC and election committee meetings that are organized to determine the candidate numbers, to organise or count the ballot papers or to determine the election result. The Act foresees the same rights for any other observer accredited by the Ministry of Justice. The provision presumably covers international and domestic observers from civil society organizations.²⁰

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs estimates that the number of Finnish citizens abroad is 217,000. The eligible voters can cast their vote for the district in the last place of registration in Finland or, in case if they were never registered in Finland, for the electoral district of Helsinki. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs also organizes early voting aboard Finnish ships²¹ in the period from 13 March to 9 April 2011.

During the meetings with the OSCE/ODIHR NAM, all interlocutors expressed a high level of trust in the impartial and professional administration of the elections in Finland.

F. VOTER AND CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

1. Voter Registration

Voter lists are extracted by the Population Register Centre (PRC) from the central and computerized Population Information System database. Registration and subsequent updates in the Population Information System database are passive, meaning that eligible voters are automatically included in voter lists. The PRC estimates that some 4.4 million voters are eligible to cast ballots in the upcoming elections.

Voter lists are made available for public inspection at local PRC offices 41 days before election day. In addition, all voters, including those registered abroad, receive a voting card containing specific information on the dates, procedures and locations for early and regular voting.²² Requests to amend the voter lists can be submitted to the local PRC office up to 16 days before election day. PRC decisions can be appealed at the Provincial Administrative Court or, through extraordinary appeal, at the Supreme Administrative Court. Voter lists become legally valid 12 days before election day and cannot be altered unless an appropriate court decision is presented.

²⁰ The Election Act, Section 184.

²¹ Crews aboard 40 ships have requested to vote in advance for the 2011 parliamentary elections.

²² Please see the "Methods of Voting" section of the report.

For election day, separate and updated paper copies of the voter lists, in which “early voters” are not featured, are provided for each polling station by the Ministry of Justice. This is a strong safeguard against possible multiple voting on election day. For the forthcoming parliamentary elections, electronic voter lists will be piloted in some 50 polling stations on election day.

Throughout the OSCE/ODIHR NAM, all interlocutors underscored their confidence in the accuracy of voter lists.

2. Candidate Registration

In parliamentary elections, candidates may be nominated either by political parties which have been entered into the party register kept by the Ministry of Justice,²³ or a constituency associations established by 100 eligible voters. This latter possibility provides the opportunity for independent candidates to stand for office in line with OSCE commitments.

A local branch of a political party or a group of at least 15 party members of the same branch or a group of at least 30 party members from different branches has the right to nominate candidates. According to the Electoral Act, after an internal party vote on candidates’ nominations, the district party executive can replace a maximum of one-quarter of the candidates. The national-level party organization and leadership has limited possibilities to influence candidate selection at the district level.

A political party or constituency association has to submit its list of candidates (candidate application) to the EDC of the electoral district in which it intends to nominate candidates no later than 8 March.²⁴ The EDCs examine the candidate lists, especially with regard to the eligibility of the candidates, and have to confirm the nomination of candidates by 17 March.

G. PARTY FUNDING AND CAMPAIGN FINANCING

Various high-profile financial scandals involving prominent politicians prompted the parliament to pass the Act on a Candidate’s Election Funding (273/2009) that lays down provisions on candidate’s election funding and its disclosure in parliamentary, presidential, municipal and European Parliament elections. The Act defines candidate’s election funding as the funding raised to cover the costs of the campaign incurred over a period starting six months before election day and ending no later than two weeks after the election day, irrespective of when such costs are paid. Election funding may consist of the candidate’s own funds and any loans taken out by the candidate for the campaign; campaign contributions received by the candidate, his or her support group or other entity operating exclusively for the purpose of promoting the candidate; as well as any other campaign contributions.

²³ A political association that fulfils certain conditions may become an officially registered party. To qualify as a registered party, an association must have bylaws guaranteeing democratic internal organization and must be able to present 5,000 signatures from supporters who are eligible to vote. A party that fails to gain at least one parliamentary seat in two consecutive parliamentary elections is deleted from the party register.

²⁴ The same deadline applies to notices of electoral alliances and joint lists.

According to the Act, an election funding disclosure is to be filed by an MP elected in parliamentary elections and a deputy representative for the MP²⁵ appointed upon confirmation of the election results. Other candidates not elected in the parliamentary elections do not need to disclose their funding. The disclosure must be filed with the National Audit Office (NAO) within two months of the confirmation of the election results; the financial statements are posted on the NAO website. The disclosure must identify expenditures,²⁶ income and any other information that the discloser deems appropriate. The value of each donation and the name of the donor shall be stated separately, if the value is at least EUR 1,500. The name of an individual may not be disclosed without his/her express consent if the amount donated is lower than EUR 1,500.

Parliamentary parties receive state subsidies that are granted annually by the government in proportion to the number of seats held in parliament. Parties may accept other contributions as provided for in the Act on Political Parties. The NAO oversees political parties funding while the Ministry of Justice monitors the use of the state subsidies to the parties.

The Act on Political Parties, amended in 2010, sets an annual limit on the total amount of contributions from the same donor at EUR 30,000. The Act also bans anonymous donations and contributions from foreign donors except private individuals and international organizations with a similar ideology (e.g. “sister parties”).

The new regulations of campaign finance and party funding will be applied for the first time in the 2011 parliamentary elections.

H. ELECTION CAMPAIGNING AND THE MEDIA

The Election Act does not regulate the election campaign. OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors opined that the 2011 election campaign will feature an increasing use of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter and internet blogs. Contestants are also planning to use a wide range of more traditional means of campaigning, including door-to-door campaigning, public rallies, and media debates. None of the OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors raised concerns about their ability to campaign freely.

The media environment in Finland is open and pluralistic, which is reflected in the variety of media outlets operating in the country. Newspaper readership is one of the highest in the world; some 90 per cent of adults read at least one newspaper a day.²⁷ Most media focuses on the Finnish-speaking audience, however, a number of television and radio stations, as well as print publications, offer media products in Swedish. Newspapers play an important role in providing political information to a large audience.

The freedom of expression is enshrined in the Constitution and in the Act on the Exercise of Freedom of Expression in Mass Media. The legislation regulates the work of the media only in general terms and does not contain references to the role and duties of the media during elections. Election-related coverage is determined by the media itself, except for the

²⁵ Deputy representative for a member of parliament is the first candidate on the list who has not been elected from the party or from the joint list which the member represented (Section 92 of the Election Act).

²⁶ In total and item by item.

²⁷ Source: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Department for Communications and Culture. <http://www.finland.fi/Public/default.aspx?contentid=162833&nodeid=41808&culture=en-US>.

Finnish public service broadcaster (*YLE*) that has the legal obligation “to treat all political parties equally and to follow uniform criteria.” The Act on Political Parties also allows *YLE* to take “aspects relating to public service programming” into consideration when implementing this obligation of equal treatment.²⁸ *YLE* interlocutors clarified that the size of a party, its parliamentary status and interests of the viewers are therefore taken into consideration when deciding on access of the political parties to the public broadcaster. *YLE* decided that registered parties with no parliamentary representation will be given an opportunity to present their views on radio but not on TV. Some interlocutors met by the OSCE/ODIHR NAM expressed a concern that smaller parties with no parliamentary representation have fewer opportunities to present their views than parliamentary parties.

YLE will broadcast a large number of election-related programmes. It will organize several debates, which aim to provide a platform to a wide range of electoral contestants, including the popular “prime ministerial” TV debate among leaders of three major political parties – the Social Democratic Party, The Centre Party, and the National Coalition Party. At the time of the OSCE/ODIHR NAM, there was an ongoing debate about whether the leader of the True Finns should also be invited to the prime ministerial debate based on the strong showing of the party in opinion polls. At the time of writing, *YLE* had not made a decision. Private TV channel *MTV3* is organizing a number of discussions and interactive panels, to which representatives of key political parties will be invited. It will also offer some opportunities to non-parliamentary parties.

The Council for Mass Media, a self-regulating body, promotes good journalistic practice and considers complaints about breaches of norms of professional ethics. The Council does not exercise legal jurisdiction, but has a strong moral authority. Its decisions are binding on the concerned media outlets that have the obligation to publish them.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

All the OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed a high level of confidence in the conduct of elections in Finland and did not raise any major concerns. Nevertheless, most interlocutors welcomed a potential OSCE/ODIHR activity for the 17 April 2011 parliamentary elections recognizing that election processes can always be improved and acknowledging that the OSCE/ODIHR may contribute to these efforts.

In this regard, the election process could benefit from closer scrutiny in a few areas, including the current electoral system and its possible shortcomings, the mechanisms for election disputes, the implementation of the newly-adopted regulations on party funding and campaign finance, and access of non-parliamentary political parties to the media. The fact that the OSCE/ODIHR has not previously conducted an election mission in Finland is an additional reason to consider such an OSCE/ODIHR activity. As none of the interlocutors expressed any concerns related to the conduct of election-day procedures, the OSCE/ODIHR NAM recommends the deployment of an Election Assessment Mission for these parliamentary elections.

²⁸ Section 10 of the Act on Political Parties.

ANNEX: LIST OF MEETINGS

STATE AND ELECTION AUTHORITIES

Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Ms. Outi Holopainen, Director, Unit for Security Policy and Crisis Management
Ms. Päivi Karhio-Szilvay, OSCE Desk Officer, First Secretary, Unit for Security Policy and Crisis Management
Mr. Pasi Kokkonen, First Secretary, Unit for Human Rights Policy
Mr. Teemu Turunen, First Secretary, Unit for Consular Assistance
Ms. Karita Tammi-Kortelainen, Departmental Secretary, Unit for Consular Assistance
Mr. Erkki Seppänen, Attaché
Mr. Samuli Harju, Project Assistant

Ministry of Justice

Ms. Johanna Suurpää, Director, Democracy and Language Affairs Unit
Mr. Arto Jääskeläinen, Director of Elections
Mr. Jussi Aaltonen, Ministerial Adviser
Ms. Kaisa Tiusanen, Senior Specialist, Democracy and Language Affairs Unit

Supreme Administrative Court

Ms. Anne E. Niemi, Justice
Ms. Monica Gullans, Legal Secretary

National Audit Office

Mr. Jaakko Hamunen, Chief Information Officer
Mr. Jaakko Eskola, Director of Financial Audit
Mr. Petri Nurmi, Principal Performance Auditor

Population Registration Centre

Ms. Riitta Haggrén, Director
Mr. Timo Salovaara, Information Services Manager

POLITICAL PARTIES

Social Democratic Party

Mr. Tero Shemeikka, Special Advisor to the Second Deputy Speaker of the Parliament, International Secretary

National Coalition Party

Mr. Pasi Rajala, Secretary for International Affairs
Mr. Jukka Tamminen, Political Adviser

Finnish Centre Party

Mr. Tuomo Puumalainen, MP, Vice-Chairperson

Green League

Mr. Panu Laturi, Secretary General

Change 2011 (Upon its request)

Mr. Petri Kaivanto, journalist, candidate in parliamentary elections

Independence Party (Upon its request)

Mr. Saku Mättö, Party Secretary

MEDIA

Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE)

Mr. Jyrki Richt, Head of Current Affairs

Television channel MTV3

Ms. Merja Ylä-Anttila, Head of News

Ms. Päivi Anttikoski, Head of Foreign News

Council for Mass Media

Mr. Risto Uimonen, Chairperson

Ms. Nina Porra, Secretary

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Coalition of Finnish Women's Associations

Ms. Tanja Auvinen, Secretary General

Finnish League for Human Rights

Ms. Kristiina Kouros, Secretary General

Ms. Milla Aaltonen, Advisor

Ms. Pipsa Neumann, Assistant

Transparency International Finland

Mr. Santeri Eriksson, Chairperson

Mr. Pentti Mäkinen, Vice-Chairperson