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EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW
(VENICE COMMISSION)

DECLARATION
ON WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS

Adopted by the Venice Commission
at its 67th plenary session
(Venice, 9-10 June 2006)

on the basis of contributions by

Mr François LUCHAIRE (Member, Andorra)
Ms Hanna SUCHOCKA (Member, Poland)

Item I.2.5 of the Code of the Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters provides as follows:

« Legal rules requiring a minimum percentage of persons of each gender among candidates should not be considered as contrary to the principle of equal suffrage if they have a constitutional basis ».

The following completes this principle :

“a. Implementation of the parity principle may lead to admit:

1. Elections by a list system

- The obligation to ensure a composition of the candidates' lists alternating men and women
- The refusal to register lists which do not respect such an alternating composition

2. Elections in single-member constituencies

- The obligation to ensure a balanced percentage of women and men amongst candidates of the same party
- Dissuasive sanctions in case of non-respect of this obligation

b. Suffrage should be individual and secret, which excludes any form of “family voting”, whether committed in the form of group voting (where a [male] family member accompanies one or more [women] relatives into a polling booth), in the form of open voting (when family groups vote together in the open), or in the form of proxy voting (where a [male] family member collects ballot papers belonging to one or more [women] relatives and marks those papers as he sees fit).