

Good afternoon,

Latvian delegation would like to submit some answers to the questions transmitted to JHA Counsellours on April 11, 2018. Due to the time limitation it was not possible to complete the questionnaire.

1. Has your country introduced any measures governing the use of media and social media in the context of election campaigns? These measures may include, but not be limited to:
 - i. the observance of election silence period,
 - ii. prohibition of disinformation (fake news)
 - iii. equal representation of candidates
 - iv. financial rules on campaigning and especially advertising limitations, awareness campaigns or bypassing the established financial limits.

If so, please briefly list such measures and explain possible exemptions for example for social media. If not, is your country currently considering introducing such measures in the future and for which media?

Election campaigns in Latvia regulated by Pre-election Campaign Law, but restrictions for the amount of pre-election campaign expenses (pre-election expenses) of a political party and association of political parties regulated by the Law On Financing of Political Organisations (Parties). In Latvia:

- *prohibited the hidden pre-election campaigns;*
- *Deputy candidates who are on the list of deputy candidates of the same title have rights to use the State ensured free of charge broadcasting time for the pre-election campaign in the first television and radio programme of the public electronic mass media in cases;*
- *The lists of deputy candidates submitted for elections have the right to participate, at least once, in the pre-election broadcasts in the television programmes of electronic mass media within the framework of public remit;*
- *Restrictions for the pre-election campaign in the television and radio programmes of electronic mass media;*
- *regulated pre-election campaign in the publications, on the internet and distribution of other editions of pre-election campaign produced by print technology;*
- *restrictions for the amount of pre-election expenses.*

3. Has your country introduced any transparency or disclosure requirements for political entities advertising online in general and social media in particular? Do political digital ads have to be explicitly labelled with an imprint? Does the funding and provenance of these ads have to be clearly displayed?

Regarding to pre-election campaign in the television and radio programmes of electronic mass media, - prior to each of the pre-election campaigns and immediately after thereof it shall be clearly and unambiguously communicated which campaigner has paid for the pre-election campaign. But regarding to pre-election campaign on the internet,- when placing the materials of pre-election campaign on the Internet, it shall be clearly and unambiguously indicated within the framework of each material which campaigner has paid for the pre-election campaign.

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6. Given the importance of freedom of expression in election campaigning and the democratic process, what is in your view the balance between formal regulation and self-regulation?

As the political party engages in pre-election political campaigns to take part in the elections and involved in the establishment of public administration institutions, then it is proportionate to set certain restrictions on these activities for them, in certain cases also restricting freedom of expression. For example, setting up restrictions for the pre-election campaign expenses; prohibition on the election day, and the day before the election day, the placement of materials of pre-election campaign in electronic mass media radio programmes and broadcasts, public use outdoor areas and indoor premises, publications, as well as conducting of campaign as a paid service on public electronic communication networks, including the Internet (without applying this to websites of political parties and associations thereof); prohibition on the election day, as well as 30 days prior to the election day, the placement of materials of pre-election campaign in radio programmes and broadcasts of an electronic mass medium. These restrictions should be proportionate to the purpose of these restrictions.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact my colleague Arta Poisa
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Best regards,
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