



**RULE OF LAW**  
**CENTRE** | UNIVERSITY  
OF HELSINKI

*Monday, September 19, 2022*

The address of the State Election Commission, Mr. Ilirjan Celibashi in the round table “A digital system of reporting and publication of political financing in Albania”

Dear participants,

In the meeting held in June this year, in the framework of introduction of the project of IDEA and the Center for the Rule of Law in Finland, on the transparency of financing of political parties, we discussed the current situation of political parties’ funding in terms of the legal framework in force, as well as the problems encountered in practice.

There was a wide agreement that the entire system of political party financing needs improvements. Changes to the legal framework, the Electoral Code and/or the law for political parties, should, in essence, consider the improvement of the entire system of real control and verification on where political parties get their money, how much money they get and how they spend it- both for their regular annual activity and during the election campaigns.

We also agreed that these changes should take into account the establishment of rules regarding the financing of so-called "third parties", or rules regarding the coverage of the election campaign in digital media and social networks.

The interest of many actors, but first and foremost, of the public in having a greater and real-time transparency on the financing of political parties in general and their election campaigns in particular, was also one of the conclusions of the discussions at the June’s roundtable.

At the round table, the CEC presented its goals to digitize, to the extent which it is viable and beneficial, the system of financial reporting of political parties and electoral subjects, including the process of publication, consultation and analysis of these reports.

We are fully aware that the process of digitizing party financial reports, reviewing and evaluating them is not an easy undertaking. It requires time, expertise and budget to make it happen.

Currently, financial reporting is a process that is carried out entirely in paper. Only sporadically, the CEC receives some data in digital format. The current way of reporting provides very few opportunities for the stakeholders to obtain complete information on the data contained in the financial reports of political parties and/or electoral subjects. A lot of time and energy is then spent in analyzing the data contained in these reports. And in the end, little do we understand about the issue of financing.

The concrete commitment of IDEA International and the Center for the Rule of Law in Finland to support the CEC in implementation of the digitalization of the political parties' financial reporting systems will help us, as an institution, to achieve this goal in time and with the best international standard.

The CEC is fully open and invites the part of civil society, or even other stakeholders, which are involved in political party financing issue, to contribute with their input and proposals in building this system.

The digitalization system of the parties' financial reporting aims at their standardization, facilitating the reporting process for reporters, providing clarity in what is required to be reported, clarity in their reporting, real-time and dynamic reporting of the data being reported (both for income/donations and expenses), access for all parties, including the public, to consult reports and assess them in real time.

The system should provide the opportunity for interested parties (civil society, parties, etc.) to retrieve easily, clearly and fully all the data obtained from financial reports.

Regarding this feature, it is important that the interested parties have the opportunity to carry out different analyzes of the data that the financial reports, both annual data and during the election period.

Concerning the analysis of the data in the reports and, depending on the case, their comparison of the data, I think it would be useful if it can be done directly online, on the platform- at least for the main data contained in the financial reports of the parties.

Otherwise, in the case of a more in-depth analysis of the data of these reports, the interested parties can do it by having the option to download all the data from the system

It is important to underline that we intend the system be designed in such a way as to allow interested parties to download the data in different and easily processable formats.

The digital financial reporting system or module as a whole and in summarized form, will have three components or aspects which will address:

- a. the reporting process (with all elements) by parties and entities;
- b. the audit and evaluation process by the CEC;
- c. publication process and access by interested parties.

The relevant staff at the CEC has long since started working to design the technical terms and the work flow of the process of financial reporting, control and audit by the CEC, as well as the publication of data.

IDEA and the Center for the Rule of Law in Finland present today the draft on the way of building the digital system of financial reporting by political parties and electoral subjects. I consider this document as serious and professional.

This table, but not the only one, is also an opportunity for other actors to give their contribution regarding possible technical improvements that can be made to this document and as a result, to the digital system of financial reports of political parties, which the CEC aims to build.

Thank you!