The European Electoral Heritage and social media in elections

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How to promote social media in elections while ensuring their compliance with electoral standards?
Background

- Existing binding or non-binding texts in the electoral field

- Increasing use / demand of social media in electoral processes

- Numerical fracture among voters and among candidates
International instruments

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) ➔ Article 25 b
- European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ➔ Article 3 Protocol 1 + case-law of the Court
- Copenhagen Document 1990, I 5.1
Good practices

*Inter alia* The Venice Commission’s Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters

Handbooks....
The European Electoral Heritage

Five principles: universal, equal, free, secret, direct

Principles which are not questionable regarding use of social media – universal and free suffrage

What about the secrecy of the vote and the equal suffrage?
Use of social media in Denmark

Increasing use of social media among the population – the example of Denmark

3M up to 5.6M Danes are on Facebook

Most of the journalists
Use of social media in Australia 1/3

Around 23M inhabitants

As of May 2013:
Facebook – 11,534,540 users/accounts
Twitter – 2,167,849 active users

Last General Elections, 7 September
Use of social media in Australia 2/3

Results of the 7 September general elections

Use of social media in Australia 3/3

The Election Tracker
Possible impacts of social media in elections

- Unequal coverage of political information
- Abusive use of social media, media silence period
- Risk of giving credit to prediction of elections
The principle of secrecy

Secrecy of the vote
A right and a duty – Individual vote
Political opinions expressed on social media
Prediction of elections
The principle of equality

**Equality** of the vote

Equality of opportunity – Neutral attitude of authorities

Media silence period in social media

Coverage of political information
Our shared goal

Promoting use of social media in elections in accordance with electoral standards
How to achieve it?

- By adapting rules and standards to new electronic communication means
- By a positive obligation of authorities to inform the public
- By promoting political platforms through social media
Thank you!

At your disposal for questions!

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