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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).