Session IV-II: Searching for New Solutions to Emerging Trends That Endanger Political Finance Integrity (government agencies)

Threats and complexities for tracking online expenses

- There is a significant gap in reliable data on online campaign expenses, with some data available only for platforms like Facebook and Instagram, highlighting the urgent need for systematic and comprehensive monitoring across all digital platforms.

- External companies need to be engaged to collect detailed data on advertisements across diverse platforms such as YouTube and Google, and political parties must be required to report their online campaign materials to ensure transparency and facilitate comparison.

- The use of fake accounts for campaigning and inadequate labeling of political ads exacerbate the challenges in tracking and personalizing political spending online, demanding robust public reporting mechanisms for undeclared campaign activities.

- The complexities involved in tracking campaign expenses paid from abroad, particularly those originating from

Threats and complexities for tracking online expenses

Inadequate legal framework for online campaign finance:

- The necessity to differentiate the campaign materials from state institution public information dissemination (for incumbent running for an office).

- Inadequate proportionality of the sanctions for campaign finance violations, especially for the foreign interference violations.

- The definition of political ads should be clear, different actors may define this differently, including national legislation versus big tech companies' definition.

- The necessity to define the third parties,

Threats and complexities for tracking online expenses

- There is a critical need to distinguish between material and non-material expenses, define their market values, and enhance the transparency regulations for online platforms to address the issue of hidden political ads and unreported spending on online campaign strategy planning.

- The emergence of new social media platforms and the expanding functionalities of existing ones are complicating the tracking and regulation of political campaign spending, which includes microtargeting and personalization of ads — often the most costly aspects of online campaigning.

- Artificial intelligence is reducing the overall costs of campaigning; however, it simultaneously presents challenges in monitoring and regulating

Existing methodologies

- Restricting the placement of online campaign materials to advertising agencies could aid political oversight agencies in tracking expenses more effectively.

- Engaging specialized agencies to monitor social media activities will enhance the oversight of online campaigning.

- Legal regulations should mandate detailed reporting for online campaigning and associated expenses, requiring the submission of campaign material copies and specific identification on social media platforms. Additionally, certain types of paid political ads, such as those

Existing methodologies

- Engaging influencers should be recognized and regulated as third-party campaigning, requiring balanced regulation to both preserve freedom of expression and ensure campaign finance transparency.

- There should be a clear definition of political ads and their targeting to maintain clarity and compliance.

- Establishing international standards for online campaigning is essential, including guidelines for placing political ads, targeting strategies, labeling of political ads, and mechanisms for their enforcement and

Capacity of the oversight agencies

- There is a lack of a clear mandate to obtain information upon request regarding online campaign finance materials.

- It is essential to train staff in social media and campaign finance monitoring to ensure they are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge.

- Staff numbers and qualifications must be sufficient to effectively perform online campaign finance monitoring.

- It is crucial to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of political finance oversight agencies.

- Specialized software, including AI-based tools

Capacity of the oversight agencies

- Enhance collaboration with civil society and universities to monitor social media effectively.

- Establish a specialized unit dedicated to social media monitoring.

- Cooperate with state institutions to ensure proper labeling of political ads.

- Address the lack of IT capacity within political finance oversight agencies, marked by low salaries and a shortage of specialized staff, by potentially engaging external experts during campaign periods.

- As online campaigning intensifies, it is crucial to bolster the capacity of political finance oversight agencies.

- Strengthen inter-agency cooperation by utilizing

Cooperation with other stakeholders

(inter-agency collaboration, cooperation with the civil society, big tech companies, private business, political parties)

Interagency collaboration

- Establish cooperation with prosecutors and other relevant state agencies to enhance oversight capabilities.

- Foster regional collaboration among political finance oversight agencies to share best practices and strengthen regulatory measures.

- Ensure effective political finance oversight by collaborating with institutions that have mandates over specific aspects of campaigning.

- Address the ambiguity of the legal framework which often leads to unclear mandates and weak oversight; mapping out mandates and coordinating efforts can help prevent overlaps or gaps in oversight.

- Enable the political finance oversight agency to coordinate with other agencies responsible for monitoring and overseeing political finance, facilitating joint work planning. Establishing trustworthy open and efficient cooperation is

Interagency collaboration

- Establish an interagency task force and clearly communicate its roles, activities, and the distinct mandates of its member agencies to the public, setting appropriate expectations.

- The political finance oversight agency could act as a guide for other agencies by providing interpretations of campaign finance regulations.

- Implement a digital mechanism for automatic data exchange with other state agencies holding relevant databases, and establish protocols for data exchange and usage. APIs can be instrumental in facilitating this exchange, enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of political finance monitoring and oversight.

- Access to data from other state institutions can provide evidence for verifying the legality of campaign finance operations. Regular interactions with these institutions will aid in understanding the structure of their data, thereby enabling its effective utilization.

Collaboration with civil society, media and the private sector

- Establish cooperation with journalists by providing them with training and essential information to help track online campaigns effectively.

- Develop partnerships with civil society organizations, offering regular training on regulations and holding frequent meetings to ensure they are well-informed and engaged.

- Utilize results from social media monitoring conducted by civil society as evidence in prosecuting campaign finance violations.

- Organize meetings with media outlets and agencies to discuss and clarify regulations concerning campaigning to ensure widespread understanding and compliance.

- Facilitate access to specialized software for social media monitoring through partnerships with international organizations, enhancing the ability to track and analyze online campaign activities.

- Work with banks to obtain information on campaign expenses, although this may be challenging due to banking

Collaboration with online platforms and social networks

- Establishing cooperation with online platforms and social networks can be crucial for enhancing oversight and transparency.

- Online platforms and social networks should revise their policies to increase transparency around political ads, including providing the ID number of political ads on invoices.

- These platforms may also need to implement stricter regulations on the foreign sponsorship of political ads to prevent external influence.

- All social media platforms should create a political ads library that includes detailed information on financial transactions associated with these ads.

- It is vital to understand the policies of online platforms regarding the provision of information to political finance oversight agencies to ensure requests are properly made and responses are timely. This is particularly important for platforms like META and less

Collaboration with political parties

- Maintain consistent, regular, and transparent communication between political parties and political finance oversight agencies.

- Provide training and online webinars to political parties on campaign finance reporting to ensure compliance and understanding.

- Organize Q&A sessions with political party leadership at the start of the campaign period and hold regular, frequent meetings with party treasurers to address any concerns and clarify procedures.

- Facilitate joint meetings between political parties and civil society to foster collaboration and transparency.

- Establish a formal protocol of cooperation with political parties to streamline interactions and

Policy changes or recommendations

1. Encourage online platforms and social networks to harmonize the policies of major tech companies regarding political ad transparency across different countries, and to enhance the overall transparency of online platforms.

2. Foster constructive and open dialogue with online platforms and social networks to ensure clear communication and cooperation.

3. Regulate campaign expenses incurred outside of the designated campaign period to maintain fairness and transparency.

4. Clearly define third-party campaigning, its parameters, and continue discussions on third-party registration and reporting to ensure accountability.

5. Regulate the activities of advertising agencies to ensure they comply with campaign finance laws.

6. Increase the capacity of political finance oversight agencies and enhance their collaboration with other