



GOPAC Global Task Force on Parliamentary Ethics and Conduct (GTF-PEC)

(This task force includes Parliamentary Immunity)

Description: In partnership with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) the [Handbook on Parliamentary Ethics and Conduct](#) was launched in November 2009. More recently, the Chair of this GTF welcomed GRECO's initiative to include the prevention of corruption in parliamentary assemblies in the scope of its Fourth Evaluation Round. A concept note on the partnership with WFD and others is in preparation and will be available before the Conference. In this workshop participants will be provided with an overview of the handbook and will be encouraged to comment on ethics and conduct regimes in their country.

Issues for discussion:

- One GOPAC objective is to increase **public trust** in parliamentarians – an important step if parliamentarians are to play an effective role in preventing corruption. Ethics can play an important role in increasing this trust. However also important is evidence on conduct i.e. that parliamentarians understand and play their core democratic roles – representation, oversight and legislation. GOPAC members have noted that some parliamentarians do not understand well these roles. Should this task force add conduct of democratic roles to its work?
- To date successful events have taken place in the Arab and African regions on the handbook. The challenge for this GTF is to **organize and fund workshops** on the handbook at the regional level so that the handbook can be 'domesticated' to better meet country needs. How can this best be done and what other partnerships are important?
- How can ethics and conduct developments be best be monitored?
- At the regional level, how can **public outreach** and education take place? Our monitoring report suggests that citizens do not have a good understanding of this area and the actual role of parliamentarians in some countries.
- What specific **other areas** should be pursued that are not addressed in the handbook to expand the ethics and conduct library? Examples are: rules relating to the personal demeanour of parliamentarians and relationships between political groups which could be covered by parliamentary rules of order; or shielding parliamentarians from undue influence - as is advocated in the Handbook – rather than seeking to regulate on relations with lobbyists or even to prohibit such relations as was the case in some countries.¹

¹ At the GRECO event, the Chair noted that lobbying is part of political life and it is important to bear in mind that not only lobbyists and other interest groups, but also governments, which would not be covered by regulations applicable to lobbyists, exerted pressure on and seek to influence parliamentarians.



Draft Resolutions: GTF-PEC shall

- encourage all members and chapters to use the GOPAC and Westminster Foundation *Handbook on Parliamentary Ethics and Conduct* to establish where needed ethics and conduct regimes in their own parliaments and provide tools and means necessary to develop and sustain them;
- work in partnership with the Westminster Foundation on Democracy and others to
 - monitor the use of the Handbook and identify regions and countries to carry out training for parliamentarians where there are opportunities for parliamentary reform in ethic and conduct regimes;
 - regionalize guidance and approaches; and
 - expand the global ethics and conduct library to respond to the needs and issues identified by parliamentarians.