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**SUPPORT TO
ELECTORAL REFORMS**

ПОДДРШКА НА ИЗБОРНИ РЕФОРМИ
MBËSHTETJE E REFORMAVE ZGJEDHORE

ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT

2023

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The aim of this document is to be conducive to the establishment of a culture of dialogue, mutual respect and understanding of the argument of the other, and to serve as *daily reminder* of what younger or future politicians and holders of public office must (not) do and forget during their political career.

The field of political action for politicians is much broader than the way it is prescribed by law or any other act. Such unregulated field of action raises ethical dilemmas and questions for a politician. How should I act? How am I supposed to talk? How can I ensure that my actions or words not harm the other to the extent that they may degrade or destroy a political opponent? How can I influence the society through my action and words, without creating a field of discord or impatience that should not be inherent to the political sphere? These questions and dilemmas are the essential guiding principles for each politician willing to perform and be virtuous in any actions in the public sphere.

The ethical standards for self-assessment were developed by the alumni of the Academy of Public Policies (within the project "Support to Electoral Reforms" financed by the Government of Switzerland and implemented by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems-IFES in cooperation with the Forum for Reasonable Policies), as part of the two-day seminar on "Ethics and Integrity in the Public Sphere" held on December 2 and 3, 2023 in Shtip. To develop this document, several references were used from international and domestic authors dealing with topics in the field of ethics, transparency and accountability in politics.

The immanent need to design such ethical standards was unequivocally stated during the three previous joint meetings/seminars with young politicians-alumni of the Academy of Public Policy.

Their *thirst* for new knowledge, their sincere motivation to solve the problems they face, as well as their openness and respect for one other, continuously inspired them to intensify their mutual friendships and meetings.

Thus, they gave the biggest input for the design of this document, however, it is also the heaviest as they carry the burden for the future.



Ethical standards are composed of five chapters related to ethics in politics, however, the list of topics is non-exhaustive and leaves room for further additions:

I.Relations between politicians in their own political party;

II.Mutual relations between politicians (from different political parties);

III.Politicians' relations with the media;

IV.Relations between politicians and citizens/civil sector;

V.Conduct of politicians – holders of executive positions in state and public administration

I.Relations between politicians in their own political party;

1.I respect the values and principles which are the foundation of my political party. However, I am free to give a critical opinion and I expect such opinion to be respected and not sanctioned in any way.

2.To achieve a higher goal, I always strive to recognize and publicly support the general rather than any personal interest.

3.I cooperate with the organs and bodies of the party to promote the values and ethical principles that enable full democratic development among its members, especially among younger members, vulnerable and marginalized groups.

4.If I am aware of misconduct and/or unethical conduct in my own party, such as cronyism or nepotism, I am obliged to warn the competent party bodies.

5.The facts I share within my own political party are from verified sources and relevant surveys.

II. Mutual relations among politicians (from different political parties):

1. When the general interest is concerned, I try to reach an agreement and seek a compromise among the diverse positions taken by colleagues from other political parties.

2. I am ready for cross-party cooperation for the collective good of the public and the public interest.

3. I tackle any disagreements professionally and reasonably, without resorting to personal attacks.

4. I respect private lives, beliefs and personal choices in life and never discuss them openly in a public debate.

5. A negative campaign is a necessary part of the political struggle; however, it must be always based on verified facts and sources. A negative (black) campaign based on personal attacks and personal disqualifications is not allowed on the political stage.

6. The facts I share in cross-party communication are from verified sources and relevant surveys.

III. Politicians' relations with the media;

1. I use clear and concise language to share relevant information in order to get closer to the media and ensure proper relations through regular and professional communication.

2. I respect the autonomy of media professionals, without interference, coercion or pressure on them.

3. I always avoid manipulation and dishonesty when making public statements.

4. I accept criticism and constructive input from media representatives. I am willing to apologize if I misrepresented any facts or (un)intentionally shared misinformation.

IV. Relations between politicians and citizens/civil sector;

1. I use the information received from citizens/civil society organizations ethically and responsibly. I do not use sensitive information for personal or political gains.

2. In communication with citizens and the public, I provide accurate and transparent information.

3. The facts I share with citizens/ civil sector are from verified sources and relevant surveys.

V. Politicians holding executive positions in state and public administration

1. As politician holding an executive position, I am personally responsible for my actions and transparently report on my activities.

2. I take political responsibility exclusively as a personal moral responsibility. In doing so, I am prepared to assume responsibility for any inconsistencies or irregularities within my remit, including situations that refer to gross violation of the rules and laws by my subordinate officers.

3. I effectively, equitably and effectively administer the public resources and public property, and I do not misuse them to gain personal benefit, benefit for my family or my political party.

4. When making important decisions, I consult with all stakeholders involved and seek advice from independent and impartial parties.

5. In my work, I am guided solely by the public and not by party interest.

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