

DIALECTIX/INFOSERVICE dx/di

News digest and policy review//Politics/CODESA submission No 1.

February 1992.

1. CREATION OF A CLIMATE FOR FREE POLITICAL ACTIVITY

1.1. WHAT NOT TO DO

There is absolutely no point in trying to define, record, observe, regulate or restrict normal political activity. There are and will remain important differences between what different communities at different times are prepared to tolerate in the line of political activity. The boundaries of such tolerance can and must be set and re-set at local level, provided they are set in terms of universal restrictions on noise, litter and the use of public space and facilities for meetings.

Under no circumstances should political parties be singled out for any special treatment in the regulation of their everyday activity at local level.

2. TRY HARDER AT SOMETHING ELSE

2.1. Open a National Register of Political Parties. To register, all parties must declare their gross income, their immovable properties and their employees. To stay registered, all parties must submit audited accounts yearly.

2.2. Set rules for fair access to public media (television, radio and opinion polls) during election periods.

The Network recommends that we define two stages of the election process. In the early stage, public media time should be allocated roughly equally between parties, with a strict standard format (e.g. interviews with leaders, documentaries on the party's history and principles, etc). In the late stage, public media time should be allocated in strict proportion to current public support, as reflected in the AMPS ratings of the broadcasts themselves, and in impartial opinion polls.

2.3. Define the offences of Political Fraud and Political Libel.

Political Fraud:

- *raising of money for political ends under false pretences;
- *the abuse of the symbols, letterheads and/or names of parties and/or politicians for overtly or covertly political aims.

Political Libel:

- *the use of irrelevant personal information concerning any politician for the purposes of discrediting that person and/or the party he or she belongs to.