

# Strengthening Lawmaking, Improving Laws



## ODIHR assistance for more transparent, inclusive and high-quality legislative processes and laws

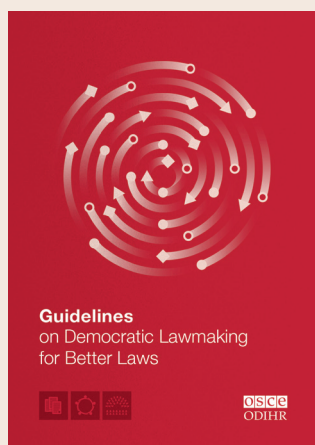
ODIHR assists national authorities in improving the quality of their legislative processes, addressing lawmaking challenges and enhancing their transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, rule of law and human rights compliance at all stages of the legislative cycle.

### Why improving lawmaking matters?

The quality of laws that govern our lives depends directly on how they are developed and consulted. Even well-meaning laws can be ineffective or lack democratic legitimacy if created through opaque, exclusionary or rushed processes that limit meaningful deliberation. Effective and transparent democratic lawmaking is essential to a well-functioning democracy and the full realization of human rights.

### Why states request support?

- To benefit from ODIHR's expertise and access specialized knowledge, comparative good practices and analysis benchmarked against OSCE commitments and international human rights standards.
- For support with identifying and reforming systemic weaknesses, providing a clear path to addressing underlying challenges in legislative governance.
- To improve the quality and implementation of laws, leading to more effective legislation that better serves society.
- To strengthen democratic institutions and public trust, by enhancing the transparency, inclusivity and accountability of lawmaking.



### Guidelines on Democratic Lawmaking

ODIHR's *Guidelines on Democratic Lawmaking for Better Laws* is a landmark tool developed from over two decades of ODIHR assessments of the legislation and legislative processes of OSCE participating States. Drawing on OSCE commitments, established international standards and good practices, they offer concrete and practical recommendations on how to improve legislative rules and practices to produce good-quality laws. Approaching lawmaking as a full cycle — from policy formulation and drafting to consultation, adoption, publication and post-

legislative review — the Guidelines advance openness, transparency, accountability, inclusiveness and participation. They seek to ensure that legislative processes and outputs remain rule of law- and human rights-compliant, accessible, non-discriminatory, gender-responsive and attentive to diverse social needs.

### Who is the target audience?

The Guidelines are for anyone involved in lawmaking, including legislators, government officials, parliamentary staff, civil society and national human rights institutions.

## How does ODIHR assist?

### Comprehensive assessments of the lawmaking process

ODIHR conducts, upon request, comprehensive lawmaking assessments of legislative processes throughout the lawmaking cycle. These aim to help states identify and address systemic challenges in the lawmaking process and offer actionable recommendations for reform, based on the framework and standards set out in the *Guidelines on Democratic Lawmaking for Better Laws*.

A comprehensive lawmaking assessment typically includes the following key stages:

- **Preliminary Opinion on the Legal Framework Governing the Lawmaking Process.** A review of the legal framework and key challenges, with preliminary recommendations.
- **Country Visit:** To present and discuss the Preliminary Opinion and gather insights from key stakeholders.
- **Comprehensive Lawmaking Assessment Report** (*typically finalized three to six months after the visit*) to analyse the legal and practical aspects of the lawmaking cycle, from legislative planning and legal drafting to consultation, oversight and evaluation, with detailed, actionable recommendations for reform.
- **Report launch and follow-up activities on implementation.**

## Capacity development

ODIHR can, on request, support capacity development for policy- and lawmakers on key aspects of the lawmaking process, adapted to the national context and specific institutional needs, including:

- Development and delivery of **practical and interactive training on essential components of the lawmaking process** such as public consultations, regulatory and human rights impact assessments, legislative drafting, approximation of legislation with EU acquis, gender-sensitive legislation and lawmaking under emergency procedures.
- Technical assistance to **develop, design and disseminate user-friendly tools** to help lawmaking officials integrate democratic lawmaking principles into their work. These can include checklists, templates, self-assessment instruments, practical guidelines, or digital platforms to facilitate inclusive, accessible, participatory and transparent lawmaking.

### Legal reviews of existing or draft legislation governing the lawmaking process

At the request of participating States, ODIHR can review existing or draft legislation governing the lawmaking process and/or its key components, or the operation of institutions carrying out legislative functions. While

these reviews do not represent a comprehensive assessment of the lawmaking process, they aim to advise authorities on relevant aspects of the lawmaking, assessing the compliance of the legislative acts with international democratic governance and human rights standards and OSCE commitments and provide concrete, actionable recommendations to improve the legal and institutional framework. For further information, see *Requesting Legislative Assistance from ODIHR*.

## Who can request assistance?

- A **Comprehensive Lawmaking Assessment** may be requested by high-level state authorities, such as:
  - o The leadership of the parliament (e.g., Speaker and Deputy Speakers/ Secretary General of the Parliament)
  - o The leadership of the executive branch (e.g., President/Head of Presidential Administration, Prime Minister, Minister of Justice, Head of Secretariat of Government)
- A **Legal Review of (draft) legislation governing the lawmaking process.**
  - o Parliament (e.g., Speaker and Deputy Speakers, Heads and Deputy Heads of Committees); Government (e.g., President/Head of Presidential Administration, Ministers/Deputy Ministers/Heads of Departments);
  - o OSCE field operations or other OSCE structures.

## How to request assistance

Requests are made by sending an official letter addressed to the ODIHR Director at [office@odihr.pl](mailto:office@odihr.pl).

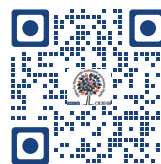
All ODIHR lawmaking assessments (and translations) are available at: [LEGISLATIONLINE](https://legislationline.org).



OSCE Office for  
Democratic Institutions  
and Human Rights

ul. Miodowa 10  
00-251 Warsaw  
Poland

Office: +48 22 520 06 00  
[office@odihr.pl](mailto:office@odihr.pl)



Follow ODIHR

