Publishing and broadcasting political program comparisons during an election period

Reference: *Election Act*, section 402

PURPOSE

To establish rules for publishing and broadcasting political program comparisons.

POLITICAL PROGRAM COMPARISONS

A political program comparison consists of excerpts from the programs of political parties or candidates, selected for the purpose of publication or broadcast. The information contained in a political program comparison may, for example, be gathered by means of a questionnaire sent to political parties or candidates, or through consultation of their official documents or websites.

Costs associated with publishing and broadcasting political program comparisons are not considered election expenses, provided the **following conditions are met.**

A political program comparison must:

- be prepared as part of the regular activities of the organization producing it;
- address topics related to the organization's mission;
- provide for the equitable representation, in both qualitative and quantitative terms, of all authorized political parties or all candidates in a given electoral division;
- be prepared and presented in a neutral and unbiased manner;
- be published or broadcast through the organization's normal channels of communication.

The political program comparison should not include or be accompanied by:

- photos or videos;
- analyses, commentaries, assessments, annotations or any other forms of evaluation.

In cases where the preceding conditions are not met, the costs associated with publishing or broadcasting a political program comparison constitute election expenses that may only be incurred by the official agent of a political party or candidate.

COMPARISONS CONSISTING OF HYPERLINKS

A political program comparison may also consist of hyperlinks to the programs or positions of political parties or candidates. Such hyperlinks must not be accompanied by analyses, commentaries, assessments, annotations or any other forms of evaluation.