

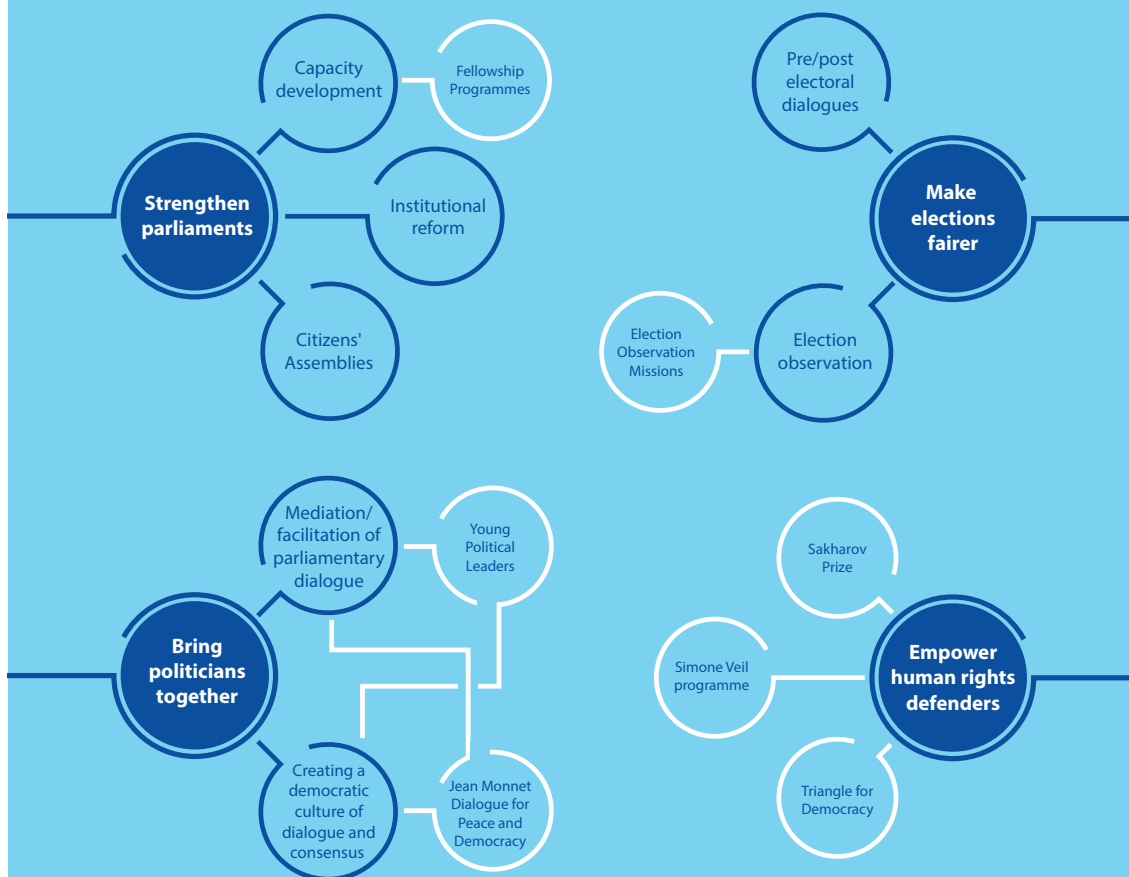
2024 – 2029



GLOBAL DEMOCRACY SUPPORT



How do we contribute to democracy in the world?



Global Democracy Support

Introduction

Democracy is a fundamental value of the European Union (EU). The European Parliament (EP) supports the European Union's effort to promote its values of democracy, human dignity, freedom, equality, rule of law and human rights.

This commitment extends within the EU, where the European Parliament safeguards everyone's rights, and globally, where it has become a key advocate for democracy. This aligns with the Treaties' mandate for the EU to advance democracy worldwide.

This brochure outlines the European Parliament's activities in promoting democracy beyond the EU's borders and highlights your potential role as a Member of the European Parliament.

A group dedicated to democracy support action

The European Parliament coordinates its global democracy support activities through the Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group (DEG). This group provides political guidance and supervision on:

- Election observation and follow-up;
- Support to partner parliaments;
- Human rights, including Sakharov Prize Community activities and
- Mediation and Dialogue Support.

The DEG group is composed by Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) appointed by the political groups and is co-chaired by the chairs of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Development to ensure coordination among Parliament's main foreign policy bodies. It also includes the chair of the Conference of Delegation Chairs, the chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights, and Parliament's vice-presidents responsible for human rights and democracy.

The DEG meets regularly to oversee the European Parliament's democracy support activities, discuss their implementation and make strategic decisions (such as sending

a Parliamentary Election Observation delegation to a country or opening a mediation process with a partner Parliament). Its activities are governed by [implementing provisions](#) adopted by the Conference of Presidents.

At the beginning of each parliamentary term, the DEG identifies priority countries for its work programme, focusing mainly on EU candidate countries. Additional countries may be engaged based on political priorities. These are reviewed annually and may be adjusted mid-term if necessary.

MEPs (not necessarily only the DEG Members) from different political groups are appointed as “lead members” for each priority country or region. They steer the DEG’s activities in the relevant country or region, represent the DEG before its counterparts, and report to it.

In these countries and regions, the European Parliament provides comprehensive democracy support to elected representatives, civil servants, political parties, human rights defenders, independent media and civil society organisations. This is done through a “Comprehensive Democracy Support Approach”, ensuring coordinated activities aligned with the electoral cycles and political objectives of the European Parliament and the EU.

Elections

The European Parliament is actively engaged in international election observation and is a respected member of the international election observation community.

Because elections are part of a larger cycle, Parliament also supports the entire electoral cycle, beginning with the pre-election period and continuing after the vote.





► ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION IN GUATEMALA, 2023

ELECTION OBSERVATION

The DEG has an official consultative role for the Vice-President of the European Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) during the selection of priority countries for long-term EU election observation missions and appoints chief observers for those missions.

Every EU election observation mission is headed by an MEP, appointed as Chief Observer by the VP/HR. These missions are only sent upon invitation from the country's authorities.

The European Parliament sends 10-12 short-term election observation delegations to countries outside the EU annually, reinforcing the ongoing long-term mission in the country. The DEG organises information sessions for all MEPs on international election observation at least twice per mandate.

The long-term missions that MEPs join are either:

- European Union election observation missions (EU EOMs) in Africa, America or Asia and in [countries](#) that are not members of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

or

- international election observation missions (IEOMs) led by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in countries that are members of the OSCE, with the exception of EU countries. In this case, the European Parliament's delegation joins forces with delegations from parliamentary or regional assemblies, such as those of the OSCE, the Council of Europe or NATO.

MEPs' participation adds political weight to these missions, and their experience as elected representatives enriches the evaluation of local electoral processes.

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORAL DIALOGUES

The European Parliament also engages in Parliamentary electoral dialogues, which involve round tables with MEPs and key parliamentarians and political leaders from partner countries.

Other actors – such as members of the local electoral commission, security forces, religious leaders or young political leaders – are also invited to take part when they can contribute to the discussion.

Before the election, these dialogues focus on issues related to the preparations for the next one and particularly on any concerns that a tense pre-electoral climate might lead to violence. Subjects for dialogues include hate speech, codes of conduct for political parties and the importance of accepting election results, fake observation or foreign interference in the electoral process.

After the election, dialogues focus on implementing the recommendations of the election observation mission. As many recommendations require legislative changes, local parliaments play an important role in the follow-up phase.



► STUDY VISIT FOR UKRAINE'S VERKHOVNA RADA

Support to parliaments

The European Parliament assists national parliaments and regional assemblies outside the EU's borders in order to reinforce their institutional capacity through a "Comprehensive Democracy Support Approach".

The European Parliament establishes a dialogue with these legislatures, exchanging best practices and supporting their participation as fully-fledged members of the democratic community. Members of the European Parliament play a key role in these exchanges.

The aim is to create joint ownership of customised support programmes for members of parliament (MPs) and civil servants. They usually focus on specific topics agreed upon by the partner parliament and the EP, and are implemented through the following tools:

- conferences, seminars and workshops on specific topics that allow MEPs and MPs of EU National Parliaments to highlight best practices for local MPs;
- study visits, which enable local MPs and staff to become acquainted with the work of the European Parliament and to meet key MEPs and
- fellowship programmes, intended for the staff of partner parliaments and aiming to build their institutions' capacity.

These may be organised in the European Parliament, in the priority country/region or in EU Member States.

The support programmes generally strengthen the principal functions of parliaments:

- representing voters and engaging with the citizens;
- making laws;
- scrutinising government and
- strengthening the work and the expertise of the administration of the parliament.

Additional programmes are dedicated to more specific topics, such as empowering women-parliamentarians and fighting misinformation.



► STUDY VISIT FOR THE
PARLIAMENT OF BOSNIA AND
HERZEGOVINA



► DISPLAY OF NAVALNY'S PRISON CELL

Human rights

Human rights are a cornerstone of the EU's foreign policies, as mandated by the Treaties. Through the DEG human rights action umbrella, Members contribute to Parliament's reputation as a dedicated champion of human rights, a reputation built over the years through the work of its Committees, its regular urgency resolutions on human rights issues, and the work around the Sakharov Prize.

Members help empower agents of democratic change like human rights defenders, civil society, strengthening independent media and parliamentarians, especially women, as promoters of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Members further oversee activities to support the EP human rights agenda and give visibility to Parliament's human rights work. Together with Sakharov Prize laureates, finalists and fellows, they shape the activities of the Sakharov Prize Community. The DEG Secretariat also supports Members representing the European Parliament in the governing bodies of the European Endowment for Democracy.



▶ AWARD OF SAKHAROV PRICE 2023

The Sakharov Prize Community

Since 1988, the European Parliament has awarded the annual Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, recognising outstanding work for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The laureate is chosen by the Conference of Presidents from a shortlist decided by the Members of the Committees on Foreign Affairs and Development, based on nominations by political groups and individual MEPs.

In 2008, the European Parliament set up the Sakharov Prize Community as a forum for sustained contacts among Members and all laureates. It is also a means of supporting their initiatives and monitoring the situation of laureates who are threatened or at risk. This community also includes finalists and fellows, and its action is coordinated with the President, a Vice-President responsible for the Sakharov Prize Community and relevant committees and delegations.

Working with civil society

A vibrant civil society strengthens democracy. The European Parliament works to empower civil society actors through their inclusion in democracy support activities and facilitation of their dialogue with partner parliaments and authorities.

Major instruments include the Sakharov Fellowship Programme, the Programme for Empowering Women Parliamentarians, and the Triangle for Democracy tackling disinformation.

The Sakharov Fellowship Programme offers annual training for 14 human rights defenders in Brussels and at the Global Campus of Human Rights in Venice. Since its launch in 2015, the fellowship has built up a large pool of activists contributing to parliamentary human rights work. Candidates for the programme are identified in close cooperation with EU delegations worldwide. Alumni are part of a stay-in-touch programme.

The Women Empowerment Programme strengthens women in politics, in particular women parliamentarians, and promotes inclusive societies and democratic change. The programme offers insights into the range of tools women-MPs can use to foster progress on gender equality as well as elements of personal development. It consists of training modules tailored to the needs of the beneficiaries.



▶ SAKHAROV FELLOWSHIP 2024 WITH VICE-PRESIDENT HEIDI HAUTALA

Through its **Triangle for Democracy Programme**, Members accompany partner Parliaments in bringing together legislators, civil society, and media actors to tackle dis-information while protecting freedom of expression.

Mediation and dialogue

Members of the European Parliament mediate, facilitate, and support dialogue processes outside the EU, contributing to conflict resolution and peacebuilding, especially in EU candidate countries. Key programmes include the **Jean Monnet Dialogues for Peace and Democracy** and the **Young Political Leaders Programme**.

THE JEAN MONNET DIALOGUE: BUILDING TRUST THROUGH DIALOGUE

The Jean Monnet Dialogue for Peace and Democracy seeks to promote dialogue and the building of trust among political leaders in partner parliaments. MEPs facilitate dialogue rounds to build consensus and foster a democratic parliamentary culture..

This approach, based on Jean Monnet's pragmatic, result-oriented and consensus-building method, brings political leaders out of the spotlight of the media and far from Brussels and national capitals to create a climate of trust and discretion, essential to achieve political compromise.

MEPs have mediated in Ukraine, Serbia and North Macedonia, providing added-value to the EU's overall conflict resolution efforts, while giving the European Parliament high visibility.



- ▶ JEAN MONNET DIALOGUE WITH NORTH MACEDONIA'S PARLIAMENT



► YOUNG POLITICAL LEADERS PROGRAMME

FOCUSING ON YOUTH: THE YOUNG POLITICAL LEADERS' PROGRAMME

The Young Political Leaders Programme fosters dialogue and tolerance among future political leaders by sowing the seeds of respect in the political culture of engaged youth in non-EU countries.

It targets young agents of change, including MPs, civil society representatives, journalists, and businesspersons. The Programme has focused on the Western Balkans, and has engaged with Israel, Palestine, Armenia and Azerbaijan. In 2024, it will expand to Ukraine in 2024 and might cover further countries during the current parliamentary term.

MEPs facilitate the exchanges among Young Political Leaders to promote dialogue, democracy and tolerance. ■

LANGUAGE VERSIONS

This publication is available in English (original), French, German, Italian, Polish and Spanish.

ABOUT THE PUBLISHER

Manuscript completed in May 2024.

Author of the publication: Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group (DEG), Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union, DEG-DGEXPO@europarl.europa.eu.
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/globaldemocracysupport/en/home/home>

DISCLAIMER

The reuse of this document is authorised provided that the source is acknowledged, in accordance with the copyright provisions of the [legal notice](#) published on the European Parliament's website.

This document is prepared for, and primarily addressed to, the Members and staff of the European Parliament to assist them in their parliamentary work.

The opinions expressed in this document do not necessarily represent the official position of the European Parliament.

Photos © European Union 2024 – Source : EP

