



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR JUSTICE AND CONSUMERS

Unit C4: Democracy, Union Citizenship and Free Movement

## MINUTES

### 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the European cooperation network on elections

19 April 2024

Hybrid (Brussels and online)

#### 1. Welcome by the Commission. Intervention by the BE Presidency.

**COM** welcomed the participants and recapitulated the most recent policy developments and the topics covered during the previous ECNE meeting in February 2024. **COM** thanked the network for the work in the context of the preparation of the Guide of good electoral practices in Member States addressing the participation of citizens with disabilities in the electoral process and Compendium of e-voting and other ICT practices.

**Belgian Presidency of the Council** presented the latest developments on the directives related to the voting rights of mobile EU citizens in the Council Working Party on General Affairs (GAG) as well as an overview of the mandate and work of the Horizontal Working Party on Enhancing Resilience and Countering Hybrid Threats (ERCHT) and ongoing works in relation to hybrid threats and the elections of June 2024.

#### 2. Preparations for the Elections to the European Parliament

##### *Follow up on the Recommendation on inclusive and resilient elections*

**ES** presented measures taken under the scope, including a national coordination framework created in 2019 involving the Ministry of Interior, the Central Electoral Commission and other relevant actors.

**RO** presented their ongoing efforts in the preparation of the elections to the European Parliament.

**SE** updated on the follow up to the Recommendation on inclusive and resilient elections. The national election network is permanent and meets regularly, with higher intervals ahead of elections.

*Supporting turnout and inclusive participation, including participation of persons with disabilities and participation of youth and first time-voters*

**LV** briefly shared results of a study on voters' participation.

**COM** shared ongoing efforts in the Commission's campaigns to mobilize EU mobile citizens.

**EE** pointed out the challenges in communication strategies when talking about early voting periods in different Member States.

**COM** gave an update on the election helpline and other similar initiatives through which citizens can request information through various channels.

*Voting hours*

**COM** reminded on the provisions of the Recommendation on inclusive and resilient elections on voting hours.

Different Member States (**AT**, **SE**) inquired about the possibility of exchanging regarding the time of closing of polling stations.

*Mutual support to address threats to elections and cyber security of elections*

**COM** reminded that collaboration of different actors is a working method embraced in the Recommendation on inclusive and resilient elections.

**COM** updated on the Guidelines under the DSA for the mitigation of systemic risks online for elections, the Guidelines for providers of VLOPs and VLOSEs on the mitigation of systemic risks for electoral processes and the latest developments in the Code of Practice.

**COM** also presented a mapping of relevant actors and networks in safeguarding free and fair elections.

**COM** also briefed on the work of Network against disinformation and the taskforce on elections that has recently started its work.

**EEAS** informed the Network on the Rapid Alert System network three-day workshop in Warsaw.

**EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT** presented the campaign strategy "Use your vote" ahead of the elections to the European Parliament.

**EE**, **SE**, **LV** raised physical safety concerns during voting hours and ongoing efforts to prevent it (longer voting hours, less queuing).

**The European Parliament** introduced the communicating efforts on the voting day. The voting period of the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> of June is only used at EU level.

**SE** considers it important to differentiate between information sources (EU versus national authorities).

**ES** posed questions to the EP regarding a possible event to follow the elections live.

### ***Preparations for the Elections to the European Parliament***

**AT** gave an overview of their electoral reform of 2023 affecting the federal level and the effects it has had in practice.

**PT** gave an overview of the use of digital resources on electoral dates. PT is taking into account the fact that on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June is a national holiday and trying to best accommodate flexibility for voters moving across the country.

**SI** presented the meetings of its national electoral network, which brings together 13 state bodies that will be involved in the EP elections.

**CZ** expressed concerns about the extra administrative burden caused by the missing information in exchange of information on mobile voters and welcomes the update of the directive in correcting this issue. **CZ** have also adapted website, so it is easy to read and more accessible.

**SK** echoed the comments from CZ.

### ***Election observation***

**OSCE/ODIHR** presented its election observation plans for the elections to the European Parliament.

### ***Exchange on recent developments and best practices in electoral matters***

**SI** presented ongoing discussions to deploy the limitation of the passive right to vote.

**SK** updated on the latest presidential elections that experienced the second highest turnout for national elections.

### ***Inclusiveness, especially women's participation in elections***

**COM** presented the Commission's ongoing framework on the inclusiveness focusing on Roma.

### ***Encouraging election integrity and fair campaigning***

**COM** informed about the joint code of conduct signed by European Political Parties in line with point 10 of the Recommendation on inclusive and resilient elections. The code was signed by all European Political Parties on the 9th of April.

**International IDEA** presented on the development process and key commitments to prepare the code of conduct<sup>1</sup>, in which 10 European parties participated. ECNE Members were invited to bring the Code of conduct to the attention of national political parties who are encouraged to sign up.

***AOB and closing remarks***

**COM** reminded of the EU Citizenship Guide and called on Member States to disseminate it.

**COM** reminded that a joint mechanism for electoral resilience providing funding is available.

**EE** reminded on questionnaire on resilient ICT systems.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/document/bebd9b72-fbb9-42f3-bcea-dba7e0650f\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/document/bebd9b72-fbb9-42f3-bcea-dba7e0650f_en)