



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL JUSTICE AND CONSUMERS

Directorate C: Rule of Law, Fundamental Rights and Democracy
Unit C.4: Democracy, Union Citizenship and Free Movement

MINUTES

Nineteenth Meeting of the European Cooperation Network on Elections

27 September 2023

The nineteenth meeting of the **European Cooperation Network on Elections (ECNE)** took place on 27 September 2023.

1. Welcome by the Commission. Update on the 2021 Democracy Package proposals on political advertising and electoral rights

COM welcomed the participants and new ECNE members. **COM** also highlighted the topics covered on the 18th meeting of ECNE held in June 2023.

ES Permanent Representation to the EU provided latest update regarding the different package of proposals that are under discussion in the Council of the EU. The files include the proposal for a regulation on the transparency and targeting of political advertising, the proposal to recast the regulation on the statute and financing of European political parties and foundations, two directives on mobile EU citizens as well as the European Parliament proposal for a new electoral law and the allocation of seats in the European Parliament.

2. Preparations for the Elections to the European Parliament

Data protection. Supporting voter turnout and inclusive participation. Participation of women as voters and candidates. Communication to voters and candidates. Cyber security of elections and tabletop exercise with the Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CNECT). Voting in third countries

COM referred to different events as part of preparation for the European Parliament elections including a high-level event in October and a joint tabletop exercise in November 2023.

The **European Data Protection Board (EDPB)** presented the composition of the Board and its role to ensure consistent application of GDPR. New issues related to Artificial Intelligence (AI) were also presented.

RO raised a question on how to address AI and social media with untraceable fake profiles and microtargeting.

SE presented their planned measure to communicate with voters in the upcoming European elections. The presentation focused on voter communication, the main messages for European election, channels of communication and detailed planned activities.

BE updated about the website developed to inform European citizens on how to register for the European elections.

The **European Parliament** also presented its plans for the European elections in which an inter-institutional URL is being developed as a one-stop hub to collect all information on voting. The website will be available in 24 languages to ensure equal access to information and will also prepare easy to read manual to include people with disabilities. The how to vote page will come to production in December 2023.

COM presented the common communication campaign to support the vote by mobile EU citizens for the upcoming European election. It referred to actions related to targeted audience (18 to 24 years of age), and tools to be used (e.g. work with content creators, paid and organic promotion on META) to raise awareness on voting by mobile EU citizens.

COM underlined that collaborative work across institutions and no group should be left behind including first-time voters.

EEAS provided an update on their efforts to fully leverage the potential of its network of 140 EU Delegations in order to promote EU citizenship and Geopolitical Europe. Considering the upcoming European elections in 2024, the EEAS is looking at EU citizens voting from abroad and how they can be reached better through strategic communications. The EEAS also suggested a discussion on how Member States increase their cooperation to ensure that EU citizens can vote in countries where there is no embassy.

NL informed that there are approximately 1 million NL citizens living abroad. The Municipality in the Hague is responsible for registration and Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports in sharing the information with their network.

COM updated on developments related to the Code of Practice on disinformation, information on the use of generative AI and a first set of structural indicators on prevalence and sources of disinformation that are also published.

CESIE, an NGO in **IT** presented details of a CERV funded project ‘Activ8 and Particip8’ that aims at fostering active citizenship, political participation and interests of young people in political and global social issues. The detailed activities, impact and reached beneficiaries of the project were also presented.

GLOBSEC presented CERV funded project, EUact2 is aimed at promoting participation of eg. young and women, and has been operational since October 2022. The project’s diversity and gender-sensitive approach and its multidimensional activities were also presented.

COM provided an update on the joint tabletop exercise on cyber security planned for 21 November.

3. Exchange of recent developments and best practices in electoral matters

EEAS updated on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) and how the Rapid Alert System on Disinformation (RAS), which was established ahead of the last European elections, facilitates daily exchanges on FIMI and will be leveraged for the upcoming European elections. EEAS announced that a joint session of RAS and ECNE this year will help to further increase cooperation.

A number of **Member States** provided recent developments and best practices in electoral matters in their respective countries.

SE briefed about a report on the public's trust in **SE** electoral system.

HR provided brief overview on electoral practices related to electoral silence across Member States.

ES updated on the election held in July 2023

CZ updated on the questionnaire to Member States on presidential elections.

NL stated that the election date for parliamentary election is set for 22nd of November.

4. Updates on e-voting compendium, guide on participation of citizens with disabilities in electoral process

COM provided the latest update on the finalisation of a compendium of e-voting practices that will be published in Autumn. **COM** referred to stakeholder consultations which were conducted to inform the guide of good electoral practice addressing participation of citizens with disabilities.

5. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and disinformation in Electoral Context

ES presented measures countering disinformation performed through a standing committee against disinformation.

FI highlighted the future of threats emerging in the cyber and information domains and discussed the benefits, threats and risks of AI.

LT highlighted on AI ideas to promote voter turnout including by making use of generative AI. **LT** referred to AI to simplify voter registration process, AI powered language translation reduces language barrier and improve access to voters with disability.

COM presented state of play on election disinformation narratives and work of Network against Disinformation.

6. International Dimension of ECNE

The involvement of accession countries and the possibility to invite in a punctual manner experts from third countries were discussed.

7. AOB and Closing remarks

COM provided an update on the high-level event and reminded the possibility to use the joint mechanism for electoral resilience, which is up and running since last year.

FI highlighted that the preparations for its own request to use it are ongoing.

COM announced the next meeting, following the High-level event and the tabletop exercise, will be on 6th of December.