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MINUTES

Working Group of the European Cooperation Network on Elections

on Safety in Politics

29 January 2026

Online

The second meeting of the European Cooperation Network on Elections (ECNE) working group on safety in politics took place on 29 January 2026.

COM welcomed the participants. The meeting focused on collecting best practice on awareness-raising and voluntary commitments, exchange best practice on data-collection and on understanding priorities concerning prevention.

*Upcoming: COM highlighted the **ECNE strategy seminar** that will be held in February, where safety in politics will be among the topics discussed, as well as the **High-Level Event on Democracy** announced by the European Democracy Shield. The next working group meeting was announced for March.*

Minutes

COM started with a recap of the first working group meeting, including by explaining what priority topics have been flagged by Member States before. COM presented existing practices in the Member States, both based on COM's own research and Member State input, and discussed the proposed **guide of best practices** for further feedback.

NL presented its **Network Resilience approach** to safety in politics, where the Ministry of the Interior works with civil society, police, local level associations, prosecutors, and 'knowledge institutions' to design policies and training modules that help local politicians understand how to respond to threats, individually and collectively. The Ministry **funds associations of local politicians** to provide training, online modules, and resilience programmes. The network has a **hotline** for mayors, available 24/7, offering advice from peers. NL offers **safety scans** for all representatives to get security advice (e.g., for their houses, saving files online etc), and a **support package** regarding online hatred focusing on women. NL has issued **yearly studies on safety in politics** since 2014. On the Guide, the NL would welcome a **collection of best practices systematically sorted** by topic areas.

PT collaborates with political parties and actors on **lawful campaign conduct** and on reducing local disputes. Further highlights included preventive **guidance on public campaign conduct**, including for local level, **cybersecurity awareness workshops**, **police security level assessment for local politicians**. PT also provides confidential **channels for electoral complaints** during electoral periods (including for citizens and candidates) and launched a platform with a **guide on disinformation and a channel for reporting disinformation**. Police can offer threat level assessment or police escorts for candidates. PT underlined the need for targeted data collection.

HR has presented general **measures on combating discrimination and protecting human rights**, which strengthen social inclusion of minority groups, combat violence against women, and educate the youth. **Female representation** among politicians at all levels is **mandated** to at least 40% (subject to financial sanctions). Local authorities receive training in human rights, though protection of their families and staff is informally managed. Authorities **systematically collect data on different crimes**.

FR enhanced security and protection measures through the Act No. 2024-2047 focusing on protecting mayors, tightening penalties, improving security, extending functional protection, and introducing state reimbursement for security-related expenses, also in view of addressing threats ahead of the local elections in March 2026.

RO notes activities through general legal measures. RO cited examples of online harassment against officials during the 2025 election cycle, prompting the national electoral bureau to publicly condemn the acts and calling on competent authorities to act swiftly. RO notes rise of **hate speech originating from outside RO and even the EU**.

LT referred to its **training and guidance** ahead of election cycles for candidates and entire campaign teams. This includes lawful and fair campaigning, campaign finance rules, and the prevention of undue influence, cybersecurity training, trainings on election accessibility, and helping candidates and parties recognise disinformation. This work is complemented by countrywide awareness raising initiatives led by the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, and the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson. Their programmes focus on countering hate speech, preventing discrimination and addressing gender-based harassment in public life. In parallel, **media literacy and digital safety initiatives** help citizens and political actors recognise disinformation and online harassment. Ethical standards and legal obligations are enforced through existing legal frameworks, including criminal, administrative, and civil law. Political parties are subject to the **codes of conduct**, which requires transparency and prohibits hate speech, complemented by a code of conduct for politicians and additional internal codes in municipalities. Relevant **data** is collected through law enforcement, judicial statistics, academic research and reports by the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson. LT noted cooperation between electoral commission and police before election to ensure preparedness.

SE's National Council for Crime Prevention conducts political safety survey every second year, asking political representatives to report on threats (self-reporting mechanism).

COM presented the draft guidance, which will be informed by the exchanges within the working group, with the aim of providing an overview of existing good practices in the Member States related to safety in politics. It will be developed through a participatory process combining research and broad stakeholder engagement. The guide is intended to reflect relevant EU legal and policy frameworks, key Member State approaches and tools, and perspectives from a wide range of actors. Further feedback was invited on additional themes and areas to be covered. **COM** explained the joint resilience mechanism for facilitating exchanges of best practices between EU member states and encouraged sharing any relevant reports or other practical documents with the working group.