



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS STATEMENT

Ten years “European Platform for Democratic Elections”. Fighting for election integrity now more important than ever

In December 2012, European citizen election observation organizations launched the European Platform for Democratic Elections (EPDE) in reaction to democratic backlash in the region and an emerging need for solidarity and transnational cooperation for citizen election monitors.

Since then, EPDE has evolved into a professional network of 16 members from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Poland, Sweden and Ukraine. EPDE is united in the common goal of improving democratic election processes across Europe and providing a platform for peer learning and professionalization for its members and experts. In the last decade, EPDE trained more than 1.000 election observers from Central and Eastern Europe, supporting the rapid development in the capacities of citizen election observation in the region.

Today, EPDE is a key point of contact for advocating for the needs and expertise of citizen election observers to both European and international institutions. With disinformation campaigns, criminalization of civil society actors, and manipulation in the (digital) information sphere on the rise, local expertise from EPDE members is more relevant today than ever before in anticipating diverging trends across Europe and safeguarding the integrity of democratic institutions.

While achievements in electoral integrity have been made in Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, we witness brutal crackdowns against civil society actors in the Russian Federation, Belarus and Azerbaijan as well as worrying trends in some EU Member States.

Six of our Belarusian colleagues from the Human Rights Center Viasna are held as political prisoners by the Belarusian regime, including Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Ales Bialiatski. In the Russian Federation, EPDE itself was branded a so-called Undesirable Foreign Organization (“UFO”). The criminalization of any form of affiliation with EPDE forced our founding member, the Russian movement “Golos” to suspend its membership of EPDE. With the ongoing war against Ukraine and its networks of malign influence, Russia exerts its corrosive influence beyond its borders.

In commemorating the successes of the last ten years, we acknowledge the challenges that lie ahead: EPDE with all its member organizations will continue to strengthen alliances with partners across the region, to press European governments to implement policy recommendations protecting free and fair elections, and contribute to reversing the declining trust in democratic institutions.



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The European Platform for Democratic Elections (EPDE) is a network of 16 independent European citizen election observation organizations. Its aim is to support citizen election observation and to contribute to democratic election processes throughout Europe.

EPDE is a signatory of the Declaration of Global Principles for Nonpartisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations and the Code of Conduct for Nonpartisan Election Observation. EPDE also is a member of the Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors (GNDEM).

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Federal Foreign Office