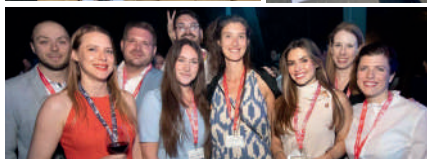
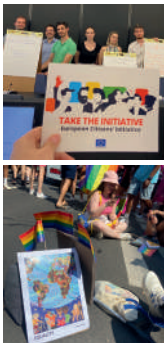


2023

ANNUAL REPORT



DEMOCRACY INTERNATIONAL

Democracy International is largely funded by donations of committed citizens. We are always looking for new possibilities to guarantee our independence, and in the past year, we have directed a lot of our efforts towards widening our financial base. If you have ideas or want to support us, please let us know - we are stronger together.

If you want to help us with your donation, you can use the form on the back or donate using our website: www.democracy-international.org/become-sponsor



Democracy International is a registered association in Germany (eingetragener Verein - e.V.) - Amtsgericht Köln: VR-Nr. 17139



www.democracy-international.org



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[DemocracyNetwork](https://www.youtube.com/DemocracyNetwork)



[@democracyintl](https://www.instagram.com/democracyintl)

Printed on paper from responsible sources.

OUR JOURNEY IN 2023

14 JANUARY

Democracy International hosted the Kick-off event of our project Parliament for the Future of Europe in our office



27 FEBRUARY – 7 MARCH

The Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy, Mexico edition, took place in Mexico City, Guadalajara and Merida



25 MAY – 7 JUNE

The International Democracy Community hosted the Spring Semester: Direct Democracy – Simplified webinar series



6 JUNE

Film screening was organised by the Tunisia Democracy Connectors team



8 JUNE

ECI Day gathered 370 participants



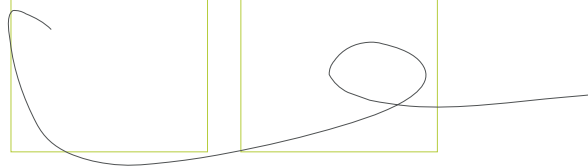
13 JUNE

The European Parliament adopts ambitious report on European Citizens' Initiative that we gave input on



8-9 JULY

Christopher Street Day saw discussions hosted by the Ukrainian Vibes and Tunisia Democracy Connectors teams





11-16 JULY

Ukrainian Vibes brought the Europe Dome through Saxony to talk about Ukraine and Europe



4 SEPTEMBER

The new Direct Democracy Navigator team met in Prague to plan the future of the database



14 SEPTEMBER

The European Parliament adopts report on Parliamentarism, Citizenship, and Democracy that Democracy International gave input on



13-17 SEPTEMBER

The Democracy Camp gathered 60 young people to talk about participation tools available to them



2-29 NOVEMBER

Our "Life as an Activist" series explored the challenges of democracy activists around the globe



9 DECEMBER

Lightroom for Democracy and Human Rights encouraged attendees to think about human rights and democracy in a creative way



19 DECEMBER

At our christmas party, we celebrated the end of yet another year for Democracy International!



YEAR IN NUMBERS

8
DAYS

WAS THE
LONGEST
EDITION OF
THE GLOBAL
FORUM ON
MODERN
DIRECT
DEMOCRACY
EVER

600 PEOPLE
FROM OVER
60 COUNTRIES
ATTENDED
THE FORUM

5 ACTIVISTS,
FROM 5 COUNTRIES
SHARED THEIR WORK WITH US
IN THE

'LIFE AS AN ACTIVIST'
SERIES

6 OUT OF 7
PARLIAMENT FOR THE
FUTURE OF EUROPE
CITIZENS PANELS
TOOK PLACE

164

NEW MEMBERS
JOINED OUR
INTERNATIONAL
DEMOCRACY
COMMUNITY

2
TRAINEES

7
INTERNS

8
ASA VOLUNTEERS

JOINED OUR TEAM

13 DOME STOPS

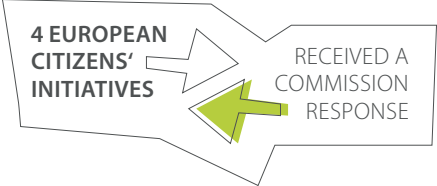
WERE ORGANISED IN AUSTRIA AND
GERMANY TOGETHER WITH OUR
AUSTRIAN PARTNERS IG EUROVISION



**70+ CSOS SIGNED AN
OPEN LETTER TO**
EU PRESIDENT VON DER
LEYEN CALLING FOR
THE EU COMMISSION
TO HONOUR ITS
COMMITMENT TO THE
EUROPEAN
CITIZENS INITIATIVE



WE TRAINED
5 ECIS THROUGH
THE **ECI FORUM**



**4 EUROPEAN
CITIZENS'
INITIATIVES**

RECEIVED A
COMMISSION
RESPONSE

INTERESTING FACTS

For over a year, **we have been one of 100 members**
of the European Charlemagne Youth Prize Alumni Network

Democracy International participated in Cologne Pride for
the first time, hosting multiple workshops and participated in the
demonstration with a group from our team

The Democracy Camp was selected as a finalist
for the **SALTO Award in "Participation in
Democratic Life"**

We are updating our website, stay tuned
to see the new Democracy International
webpage soon!



hello



NEW

DEAR FRIENDS



We invite you to join us for this recollection of the 2023 journey of Democracy International. Let's take a tour guided by this year's developments around direct democracy and citizen participation, that are behind each one of our projects.

Among the many tangible threats to democracy, we witness a creeping fragility of trust. How is it possible to trust in democratic systems in an increasingly autocratic world? The rise of populism, such as in Slovakia and the Netherlands, ongoing and unfolding conflicts, and misinformation pervading political campaigns, including the one for the Voice to Parliament in Australia, generate more and more frustration and distrust. With authorities instrumentalising votes to serve their cause instead of the people's, citizens find it easier to ignore the voting process. The plebiscite shadowing the elections in Poland is living proof of it, even though in Poland citizens managed to

resist this referendum attempt. All these obstacles signal the need for improvement of democracy.

We also truly believe that reinstating and strengthening trust in the democratic system and its institutions would return many on the tumultuous yet rewarding road to a democratic future. And this can only be achieved by democracy itself. That is why every effort of every citizen matters, especially when it reinforces trust in democracy and people's power.

The Yasuni referendum in Ecuador is a true celebration of the democratic process. Not only did it take place after a ten-year-long battle of activists, but the majority of the population voted to end oil extraction from the national park - for the good of the planet. This first referendum sets a precedent for our planet.

Even more, it shows the power of peoples' trust and hope in the democratic process. While the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) still has to grow into becoming the direct democratic tool that Democracy International anticipates, the European Parliament's vision for ECI reform is a bold and hopeful sign.

The upcoming 2024 year will be one of an unprecedented number of elections around the world. More people than ever before in history will go to the polls. It is also the year of the European elections. This momentum will shape the fate of the world in the near future. Consequently, working on our core missions will remain crucial: Learning from each other and exchanging experiences to shape better democracies. Supporting activists and building strong organisations that lead people on their journey towards trust in democracy. Helping build strong democratic institutions and instruments on a national and transnational scale. Based on these values we will surely continue our work in 2024.

At Democracy International, we are committed to strengthening the trust in democratic processes and elections in Europe and beyond. We are paying close attention to the upcoming United Nations Summit of the Future as an opportunity to empower citizens worldwide, as well as to highlight the potential that citizen-led solutions like the UN World Citizens' Initiative bear at the global level. And we are constantly working to make these a reality.

Wherever in the world you are reading these lines, it is our great honour to walk this road towards a more democratic future with you in 2023 and the years to come. Thank you for your trust!

The Democracy International team

DEMOCRACY INTERNATIONAL TEAM



In 2023, more people worked with and for Democracy International than ever before. In addition to our core team, a total of two trainees, eight ASA volunteers and seven interns supported us in our work and projects. Many thanks to Obakeng, Londeka, Alejandro, Gabriel, Morgan, Antonia, Elena, Khaled, Hichem, Ania, Stefaniya, Carla, Anastasia, Léo, Mariana, Katrijn and Mélina!

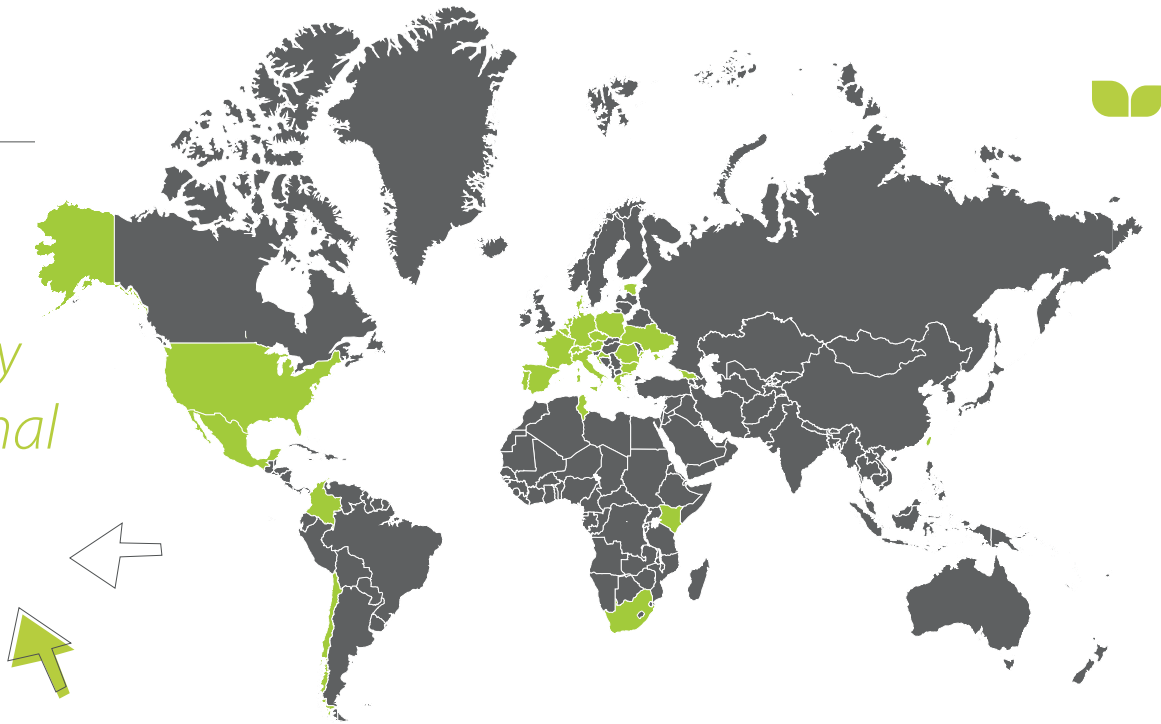
We would also like to thank our project team member Theo Wenzler, who supported our chARter and Have Your Say in Europe projects over the summer.

At the same time, we had to say goodbye to our long-standing colleague Dr Klaus Hofmann. Klaus took his well-deserved retirement in July. Dear Klaus, we would like to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your work, your support and your advice. We will miss you!



MAP

*Democracy
International
all over
the world!*



LEARNING AND EXCHANGE



Mutual learning and exchange may have become the most exponentially used phrases. We at Democracy International, however, set this mission in stone long ago. Learning from each other and exchanging best democratic practices stay at the core of truly progressive democratic reform. *And our learning and exchange come in an exciting variety!*

With the challenges the democratic world has been facing in past years, it is imperative to make the hard work of activists more visible. Therefore, many of our global projects, such as Life as an activist and Tunisian Democracy Connectors, focus on learning about the experiences of activists from various political setups and the possibilities to apply their ideas in different contexts. Our initiatives create a basis for people to connect with activists and become active themselves via webinars, documentaries, or film screenings. “Do not take democracy for granted” was the

message repeated by activists from all over the world. With the Democracy Camp, Ukrainian Vibes and many more, we are connecting citizens across countries to learn from the best experiences, explore possibilities for tackling current global problems and find inspiration for more transnational participation. *The need for better exchange between citizens and decision-makers, more possibilities for building alliances to create intersectional projects, and enhancing digital participation. These are just some of the voiced ideas!*

We are constantly supporting the empowerment of diverse communities, the inclusion of their ideas in shaping the future of democracy, and learning from their new practices to reform the EU and national democracies. Through Parliament for the Future of Europe, underrepresented communities reshaped the proposals of the Conference on the Future of Europe



proposals in six EU Member States with low voter turnouts in the 2019 European elections. The newly drafted proposals on participation, for example, reflect the strong demand for inclusive participatory initiatives on local, national and European levels. The proposal was changed to make the language more strong, as this particular issue was widely supported by participants. In 2024, we will continue to promote these more inclusive proposals in the member states and at the EU level.

European Citizens' Panels (ECPs) emerged as a direct outcome of the Conference on the Future of Europe. Three impactful ECPs addressing learning mobility, virtual worlds, and food waste took place, marking a significant EU commitment to citizen assemblies, and more ECPs are to come in 2024!

Surely, efficient democratic reforms require a strong legislative background. With our Direct Democracy Navigator, we provide

the platform to research and learn about direct democracy legal designs in more than 100 countries.

We keep discovering unique ways to communicate about democracy and facilitate the exchange of opinions! This year, more than any other, highlighted how much art is an engaging channel. Within the framework of our We the Peoples campaign and together with our partners Mehr Demokratie and Innn.it, we explored the connection between human rights and democracy, in an immersive light and sound installation by artist Edda Dietrich. Another project, chARTer, makes art the starting point for conversations about Europe. 13 European artists each interpreted one chapter of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights for our travelling exhibition about fundamental rights and democracy.

LEARN &
EXCHANGE

PARLIAMENT FOR THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

HELP &
DEVELOP

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In our Parliament for the Future of Europe project, we're rewriting the script for a more inclusive Europe. Across six EU member states with low voter turnouts, we're transforming the Conference on the Future of Europe's proposals to champion underrepresented voices, involving 500 direct participants. Stay tuned for the grand reveal of the Catalogue of Ideas before the 2024 European Elections!

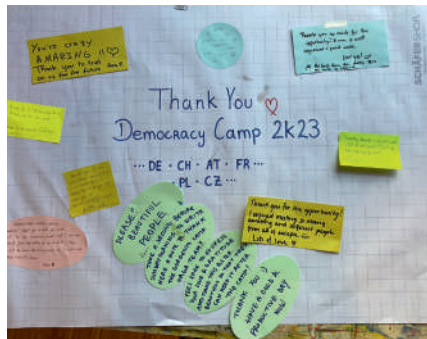
www.democracy-international.org/pafuteu



Co-funded by
the European Union







DIRECT DEMOCRACY NAVIGATOR

LEARN &
EXCHANGE

This year was a year of changes for the world's largest online database for direct democracy tools. A new webpage, new team members, and new horizons for the growth of this research platform. Our mantra: Providing open-source data on direct democracy instruments enables citizens to use them.

www.democracy-international.org/navigator



**DIRECT
DEMOCRACY**
NAVIGATOR



LIECHTENSTEIN-INSTITUT

SWISS
DEMOCRACY
FOUNDATION
SCHWEIZER
DEMOKRATIE
STIFTUNG



ENHANCING TRANSNATIONAL DEMOCRACY



Democracy International is a transnational movement at its core. Hence, we naturally work to strengthen the international coalition for democracy and contribute to the growth of solid and trustworthy transnational institutions. To reach this ambitious goal, we are acting in several directions.

Transnational growth of democracy can only be possible with the exchange of new ideas generated in a gathering of activists working for stronger people power from all over the globe. With our flagship event, the Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy, we are creating this multicultural and multidisciplinary environment on how to deepen the roots of democracy from the local to the global level. *Experts, academics, activists, and legislators learn together and from each other about direct democracy. What could provide better exchange grounds for developing new ideas?*

The idea of reforming European democracy and providing the EU citizens with more direct democracy tools was driving us to closely follow the development of the European Citizens' Initiative since it came into effect. We know campaigners give life to the instrument so that the instrument is a living and breathing democratic tool for citizens to sign and use. That's why Democracy International promotes awareness and understanding of the ECI and assists campaigners in their journey.

Especially in the face of many new challenges to democracy, global governance needs to improve and gain more trust among the people. With the We the Peoples campaign, Democracy International and the coalition of over 200 NGOs are calling for reforms in the United Nations system. Our aim is to make the UN more inclusive, democratic and accountable to the world citizens.



TRANSNATIONAL
DEMOCRACY

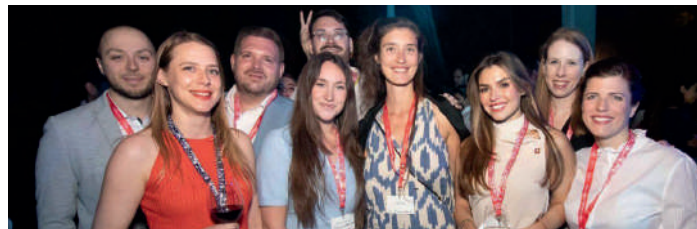
GLOBAL FORUM ON MODERN DIRECT DEMOCRACY

LEARN &
EXCHANGE

HELP &
DEVELOP

From 27 February until 7 March, 15 years after the first Forum in Aarau, a record edition of the Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy took place in Mexico City, co-hosted by the National Electoral Institute. It saw over 40 different sessions in cooperation with over 30 programme partners and was attended by over 600 people from 60 countries.

www.democracy-international.org/global-forum



Cohabitantes
MX



**2023 GLOBAL FORUM
ON MODERN
DIRECT DEMOCRACY**
1 - 4 March - Mexico City, Mexico

SWISS
DEMOCRACY
FOUNDATION
SCHWEIZER
DEMOKRATIE
STIFTUNG



IDdeco
Instituto para el
Desarrollo Democrático
y la Competitividad





EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE

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EXCHANGE

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DEMOCRACY

The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) made waves in 2022 with a record number of successful ECIs. So far this year, four new ECIs have been

registered, and four received careful responses from the European Commission. This year, through the ECI Forum our stakeholder consultations continued. We consulted five ECI teams regarding campaigning, fundraising and running initiatives. Unfortunately, we also saw the Commission backpedal on its own commitment to a successful ECI, where 70+ NGOs demanded the Commission stand by its word. At Democracy International, we believe a strong political commitment is key to the ECI's success!



<https://www.democracy-international.org/eu-citizens-initiative>

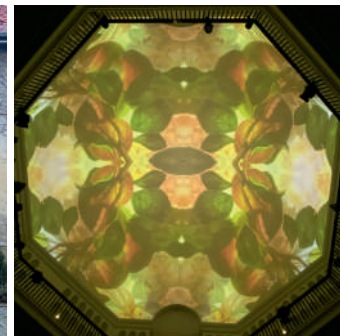


LIGHTROOM FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

HELP &
DEVELOP

75 years ago, on the trail of two devastating world wars, the Universal Declaration for Human Rights was adopted. Within the framework of our We the Peoples campaign and together with our partners at Mehr Demokratie and Inn.it, we looked at the connection between human rights and democracy, and their importance given the challenges we face today. Following our spotlight on activism around the world in our "Life as Activist" project, local civil society was well-represented at the event in Berlin, which centred around a light and sound installation by artist Edda Dietrich.

www.democracy-international.org/lichtraum



Gefördert durch



mit Mitteln des



2024 - THE YEAR OF EU ELECTIONS



With 2024 being an election year in many countries and, in particular, the European Parliament election on 6-9 June 2024, we have many activities in the works. As the core objectives of Democracy International centre around enabling citizens to exercise their democratic rights, it is only natural that we started our mobilisation efforts early.

Ahead of the EU elections and within the YEUF project, young changemakers in each EU country mobilise their peers in workshops on European challenges. To kick-off our voting mobilisation activities, Democracy International hosted the Democracy Festival in Düsseldorf with 100+ participants, and changemakers attended training in Aachen where this year's Charlemagne Youth Prize Ceremony inspired them.

Within the eurVote, eurFuture project, we have teamed up with ten civil society organisations across ten countries. Through in-person

Get-Out-the-Vote campaigns and online social media challenges, our mission is to ensure young people and underrepresented groups exercise their European voting rights. The project officially launched this year, and more exciting activities are on the horizon in 2024!

We invite you to sign up to the European Parliament's election platform for events and information:



Not only did we focus on youth participation in elections. The Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy 2024 will take place in Romania ahead of the local, national and EU elections. Exploring issues of trust in democracy, in people's sovereignty and in a peaceful Europe will inspire citizens to get to the polls.

UKRAINIAN VIBES

LEARN & EXCHANGE

In year three of Ukrainian Vibes, our four young professionals from Ukraine and Germany collected citizens' ideas under the Europe Dome in the German Bundesland Saxony and in four online workshops for young Europeans. The topics: citizen participation, European identity and elections, sustainability, and women's rights. Browse the Catalogue of Ideas at:

www.democracy-international.org/ukrainian-vibes



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Bundesministerium für
wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit
und Entwicklung

HAVE YOUR SAY IN EU

LEARN &
EXCHANGE

HELP &
DEVELOP

As one of five partners for the EU co-funded project, we involved citizens in dialogues and workshops on Europe's future issues – from citizen participation and fundamental rights to disinformation. Stay tuned: a Map of Best Practices will showcase the exciting results from Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Poland, and Spain in 2024!

www.democracy-international.org/have-your-say-eu



Co-funded by
the European Union

SCHUMAN

EURVOTE, EURFUTURE

TRANSNATIONAL
DEMOCRACY

Get Ready for the European Parliament Elections on June 6-9, 2024, with eurVote eurFuture! We've teamed up with ten civil society organisations across ten countries. Through in-person Get-Out-the-Vote campaigns and online social media challenges, our mission is to ensure young people and underrepresented groups exercise their European voting rights. The project began this year, and more exciting activities are on the horizon in 2024!

<https://www.democracy-international.org/eurvote>



HELP AND DEVELOP



Cross-border support, solidarity, and synergy between citizens and democracy activists are crucial for developing an inclusive democracy. We offer our support to organisations and activists in many different ways.

Community is all-important in this mission of support and growth. The International Democracy Community is a platform that grew out of a need for a global network, linking up all the people working towards a world in which citizens have the final say. Connecting activists from across the world, helping out those who need it with expertise from Uruguay to Australia, from South Africa to Norway, and sharing the activities, articles, and events from many countries. The Community serves to develop a strong network of democracy enthusiasts.

With the European Citizens' Initiative Forum consultations, Democracy International shares the expertise and lessons learned

in a decade of experience in campaigning and organisational development. The consultations for current and upcoming European Citizens' Initiative organisers support active users of this first tool of transnational participatory democracy and improve the tool together with them.

Not only established experts and activists, but we are also supporting those who are only at the beginning of their path towards democratic activism. Our Democracy Camp 2023, for instance, focused on the participation tools available for youth and the use of these instruments to promote sustainability and inclusive societies. From engagement through local youth councils and advisory boards to national youth parliaments to proposing and supporting European Citizens' Initiatives, there are some instruments that youth can use to run their own projects and campaigns in the future!

HELP &
DEVELOP

THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY

LEARN &
EXCHANGE

HELP &
DEVELOP

Our networking and learning platform for democracy activists around the world, has continued to grow over the past year, hosting almost 400 activists, experts and organisations dedicated to democracy now. A Spring Semester: Direct Democracy – simplified webinar series sought to break down the basics and key lessons on democratic participation and was attended by almost 100 people.

[www.democracy-international.org/
democracy-community](http://www.democracy-international.org/democracy-community)



WE HAVE WORKED WITH

300+
PARTNERS

MORE
THAN 70
COUNTRIES

ON 6
CONTINENTS



LIFE AS AN ACTIVIST

LEARN &
EXCHANGE

HELP &
DEVELOP

In a series of five mini-documentaries, accompanied by webinars, we examined the realities and challenges of democracy activism around the world. Together with activists and experts from Georgia, Tunisia, Colombia, Taiwan and Kenya we had an in-depth look at the state of democracy in the world today and took inspiration from those working to make it better.

[www.democracy-international.org/
life-activist](http://www.democracy-international.org/life-activist)



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TUNISIAN DEMOCRACY CONNECTORS

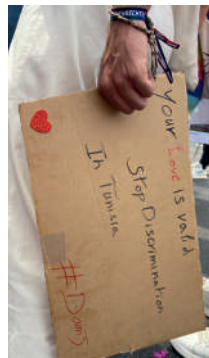
LEARN &
EXCHANGE

HELP &
DEVELOP

Once the success story of the Arab Spring, Tunisian democracy has taken a turn for the worse over the past couple of years. Together with our partners at the Intersection Association for Rights and Freedoms, we examined the recent developments, culminating in an autocratic overhaul of the constitution. The latter was confirmed through a bitterly lowly attended referendum, and how they have affected personal freedoms, particularly for LGBTQI+ individuals. Two young professionals from Tunisia and two from Germany joined our team for the project.

[www.democracy-international.org/
tunisia-democracy-connectors](http://www.democracy-international.org/tunisia-democracy-connectors)

GLS *Trenhand*



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mit Mitteln des



CHARTER

LEARN & EXCHANGE

Art: a true conversation opener! That is why 13 European artists each interpreted one chapter of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Co-funded by the EU, six partners from six EU countries then hosted at least one exhibition and discussions on fundamental rights. Democracy International involved 100+ citizens in the art and rights discussions during Cologne Pride!

<https://democracy-international.org/charter-art-fundamental-rights>

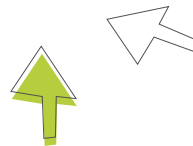


FUNDRAISING



Again this year we would like to take this opportunity to thank the growing network of institutions that have made our work in 2023 possible through their generous support: Swiss and European Democracy Foundations, the European Commission and European Parliament, Engagement Global/ German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, GLS Treuhand, Cultura gGmbH, the Franco-German Youth Office and the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (German Federal Agency for Civic Education). A very big thank you also to our members, individual supporters and project partners who have helped us with their donations and contributions throughout the year! We are looking forward to continuing the joint work in 2024!

*We are looking
forward to continuing
the joint work
in 2024!*



GOING FORWARD



In our daily work, we, the Democracy International team, are driven by the missions we have set on the day Democracy International was founded. This year, embodying our visions in multifold activities kept us extremely busy, and we will continue to do so in 2024!

This report started with the importance of trust in democracy. Taking place on 15-18 May, two weeks before the European Parliament elections and prior to the national and local elections in Romania, the 2024 Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy in Bucharest will zoom in on issues of trust in institutions, media and citizens, trust in the sovereignty of people, and a peaceful world. Join us in Bucharest to meet the people working to make democracy more democratic!

We are looking forward to our eurVote, eurFuture project which will increase the awareness, information, and participation of

European citizens in the upcoming European Parliament elections. In the upcoming 2024 election year, we will not only keep our eyes on the European elections but also spread trust in European institutions, citizens, and European participatory mechanisms.

Another huge encouragement for our work is the partners we work with and you, our dearest reader. We are honoured by your trust in us and the missions we carry at our core. *Democracy International is looking forward to safeguarding, reforming, and enhancing democracy and civic participation with you by our side in the coming year!*

"We are confident that direct democracy is contagious and unifying" claims the Democracy International Mission Statement. The only thing to add: it is surely worthy of trust!

THANK YOU

Yes, I want to support Democracy International e.V.

☐ 10 euros

☐ other amount _____ euros

☐ 20 euros

☐ 45 euros

☐ One-off

☐ 100 euros

☐ Monthly

☐ 250 euros

☐ Yearly

Tick the amount and frequency relevant to you



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By signing the mandate form, you authorise Democracy International to send instructions to your bank to debit your account and your bank to debit your account in accordance with the instructions from the creditor.

As a part of your rights, you are entitled to a refund from your bank under the terms and conditions of your agreement with your bank. A refund must be claimed within 8 weeks starting from the date on which your account was credited.

Name, First Name

Street, Number

Postal Code, City, Country

IBAN (International Bank Account Number)

BIC/SWIFT (Bank Identifier Code)

Location and date

Signature

We will send you your SEPA mandate reference number. The donation is tax-deductible.
You can get a tax receipt at the end of the year.





THANK YOU!

DEMOCRACY INTERNATIONAL

GÜRZENICHSTRASSE 21 A-C

50667 COLOGNE

GERMANY

CONTACT@DEMOCRACY-INTERNATIONAL.ORG

