



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Warsaw Human Dimension Conference 6-17 October 2025

EU statement – Plenary session 2 Democratic institutions

- **Democracy at the national, regional and local levels**
 - **Democratic elections**
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FINAL (532 words)

1. The OSCE participating States recognised in the 1990 Copenhagen Document that a vigorous democracy depends on the existence of democratic values, practices, and an extensive range of democratic institutions. The Copenhagen Document also highlights that political pluralism is an essential part of the tripartite system of governance and includes democracy and the rule of law. Furthermore, the OSCE participating States have committed themselves to respect the will of the people, freely and fairly expressed through periodic and genuine elections.
2. However, our democracies face challenges from rising extremism, election interference, and spread of manipulative information. The security environment has changed due to Russia's annexation of Crimea and the following war of aggression against Ukraine. Rising geopolitical competition, and international and regional conflicts, exacerbate this situation. The instrumentalisation of these conflicts can lead to aggravation of societal friction, polarisation, radicalisation and decrease in trust in institutions and elections.
3. The European Union is committed to promoting and protecting democracy. We underline that democracy at local, regional, and national level cannot thrive without the freedoms of expression and association and that democratic resilience must be based on human rights and values such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

4. Strengthening democratic resilience is a cornerstone in protecting our security. This requires free and diverse public discourse, the ability to recognise and counter foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) campaigns, including disinformation, especially those targeting the democratic functioning of institutions, the rules-based international order, and the manipulation or falsification of historical facts for political means.
5. Against this backdrop, we want to emphasise the importance of supporting civil society organisations and human right defenders who remain an essential element of the system of checks and balances. Many of them are present today at the Warsaw Human Dimension Conference and will brief us on the human rights situation in their countries despite enduring smear campaigns, surveillance, harassment, and physical attacks.
6. The EU reiterates that the protection of transparent and inclusive elections from any foreign interference, including in the information domain, by state or non-state actors, as well as election transparency, is essential for democracies.
7. We encourage all OSCE participating States to follow the OSCE commitments and invite observers to their elections from other participating States, the ODIHR, and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in a timely manner and to implement promptly ODIHR's election assessment and recommendations.
8. The EU reiterates that election monitoring by the ODIHR is a valuable tool for the promotion of democratisation and upholding human rights across the OSCE area. ODIHR's election observation methodology is globally recognised and based on the principles of independence, impartiality and professionalism, as spelled out in the MC Decision 19/06, and is applied in the same way in all countries.
9. We reiterate that ODIHR needs to be adequately staffed and resourced in order to carry out its vital work in accordance with its mandate.
10. In closing, we recall EU's continuous and firm support of ODIHR's activities, autonomy and mandate for the promotion of democracy, the rule of law and human rights in the OSCE area.

[Alignments]