

Annual Work Programme for 2023

Democracy support and
Election coordination group



European Parliament

ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2023

Executive summary.....	2
I Priority countries and regions.....	4
1. Ukraine.....	5
2. Georgia.....	8
3. Moldova.....	10
4. Tunisia.....	13
5. Western Balkans.....	15
6. Pan-African Parliament.....	22
7. Belarus - ad hoc activities in line with EP political priorities.....	24
II Thematic areas.....	26
1. Pre- and Post-Election activities.....	26
2. Mediation and dialogue, including the Young Political Leaders programme.....	27
3. Human Rights, Civil Society, and Sakharov Activities.....	31
4. Parliaments and Democratic Innovation.....	34
ANNEX I List of DEG Members and Lead Members.....	35
ANNEX II Budgetary Breakdown for EP Democracy Support Activities for 2023.....	37
ANNEX III Democracy Support Toolbox.....	38
ANNEX IV Secretariat Implementing Democracy Support and Election-Related Activities.....	40

Executive summary

Pursuant to the “Implementing Provisions on Democracy Support and Election Observation Activities”, the Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group (DEG) is responsible for four main areas of activity, namely - **election observation, parliamentary capacity development, human rights actions, as well as mediation, facilitation and dialogue**. The Annual Work Programmes (including the present one for 2023) **cover the latter three areas, with EP election observation delegations being subject to a separate bi-annual procedure** in DEG.

Since its establishment in 2012, DEG has been actively seeking to increase the European Parliament's role in the area of democracy support. It has developed a variety of concepts, methodology and specifically designed operational instruments. The EP democracy support activities, addressing fragile democracies around the world, have been increasingly recognised for bringing an added-value and complementarity to overall EU foreign and security policies and geopolitical priorities.

In line with the **Comprehensive Democracy Support Approach (CDSA)**, a guiding principle of the Group's work, the DEG selected the following **six priority countries/regions** for enhanced democracy support activities, carried out in coherence with electoral cycles: **Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Tunisia, Western Balkans** (as a priority region), and the **Pan-African Parliament** (as a priority regional parliament). In addition, the DEG will continue to implement activities in support of relevant political actors in **Belarus**, as an ad hoc priority.

Taking into account the postponement of a certain number of DEG activities following the Covid-19 pandemic, prevailing in 2020-2022, and the impact of Russia's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine on the implementation of the democracy support activities in the entire Eastern neighbourhood and Western Balkans region, the DEG reconfirmed the aforementioned countries/regions as its priorities also for the year 2023.

The current selection of the CDSA priority countries will therefore be reviewed and adjusted to the urgent political priorities, subject to continually evolving geopolitical developments, in the second half of 2023.

Building on the achievements and lessons learned from the past ten years of EP democracy support activities and following the reflections and take-aways resulting from the high-level conference ‘Supporting Parliamentary Democracy Worldwide’, held on 29-30 November 2022 in Brussels, the DEG will reinforce its focus on the most impactful activities and areas, consolidate, further develop and innovate its instruments, enhance its strategic

partnerships, outreach and visibility and deploy its engagement in countries and regions of particular strategic importance to the EU.

In 2023, DEG will continue its core work, under the political guidance of its Co-Chairs and its Lead MEPs, on the selected priority countries and regions and the three thematic areas. Separate draft programmes for each country/area of activity - to be carried out under the **principle of flexibility and adaptability**, especially against the backdrop of the Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine - have been outlined in this Annual Work Programme.

Besides the well-established wide range of DEG instruments to be used in the priority countries/regions and under the thematic areas, a **number of innovative initiatives will be piloted or further developed in 2023.**

To name a few, these include:

- Triangle for democracy
- Pool of EP mediation experts
- Solidarity with Parliamentarians at risk
- Parliaments and Democratic Innovations
- Citizens' Assembly

As always, DEG activities will be conducted in **close cooperation and coordination with AFET and DEVE, DROI and the relevant EP inter-parliamentary delegations**, with a view to fostering consistency and visibility of parliamentary diplomacy, as well as with other EU institutions and the international donor community, where relevant.

For 2023, a specific budget of EUR 1,400.000 will be available to implement the DEG activities that are presented in this Annual Work Programme.

I PRIORITY COUNTRIES AND REGIONS

In its priority countries/regions, the DEG applies, as much as possible, a full spectrum of its wide range of instruments and actions, focusing its assistance and resources for the greatest and most sustainable impact.

Having taken into consideration the postponement of a significant number of DEG activities following the Covid-19 pandemic prevailing in 2020-2022 and the impact of the Russia's unprovoked military aggression against Ukraine on the implementation of democracy support activities in the entire region, the **DEG will maintain its work in the six countries/regions** selected by the Group at the beginning of the parliamentary term.

Consequently, in the course of 2023, the priority countries/regions will include **Ukraine and Moldova**, with their newly acquired EU candidate country status, **Georgia, Tunisia, Western Balkans (as a priority region), and the Pan-African Parliament (as a priority regional parliament)**. In addition, ad-hoc activities in support of the **Belorussian democratic forces** will be developed and implemented, in line with EP political priorities.

Lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic have taught us to use **flexibility in the application of online or in-person activities, whilst ensuring efficiency of the overall programme**. The principle of flexibility remains valid and will be applied where appropriate in the upcoming year.

Russia's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine challenges the rules-based international order and liberal democracy. Its destabilising effects on the Eastern neighbourhood and the Western Balkans have implications for DEG's activities in the region, **requiring increased flexibility and adaptability when it comes to implementation**.

As such, in view of the political developments in each priority country/region, **additional democracy support activities might be carried out**, in line with urgent or arising needs and priorities.

Separate draft programmes for each DEG priority country/region are detailed below and will be carried out under the political guidance of the appointed Lead Members.

All the proposed activities, conceived as complementary to overall EU foreign and security policies and geopolitical priorities, will take place in close cooperation and coordination with the relevant EP bodies, other EU institutions and international actors.

1. Ukraine



LEAD MEMBER: MICHAEL GAHLER



General overview

The EP has a long-standing and trustful cooperation with the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (VRU), in particular, in the areas of institutional reform support and mediation/dialogue facilitation. A “Memorandum of Understanding”, last revised and renewed in March 2021, underpins this cooperation. Given the current conditions of Russia’s continuous military aggression and the granting of EU candidate status by the European Council on 23 June 2022, the cooperation with Ukraine and its parliament is now of even greater political significance and practical urgency.

The democracy support activities envisaged for 2023 will factor in the specific situation imposed by the military aggression against the country. They will focus, in particular, on strengthening the VRU and its Members, supporting its reform efforts in general and more specifically providing assistance for those transformation processes inside the VRU, which are related directly to Ukraine’s recently acquired EU candidate status.

Since its launch in 2016, the Jean Monnet Dialogue process with the VRU has conducted, among others, several successful rounds of dialogue, focussing on matters related to the necessary reforms of the Rada (in an online-format during the COVID-19 pandemic). Following the granting of EU candidate status to Ukraine the VRU is now in the process of accelerating its reform efforts. The Jean Monnet Dialogue in 2023 aims to facilitate the consensus building among key parliamentary actors on the envisaged reforms and to deepen their awareness regarding the transformative nature of the EU enlargement process.

The main reference for the reform and capacity building initiatives of the Ukrainian parliament is the “Report and Roadmap on Internal Reform and Capacity Building for the VRU” prepared by a team of EP-experts following the Needs Assessment Mission, led by former EP-President Pat Cox in 2015/2016. To date, the proposed recommendations remain valid and many have not been implemented, in particular those related to the legislative process, political oversight, transparency and accountability matters as well as a number of administrative issues (including modern technical solutions). The suggested democracy support and capacity development actions for 2023 particularly aim at enhancing awareness and capacities related to the process of EU integration.

Considering the circumstances, it is of the utmost importance to strictly uphold the political openness and inclusiveness of Parliament’s democracy support measures for Ukraine. This applies specifically to the participation of representatives of the parliamentary opposition in democracy support and

dialogue activities. This inclusiveness should be constantly highlighted in the dialogue with the VRU and also with other representatives of Ukrainian institutions (including the executive ones).

1.1. Parliamentary Support and Capacity Development

A series of actions could be carried out throughout 2023 to support the VRU, particularly in the framework of its EU integration process, including:

- The EU integration module (with focus on the political dimension, administrative, and parliamentary monitoring organisation), with the aim to prepare the Members and staff for the EU accession process. Series of regular thematic workshops with the participation of Members and experts.
- Support in the process of harmonisation of VRU's internal procedures following the EP best practices.
- Presentation of some of the key EP's working methods, exchanges views and advice/responses to issues VRU encounters. This initiative would build on a previous programme of exchange of visits carried out during 2016-2017, between Ukrainian officials and DG PRES in the Planning Unit, which aimed, inter-alia, at improving the decision-making process and the Rada's political agenda setting.
- Provide information on the EU legislative process, EP Rules of Procedure and/or recently adopted EU legislation in the format of online and in-person trainings.
- Support VRU in adoption of practical mechanisms aimed at aligning of new legislation to *acquis communautaire*.
- Pursue further digitalisation of the VRU in close cooperation of the EP's IT services.
- Coordination of the external assistance originating from the EU MS parliaments with the objective to provide support to the VRU in a more consistent, transparent and better targeted way.

1.2. Election-related Activities

According to the Electoral Code of Ukraine, the next Ukrainian parliamentary elections should be held in 2023 on the last Sunday of October. Provided the date is kept and elections take place in free Ukraine, the DEG could decide to deploy an Electoral Observation Mission if all the necessary conditions are met.

1.3. Human Rights and Civil Society Component

- **Empowerment of women parliamentarians**, under the Simone Veil Programme (communication, resilience, gender sensitive legislation) and of **civil society actors** through the facilitation of their inclusion in democracy support activities.
- **Triangle for Democracy** programme to tackle disinformation, if appropriate conditions appear, would be tailored to Ukraine's needs and specific perspective.

1.4. Mediation and Dialogue

- Continuation of the EP's mediation/dialogue facilitation support to the VRU through the **Jean Monnet Dialogue for Peace and Democracy** process. A particular focus will be the support of dialogue and consensus building related to the parliamentary reform agenda as well as the impact of the EU candidate status on the political work of the VRU.
- Taken into consideration the volatile political conditions, organisation of an in-person event in the context of the Young Political Leaders programme with participants from Eastern partnership countries, among which: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine (*For more information, please see section 2.6 Young Political Leaders Programme*).

2. Georgia



LEAD MEMBER: VIOLA VON CRAMON-TAUBADEL



General overview

Georgia has been a DEG priority country since 2017 and an important partner for the European Parliament. The country received a European Perspective status following its submission for **EU membership application** in 2022 in a context of strong political and popular support for EU integration while facing challenges due to the war in Ukraine. Yet, the backsliding on democratic standards and rule of law that Georgia has registered during the last years have hampered this ambition. So have the political tension and polarisation that characterise the political life and are identified by local and international actors as one of the main challenges the country is facing.

Nonetheless, the EP is ready to maintain its commitment to the Georgian Parliament in the field of democracy support. In 2023, the EP's support will be articulated through a **Roadmap for Democracy Support activities**. It will be focused **on key areas**, to maximise the impact of its activities in the aforementioned scenario of polarisation and where a step-by-step approach will be necessary to foster dialogue.

An outline of the proposed activities, including finalisation of negotiations on the aforementioned **Roadmap for Democracy Support activities**, is provided below:

2.1. Parliamentary Support and Capacity Development

Roadmap prioritises a series of actions to be implemented in 2023, including:

- A long-term cooperation programme on the use of parliamentary oversight mechanisms aiming at strengthening the scrutiny role of the Parliament over the executive.
- A long-term cooperation programme to promote the role of Thematic Rapporteurs and co-Rapporteurs.
- A long-term cooperation programme to support the Parliamentary Research Centre of the Georgian Parliament in establishing itself as a reliable academic body.
- In accordance with the EP/Georgian priorities, other activities included in the Roadmap for Democracy Support will be selected and implemented throughout the year.

2.2. Election-related Activities

The implementation of the OSCE/ODIHR recommendations on the last electoral cycle (the 2020 parliamentary elections and the 2021 municipal elections) remain problematic. The DEG could organise virtual dialogues or in-person follow up missions to meet the authorities in charge, to make

sure that the auspicated reforms are in force much before the next electoral appointments and not adopted as a last-minute attempt to show example of good cooperation.

2.3. Human Rights and Civil Society Component

- **Simone Veil** programme for women-parliamentarians from the Georgian parliament.
- **Triangle for Democracy** programme to tackle disinformation if appropriate conditions appear and empowerment of civil society actors by facilitating their inclusion in democracy support activities.

2.4. Mediation and Dialogue

- Provided political conditions allow, the launch of Jean Monnet Dialogue preparatory activities and the subsequent steps of the Jean Monnet Dialogue process in Georgia, aiming to address the chronic political tensions between government and opposition.
- Taken into consideration the volatile political conditions, organisation of an in-person event in the context of the Young Political Leaders programme with participants from Eastern partnership countries, among which: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine (*For more information, please see section 2.6 Young Political Leaders Programme*).

3. Moldova



LEAD MEMBER: DRAGOȘ TUDORACHE



General overview

The European Council's decision on 23 June 2022 to grant Moldova **candidate status** presents a major achievement of the country and of its pro-European leadership and provides an **additional impetus for the country's reform process**.

The European Parliament intensified its democracy support engagement with Moldova following the outcomes of elections in 2020 and 2021, which brought a pro-European President, Government, and Parliament for the first time in Moldova's recent history. These important political developments, in combination with the relaxation of the COVID-related health measures, paved the way for strengthening of the relations between the two parliaments in general, and for intensifying of the democracy support activities.

The mission of MEP / Lead Member for Moldova Dragoș Tudorache in 2021 led to the agreement on the **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** between the European Parliament and the Parliament of Moldova on a Joint Framework for democracy support activities, which was signed by late President David Sassoli and Speaker Igor Grosu on 29 November 2021. Further details of democracy support activities were subsequently provided in **the Roadmap** of democracy support activities, a document jointly agreed between the two Parliaments and annexed to the aforementioned MoU.

In line with the MoU and the annexed Roadmap, providing a **comprehensive framework of democracy support activities**, a number of initiatives, including two Triangles for Democracy events on the topic of disinformation and a Conference on the Legislative Cycle, have been successfully carried out and lay the groundwork for additional activities to be implemented over the current Moldovan parliamentary term.

Against the background of current political situation in Moldova, affected by the Russian military aggression in neighbouring Ukraine, the **2023 democracy support activities** will focus on supporting the Moldovan Parliament to play its democratic role in achieving the country's obligations deriving from its new EU candidate status and **could include the following**:

3.1. Parliamentary Support and Capacity Development

- A long-term cooperation programme on the optimisation of the legislative process was launched in November 2022 in Chisinau, with a seminar on the topic "The Legislative Cycle". The main

aim of the seminar was to share good practices of legislative procedures in Europe in support of the Moldovan Parliament on the path towards reforms. The seminar focused on “Coordination between executive and legislative powers: the annual legislative plan”, “Legislative planning in the approximation process” and “Optimisation of the legislative process”. As such, the Seminar laid grounds for a comprehensive, long-term process aiming at strengthening Moldovan Parliament’s legislative capabilities, and will include several follow-up activities (exchange study visits / workshops / seminars / conferences).

- Following the launch of a long-term cooperation programme on Translation and Interpretation services, involving the staff of the EP and of the Moldovan Parliament in September 2022, an assessment of the specific needs of the Parliament of Moldova in this area has been carried out. Consequently, specific tailored-trainings and study visits have been foreseen and will be implemented throughout the year.
- A long-term cooperation programme on Digital Transformation in Parliament, between the staff of the EP and of the Moldovan Parliament, started in December 2022 with a Seminar on Strategic Planning for Digital Transformation. Consequently, specific tailored-trainings and study visits will be designated and implemented throughout the year.
- Organisation of specific tailored trainings and study visits aiming to enhance capacities of the Members and staff of the Moldovan Parliament on strategies to counter interference attempts and strategic communication.
- In line with the EP/Moldova’s priorities, additional activities included in the Roadmap for Democracy Support will be selected and implemented throughout the year.

3.2. Election-related Activities

Over the past two years, the electoral cycle that saw the emergence of a strong idea of Moldova’s EU membership was not without problematic aspects, as identified in a number of recommendations made by international observers. The practical implementation of the reforms outlined in the OSCE and European Parliament’s recommendations should be closely monitored with the tools available to the DEG and through the post- and pre-electoral dialogues (PEDs). In 2023, PEDs will be able to complement other democracy support activities in Moldova, both in traditional format (on-the-spot meetings with the authorities responsible for implementing the reforms) as well as through the now proven format of virtual dialogues.

3.3. Human Rights and Civil Society Component

In order to support the Parliament of Moldova to advance on the European path and implement the Commission's recommendations¹ regarding the protection of human rights and dialogue with civil society, activities will be organised upon request to:

- Bring the Parliament of Moldova and the governmental authorities closer to civil society, through an EP-facilitated dialogue, with a topic approach aimed at developing cooperation and consultation mechanisms with civil society.
- Continue to facilitate cooperation between the Parliament, civil society and media actors to identify the best strategies to fight disinformation, while preserving freedom of expression, through the Triangle for Democracy Programme launched in October 2022.
- Continue to enhance gender equality and support female leaders, in particular lawmakers, in both their professional and their human dimensions, through the Simone Veil Programme.
- Support in the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, ratified in 2021, **to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence**, through cooperation with other appropriate actors (such as NGOs, police representatives, health workers, judges, etc.), in particular at local level, to encourage effective and coordinated strategies to protect victims and fight all forms of violence.

3.4. Mediation and Dialogue

- Following the preparatory mission to Chisinau carried out in the Jean Monnet Dialogue context in April 2022, the DEG appointed two additional co-facilitators to join DEG Lead Member Tudorache in this process: MEPs Andrzej Halicki (EPP, Poland) and Thijs Reuten (S&D, Netherlands). The DEG will continue with **preparatory activities within the framework of the Jean Monnet Dialogue** process and, subsequently, will **organise the first round of the dialogue in 2023**, with a view to **establishing a long-term process** aimed at developing a genuine inter-party dialogue and building the consensus necessary for generating a democratic parliamentary culture.
- Taken into consideration the volatile political conditions, organisation of an in-person event in the context of the **Young Political Leaders programme** with participants from Eastern partnership countries, among which: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine (*For more information, please see section 2.6 Young Political Leaders Programme*).

¹ Commission Opinion on the Republic of Moldova's application for membership of the European Union, 17.6.2022, COM(202)406 final

4. Tunisia



LEAD MEMBER: EMMANUEL MAUREL



General overview

Tunisia, following the 2011 Arab Spring, had remained a success story and the only Middle East/North Africa country that ensured an open, free, and democratic society. However, the country has been encompassed by political instability since the enactment of Article 80 of the Constitution by President Kais Saied, on 25 July 2021, and the subsequent Presidential Decrees dismissing the Prime Minister, suspending the Parliament, lifting the parliamentary immunity and ultimately repealing the constitutional order and affirming self-supremacy on 22 September 2021. In July 2022 the Tunisian people voted in a referendum for a new constitution, while in September 2022 the President adopted a new electoral law, which paves the way for legislative elections in December - with a second round in January 2023.

In the current context, the democratic achievements since 2011 have been under constant threat not only by the very poor socio-economic performance, but also by the political measures taken by President Saied, including the amendment of the constitution and the reform of the electoral system, which lacked prior national debate. In this context, civil society organisations have repeatedly highlighted the need to preserve and strengthen the accomplishments of the democratic transition and avoid backsliding. The EP has consistently called, including in its Resolution on the situation in Tunisia of 21 October 2021, for a return to a fully-fledged democracy, with functioning democratic institutions of which the Parliament is an essential part, respect for rule of law and Constitutional order, and guarantee for human rights.

In line with its commitment to further support Tunisia's democratic process, DEG democracy support activities will be adjusted to the political realities that would result from the general elections on 17 December 2022. Provided a democratically elected bi-cameral Legislative Assembly is properly established, tailor-made activities with the Assembly would resume. However, given the continuing deterioration of the political, economic and social situation in the country, a particular focus of activities on supporting civil society organisations and their dialogue with the new political actors will be fostered, at both national and regional level.

The activities in 2023, which would also aim at contributing to the *Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood, a new agenda for the Mediterranean (EP Recommendation of 14 September 2022)* would therefore include:

4.1. Parliamentary Support and Capacity Development

Should the political conditions so allow, capacity development activities aimed at strengthening the Legislative Assembly and civil society representatives could include, among others:

- The use of parliamentary oversight mechanisms aiming at strengthening the scrutiny role of the Parliament over the executive;
- Digital Transformation;
- Transparency and the fight against corruption;
- Civil society's engagement in the legislative cycle;
- The budgetary procedure within the framework of financial autonomy;
- Internalisation of Security services of the Assembly of People's Representatives;
- Training/exchanges of good practices on strategic communication.

4.2. Election-related Activities

Following the PED carried out by the DEG Lead Member, Emmanuel Maurel, on 28 and 29 November 2022, organisation of an Electoral Dialogue on Elections, with national election observation organisations, civil society and international partners could be envisaged. The PED would aim to increase understanding on the electoral framework and future avenues of cooperation. This should incorporate a regional dimension and could be combined with other DEG activities in the country.

4.3. Human Rights and Civil Society Component

- Facilitate a genuine dialogue of the newly elected Legislative Assembly with civil society organisations (CSOs), with a topic approach, aimed at empowering the CSOs and supporting their democratic cause.
- Support the eradication of violence against women in particular on victims' access to justice, both at local and national level.
- Supporting the empowerment of women leaders, under the Simon Veil Programme .
- Activities to raise awareness on the importance of gender equality in all aspects of the society .
- Considering the particular pattern of disinformation actors and strategies in the MENA region, Tunisia included, the Triangle for Democracy programme would be adjusted and focus on facilitating cooperation between civil society and media actors to find strategies to fight disinformation by authorities and other actors and support them in preserving their fundamental rights and freedoms.

4.4. Mediation and Dialogue

Reinitiate the Young Political Leaders programme with Tunisia, taking into consideration political conditions. (*For more information, please see section 2.6 Young Political Leaders Programme*).

5. Western Balkans



LEAD MEMBERS: VLADIMÍR BILČÍK AND MATJAŽ NEMEC



General overview

In line with the assessment of the state of play and the progress made by the Western Balkans on their respective path towards the European Union, included in the 2019-2021 Commission reports on the candidates and aspiring candidates to the EU enlargement and reconfirmed by the EP's annual resolutions, the DEG will continue to intensify its democracy support activities, complementary to other EU and EP initiatives addressing the transformative process in the region.

Russia's unprovoked military aggression of Ukraine and its effects on the political developments and polarisation in the Western Balkans has highlighted the importance of the EU enlargement policy. For the European Parliament, it has also stressed a need for a reinforced presence of the EP's democracy support engagements in all Western Balkan countries.

Following up on a number of initiatives carried out in the region in 2022, including the election observation missions to Serbia and Bosnia & Herzegovina, preparatory meetings and missions in the context of the Inter-Party Dialogue process with the Serbian *Skupština*, the Jean Monnet Dialogue with the parliament of North Macedonia, as well as the Citizens' Assembly, successfully implemented in Montenegro, the DEG 2023 programme will focus on the fundamentals of EU integration. Namely, the attention will be on the role of the parliaments in EU accession process, and through that the strengthening the oversight function of parliaments in Western Balkan countries and supporting the transformation of the political culture of the region aiming to reduce polarisation.

To enhance the reform process and increase the accountability of parliamentary institutions, notably through the Jean Monnet/Inter-Party Dialogues, capacity development, human rights activities and election observation and follow-up, DEG activities will also focus on empowering agents of democratic change - women parliamentarians under the Simone Veil programme, as well as civil society actors, to help create effective channels between citizens and institutions.

The running of the main electoral competitions in Western Balkans remains at the core of the DEG activities and will be monitored through the tools of Election Observation Delegations and in person or virtual PEDs.

5.1. Regional Activities

A. Programme on Support to parliaments on EU accession process

The Parliaments of the Western Balkans are at different stages of the EU accession process, and the challenges and reflections around this process is an element that unites them. The EP proposes to develop a programme on **Support for parliaments on EU accession process**. The programme would be developed on three strands:

- Political: focusing on the role of the parliaments in the EU accession process and ensuring that they can perform this role efficiently and effectively;
- Administrative: ensuring that the administrative structures have the capacity to support the political work during the EU accession process;
- Parliamentary monitoring organisations: strengthening the role that the civil society organisations play vis-à-vis the parliaments in contributing to the EU accession process.

The implementation of this programme at a regional level would allow for sharing of experiences and know-how among the Western Balkan countries themselves, with the support of the European Parliament, the EU National Parliaments and other EU Institutions.

B. Other democracy support tools

- The pattern of study visits from the Western Balkans, notably presented by the staff of the European Integration Committee could be further adapted to and applied to other parliamentary committees, as part of the Support for EU integration programme. This would allow for a representation and point of view of each individual country, whilst covering the entire region.
- Continue engaging with the **Young Political Leaders** in the Western Balkans through the “Bridging the Gap” format. This type of conference would be organised together with the European Commission, Parliaments from the region and relevant organisations active in youth policymaking.
- Organisation of workshops on policies related to the EU-driven reform agenda. These events could be organised with international partners active on the region or with specific expertise in the workshop’s theme.
- Organisation of online activities with YPL alumni to follow-up in-person activities or discuss topical matters (*For more information, please see section 2.6 Young Political Leaders Programme*).
- Initiatives aiming to empower agents of democratic change, including civil society actors through their inclusion in democracy support activities, or supporting women parliamentarians in the framework of the **Simone Veil Programme**.

5.2. Country-specific activities

A number of specific democracy support and election-related activities could be developed and carried out at the national level targeting parliamentary political leadership, MPs, parliamentary staff and civil society. They would consist of “country support programmes”, Jean Monnet Dialogue /Inter-Party Dialogues, citizens’ assemblies, study visits, pre- and post-electoral activities, dedicated programmes for women parliamentarians under the Simone Veil Programme, and expert missions, etc.

A. Bosnia and Herzegovina

PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Capacity development activities aimed to strengthen the accountability of the Parliament of BiH vis-à-vis their citizens. In this regard, DEG will support the empowerment of parliamentary monitoring organisations through specific activities. Other activities will include:

- Specific activities for newly elected Members of the Parliament, in particular those part of the Joint Committee European Integration.
- Empowerment of women parliamentarians, under the Simone Veil Programme, and of civil society actors.

ELECTION-RELATED ACTIVITIES

During the last Presidential and General elections that took place in October 2022, the International Election Observation Mission, in which the European Parliament participated with a 6-member delegation from 4 political groups, revealed an increasing segmentation along ethnic lines and the corresponding divergent views on the future of the country and several problems in the procedures.

The European Parliament agreed with all the recommendations made in the [statement on preliminary findings and conclusions](#) of the International Observation Mission led by the OSCE/ODIHR. Further recommendations are likely to be made within two months from the election day (2 October 2022). As such, the DEG will closely monitor the proper implementation of all these recommendations, and if appropriate, send a follow-up mission in the course of 2023 for this purpose.

B. Kosovo

PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The work for **capacity building in Kosovo** could be organised around three pillars:

(I) Increase the credibility of the Parliament

Assess the possibility of a **citizens' assembly for the Parliament of Kosovo focusing on environmental issues**. Such an event would allow for reducing the widening gap between citizens and the parliament, which risks to seriously undermine parliament's representative function.

(II) Increase the administrative efficiency of the Parliament

In the 2022 Report on Kosovo, the European Commission notes that: "The Assembly has no annual work plan. The Assembly needs to improve the planning and coordination of its work to ensure a more predictable law-making process and attendance of MPs and ministers. For over a year the Assembly has not reinstated the electronic voting technology and continued using a show-of-hand voting system, which on many occasions led to incorrect voting results. More importantly, under the show-of-hands voting system the Assembly does not publish the voting records of MPs, which undermines transparency and accountability to the public."

In this context, a country specific programme for the Parliament of Kosovo could be launched in cooperation with the EU office, with the objective to address the strategic programming dimension and the voting procedures.

(III) Tackling disinformation

Furthermore, a Triangle for Democracy programme to tackle disinformation while protecting freedom of expression could be launched.

ELECTION-RELATED ACTIVITIES

Organisation of Electoral Dialogues on the implementation of the recommendations issued by the EU led International observation Mission could be organised with the participation of the authorities in charge of the reforms, civil society organisations and international partners.

Following the establishment by the Assembly of Kosovo of an Ad Hoc Committee on Electoral Reform, possible post-electoral and capacity development activities will be explored with the Assembly.

C. North Macedonia

MEDIATION AND DIALOGUE

Democracy support activities for North Macedonia in 2023 include the **continuation of the well-established Jean Monnet Dialogue process with Sobranie**, with a continued focus on the implementation of the earlier commitments (revision of the Rules of Procedure) followed by the **organisation of the fourth round of Jean Monnet Dialogue in early 2023**.

PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The JMD between the leaders of different political factions is well underway but the main problem remains the lack of dialogue between political forces at all levels, for example in the parliamentary committees, including that on European affairs. To promote constructive debate within the committees, and enhance discussions on EU related topics and legislation, it is envisaged to launch a project envisaging a cycle of hearings and parliamentary debates involving EP rapporteurs on priority legislative issues, and involving sectoral and EU integration committees. This would allow the debate to be shifted from the internal to the European level and would be a useful exercise in dialogue between the majority and the opposition.

Progress has been made on freedom of information. On the rule of law, according to the Commission 2021 report the country is moderately prepared to implement the EU acquis on this area. The Freedom House report showed a score of 67/100 (political rights and civil liberties). According to the report, the country continues to struggle with corruption and clientelism. A series of seminars on fundamental rights and corruption could be organised on 2023 involving our MEPS in LIBE committee.

ELECTION-RELATED ACTIVITIES

Despite opposition calls for early elections, the next parliamentary elections in North Macedonia are expected to be held in 2024. The DEG could organise a pre-election dialogue in the last quarter of 2023.

D. Serbia

MEDIATION AND DIALOGUE

Following the second phase of the Inter-Party Dialogue process (IPD) with the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia on electoral conditions and the elections of 3 April 2022, the Serbian Parliament now has a more pluralistic composition with a wide range of opposition parties and groups. A renewed dialogue process, co-facilitated by the in a form of Jean Monnet Process will be established with the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia. It will primarily focus on building consensus on issues related to the reforms and functioning of the National Assembly.

PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Further engagement in the field of capacity building activities with the Serbian parliament should focus on training for newly elected parliamentarians from all political parties. Possible topics of such training could include committee work (committee formation, seating arrangements etc.), media/social media and disinformation (definition of disinformation, sharing experience in fighting disinformation) as well as a role of the opposition. An important element of cooperation would be to foster a dialogue on the parliament's role as well as the MPs duties and functioning on daily basis.

Empowerment of women parliamentarians, under the **Simone Veil Programme** and of civil society actors might be envisaged.

ELECTION-RELATED ACTIVITIES

The DEG might envisage to send a follow-up mission to Belgrade to discuss with the competent authorities the implementation of the OSCE/ODHIR recommendations issued after the last general elections held in April 2022

E. Albania

PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Despite the progress made in most areas, recognised by the 2021 Commission Report and EP's Resolution on Albania, further efforts should be focused on the implementation of reforms.

One of the persisting issues in the country is the respect of national minorities. In this area, Albania has ratified Protocol 12 to the European Convention for the Protection of Human rights and Fundamental Freedoms, but the implementing legislation related to 2017 Framework law on the protection of national minorities is still to be adopted

Initiatives, proposed for 2023, might therefore include seminars/trainings and/or exchanges of best practises focused on:

- fundamental rights, notably women, children, persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities and LGBTQ people;
- media;
- data protection;
- public procurement;
- legal services.

In the area of support to the digitalisation of the Albanian Parliament, the DEG has launched an IT project, in cooperation with OSCE, aimed at making the functioning of the work in the Albanian Parliament more fluid. Following the first meeting of the IT teams in this context and an assessment test at the beginning of November 2022, a number of activities and initiatives on legislative process in the EP, ICT support and organisation of work, digitalisation, e-parliament, AKN4EU would be designed

Study visits for Members, planned for 2022, will be confirmed and carried out in 2023.

F. Montenegro

PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Building up on the first edition of the Citizens' Assembly held in October 2021, the second edition took place on 23-25 September 2022 in Podgorica. The initiative, co-organised by the Parliament of Montenegro and European Parliament. During the two-day event, 50 randomly chosen citizens, reflecting the diversity of Montenegrin society, discussed and refined the 2021 recommendations on how the country could fight corruption more effectively.

The Citizens' Assembly was set up to raise awareness and empower citizens in the fight against corruption and to reinforce the link between citizens and the Parliament where citizen's recommendations were presented at a special sitting organised on 4 November.

In 2023, as a follow-up activity to the Citizens' **Assembly, a study visit to Brussels for MPs and a group of participants will be organised**. The purpose of the meeting will be to focus on the citizens' recommendations, discuss further their implementation with the Lead Members and **benefit of capacity development workshops for MPs on anti-corruption policies on the same occasion**.

In addition, as part of the follow-up of the Citizens' Assembly, a high-level official who was in charge with the coordination of this event in the Parliament of Montenegro was invited as a pre-accession/democracy fellow in the European Parliament in November 2022. Based on the experience and the expertise gained by the fellow, concrete actions will be established with the Parliament of Montenegro in 2023, with the **objective of accelerating the preparation for more efficient functioning of the national parliament**.

The Parliament of **Montenegro could be considered as one of the first beneficiaries of the programme for developing the know-how of MPs and staff on EU accession process**.

ELECTION-RELATED ACTIVITIES

Presidential elections are scheduled to take place in Montenegro in spring 2023, with a double-round electoral system. The DEG could decide to ask the Conference of Presidents for an authorisation to observe the elections with a delegation part of an International Election Observation Mission led by OSCE ODIHR

6. Pan-African Parliament



LEAD MEMBER: ASSITA KANKO



General overview

The Pan-African Parliament (PAP) has been on DEG's list of priority countries/regions since the last European Parliament's legislature. In line with the end-of-legislature recommendations from the previous DEG, in the 9th legislature DEG activities with PAP would mainly focus on a "Train the Trainers" approach. This involves sharing EP's best practices and working methods on a selected topic in a very targeted, in-depth and structured way, aiming to build in-house capacity more effectively.

PAP activities were suspended in June 2021, which consequently put a halt to democracy support activities planned for the year. Following the election of new officeholders, PAP resumed its activities in June 2022 and expressed an interest in relaunching the capacity building programme with the EP, in particular in view of its objective of strengthening the role of the PAP.

A. Parliamentary Support and Capacity Development

As an immediate consequence of PAP resuming its activities recently, and at PAP's request, an event mapping the EP's evolution and increase of responsibilities since its creation until present will be designed and offered to PAP counterparts. **The objective is to give a new incentive to the EP-PAP cooperation in terms of capacity building** and to launch a new cycle of collaboration for 2023.

Taking into account the extensive activities developed between EP and PAP **in the field of capacity building** and given the trajectory PAP wants to place itself on, namely to enhance its powers in the field of legislation, oversight and budgetary role, the following events could be envisaged for 2023:

- Continue with the established capacity building programme on 'parliamentary oversight, monitoring and evaluation' with the possibility to offer a budget scrutiny and budget procedures insight seminar in 2023.
- Develop a programme on 'enhancing capacities in the areas of election observation, conflict prevention and mediation'.
- Resume study visits for PAP parliamentarians and Democracy Fellowship Programme for the Secretariat, with a result-oriented strategic approach and as part of the capacity building programme, which will aim at maximising the impact of the study visits and fellowships.

B. Election-related Activities

Organisation of an Electoral Dialogue between PAP and DEG Members could be envisaged to increase understanding on their respective election observation activities and to define possible future avenues of cooperation.

C. Human Rights and Civil Society Component

A training event under the Simone Veil programme for key PAP women parliamentarians focused on advocacy, negotiation and leadership empowerment.

D. Mediation and Dialogue

Support youth parliamentary caucuses as a platform for reaching a wider African audience (*For more information, please see section 2.6 Young Political Leaders Programme*).

7. Belarus - ad hoc activities in line with EP political priorities



General overview

The brutal repression unleashed by the Lukashenka regime after the stolen elections and mass protests of 2020 continues. The number of political prisoners has risen to over 1400. Courts impose extremely harsh sentences for any expression of opposition to the authorities. Having four Sakharov laureates in jail and fifth disbanded is a vivid illustration of this situation.

The regime in Minsk has lost much of its autonomy and is supporting Russia in its illegal aggression against Ukraine. Moreover, the larger crisis of a full-scale war in Europe overshadows the reality of a continuing dismal human rights situation in Belarus. Even if almost any dissent is only possible in exile, democratic forces continue to function. Creative democracy support to them is important.

In its resolutions on Belarus, the EP has insisted on the need for the EU to assist the country's democratic forces in an inclusive way. In 2021 the DEG endorsed a Platform against Impunity for Human Rights Violations which provides stakeholders with a space to discuss and support Belarussian civil society in collecting evidence of human rights violations. The EP has maintained a dialogue with the Coordination Council (CC) led by Sviatlana Tsikanouskaya. The CC will soon have an office in Brussels which could facilitate contacts. Ms Tsikanouskaya has also formed the United Transitional Cabinet. This Cabinet, which presents itself as a sort of executive-in-exile, could receive support of the EP, while also keeping an inclusive approach to other components of the Belarussian democratic forces.

The following activities tailored for the Belarussian democratic forces, including the Coordination Council, could be implemented in 2023:

A. Parliamentary Support and Capacity Development

- Capacity building on IT data processing, storage and security.
- Follow-up assistance on strategic communication.
- Activities aiming to enhance the administrative capacity of the Coordination Council Secretariat and of the United Transitional Cabinet. More joint activities and closer cooperation might be possible in the view of the opening of a Coordination Council's Office in Brussels.

B. Election-related Activities

The DEG could invite the United Transitional Cabinet and the Coordination Council to start a dialogue on the topic of basics for free and fair elections in Belarus.

C. Human Rights and Civil Society Component

- Continuation of the Platform against Impunity for Human Rights Violations in Belarus, under the aegis of the DROI Subcommittee.

- Support activities to human rights and civil society activists.
- Continued efforts for the release of Sakharov Laureate and all political prisoners.
- In line with EP and Belarussian opposition priorities and needs, other activities could also be implemented throughout the year.

D. Mediation and Dialogue

Taken into consideration the volatile political conditions, organisation of an in-person event in the context of the **Young Political Leaders programme** with participants from Eastern partnership countries, among which: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine (*For more information, please see section 2.6 Young political leaders programme*).

In response to the needs expressed by the Belarusian democratic forces, a workshop on building the Coordination Council's and United Transitional Cabinet's **capacity on mediation and dialogue process and design**, could be envisaged. The objectives of this initiative would be to support members of democratic forces by enhancing their capacities and readiness for possible future mediation / dialogue process.

II THEMATIC AREAS

1. Pre- and Post-Election activities

The DEG decides on its election observation delegations in third countries following the specific provisions set out in the DEG Implementing Rules, when an International Election Observation mission is deployed under the leadership of the EU, based on the indicative priorities provided for by the HR/VP, and when is deployed under the OSCE umbrella. These activities are selected following the principles of regional equilibrium and political priority. In this respect, the DEG deems crucial to assess carefully the engagement of the EU in third countries, based on clear political conditions like the will to engage on inclusive reforms and concrete follow-up on any previous missions' recommendations.

1.1. VIRTUAL PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORAL DIALOGUES (V-PEDS)

Following the experience acquired during the pandemic, DEG will keep holding **virtual parliamentary pre- and post-electoral dialogues/discussions (V-PEDS)**, between interested MEPs and relevant interlocutors to complement the in-person EP election observation delegations and PEDs. The choice of countries will concern both priority and non-priority countries and will see the involvement of other parliamentary bodies, incl. bilateral delegations, multilateral assemblies or standing committees that have a concrete interest in how elections in certain countries can trigger or boost up the political dialogue with stakeholders on the ground.

1.2. ELECTION-RELATED ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

Following the Implementation Meeting of the Declaration of Principles (DoP), held in the EP on 6 to 8 December 2022, the DEG will envisage follow-up activities, which will include, inter alia:

- The development of the Parliamentary Dimension of Election Observation: Parliamentarian observers share the same concerns and face similar challenges and opportunities when observing elections - which are often different from those of the technical observation teams of experts. The EP aims to lead the development a hub for the parliamentary dimension of the election observation in close cooperation with other parliamentary assemblies carrying out election observation and EU National Parliaments. The DEG will organise in person and online debates on topics of interest for parliamentarian observers, including the exchange of best practices in the area of parliamentary election observation.
- The establishment of an EU network for capacity training for electoral observers with EU focal points. A first experience has been developed with the Office of Human Rights and Election Observation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain to develop avenues of cooperation. The DEG could cooperate by participating in their capacity development for international observers training sessions, through the establishment of an institutional focal point that would allow the EP to be part of these trainings and by disseminating good practises amongst other focal points.

2. Mediation and dialogue, including the Young Political Leaders programme

The added-value of the European Parliament's activities in parliamentary mediation, dialogue and conflict prevention, as well as the key role of Members of the European Parliament engaged in mediation processes, has been recognised as complementary to the overall EU capacities and strategies in this field, most notably in the European Parliament's Resolution on building EU capacity on conflict prevention and mediation of March 2019, and in the recent European Commission's Communication on EU enlargement policy.

Since the introduction of mediation in the European Parliament's array of external policies instruments in 2014, the DEG and its Lead Members have successfully built on the well-established Jean Monnet Dialogue/Inter-Party Dialogue concept and methodology, giving the European Parliament a unique role within the broader EU mediation efforts. The Jean Monnet Dialogue and other parliamentary mediation and dialogue facilitation activities have provided added-value to the overall EU approach to effectively address conflicts, in a very cost-effective fashion, while giving high visibility to the European Parliament.

Alongside with its other flagship initiative, the Young Political Leaders programme, mediation and dialogue are key instruments in DEG's Comprehensive Democracy Support Approach (CDSA). They will thus continue to be offered to priority countries and, in line with the DEG's Implementing Provisions, to additional countries deemed a priority for the European Parliament.

2.1. Jean Monnet Dialogues (JMD) and Inter-Party Dialogues (IPD)

The Jean Monnet Dialogue process will be continued with the *Verkhovna Rada* of Ukraine, the *Sobranie* of the Republic of North Macedonia and with the Serbian *Skupština* (where it has so far been implemented in the Inter-Party Dialogue format to reflect country's specific conditions and political environment pre-2022 elections).

In each of the above-mentioned countries, the Dialogue will need to be adapted to fit to the prevailing political circumstances and priorities. Notably, the Dialogue with the *Verkhovna Rada* will need to be adjusted in consultation with the *Rada*'s leadership to suit the needs of a parliament in times of war.

Adjustments will also be needed for the Dialogue with North Macedonian *Sobranie*, which needs to be intensified after a difficult and politically turbulent period for the country and a corresponding lack of progress of implementation of the agreements already made during the last round of dialogue.

The format of Dialogue with Serbia will also need to be adapted to the new political reality, *i.e.*, the fact that all major political parties are now represented in the *Skupština*, unlike at the time of the Inter-Party Dialogue so far.

Finally, implementation of the Jean Monnet Dialogue with the Parliament of Moldova, which has been agreed with the parliamentary leadership in 2022 is also envisaged in 2023.

The Jean Monnet Dialogue or Inter-Party Dialogue methodology may be further expanded, adapted and provided to other CDSA priority countries and regions, notably to Georgia, as well as to other third countries (See Chapter on Priority Countries and Regions).

2.2. MEPs as Mediators and Facilitators

Following the successful model of the joint EP/European Commission mediation in North Macedonia (2015-2017), MEPs could be appointed, in line with EP priorities and DEG Implementing Provisions (including in situation of urgency), to act as Mediators or Facilitators on behalf of the EP and within an overall or joint EU response to political conflicts and crises.

2.3. PARLIAMENTARY MEDIATION TRAINING PROGRAMME

Based on successful peer-to-peer coaching of MEPs tailored to specific mediation processes and country contexts, the programme, initially designed for the needs of Members of the European Parliament acting as mediators, would be further adapted and customised, including to fit the purposes of the new pool of mediation experts.

2.4. POOL OF EP MEDIATION EXPERTS

The creation of a pool of EP's mediation experts will contribute to Parliament's operational readiness to respond to challenges in addressing diverse and constantly changing contexts. The objective of this innovative initiative is to further strengthen Parliament's mediation capacities, including the support to MEPs assuming the role of mediators, further develop the specific parliamentary mediation methodology and instruments and increase of the recognition and visibility of the EP as a mediation actor. It is envisaged that this project, officially initiated in 2022, will provide concrete deliverables to MEPs and mediation support staff in the course of 2023.

2.5. WOMEN AND PEACE BUILDING

It is essential to ensure that women are fully involved in mediation activities and provided with specific capacity building. Focusing on women and mediation is a new aspect of mediation activities that the EP could offer and further develop in 2023 (in line with EP Resolution March 2019 and in recognition of UNSCR 1325).

2.6. YOUNG POLITICAL LEADERS PROGRAMME (YPL)



LEAD MEMBER: FABIO MASSIMO CASTALDO

The Young Political Leaders (YPL) programme is a flagship initiative of the European Parliament designed to promote dialogue and understanding as a means to contribute to longer-term peace and trust amongst future leaders outside the EU. The programme brings together young political activists, including political party representatives and civil society actors and encourages them to be active change-agents for peaceful dialogue and democratic political engagement.

After the suspension obliged by the pandemic, the YPL in-person activities resumed in 2022 with a workshop with Western Balkans parliamentarians. Should the health situation permit it, these will continue regularly, allowing the participants to come together and exchange views. Online activities, similar to the ones organised since the COVID-19 outbreak, could continue, as a complementary tool to in-person encounters.

Requests from institutional partners, especially the EEAS, the European Commission and EU Delegations, will be considered on a case-by-case basis, according to available budget and the capacity to carry out activities. Cooperation with international partners such as OSCE/ODIHR and the Anna Lindh Foundation proved extremely fruitful in the past and could be envisaged for future events.

A. Western Balkans

Continue engaging with the YPL in the Western Balkans through the “Bridging the Gap” format. This type of conference would be organised together with the European Commission, Parliaments from the region and relevant organisations active in youth policymaking.

Organization of workshops on policies related to the EU-driven reform agenda. These events could be organised with international partners active on the region or with specific expertise in the workshop’s theme.

Organisation of online activities with YPL alumni to follow-up in-person activities or discuss topical matters.

B. Eastern Partnership countries

Provided political, security and practical conditions allow, organisation of a Young Political Leaders programme event with participants from Eastern Partnership countries, among which: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. This event would support youth’s democratic aspirations following the candidate status granted to Moldova and Ukraine and the European perspective to Georgia. The event could be organised together with the European Commission and relevant organisations active in youth policymaking.

Further develop activities with the Armenia-Azerbaijan YPL, when political conditions allow, following the EU approach to the conflict that affects both countries.

C. MENA region

Develop joint YPL events/activities with the EEAS and the Anna Lindh foundation.

Develop the YPL programme on Israel and Palestine and (re)initiate the YPL programme with Tunisia, taking into consideration its political conditions.

D. Africa

Pan-African-Parliament (PAP): in-line with the priority partnership with the PAP, support youth parliamentary caucuses as a platform for reaching a wider African audience with a particular focus on the Horn of Africa.

Sudan: (re)initiate the YPL programme for Sudan, should political conditions be adequate, and, if done, seek the participation of the Sudanese YPL in multilateral fora such as the EU-AU Youth Summit.

E. Turkey

Engaging with the next generation of leaders will be key to ensure parliamentary and democratic standards in Turkey. Therefore, the Young Political Leaders programme frozen in 2016 following the failed *coup* could be resumed. The programme would include issues of common concern, to both young MEPs and young Turkish parliamentarians (as well as other young leaders), such as: the challenges and importance of young people participating in political life; the role of social media and communicating effectively with citizens; defending the rule of law and human rights; developing a culture of peaceful political dialogue and consensus building; cross party cooperation to promote issues of concern to the youth.

F. Youth, Peace and Security agenda

Organise YPL activities in the framework of the Youth, Peace and Security agenda (like the YPL online panel on Democracy and Peace organised in 2022); encourage the involvement of YPL alumni in relevant hearings and in Committees and Delegations activities; explore partnerships with EU institutions and Member States - Presidency, Commission, EEAS, Delegations, Youth events in the framework of the Berlin Process, Eastern Partnership initiatives, etc.; follow closely and arrange for the participation of YPL alumni in relevant UN and Regional Organisations activities, as well as in initiatives of key international CSOs.

G. Thematic priorities

Develop dedicated initiatives on, “Youth and Climate Change”, “Women and Peacebuilding” and “Young people’s civic and political participation”, among which activities dedicated to transitional justice and the fight against impunity in line with the European Union’s Youth Action Plan (YAP) in EU external action 2022 – 2027, as part of the YPL activities.

3. Human Rights, Civil Society, and Sakharov Activities

3.1. Empowering Agents of Democratic Change



LEAD MEMBER: MARIA ARENA, CHAIR OF THE EP SUBCOMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

- The **Simone Veil Programme** helps **empower women, in particular women parliamentarians** to promote inclusive societies and democratic change. Five training modules (equality, negotiation and advocacy, leadership, social media coaching, personal well-being and resilience, and pre-elections) can be tailored to the needs of the beneficiaries. Human rights-oriented training, seminars, workshops or study visits can also be organised for all parliamentarians and staff from partner parliaments in Brussels, Strasbourg or remotely.
- **Empowering civil society** actors in their interaction with partner parliaments and government authorities through inclusion in democracy support actions and activities to build trust, identify avenues of cooperation, and strengthen local human rights agendas.
- The **Triangle for Democracy Programme** gathers parliamentarians, civil society representatives and media actors to reflect on and embrace strategies to **fight disinformation** as a threat to democracy, while at the same time preserving **and protecting** the fundamental right of **freedom of expression**. Content and the number of sessions are tailored to the needs of the beneficiary country.²
- The **Solidarity with Parliamentarians at risk Programme** provides peer-to-peer support to parliamentarians who face intimidation, pressure, abuse, and even risk their lives. Members commit to help protect threatened fellow parliamentarians in third countries. The EP Global Democracy Support website gives visibility to existing twinning partnerships, paired-up parliamentarians' biographies and public actions taken under the programme. Under the umbrella of the programme, DEG can develop other activities in solidarity with parliamentarians at risk. This can include an **annual stock-taking conference on the human rights of parliamentarians** in the world or events with a regional or country-specific focus.

3.2. Support of the EP Human Rights Agenda and Visibility of EP Human Rights Work



LEAD MEMBER: MARIA ARENA, CHAIR OF THE EP SUBCOMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

- **Support and promotion of ongoing DROI activities** and the work of DROI rapporteurs or other MEPs with a relevant human rights focus. This can include the production of audio-visual material, exhibitions, or events combining art and human rights, inter alia.
- **“Care about what you wear”**: a series of awareness raising events to accompany parliamentary work on a new EU trade instrument to ban products made by forced labour, including the participation of Sakharov fellows.
- **“Youth for global due diligence”**: a series of advocacy events to promote an international binding instrument on corporate sustainability due diligence.
- **3rd edition of the Conference on the Global State of Human Rights** at the Global Campus in Venice. The annual high-level conference in cooperation with the European Parliament gathers MEPs, EU and international stakeholders, academia and the Sakharov Community to analyse major trends and raise awareness of human rights challenges in the world.
- **Invitation of human rights defenders** to contribute to the EP human rights agenda including through fact-finding, reporting and participation in inter-parliamentary meetings, delegation meetings, conferences or other relevant meetings in Brussels, Strasbourg or elsewhere.
- **Human rights film screenings and debates, organised by the EP or third parties**, including the Brussels part of the annual One World International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival, and, if appropriate, **support to production, sub-titling and promotion of audiovisual material related to the EP human rights agenda.**

3.3. Sakharov Activities



LEAD MEMBER: HEIDI HAUTALA, EP VICE-PRESIDENT FOR THE SAKHAROV COMMUNITY

A. Sakharov week 2023

The Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought is an annual prize the EP has been awarding since 1988 to honour individuals or organisations for their efforts on behalf of human rights. Around the award ceremony in Strasbourg in December, a comprehensive programme of meetings,

interviews and public events is organised for the laureates or their representatives and, if decided, the finalists, including follow-up events to promote the Sakharov Prize in EU Member States.

B. Sakharov fellowship for human rights defenders

This annual capacity-building programme for up to 14 human rights defenders grows an alumni network intertwined with EP human rights activities. It includes **a two-week human rights training** at the European Parliament and at the Global Campus of Human Rights in Venice (5-17 June 2023). A remote edition of the fellowship can be organised if needed, albeit with lower ambitions in terms of empowerment and community building. Alumni are part of a **stay-in-touch programme**.

Promotion of the Sakharov Prize Community as a platform for the human rights activities of the Sakharov Prize laureates, finalists, fellows, and MEPs. It aims at building a culture of human rights, raising awareness on human rights issues in and outside the EU, and supporting human rights defenders around the world through common action.

Support of Sakharov Prize laureates who are at risk or in difficult situations is coordinated with the President, the Vice-President responsible for the Sakharov Prize Community, relevant committees and delegations. Public support and/or silent diplomacy to this end can also extend to Sakharov finalists and fellows and entails close cooperation with EU institutions.

Support individual laureates, finalists or fellows in their projects and advocacy initiatives including cooperation among them in line with the EP human rights agenda.

Participation of laureates, finalists or fellows in committee or delegation meetings or other relevant EP events, e.g. the European Youth Event (EYE).

Sakharov Community debates and other events to increase public human rights awareness, promote the causes of the laureates, and enhance the visibility of the Sakharov Prize. These events can be organised remotely or with the presence of laureates, finalists and fellows in EU Member States in cooperation with the EP Liaison Offices or outside the EU together with international partners or in the framework of international fora.

Meetings of laureates, finalists or fellows with EP delegations on mission, including Election Observation Missions to be set up in liaison with the concerned bodies according to 2023 programme of committee and delegation visits and list of priorities for EOM.

Sakharov Traineeship - a special section of Parliament's Schuman traineeship initiated by the Sakharov Prize Community. Organised twice a year, it allows young human rights professionals from the EU and third countries to gain practical insight in Parliament's human rights policies.

4. Parliaments and Democratic Innovation

In 2021, the DEG hosted together with INTERPARES, a conference on parliaments and democratic innovation. In light of the challenges faced by parliaments in the recent years, with Covid-19, the continuous affronts to parliamentary democracy, the Russia's illegal aggression against Ukraine, it is key for the EU and the EP to continue building democratic resilience, within the EU and worldwide. The DEG could continue hosting reflections on democratic innovation with EU national parliaments and parliaments of like-minded countries, as well as with democracy support organisations.

ANNEX I

List of DEG Members and Lead Members**DEG Composition**

Co-Chairs:

Mr David McALLISTER	Chair AFET, EPP
Mr Tomas TOBÉ	Chair DEVE, EPP

Members:

Mr Michael GAHLER	EPP
Mr György HÖLVÉNYI	EPP
Mr Nacho SANCHEZ AMOR	S&D
Ms Isabel SANTOS	S&D
Ms Inma RODRÍGUEZ-PIÑERO	Chair CDC, S&D
Ms Izaskun BILBAO BARANDICA	RENEW
Mr Urmas PAET	RENEW
Ms Viola VON CRAMON-TAUBADEL	Greens/EFA
Mr Thierry MARIANI	ID
Ms Anna FOTYGA	ECR
Ms Marisa MATIAS	GUE/NGL

Ex-officio Members (without voting rights):

Ms Maria ARENA	Chair DROI, S&D
Ms Heidi HAUTALA	Vice-President responsible for the Sakharov Community and for Human Rights and Democracy, Greens/EFA
Mr Michal ŠIMEČKA	Vice-President responsible for Human Rights and Democracy, RENEW

DEG Lead Members

Country / Region	Lead Member	Political Group
Ukraine	Mr Michael GAHLER	EPP
Georgia	Ms Viola VON CRAMON-TAUBADEL	Greens/EFA
Moldova	Mr Dragoş TUDORACHE	RENEW
Tunisia	Mr Emmanuel MAUREL	GUE/NGL
Pan-African Parliament	Ms Assita KANKO	ECR
Western Balkans	Mr Vladimír BILČÍK	EPP
	Mr Matjaž NEMEC	S&D
Young Political Leaders	Mr Fabio Massimo CASTALDO	NI
Sakharov network	Ms Heidi HAUTALA	EP Vice-President
Human rights and civil society activities (including Simone Veil Programme)	Ms Maria ARENA	DROI Chair

ANNEX II

Budgetary Breakdown for EP Democracy Support Activities for 2023

BUDGETARY LINE	ACTIVITIES	EUR
Budget Line 3230-01-01: Actions to support for democracy	Horizontal democracy support activities, pre and post-election activities, capacity building, mediation, human rights, etc.	440.000,00
Budget Line 3230-01-02: Mediation support	Mediation activities, including Jean Monnet Dialogues, Inter-Party Dialogues, activities related to conflict prevention	230.000,00
Budget Line 3230-01-03: Young Political Leaders Programme	Young Political Leaders Programme	130.000,00
Budget Line 3230-02-01: Sakharov Prize	Sakharov Prize	100.000,00
Budget Line 3230-02-02: Sakharov Prize Activities	Activities related to the Sakharov Prize /network, etc.	124.000,00
Budget Line 3230-02-03: Human Rights actions	Targeted human rights activities in the CDSA priority and other ad hoc priority countries	76.000,00
Budget Line 3230-03-01: Capacity building activities	Capacity building activities in CDSA priority countries and regions and pre-accession countries	300.000,00
TOTAL		1.400.000,00

ANNEX III

Democracy Support Toolbox

DEG has a variety of instruments at its disposal to carry out its different missions. Together, these instruments constitute DEG's **democracy support toolbox**. The toolbox has **components** in the following activity areas: **election observation**, **parliamentary support and capacity building**, **human rights action** as well as **mediation and dialogue support**. The activity areas reflect the aforementioned Comprehensive Democracy Support Approach (CDSA) and are associated to the electoral cycle. Under DEG's political guidance and supervision the democracy support toolbox and its individual components are managed by DG EXPO's **Directorate for Democracy Support** (Directorate D) and its **four units**:

1) ELECTION OBSERVATION AND FOLLOW-UP UNIT

This unit coordinates and supports Parliament's engagement in **election observations**. In line with Parliament's policy, it focuses on the entire electoral cycle, including also the pre- and post-election period. It supports DEG in its consultative role vis-à-vis the HR/VP when priority countries for **long-term observation missions** are selected and **chief observers** for those missions are appointed.

A crucial element of the unit's tasks is the preparation, implementation and follow-up of Parliament's **short-term election observation missions** to countries outside the EU, thus reinforcing ongoing, longer-term missions in the countries.

In addition to election observations, this unit supports Parliament's "**parliamentary electoral dialogues**". Before elections, these dialogues focus on issues surrounding preparations for the next elections, and particularly on any concerns of pre-electoral violence. After elections these dialogues focus on the implementing the recommendations of election observation missions.

2) PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING UNIT

Assistance of national parliaments and regional assemblies beyond the EU in order to **reinforce their institutional capacities** is a further component of the democracy support toolbox. The Parliamentary Support and Capacity Building Unit assists DEG in establishing ongoing dialogues with these legislatures, exchanging best practises and supporting their participation as fully-fledged members of the democratic community.

The unit prepares a number of **customised support programmes** for members of parliaments (for example conferences, seminars and workshops) as well as for civil servants (for example fellowships). Generally, the purpose is to highlight best practices, improve the understanding of the work of the EP and its MEPs, and to enhance the partner institutions' capacities. The programmes aim to **strengthen the principal functions of parliaments**: citizens' representation, law-making, scrutiny of the executive. Additional programmes can be dedicated to more specific topics, such as fighting misinformation and "fake news".

In line with DEG's orientations, the main focus of the unit's activities is the Western Balkans region, in order to **strengthen parliamentary capacities, facilitate scrutiny of EU legislation and encourage parliamentary dialogue**. However, geographical priorities may shift in accordance to political necessities.

3) HUMAN RIGHTS ACTION UNIT

The **human rights component of democracy support** includes empowering agents of democratic change like human rights defenders, civil society, strengthening free and pluralistic media, and parliamentarians, especially women, as promoters of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

It further supports the **EP human rights agenda** and gives visibility to EP human rights work. The **Sakharov Prize** for Freedom of Thought and the activities of the Sakharov Prize Community of laureates, finalists and fellows are an integral part of this agenda.

Major tools include the empowerment of civil society actors through their inclusion in democracy support activities and facilitation of their dialogue with parliaments and authorities, the **Sakharov fellowship Programme** for human rights defenders, the **Simone Veil Programme** for women parliamentarians, the **Solidarity with Parliamentarians Programme** for parliamentarians at risk, and the **Triangle for Democracy** linking civil society, media and parliaments on fighting disinformation while protecting freedom of expression.

The Human Rights Actions Unit also supports the Members representing the European Parliament in the **governing bodies of the European Endowment for Democracy**.

4) MEDIATION AND DIALOGUE SUPPORT UNIT

Mediation, inter-party dialogue and consensus building are highly cost-effective tools to be applied in a wide range of cases, complementing democracy support and conflict prevention efforts. Under DEG's guidance and supervision the Mediation and Dialogue Support Unit supports Members in mediation, facilitation and dialogue processes.

The **core tools** underpinning Parliament's efforts in this field are the **Jean Monnet Dialogue and the Inter-Party Dialogue processes** as well as the **Young-Political Leaders Programme**. The Jean-Monnet Dialogue and Inter-Party Dialogue processes are parliamentary mediation instruments, adapted to the specific political environment in which they are deployed. The Young Political Leaders Programme targets future leaders, parliamentarians, political party representatives and politically active civil society actors outside the EU to encourage peaceful dialogue and cooperation, while building confidence. The programme develops participants' capacities as peacebuilders, facilitates discussions on challenging regional issues and promotes the political inclusion of youth and civil society.

The Mediation and Dialogue Support Unit also supports those Members representing the European Parliament in the **advisory board of the European Institute for Peace**.

ANNEX IV

Secretariat Implementing Democracy Support and Election-Related Activities

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EXTERNAL POLICIES (DG EXPO)				
DIRECTORATE D: DEMOCRACY SUPPORT				
SERVICE/ UNIT	CDSA ACTIVITIES	CONTACT	E-MAIL	PHONE +32 2 28 +
Directorate D: Democracy Support	DEG Secretariat Coordination of democracy support activities	Director Armelle DOUAUD	DEG-DGEXPO@europarl.europa.eu	43806
Election Observation and Follow-up Unit (ELEC)	Election observation missions Pre- and post-election activities and events	Head of Unit Cristina CASTAGNOLI	elec-secretariat@ep.europa.eu	32782
Parliamentary Support and Capacity Building Unit (PAC)	Capacity building activities in priority countries, including pre-accession countries	Head of Unit Marta UDINA	parliamentary-support-and-capacity-building-unit@ep.europa.eu	32916

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EXTERNAL POLICIES (DG EXPO)				
DIRECTORATE D: DEMOCRACY SUPPORT				
SERVICE/ UNIT	CDSA ACTIVITIES	CONTACT	E-MAIL	PHONE +32 2 28 +
Human Rights Actions Unit (HRAC)	Targeted human rights activities in priority countries and Sakharov-related activities	Head of Unit Stefan KRAUSS	HumanRights- Actions@ep.europa.eu	32256
Mediation and Dialogue Support Unit (MED)	Mediation activities Jean Monnet Dialogues Young Political Leaders Conflict prevention	Head of Unit Maximilan SCHROEDER	med@ep.europa.eu	32250

