

# Parliamentary Electoral Dialogue

## Challenges and needs for holding out-of-country voting for Ukraine's post-war elections



**30-31 May 2023**

Meeting room: **SPAAK 4B1**

European Parliament, Brussels



European Parliament  
Directorate-General for  
EXTERNAL POLICIES  
OF THE UNION





## **Parliamentary Electoral Dialogue:**

# **Challenges and needs for holding out-of-country voting for Ukraine's post-war elections**

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Organising the first post-war elections will pose unprecedented challenges for Ukraine, as a significant part of the electoral infrastructure has been damaged and millions of voters are now displaced within or outside the country. One key challenge for the electoral authorities of Ukraine will be to ensure voting rights and equal opportunities for its displaced citizens to participate, many of whom will be voting from outside Ukraine.

The Ukrainian electoral authorities have a complex challenge ahead of them in planning and executing the necessary elements to provide out-of-country voting (OCV). These steps include voter identification and registration in foreign countries, and training for new election officials. Facilitating voting for displaced citizens will require establishing numerous new out-of-country polling stations and/or the organization of postal voting. Central to this process will be providing citizens both within and outside the borders of Ukraine with the necessary electoral materials and ensuring that they are provided in a safe and secure manner. Moreover, a workable and secure way to tabulate and count votes cast will have to be put in place.

Beyond the necessary elections management tools to be established, election administration bodies need to conduct a large scale public outreach campaign to inform voters of the new arrangements made for voter registration and voting. These initiatives will need the support of host countries at every stage of their planning and implementation, further complicating the task, as authorities will need to be in regular and secure communication with each other. To succeed in these changes, the Ukrainian election authorities will need to determine an optimal roadmap of actions based on comparative options and lessons learned from across the globe.

To help address these questions and facilitate the provision of comparative lessons to Ukraine, International IDEA, in cooperation with the European Parliament, will convene a dialogue with European election management bodies (EMBs). The dialogue is designed to support Ukraine in identifying options for organising OCV and facilitating further dialogues with host-country authorities. The dialogue will be held on 30-31 May 2023, at the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium.

Participating electoral authorities will be requested to share good practices and lessons from their experiences in organizing OCV, including through the use of postal, online and early voting. The dialogue aims to support the Ukrainian election and other state authorities in increasing their knowledge of comparative OCV practices. This will involve identifying the next steps and questions for consideration, including taking stock of relevant laws and regulations in host countries, estimating the expenses and resources necessary for the vote, and formulating needs for future international support.

## Background

In line with the provisions of Ukraine's constitution, regular parliamentary elections should be conducted in autumn 2023, presidential elections in spring 2024, and local elections in autumn 2025. However, elections cannot take place while martial law is in place. While tragically the war is not over yet, the stocktaking of the war's effect on the voting population and infrastructure and preparations for new arrangements have already begun.

According to the United Nations Refugee Agency, by the end of February 2023, some 8.1 million Ukrainian refugees have been recorded across Europe. Given that the war is ongoing, these numbers are likely to change: some people may return to Ukraine once the security situation improves, while others are more likely to remain abroad at least until the war ends.

The Ukrainian Central Electoral Commission (CEC) recognizes the magnitude of the challenges it will be facing in preparing and administering the post-war electoral processes. In its recent proposals to prepare for those elections, the CEC proposed to expand the number of polling stations abroad and open polling stations outside of Ukrainian embassies and consulates, which will require cooperation from host countries.

To address these challenges, Ukrainian election authorities should be given ample international advice and support. As noted by International IDEA, the operational requirements to facilitate the votes of millions of voters abroad will require consideration of a wide range of OCV options. The complexity of introducing these options should not be underestimated. European countries provide a rich array of practices and lessons in organizing OCV, including through the use of postal and additional voting places outside of embassies. Recent experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic in expanding opportunities for remote voting domestically and OCV are also of interest. Moreover, activities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the International Organization for Migration together with host countries in facilitating OCV—for voters from Bosnia and Herzegovina (1996–1999), East Timor (1999), Kosovo (2000–2001), Afghanistan (2004), Iraq (2005) and Ecuador (2006–2007)—provide comparative experiences for review and consideration by Ukrainian authorities.

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**Agenda**  
*Central European Summer Time (CEST)*

**DAY I**

**09:00 – 09:30**

**Registrations and Welcome Coffee** (SPAAK 4B01, 4<sup>th</sup> floor)

**09:30 – 10:00**

**Welcoming Remarks**

- **Mr. Michael Gahler**, Member of the European Parliament Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group Lead Member for Ukraine
- **Ms. Olena Shuliak**, Head of the Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on the Organization of the State Power, Local Self-Government, Regional Development and Urban Planning, Member of Parliament
- **Mr. Oleh Didenko**, Chairperson of the Central Electoral Commission of Ukraine
- **Mr. Sam van der Staak**, Director for Europe, International IDEA

**10:00 – 11:00**

**SESSION I: OUT-OF-COUNTRY VOTING:**  
**COMPARATIVE PRACTICES AND CONSIDERATIONS NEEDED**

**Moderator: Mr. Michael Gahler, Member of the European Parliament,  
Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group Lead Member for Ukraine**

**Speakers:**

- **Mr. Peter Wolf**, Senior Expert on Digital Technologies, Global Electoral Processes, International IDEA
- **Mr. Hassan Sesay**, Team Leader for Strategic Partnership, United Nations Electoral Assistance Division
- **Ms. Meaghan Fitzgerald**, Head of the Election Department, ODIHR
- **Mr. Peter Erben**, IFES Principle Global Advisor, Senior Country Director, IFES Ukraine
- **Dr. Irena Hadziabdic**, Member of the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Venice Commission expert

**11:00 – 11:45**

**SESSION II OUT-OF-COUNTRY VOTING:  
IN-PERSON VOTING – COMPARATIVE EXPERIENCES**

**Moderator: Ms. Nana Kalandadze, Programme Manager, International IDEA**

**Speakers:**

- **Mr. Zsombor Vajda**, Vice-President of the Permanent Electoral Authority of Romania
- **Mr. Vasile Postolache**, Member of the Central Electoral Commission of Moldova
- **Dr. Suad Arnautovic**, President of the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina

**11:45 – 12:15**

**Coffee Break (SPAAK 4B01, 4<sup>th</sup> floor)**

**12:15 – 13:30**

**SESSION II - OUT-OF-COUNTRY VOTING:  
SPECIAL VOTING ARRANGEMENTS - COMPARATIVE EXPERIENCES**

**Moderator: Mr. Igor Kogut, Director, USAID “RADA: Next Generation” Program, Internews-Ukraine**

**Speakers:**

- **Ms. Anna Nyqvist**, Head of the Swedish Election Authority
- **Mr. Gregor Wenda**, Acting Head of Electoral Affairs Department, Federal Ministry of the Interior, Republic of Austria
- **Mr. Krzysztof Lorentz**, Head of the Department of the Financial Control of Political Parties and Election Campaigns, National Election Commission of Poland
- **Mr. Beat Kuoni**, Legal Counsel of the Political Rights Section of the Federal Chancellery of Switzerland

- **Mr. Thomas Hicks**, Commissioner, U.S. Election Assistance Commission
- **Mr. Shaun McNally**, Chief Executive Officer of the Electoral Commission of the United Kingdom

**13:30 – 15:00**

**Lunch** (*ASP 00 G Grand Café Spinelli*)

**15:00 – 17:30**

**SESSION III: OUT-OF-COUNTRY VOTING FOR UKRAINE:  
OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES AND ASSISTANCE NEEDS**

**15:00 – 16:15**

**SESSION III- PART I - OUT-OF-COUNTRY VOTING FOR UKRAINE:  
PRACTICAL CHALLENGES, PROSPECTIVE SOLUTIONS,  
AND STATE INSTITUTIONS' SUPPORT NEEDS**

**Moderator: Mr. Petras Auštrevičius, Member of the European Parliament**

**Speakers:**

- **Mr. Serhiy Postiviy**, Member of the Central Electoral Commission of Ukraine
- **Mr. Serhii Kalchenko**, Head of the Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on the Rules of Procedure, Deputy Ethics and Arrangement of Activity of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Member of Parliament
- **Mr. Roman Goriainov**, Director of the Department General for Consular Service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine

**16:15 – 17:30**

**SESSION III- PART II: OUT-OF-COUNTRY VOTING FOR UKRAINE:  
PERSPECTIVES FROM THE CIVIL SOCIETY AND INTERNATIONAL  
ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS**

**Moderator: Mr. Nacho Sánchez Amor, Member of the European Parliament**

**Speakers:**

- **Ms. Olha Aivazovska**, Head of Board, Civil Network OPORA
- **Ms. Julia Kyrychenko**, Member of Board, Centre of Policy and Legal Reform
- **Ms. Anna Denis**, Democracy and Governance Advisor, IFES Ukraine
- **Ms. Yuliya Shpylova**, Programme Officer Eastern Europe, International IDEA

**17:30 – 19:30**

**Reception** (*Salon MEP 2 and 3*)

## DAY II

**09:00 – 09:30**

Welcome Coffee (SPAAK 4B01, 4<sup>th</sup> floor)

**09:30 – 12:00**

### **SESSION IV: OUT-OF-COUNTRY VOTING FOR UKRAINE: NEXT STEPS**

#### **Moderators:**

- **Ms. Yuliya Shypilova**, Programme Officer Eastern Europe, International IDEA
- **Mr. Oleh Didenko**, Chairperson of the Central Electoral Commission of Ukraine
- **Ms. Olena Shuliak**, Head of the Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on the Organization of the State Power, Local Self-Government, Regional Development and Urban Planning, Member of the Parliament
- **Mr. Serhii Kalchenko**, Head of the Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on the Rules of Procedure, Deputy Ethics and Arrangement of Activity of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Member of Parliament
- **Ms. Olena Hataullina**, Secretary of the Central Electoral Commission of Ukraine
- **Mr. Sergii Postivyi**, Member of the Central Electoral Commission of Ukraine
- **Mr. Roman Goriainov**, Director of the Department General for Consular Service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine

#### **Roundtable discussion:**

- Albania**
  - **Mr. Ilirjan Celibashi**, State Elections Commissioner, Central Elections Commission of Albania
  - **Mr. Erton Sinani**, Chief of Staff of the Central Elections Commission of Albania
- Belgium**
  - **Ms. Isabel Leliaert**, Attaché at the Election Unit of the Federal Public Service Home Affairs, Belgium
- Bosnia and Herzegovina**
  - **Dr. Suad Arnautovic**, President of the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina
  - **Dr. Irena Hadziabdic**, Member of the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Venice Commission expert
- Croatia**
  - **Ms. Ivana Belec**, Member of the State Electoral Commission of the Republic of Croatia
  - **Ms. Ivana Ljulj Cvitanić**, Member of the State Electoral Commission of the Republic of Croatia



- Czech Republic**   ▪ **Ms. Kristýna Rysová**, Policy Officer at the Unit for Legal and Methodological Conduct of Elections, Department of Elections of Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic
- Denmark**       ▪ **Mr. Søren Stauning**, Special advisor of the Election Unit at the Office for Democracy of the Ministry of the Interior and Health of Denmark
- Estonia**        ▪ **Mr. Arne Koitmäe**, Head of the State Electoral Office of Estonia
- Finland**        ▪ **Ms. Elina Rissanen**, Senior Specialist, Ministry of Justice of Finland
- Germany**       ▪ **Ms. Anke Balzer**, Head of Office of the Federal Returning Officer of the Federal Republic of Germany
  - **Ms. Anna-Karina Elbert**, Employee of the Federal Returning Officer of the Federal Republic of Germany
- Hungary**       ▪ **Dr. Péter Minda**, Vice-president of the National Election Office of Hungary
- Italy**            ▪ **Dr. Giorgio Cella**, Prof. of the Catholic University and foreign policy analyst, Italy
- Latvia**          ▪ **Ms. Kristine Saulite**, Chairperson of the Central Election Commission of Latvia
- Lithuania**     ▪ **Mr. Andrius Puksas**, Acting Chairperson of the Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Lithuania
  - **Mr. Darius Gaižauskas**, Head of Information Technology Division of the Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Lithuania
- Moldova**       ▪ **Mr. Vasile Postolache**, Member of the Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Moldova
- Poland**          ▪ **Mr. Krzysztof Lorentz**, Head of the Department of the Financial Control of Political Parties and Election Campaigns, National Election Commission of Poland
  - **Mr. Tomasz Gąsior**, Expert, Department of the Financial Control of Political Parties and Election Campaigns, National Election Commission of Poland
- Romania**       ▪ **Mr. Zsombor Vajda**, Vice-President of the Permanent Electoral Authority of Romania
- Spain**            ▪ **Ms. Alba Romero**, Head of International Electoral Cooperation Unit of the Deputy Directorate for Electoral Matters of the Ministry of the Interior of Spain
- Sweden**         ▪ **Ms. Anna Nyqvist**, Head of the Swedish Election Authority
- Switzerland**   ▪ **Mr. Beat Kuoni**, Legal Counsel of the Political Rights Section of the Federal Chancellery of Switzerland

- United Kingdom**   ▪ **Mr. Shaun McNally**, Chief Executive Officer of the Electoral Commission of the United Kingdom
- United States of America**   ▪ **Mr. Thomas Hicks**, Commissioner, U.S. Election Assistance Commission

**12:00 – 12:30**

**CLOSING SESSION: WRAP-UP DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS**

**Speakers:**

- **Mr. David McAllister**, Chair, Committee on Foreign Affairs, European Parliament
- **Mr. Oleh Didenko**, Chairperson of the Central Electoral Commission of Ukraine
- **Mr. Sam van der Staak**, Director for Europe, International IDEA

**12:30 – 14:00**

**Lunch** (*ASP 00 G Grand Café Spinelli*)





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