



Ministry of the Interior and  
Kingdom Relations



Roundtable on  
Online Political Advertising and Microtargeting: the latest legal,  
ethical, political and technical evolutions  
and  
Virtual Meeting of the European Cooperation Network on Elections

Webinar series 15-24 June 2020

Organised by the European Commission, Dutch Ministry of the  
Interior and Kingdom Relations, and the International Institute for  
Democracy and Electoral Assistance

Monday 15 June, Thursday 18 June and Wednesday 24 June 2020

**Programme: Attached**

**Concept**

European Commission's Directorate General Justice and Consumers (DG JUST), the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) will organise a webinar series on online political advertising and microtargeting, to be held between 15 and 24 June 2020.

This event series is convened to advance the understanding of the implementation of rules on and oversight over online political advertising and microtargeting in ensuring safe and fair elections, support the exchange of good practices, as well as to inform policy initiatives and potentially support the development of guidelines, rules and oversight frameworks.

The online discussions will bring together members of the European Cooperation Network on Elections. Additional participants will provide a balance of perspectives, new voices and geographic spread and include leading European and global experts from civil society, academia and selected technology companies. The event will provide an opportunity to discuss the state of regulation and oversight of online political microtargeting.

## **Background**

The European Cooperation Network on Elections was inaugurated in January 2019 to exchange practices on a range of topics relevant to ensuring free and fair elections, including data protection, cyber-security, transparency, disinformation and awareness raising among representatives of Member States' authorities with competence in electoral matters. In June 2019, International IDEA and the Dutch Ministry of the Interior co-organised a roundtable on the regulation and oversight of online microtargeting by political parties in election campaigns. The upcoming round table follows up on both these initiatives.

## **Event scope and problem definition**

For the purpose of the event,

Online political advertising refers to three things:

1. the use of online platforms and social media profiles to publish messages and communicate with citizens;
2. "organic" online campaigning through citizens' interactions with political party communications; and
3. the use of paid online advertising services, either as provided directly by online platforms or via intermediaries such as digital marketing analysts and data brokers the use of paid online advertising services.

Microtargeting relates to a number of techniques used by social media platforms and other market actors offering services in the context of online advertising which apply online user data to direct content towards individuals and groups with defined characteristics.

Regulation and oversight of online political advertising and microtargeting is expected to address several separate challenges, including:

1. protecting the ability of voters to form opinions free of manipulative interference of any kind;
2. protecting the privacy of citizens;
3. preventing the erosion of campaign ethics with detrimental effects on electoral integrity;
4. maintaining a level playing field between political parties;
5. ensuring the transparency of political advertising;
6. ensuring the transparency of campaign spending; and
7. addressing the power imbalance between governments and online platforms.

While media and political finance regulations cover traditional forms of media, online advertising may not be sufficiently covered by existing regulation. The EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) provides some solutions to these regulatory challenges where they relate to threats to privacy and personal data.

Even where regulation exists, its enforcement and oversight may remain difficult and many questions remain open. At the event in June 2019, various challenges were mentioned, including the very definition of a "political advertisement", the question of what establishes "meaningful transparency" and the extent of enforcement of GDPR to address these challenges.

**Event format**

The event will be held online with a two-hour session on 15 and 18 June. Each session will be introduced by keynote addresses and presentations as the background for the subsequent sharing of national and practitioner experiences by event participants.

The webinar sessions aim to capture the latest legal, ethical, political and technological evolutions, and to provide an opportunity to exchange experiences gained since the May 2019 European Parliament elections and other elections in recent years. The sessions will focus on solutions for secure and fair online political advertising and providing a holistic perspective on the problem that incorporates country experiences and the views of experts.

Webinar 1 will be dedicated to exploring the scope and limitations of existing legal frameworks for online political advertising and microtargeting.

Webinar 2 will focus on the oversight of rules and regulations, experiences with the application of GDPR in online political microtargeting for online political microtargeting, and the effectiveness and capability of oversight structures.

Participants are invited to share both good practices and reflections related to the regulatory practices, and the structuring and capabilities of the agencies responsible for the oversight of online advertising and microtargeting in election campaigns.

The session on day 3 will be a closed meeting amongst representatives of EU Member States in the European Cooperation Network on Elections.



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## Webinar series

### Online Political Advertising and Microtargeting: the latest legal, ethical, political and technical evolutions

Programme 15 and 18 June 2020

Webinar 1: MONDAY, 15 JUNE 2020 (11:00-13:00)

Exploring legal frameworks for online political advertising and microtargeting, and  
their implementation

*The objective of the session is to advance the understanding of legal frameworks for online campaigning, exchange good implementation practices and identify remaining implementation challenges.*

#### **11:00 – 11:25**

*Welcome and Opening Address*

- **Mr Eric Stokink**, Deputy Director for Democracy and Governance, Minister of the Interior and Kingdom relations, The Netherlands

#### **11:25– 11:40**

*Presentation on legal frameworks for online political advertising*

- **Mr Dr Ronan Fahy**, Senior Researcher, Institute for Information Law, University of Amsterdam

#### **11:40 – 11:50**

*Presentation of the survey conducted by International IDEA (findings related to legal frameworks)*

- **Mr Peter Wolf**, Senior Expert on digital technologies, International IDEA

### **11:50 – 12:55**

*Practical examples and national experiences*

*Discussion*

### **12:55 – 13:00**

*Conclusions and Closing of the session by*

- **Mr Eric Stokkink**, Deputy Director for Democracy and Governance, Minister of the Interior and Kingdom relations, The Netherlands

Webinar 2: THURSDAY, 18 JUNE 2020 (11:00-13:00)

## Enhancing oversight of online political advertising and microtargeting

*The objective of the session is to discuss challenges and efforts to innovate effective oversight of online political advertising and microtargeting.*

### **11:00 – 11:05            OPENING**

*Welcome by*

- **Mr Sam van der Staak**, Head of Europe Programme, International IDEA

### **11:05 – 11:20**

*Keynote Addresses by*

- **Ms Irena Moozova**, Director, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST), European Commission

### **11:20 – 11:55**

*Presentation of the survey conducted by International IDEA (findings related to oversight)*

- **Mr Peter Wolf**, Senior Expert on digital technologies, International IDEA

*Expert considerations and research perspectives*

- **Mr Julian Jaurisch**, Project Director “Strengthening the Digital Public Sphere | Policy”, Stiftung Neue Verantwortung
- **Mr Sam Jeffers**, Co-Founder, Who Targets Me
- **Mr Gary Wright**, Co-lead Data & Politics programme, Tactical Tech

**11:55 – 12:55**

*Practical examples and national experiences*

*Discussion*

**12:55 – 13:00**

*Conclusions and Closing of the session by*

- **Mr Sam van der Staak**, Head of Europe Programme, International IDEA

Webinar 3: WEDNESDAY, 24 JUNE 2020

Meeting of the European Cooperation Network on Elections

**Agenda will be circulated separately to the members of the Network**