



INTERNATIONAL IDEA
Supporting democracy worldwide

The State of Democracy in Europe 2021

**Countering Democratic Backsliding-
Conversation with Democracy Defenders**

Global State of Democracy Report 2021

**13 December 2021 10:00-11:00 (CET/Brussels)
online**

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INTRODUCTION

International IDEA's Global State of Democracy Report reviews the state of democracy around the world over the course of 2020 and 2021. The Europe report forms part of a series of regional and thematic reports examining democracies' key attributes such as representative government, fundamental rights, and checks on government.

About the report

International IDEA launched the Global State of Democracy Initiative in 2016, to analyze democratic trends, challenges and opportunities impacting on the global democracy landscape. The initiative aims to contribute to the public debate on democracy and inform policy interventions to strengthen democracy.

The assessment is based on International IDEA's Global State of Democracy (GSoD) Indices, which measure democratic performance for 165 countries from 1975 until 2020 and help to monitor progress on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

[The State of Democracy in Europe 2021 report](#) is part of a series of regional and thematic reports associated with the [Global State of Democracy 2021 Report](#). The report, in its third edition, provides up-to-date, incisive, relevant data, analysis and policy guidance on the challenges and opportunities to democratization around the world. The Report is designed to inform, influence and help shape the agenda for the future of democracy

[The full report and related data are available here.](#)

For more than a decade, a majority of Europe's established democracies have seen their democratic qualities stagnate—or even decline—rather than improve. Some show clear signs of erosion of democratic processes and fundamental rights; several have deteriorated to the point where they can hardly be qualified as democracies any longer. The arrival of the Covid-19 global health crisis has added to the strain. The pandemic has laid bare the strengths and weaknesses of democracies across Europe, and the warnings it offers need to be taken seriously. The pandemic has, moreover, widened the democratic rift between Western Europe and much of Central and Eastern Europe to a dangerous point.

Nevertheless, many democracies have stood their ground against the worst of Covid-19 restrictions and have proven more resilient than initially expected. The pandemic has also left Europe with a greater sense of urgency to defend its democracy against foreign challenges. This report provides lessons and recommendations that governments, political and civic actors, and international democracy assistance providers should consider in order to counter the concerning trends in the erosion of democracy, and to foster its resilience and deepening.

13 December 2021

10:00-10:05	Welcome and Opening Remarks H.E. Ms Hanna Lehtinen , Ambassador and Representative of Finland to the Political and Security Committee of the EU
10:05-10:15	Keynote Address Ms Věra Jourová , Vice-President of the European Commission for Values and Transparency
10:15-10:25	The State of Democracy in Europe – Presentation of the Report Ms Nana Kalandadze , Programme Manager, International IDEA
10:25-11:00	Panel Discussion on the State of Democracy in Europe Moderator: Mr Sam van der Staak , Head of Europe Programme, International IDEA Dr Adam Bodnar , Poland's Seventh Ombudsman (Commissioner for Human Rights), Professor at the SWPS University Ms Márta Pardavi , Co-chair, Hungarian Helsinki Committee (HHC) Discussion and questions from the online audience

Ms Věra Jourová, Vice-President of the European Commission for Values and Transparency



Věra Jourová is currently Vice President of the European Commission for Values and Transparency and deals with democracy, rule of law, media pluralism and fight against disinformation. From 2014 to 2019, she served as EU Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality. In 2014, before arriving to the European Commission, Ms Jourová held the position of Minister for Regional Development in the Czech Republic. Previous to this, from 2006 to 2013, she worked in her own company as an international consultant on European Union funding, and was also involved in consultancy activities in the Western Balkans relating to the European Union Accession. She holds a Degree in Law (Mgr.) and a Master's degree (Mgr.) in the Theory of Culture from the Charles University, Prague.

H.E. Ms Hanna Lehtinen, Ambassador and Representative of Finland to the Political and Security Committee of the EU



Ambassador Hanna Lehtinen has considerable experience working in foreign affairs. She was head of the department of Foreign affairs at the Finnish ministry of foreign affairs. Lehtinen also worked in the Department for Foreign Affairs of America and Asia, and in the Department of Commerce and Politics. She was also ambassador of Finland in Warsaw, before becoming Ambassador of Finland to the Political and Security Committee of the EU in 2018.

She received a special military award for her work in the defence forces from the Finnish defence forces.

She holds a master's degree in international economics from the Helsinki School of Economics.

Dr Adam Bodnar, Poland's Seventh Ombudsman (Commissioner for Human Rights), Professor at the SWPS University



Adam Bodnar served as Poland's seventh Ombudsman (Commissioner for Human Rights), from 2015 until 2021. He started his professional track as an associate with Weil, Gotshal & Mangers. A few years after, he joined the Helsinki Foundation of Human Rights, first as a co-founder and coordinator of the Precedent Cases Programme and then as head of legal department and vice-president of the Management Board. In 2013-2014, he was a member of the board of directors of the United Nations Fund for Victims of Torture. For the defense of judicial independence and vulnerable minorities he and his office received the Rafto Prize (2018) and Rule of Law Award by the World Justice Project (2019). In 2020 he was awarded the French Order of the Legion of Honor with the rank of Chevalier. Since March 2020 he is a professor at the SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities. He holds a doctor's with habilitation in law from University of Warsaw and an LL.M. in comparative constitutional law from CEU.



Ms Márta Pardavi, Co-chair, Hungarian Helsinki Committee (HHC).

Márta Pardavi is co-chair of the Hungarian Helsinki Committee (HHC), a leading human rights NGO in Budapest. She has recently been focusing on the threats to the rule of law and civil society space in Hungary and in the EU, and on strengthening alliances between human rights defenders in the EU. Márta serves on the boards of PILnet, International Partnership for Human Rights and Verzio International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival. She has been awarded the 2018 William D. Zabel Human Rights Award from Human Rights First, Civil Rights Defender's Civil Rights Defenders of the Year 2019 award and was chosen to be a member of POLITICO28 Class of 2019.



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

Sam van der Staak is the Head of International IDEA's Europe Programme. His work focuses on responding to democratic developments in Europe, with a special emphasis on the topics of political parties, money in politics, and ICT in democracy.

Van der Staak manages International IDEA's Regional Europe Programme, in which capacity he leads International IDEA's representation to the European Union in Brussels. Sam has been involved in International IDEA publications on Cybersecurity in elections, Citizen movements, Money in politics, and Political party dialogue. He makes regular media contributions for national and international media.



Ms Nana Kalandadze, Programme Manager, International IDEA

Nana Kalandadze leads International IDEA's initiatives in the Eastern Partnership region. Nana has over 15 years of experience in designing and managing democracy assistance initiatives in the field of democratic participation and representation, electoral integrity and the role of money in democratic politics, gender quotas and women's electoral participation and democracy assessments. She closely follows and engages with national stakeholders in supporting democratic reforms in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Before joining International IDEA, Nana worked as a Gender Advisor of the OSCE/ODIHR Democratization Department, being involved in numerous gender equality and non-discrimination, OSCE Mission to Georgia and various other international missions on electoral reform and democratic reforms. Nana holds a master's degree in International Relations and European Studies from Central European University in Budapest, Hungary.



The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) is an intergovernmental organization that supports sustainable democracy worldwide. It was founded in 1995 and currently has 33 Member States. International IDEA's headquarters are in Stockholm, and the Institute has 17 regional and country offices across the globe.

International IDEA advances democracy worldwide, as a universal human aspiration and an enabler of sustainable development, through support to the building, strengthening, and safeguarding of democratic political institutions and processes at all levels. International IDEA believes that democracy is a universal human aspiration and an experience that is pursued and lived in different ways around the world. To support this mission, International IDEA works in a number of areas, including elections, constitution building, money in politics, parliaments, and democracy assessment.

The International IDEA Office to the EU represents knowledge resources on democracy before EU institutions and provides technical support to a range of actors in Europe on issues of electoral integrity, democratic and inclusive constitution-making processes, parliamentary strengthening and combating political corruption.

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