



## **Ad hoc Committee of the Bureau of the Assembly on the New Democratic Pact**

### **Meeting of 20 November 2025 – Concept note**

**Title:** Safeguarding Democracy: Elections and Foreign Interference

**Venue:** Chişinău, Republic of Moldova

#### **Background**

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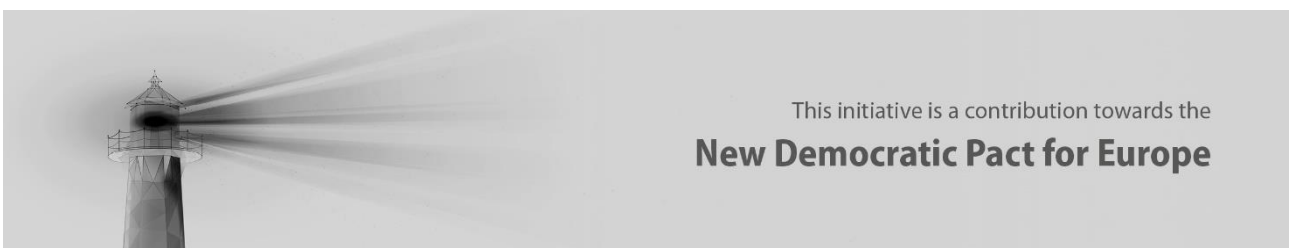
Free and fair elections lie at the core of democratic governance and constitute a fundamental obligation under Article 3 of Protocol No. 1 to the European Convention of Human Rights. Yet, recent electoral cycles across Europe and beyond have revealed increasingly sophisticated forms of foreign interference, including disinformation campaigns, cyberattacks, illicit financing, and the manipulation of information spaces. Such acts threaten the integrity of elections, erode public trust, and weaken democratic institutions.

The Council of Europe offers a comprehensive and coherent legal framework for safeguarding democracy through its standards and the complementary work of its institutions - notably the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the Venice Commission, and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. Together, these bodies form a unique institutional architecture encompassing all stages of the electoral cycle: from standard-setting, monitoring, and legal review to election observation, pre- and post-electoral dialogue, and capacity-building.

Within this framework, PACE plays a leading role in steering the Council of Europe's electoral cycle. Alongside the Congress and the Venice Commission, PACE brings together all Council of Europe institutions, committees, and departments involved in standard-setting, monitoring, and cooperation across all phases of the electoral process. This includes areas such as the legal framework, political financing, media and environment, as well as cross-cutting issues related to anti-discrimination, gender equality, cybersecurity, and artificial intelligence. This integrated and coordinated approach ensures coherence, continuity, and accountability in promoting democratic integrity across the member States.

Through its extensive observation missions, resolutions, and follow-up mechanisms, PACE contributes decisively to strengthening electoral legal frameworks, addressing systemic weaknesses observed, and promoting democratic resilience. Moreover, the PACE Electoral Cooperation projects and programs and the Parliamentary Alliance for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFE), provide excellent platforms for cooperation among national parliaments, fostering peer exchange, political commitment, and coordinated responses to challenges such as foreign interference.

As the institutions that directly represent citizens, national parliaments are essential actors in translating the Council of Europe's standards into effective national legislation, ensuring political oversight, and reinforcing public confidence in democratic processes. Their engagement, supported by PACE and the PAFFE including through cooperation activities, is indispensable to preserving the integrity of elections and upholding democratic security across Europe.



This initiative is a contribution towards the  
**New Democratic Pact for Europe**



## Objectives

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- **Reaffirm** the Council of Europe's standards on free and fair elections and highlight the essential role of PACE and national parliaments in promoting and implementing such standards.
- **Examine** emerging challenges and forms of foreign interference in electoral and democratic processes, and discuss effective measures to prevent, detect, and counter such threats.
- **Promote** the exchange of good practices and strengthen inter-parliamentary cooperation to safeguard electoral integrity, enhance public trust, and consolidate democracy across member States.



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