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Welcome to our first newsletter!

Supporting Democracy is an EIDHR-funded technical assistance project designed to respond to European Union Delegations (EUDs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) that need expertise on the role of civil society in the democratic cycle.

New research on the shrinking space for civic engagement in Eastern and Southern Africa

Citizen organisations, journalists and civic activists around the world are increasingly facing restrictions, interference and harassment from governments and other actors. To find out how civil society is responding to such pressures, the European Commission has invited us to conduct seven broad country-specific consultations in Eastern and Southern Africa. Marc De Tollenaere, who has been coordinating this study, will present some preliminary findings to the EIDHR, CSO-LA and Human Rights & Democracy Focal Points in Delegations in February in Brussels.

The study will also be presented at the roundtable 'Working to promote democratic accountability in Eastern and Southern Africa' on 13 – 15 March 2018 in Johannesburg. At the event, civil society representatives from each country (Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia), EU Delegations, and EU member state representatives will discuss how to promote accountability to counter the shrinking space for civil society. The event is intended to provide the EU with insights to inform its support for such efforts.

EU4Democracy campaign 2017

The first EU4Democracy campaign was launched on 15 September 2017 on International Democracy Day, to communicate the EU's work on democracy, and engage activists, students, politicians and the media on related issues around the world. *Supporting Democracy* created a global brand for the campaign as well as a package of tools and materials, featuring activities, print and digital assets, and illustrations created by the group Cartooning for Peace. 26 EU Delegations took part in the month-long campaign, hosting documentary screenings,



exhibitions, and roundtable events to mark International Democracy Day and International Day for Universal Access to Information. Our selfie-based viral campaign 'My democracy is' was shared on social media using the campaign hashtags #EU4Democracy and #Mydemocracyis and the Delegation to Uganda even held a competition for the best photo. Plans are already in place to make this year's campaign bigger and better, including a host of new digital materials – so watch this space!

Guide for Citizen Observers on Electoral Reform piloted in Kyrgyzstan

Our new Guide for Citizen Observers on Electoral Reform is specifically designed to support EU Delegations with long-term engagement of national observer groups beyond election day. Its step-by-step approach gives civil society the tools to monitor and report on the follow up of observer recommendations. We introduced this new advocacy methodology in Kyrgyzstan ahead of the presidential election, held on 15 October 2017. At the EU Delegation's request, *Supporting Democracy's* experts trained 37 citizen groups from seven provinces, ranging from disability and women's rights to education and research. This year, we plan to offer long-term support to civil society in Kyrgyzstan to maintain momentum on democratic reforms between elections.

Our experts are currently accepting requests from EU Delegations for similar long-term training and mentoring of national observers. For more information, contact us at: contact@supporting-democracy.eu



Citizen's Voice Initiative piloted in Malaysia and Peru

Supporting Democracy has launched the Citizen's Voice Initiative (CVI) to build consensus on how to campaign for transparency and accountability. At the Delegation's request, CVI experts will support a burgeoning network of citizen groups engaged in assessing progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in two Malaysian states. In Peru, we also carried out a fact-finding mission to assess the viability of using CVI to support the watchdog Observatorio de Integridad in monitoring the allocation of reconstruction funds following devastating floods in 2017.

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Request Support

For more information or to request assistance, please email:

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