



Annual Report 2022



DEMOCRACY
REPORTING
INTERNATIONAL

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Foreword

Urður Gunnarsdóttir,
Chairperson of DRI's Board of Directors



As countries gradually lifted COVID-19 safety measures in early 2022, the world was confronted with severe geopolitical tensions, weakened economies, and disruptive technological innovation. All these challenges are having an immense impact on the state of democracy in the world, making the work of Democracy Reporting International (DRI) all the more critical and relevant.

The ongoing threat that authoritarianism poses to democracy came to the fore once again, with Russia's full-fledged invasion of Ukraine. Russia's attack, underpinned by a lack of Chinese opposition to the war, highlights the security risks coming from authoritarian regimes. In the face of this threat, most democracies rallied around to support Ukraine, providing them with a renewed sense of purpose and strong reasons to deepen their alliances.

DRI has been part of the collective democratic response to the war. Against the backdrop of Ukraine's future accession to the EU, a DRI delegation travelled to Kyiv in September 2022 and, together with Ukrainian non-governmental organisation (NGO) partners, held a discussion on democracy in times of war. Throughout 2022, we have also conducted social media monitoring to shed light on the online perceptions of the war in Ukraine, the EU, and Russia.

The year 2022 also saw widespread protests in several countries, including Iran, Sri Lanka, and China. Many people in Asia took to the streets to demand their rights, frustrated with repressive measures, economic mismanagement, and, in some cases, kleptocratic leaders. DRI's work on the continent has been increasingly difficult to sustain and, regrettably, funders have not been very engaged in supporting democracy in Asian countries. This is particularly unfortunate when countries we work in, such as Sri Lanka and Myanmar, have undergone serious turmoil. Nevertheless, during 2022, we continued to strengthen the role of civil society in policymaking in Pakistan. In Myanmar, in a repressive context, we continued to support a culture of inclusive dialogue and to build the technical skills of civil society organisations. In Tunisia, also in a challenging context, we continued to support the rule of law, and encouraged young people to participate actively in public affairs. We also continued working with civil society – especially youth and women – and government in Lebanon and Libya.

DRI has also continued its research and analysis on the impact of technology on democracy. In a year when many state-of-the-art AI content generation tools were released, DRI reported on the impact of AI content generation on the democratic information space. In the area of the rule of law, DRI developed, together with partners, an assessment of the non-implementation of EU court rulings, a methodology that the European Commission later adopted in their 2022 Rule of Law Report.

Amid this challenging global context, I believe that DRI's signature impartial research, our willingness to listen to communities, and our long-term investments in building institutions are more necessary and more relevant than ever. This is why I am honoured and proud to have been appointed chair of DRI's Board of Directors in 2022.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our predecessors on the board. In 2022, Ilkka Uusitalo, who served as the chair, and Gabriele Geertz, who oversaw finances and organisational development, ended their board terms after eight years. They were the first board members and carried the board's work for almost a decade with great dedication and diligence. Ilkka and Gabriele were always proactive and ready to support the organisation, overseeing eight years of growth as DRI addressed new challenges, such as digital democracy or working in Europe. As new members, we have relied on their experience and insights. We are very grateful to both of them.

We, the new board members, certainly have our work cut out for us as well. My colleagues and I on the Board are confident that, with the dedicated, hard-working group of DRI staff, we are well equipped to face current and evolving challenges to democracy. I invite you to read through this Annual Report to understand and appreciate DRI's crucial role in addressing these challenges.



About DRI

Democracy Reporting International (DRI) is an independent, non-profit organisation committed to defending and improving democracy worldwide.



Our vision

We believe that democracy must be at the heart of any effort to address current challenges.

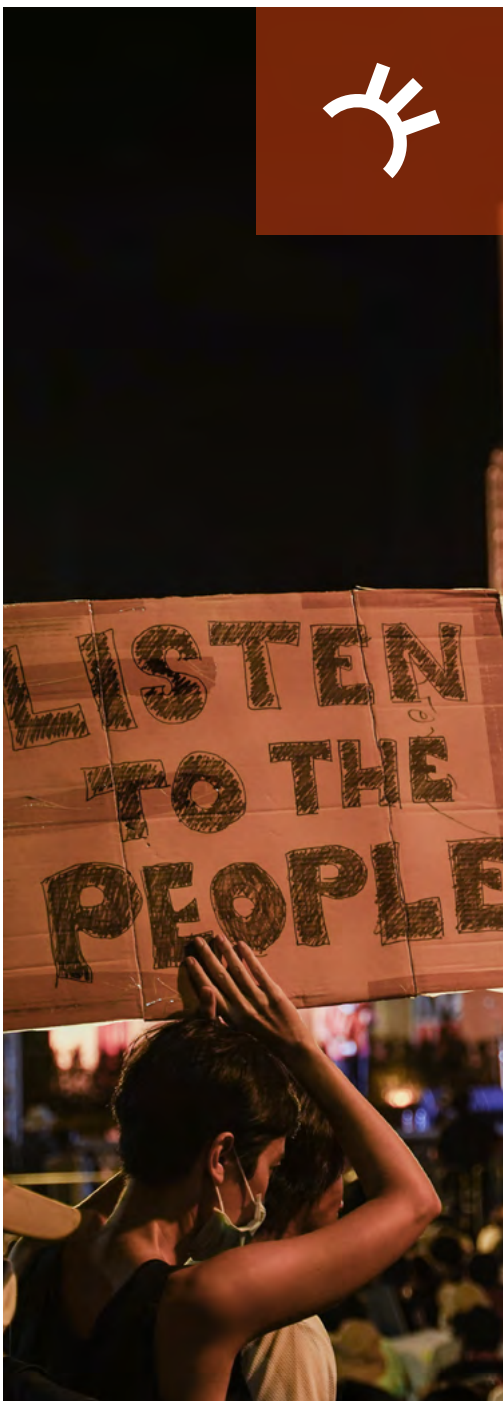
Democracy is not a given; it is an idea and a political system that all of us need to nurture and protect. For this reason, we believe people must be active participants in public life, and not passive subjects of their governments.

We work towards a world that empowers informed people to elect their governments and to participate in decision-making, irrespective of social status, gender, religious belief, political convictions, ethnicity, age, or ability.

People make change and institutions preserve it. This is why democracy thrives when governments and institutions are close to the people they serve. Their rules must be transparent, and government actors need to be accountable to each other.

Amidst a trend of authoritarianism, we work with citizens, elected officials, civil society, and institutions to strengthen democracy. We need to think of new ways in which democracy delivers for citizens, particularly amid unforeseen crises, such as COVID-19 or Russia's war against Ukraine, and to address long-term challenges, such as climate change.

We will continue this work until democracies are more inclusive, participatory, legitimate, and effective at responding to people's needs.





Our mission

We analyse complex political trends and break them down to help democratic actors address the numerous challenges we face. To make democracy more effective, we raise awareness of emerging threats, and outline recommendations before these become pressing problems.

Through our programmes, we work to support people's rights to live a dignified life, to be treated with fairness, and to participate in the shaping of their communities. We focus on those often left out – young people, women, minorities, and rural populations.


Together with citizens and other actors committed to democratic renewal, we establish and improve democratic institutions that preserve people's freedoms. Our reference points are internationally agreed democratic principles.

By engaging with citizens, civil society, media, and governments at all levels, we encourage all actors to have a constructive and long-term view of the problems they want to solve.

With a presence in eight countries, local teams, and wide networks of partners, we listen to communities, and together chart the best path towards change. At a time when politics are increasingly volatile, this local knowledge, combined with our broad areas of expertise, allows us to respond quickly and flexibly to unexpected developments in the countries where we work.

As part of our overall mission, we address pressing issues to make our societies more democratic: the technological transformation and the digital sphere, the upholding of the rule of law, policy design and implementation, local governance, youth and women's participation, and equal rights and elections, among other topics.

Our Values



We are impartial: We do not work for political parties or programmes, and we are free from pressure by interest groups. Our reputation as an honest broker allows us to bring social actors from different ideologies, backgrounds, and cultural traditions to the table.

We are inclusive: We believe in inclusive societies and apply this principle to our work. When we establish a dialogue, we hear every voice across the political spectrum, and from different cultural, religious and ethnic traditions, including vulnerable groups that might have little access to the political process.

We are in it for the long run: We invest time and energy in the problems we want to work on and in the communities we want to change. This is why we establish offices in many of the countries we work in and develop close and long-standing relationships with our partners.

We innovate: To breathe new life into democracy, we need different and creative approaches. We are agile at adapting to the challenges of a rapidly evolving world, and bold at proposing practicable solutions to today's challenges.

We are diligent: Thanks to an ongoing evaluation of our impact, we adjust our programmes to time-tested methodologies, taking into account the political and cultural traditions of the places where we work.

We adapt quickly: Our broad areas of expertise, committed global and local teams, and flexible structure make us an agile actor in the field, able to deliver first responses to emerging political trends and crises.

What we do

Our work centres on analysis and reporting, training, and raising public awareness. In this, we are guided by the democratic and human rights obligations enshrined in international law. We work to promote democratic elections, independent judiciaries, transparent government and public institutions, and fundamental freedoms for all.

We work across countries in Asia, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa, to strengthen the following five pillars of any democratic society:



Elections:

We help defend the heart of democracy through social media monitoring to ensure authentic online debates; through analysis and supporting legal reforms and voter education; and through involving citizens in election observation.



Justice:

Beyond supporting the writing and implementation of new constitutions, we work with courts and lawmakers to help strengthen the rule of law and judicial independence. We also help include civil society and the public in debates on improving and ensuring justice.



Human rights:

We work with people and institutions to make sure that everyone can participate equally in public and political life, without fear or facing repression.




Local governance:

We work on decentralisation reforms, strengthening how local governments operate, and increasing civic participation, to bring democracy closer to people.



Democratic discourse:

We work to make sure that everyone can access public debate, online and offline, regardless of political opinions or personal beliefs. We do this by countering disinformation and political polarisation, and by engaging citizen groups in monitoring online content.



“In the past election, I ran and had to withdraw in favour of another female candidate from my party. But this time I am determined to continue running until the end, even if my party refused to support me, because the courses we followed with DRI strengthened my self-confidence and made me determined to proceed with this experience.”

– A participant in our capacity-building programme for women

DRI at a glance

📍 Offices

📁 Regions and countries where we also worked during 2022

👥 Number of events per region/area

📄 Number of publications per region/area

Digital Democracy

👥 📄
11 12

Europe

👥 📄
73 24

Asia

👥
11

MENA

👥 📄
233 48



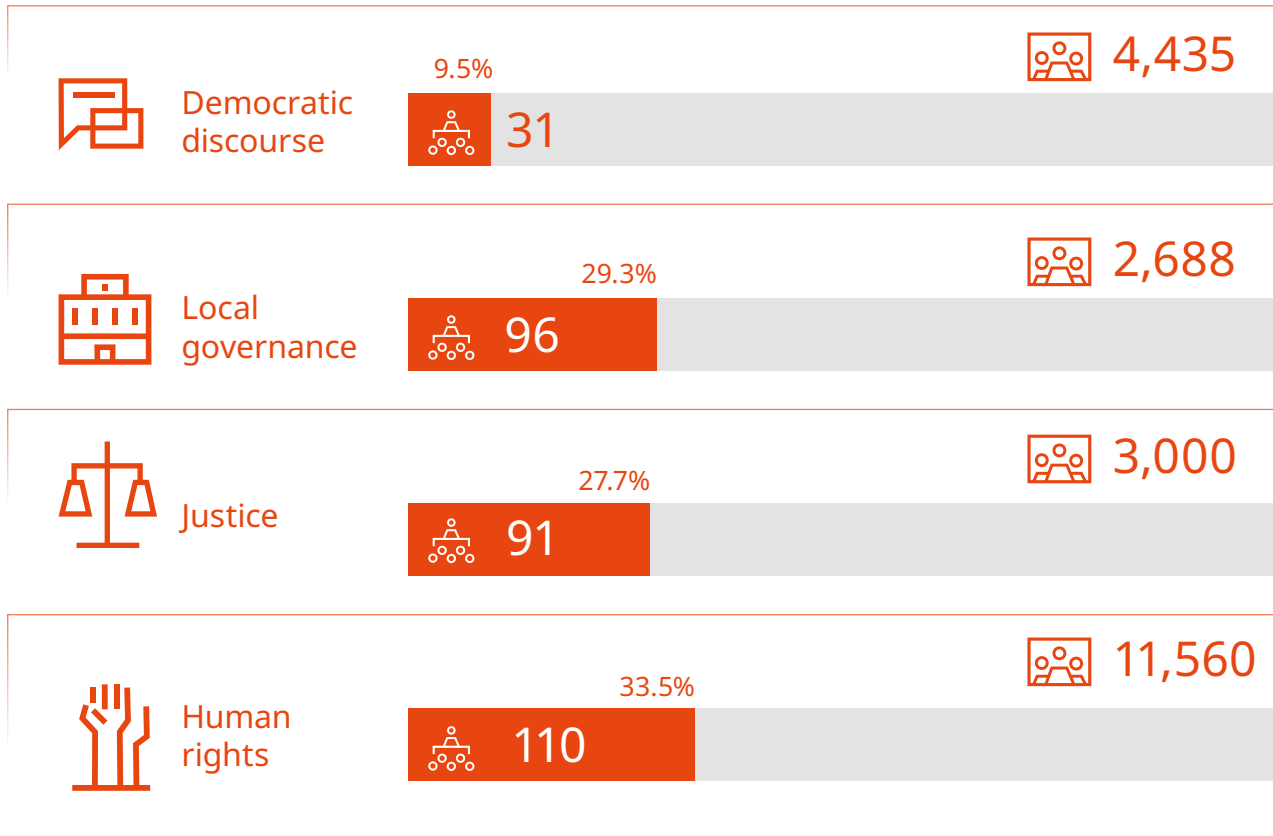
Our events in 2022



Number of events



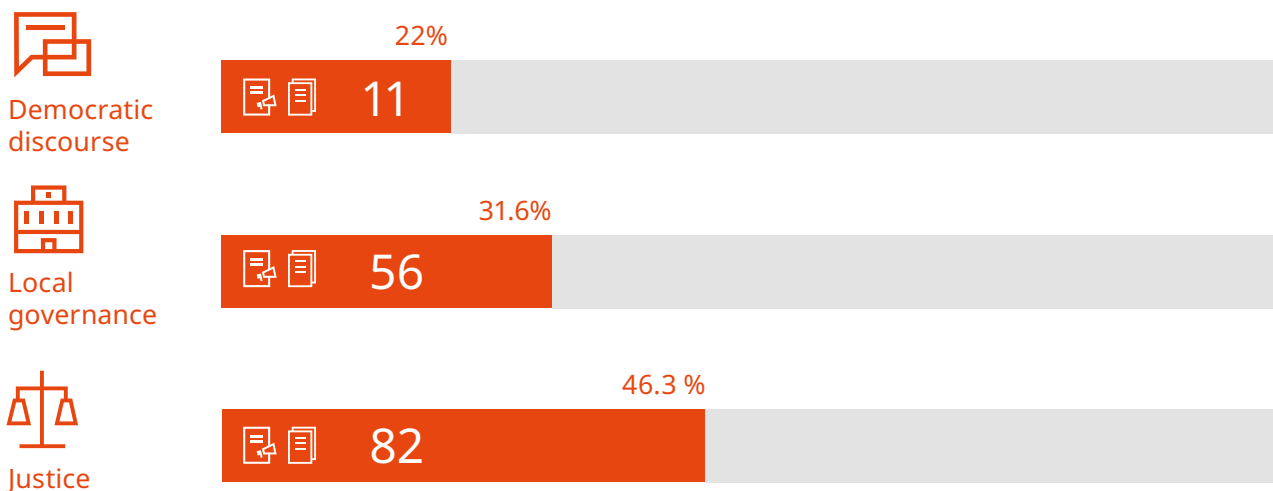
Number of participants



Our publications and articles in 2022



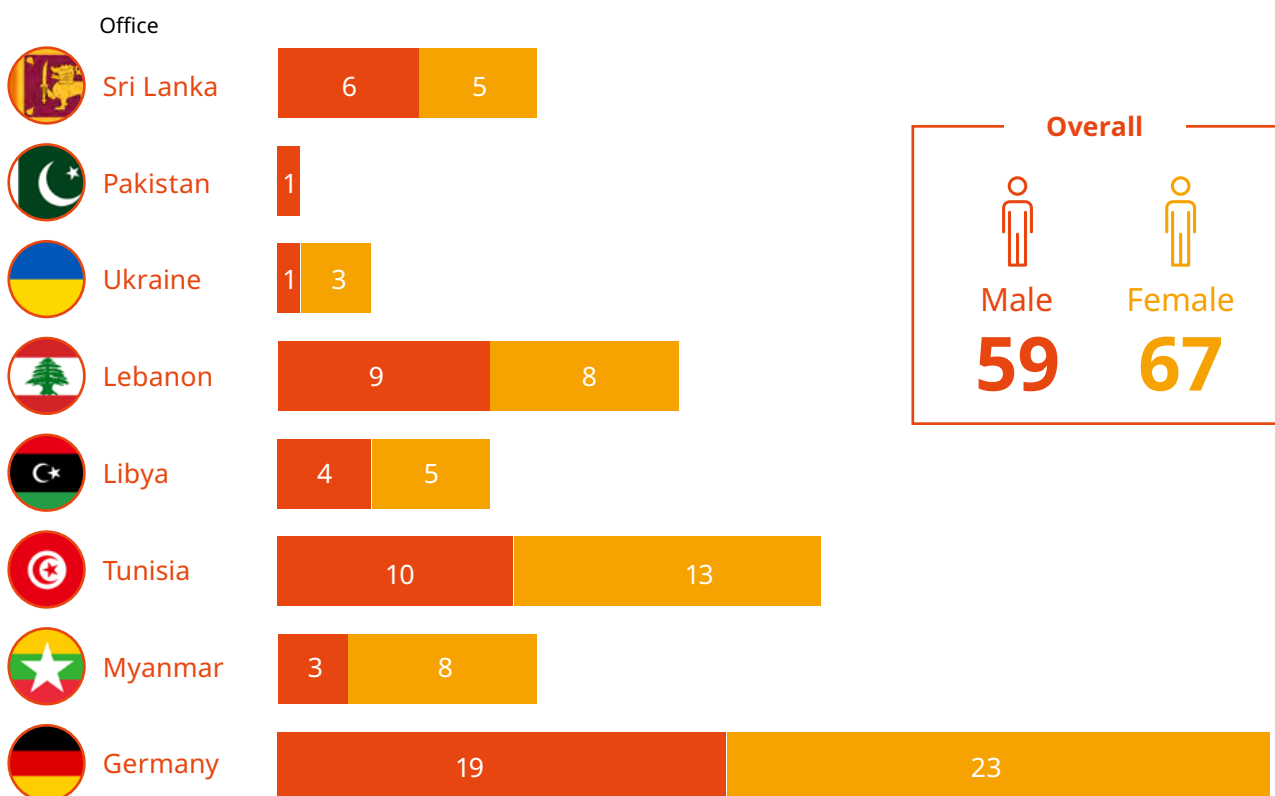
Number of publications and articles




Total numbers

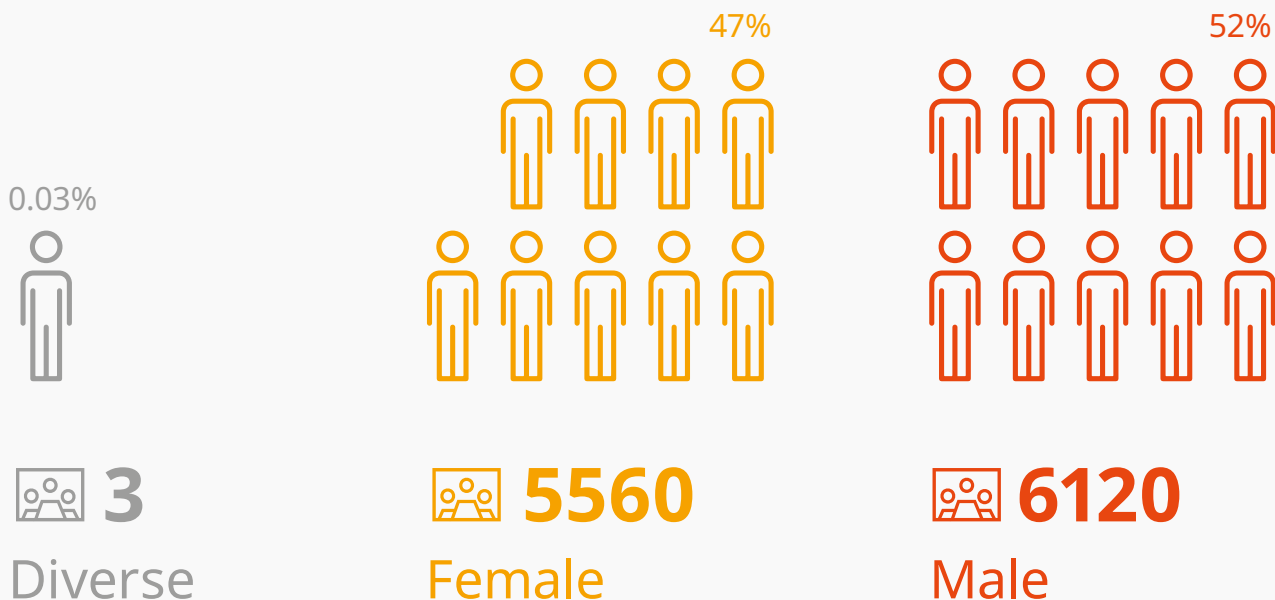


Staff breakdown by gender (as per December 2022)




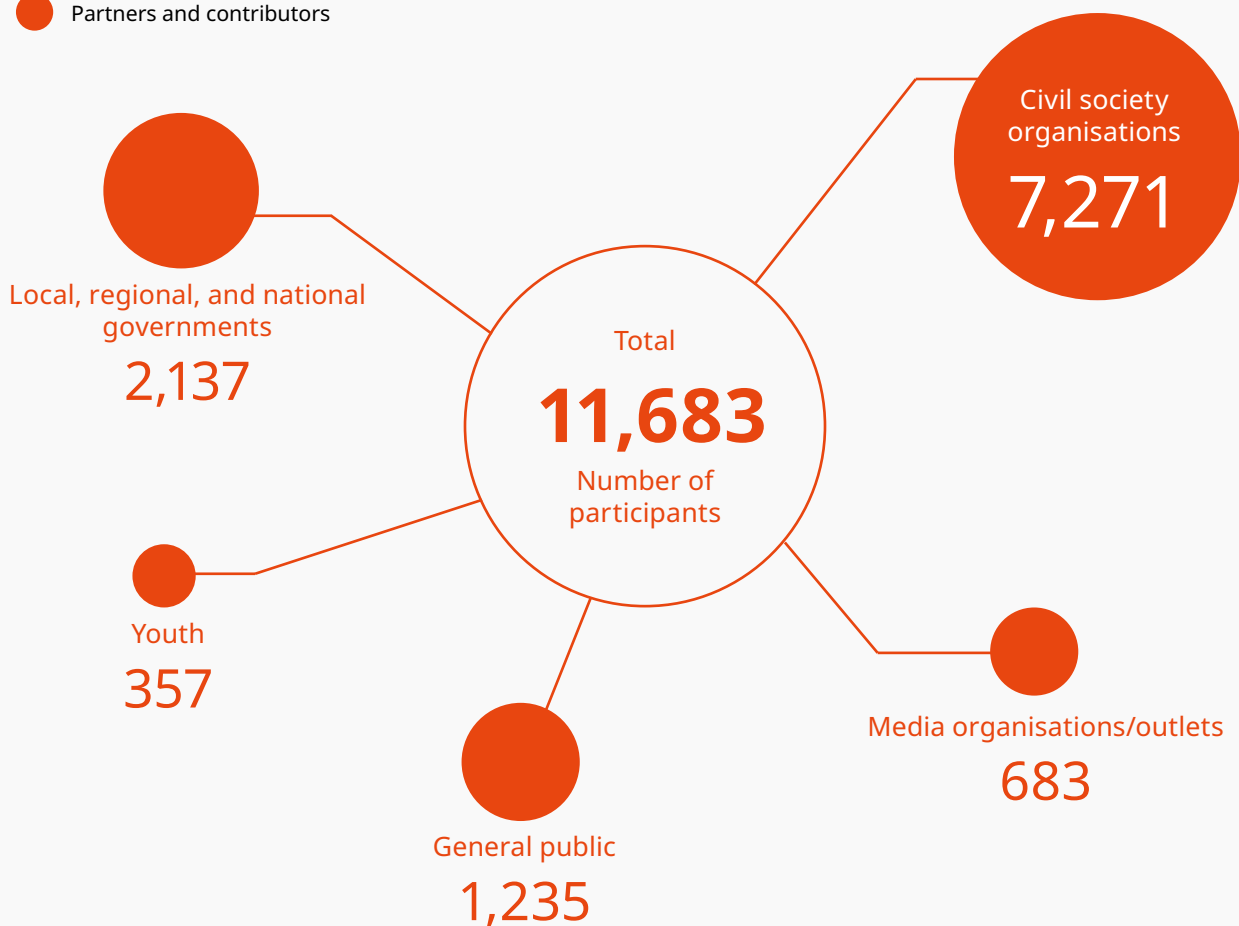
Gender balance among participants in DRI activities

 Number of participants
(Includes an estimate for online events)



Who we worked with

 Partners and contributors





Digital Democracy



Events

11



Participants

2,611



Publications

12



Articles

4



Thematic Areas



Elections



Human rights



Justice



Local governance



Democratic discourse

Intro

Heather Dannyelle Thompson
Digital Democracy Programme Manager

In many ways, the battle for democracy in 2022 was waged online. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine led to a considerable increase in online attacks and cyberwarfare, as well as in a Russian disinformation strategy that aimed to convolute the narrative and justify the attacker's actions. In parallel, amazing advancements in artificial intelligence now allow any person to create hyper-realistic synthetic images, texts, and videos. What will become of the truth when fake "evidence" can circulate on social media before fact-checkers and governments can react or contain it?

While new digital threats certainly pose a challenge, we cannot overlook the continued hum of ordinary, everyday digital threats; hate speech and violence against women online impact the mental health and well-being of women and girls everywhere and prevent them from fully participating in democratic discourse. Hate speech and "low tech" disinformation continue to increase polarisation and apathy towards politics and democracy.

Fortunately, we are not helpless. In Europe, policymakers passed the Digital Services Act, which entered into force in November 2022. The new legislation is an important development in our field, as it gives researchers and civil society, such as DRI, better tools and methods of enforcement to combat disinformation, empower research and fact-checkers, and hold platforms accountable. Our work met with the new challenges of 2022. DRI's Digital Democracy unit combats online threats to democracy through our three main pillars: social media monitoring, digital policy advocacy, and analysing and warning of emerging threats. We supported and monitored social media in Jordan, Lebanon, Russia, Senegal, Tunisia and Ukraine to identify evidence of online behaviour, and leverage that evidence for effective advocacy. Our work on emerging threats became ever more relevant with our first DisinfoCon Conference, in December, which focused on new threats. Our work was picked up in Der Tagespiegel, Euronews, Coda Story, the EU DisinfoLab newsletter, and Politico EU, among other media outlets.



InFocus

Disinfo Radar

Lena Maria Böswald,
Digital Democracy Programme Officer

Disinformation threatens to undermine trust in electoral processes, solidarity between social groups, and even the very notion of truth. As the tactics and tools used in disinformation campaigns become more subtle, sophisticated, and AI-powered, democratic decision-makers and stakeholders need to become more proactive in anticipating dangerous trends. In response to this threat, we launched Disinfo Radar in 2022 to prepare democratic societies for the challenges ahead.

DRI examined three core dimensions of disinformation: the technical tools, strategic tactics, and deceiving stories to propagate disinformation. Over the course of the year, DRI forecasted tomorrow's disinformation toolkit by identifying new trends in the ever-evolving disinformation landscape, interviewing leading experts on text-to-image generation as an emerging threat, and working on concrete solutions and calls to action (becoming a member of Adobe's Content Authenticity Initiative, for example). Furthermore, we gathered a working group of 13 international disinformation experts to discuss ways to disrupt the spread of disinformation.

Our interventions were covered by national and international media. DRI also held public events – including a hybrid panel conference with more than 2,300 participants online – and convened key players in the field to discuss priority actions. Based on our innovative research, hybrid and online formats allowed us to advance the understanding of emerging and future disinformation threats amongst a broad international audience.

Main Reports and Activities

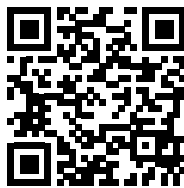
On the Radar: Mapping the Tools, Tactics, and Narratives of Tomorrow's Disinformation Environment

Our first report – “On the Radar: Mapping the Tools, Tactics and Narratives of Tomorrow's Disinformation Environment” – analysed the cutting-edge tools and strategies that are shaping the future of disinformation, and identified potential new disinformation threats. It also offered forecasts on technical developments still below the radar in July 2022, when the report was released. This report is the result of an assessment of the project's initial findings and of discussions with leading experts in the field on the risks and benefits of open-source technology in the information environment. More than 200 civil society actors and experts participated in the debate.

We launched a **DisinfoRadar.com**, an online platform examining three core pillars of disinformation: emerging technological tools, new tactics and the false narratives propagated with them.



Scan and read



Website

2,334

participants followed DisinfoCon, our hybrid conference on the new disinformation frontier and its impact on democracy.

58

representatives from civil society, think tanks, academia and media mentioned and shared our work.

13

international disinformation and security experts joined our Disinfo Radar working group, which resulted in recommendations for tackling disinformation tactics and narratives.

Disinfo Radar explores new tools, tactics and narratives impacting our disinformation environment.

Tools

The increasing sophistication of AI and lower technical barriers to entry are making it possible to scale up disinformation campaigns. Disinfo Radar provides users with a range of analytical tools to discover the disinformation technologies of tomorrow at an early stage.

Tactics

Disinfo Radar is designed to detect specific tactics used by disinformation actors. By leveraging DRI's extensive experience monitoring social media, it tracks online discussions in near real-time among some 4,000 scholars and professionals.

Stories

Beyond tools and tactics, it is ultimately false narratives the ones with the power to manipulate public opinion and impact our democratic discourse. Despite persistent debunking efforts, a maelstrom of disinformation narratives continues to cycle around the internet.

“No government will be able to deal with disinformation effectively without the insights and knowledge provided by civil society. @DemocracyR is a prime example: great research on new technological trends and their impact on disinformation.”

Peter Ptassek, Director of Public Diplomacy, German Federal Foreign Office

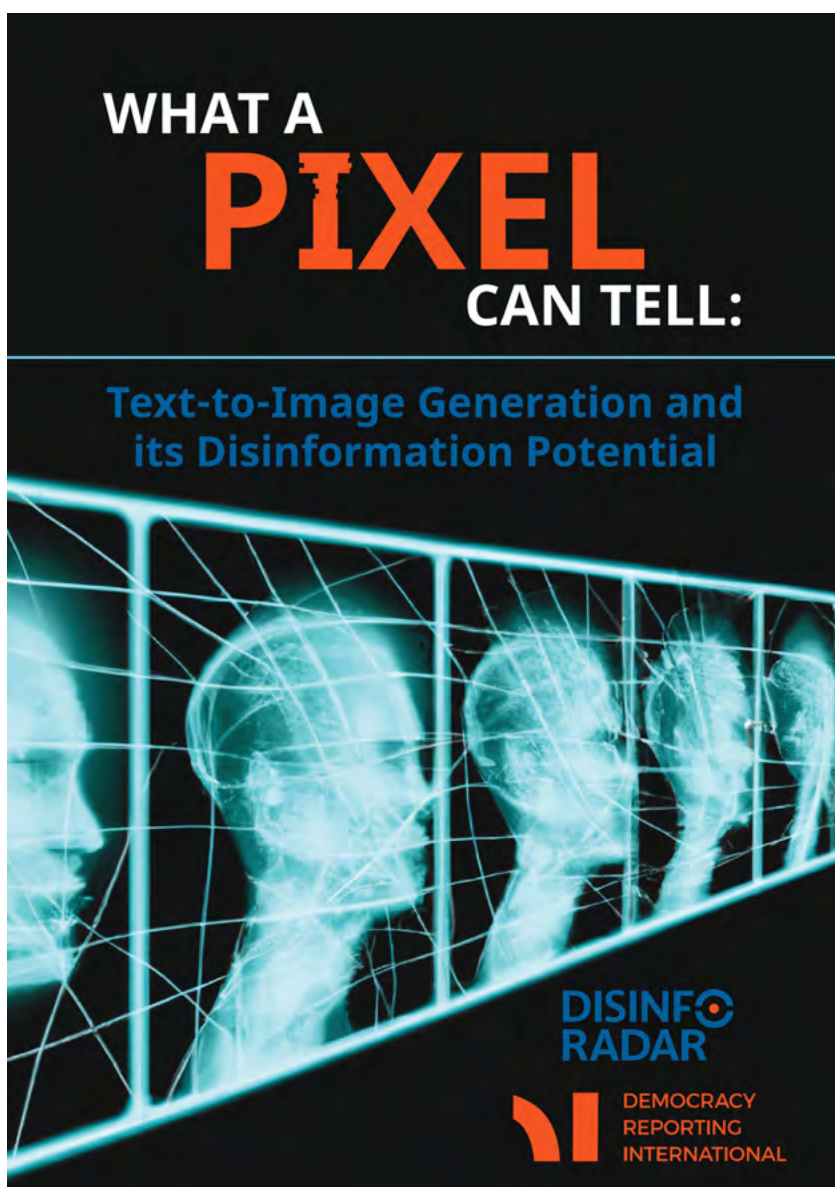
What a Pixel Can Tell: Text-to-Image Generation and its Disinformation Potential

With our in-depth report “What a Pixel Can Tell: Text-to-Image Generation and its Disinformation Potential”, released on 23 September, we explored this AI-powered technology, which is achieving mass appeal in 2023. Based on interviews with eight leading experts in the field of disinformation research, visual forensics, and AI ethics and legislation, the report assessed how prepared we are for the unrolling of text-to-image generation, and explored possible solutions to the disinformation problem it is creating. The report and its industry-encompassing recommendations were covered by POLITICO Europe, Der Tagesspiegel and Codastory. More than 50 experts followed our launch event.

Scan and read



Publication



DisinfoCon: Discussing Emerging Disinformation Challenges

On 6 December, we brought together renowned international experts on disinformation, as well as tech industry and civil society organisation representatives, to discuss today's most pressing disinformation challenges, and to prepare for those of tomorrow. DisinfoCon, a hybrid event, investigated the new frontier of disinformation and its potential impact on democracy, focusing on local disinformation narratives and solutions, the EU Digital Services Act, and transformations that AI and digital technologies will bring to media and democracy.

Scan and read



Video



Funding Partner

The German Federal Foreign Office

Words Matter – Analysing Online Disinformation and Hate Speech in the MENA Region

Mejda Souissi,
Civil Society Officer

Wafa Hmadi,
Programme Coordinator

Words Matter is our MENA regional project that supports six partners from different countries of the region, including from Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan, and Tunisia.

Through this work, DRI and its partners were able to connect with Meta's oversight board, resulting in our partner Maharat becoming a Trusted Partner. This strengthens the collaboration between civil society and the online platform.

Partners such as JOSA and Maharat participated in the Bread & Net conference, RightsCon and an online debate organised by the UNDP Action Coalition on "Information Integrity in Elections".

Additionally, partners within the project worked on the 2022 parliamentary elections in Lebanon, and briefed a variety of stakeholders, including Lebanon's Feminist Civil Society Platform and deputies from different political parties in the country.

DRI also conducted several meetings with the EU election observation mission and with UNDP in Lebanon. This led to the EU inviting Maharat to take part in a debate on reforming media laws during elections.

As part of their training for women political candidates, Maharat and other Lebanese civil society organisations presented their work to the electoral reform consortium in Lebanon and to The Arab Institute for Human Rights.

The project succeeded in supporting partners in effectively monitoring disinformation and hate speech, and in producing data-driven evidence analysing key political processes as follows:

Maharat – Lebanon

Event covered under the monitoring: Parliamentary elections: 15 May 2022	Monitoring period: January 2022 - June 2022	Topics: Disinformation, propaganda, hate speech and violence against women in politics.
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Al Hayat – Rased

Event covered under the monitoring: Local elections: 22 March 2022	Monitoring period: December 2021 - March 2023	Topics: Government performance, electoral campaign, and special events.
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Josa – Jordan

Event covered under the monitoring: Hate speech and violence against Women	Monitoring period: January 2023 - October 2023, with an AI MODEL designed by JOSA	Topics: Misogyny, hate speech campaigns against women activists, human rights defenders, etc.
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LAB'Track (Mourakiboun and IPSI) – Tunisia

Event covered under the monitoring: Referendum: 25 July 2022 / Parliamentary elections: 17 December 2022 (as announced by the president)	Monitoring period: from March 2022 - June 2022	Topics: Bipolarization, disinformation targeting political parties, political leaders and government institutions, and online manipulation in relation to social movements.
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SUDIA – Sudan

Event covered under the monitoring: Transitional process since October 2021	Monitoring period: March 2022 - October 2022	Topics: Hate speech and civil conflicts, peace-building process post 25 October 2021.
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“The training was very rich technically, and I am now able to identify when a comment contains hate speech or not.”

Marina Al-Sahawneh, from the JOSA team

Main Reports and Activities

Regional exchange Amman, March 2022

The first in-person meeting gathered 15 representatives from the project partners to strengthen ties between DRI and its partners, and among the partners themselves.



Online Public Discourse in the MENA Region: Lebanese and Jordanian Elections as a Case Study

The first regional report presenting the results of social media monitoring of the 22 March municipal elections in Jordan and the online campaign leading up to the 22 May Lebanese parliamentary elections analysed disinformation and hate speech, and their impact on democratic processes. The report contains a case study examining online gender-based violence perpetrated on Twitter against politically active women in the MENA region. It also offers regional and national recommendations.

Scan and read



Publication

Presentation of the Arabic version of our Digital Democracy Toolkit, April 2022

DRI's toolkit for the Digital Democracy Monitor provides all the necessary resources for monitoring social media networks in one place. The toolkit was translated into Arabic for its use across the region. It is designed for civil society, journalists, researchers, and anyone interested in learning more about social media and democracy.

Scan and read



**Radio interview
on the Digital
Democracy
Toolkit
(in Arabic)**

In-Person Training

DRI's social media analyst and data analyst designed an in-person training programme tailored for our partners, delivering three-day hands-on workshops in each partner's offices.



“The in-person sessions were very helpful, as they enabled us to develop monitoring and analysis capacities, and the practical exercises on CrowdTangle, for example, are very keen and helpful.”

Mehdi Ibrahim, Media Monitor with SUDIA

Arabic Toolkit

445

people reached

First Regional Report

460

people reached

Funding Partner

The German Federal Foreign Office

Other Projects

- **Election Observation and Democracy Support (EODS III)**

The aim of this project is to strengthen EU election observation missions worldwide. Our team provided training workshops for the missions' social media analysts, and worked on an improved methodology.

- **Social media monitoring support to the NGO Humanitarian Dialogue**

Since summer 2022, DRI has supported Humanitarian Dialogue in designing a social media monitoring methodology for Citizens Charter on the responsible use of social media for elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Nigeria. The team advised on designing the methodology of the social media monitoring body, and provided suggestions on the training of the monitors.

- **Social media monitoring support to Charter Project Africa**

As a member of the European Partnership for Democracy, DRI supported the Partnership's Charter Project Africa in conducting social media monitoring of the Senegalese parliamentary elections, in close collaboration with one of the consortium members of the project, the Gorée Institute. The team collected and analysed data on political and toxic discourse amongst candidates.



Europe



Events

73



Participants

3,066



Publications

24



Articles

57



- re:constitution
- SEEDS Project
- Healthy Digital Sphere (EDAP) project
- German Foreign Policy Project
- Instigation to Democracy
- Solidarity with Ukraine
- Resilience against Disinformation
- Online discourse in times of war

Thematic Areas



Elections



Human
rights



Justice



Local
governance



Democratic
discourse

Intro

Paul Zoubkov
Europe Programme Manager

2022 was the year of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The brutal and illegal attack left tens of thousands dead and millions fleeing their homes. It also upended the geo-political order, laying bare the stark contrast between democratic and autocratic regimes. Nevertheless, Ukraine still stands, showing impressive resilience of institutions, a commitment to democracy, and the full force of its civil society. Although a full reckoning of how the war was also enabled by the “business as usual” approach of the West is still to come, democratic Europe and its allies have largely stood up to the test, offering financial, military and diplomatic aid, and in the process revitalising their institutions. The groundswell of popular support for Ukrainian refugees was also an important show of civic engagement at the grassroots.

The rule of law backsliding in the EU continued, with further attacks on the independence of the judiciary and the primacy of EU law, particularly in Poland and Hungary. In response, the EU applied financial pressure, but was slow to act by other means. Disturbing revelations emerged about Member States like Greece and Spain employing spyware to surveil journalists, activists, and opposition figures. Far-right politicians gained prominence in various elections, reflecting public discontent at a time of crises. The unfair elections in Hungary, tainted by an uneven playing field, resulted in yet another super-majority for Orban's Fidecz party, enabling further erosion of institutions and civic space in the country. The Conference of Europe concluded with ambitious proposals, but the Commission's lacklustre follow-up and sizeable Member States opposition stifled progress on deeper constitutional reforms. Notably, Ukraine and Moldova achieved EU candidate status, while Georgia lagged behind.

During the year, DRI stood in solidarity with Ukraine, supporting colleagues on the ground, tackling disinformation, and sparking dialogue about democracy during war. We also examined the implications of invasion on democracy at large and sought to position democratic governance as a “hard” security issue. We continued to build the capacity of media to report on the rule of law, debunked justifications for democratic rollback, and produced ground-breaking research adopted by EU institutions. We also looked closer at the implications of algorithms on the rule of law and began looking ahead to the next European Parliament elections. We finally sought to foster grassroots participation in Moldova.

re:constitution

Jakub Jaraczewski,
Research Coordinator for the Rule of Law

[R]e:constitution was an impactful project in 2022. Multiple media presences and engagements with journalists contributed to the goal of strengthening a quality public debate on the rule of law in the European Union. With our experts quoted in outlets such as New York Times, Politico and Die Welt, we strengthened our presence as providers of high-quality, accessible insight. We continued covering elections in the EU with a rule of law focus, and provided input to the European Commission's annual Rule of Law Report. We strengthened our relationship with policymakers, and DRI researchers appeared before the European Parliament, speaking at events organised by MEPs and participating in activities of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency. Of particular note was our continued and expanding engagement with diplomats based in Berlin and Warsaw, as well as with ministries of foreign affairs both in EU Member States and EU-neighbouring countries.

Main Reports and Activities

Rule of Law FAQs – Debunking Common Myths

Together with Meijers Committee, we published the “Rule of Law FAQs” – a set of easy-to-use cards to help policymakers, journalists, and other actors navigate the EU rule of law debate, emphasising legal fact-checking and debunking misinformation and inaccurate narratives. Available in five languages, the FAQs were distributed in a reach-out campaign targeting 1,700 select stakeholders in European institutions, national ministries, embassies, and media outlets, and further via social media. Various policymakers, diplomats, and civil society organisations highlighted the usefulness of the tool, and DRI was asked to present it at a European Economic and Social Committee hearing on effectively communicating the rule of law.

Scan and read



Publication

Justice Delayed and Justice Denied: Non-Implementation of European Courts' Judgments and the Rule of Law

The serious challenges to the rule of law in Hungary and Poland have been widely discussed, but rule of law problems in the EU are broader. Our report "Justice Delayed and Justice Denied: Non-Implementation of European Courts' Judgments and the Rule of Law", prepared jointly with European Implementation Network (EIN), examined the non-implementation of regional court judgments by EU Member States, and called for this to be reflected in the Commission's annual Rule of Law Report. The study was released at an event with high-level participation from the Council of Europe, the European Parliament and the European Commission. Our findings were also presented at a special hearing of the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE). As a result of these and other engagements, the report's findings and methodology were adopted by the European Commission for its 2022 Rule of Law Report, systematically covering the issue of the non-implementation of judgements for the first time. They will also be picked up in the future editions of the Report.

"The Rule of Law FAQs come with me in my suitcase when I travel to the EU Council of Ministers meetings in Brussels."

State Secretary of Justice, EU Member State

InFocus Recon: Proof of Impact

re:constitution I: Four years promoting a fact-based debate on the rule of law

In 2022, the first four-year phase of the re:constitution project on the rule of law in Europe came to a close. The initiative resulted in over 300 analytical pieces on the rule of law, with over 100 produced by DRI, and 200 from 192 experts, through joint symposia with Verfassungsblog. Together, the analysis has been viewed at least 270,000 times on websites. In addition, we held 38 international events, reaching 1,800 key stakeholders. We built a network of some 300 journalists and responded to over 500 media queries. DRI's analysis has been quoted in the media 215 times, by 110 different outlets, from 28 countries, and in 18 languages. DRI experts appeared at seven EU institutional events, and DRI has been referenced in several European Parliament resolutions, in EU Fundamental Rights Agency reports, and in the work of the European Commission. The second phase of the project will run from 2023 until mid-2026.

Funding Partner

Stiftung Mercator

One Year Supporting Ukraine, One Year Supporting Democracy

Oleksandr Iakymenko
Country Director Ukraine

DRI has been supporting Ukraine and Ukrainians in new ways since the full-scale Russian invasion, including with humanitarian efforts and by promoting democratic reforms, advocating for democratic foreign policies, fighting disinformation and propaganda, and conducting research and analysis on the impact of war on democracy and human rights.

DRI's efforts in supporting democratic reforms in Ukraine have been particularly valuable, as they recognise the importance of maintaining democratic institutions and freedoms even during a time of war. Moreover, DRI has been fighting against Russian disinformation and propaganda by monitoring online public discourse and supporting, together with Ukrainian partners, the training of journalists to identify online falsehoods and fake narratives. At the same time, we worked with various media outlets to highlight critical issues related to the conflict, including negotiations, international law, and security risks posed by authoritarian regimes.

Finally, DRI has analysed democratic foreign policies and the inclusion of democracy as a security concern in trade partnerships and alliances. DRI's team reviewed the approach to democracy in foreign and security policy of 13 countries, and commissioned nationwide polling to gauge German citizens' opinions on Russia's war and the role of democracy in the German foreign and security policy discussion.

Nationwide polling on democracy in Germany's foreign security policy

63%

of Germans believe that values and interests should be equally prioritised in relations to other countries.

Scan and read



Media Outlet

Respondents find the two narratives integrating values and interests significantly more compelling than the “change through trade” narrative.

Convinced Not convinced
Partially convincing Don't know

Change through trade



Security through reliability



Value secure interests



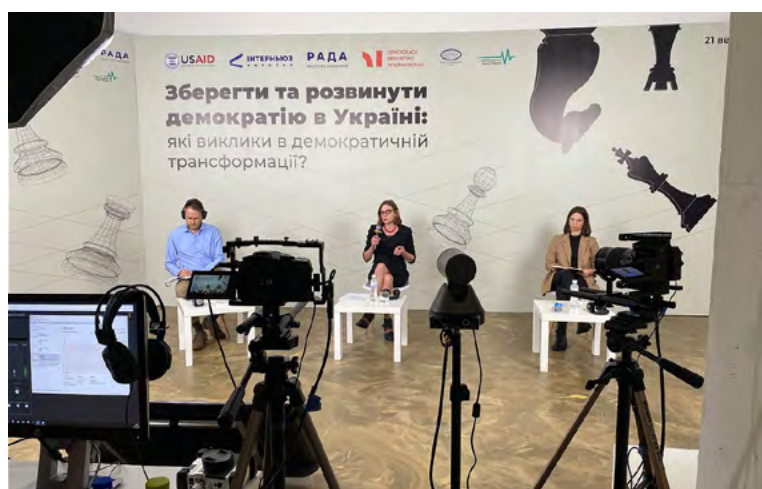
Change through values



Main Reports and Activities

Evacuation and a Trip to Kyiv

DRI helped evacuate its colleagues and partners affected by the war, and supported them in resettling in safer places, while condemning Russia's invasion as a violation of the most basic principles of international law. In September 2022, a DRI delegation visited Kyiv, and met with partners, state institutions, diplomats, NGOs, MPs, and former colleagues. At the request of parliamentary leadership, together with local NGOs, we visited Bucha – one of the sites of Russian massacres.



Preserving and Developing Ukrainian Democracy

Together with local partners, DRI co-hosted an event in Kyiv titled “Preserving and Developing Ukrainian Democracy”. Over 1,000 people tuned into this discussion on sustainable democratic reforms, featuring Ukrainian civil society, DRI and Members of the Ukrainian parliament. We highlighted the findings in a paper.



Scan and read



Discussion

Ukraine, the European Union and the Rule of Law

Throughout last year, we looked extensively at the impact of the war on the rule of law situation in the EU, via commentary, a regional conference, and a submission to the European Commission on the rights of Ukrainian refugees. In partnership with *Verfassungsblog*, DRI hosted an online symposium, asking ten EU and Ukrainian researchers to examine the pressing rule of law issues related to the war affecting Ukraine, the European Union and its member states.

Online Discourse in Times of War

Analysing the Social Media Conversation around Ukraine: DRI contributed to combating disinformation spread by Russia and pro-Russian groups, who have been running vast influence operations. Already in May, DRI started to monitor social media to provide an understanding of Ukrainian and Russian war-related discourse, examining various relevant topics.



Scan and read



Publication

Resilience against Disinformation

DRI supported Vox Ukraine in analysing and debunking key Russian disinformation narratives, and looked at “astroturfing” efforts on Telegram. This is when such false narratives are made to seem authentically Ukrainian.

Funding Partners

Civitates
Stiftung Mercator
The Alfred Landecker Foundation
The Open Society Foundation

Other Projects

- **Instigation to Democracy**

To help foster grassroots participation, together with CPR Moldova, DRI organised a training programme for 70 Moldovan community activists from around the country. Covering such topics as project management, policy advocacy and accountability tools, this democracy school also provided micro-grants and mentor support for follow-up initiatives. In total, eight graduate teams were formed, addressing such issues as public safety, waste management, infrastructure, and the transparency of the local government, reaching over 13,000 people in the process.



Scan and read



Story

- **SEEDS - Supporting Engagement in European Elections and Democratic Societies**

The SEEDS project looks ahead to the 2024 European Parliament elections and aims to bridge the gap between active European citizens and EU decision-makers. Implemented jointly with the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD), the European Platform for Democratic Elections, and Election-Watch.eu, the project involves a series of events to expand civil society engagement, strengthen the network of electoral experts, develop practical EU-level recommendations, and encourage broader citizen participation.

- **Healthy Digital Sphere**

With the adoption of the European Democracy Action Plan (EDAP), the EU has recognised the fundamental significance of an online public space that is based on democratic principles. The current project aims to ensure the proper implementation of the EDAP. Through monitoring and capacity-building on such issues as online political ads, the Digital Services Act, disinformation, hate speech and the Conference on the Future of Europe. The project is carried out with our partner, the European Partnership for Democracy.

Funding Partners

Civitates
The European Union
The German Federal Foreign Office
The Open Society Foundation
Stiftung Mercator
The Alfred Landecker Foundation





Middle East and North Africa



Events

233



Participants

5,559



Publications


48





Articles


42




 A Bottom-Up Reform Agenda for Lebanon
 Municipal Know-How for Host Communities in the Middle East
 Enhancement of Municipal Police Service to Local Populations
 Nafas Jdeed 2: Expanding the Media Discourse around Elections in Lebanon
 MASAR for Local Governments – Policy Advocacy for Municipal Service Improvement in Lebanon
 Words Matter

 Improving Services and Accountability at the Local Level
 Fa'ela - Tapping into Women's Full Potential in Shaping Libya's State-Building Efforts
 Firmer Ground for Advancing Women's Participation

 JEDI – "Justice Reform, Enhance the Rule of Law, Develop Human Rights and Strengthen Institutions"
 Youth for Democracy
 Youth Talks e-Democracy
 Words Matter

 Words Matter

 Words Matter

Thematic Areas



Elections



Human
rights



Justice



Local
governance



Democratic
discourse

Intro

Hannah Becker
MENA Programme Manager



The prospects for advancing democracy in countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are deteriorating, marking a setback from the aspirations sparked by the “Arab Spring” in 2011. Citizens continue to endure from limited to no influence over their own governance, with authoritarian rulers in the region further tightening their repressive control. Increasingly challenging living conditions, caused by years of mismanagement and corruption, and exacerbated by COVID-19, climate change, and the impacts of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, are adding to the MENA population’s hardships. The situation continues to be particularly dire for women and members of marginalised communities, who are facing significant societal, economic, and legal barriers to active participation in public life.

It is precisely because of these enduring challenges that it has become ever more important to support those who are continuing to work towards a more democratic future in their countries. For the majority of the people in the MENA region, democracy remains the favoured form of government. Public opinion is trending towards gender equality. A new generation of globally connected and highly educated youth is vocal and engages in movement-building offline and online, despite all attempts by governments to silence them. Civil society continues to play a crucial role, against all odds and within an increasingly shrinking space.

In 2022, DRI remained committed to its partners in the region, supporting them in safeguarding democratic gains and forging new paths for equal participation. In Tunisia, we have fostered access to administrative justice, making it easier for citizens to claim their rights. In Libya, we have challenged stereotypes regarding women activists and politicians, providing them with opportunities to showcase their leadership skills and share their stories with a broader audience. In Lebanon, we have organised a country-wide voter education campaign and trained emerging women leaders, encouraging them to run for municipal elections. On a regional level, we have advocated for better moderation and regulation of social media in Arabic, and raised awareness about the impact of disinformation and hate speech on democratic processes.

Funding Partners

The European Union
The German Federal Foreign Office
The Porticus Foundation
The International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies
Engagement Global
Canal France International
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands
ifa zivik

Lebanon

Events
44

Participants
919

Publications
11

Articles
35

André Sleiman,
*Country
Representative at DRI
Lebanon*

The Lebanese financial crisis has entered its third year; hyperinflation has decimated the resources of the public sector and continues to take a toll on citizens' livelihoods. The country has been without a president and a government since October 2022, causing gridlock and a paralysis of parliamentary activity. Polarisation along sectarian lines is growing, while prospects for reform remain stagnant. Despite relentless calls by the international community to press forward with long overdue reforms, the Lebanese ruling class is reluctant to introduce structural changes that might threaten its vested interests.

DRI is working on multiple fronts to advance a reform agenda in Lebanon. We combine high-level policy work with support to local communities and civic actors. We have successfully contributed to the implementation of the new Public Procurement Law, through the development of secondary legislation and training, and we continued to engage with the parliamentary sub-committee to modernise the Municipal Law.

At the local level, we have been promoting community policing. We also led a country-wide campaign to educate voters and encourage them to go to the polls ahead of the May 2022 general election. We continue to train emerging women leaders and encourage them to run for municipal elections. While continuing to coordinate decentralised cooperation projects between Lebanese and German municipalities, we have intensified our research on municipal service delivery to explore new ways of catering to citizens' needs in the current context of crisis.

We took a step forward in involving young Lebanese media professionals in the second season of Nafas Jdeed, a political talk show that gives voice to the politically marginalised. We have been exploring new topics and inviting new guests to join the conversation about civic space, media freedom, and reform-oriented politics in Lebanon.

Thematic Areas



Elections



Human
rights



Justice



Local
governance



Democratic
discourse

A Bottom-Up Reform Agenda for Lebanon: Capacity-Building for Women Leaders and Candidates; Networking

Dory Abou Jaoude,
Programme Manager at DRI Lebanon

DRI Lebanon rolled out a capacity-building programme for women aspiring to compete for political mandates on the municipal level. To ensure diversity and inclusivity, we selected participants from different political, cultural, and geographic backgrounds. The training curriculum included legal topics (such as the Municipal Law, the Public Procurement Law, municipal finances, and budgeting), interpersonal skills (including leadership, conflict resolution, and public speaking), and technical know-how (such as electoral campaigning, proposal writing, gender, and coalition building).

Through this programme, we strengthened the knowledge of 80 women trainees, boosted their self-confidence, and helped them challenge patriarchal thinking and structures in their environments. This opened doors for new partnerships, network-building, and the exchange of practices among the women participants. They are currently working on a committee to collaborate on specific initiatives and to encourage other women to run in elections.

Within the framework of this project, DRI Lebanon also trained youth on electoral law and conducted a mapping of parties and civil society organisations to understand their needs and potential for shaping a new political agenda. To further support reforms in the country, DRI Lebanon worked with legislators to draft new decrees of the Municipal Law and helped speed the implementation of the Public Procurement Law.

Main Reports and Activities

Sessions on voter education

We conducted eight awareness-raising sessions on voter education in different Lebanese regions, targeting around 300 citizens (51 per cent of them women), including mock elections. DRI Lebanon prepared and disseminated a voter guide. Around 60 per cent of the participants increased their knowledge and 100 per cent expressed their willingness to participate in the election process



Training youth and women election observers

DRI Lebanon trained 55 youths as election observers and deployed 24 (19 women) during the parliamentary elections. The observers supported the prevention of electoral fraud and malpractice by, instantly reporting to the media and to the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM) several violations that required their intervention.



“The training expanded my knowledge in the municipal field, which is essential to each Lebanese citizen: It was a very educational experience.”

– A participant in a session on voter education

Building the skills of politically active women

Eighty Lebanese women attended a capacity-building program to leverage their knowledge and skills and to prepare them to compete in the municipal elections. Experts delivered training on topics such as municipal law, municipal finance, decentralisation, public procurement, leadership, and campaigning, and 92 per cent of the participants reported an increase in their knowledge. The participants praised the experience they gained, as well as the connections and synergies they made, despite being from different cultural and political backgrounds.



“We will use the acquired knowledge by going towards alliances with people with whom policies were set and turn them into programmes and projects that benefit our society.”

– A participant in our capacity-building programme for women

Mapping the Change Movement in Lebanon

DRI conducted a mapping for the emerging civil society groups, networks, and new political contenders, visualising the current network of relationships between groups and their stances regarding several emerging and conflicting topics. The final report was disseminated during a national conference and through DRI's social media platforms.



Scan and read



Publication

Implementation decrees for the Public Procurement Law

Following several meetings and workshops with stakeholders to leverage the operationalisation of the new public procurement system, DRI Lebanon issued six implementation decrees for the Public Procurement Law. DRI Lebanon also exchanged nine legal memos with the Sub-committee on Reforming the Municipal Law. The local government approved some amendments ensuring greater autonomy for local authorities.

Funding Partner

The German Federal Foreign Office

Other Projects

- **Municipal Know-How for Host Communities in the Middle East**

DRI, in coordination with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), provided technical assistance in developing decentralised partnerships between German and Lebanese host municipalities to further the exchange of know-how in local governance. DRI Lebanon accompanied and advised delegations of German municipal representatives visiting Lebanon on the development of municipal project partnerships with Lebanese counterparts.

- **Enhancement of Municipal Police Service to Local Populations**

We have supported the development of new standard operational procedures, a code of conduct, and recruitment guidelines, to better align police work with human rights and the rule of law. DRI invited communities to discuss the duties of the municipal police, and strengthened dialogue between security forces and civil society, thus ensuring buy-in by local communities.

- **Nafas Jdeed - Expanding the Media Discourse around Elections in Lebanon**

With the second season of our political talk show Nafas Jdeed ("A new spirit") we amplified the voices of politically marginalised actors and communities. The talk-show expands a youth-led media discourse around elections and political reform, with the contribution of young media makers. DRI also created a media-community centre for media makers, students, and young media professionals to produce media materials free of charge.

- **Policy Advocacy for Municipal Service Improvement in Lebanon – Maintaining Strength and Resilience for Local Governments (MASAR)**

MASAR ("The Path") aims at strengthening the long-term resilience of sub-national governments and their host, refugee, and internally displaced populations to better deal with displacement. DRI provided policy advice and research expertise, and conducted a strategic analysis of the challenges of local governance and reform prospects in the context of crisis, as well as an assessment of sub-national governments' capacities to deliver and maintain basic services.

Funding Partners

The German Federal Foreign Office

The Porticus Foundation

VNG International

The International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies

Engagement Global

Canal France International



Tunisia

Events
50

Participants
2,810

Publications
26

Articles
3

DRI Staff Member

The year 2022 was a pivotal one in Tunisia, following the suspension of parliament in 2021. The new constitution, adopted by referendum on 25 July 2022, breaks with some of the achievements of the 2014 constitution, and the risk of constitutional and democratic regression was high in the past year. The 2014 constitution was blamed by some for the country's political instability and socio-economic problems, so new constitutional rules to establish a stable and effective system of governance were an attractive prospect to some citizens, even if it meant giving up the democratic gains of 2014. The parliamentary elections in December were boycotted by several opposition parties. A record low voter turnout of about 11 percent signified a lack of enthusiasm for the new political system, and for a parliament that has fewer prerogatives than the previous one. There was a lack of calm, open, and participative public debate on these fundamental choices for the citizens of Tunisia in 2022.

DRI pursued its projects to strengthen the rule of law and access to justice. Furthermore, to contribute to an open public debate reflecting different views, and to explain the stakes of the new constitutional, legal, and electoral choices, DRI published analyses, organised conferences and disseminated clear and accessible content on traditional and social media dealing with the legal and constitutional issues of the day – the stakes of the referendum, the political regimes, the constitutional reforms, and the electoral law. DRI's approach was to break down the key concepts of fundamental legal reforms, in order to raise awareness among the general public of the implications of the constitutional change.

Thematic Areas



Elections



Human
rights



Justice



Local
governance



Democratic
discourse

JEDI – “Justice Reform, Enhance the Rule of Law, Develop Human Rights and Strengthen Institutions”

Yasmine Hamrouni,
Communications Coordinator at DRI Tunisia

Ferdaous Ben Sassi,
Project Manager at DRI Tunisia

Our work on the JEDI project – “Justice Reform, Enhance the Rule of Law, Develop Human Rights and Strengthen Institutions” – reached the end of its first four-year implementation period on 31 December 2022. We strengthened democratic governance and the rule of law in Tunisia by improving access to justice, contributing to the development of legal frameworks and justice institutions, and supporting the protection of human rights through institutional mechanisms.

We worked with citizens, state institutions, and civil society actors to build awareness and understanding of justice sector issues, and to implement participatory reform measures. Despite challenges faced during implementation, such as the political environment, the COVID-19 situation, and the obstacles to advancing judicial reforms, we reached some 35,000 people directly, and some 7 million people indirectly, through knowledge products and awareness-raising messages on social media, radio and television, and in field activities.

DRI Tunisia collaborated with 14 partners, including NGOs, public and governmental organisations, and local stakeholders, to ensure ownership and effectiveness of the reform measures. We worked with civil society partners, such as Mourakiboun, ATMA, IBSAR, Mobdiun and Munathara, to conduct awareness-raising campaigns on access to administrative justice and promoting human rights.



Institutional partners, such as the Administrative Tribunal, the Administrative Court, the Access to Information Authority (INAI), the High Authority of Local Finances (HIFL), and the parliament, supported participatory reform efforts. This collaboration resulted in the creation of 19 draft laws, 17 institutional reports, and 13 strategic documents. DRI Tunisia also aided in the digitalisation of court services, providing citizens with access to e-services, an e-learning platform, and a web application.

DRI Tunisia also conducted research and created information products covering important legal and political changes, such as the new constitutional framework, referendums and the presidential system, as well as their conformity with international standards. We produced and distributed 20 publications, including reports, studies, briefing papers, and guides.

Main Reports and Activities

'Access to Justice' awareness campaign

DRI conducted a national field and digital awareness-raising campaign on access to administrative justice for seven months, with different intervention tools and approaches, including public service announcements, "open days" for citizens to access legal advice from experts, and printed and visual materials. Working with civil society and media outlets in direct interaction with citizens at the local level, DRI reached some 3.5 million citizens. We ensured that our activities were inclusive by collaborating with IBSAR, a Tunisian association that empowers visually impaired people.



Supporting the drafting of legislative texts

DRI successfully targeted the core of Tunisia's administrative justice ecosystem by working with the Administrative Tribunal, the Administrative Court, and the High Authority of Local Finances. DRI's partnerships and trust with its partners resulted in the successful conclusion of eight justice reform processes, 49 discussion and working sessions, and six seminars. These efforts involved almost 1,800 participants, and indirectly reached some 27,000 people. As a result, ten legal documents were drafted by the three institutions, including three draft organic laws, four draft decrees, the final draft of the Code of Administrative Justice, and two proposed of legal amendments.

"It was a big campaign, the first campaign since the creation of administrative justice in 1972, to show that administrative justice exists for citizens."

Administrative Tribunal Member during the final project evaluation.
25 January 2023, Tunis

Supporting institutions with their outreach and awareness-raising activities

We successfully supported INAI in improving its outreach and accessibility, while our partners Munathara and Mobdiun conducted several awareness-raising activities, including podcasts and a live television broadcast of a town hall meeting.

Supporting legislative processes in the Tunisian parliament

Despite a challenging environment, DRI was able to significantly support the Tunisian parliament. DRI provided technical and legal support, resulting in 13 legislative recommendations being considered during the electoral law review process. Additionally, DRI supported 29 MPs in nine legislative processes in 2021, to promote gender equality, human rights, and democratic values. Through its efforts, DRI provided timely information directly to 671 people, and reached some 1.3 million people indirectly via social media.

JEDI project - End of phase

Through JEDI, DRI Tunisia supported seven justice reforms, particularly in the Administrative Tribunal and the Audit Court. It did so by organising 49 working sessions and drafting policy documents and written opinions that significantly improved the rule of law and access to justice. DRI Tunisia also supported the Administrative Tribunal in drafting the Code of Administrative Justice, which, despite not being adopted due to the suspension of the parliament in 2021, facilitated the introduction of e-services, expedited case procedures and made administrative justice more accessible. DRI Tunisia also supported the Audit Court in drafting guidelines and streamlining financial procedures. It also helped the Court to open up and increase its visibility among civil society and increase awareness of the body among the media and the public.

“The law obliges the HIFL to publish an annual report on the state of local finances, together with recommendations to develop the capacities of local authorities, so that they can fully fulfil their role. Two annual reports have been produced and communicated thanks to the technical support of DRI.”

Amel Elloumi Baoubab, former president of the High Authority of Local Finance

Funding Partner

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

Other Projects

- **Youth for Democracy**

This project, implemented with WeYouth in Sfax, Tunisia's second-largest city, fostered stronger relationships between young local leaders and local authorities. The project resulted in the implementation of seven initiatives addressing youth and sports, waste management, reforestation, ecotourism, cultural promotion, and employability. The project empowered 141 individuals in Sfax, with 94 per cent recognising the importance of community-led interventions. An awareness-raising campaign conducted on social media reached over 360,000 people.



- **Youth Talks e-Democracy**

The #YTeD project aims to increase young people's participation in political processes in Tunisia. Along with its partners AlQatiba and Yaluna, DRI Tunisia is working with influencers, experts and young Tunisians to improve young people's understanding of key political concepts, to deconstruct preconceived ideas, and to explain the implications of the 2022 constitutional referendum and elections.

Funding Partners

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands
The Porticus Foundation
ifa zivik



Libya



Events

139



Participants

1,830



Publications

11



Articles

4

Asma Dekna,
Project Manager

Following the failed attempt at holding presidential and parliamentary elections in December 2021, Libya finds itself in another political deadlock, with two rival parallel governments and an increasing local and international legitimacy crisis. The mandate of the internationally brokered Government of National Unity (GNU) has expired, and the House of Representatives has installed a parallel government, based in Sirte, with unclear internal procedures. Politics are run by a few selected individuals, with limited popular participation. Calls by civil society and citizens for elections have little resonance with and generate no reaction from the political elite.

A crackdown on civil society and on the work of international organisations in Libya has limited their work and threatens civic space. The civil society commission continues to restrict operations for civil society organisations, and a parallel civil society commission in Benghazi is crippled by internal conflict and political interference. Government decisions aimed at influencing foreign cooperation and funding for local civil society isolates and weakens Libyan organisations. Women NGOs and activists are at a heightened risk, and have experienced hate speech and smear campaigns online, which have triggered violence and alienation offline.

Further decentralisation of power to local authorities has helped improve services at the local level, despite numerous challenges, including legislative ambiguity, the reliance on government decrees for the operational framework of local governments, and the lack of skilled workers and policymakers at the local level.

DRI facilitated women's active participation in public and political life by supporting an enabling environment, forging networks, and re-writing the narrative regarding women's role in public life. We worked extensively with media to challenge stereotypes regarding women activists and politicians, allowing them to tell their stories on television. DRI has also contributed to the decentralisation process in Libya, by training and engaging with councillors, staff and civil society organisations in 10 municipalities on newly transferred powers. Furthermore, our commitment to participatory governance approaches took concrete form in developing inclusive city charters and co-designing and co-planning public spaces within cities.

Thematic Areas



Elections



Human rights



Justice



Local governance



Democratic discourse

Improving Services and Accountability at the Local Level

Asma Dekna,
Project Manager

In light of the momentum towards further decentralisation in Libya, DRI contributed to the process of the devolution of powers initiated by the Ministry of Local Governance, through the “Improving Services and Accountability at the Local Level” (ISAL) project. We reached and engaged over 1,000 beneficiaries in training, workshops, seminars, consultation meetings and co-design sessions. By building meaningful relationships with local authorities and partners, we supported the implementation of better communication strategies in municipalities, and provided guided mentorship to staff members to engage citizens in meaningful ways.

Our participatory approaches resulted in the co-design and implementation of city charters in four cities. Citizens participated a six-month process of finding solutions to common issues. Citizens in those cities also oversaw the implementation of the charters, increasing their confidence in local authorities and building bridges of trust and cooperation.

DRI also supported the active participation of civil society in local-level decision-making. High distrust between civil society and municipalities, as well as lack of clarity and capacity in understanding the role of organisations in a local context, made it difficult to build trust. Realising that building such trust takes time, the project was amended to provide small grants for common awareness-raising projects, which helped build personal and institutional relationships.

Main Reports and Activities

Study on the role of civil society organisations in supporting community cooperation, and women's and youth engagement

The study analyses the capacity of civil society organisations to promote community participation, engage women and youth in local affairs, and ensure transparency and accountability. Based on the study, we implemented 12 advocacy meetings in six target municipalities.

Study on strategic planning of local-level public policies to promote development

This study maps out ways to support the better participation of women and youth in planning policies at the community level. It focuses on the impact of policy coordination between the central and local levels, as well as the devolution of competencies. Three recommendations were shared with the Ministry of Local Governance, municipalities, civil society organisations and other relevant stakeholders. Six municipalities implemented parts of the recommendations.

Signing of city charters (Ghiryan, Maradah, Wadi Utbah, and Traghan)

DRI facilitated the design and implementation of city charters, which resulted from six months of community dialogue between social actors and the municipalities. By bringing to the table over 60 relevant actors to tackle issues of common concern, we fostered a form of social contract between the municipality and the public. The city charters addressed issues such as public transportation, access to services for persons with disabilities, and civic space.

Setting up internal processes at citizen services offices

In coordination with the Ministry of Local Governance, DRI supported the development of internal processes at three newly set-up citizen services offices (CSOs), including the training and coaching of 15 staff members. The citizen services offices were later added to the internal structures of the municipalities, and eventually mainstreamed to all of them.

Design and implementation of communications plans for municipalities with civil society participation

DRI, together with civil society organisations, supported three municipalities in designing and implementing communications plans. The plans reflect how municipal councils communicate with citizens and engage them in decision-making. Civil society organisations support the municipal councils in their implementation, and both actors conducted community sessions to raise awareness about the municipal council's outreach plans. Two of the three plans were successfully implemented.

“This is the first time we said that women must have a voice and they should have a seat at the table. We started with a few women attending consultative sessions on the city charter, and then more were encouraged [...]. And then we started meetings in the council meeting hall. We want to do more now.”

City Charter facilitator focusing on engaging women in Maradah

Funding Partner

The European Union

Other Projects

- **Fa’ela - Tapping into Women’s Full Potential in Shaping Libya’s State-Building Efforts**

Fa’ela enhanced women’s role in decision-making and effective participation in public life. Through long-term engagement with women-led Libyan CSOs and women leaders from across the MENA region, Fa’ela established a foundation for future policy and advocacy work to foster equality. A key success was the formation of the Tadamon Coalition, a network connecting Libyan women activists with counterparts from across the MENA region.

- **Firmer Ground for Advancing Women’s Participation**

The Firmer Ground for Advancing Women’s Participation in Libya (FG4W) Project built on Fa’ela and supported additional women’s rights organisations in Libya. DRI also published a social media monitoring report on online violence against politically active women in Libya.

Funding Partners

The European Union

The United Kingdom Foreign

Commonwealth & Development Office





In collaboration with



DEMOCRACY
REPORTING
INTERNATIONAL

UNPACKING HUMAN RIGHTS MONITORING AND REPORTING INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP - 3



22 February 2022



var

ASIA



Events

11



Participants

447



Publications




0



Articles

0



-  Strengthening Media Freedom and Civic Space in Pakistan
-  Undisclosed project due to security concerns
-  Protecting civic space to overcome challenges to fundamental freedoms

Thematic Areas



Elections



Human
rights



Justice



Local
governance



Democratic
discourse

Intro

Nicola Schmidt,
Executive Director

The aftermath of the 2021 coup in Myanmar has ended all democratic action in the country, with pro-democracy activists having to operate from outside or in hiding. Pakistan was faced with severe floods, landslides, a heat wave and a constitutional crisis, when the former prime minister was removed through a no-confidence motion in parliament, resulting in protests across the country. In Sri Lanka, public protests in reaction to the ongoing economic crisis and against corruption resulted in a change in the presidency, but not in more space or opportunity for civil society action and participation. Amidst these challenging circumstances, the overall shrinking space for civic engagement, and the scaling back of democratic governance, our activities focused on supporting pro-democracy actors in local government and civil society. In addition, our funding partners have refocused their activities away from supporting our work, leaving us no choice but to scale down our work in Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Despite these negative developments, we have worked with civil society organisations on advocacy-based independent research and advice, and with local government and parliaments on policy action, and also provided training for parliamentarians and women local government candidates. We supported networking and the training of democracy actors, with a specific focus on women's participation, on issues related to secure communication, advocacy, and planning, and on principles of democracy. We are hopeful that we will be able to continue our work in Myanmar, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, to maintain democratic gains and reclaim space for civil society action.

Funding Partners

The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Colombo
Sri Lanka
The European Union



Sri Lanka

Aingkar
Kugathan,
Programme Manager
at DRI Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka faced an unprecedented economic and political crisis in 2022. An attack on peaceful protesters calling for President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's resignation ignited mass protests across the country demanding governmental change. Since the appointment of Ranil Wickremesinghe as president in July 2022, the new government has taken numerous steps to suppress anti-government protests, including the use of draconian counterterrorism laws to target peaceful protesters. Security forces have also quelled protests, arresting their organisers, and the government declared a state of emergency.

Against this backdrop, DRI Sri Lanka, in collaboration with the Collective, an informal network of civil society organisations across the country, developed a series of interventions to support civil society in their fight to counter shrinking civic space. Due to the existing economic situation, however, there have been several challenges in implementing the interventions as planned. DRI Sri Lanka is developing a briefing paper that identifies the gaps in the existing constitutional, legal and administrative framework in protecting the freedoms of expression, association and assembly, and also provides recommendations to address those gaps. DRI Sri Lanka is also developing a guidebook on these very same freedoms, to educate and inform the members of the Collective and other organisations on safeguarding their civil liberties. By working with the Collective, DRI Sri Lanka strengthens regional civil society organisations, by providing information, education, training and networking opportunities with state and non-state institutions and with independent commissions.

DRI Sri Lanka, through its interventions, further aims to create an enabling environment in which civil society can effectively engage with policymakers, and thus increase citizens' participation in parliamentary business – legislation, policy-making, and oversight.

Thematic Areas



Elections



Human
rights



Justice



Local
governance



Democratic
discourse

Country Projects Description

Protecting civic space in Sri Lanka to overcome challenges to fundamental freedoms

The project aims to support and protect the freedoms of expression, assembly and association guaranteed in Sri Lanka's Constitution and in human rights principles. It does so by strengthening civil society's responses to threats to these freedoms.



Scan and read



Publication

Funding Partners

The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Colombo
Sri Lanka

Pakistan



Events

11



Participants

447



Publications

0



Articles

0

Muhammad Nasir,
*Head of Finance and
Administration at DRI
Pakistan*

Pakistan's politics remained volatile throughout 2022, with opposition parties mounting pressure on the government, and economic uncertainty leading to a no-confidence motion against the then prime minister.

In March 2022, DRI Pakistan concluded “Strengthening Media Freedom and Civic Space in Pakistan”, a project to foster freedom of the press, freedom of expression and an expanding civic space. The project also developed the capacity of national and provincial legislatures and key decision-makers to make public policies more inclusive.

DRI Pakistan formed civil society coalitions in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab provinces to develop a charter of demands to address challenges related to the human rights of vulnerable communities, as well as civic space issues. The proposal gained support from the federal and provincial Ministries for Human Rights, The National Commission of Human Rights, and parliamentary standing committees, among others.

Civil society coalitions successfully submitted amendments to legislation on the registration of charities and on documents and the participation of transgender persons, and on their protection from violence and discrimination. Additionally, DRI Pakistan provided technical support through a toolkit equipping grassroots communities with the necessary knowledge to engage with government departments, national human rights institutions, and policymakers.

Thematic Areas



Elections



Human
rights



Justice



Local
governance



Democratic
discourse

Country Projects Description

Strengthening Media Freedom and Civic Space in Pakistan

This project, implemented in partnership with the Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability, aimed at contributing to the freedoms of the press and expression, and to civic space in Pakistan. By developing the capacity of national and provincial legislatures (as key policy decision-makers), government officials, and civil society, DRI Pakistan championed the cause of the inclusion of the interests of vulnerable groups in public policies. We were able to help policymakers, response providers and target communities become more aware of, sensitive to, and inclusive of the rights of vulnerable groups (women, girls, and religious minorities), and to create a more conducive operating environment for civil society to act as a protector of the rights of vulnerable groups.

Funding Partners

The United Kingdom Foreign
Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)



Myanmar

DRI Staff Member



As a result of the military coup that took place on 1 February 2021 in Myanmar, we have not been able to include all information that this section would provide under normal circumstances. The decision has been made to protect our colleagues and donors.

For the reasons expressed above, we are unable to provide more information regarding our work in Myanmar.

Since the military takeover on 1 February 2021, Myanmar's political, economic, and security context has been deteriorating and, in response to anti-regime resistance, the Myanmar military has detained, tortured, and imprisoned members of the opposition and resistance groups. At the time of the writing of this report, some 21,000 people from resistance groups had been arrested, over 17,000 had been detained and sentenced, and more than 3,200 had been killed by military forces, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, a human rights organisation.

We have gradually adapted to the challenging operating context, ensuring that we uphold the principle of “do no harm”. In 2022, we continued with the implementation of a project on strengthening a culture of inclusive dialogue, supporting pro-democracy actors through 20 online events, including multi-day training and workshops on communication, mediation, negotiation skills, pluralism, and federalism. We organised dialogues and brought together national and international stakeholders from civil society, academia, and government bodies.

Through building connections and developing technical capacities, the project team has been strengthening and amplifying the diverse voices of civil society actors, political parties, individual politicians, community leaders, youth activist groups, and student movements. Many of the project beneficiaries are using their newly acquired skills in various dialogue and advocacy initiatives across the country. We placed a particular focus on disadvantaged groups, including youth, ethnic minorities, and women leaders. Additionally, DRI Myanmar continued to expand its women's network and organised various capacity-strengthening, networking, and knowledge-sharing sessions for the group, connecting participants with other women's networks and providing space for further exchanges.

Thematic Areas



Elections



Human rights



Justice



Local governance



Democratic discourse



Tim Bittiger,
Senior Advisor at DRI

DRI has been active in Sub-Saharan Africa since 2009, supporting electoral processes and strengthening civil society across the continent. Our work has ranged from supporting domestic election observers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) for the European Union (2015-20), training social media monitors in Nigeria for the United Kingdom Department for International Development (2018-19), enhancing civic space in Southern and East Africa (2018-19), and conducting EU electoral expert assessments across the continent (2009-2015).

We are now further growing our portfolio in various Sub-Saharan African countries. We continue to enhance civil society capacity, for example, with a project in South Africa, and to strengthen youth participation in democratic processes and to support domestic election observers across the continent, both on EU-funded projects.

The aim is to further strengthen the vibrant civil society active across many countries to strengthen democracy, accountability and inclusion in often challenging political environments.

Thematic Areas



Elections



Human
rights



Justice



Local
governance



Democratic
discourse

Country Projects Description

WYDE - Women and Youth in Democracy Initiative

Since September 2022, we have co-led the EU's large-scale Women and Youth in Democracy Initiative (WYDE), a four-year (2022-2026) programme implemented by the European Partnership for Democracy and its member organisations. The programme is aimed at improving youth democratic participation, enfranchisement, empowerment, and inclusion at all levels of government, including regional and global exchanges. We provide innovative tools and approaches for domestic election observation, and follow-up to observer recommendations by youth across Sub-Saharan Africa. To make them genuinely valuable for youth observer groups, we ensure that these tools and approaches are co-created by the most-experienced youth groups, who also assist in providing training.

Enhancing Accountability in South Africa

Since late 2022, we have partnered with GOPA Worldwide Consultants to implement the EU-funded service contract “Technical Assistance to operationalise the EU Capacity Building & Engagement Window of the ‘Enhancing Accountability’ programme in South Africa”. The three-year project aims to improve South Africa's public governance through activities that boost accountability, democratic engagement, and transparency. We will be convening dialogues related to fundamental rights enshrined in the South African Constitution with representative segments of society, and will conduct advocacy involving civil society organisations, different independent institutions, and local and central governments.

Funding Partner

The European Union

In the Media

24/09/2022

КИЇВЩИНА 24/7

Representatives of the International organisation Democracy Reporting International Visited Bucha

Updated 25/04/2023

euronews. Since Elon Musk Took over Twitter, Hate and Disinformation Spiked

Heather Dannyelle Thompson

11/10/2022

euobserver What I Learned in Kyiv: Any "Political Solution" Will Be Brutal

Michael Meyer-Resende



03/12/2022



Legal Framework of the ARP Elections, in the Light of the Constitution of 25 July: "A Changeover at the Wrong Time!"

Kamel Ferchichi

03/12/2022

TAGESSPIEGEL New Survey on Foreign Policy: Citizens See Authoritarian States as a Danger

Hans Monath

.coda

31/10/2022

AI Image Generators Enable the Creation of Fake pictures to Support Fake News

Rebekah Robinson



**BEIRUT
TODAY**

31/05/2022

The Case for Voting in Lebanon's Parliamentary Elections

Lynn Sheikh Moussa



POLITICO

07/02/2022

Poland Takes Half Step Back to Cool Legal Conflicts with EU

Jan Cieski

EURACTIV

04/04/2022

Splitting Up Europe's Authoritarian Alliance

Jakub Jaraczewski and Tom Theuns

The New York Times

08/02/2022

Europe Cuts Payments to Poland in Court Dispute Over Mine

Jakub Jaraczewski



EL INDEPENDIENTE

27/12/2022

This Is How European Experts See the Problem With the Council of the Judiciary: "Political Parties Are Selfish Instead Of Selecting by Merit"

Nino Tsereteli

Our Staff

DRI Shareholders

- Andrew Bruce
- Richard Chambers
- Michaela Küfner
- Dr. Nils Meyer-Ohlendorf
- Duncan Pickard
- Zsuzsanna Szelényi
- Geoffrey Weichselbaum

DRI Supervisory Board

- Dr. Killian Bälz
- Gabriele Geertz, *until September 2022*
- Urður Gunnarsdóttir,
Chairperson of the Board from October 2022
- Ghassan E. Moukheiber
- Ilkka Uusitalo,
Chairperson of the Board until September 2022

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Lebanon

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Sri Lanka

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- Fatima Sabra Zahid, *Programme Support Expert*
- Ganidhu Weerasinha, *Programme Associate*

Tunisia

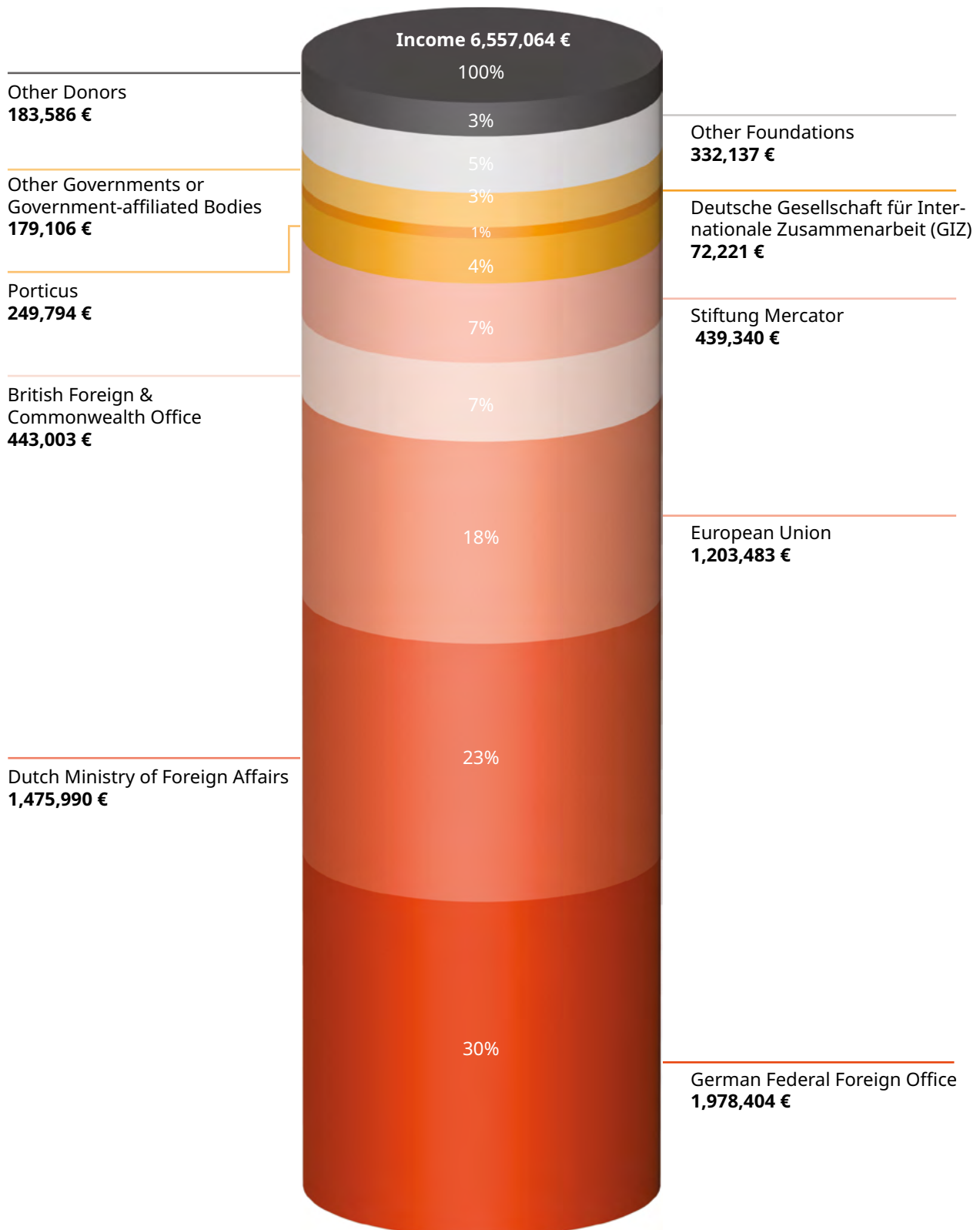
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- Ramzi Ben Brahim, *Logistics Assistant*
- Rania Ben Farhat, *Project Officer*
- Moez Ben Rouha, *MEL Coordinator*
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Myanmar

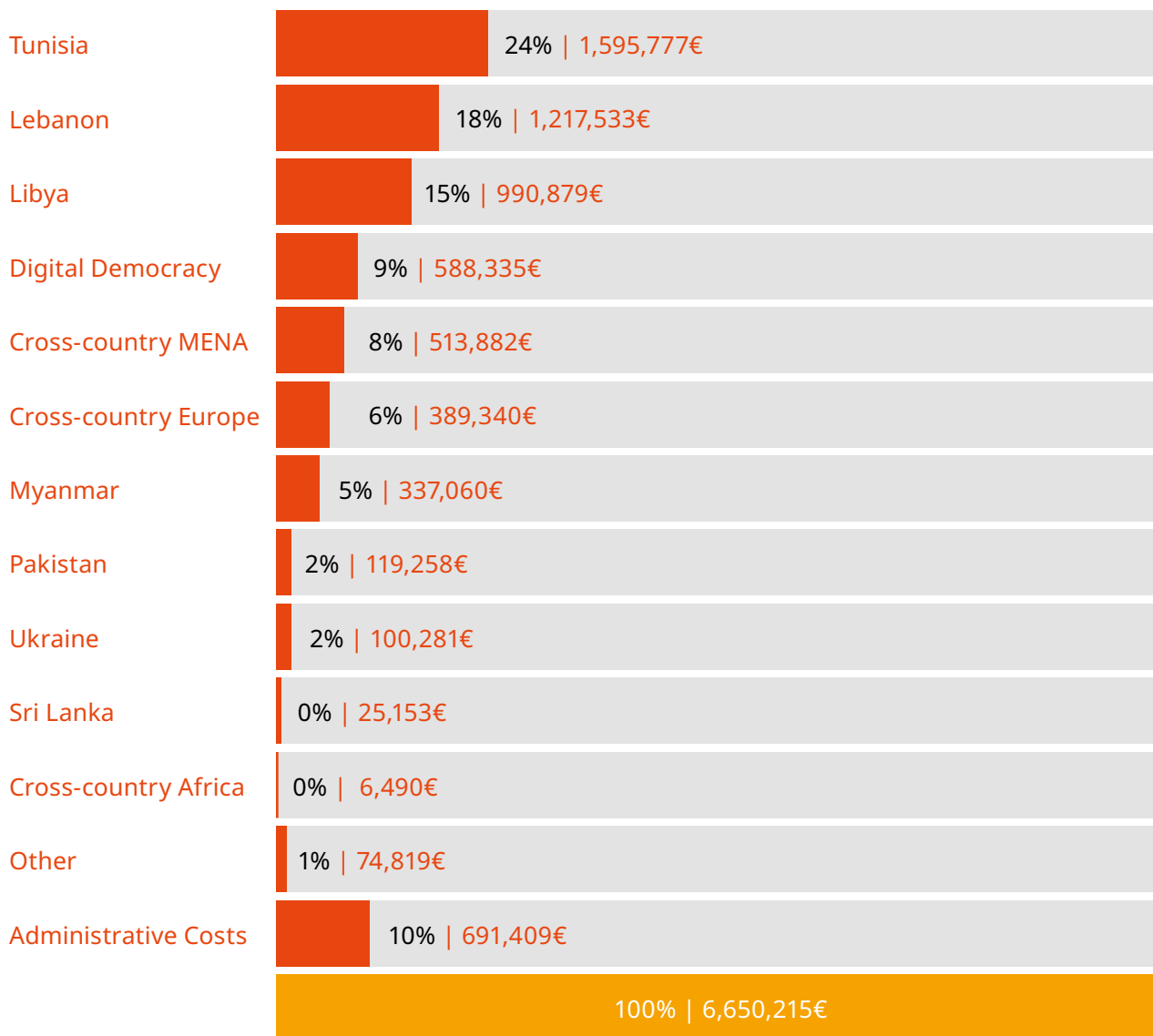
We thank all members of our team in Myanmar for their hard work. Their names have not been included here for their own protection, but we carry their achievements with us every day.

Our Finances

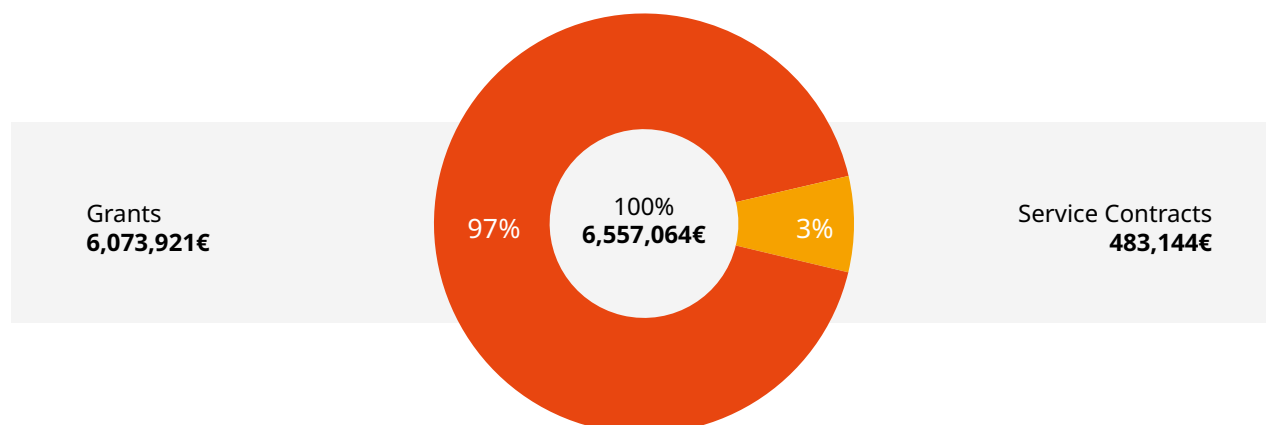
2022 Income by funding partner



2022 Expenditure by Programme



2022 Turnover Breakdown



Our Partners

Funding Partners

- The Alfred Landecker Foundation
 - Civitates
 - Engagement Global
 - The European Union
 - Expertise France
 - The German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ)
 - The German Federal Foreign Office
 - Global Affairs Canada
 - The International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies
 - Luminate
 - The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands
 - Porticus
 - Stiftung Mercator
 - The UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
 - VNG International
-

Programme Partners in Europe

- The Association for Defense of Human Rights in Romania
- The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD)
- The Centre for Policies and Reforms - Moldova
- The German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ)
- The German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP)
- Election-watch.eu
- The European Commission – Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers
- The European Implementation Network (EIN)
- The European Partnership for Democracy (EPD)
- The European Platform for Democratic Elections (EPDE)
- The European Policy Centre (Connecting Europe)
- The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)
- Forum of Transregionale Studien (FTS)
- The German Marshall Fund (GMF)
- The Global Democracy Coalition
- Good Lobby Profs
- The Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (Poland)
- The Hungarian Helsinki Committee
- The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)
- International IDEA
- The Meijers Committee
- Recharging Advocacy for Rights in Europe (RARE)
- The Romanian Helsinki Committee
- Tagesspiegel
- Verfassungsblog

Ukraine

- The Centre of Policy and Legal Reforms (CPLR)
- The Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy
- The East Europe Foundation
- Internews Media Ukraine
- The Ministry of Youth and Sports
- RADA Next Generation
- The Reanimation Package for Reforms (RPR) Coalition
- Vox Ukraine

Myanmar



Due to security concerns, we cannot list our local partners in Myanmar.

Sri Lanka

- The CSO Collective

Lebanon

- Action Research Associates (ARA)
- The Development for People and Nature Association (DPNA)
- The Directorate General of Local Administration and Councils (DGLAC)
- The Governorate of Akkar
- The Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE)
- The Lebanese Foundation for Permanent Civil Peace (LFPCP)
- The Lebanese parliament
- Loubnaniyoun (CSO)
- The Ministry of Finance
- The Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM)
- The Municipalities of Bechmezzine, Btorram, Kfarhazir, and Batroumin
- The Municipality of Bkarzla
- The Municipality of Bkeftine
- The Municipality of Bwareg
- The Municipality of Chekka
- The Municipality of El Qaa
- The Municipality of Ghazze
- The Municipality of Hebbarieh
- The Municipality of Kfarshima
- The Municipality of Menjez
- The Municipality of Mouhammara
- The Municipality of Qrayyeh
- The Municipality of Rachiine
- The Municipality of Tripoli
- The Municipality of Tyre
- The Municipality of Zgharta
- The Union of Municipalities of Aarsal
- The Union of Municipalities of Bouhaira
- The Union of Municipalities of Chouf Souayjani
- The Union of Municipalities of Deir El Ahmar
- The Union of Municipalities of Dreib El Awsat
- The Union of Municipalities of Dreib El Gharbe
- The Union of Municipalities of Jabal El-Sheikh
- The Union of Municipalities of Jezzine
- The Union of Municipalities of Jurd el-Qayteh
- The Union of Municipalities of Menieh
- The United Nations Development Programme Lebanon Election Assistance Project (UNDP LEAP)
- The Youth Council of Koura

Pakistan

- The Charity Commissions of Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
- The Department of Law, Parliamentary Affairs and Human Rights, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
- The Human Rights and Minority Affairs Department, Punjab
- The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly's Standing Committee on Law, Parliamentary Affairs and Human Rights
- The National Assembly of Pakistan
- The Pakistan Civil Society Forum (PCSF)
- The Pakistan Information Commission (PIC)
- The Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province
- The Provincial Assembly of Punjab province
- The Punjab Assembly's Standing Committee on Human Rights and Minority Affairs
- The Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability (TDEA)

Libya

- The Jusoor Center for Studies and Development
- The Municipality of Dirj
- The Municipality of Ghadames
- The Municipality of Ghiryan
- The Municipality of Maradah
- The Municipality of Sahel Al Jabal
- The Municipality of Traghan
- The Municipality of Wadi Bawanees
- The Municipality of Wadi Utba
- The Ministry of Local Governance
- The Ministry of Women's Affairs
- The National Municipal Councils Association (NMCA)
- The National Organisation for Governance and Local Development (NOGLD)
- UN Women
- The Women Elected Officials Network

MENA Regional

- The Al-Hayat Center for Civil Society Development (Jordan)
- Institut de presse et des sciences de l'information (IPSI) – (Tunisia)
- The Jordan Open Source Association (Jordan)
- The Maharat Foundation (Lebanon)
- Mourakiboun (Tunisia)
- The Sudanese Development Initiative (SUDIA) – (Sudan)

Tunisia

- The Administrative Judges Union
- The Administrative Tribunal
- The Assembly of People's Representatives (ARP)
- The Audit Court
- The High Authority of Local Finance (HAFL)
- IBSAR (Leisure and culture for the blind and visually impaired)
- The Kawakibi Democracy Transition Center
- The International Republican Institute (IRI)
- Mobdi'un- - Creative Youth
- Mourakiboun
- Munathara Initiative
- The National Authority for Access to Information
- The Tunisian Association of Alternative Medias
- The Tunisian Association of Parliamentary Advisers
- The Tunisian Bar Association
- The Tunisian Institute for the Training of Elected Officials
- The Union of Audit Court Judges Al Qatiba
- The We Youth Organization
- Yaluna

