



IFES supports citizens' right to participate in free and fair elections. Our independent expertise strengthens electoral systems and builds local capacity to promote sustainable democracy.



Europe and Eurasia

Overview

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems' (IFES) programming in Europe and Eurasia (E&E) is diverse, yet customized to each country's specific assistance needs. IFES provides traditional "core" support with innovative, cutting-edge programming for integral, democratic elections and citizen engagement. Addressing process threats, particularly cybersecurity, has become a priority for IFES' work in E&E, as countries increasingly face foreign and domestic interference. Working in politically evolving environments, IFES assists in reforming electoral legal frameworks, conducts trainings for election management bodies (EMBs), and develops professional judiciary to strengthen election dispute resolution (EDR).

IFES also works to improve electoral integrity, strengthen and enforce political finance regulations, and promote inclusivity in the decision-making process by emphasizing the equal rights of all citizens, placing priority on women's equality and inclusion of persons with disabilities, ethnic and religious minorities and youth. As young people increasingly comprise a majority of citizens in the region, tailoring opportunities to youth through formal and informal education, such as university- and school-based civics courses, will continue to be a major priority of IFES' work in the years ahead. Many countries in E&E are currently experiencing a turn toward nationalist politics, while others are locked in an internal struggle to define geopolitical orientation. These realities make it imperative that IFES provides targeted, impactful assistance, allowing voters to access the entire decision-making process.

Current Programs

Armenia

In September 2018, IFES began implementing a new United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded four-year project "Supporting Elections and Political Processes in Armenia." Through this project, IFES provides technical assistance to build institutional capacity of EMBs, support electoral legal framework reform, improve EDR and political finance processes, and support youth engagement via a university-level civic education program. IFES actively works with disabled people's organizations to promote their inclusion in political decision-making and improve accessibility, physical and otherwise, to all aspects of the voting process.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

USAID's Global Elections and Political Transitions "Catalyzing Cross-Party Initiative" program focuses on evaluating the abuse of state resources (ASR) and providing technical expertise to stakeholders on electoral system design. IFES' interventions after the October 2018 elections will focus on analyzing the voter registry's operational and technical framework and assessing its efficacy and integrity. Based on its research, IFES has delivered recommendations on combating ASR in electoral processes as part of its assistance.

Georgia

IFES conducts a range of assistance activities to support the development of democratic elections and political processes. Targeted interventions have led to improved electoral legislation and administration, moved forward discussions on constitutional and election system reform, strengthened civil society and media, and created an active and engaged cadre of young leaders. IFES actively supports political finance reform and implementation and works with local partners to increase participation and enfranchisement of vulnerable groups. In 2011, IFES introduced a civic education course for institutions of higher learning, which today is taught at over 30 universities, colleges and technical institutes.

Kosovo

IFES has provided support for genuine and democratic elections since 1998, focusing on topics such as technical election assistance, political finance monitoring, public outreach, civil society work and civic education. When Kosovo declared independence in 2008, election management capabilities were transferred from international institutions to the Central Election Commission and the Election Complaints and Appeals Panel. The current USAID Elections and Political Transitions “Strengthening Elections Administration Activity” program supports institutions to efficiently and independently accomplish their roles and effectively conduct local and parliamentary elections.

Kyrgyzstan

IFES manages an extensive portfolio of activities supporting the development and sustainability of the country’s democratic processes, working to build capacity of EMBs, strengthen civil society and provide broad, technical assistance, including reform of political finance regulations and building the training capacity of EMBs and the State Registry Service. IFES supports a diverse array of programming for young and future voters designed to broaden students’ understanding and interest in government, volunteerism and active civic engagement. IFES also conducts disability inclusion work, aimed at breaking social stigmas and empowering citizens with disabilities to have greater access and participation in the country’s civic and political processes.

North Macedonia

IFES provides technical assistance to the State Election Commission in administering electoral processes through targeted training of election officials and provision of expertise in key areas of the electoral reform process. IFES is currently implementing two complementary programs in North Macedonia. The five-year “Support to Electoral Reforms in Macedonia” program, funded by the Swiss Development Agency, strengthens election institutions’ conduct of fair and efficient election processes, helps political parties to formulate issue-focused platforms and empowers citizens to hold political parties and elected officials accountable. IFES is also implementing a USAID-funded three-year program, “Macedonia Electoral Support Activity,” which provides long-term electoral technical support to EMBs.

Regional Europe Program

The “Regional Elections Administration and Political Process Strengthening Program” (REAPPS) was launched in 2013 with support from USAID and addresses common challenges among Central and Eastern European and Eurasian societies, including defining the role of government, fostering political pluralism, stimulating civic participation and channeling internal conflict into political institutions to produce democratic outcomes faced by transitioning democracies. REAPPS has involved more than 30 EMBs from Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans and Eastern Partnership countries. The program builds upon existing successes and addresses other challenges in the region, such as cybersecurity threats and investing in new leaders in the government and nongovernmental organization sectors.

Combating Corruption in Southern Europe

The United States Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs has provided a grant to IFES for “Effective Combat Against Corruption: Supporting Stakeholders in Implementing Anti-Corruption Standards,” through which IFES strengthens efforts in Romania, Bulgaria and Montenegro to identify priority anti-corruption measures and assist in implementing reforms.

Ukraine

Funded by USAID and UK aid, IFES works to strengthen cybersecurity in elections, foster discussion on electoral law reform, build the capacity of civil society to analyze and advocate on election law issues, ensure Ukraine’s ability to enact critical political finance reforms and strengthen the capacity of EMBs at all levels. IFES also works with local civil society organizations to address areas of inclusion and accessibility for persons with disabilities, the enfranchisement of internally displaced people and representation of women, youth and minorities. IFES empowers youth through a civic education course taught at 10 universities.

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