

## Social media advertising

In **Lithuania**, the CEC outsources the monitoring of campaign advertising to a private company, which estimates the market value of advertisements outdoors and on traditional media and online. Lower-level electoral commission (Constituency Election Commissions and Precinct Election Commissions) are also involved in the monitoring of political advertising as they monitor campaign activities, estimate expenditures within their constituencies and report to the CEC. After the election, the CEC conducts an analysis of placed political advertisements that is then compared with the information collected by the private company and sent to the CEC. The CEC also uses tools such as social media ‘ad libraries’ to monitor spending by contestants and identify cases of unreported or hidden advertising and its own platform - the ‘ad catcher’ – that was developed internally to gather ‘tip-offs’ from the public concerning campaign violations.

In **Croatia**, the Rulebook on Financial Reporting of Political Activities, adopted in July 2019, requires candidates to display the costs of advertising on social networks separately from other expenses, making thus possible for the public and civil society organizations (CSOs) to compare whether the data collected and scraped from the different Ad Libraries roughly corresponds to the reported costs of social media political advertising in the electoral contestants’ reports. GONG, one of the prominent CSOs in the country, concluded that “[t]he final financial statements after the [2019] presidential election show that candidates made a step forward towards a complete picture of election campaigns on social networks. However, there is still a lot of room for progress. Just like the preliminary reports, the final ones do not fully reflect the real costs of advertising on social networks, and the money-flow is difficult to follow” [link to GONG’s [website](#)]. The access to online reports and Ad Libraries allows for cross-checking information and constitutes another step in gradually improving transparency and accountability in campaign spending.

Ahead of the March 2021 parliamentary elections, political parties and some social media platforms including Facebook, Google, Snapchat, and TikTok in **the Netherlands** agreed on voluntary rules for online political advertising in a Code of Conduct. Signatories have agreed to be transparent about the payer, the costs and the target audience of such advertising. Political parties committed to not posting or spreading misleading information or accepting foreign funding for advertising. On the other hand, social media platforms pledged to publish key data related to online political advertising and help prevent foreign interference in elections through the ban of political advertisements from outside the European Union. See the First [National Code of Conduct on online political advertising](#) in the European Union signed by Dutch political parties and global online platforms, 9 February 2021.