

ANNUAL REPORT

20
23

Letter from President and the Chair of the Advisory Council

2023 delivered mixed results for democracy worldwide. The continued rise of authoritarianism underscored the vulnerability of democratic systems. Yet the year also showcased the resilience of those dedicated to defending democratic values.

Amid the ongoing war in Ukraine, the importance of protecting democracy and pushing back against authoritarian leaders has never been more evident. As we witness the continued assault on Ukraine's sovereignty and the blatant disregard for democratic principles by the aggressor, it serves as a stark reminder of the need to stand firm in defense of democracy. Now, more than ever, we must unite to support nations under threat, uphold democratic norms, and hold accountable those who seek to undermine the values of freedom and self-determination.

In these troubling times, solidarity among democracy's defenders around the globe is paramount. As we confront common threats and navigate a complex geopolitical landscape, the power of collective action and mutual support cannot be overstated. By standing in solidarity with one another, sharing resources, expertise, and best practices, we amplify our impact and bolster our resilience against authoritarian encroachment. Together, we can forge a future where democracy not only endures but flourishes, enriching the lives of people everywhere with the promise of freedom, justice, and dignity.

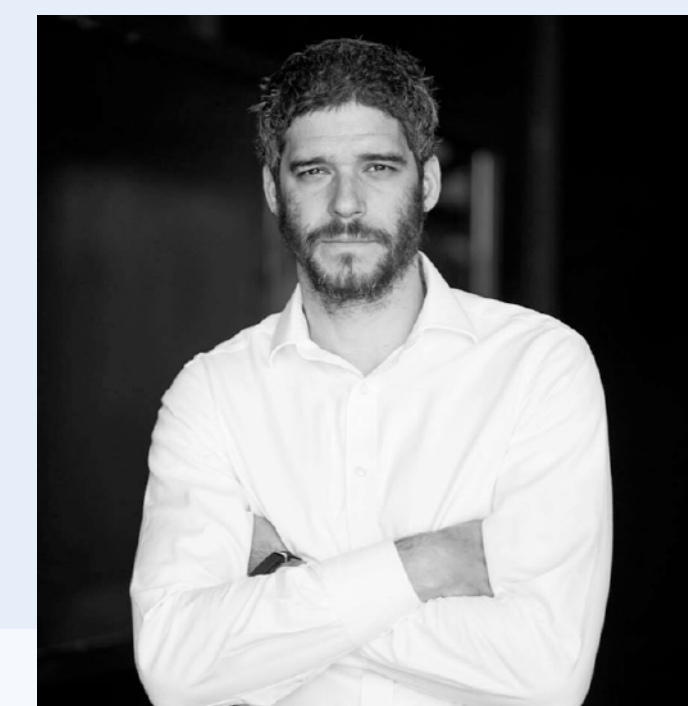
In 2023 - its second year of existence - Action for Democracy focused on empowering marginalized groups through targeted "Get out the vote" efforts, especially among women, youth, and diaspora communities, and ensuring that our grantees' innovative use of technology and social media greatly boosted voter engagement, reflecting their unwavering commitment to democratic participation. Poland in particular exemplified the impact of civil society on voter turnout, and the critical voices of youth and women in pushing back against authoritarian forces.

Action for Democracy also laid a strong foundation for 2024, a year marked by an extraordinary number of global elections. We stand at a critical juncture, with an opportunity to actively shape the future of democracy. We must seize this momentum. Together, for a freer, more democratic world.



Kati Marton

Kati Marton
Chair of the
Advisory Council



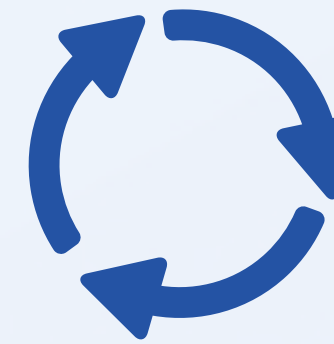
David Koranyi

David Koranyi
President and
Executive Director

Action for Democracy's Mission and Values

In 2023, we continued building up Action for Democracy as a global hub for democracy defenders that raises and channels support to pro-democracy organizations on the frontlines while amplifying their voices on the international stage. **We organized our work around three interlinked pillars:**

Community Building and Fundraising



Frontline Support



Policy Advocacy

1 Community Building and Fundraising

We leverage cutting-edge digital technology solution platforms to build an online, cross-border community of pro-democracy donors with a heavy focus on diaspora communities willing to support organizations on the frontline of defending democracies. We deploy a people centered digital strategy and simple, targeted, accessible, and interactive engagement to capture grassroots funding globally.

2 Frontline Support

From the proceeds of our fundraising activities we support, in a non-partisan fashion, frontline civil society organizations with tangible impact on the ground who work to expand democratic participation, promote genuine elections and good governance, fight corruption, support civic education, uphold independent media and combat hate, fear, and exclusion.

3 Policy Advocacy

Building on the strength of our growing community, we advocate for more robust pro-democracy and anti-authoritarian engagement strategies among policymakers around the world. Our aim is to secure material support for pro-democracy actors, and advocate for policies that help reverse the erosion of democratic norms and institutions. Our primary aim is to provide a platform to help amplify the voices of our grantees with decision-makers in key capital cities.

Pillar 1

Community Building

In 2023, Action for Democracy (A4D) witnessed significant progress in expanding organizational innovation, unlocking new donor acquisition channels, and initiating efforts to ensure diversified revenue streams. A pivotal aspect contributing to A4D's progress was the prioritization of donor acquisition strategies, notably through email and social media campaigns as a primary tool to acquire donors.

A4D worked with deeply experienced fundraising experts to conduct an extensive study involving a diverse range of individuals, yielding conclusive results. The study delved into audience identification, issue prioritization, personality types, and target audience behaviors. Its outcomes not only outlined strategies for engaging new donors but also detailed execution plans for 2024, encompassing all elements of the campaign series, including channel mix definition and narrative arc. The pivotal conclusion drawn was that A4D has evolved into an elite "thinking person's" organization, with a primary focus on major, mid-level donors, and higher-end low dollar donors. These donor groups share a commitment to defending democracy, albeit with varying degrees and preferred avenues of engagement. Our messaging is thoughtfully crafted to effectively attract these groups, taking into account differences in their strategic orientation and emotional connection with A4D's initiatives.

The research laid the foundations to elevate our community building efforts to a new level, with plans to launch our Democracy Defenders Club (DDC) in Q2 2024. The DDC is a new initiative to further deepen our engagement with donors and activists committed to furthering the cause of democracy and freedom around the world.



Pillar 2

Frontline Support

Action for Democracy supported 24 grassroots initiatives in six battleground states/regions, which we define as countries facing an imminent threat of democratic erosion and having pivotal elections for the global fight against autocracy. These initiatives aimed to protect and enhance the voting rights of citizens and to increase the political engagement of marginalized groups, such as women and young people. Our funding priorities were guided by the following criteria:



Electoral Empowerment – Get Out the Vote Campaigns

Projects that aim to ensure fair elections, empower marginalized groups in the electoral process, with an emphasis on women, the youth and the diaspora.

Freedom of Press

Projects that protect and strengthen freedom of the press and fight disinformation.

Democratic Watchdogs

Initiatives that strive to monitor and assess government actions, elections, and policy-making to safeguard the principles of democracy.

Democratic Education

Initiatives that promote democratic education, such as civics programs, to enhance public understanding of democratic principles.

Frontline support

Poland

Action for Democracy provided support to 14 grassroots organizations in Poland that worked tirelessly to expand democratic participation among underrepresented groups and support free and fair elections.

Our grantees in Poland demonstrated exceptional creativity and effectiveness in their campaigns. The 13% overall increase in turnout from the previous parliamentary elections, the sky-high 84.9% participation rate in Warsaw, the record 22.2% rise in youth turnout (reaching 68.8%), and the historic swell of female voters (73.2% compared to 61.5% in 2019), underscore the positive impact of these initiatives. This is proved by a study of The Philanthropy for Impact and Stefan Batory Foundation', which demonstrates that Over 70% of surveyed participants exposed to our grantees' Get Out the Vote (GOTV) campaigns acknowledged the campaigns' significant impact.¹



Fundacja Inicjatywa Wschód



Wschód is a non-governmental organization that emerged in response to the Russian fossil fuel embargo after the invasion of Ukraine, and was formally established in 2023. Their work focuses on the nexus of the climate crisis, fossil fuels, and their effects on everyday life, such as rising prices, inflation, and democratic decline in Poland. Their project, "Idź Głosować: Empowering Young Women in Democracy," aimed to boost the political participation of young women in Poland's autumn elections. With the support of Action for Democracy, they launched a nationwide voter-awareness campaign on social media, organized a creative silent disco event outside the Parliament to attract the attention of the youth, and set up an activist camp for about 100 participants.

¹ Impact, Philanthropy for. *Impact assessment of the get-out-the-vote campaigns in Poland's 2023 parliamentary elections – Philanthropy for Impact*. 10.11.2023

Frontline support

Poland

Fundacja na rzecz Kongresu Katoliczek i Katolików



The mission of Fundacja na rzecz Kongresu Katoliczek i Katolików involves reshaping power dynamics within the Church and asserting its autonomy from governmental influence. Through their "Church Free from Politics" initiative, they advocated for a non-politicized Church and politics that refrain from exploiting religious sentiments. This project utilized educational videos for use in civic and religious education, alongside social media campaigns and partnerships with media outlets. By championing a politically neutral Church and advocating for a healthy separation of Church and state, their goal is to promote inclusive dialogue and mutual understanding among diverse societal factions.



Akcja Demokracja



Akcja Demokracja takes concerted action to advance a fairer, more equitable society. Grounded in shared values such as human rights, environmental preservation, and socioeconomic equality, they steer social change in these directions. Their flagship initiative, "The Change We Need and Deserve," stands as Poland's largest grassroots Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) campaign, aimed to boost voter mobilization among individuals who align with their values in human rights, the rule of law, climate action, and social justice. With a goal to engage at least one million voters, the project employed diverse channels including social media, direct actions, participation in events, debates, press conferences, and voter meetings, to cause substantial social and political transformation post-election.



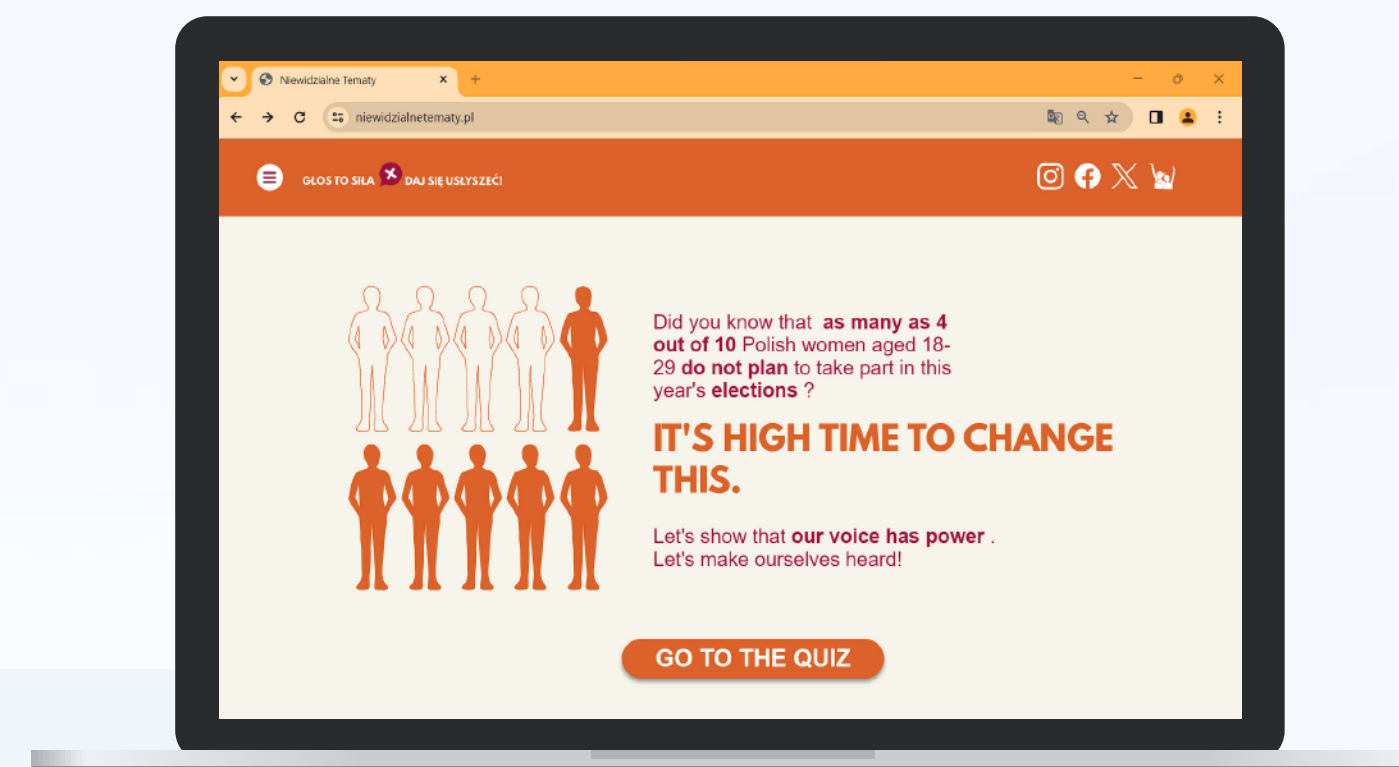
Frontline support

Poland

Fundacja OFF school



The OFF school Foundation focuses on projects and programs tailored for the younger generation, specifically Generation Z, guiding them on how to listen, comprehend, and empower themselves while fostering social engagement. Action for Democracy helped fund their initiative, "Dom Spokojnej Młodości - Electoral Scenarios," which equipped high school students with lesson plans for self-directed learning, challenging traditional education systems. Through our grant, they developed specialized electoral scenarios empowering young individuals to lead lessons for their peers, educating them on social engagement, electoral integrity, and the evaluation of political candidates' credibility.



Fundacja "Widzialne"



Fundacja "Widzialne"'s mission is to bolster self-assurance and belief in the capabilities of women. The foundation emerged in response to women's protests following a controversial ruling by the Constitutional Tribunal on October 22, 2020. Through amplifying women's voices, they strive to enhance their visibility in the public domain, fostering confidence and agency. The "Niewidzialne w polityce" project targeted the issue of low voter turnout among young people in elections. Through direct engagement with individuals feeling underrepresented in politics, they strived to grasp their needs and tackle "invisible" political issues from their standpoint. With the support of Action for Democracy, they were able to elevate the visibility of the concerns of young people, particularly women and marginalized groups in the political sphere ahead of the parliamentary elections.

Frontline support

Poland

Fundacja Ogólnopolski Strajk Kobiet / Polish Women's Strike Foundation



The Polish Women's Strike Foundation (Fundacja Ogólnopolski Strajk Kobiet) originated as an organic, widespread social movement in 2016, sparked by opposition to a proposed total abortion ban in parliament. Since its inception, it has evolved into Poland's largest advocate for women's rights, encompassing abortion rights, human rights, democracy, the rule of law, and secularism. The "Protestujemy – głosujemy" project focused on encouraging voting particularly among women and young individuals who may be hesitant due to populist narratives. It targeted those who participated in the significant 2020 protests against the abortion ban imposed by the illegal Constitutional Tribunal. The campaign directly connected participation in the iconic 2020 protests to voting, emphasizing that legalizing abortion (alongside human rights and secularism) is a pivotal factor for engagement in elections.



Stanisława Brzozowskiego



Stowarzyszenie im. Stanisława Brzozowskiego (Krytyka Polityczna) is a social change organization that runs the online journal KrytykaPolityczna.pl, publishes books and conducts research. With the support of Action for Democracy, they implemented the project Coś trzeba wybrać, which aimed to inspire women to vote in the parliamentary elections, highlighting the significance of making conscious decisions in their lives. The project engaged well-known artists from diverse backgrounds, both popular and independent, who recorded nine songs about the elections. Through the power of music and entertainment, women motivated their peers to join the democratic process. The project and its songs were promoted through various media channels, and each person who sent a post-election selfie at the polling station received a CD with the songs.



Frontline support

Poland

Fundacja Liberté!

LIBERTÉ!

Fundacja Liberté! is a cultural and social organization and think tank that was founded in 2007 and advocates for an open society, a rational free-market economy, and a liberal culture in Poland. Their main activity is organizing the Freedom Games (Igrzyska Wolności), Poland's largest forum of ideas, which celebrated its 10th edition in 2023. With the support of Action for Democracy, they carried out the pro-turnout campaign "Turning Point", which included an online civic referendum that asked important questions to evaluate the government's performance. The website received 315k visits, and 63.8k people participated in the referendum. They also created promotional videos with celebrities who urged Polish citizens to vote, which reached almost 2 million views on social media.



Komitet Obrony Demokracji (KOD)



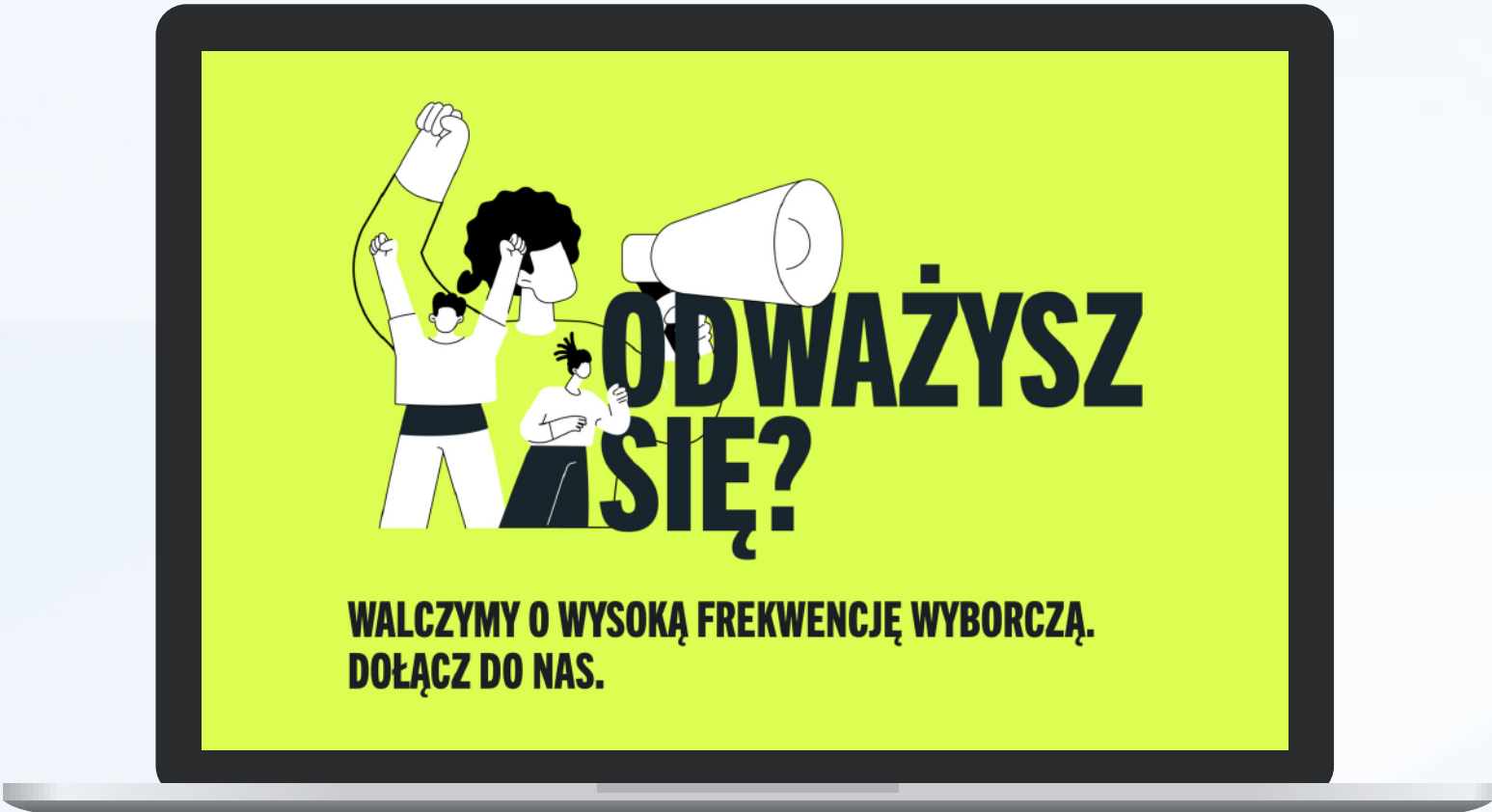
The Committee for the Defense of Democracy, formed in December 2015 in response to threats to the rule of law in Poland by the government, is a social movement and association with goals centered on upholding democratic principles, the rule of law, human rights, civil liberties, and the advancement of civil society. Their ongoing project, Civic Control of Elections, established in 2018, serves as a watchdog initiative aimed at ensuring the proper conduct of voting in various elections across Poland, including local government, parliamentary, presidential, and European elections. The project also seeks to engage citizens in election observation to foster societal involvement. During the Autumn parliamentary elections, around 20,000 OKW observers monitored election commissions, contributing to a fully democratic vote.

Frontline support

Poland

Fundacja Obrony Demokracji

The Foundation for the Defence of Democracy is an organization that was founded in response to the growing violations by the Polish authorities, such as the takeover of state institutions, the assault on the Constitutional Tribunal, the civil service, and the public media, as well as the manipulation of rules and the harassment of critics. As part of the grant, they carried out a ‘Get Out the Vote’ (GOTV) campaign in Poland, aiming to mobilize the youth and the people who feel alienated by the mainstream political parties.



Foundation Institute for Eastern Studies (IES)



The Institute for Eastern Studies (IES) is a leading organization in promoting social and political education and capacity-building for the democratic development of Poland and other Central and Eastern European countries. For over 30 years, the IES has been hosting the Economic Forum in Krynica Zdrój, a prestigious international conference that fosters dialogue and collaboration among academic, political, economic, civil society, and cultural leaders, as well as media professionals from across Europe. With the support of Action for Democracy, the IES launched the CyberResilience project, which aimed to raise awareness and share best practices on countering disinformation and fake news. The project involved five debates at the Economic Forum in Karpacz, with the participation of international experts, and generated lively online discussions. The project was a great success, as evidenced by the high quality of expert inputs, the active engagement of the audience, and the keen interest in further cooperation among the stakeholders.



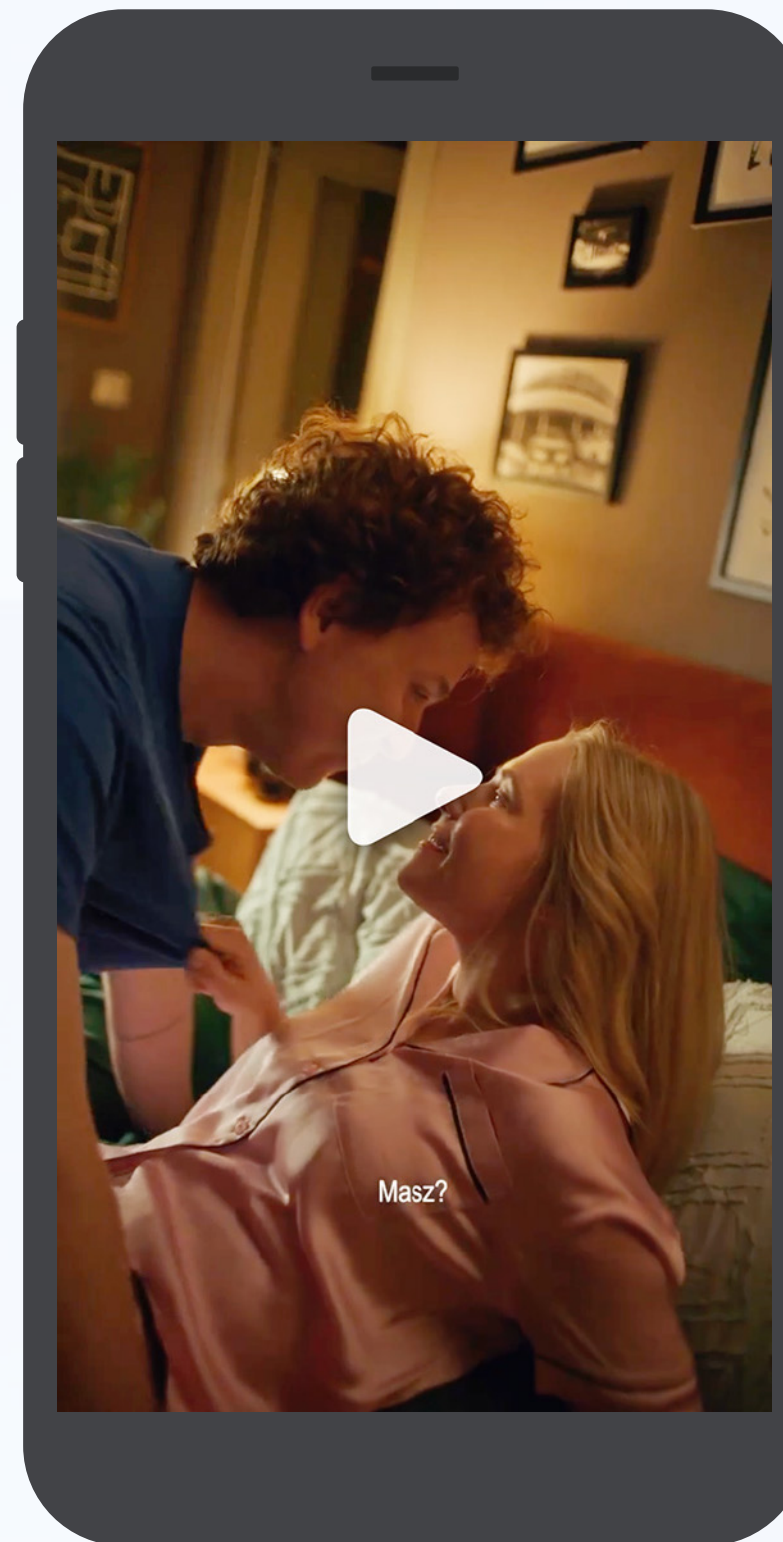
Frontline support

Poland

SEXEDPL



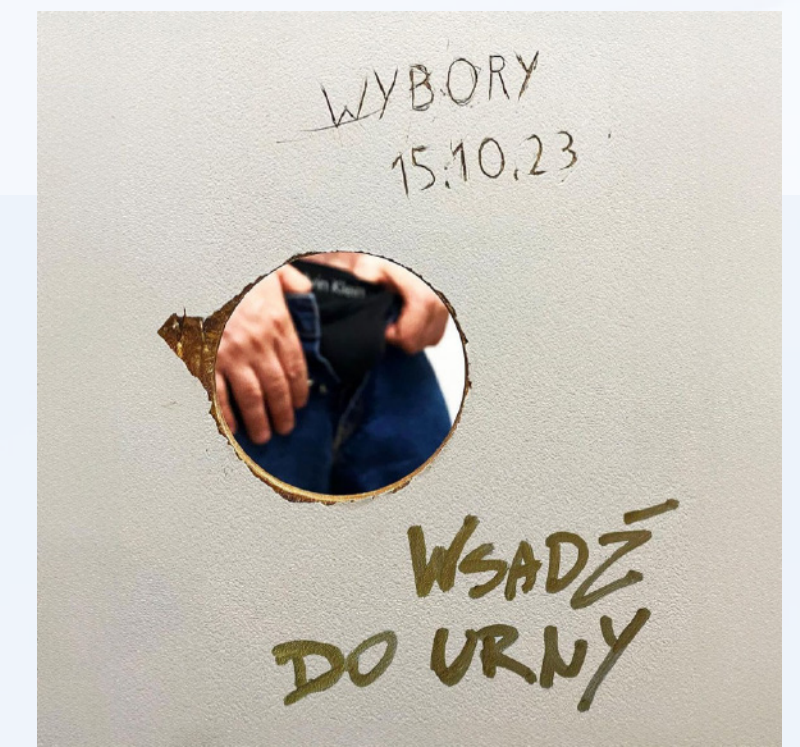
SEXEDPL is a multimedia platform dedicated to providing comprehensive and age-appropriate education in human rights, gender equality, relationships, and reproduction for young people, parents, and adults. Their approach focuses on informing about the risks associated with sexual life while presenting sex and sexuality positively, emphasizing values like mutual respect, inclusiveness, equality, empathy, and responsibility. As part of their efforts to engage young voters, particularly females, in the parliamentary elections on October 15, 2023, they produced and promoted social media films. These films garnered over 14 million views solely on social media platforms associated with the foundation, effectively motivating participation in the electoral process.



Fundacja Basta



Fundacja Basta actively combats hate speech in European media and champions LGBTQ rights in Poland. They leverage social media to drive pro-democracy initiatives and ensure fair representation and safety for the LGBTQ community. Supported by Action for Democracy, they initiated Poland's first major voter turnout campaign on gay dating sites. Additionally, they produced six videos depicting the potential impact of politicians' promises on people's everyday lives.



Frontline support

Poland

Alliance 4 Europe



Alliance4Europe (A4E) is a non-profit organization with the mission of protecting and advancing democracy and fundamental values in Europe by connecting pro-European and pro-democratic actors. A4E works on opening up civil society space, countering disinformation online by amplifying democratic voices and developing approaches to citizen activation. To achieve its mission, A4E develops civic tech solutions and supports campaigning, advocacy, and citizen participation initiatives. Action for Democracy supported Alliance4Europe in the dissemination of "Without you there would be no us" a documentary film and campaign featuring Ukrainian women refugees in Poland, conveying their gratitude and highlighting their ongoing struggles through testimonies, aiming to bridge understanding and remind Poles of the impact of their support on the lives of the refugees.



Frontline support

Slovakia

Action for Democracy awarded grants for 5 projects aimed at encouraging Slovak citizens to participate in the parliamentary elections in September 2023, with campaigns particularly aimed at strengthening the voices of women, young people and the Slovak diaspora.

Our grantees made a notable impact on civic participation. The 15 percentage point increase in young people's interest in elections, from 52% in April to 69% in September, reflects the effectiveness of the non-partisan campaigns led by our grantees. The tangible outcome of this heightened interest is the impressive 69% participation of young people in the elections, surpassing the results of the previous elections three years ago (65%).



Mladi, o.z.



Mladi is an organization dedicated to empowering the youth. With a strategy that intertwines education and digital engagement, Mladi sparks curiosity and fosters interactive discussions among young people, encouraging them to become informed participants in society. Leveraging the grant from Action for Democracy, Mladi launched a targeted social media campaign to educate and mobilize Slovak expatriates in key cities, complemented by a series of high school lectures and the development of a comprehensive educational portal. Through a robust social media campaign, Mladi engaged over 1.6 million Facebook users, 1.2 million Instagram users, and achieved 1.4 million views on YouTube. The organization also expanded its educational impact by conducting 40 high school lectures and supporting 70 additional presentations through its educational website. These efforts have greatly amplified Mladi's mission to instill democratic values and civic engagement among the younger generation.

Frontline support

Slovakia

Open Society Foundations Bratislava



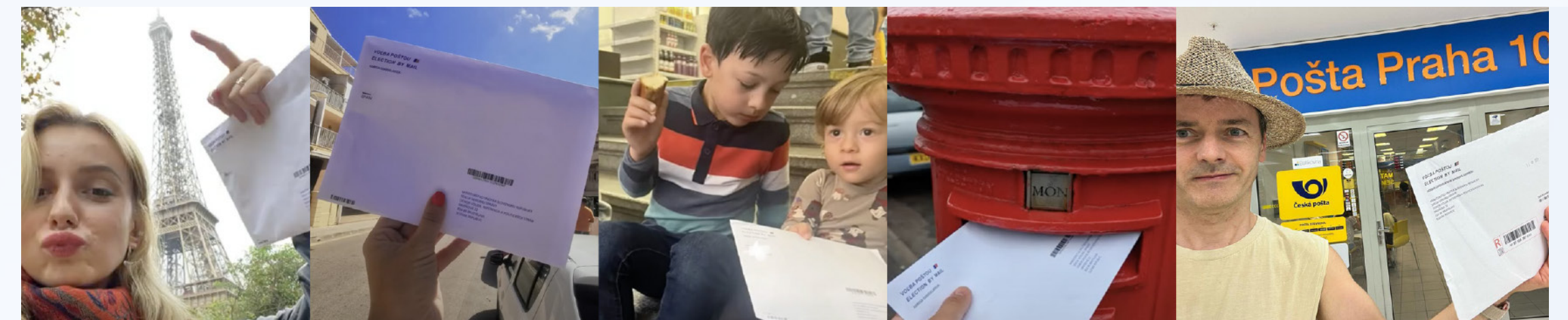
Open Society Foundations Bratislava is dedicated to enriching civil society by promoting openness, transparency, and equal opportunities. In a collaborative effort with Action for Democracy, OSF Bratislava successfully launched the “I WANT TO STAY” campaign, which was aimed at invigorating the democratic process and boosting voter turnout among young adults, particularly those aged 18-25, as well as reaching out to undecided and disengaged citizens. The campaign kicked off on July 8th at Pohoda, Slovakia’s largest summer festival, and featured an array of 48 offline activities. These included mobilization concerts, public rallies, and a variety of interactive events such as discussions, simulations, and experiential learning sessions focused on participatory democracy, migration, and youth politics. The campaign’s online component involved the production of educational videos that resonated with nearly one million Instagram users.



Srdcom doma, o.z.



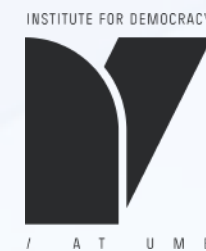
Srdcom doma o.z. is a non-profit organization founded by citizens of the Slovak Republic living in Prague, whose work has been pivotal in boosting voter participation among the Slovak diaspora. With the assistance of Action for Democracy, Srdcom doma orchestrated a compelling Get Out the Vote campaign. This initiative enlightened the Slovak diaspora about the 2023 Parliamentary Elections’ significance, urged diaspora members to vote by mail, and motivated over 50,000 voters to return to Slovakia to cast their votes in person. The campaign’s impact was profound: registration for mail voting surged, and overall electoral participation rose from 65.80% to 68.51%, marking an increase of 2.71%. Notably, the influence of the diaspora’s vote grew, with 58,779 voting by mail, accounting for 1.95% of the total votes cast, compared to 48,925 voters and 1.67% in the 2020 elections. This remarkable achievement underscores the vital role of Srdcom doma in fostering democratic engagement and amplifying the voice of Slovak citizens abroad.



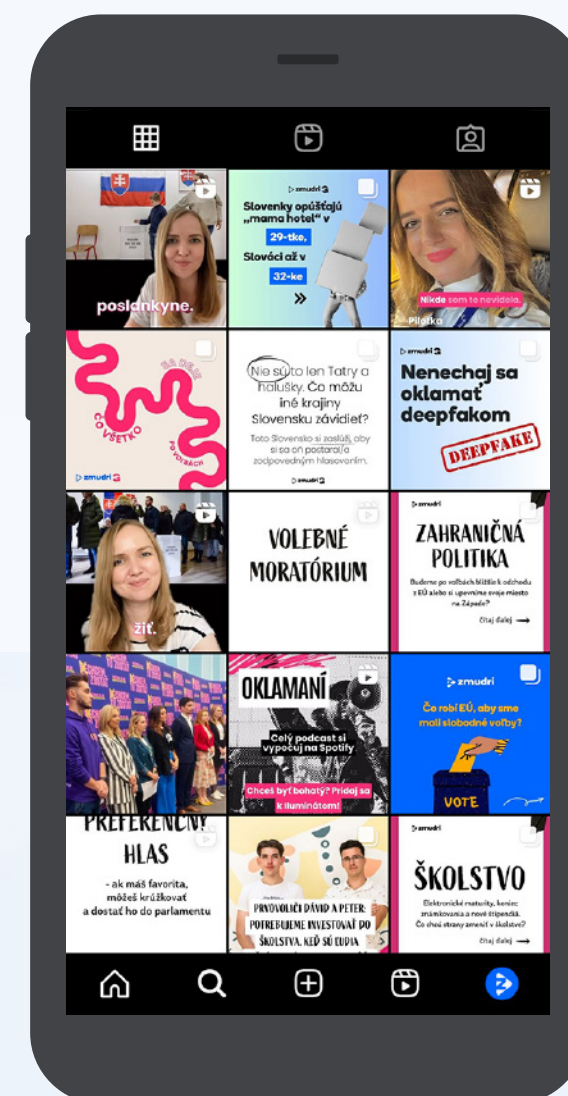
Frontline support

Slovakia

Inštitút pre Demokraciu pri UMB



The Institute for Democracy at UMB is a transdisciplinary community of Slovak scholars, students and civil society leaders that works to enhance informed voter decision-making. With the backing of Action for Democracy, the Institute has successfully promoted 'Volebný Kompas', a complimentary online platform that empowers citizens to make educated choices in the 2023 Slovak parliamentary elections. This tool quickly garnered attention, drawing in over 81,000 visitors within just two days and sparking significant media interest. Moreover, the Institute has been proactive in encouraging democratic engagement among both senior citizens and first-time voters. A two-semester course was tailored for seniors at Matej Bel University, while secondary school students benefited from three workshops that included simulated elections and hands-on experience with 'Volebný Kompas'. Additionally, the Institute facilitated two pre-election debates before October 10th.



Zmudri



Zmudri's mission is to empower young people to become active and responsible citizens upon completing their education. With the support of Action for Democracy, Zmudri launched a dynamic educational initiative targeting first-time voters. This campaign was anchored by two pivotal strategies: a Social Media educational campaign focused on the principles and workings of liberal democracies and a Voting Calculator, a tailored tool designed to meet the unique needs of young voters, aiding them in navigating the electoral landscape. The impact of Zmudri's election-focused educational content was profound, organically reaching over 400,000 users in September alone, and amassing a cumulative audience of over 2.8 million within the same month. The campaign's centerpiece, the voting calculator, drew the attention of more than 138,000 visitors to its landing page, underscoring the campaign's resonance with the youth.

Frontline support

Hungary

Hungarian Civil Union



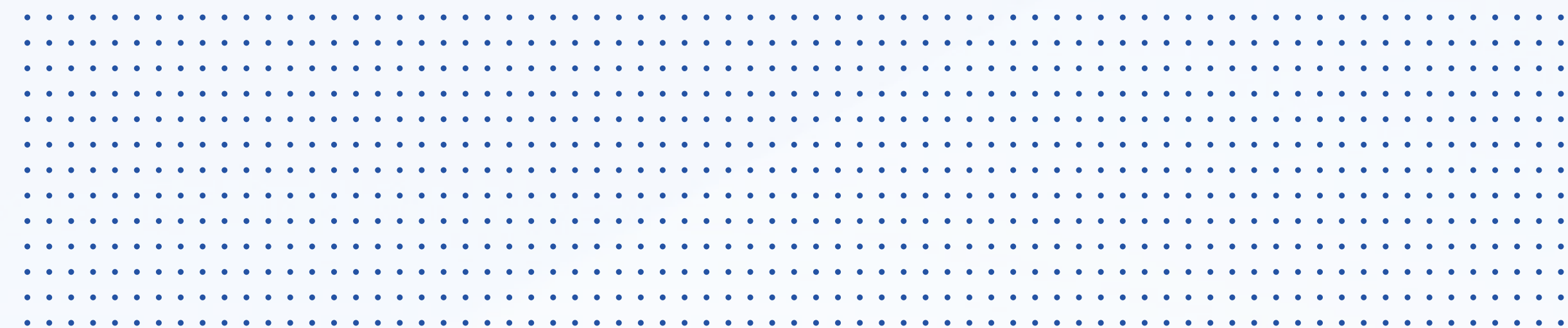
The Hungarian Civil Union (HCU) is a group of individuals committed to creating and building a strong civil society in Hungary. One of their main objectives is to promote democratic processes and create and develop participatory programs. For that purpose, Action for Democracy helped the HCU establish the Civil Parliament, a platform where various interest groups in Hungary discuss legislation and implement social control of their authorities and the Civil Interest Conciliation Council. It serves as an opinion-forming and decision-making civil unit at the local level. Further, HCU is working on the development and introduction of software to assess the opinion of the public through digital referendums on certain social problems, especially local matters.



Kispolgar / News for Kids



Contemporary Hungary formal education provides little insight on current affairs. Existing media is unfriendly to kids and content for children shies away from news and politics. However, children are very much affected and interested in politics. KisPolgár is a mobile application that aims to tackle this problem by serving as a news medium for Hungarian children aged 10+. The app delivers news and featured articles on local and global politics, economy, society explained for the coming generation, in a way that is brief, clear, illustrated and exciting. Their main target is middle class parents looking for ways to explain global and local news and teach media awareness to their children. The grant from Action for Democracy was instrumental in the development of interactive features that enhance the learning experience.



Frontline support

Hungary

"Only what you need to hear" – Bookazine of the Jelen magazine

Action for Democracy has supported the editorial team of Jelen magazine in producing a comprehensive "bookazine" that sheds light on the corrupted inner workings of the current political system in Hungary. The publication also sheds light on the extensive political machinery that Viktor Orbán has put in place to consolidate his control over Hungary. It examines the pervasive system of patronage that has permeated all levels of Hungarian society, from wealthy allies to the distribution of public works projects, which may or may not be influenced by political affiliations even in the most remote communities. This narrative aims to provide the reader with a clear understanding of the forces that have transformed Hungary under Orbán's tenure.



Frontline support

Argentina

Asuntos del Sur



Asuntos del Sur is an Argentinian civil society organization working to foster inclusive and participatory democracies. With the backing of Action for Democracy, Asuntos embarked on a mission to bolster voter turnout in Argentina, addressing the concern of historically low participation rates in presidential elections. Asuntos undertook various public education and mobilization activities intended to inform Argentines about the history of the rights they currently enjoy, and the imperative to make an informed and active decision in the ballot box. They provided convening support in Buenos Aires and across the country to a wide array of non-partisan civic organizations (both local and national) who are working to improve participation in the elections.



Quid

Quid.

Quid, established in Brazil in 2020, is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting social engagement and advocacy. Its mission is to serve as an incubator for communication strategies and mobilization efforts that support ethical practices, peace, civic engagement, human rights, and democratic principles. The organization received a grant from Action for Democracy aimed at empowering social movements, non-governmental organizations, labor unions, and activists in Argentina. The grant facilitated workshops on community engagement, effective use of WhatsApp for organizing, and the reinforcement of democratic ideals, strategies, and narratives. The initiative successfully engaged over a hundred activists from various groups.

Boosting the Digital Capabilities of our Grantees

Action for Democracy firmly believes that addressing global challenges requires innovative, global solutions. Recognizing the pivotal role of social media and artificial intelligence in shaping civic innovation, we have strategically invested in enhancing digital capabilities among our grantees. This commitment reflects our dedication to staying at the forefront of progressive change and ensuring that our community is well-equipped to navigate the evolving landscape of digital innovation.



Strategic Partnership with Estratos

Estratos Digital GmbH is a leading European digital agency that provides digital organizing services for progressive causes. They have worked with many NGOs, civic initiatives, and political clients, helping them grow and become strong digital movements. Action for Democracy gave Estratos an institutional development grant to build their organizational and IT capacity and to offer digital organization support services to our grantees, such as expanding their social media reach with effective messaging, planning and running micro donation fundraising campaigns, and optimizing their digital engagement for GOTV campaigns.



AI Caller

In 2023, Action for Democracy initiated a pilot project aimed at surveying public opinion on the Ukraine Crisis. The project utilizes an AI tool employing natural language processing (NLP) to comprehend the caller's responses and generate personalized questions. The objective of the pilot project is to gain deeper insights into the American public's perspectives on the Ukraine crisis within the framework of the struggle between democracy and authoritarianism. The survey results will play a crucial role in informing Action for Democracy's advocacy and outreach efforts.

Pillar 3

Policy Advocacy

In 2023, Action Democracy strengthened its commitment to fostering a more inclusive and representative global political landscape through dedicated policy advocacy efforts. We have worked to elevate the profile and messages of our grantees, who would otherwise have limited exposure to policymakers, to ensure that their critical voices and recommendations reached the right audience.

Our advocacy campaigns were aimed at securing more robust material and political support for frontline organizations. Through these efforts, we have not only amplified the voices of democracy defenders from battleground states but also facilitated critical dialogue and policy recommendations with decision-makers. Our focus on connecting with leading think tanks and advocacy groups, has been instrumental in promoting the causes of our grantees.

Moreover, our initiatives to upscale the visibility of our grantees through press releases, open letters, and op-eds have contributed to building a potent global voice for democracy defenders and diasporas from key battleground states. This strategic approach has enabled civil society leaders to advocate for themselves effectively and have a meaningful impact on the policy environment.



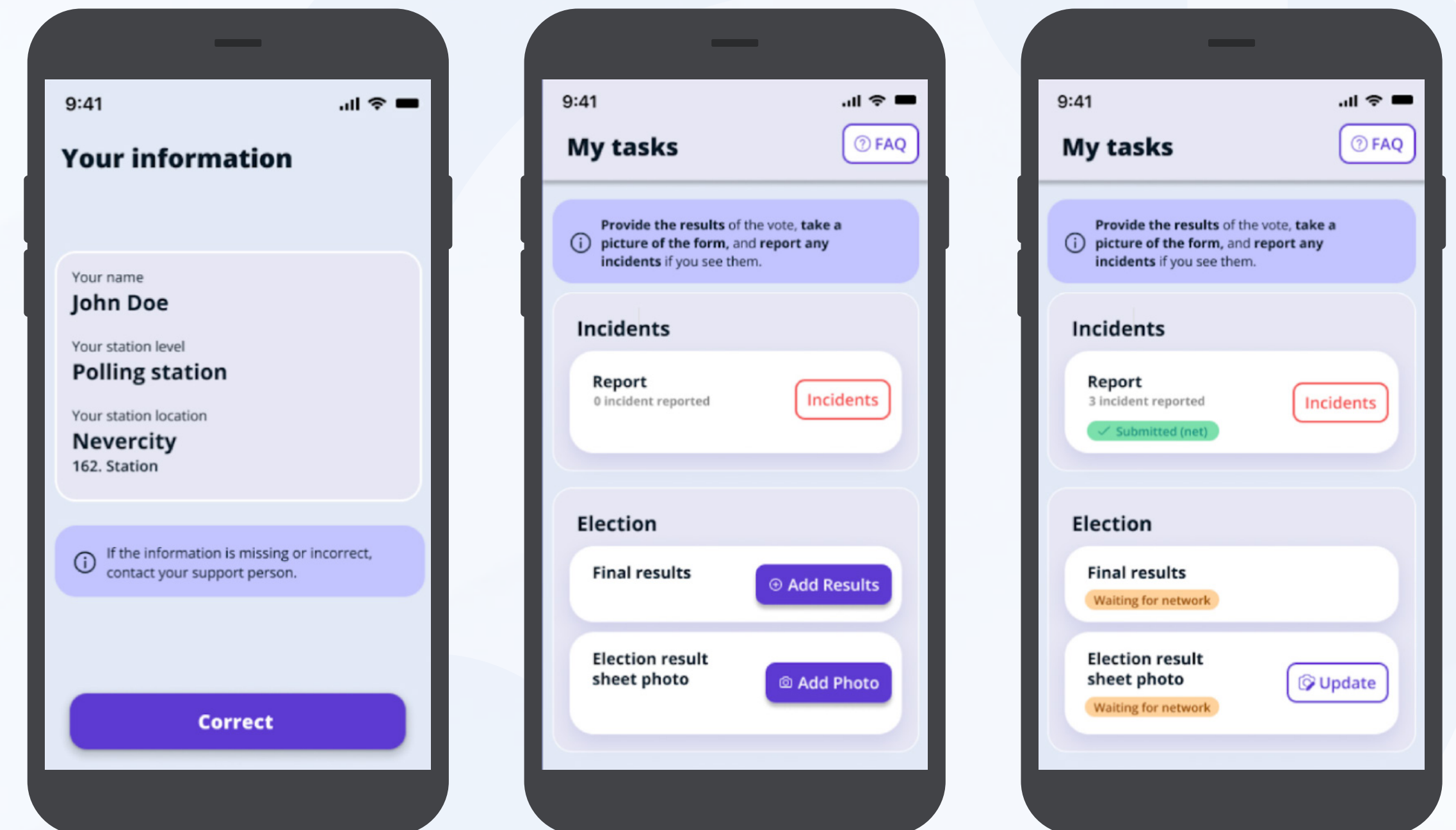
Policy Advocacy

Protecting Electoral Integrity - Our new Parallel Voting Tabulation (PVT) system

Elections are the lifeblood of democracy. For this reason, authoritarian leaders and regimes around the world often perceive them as perilous to their hold on power, prompting them to manipulate the electoral process in their favor. Instances abound of routine ballot stuffing, voter coercion, and manipulation of voter lists.

To address this challenge, Action for Democracy has worked on coordinating a coalition of global democracy defenders, regional advisors, democratic technology experts, and activists to develop and operationalise a brand new and state-of-the-art Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) System, which can be deployed anywhere in the world to protect the integrity of elections.

Our PVT system uses cutting-edge digital solutions designed to help citizens ensure accurate vote tabulation by reporting incidents and tracking the actual vote counts in real time. It helps prevent election rigging even in the face of authoritarian leaders and regimes trying to manipulate the vote, and safeguard the integrity of elections by crowdsourcing, organizing and sharing real-time monitoring of incidents and vote counts, derived from local, observable tabulations.



Attacks against Action for Democracy in Hungary

Strengthening Civil Society and facing backlash for it: On the Sovereignty Protection Law

In an escalation of the “dollar-left” smear campaign targeted at Hungarian civil society and the democratic opposition, the Orbán government has introduced the Sovereignty Protection Act in December 2023. Ostensibly aimed at ‘protecting’ national sovereignty, the law – inspired by similar legislation in Putin’s Russia – is, in reality, a direct attack on independent civil society and free expression. The Act established the new Sovereignty Protection Office (SPO), endowed with unlimited investigative powers.

The Sovereignty Protection Office is empowered to investigate any organization or individual on unclear and wide-ranging pretexts, such as serving foreign interests or threatening Hungary's sovereignty. SPO, aided by the National Information Centre, a recently established super-intelligence agency led by the head of the Cabinet Office Antal Rogán, in charge of Orbán’s propaganda machine, has access to any data and information about civil society organizations, companies, political parties, churches and even individuals, in full disregard of privacy. No legal remedies are available against the SPO’s actions, including against its investigations or the publication of its findings.

The law’s broad scope means it could target journalists, media, non-profit or private sector organizations as well as citizens who criticize government policies. The SPO’s real purpose is to intimidate and silence the remnants of independent press and civil society in the country, by conducting smear campaigns on pseudo-legal grounds. It is telling that the SPO’s president is the same Mr. Tamás Láncki who as the editor-in-chief of the weekly Figyelő magazine oversaw the publication of the infamous list of 200 “Soros mercenaries” after the 2018 elections.

The blatant illegality and illegitimacy of the Office for the Protection of Sovereignty is also evident by the fact that the European Commission launched infringement proceedings against Hungary, since the Office for the Protection of Sovereignty is in breach of a series of EU laws.

telex

Trump-admiring fake Twitter profile delivers perfect case for Sovereignty Protection Authority

Attacks against Action for Democracy in Hungary

SPO's attack on Action for Democracy

The SPO's first deployment confirmed that the sole purpose of the Office for the Protection of Sovereignty is to service the Orbán government's communication goals, to silence the remaining independent press and to intimidate civil society:

Between the 29th and the 31st of January - coinciding with SPO's launch - the fringe X account Maga Babe published three videos, secretly recorded in a Black Cube style covert operation, carried out against members of Action for Democracy's advisory council and board members in August 2023. Based on these doctored videos, SPO has announced that it is opening an inquiry into Action for Democracy, and the Hungarian government's propaganda press launched an extensive smear campaign against Action for Democracy and its advisory council members.

EUROPE

The New York Times

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Account

How ‘MagaBabe’ and a Fake Investor Targeted Critics of Viktor Orban

A covert campaign to entrap and discredit people linked to rights groups in Hungary has added fuel to longstanding complaints of democratic backsliding in the country.

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Critics of Hungary's prime minister, Viktor Orban, appear to have faced an elaborate dirty-tricks operation. Denes Erdos/Associated Press

By Andrew Higgins

Reporting from Budapest

March 7, 2024

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Kati Marton, a Hungarian-born American writer, thought she was talking with a friend of Gen. Wesley Clark, NATO's former commander in Europe. The man, who had sent her a résumé describing himself as a “results-oriented wealth and investment manager” living in Switzerland, said he was exploring green

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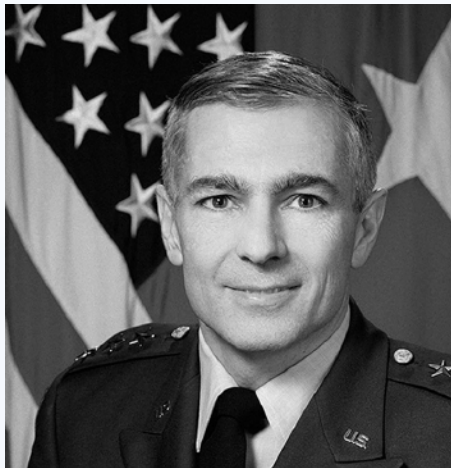
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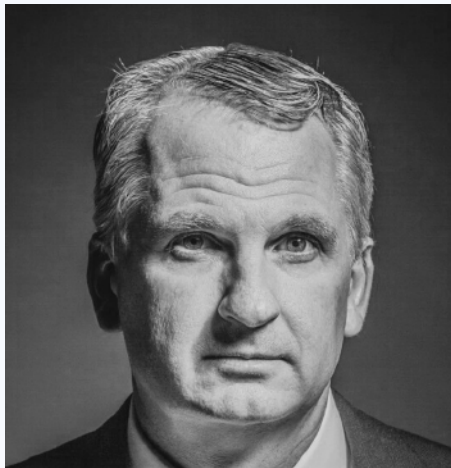
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