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Annual Report

→ LETTER FROM PRESIDENT AND THE CHAIR OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL

2024 emerged as a record year for democracy, hosting a multitude of elections across nearly 80 countries, collectively representing half of the global population. Never in the history of humankind have so many people had the opportunity to make their voices heard.

This unprecedented wave of global elections became a defining test for democracy—a sweeping referendum on the values of freedom, pluralism, and the rule of law. From the largest democratic exercises in history in India and the United States to decisive turning points in Europe, Latin America, and Southeast Asia, it was a year of immense promise and profound peril:

Democracy itself was on the ballot.



Kati Marton

Chair of the Advisory Council,
Action for Democracy

Kati Marton



David Koranyi

President,
Action for Democracy

David Koranyi

2024 Elections

Autumn 2024



At Action for Democracy, we entered 2024 with a clear sense of urgency and purpose. The scale of elections—spanning nearly 80 countries and representing half the world’s population—offered an unparalleled opportunity to push back against rising authoritarianism. And yet, for every beacon of democratic resilience, we witnessed troubling signs of backsliding: from Hungary’s deepening autocracy and the EU’s concerning concessions, to Georgia’s regression.

As Nobel Peace Prize laureate Maria Ressa starkly put it, “we will know whether democracy lives or dies by the end of 2024.”

The results were mixed. In some battlegrounds, grassroots mobilization and international solidarity helped protect democratic gains. In others, anti-democratic forces consolidated power, often using the tools of democracy to dismantle its foundations. But even in the face of setbacks, our conviction remained unshaken: democracy is worth fighting for, and together, we can—and must—tilt the balance toward justice and freedom.

This report chronicles our efforts: building a transnational infrastructure for democratic resilience, delivering rapid support to frontline organizations, and elevating local voices in global policy arenas. In the run-up to the European Parliamentary elections, we launched coordinated campaigns across key EU member states to mobilize diaspora voters—those often overlooked yet crucial to the democratic process. From culturally tailored civic engagement tools to multilingual digital outreach, our aim was to counter apathy and misinformation with empowerment and participation.

Whether it was helping to stop democratic backsliding in Poland through youth- and women-led civic campaigns, countering far-right narratives in Austria, or activating dispersed communities across Europe to make their voices heard at the ballot box, Action for Democracy showed that international engagement can be fast, principled, and impactful.

As we look ahead, we remain steadfast in our mission. In the face of growing polarization, disinformation, and authoritarian collaboration, we must double down on solidarity, innovation, and bold action. Our work is far from over—but with your continued support, we can help ensure that democracy not only survives this critical juncture, but emerges stronger.

**Thank you
for standing with us
in this fight.**



Kati Marton

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→ ACTION FOR DEMOCRACY'S MISSION AND VALUES

In 2024, 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:



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

As a relatively young organization with global ambitions, A4D has prioritized community building and sustainable fundraising. In 2024, we launched two new donor engagement initiatives:

- the **Democracy Defenders Club (DDC)**
- and a **Community Matching Funds Campaign**.



The **DDC** emerged as a cornerstone of our donor engagement strategy, offering exclusive weekly briefings featuring expert analysis on unfolding political developments in key battleground states. The initiative debuted with the Democracy on the Brink webinar, headlined by Francis Fukuyama, drawing strong interest and setting the tone for a more informed and engaged donor community. Insights gained from this launch have been instrumental in refining our messaging and deepening audience connection.



Our **Community Matching Funds Campaign**, piloted in partnership with the Polish Women’s Strike, demonstrated the powerful synergy between donor passion and grassroots impact. By matching every contribution toward the Strike’s campaign for WHO-aligned reproductive rights reform, we not only doubled financial support but also strengthened trust and solidarity between our supporters and frontline actors.

Beyond these campaigns, we continued investing in branding, storytelling, and donor communications to increase visibility and build trust. Our expanded digital infrastructure now allows us to deploy rapid-response campaigns, maintain segmented mailing lists, and tailor messaging across multiple platforms.

Pillar 2

→ **FRONTLINE
SUPPORT**
01

In 2024, Action for Democracy deployed targeted, high-impact support to frontline civil society organizations across Hungary, Georgia, Italy, Austria, Germany, Poland, Slovakia, and France. We prioritized key electoral moments and escalating authoritarian threats to deliver timely interventions that could tip the democratic balance.

In **Hungary**, we focused on building sustainable civic infrastructure. Our support empowered independent media initiatives, youth-focused civic education, and digital tools that give citizens a stronger voice in one of Europe’s most repressive environments.

Ahead of Georgia’s pivotal parliamentary elections, we facilitated training programs that equipped civil society

groups with proven campaign strategies. These efforts aimed to strengthen organizational capacity and boost civic coordination under intensifying political pressure.

In **Italy**, we backed a voter mobilization campaign ahead of the Ligurian regional elections. The campaign served as an important opportunity to test pro-democracy messaging in a region where populist forces continue to exert strong influence.

In **Austria**, we issued an open call to support civil society groups working to counter far-right extremism in the run-up to the general election. Selected initiatives effectively engaged young and disillusioned voters through compelling, multimedia narratives.

Pillar 2

→ **FRONTLINE
SUPPORT**
02

The **European Parliament** elections offered a transnational platform to scale our model. Faced with widespread voter apathy and rising authoritarianism, especially among mobile EU citizens, Action for Democracy launched a multi-country campaign to inform, mobilize, and empower voters across the continent. We also supported a voter education series that delivered webinars and infographics in 27 EU languages. These materials, while modest in online visibility, gained institutional traction and circulated widely across civic and academic networks.

In **Germany, Poland, and Slovakia**, we supported grassroots campaigns that localized and amplified our core messages. These groups played a critical role in reaching diaspora communities and building civic trust with culturally resonant, emotionally powerful content.

In **Poland**, we funded diaspora-driven initiatives that launched a new civic engagement website, ran targeted search ads, and promoted voter registration through emotionally grounded storytelling and community-based messaging.

To bolster the impact of all these initiatives, Action for Democracy continued its strategic partnerships with leading digital mobilization experts. These collaborations ensured that even our smaller grantees could scale their reach using data-driven and AI-enhanced campaign tools, making our entire network more agile, connected, and impactful.

Pillar 3

→ **POLICY
ADVOCACY**
01



A4D leveraged its growing community of partners, board members, and advisors to advance targeted advocacy strategies in Washington, Brussels, and key European capitals. Our goal has been to elevate the voices of frontline democratic actors while shaping the broader policy environment in which they operate.

A cornerstone of our work is equipping grantees with the tools, platforms, and opportunities they need to influence policy and push back against authoritarian trends. Over the past year, we have supported civil society leaders in engaging with key policymakers, helping them bring grassroots perspectives to national and international decision-making spaces. By facilitating access to high-level dialogues and offering strategic guidance, we ensured that grantees are not only heard, but that their voices are reflected in decision-making processes.

In parallel, we helped our grantees build public visibility and strengthen their influence through comprehensive communications strategies. Working with expert partners, we supported the design and rollout of multi-platform campaigns that raise awareness, shape narratives, and generate public awareness around pro-democracy causes. We also fostered collaboration between grantees and like-minded organisations, amplifying their reach and impact.

Our EP election campaign included a strong advocacy component, targeting European institutions and national governments to strengthen protections for mobile voters and support election integrity measures. Through partnerships with NGOs like Election Watch EU, we contributed to public dialogue on electoral transparency and citizen inclusion across the EU.

In 2024, Action for Democracy laid the groundwork for four major new initiatives that will launch in 2025. These projects reflect our commitment to strengthening democratic resilience and countering the global rise of authoritarianism: from tracking autocratic alliances to empowering democratic action through AI, our 2024 portfolio expands the tools, communities, and knowledge available to those defending democracy worldwide. Below is a preview of these forthcoming initiatives.

Authoritarian Collaboration Index

The Authoritarian Collaboration Index (AuthCollab Index) is Action for Democracy's flagship initiative to expose cross-border collaboration between authoritarian regimes and their allies. The Index will systematically document and visualize financial, diplomatic, propaganda, military, and transnational repression collaborations among autocratic actors, with a special focus on their infiltration

Pillar 3

→ **POLICY
ADVOCACY
02**

into democratic societies. By consolidating open-source information into a searchable database and interactive map, this platform will provide policymakers, researchers, and civil society with unprecedented visibility into how autocracies support each other—and threaten democracy globally.

AI Advocacy

Our AI Advocacy Chatbot puts powerful civic engagement tools directly into the hands of pro-democracy citizens. Launching in 2025, the chatbot helps users send personalized letters to elected officials in support of vital legislation like the Transnational Repression Policy Act, Cambodia Democracy and Human Rights Act, and the MEGOBARI Act. By streamlining constituent outreach and tailoring messages to individual views, the chatbot makes digital civic action intuitive, impactful, and scalable—amplifying the voice of democracy advocates at a time when every letter counts.

Transnational Repression Working Group

In 2025, Action for Democracy convenes the Transnational Repression Working Group (TRWG) to confront the rising

use of cross-border coercion by authoritarian regimes. From spyware to assassinations, transnational repression has become an institutionalized tactic for silencing dissent abroad. The TRWG unites human rights defenders, experts, advocacy leaders, and practitioners to push for legislative responses in the U.S. and EU. Through coordinated public advocacy and institutional engagement, the group seeks to expose abuses, defend at-risk communities, and secure robust legal protections against authoritarian reach.

Markers of Democratic Backsliding Index

In partnership with Asuntos del Sur, Action for Democracy is co-developing the Markers of Democratic Backsliding Index—a practical toolkit to detect both early warnings of democratic erosion and sources of resilience. The project expands on existing scholarship by identifying subtle yet dangerous trends in political rhetoric, institutional decay, and social polarization—while also highlighting civic practices that can sustain democracy. Tested across three continents, the project will launch a “do-it-yourself” diagnostic framework for local actors in 2025, backed by a global community of practice committed to reversing democratic decline.

→ OUR PEOPLE

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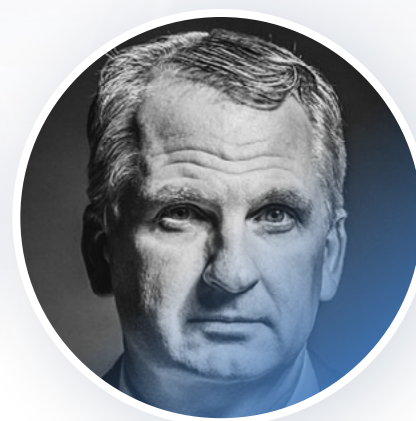
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