

European Election Observers Launch Platform in Warsaw

Warsaw – On 12th December 2012, twelve civil society organisations supporting or conducting citizens' election observation in the states of the Eastern Partnership, the Russian Federation and the European Union have launched the "European Platform for Democratic Elections" (EPDE) in Warsaw.

"The support of citizens standing for democratic elections wherever they are at risk in Europe is our common aim and responsibility" said Stefanie Schiffer, chair of European Exchange (Berlin) and newly-elected coordinator of the Platform. Whereas all six countries of the Eastern Partnership of the European Union (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine) and the Russian Federation have committed themselves to the principles of electoral democracies through their constitutions and international obligations, today none of these states fully meets the standards of democratic elections. "Election fraud has become a common tool for some of the post-Soviet countries to preserve power. The poorest records belong to the European Union's immediate neighbour states, Belarus and the Russian Federation, as well as Azerbaijan."

The aim of the "European Platform for Democratic Elections" is to assist citizens' election observation in the countries of the Eastern Partnership and in the Russian Federation, and to contribute to democratic election processes throughout Europe. The Platform will develop innovative methodologies to detect election fraud through citizens' observation, it will train citizens' observation networks in Eastern Europe and it will contribute to raising awareness for the findings of citizens' election observation in European political structures.

The first activities of the European Platform for Democratic

Elections are directed towards supporting citizens' observation during the upcoming presidential elections in 2013 in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, as well as towards the regional elections in the Russian Federation and in Ukraine.

The founding members of the European Platform for Democratic Elections are the Association GOLOS (Russia), Belarusian Helsinki Committee BHC (Belarus), Committee of Voters of Ukraine CVU, Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Center EMDSC (Azerbaijan), European Exchange (Germany), Helsinki Citizens' Assembly VANADZOR (Armenia), Human Rights Center "Viasna" (Belarus), International Society for Free Elections and Democracy ISFED (Georgia), Norwegian Helsinki Committee NHC, Civil Network OPORA (Ukraine), Association Promo-Lex (Moldova) and Swedish International Liberal Centre SILC (Sweden).