



Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
and International Cooperation



# Pro-Electoral Integrity

Project in Support to Electoral Integrity in Africa via the Department of Political Affairs,  
Peace and Security of the African Union Commission



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## INTRODUCTION



The "Pro-Electoral Integrity: Project in Support to Electoral Integrity in Africa" aims at contributing to peace and security through the development of a common culture of resilience and shared values around integrity in electoral processes, by strengthening the capacities of African EMBs in conducting their own credible and inclusive elections.

The Project is funded by Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and is implemented via the partnership of the Evia the African Union Commission's Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (AUC-PAPS).



In furtherance of actualising provisions of the MoU signed between ECES and the African Union Commission's Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security in May 2021 and also following exchanges between ECES and the AU-PAPS the "Pro-Electoral Integrity" project was conceived and designed to provide technical support to a broad range of electoral and constitutional stakeholders on the African continent with the overall objective of contributing to the conduct of credible, and inclusive elections in African Union Member States fostering the prevention of electoral conflicts and promotion of electoral integrity.

The project has an overall implementation period of 12 months and will support the African Union Commission's Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security to mainly build the resilience of Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) and networks of EMBs to contribute to the challenges of electoral contexts to effectively



organize elections in accordance with national and international norms and standards of democratic elections.

## BACKGROUND

In May 2021, the African Union Commission's Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (AUC-PAPS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the European Centre for Electoral Support (ECES) which intends to further strengthen the cooperation between both parties in promoting electoral integrity and free, fair, transparent, democratic and credible elections, as well as the prevention of electoral conflicts, human rights and women political participation, in line with their respective mandates.

Following this signature, both parties worked together to draft the "Pro-Electoral Integrity Project", a technical assistance project as a concrete outcome and, more importantly, as a means for the implementation of the MoU.



*On the 10th of February 2022, ECES' Founder & Executive Director Fabio Bargiacchi and the Vice President of the ECES Advisory Committee Filiberto Ceriani Sebregondi participated in the Afrika-Europa transmission from European Parliament with Carlos Zorrinho, Ambassador Calixte Aristide Mbari and Ambassador Fabrizio Lobasso. The topic of the transmission was: "Prospects for cooperation between the EU and the AU in the field of election observation and electoral assistance, focusing on strengthening election integrity, human rights and inclusive political participation in 2022-2023 and beyond".*

A first Italian MFA contribution fed into this positive dynamic through funds from Phase III of the project called Innov-Elections. Officially launched on 15 December 2020 as part of the announcement by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of its





"Partnership with Africa" policy document, the Innov-Elections project was developed in collaboration with the Sant' Anna School of Advanced Studies of Pisa (SSSA) and implemented with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

In 2022 at the end of the implementation of the third phase of Innov-Elections the AU and ECES worked together in the realization of the Pro-Electoral Integrity Project" that the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation decided to finance via the Italian – African Peace Facility Agreement (IAPF). This agreement was signed in Lisbon in 2007, with the aim of supporting the African Union in promoting Peace and Security on the continent and intervening in conflict prevention, mediation, and resolution in Africa. The "PRO-Electoral Integrity" project shows its relevance as an instrument to support the achievement of shared objectives between the African Union Commission, the Italian government, and ECES.

Furthermore, in the framework of the Innov-Election project funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation ECES has supported the relaunch meeting of the **Association of African Election Authorities (AAEA)** held in Accra from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> of May.



The meeting had the aim to revive and re-establish the engagement of the 45 Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) member of the organization in Africa following a period of inactivity due to the burst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the meeting aimed at identifying the specific areas of support for each other in upcoming elections in the members' countries, getting the approval for its strategic plan and revitalising the association

Founded in 1996 the Association of African Election Authorities (AAEA), is an association with the objective of gathering, challenging, and supporting Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) in order for them to administer free and fair elections in their respective countries.

In line with the above, and with its constant work to offer support to countries in their electoral journey, ECES is proud to share the same vision as AAEA and has offered technical and financial support to the Association as a way of assisting the implementation of their activities via the MoU we have signed with the African Union.

From the relationship built with the **Association of African Election Authorities (AAEA)** thanks to latter activity ECES organized in the framework of the Pro Peace Kenya project a Solidarity mission to support Wafula Chebukati, Chairman of the Kenya's **Independent**





**Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC)** during the August 9<sup>th</sup> elections in the country.

The mission involved the Chairpersons from five different countries: Ghana, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, and Zambia. ECES, as a partner of the African Union and IEBC, and in line with its mandate to support the popularization of democratic practices will offer operational, logistical, and content support to the solidarity mission members.

The mission was the first one of that kind of the AAEA and will be the doing in the future to support member countries in the organization of elections.

## OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the Project results area is to promote a common culture of resilience to conflicts and shared values around democracy particularly electoral democracy and around integrity in electoral processes.

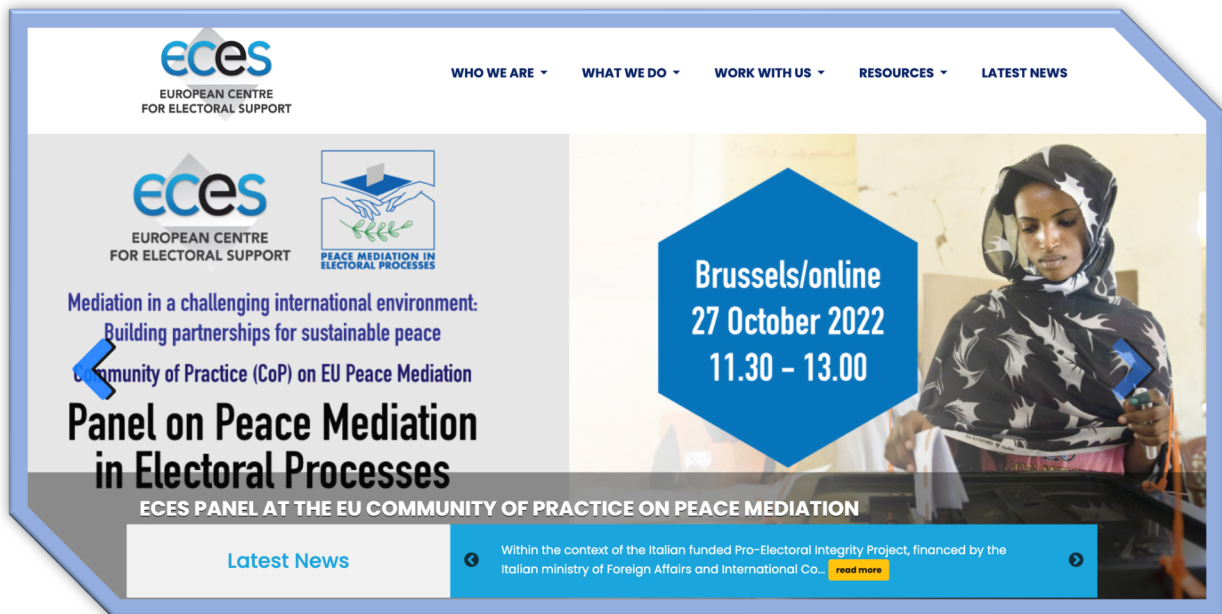
The main areas of implementation of the project activities will focus on:

- Strengthen democratic governance including through decentralized systems, the rule of law and the capacities of our institutions to meet the aspirations of our people;
- Reiterate our rejection of an unconstitutional change of government, including through any attempt to seize power by force but recognize the right of our people to peacefully express their will against oppressive systems;
- Promote integrity, fight against corruption in the management of public affairs and promote leadership that is committed to the interests of the people; and
- Foster the participation of our people through democratic elections and ensure accountability and transparency.

Furthermore, the activities will support the identification of needs and the development of a Comprehensive support programme and an Implementation Plan for the country in the areas of Elections, Constitution building, Transitional justice, SSR, Decentralization and Local Development and the Promotion of the Rule of Law. The results of the mission will include direct technical support to post-Conflict institutions, and the Deployment of technical experts in support of the stability in the targeted countries.



## IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS



ECES promotes electoral and democratic strengthening through the provision of advisory services, operational support and management of large projects mainstreaming capacity and leadership development, via peer exchanges and comparative experiences, dialogue and the prevention and mitigation of electoral conflicts.



ECES has obtained the TRACE certification for its financial management transparency and the ISO 9001 certification for its Quality Management System. ECES has crafted and copyrighted its strategy called "A European Response to Electoral Cycle Support - EURECS", which is implemented via specific methodologies and tools also copyrighted by ECES. EURECS is an innovative delivery mechanism to implement electoral and democracy assistance activities that are consistent

primarily with European values and EU policies, targeting the facilitation of the cooperation on electoral matters between the EU, the EU member states and their partner countries. ECES together with the College of Europe and other partners, is implementing on behalf of the EU the ERMES project, the European Resource for Mediation Support. ECES is providing the key expertise and the office for the project that is a strategic tool for the EU role in mediation and



dialogue. In this context ECES is also a member of the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office network, the biggest and leading civil society European platform of 40 independent organisations and think tanks from 16 European countries committed to peacebuilding and the prevention of conflict.



The African Union (AU) is a continental organization composed of 55 Member States representing the countries of the African continent. It was officially created in Durban, South Africa in July 2002 replacing an already existing continental organization namely the Organization of African Unity (OAU, 1963-1999).

The decision to rebuild Africa's pan-African organization reflects on African leaders who believed that, in order to realize Africa's full potential, attention must be diverted from the struggle for decolonization and the continent's liberation from apartheid fought through the OAU, to enhance cooperation and integration among African countries to promote growth and economic development in Africa with a new established continental organization; the AU. Committed to the vision of *"An integrated, Prosperous and Peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force*

*in the global arena"*, the AU strives among others to: achieve greater unity and solidarity between African countries and their people, defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its Member States, accelerate the political and socio-economic integration of the continent; encourage international cooperation, promote peace, security, and stability on the continent, as well as democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance, ensure the effective participation of women in decision-making, particularly in the political, economic and socio-cultural sphere.

Furthermore, to ensure all goals are met and that foreseen pan-African vision of an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa is attainable, the AU developed Agenda 2063. An agenda that sets out strategies for the long-term socio-economic and inclusive development of Africa. A framework that calls for increased cooperation and support for African-led initiatives to guarantee that the ambitions of African people are fulfilled.

The AU Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit (DEAU) is the operational unit within the DPAPS in charge of the implementation of the AU electoral assistance in terms of capacity building, credibility and transparency of elections and democratic consolidation in Africa. It plays a central role at the institutional-functional and empirical levels.

In its operations, the DEAU has developed key strategic partnerships in the past years, with several internationally recognized technical assistance providers such as International IDEA or EISA (Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa) and African Leadership Foundation. The European Centre for Electoral Support is one of those.





## Collaboration with the African Union

On 20th May 2021, Fabio Bargiacchi, Founder and Executive Director of ECES, and Bankole Adeoyemira, Commissioner for Political Affairs and Peace and Security of the African Union, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at consolidating their comprehensive partnership in the areas of Electoral Integrity, Prevention of Electoral Conflicts, Human Rights and Women Political Participation. The MoU intends to further strengthen the cooperation and synergies between ECES and the African Union (AU), recognizing their complementarity in support of electoral processes on a national and continental level.

## ACTIVITIES

In the framework of the Pro – Electoral Integrity project the following activities were supported:

- 1. Validation Meeting on Implementation Material of The AU Strategy for The Inclusion and Mainstreaming of The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance in School Curricula of African Union Member States to Member States and Regional Economic Community Representatives and Regional Mechanisms.**

The meeting was held in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, on the 12 and 13 of August. The validation meeting was an important step in the inclusion of the **African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance in School Curricula of African Union Member States**.

The meeting saw the participation of Constitutional and Educational experts to discuss the training materials.

- 1.2. Validation Meeting of The African Union Pedagogic Toolkit for The Rule of Law Stakeholders in Africa to Member States and Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanism**

**The one-day meeting was organized in** Abidjan, Ivory Coast, on the 14 of August in collaboration with the Constitutionalism and Rule of Law Unit at the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security of the African Union Commission.



The meeting had the objective of presenting the pedagogic toolkit to RECs and RMs representatives for their validation/adoption. A participatory approach was adopted where thematic sessions with presentations followed by a plenary discussion on questions, comments and amendments was conducted.



## **2. Consultative Workshop on the AU Guidelines on Constitutional Amendments**



The Workshop was convened in Niamey, from August 24-26, 2022. The world has witnessed a resurgence of unconstitutional changes of governments (UCGs) in many African countries.

The objective of the meeting was to bring together representatives from AU Organs, RECs and RMs to validate the guidelines on constitutional amendments before its submission to the AU Policy Organs for consideration. The consultative workshop took place over three days. It was held in plenary and panel sessions using a participatory approach. Participants shared their comparative continental, regional and national experiences on the normative framework of unconstitutional changes of government.





### 3. Sixth Edition of the African Transitional Justice Forum on 7-9 September 2022 in Lomé, Togo.

The Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) of the African Union Commission (AUC) and the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSV) hosted the Sixth Edition of the African Transitional Justice Forum on 7-9 September 2022 in Lomé, Togo. The Forum is an annual multi-stakeholder platform aimed at reviewing the state



of Transitional Justice (TJ) in Africa with the goal of strengthening TJ mechanisms and practices.

### 4. The Validation Meeting for The AU Guidelines on Constitutional Amendments.



The consultative workshop took place over three days. It was held in plenary and panel sessions using a participatory approach. Participants shared their comparative continental, regional and national experiences on the normative framework of unconstitutional changes of government. The Workshop was convened in Niamey, from October 17-18, 2022.

The objective of the meeting was to bring together representatives from AU Organs, RECs and RMs to validate the guidelines on constitutional amendments before its submission to the AU Policy Organs for consideration.

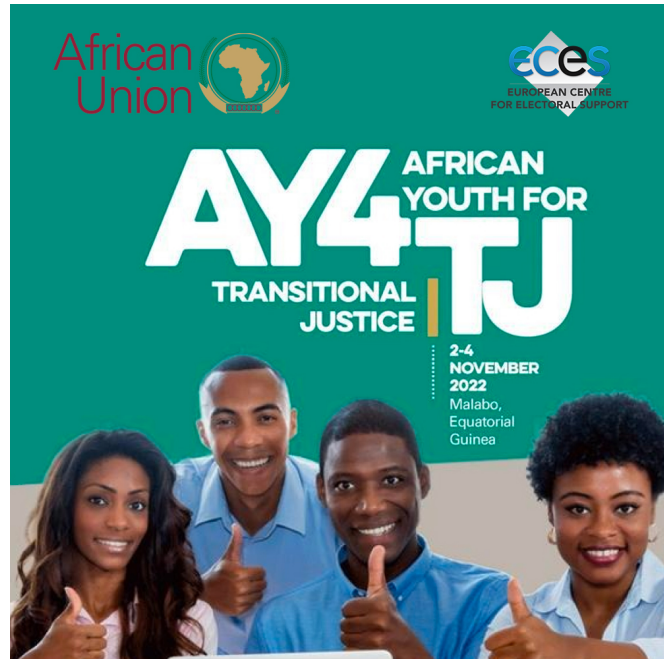




## 5. Third edition of the African Youth for Transitional Justice (AY4TJ)

Youths are one of the most vulnerable groups, and are often disproportionately affected by conflicts and authoritarian regimes in Africa. For a continent with the youngest population, the bulk of victims of conflicts on the continent is undeniable, the youth. To this end, the Policy emphasizes the participation of African youths in all transitional justice processes as one of the surest ways of guaranteeing sustainable peace, good governance and development in post-conflict and post-authoritarian regimes in Africa.

This meeting of the training took place from 2 to 4 November 2022 in Malabo, Guinea Equatorial, and was conducted in plenary and group sessions.



## 6. The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Continental Forum of Elections Management Bodies

As part of its mandate to advance democratic and participatory governance in Africa, the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (DPAPS) of the African Union Commission (AUC), in collaboration with the Association of African Electoral Authorities (AAEA), organized the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Continental Forum of Elections Management Bodies on 14-15 November 2022 in Maputo, Mozambique. The Forum was convened under the overall theme: “Building Resilience of Election Management Bodies to Safeguard Democracy in Africa.” It was followed by a General Assembly of the AAEA on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2022. The National Electoral Commission of Mozambique hosted the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the continental Forum of EMBs. The Forum charted innovative policy pathways and actionable measures for safeguarding the management of credible, peaceful and democratic electoral processes on the continent.



The EMBs forum was centered on the complex milieu of election management and its implication for the future of electoral democracy; safeguarding institutional longevity of EMBs; promoting gender in EMB leadership; overcoming economic challenges through sustainable financing of EMBs and addressing threats to electoral security and cyber-security to safeguard electoral integrity in Africa.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual EMBs Forum was conducted over two days. A participatory approach was adopted, with moderated panel presentations followed by plenary discussions. Participants



shared continental, regional and national comparative case studies and experiences on issues related to institutional resilience of EMBs in Africa.

## **7. Expert Meeting on The Teacher's Guide as Part of The Inclusion and Mainstreaming of The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance in School Curricula of African Union Member States.**

This meeting follows the validation meeting of Abidjan where the implementation materials including the strategic roadmap and the training material tool were all validated by the representatives of RECs and RMs.

The meeting was convened to ensure all relevant information was captured in the teacher's guide. It was also to set the stage for the effective implementation of the Pilot countries. The Experts meeting was conducted over one day. A participatory approach was adopted where the teacher's guide was developed by experts of the core team. The Workshop was convened in Kinshasa from November 28, 2022.

### **7.1. Experts Meeting of The African Union Pedagogic Toolkit for The Rule of Law Stakeholders in Africa**

The meeting was held in Kinshasa, Congo, on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November 2022 and seeks to review and finalize the Pedagogic toolkit as recommended by RECS and RMS at the Abidjan meeting held from August 12-14.

In a bid to expand the scope and reach of the periodic training activities organized by the Constitutionalism Unit of the African Union Commission, and upscale the capacity to meet the growing demands for rule of law professionals, it was recommended by experts and participants of the training session to design a manual for a rule of law training in Africa that will be used to conduct training with stakeholders.



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