



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
and International Cooperation

African
Union



Strategic Partnership between Italy and African Union on Electoral and Democratic Governance implemented with ECES

Innov-Elections & Pro-Electoral Integrity Projects

ECES
EUROPEAN CENTRE
FOR ELECTORAL SUPPORT

www.eces.eu

Table of Contents

LIST OF ACRONYMS	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY OF IMPLEMENTATION	13
INNOV-ELECTIONS – ENSURING CONTINUITY OF ELECTORAL SUPPORT	15
PRO ELECTORAL INTEGRITY.....	17
CONTINENTAL FORA OF EMBS AND AAEA GENERAL ASSEMBLIES	18
PEER LEARNING MISSIONS	19
AFRICAN CHARTER ON DEMOCRACY, ELECTIONS AND GOVERNANCE (ACDEG).....	20
REGIONAL NETWORKS OF EMBS.....	21
DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES FOR INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION (DOP).....	22
TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE.....	23
AU SUMMIT	24
PRO ELECTORAL INTEGRITY - PHASE IV.....	25



ECES at the AU Headquarters during the African Union Summit of Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa.



List of acronyms

Acronym	Definition
AAEA	Association of African Election Authorities
ACDEG	African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AR	Arabic
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AUC-PAPS	AU Commission Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security
AW4TJ	African Women for Transitional Justice
AY4TJ	African Youth for Transitional Justice
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States
CSVR	Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DoP	Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation
EAC	East African Community
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECES	European Centre for Electoral Support
ECF-SADC	Electoral Commissions Forum of SADC Countries
ECONEC	ECOWAS Network of Electoral Commissions
EMBs	Electoral Management Bodies
EN	English
EPEA	Electoral Political Economy Analysis
ESTA	Electoral Security Threat Assessment
EU	European Union
EURECS	A European Response to Electoral Cycle Support
FR	French
GIS	Geographic Information System
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ISO/TS	International Organization for Standardization/Technical Specification
LEAD	Leadership and Conflict Management Skills for Electoral Stakeholders
LEAD-AI	Leadership and Artificial Intelligence Skills for Electoral Stakeholders
LEAD-Q	Leadership and Quality Management Skills for Electoral Administrators
MAECI	Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
MEPA	Master in Election and Public Administration
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MMM	MENA Media Monitoring
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCIC	National Cohesion and Integration Commission
NEC	National Electoral Commission
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OAU	Organization of African Unity
PT	Portuguese



RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RMs	Regional Mechanisms
ROGEAC	Réseau des Organes de Gestion des Élections de l'Afrique Centrale
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SSSA	Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research





Executive Summary

The **Innov-Elections** and **Pro-Electoral Integrity** projects form part of a Strategic Partnership for Electoral and Democratic Governance in Africa, funded by Italy since 2020 and implemented by the African Union Commission's Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (AUC-PAPS), in collaboration with the European Centre for Electoral Support (ECES).

Both initiatives are funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI). At a time when electoral processes worldwide are increasingly shaped by complex political, technological, and security dynamics, the partnership contributes to strengthening electoral integrity as a cornerstone for conflict prevention, stability, and democratic governance across the African continent.

Anchored in a shared vision between Italy, and the African Union Commission, supported by ECES, the initiatives contribute to fostering a common culture of resilience grounded in continental ownership and peer exchange of comparative experiences, aligned with international electoral standards. They also support transitional justice and civic and voter education, with a particular focus on enhancing the participation of youth, women, and disadvantaged groups in electoral and political processes. In this context, the partnership provides support to the institutional and operational capacities of African Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) and their networks to deliver credible and inclusive elections.

The partnership builds on a longstanding and results-driven cooperation between ECES and AUC-PAPS, transitioning from the **Innov-Elections** programme—focused on innovation, distance learning, digitalisation, and continuity of electoral support—towards the more comprehensive and systemic framework of **Pro-Electoral Integrity**.

This evolution reflects a shift from crisis-response and capacity-building interventions to a consolidated approach addressing the full electoral cycle, democratic governance, and conflict prevention. Through this continuity, Italy reinforces its role as a key partner of the African Union in the field of electoral and democratic governance, supporting African-led processes through sustained political and financial engagement, including through peer exchange and the sharing of comparative experiences.

Designed as a comprehensive and forward-looking response to evolving electoral and democratic governance challenges, the partnership provides technical assistance, facilitates high-level peer exchange, and contributes to operational support for a broad range of stakeholders across the continent. It promotes a systemic approach to electoral integrity, addressing the full electoral cycle and contributing to the capacity of institutions to operate effectively in increasingly demanding environments.



This includes activities related to transitional justice, civic and voter education, and the development of school curricula at primary and secondary levels to disseminate the core principles of the **African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance**.

Following the successful implementation of its first two phases, the programme has entered the final stage of its third phase, further contributing to a strengthened framework for electoral and democratic governance cooperation between Europe and Africa.

AUC-PAPS with the support of ECES, working in close collaboration with the **Association of African Election Authorities (AAEA)** and other regional networks of Electoral Management Bodies, have implemented the annual Continental Fora on Electoral Matters (2022–2025), including the General Assembly of the AAEA, and facilitated a series of high-level peer learning missions in Kenya, Liberia, Comoros, Namibia, Ghana, Gabon, Burundi, Malawi, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, and Benin. These activities contribute to knowledge exchange, strengthen coordination, and support the development of practical responses to shared challenges.

The latest high-level peer learning mission took place in Rome from 4 to 8 May, bringing together senior electoral officials from across Africa to engage with Italian institutions responsible for electoral processes, including on key issues such as cybersecurity and artificial intelligence in elections. The activity was implemented in cooperation with the **Fondazione Med-Or**, the **Italian National Cybersecurity Agency**, the **Luiss Research Center for International and Strategic Studies**, and the **Imagine the Change Foundation**, with a particular focus on media monitoring, disinformation, and emerging challenges such as deepfakes.



Through this approach, the partnership contributes to moving beyond purely technical assistance, supporting electoral integrity as a vector of political dialogue, institutional trust, and long-term stability.

It reflects a joint commitment by Italy, and the African Union, with the support of ECES to contribute to a more resilient electoral and democratic governance ecosystem in Africa—one that supports conflict prevention, enhances stability, and ultimately contributes to strengthening democratic legitimacy.



AAEA Executive Peer learning mission participants at the Med-Or Italian Foundation

The next activity planned will focus on diaspora voting and related electoral challenges, in collaboration with the National Elections Authority of Egypt, the African Union Commission, and African Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs). In the context of increasing digitalisation of electoral processes, the discussions will notably address issues related to cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and the integrity of out-of-country voting systems. The activity will also take place alongside the African Union's Annual Continental Forum of EMBs and the General Assembly of the Association of African Election Authorities (AAEA), further reinforcing peer exchange and continental cooperation on emerging electoral challenges.

About AUC-PAPS

The **African Union Commission's Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (AUC-PAPS)** is a central pillar of the African Union's institutional framework, mandated to advance peace, security, democratic governance, and constitutional order across the continent.

Within this mandate, AUC-PAPS plays a key role in supporting Member States in strengthening democratic institutions, promoting credible and inclusive electoral processes, and preventing and mitigating conflict. Its work spans electoral assistance and observation, governance and human rights, as well as post-conflict reconstruction and



transitional justice, contributing to a comprehensive approach to peacebuilding and democratic consolidation.

AUC-PAPS leads the implementation of continental normative frameworks, including the **African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance**, fostering shared standards and supporting their integration into national systems through civic education and institutional capacity development. It works in close collaboration with Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Regional Mechanisms (RMs), Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs), and international partners to promote harmonised approaches, peer learning, and coordinated electoral support across Africa.

Anchored in the principles of African ownership and collective responsibility, AUC-PAPS facilitates dialogue, knowledge exchange, and policy development at both continental and regional levels. Through its activities, it contributes to strengthening institutional resilience, reinforcing democratic legitimacy, and advancing long-term stability and peace across African Union Member States.

This cooperation is further strengthened through the formal partnership established between AUC-PAPS and the European Centre for Electoral Support, including the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in May 2021. The MoU provides a structured framework for technical cooperation and joint action, notably covering support to electoral processes, capacity development of Electoral Management Bodies, peer learning and exchange of comparative experiences, development of operational methodologies and tools, as well as collaboration on conflict prevention, governance, and transitional justice initiatives across the continent. The Department is led by Bankole Adeoye, a seasoned Nigerian diplomat with over three decades of experience in multilateral diplomacy, conflict prevention, and governance.



Commissioner Bankole Adeoye and the Founder and Executive Director of ECES, Fabio Bargiacchi, in ECES premises

Prior to his election to the African Union Commission, he served as Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the African Union and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), where he played a central role in advancing **Agenda 2063** and strengthening partnerships between the AU, the United Nations, and regional economic communities. His career reflects a sustained commitment to African-led solutions, preventive diplomacy, and the promotion of democratic governance, positioning him as a key figure in shaping the continent's peace and security architecture.

About AAEA

The Association of African Election Authorities (AAEA) was conceived from an effort at promoting and institutionalizing professionalism of African election authorities through regional exchanges and networking. The Association grew out of a Colloquium of African Election Authorities that was held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, in November 1994. At the close of the meeting, participants set up a Working Group to explore the feasibility of forming an association of African election administrators and election-related NGOs.



The working group developed a draft charter and discussed it at a meeting in Cape Town in 1995, and in Windhoek in 1996. An inaugural conference of the AAEA was held from January 14th to 16th, 1997 in Kampala, Uganda. The conference was attended by election administrators and leaders of non-governmental organizations from sub-Saharan Africa, as well as international election specialists.

Participants revised and approved the Charter, marking the formal establishment of the Association. Participants in the Kampala meeting selected Dr. Amare Tekle of Eritrea as the AAEA's Interim Executive Secretary. An Interim Executive Secretariat was established in Asmara, Eritrea, in 1997. The inaugural meeting of the AAEA General Assembly was held from August 13th to 15th, 1998 in Accra, Ghana. It was attended by election authorities and NGO leaders from sub-Saharan Africa. The following are founding members of the AAEA: Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Gabon, Ghana, The Gambia, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Mali, Senegal, Togo, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

After the General Assembly held in Ghana in March 2025 the AAEA elected a new President of the Assembly of the Association of African Election Authorities (AAEA) and a new Executive committee. The presidency is held by the Electoral Commission of Ghana, the work of the Assembly is further supported by an Executive Committee composed of representatives of the Electoral Commissions from Benin, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Libya. This governance structure ensures regional balance and collective ownership, while providing strategic direction and oversight for the activities of the Association across the continent.

The AAEA Peer Learning Missions are a valuable tool and opportunity to share good practices, confront experiences from different contexts in other countries and learning by exchange with peers. AAEA plays a strong role as a platform in this regard. The strength of such missions is its ability to reinforce collaboration between institutions from different countries and to provide input for the exchange of ideas. The purpose of the Peer Learning Missions is to learn, foster collaboration, knowledge sharing, and capacity building between Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) to enhance their effectiveness, credibility, and efficiency in managing electoral processes.

About ECES

ECES is an independent, non-partisan, and not-for-profit foundation headquartered in Brussels, with a global remit. Established at the end of 2010 by the initiative of Fabio Bargiacchi—following his tenure from 2004 to 2010 as Coordinator of the Joint Task Force between the European Commission and the United Nations Development Programme on Electoral Assistance—ECES operates as a specialised implementer of electoral and democratic governance support worldwide.

Since its creation, ECES has implemented activities in more than 50 countries, primarily—but not exclusively—in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. Its operations have



been largely funded by the European Union and EU Member States, which have entrusted ECES with **over EUR 155 million in programme implementation mainly from the EU and its Member States, primarily Italy, Germany and France.**

ECES promotes electoral and democratic strengthening through the provision of advisory services and operational support, delivered via innovative project and financial management methodologies. A core feature of its approach is the mainstreaming of capacity and leadership development through peer exchange and the sharing of comparative experiences, fostering dialogue and contributing to the prevention and mitigation of electoral conflicts.

At the heart of ECES' work lies its flagship strategy, **“A European Response to Electoral Cycle Support (EURECS)”**, a **comprehensive and copyrighted framework implemented through a suite of specialised methodologies and tools, totalling over 22 intellectual property components.** EURECS serves as an innovative delivery mechanism for electoral and democracy assistance, aligned with European values and EU policies, and designed to facilitate cooperation on electoral matters between the EU, its Member States, and partner countries.

ECES holds internationally recognised certifications, including ISO 9001 and T-certification, reflecting its commitment to quality management and financial transparency. Its strength lies in its people: a truly international, multicultural, and multilingual team representing over 60 nationalities and working in more than 30 languages. This diversity enables ECES to operate effectively across diverse contexts, build trust with local stakeholders, and deliver context-sensitive support grounded in cultural understanding.

ECES has also implemented, in partnership with other organisations and on behalf of the EU, the European Resource for Mediation Support (ERMES) project, a strategic instrument supporting the EU's role in mediation and dialogue. ECES provided key expertise for the initiative, which was hosted within its headquarters.

As part of its broader engagement, ECES is a member of the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), the leading civil society platform in Europe bringing together over 50 independent organisations and think tanks from 17 countries committed to peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

ECES is also a proud member of both the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) network and the Team Europe Democracy (TED) Initiative, reflecting its commitment to contributing to broader European and international efforts in the fields of peacebuilding, conflict prevention, democratic governance, and democratic resilience. EPLO is the leading independent European platform bringing together more than 50 civil society organizations, NGO networks, and think tanks working on peacebuilding, mediation, dialogue facilitation, and crisis prevention, while the TED Initiative represents a global European Union framework aimed at strengthening cooperation and synergies among EU institutions, EU Member States, implementing partners, not-for-profit foundations such as ECES, civil society organizations, academia, and other democracy-

support actors worldwide. Within these frameworks, ECES contributes its operational expertise in electoral assistance, peer learning, capacity development, and democratic governance support developed through activities implemented across Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and other partner regions..

An Innovative Approach: EURECS

ECES has developed its flagship methodology, “**A European Response to Electoral Cycle Support**” (EURECS)—a comprehensive and innovative framework for electoral assistance.

- **22 specialised methodologies and tools**
- Fully aligned with EU policies
- Designed to enhance cooperation between the EU, its Member States, and partner countries

EURECS enables tailored, flexible, and results-oriented support across the entire electoral cycle using also peers’ exchanges to share comparative experiences fostering political dialogue and mediation on electoral matters.



Quality, Expertise, and Global Reach

ECES is ISO 9001 and T-Certification certified, reflecting its commitment to quality management and financial transparency. Its strength lies in its people:

- 60+ nationalities represented
- **Operations in 30+ languages**
- **A truly multicultural and multidisciplinary team**

This diversity allows ECES to build trusted partnerships, grounded in cultural understanding and contextual expertise.

Partnership with the EU, EU member states including Italy, Germany and France

Within this framework, ECES has developed a strong partnership with the EU and the EU member states including with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI), Germany and France as main donors while the others are Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg and Austria.

- **+155 MEURO** mobilized since 2010 from EU and EU member states
- Italy is ECES’ **third largest donor**, after the EU and Germany and before France

- **EUR 5+ million** contributed by Italy for the support to the African Union Commission via **Innov-Elections (3 phases)** and **Pro-Electoral Integrity (3 phases)**



Background and Methodology of Implementation

A Proven and Scalable Model for Electoral Support
ECES designs and implements its programmes based on **extensive operational experience** and a **strong evidence base**:

- **100+ countries** covered through **global networks**
- **16+ years of donor evaluations and lessons integrated** from external system and financial audits
- Continuous support across the **full electoral cycle**

This experience underpins ECES' ability to deliver **sustainable, long-term capacity development**, while effectively supporting critical electoral processes and operations.



EURECS: A Comprehensive Electoral Support Framework

At the core of ECES' approach is its flagship strategy: “**A European Response to Electoral Cycle Support**” (**EURECS**), designed to operate across **time (entire electoral cycle)** and **space (multi-stakeholder ecosystems)** EURECS transforms electoral support from short-term interventions into **long-term, systemic engagement**, ensuring continuity, coherence, and impact.

From Observation to Implementation

EURECS directly contributes to:

- Implementation of **Election Observation Mission recommendations** though it does not conduct election observation per se, but rather provides capacity development.
- Prevention and mitigation of **electoral conflict via political dialogue and civic-voter education**
- Strengthening of **institutional resilience and governance frameworks**

A Complete Toolbox for Electoral Integrity

The EURECS framework is operationalised through **22 specialised tools and methodologies**, including:

Capacity & Leadership

- Leadership and Conflict Management Skills for Electoral Stakeholders (LEAD) & Leadership and Quality Management Skills for Electoral Administrators (LEAD-Q) training programmes
- LEAD-AI (AI and democracy skills)



Analysis & Risk Prevention

- Electoral Political Economy Analysis (EPEA)
- Electoral Security Threat Assessment (ESTA)
- Conflict prevention & early warning systems



Operational Support

- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- Strategic planning for EMBs
- Peace mediation methodologies

Digital Innovation

- **6+ electoral technology applications**, including:
 - Electoral Results aggregation systems
 - Social media monitoring tools

- o Voter list digitalisation
- o GIS-based polling allocation

Sustainable and Context-Driven Impact

All ECES interventions are:

- Grounded in **real-world operational experience**
- Adapted to **complex political environments**
- Designed for **long-term institutional strengthening**

This approach ensures that electoral support moves **beyond events** to deliver **lasting democratic impact**.



Innov-Elections – Ensuring Continuity of Electoral Support

Developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Innov-Elections enabled the uninterrupted delivery of electoral assistance through innovative digital and remote learning solutions, strengthening the resilience and operational continuity of Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) and regional electoral organisations across Africa.



Implemented over three phases with the support of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI), the programme reached 35 African countries and trained more than 1,088 EMB representatives through multilingual online and hybrid activities delivered in English, French, Portuguese, and Arabic.

Key activities implemented under Innov-Elections included:

- Enrolment of EMB representatives in the Executive Master in Election Policy and Administration (MEPA) and specialised MEPA modules covering the full electoral cycle;
- Delivery of senior electoral advisory services, live coaching sessions, and remote and hybrid trainings through Webex-based platforms;
- Implementation of trainings on leadership, conflict prevention, electoral observation, electoral logistics, media monitoring, electoral security, and quality management;
- Development of additional MEPA modules on elections during pandemics, elections in the digital age, electoral integrity, and leadership;
- Translation of MEPA modules and platform functionalities into French and Portuguese to expand accessibility across African EMBs;
- Strengthening cooperation with continental and regional electoral networks, including the AU, AAEA, ECONEC, ECF-SADC, EAC, ECCAS, and CEN-SAD;
- Support to regional conferences and continental electoral governance dialogue platforms (24th Annual General Conference of ECF-SADC in Namibia, the Regional Conference on Sustainable Electoral Financing in Mozambique);
- Development and expansion of the multilingual “Electoral Translator” application;
- Development and pilot testing of an Early Electoral Warning and Conflict Mapping System to support electoral observation and conflict prevention;
- Support to the reactivation of the Association of African Election Authorities (AAEA) and reinforcement of AU-led electoral coordination frameworks;



- Contribution to the development and validation of the AU Methodological Guide on Electoral Assistance and support to high-level EU–AU electoral cooperation dialogue.

Through these activities, Innov-Elections contributed to strengthening institutional resilience, digitalisation, peer learning, and continental cooperation on electoral governance across Africa.

Building on the foundations established through Innov-Elections, the Pro-Electoral Integrity project expanded the partnership between Italy, the African Union Commission, and ECES towards a broader and more comprehensive framework focused on electoral integrity, democratic governance, conflict prevention, civic education, and transitional justice across Africa.

Pro Electoral Integrity



Patience Zanelie Chiradza, Director Governance and Conflict Prevention, AU-DPAPS

Implemented across multiple phases and in cooperation with the African Union Commission, regional electoral networks, and a wide range of institutional partners, the Pro-Electoral Integrity Project has supported a broad range of activities aimed at strengthening electoral integrity, democratic governance, conflict prevention, and institutional resilience across Africa. Building on a peer-learning and cooperation approach, the initiative has contributed to the reinforcement of Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs), the promotion of civic and democratic education, and the advancement of transitional justice and peacebuilding efforts. The activities implemented under the project can be grouped into several complementary pillars, notably peer learning and solidarity missions, transitional justice initiatives, support to the African Charter on

Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG), Continental Fora of EMBs, and participation in the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation (DoP).

Continental Fora of EMBs and AAEA General Assemblies



The project has successfully supported the organisation of the Continental Fora of Electoral Management Bodies (EMB) in partnership with the African Union Commission and the Association of African Election Authorities (AAEA). These high-level continental platforms open space for EMBs to strengthen peer exchange, and cooperation among electoral stakeholders across Africa:

- 7th Annual Continental Forum of Electoral Management Bodies (EMB), Maputo, Mozambique, 2022
- AAEA General Assembly, Maputo, Mozambique, 2022
- 8th Annual Continental Forum of Electoral Management Bodies (EMB), Cotonou, Benin, 2023
- AAEA General Assembly, Cotonou Benin, 2023
- 9th Annual Continental Forum of Electoral Management Bodies (EMB) — Accra, Ghana, 2025
- AAEA General Assembly, 2025.



Family picture of the AAEA Executive Peer learning mission at the LUISS Guido Carli University

PEER LEARNING MISSIONS

The peer learning activities implemented under the Pro-Electoral Integrity Project aim to strengthen cooperation, solidarity, and the exchange of comparative experiences among African Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) and institutional stakeholders. In this framework, the project has notably supported the implementation of the following peer learning and exchange activities:

- AAEA Peer Learning Mission to Kenya, 2022
- AAEA Peer Learning Mission to Liberia, 2023
- AAEA Peer Learning Mission to Comoros, 2024
- AAEA Peer Learning Mission to Namibia, 2024
- AAEA Peer Learning Mission to Ghana, 2024
- AAEA Peer Learning mission to Gabon, 2025
- AAEA Peer Learning Mission to Burundi, 2025
- AAEA Peer Learning Mission to Malawi, 2025
- AAEA Peer Learning Mission to Cameroon, 2025
- AAEA Peer Learning Mission to Côte d'Ivoire, 2025
- AAEA Peer Learning Mission to Djibouti, 2026
- AAEA Peer Learning Mission to Benin, 2026
- AAEA Executive Peer Learning Mission to Italy, 2026



Mrs Jean Mensa Chairperson, Electoral Commission of the Republic of Ghana; President, Association of African Electoral Authorities (AAEA) opening speech at the Executive peer learning mission in Rome



AAEA Executive Peer Learning Mission – Rome, Italy

African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG)

In the framework of the project, ECES also supported the development and validation of educational and pedagogical tools linked to the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG), including:

- Workshop on the ACDEG Strategy, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 2022
- Support to the creation of the African Union Guidelines on Constitutional Amendments, Niamey, Niger, 2022
- Technical and logistical support to the Validation Meeting for the AU Guidelines on Constitutional Amendments, Niamey, Niger, 2022
- Expert Meeting for the Development of Materials for the Pilot Phase — Dakar, Senegal, 2023
- Experts Meeting for the Alignment of Teachers' Guides and Learners' Manuals, Nairobi, Kenya, 2023
- Member States Brainstorming Session on ACDEG Educational Materials, Maputo, Mozambique, 2023
- Experts Meeting for the Finalisation of the Learners' Manuals, Accra, Ghana, 2024
- Launch of the Pilot Phase of the African Union Project for the Inclusion and Mainstreaming of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) into School Curricula for the West African Region, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 2024
- Technical Workshop on the Implementation of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) into School Curricula, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 2024
- Regional Meeting on ACDEG Mainstreaming in School Curricula, Cotonou, Benin, 2025
- Launch of the ACDEG Pilot Phase - Guinea-Bissau, 2025

- The integration of themes from the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) into the national school curricula, Guinée Bissau, 2025

Regional Networks of EMBs



AAEA Peer Learning mission in Comoros, 2024

Through the Pro-Electoral Integrity project, ECES has continuously engaged with Africa's main regional and continental EMB networks, including:

- Gabon – ROGEAC, 2025
- Burundi – ROGEAC, 2025
- Cameroon – ROGEAC, 2025
- South Africa – ECF-SADC, 2023
- Seychelles – ECF-SADC, 2024
- Eswatini – ECF-SADC, 2025
- France – RECEF, 2024
- Benin – RECEF 2024
- Italy – OECD, 2024

Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation (DoP).



ECES participating at the 20th anniversary of the DoP in Geneva, 2025

ECES was invited and has also supported participation to the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation (DoP):

- Participation in the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation Annual Meeting, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 14-17 November 2023
- Participation in the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation Annual Meeting, Gdansk, Poland, 20–22 November 2024
- ECES facilitated the participation of the African Union Commission delegation in the Convening Committee of the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation, New York, United States of America, 17–18 June 2025, and to the Implementation Meeting of the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation, New York, United States of America, 11–14 November 2025
- Participation in the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation Annual Meeting, Geneva, Switzerland, 10–12 December 2025

TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE



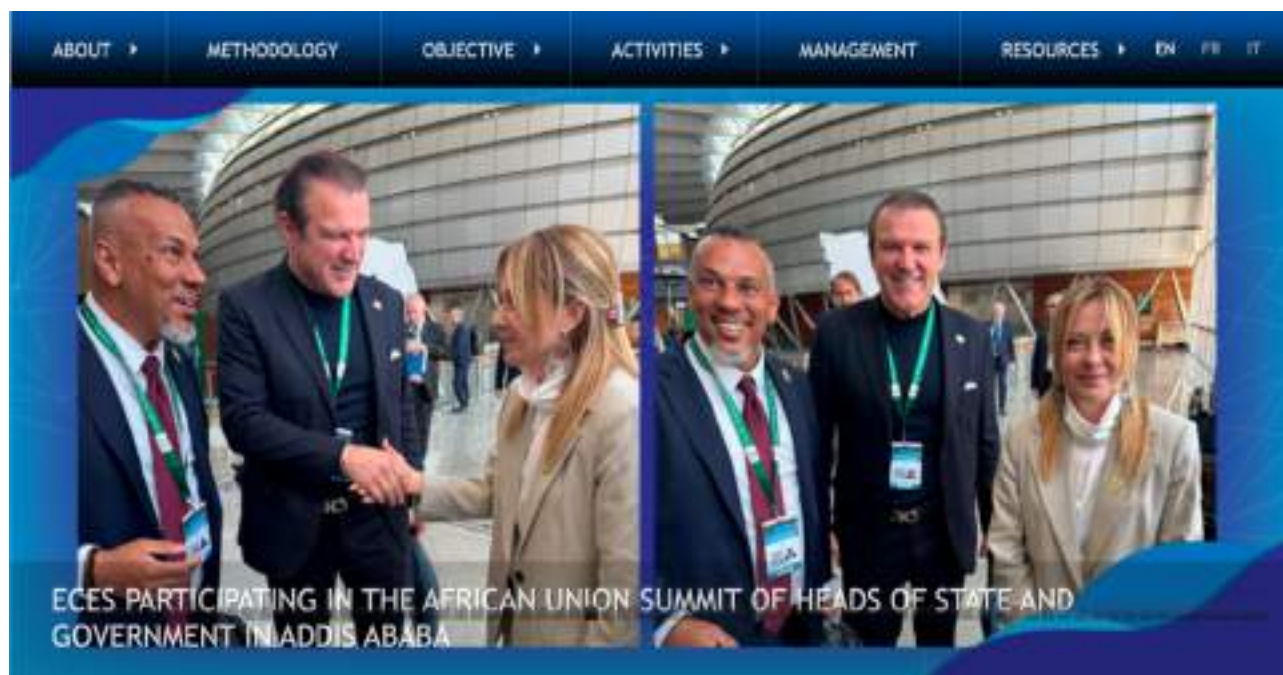
The project has notably supported the implementation of the following transitional justice activities:

- 6th African Transitional Justice Forum, Lomé, Togo, 2022
- 7th African Forum on Transitional Justice, Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco, 2023
- African Women for Transitional Justice (AW4TJ) Training and Network-Building Session, Nairobi, Kenya, 2023
- African Youth for Transitional Justice (AY4TJ) Initiative, Kampala, Uganda, 2024
- 9th African Forum on Transitional Justice, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2025



ECES takes part in the 9th African Forum on Transitional Justice in Kinshasa

AU SUMMIT



ECES Founder and Executive Director Fabio Bargiacchi, meets Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni during the AU Summit of Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa. Our Founder and Executive Director was accompanied by Giovani Barbera, Deputy Project Coordinator - Operations and Administration.

At the beginning of February 2026, as every year, ECES had the pleasure of being invited to take part in the African Union Summit of Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa, represented by its Founder & Executive Director Fabio Bargiacchi, together with Piero Scarpellini, Senior Advisor for Africa to Professor Romano Prodi, Erastus Mwencha, former Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission and former Secretary-General of COMESA, and Giovanni Barbera from the ECES office in Ethiopia. The Summit provided an important opportunity for high-level institutional engagement and strategic dialogue with African and international leaders, including Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, notably in the context of Italy's continued support over the past six years to the partnership with the African Union Commission through the Pro-Electoral Integrity project in the areas of electoral integrity, conflict prevention, and civic and voter education; Évariste Ndayishimiye, President of



ECES Founder and Executive Director Fabio Bargiacchi, meets Évariste Ndayishimiye, President of Burundi and Chairperson of the African Union, during the AU Summit of Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa

Burundi and Chairperson of the African Union; former President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa; former President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria; former President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya; former President Jakaya Kikwete of Tanzania; President Faustin-Archange Touadéra of the Central African Republic; and António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations. This participation further reflects ECES' long-standing engagement with the African Union Commission and African partners, contributing to democratic governance, institutional dialogue, and capacity development across the continent, while also providing an important opportunity to listen, better understand the geopolitical dynamics shaping Africa, and further strengthen long-term partnerships built on trust and institutional cooperation.

Pro Electoral Integrity - Phase IV



Stefano De Leo, Deputy Director-General for Globalisation and Global Issues; Central Director for Sub-Saharan African Countries, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation at the AAEEA Executive Peer learning mission in Rome

Building on the achievements of the previous phases, the proposed fourth phase of the Pro-Electoral Integrity project aims to further consolidate the strategic partnership between the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI), the AUC-PAPS, and ECES in support of electoral integrity, democratic governance, conflict prevention, and peacebuilding across Africa. The Phase IV proposal has already been submitted by the African Union Commission for a total amount of EUR 4 million, reflecting the continued commitment to strengthening African-led democratic governance and electoral integrity initiatives across the continent.

It aims to contribute to peace and security through strengthening the development of a common culture of resilience and shared values around integrity in electoral and democratic processes, by strengthening the capacities of African EMBs in conducting free, fair, credible, inclusive and violence-free elections. This will contribute to

consolidating democracies and the rule of law.

More concretely, this proposal seeks to respond to the needs and priorities of the AU in the electoral field.

Key priorities of the proposed Phase IV include:

- Support to the organisation of the 10th Continental Forum of EMBs to strengthen peer exchange, electoral integrity, institutional solidarity, and a common culture of prevention of electoral violence among African EMB leaders;
- Support to peer learning and exchange missions enabling EMB leaders across Africa to share experiences, discuss electoral challenges, exchange best practices, and reinforce informed and independent decision-making ahead of elections;



Opening speech of ECES Founder and Executive Director, Fabio Bargiacchi at the AAEA Executive Peer learning mission in Rome

- Support the continental AU election observation trainings for the AU teams of election observation missions, to strengthen the AU roster of specialised electoral observers in legal, political, media, gender, and electoral administration expertise;



Fabio Bargiacchi, Founder & Executive Director of ECES, meets with Maurizio Busanelli, Permanent Representative of Italy to the African Union and Fabio Massimo Ballerini, Sub-Saharan Africa Counsellor at the Office of the Diplomatic Advisor to the Italian Prime Minister at our ECES Office in Addis Ababa. Our Founder & Executive Director was accompanied by David Le Notre, ECES Representative in Ethiopia, and Granville Abrahams, Senior Electoral Management Expert.

- Support the deployment of targeted short-term technical assistance missions to Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs), tailored to operational and institutional needs ahead of electoral processes;

- Continued support to the implementation and expansion of the AU initiative integrating the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) into school curricula across Africa, including support to pilot countries and expansion to additional regions of the continent;
- Continued support to African Union Transitional Justice initiatives, including continental, women-focused, and youth-focused fora promoting inclusive dialogue, peacebuilding, reconciliation, and capacity-building across Africa.

The proposed fourth phase also aims to further position electoral integrity as a key pillar of democratic resilience, institutional trust, and long-term stability across Africa. Through continued peer exchange, technical assistance, and African-led cooperation, the initiative seeks to contribute to more inclusive, credible, peaceful electoral and democratic governance processes across the continent.



Patience Zanelie Chiradza, Director Governance and Conflict Prevention AU-DPAPS, Jean Mensa Chairperson of the Electoral Commission of Ghana, and President of AAEA, and Justice Sophia Akuffo, Immediate Past Chief Justice of the Republic of Ghana and Member of the Council State at the 9th Annual Continental Forum of Election Management Bodies



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
and International Cooperation

African Union 



Brussels – Belgium
Av. Louise 222, 1050 Ixelles
+32 2 325 55 58
info@eces.eu

Florence – Italy
4 Borgo San Jacopo, 50125

eces
EUROPEAN CENTRE
FOR ELECTORAL SUPPORT

2026
www.eces.eu