

Friedrichstraße 169, 10117
dbb forum berlin

28.11.2024
BERLIN



EXPERT EXCHANGE MEETING ON

**“Democracy Protection in the Global North(s) and
Global South(s): Strategies, Effectiveness, and
Challenges”**

Expert exchange meeting on “Democracy Protection in the Global North(s) and Global South(s): Strategies, Effectiveness, and Challenges”

This event comes at a crucial time when societies around the world are witnessing a decline in democracy, affecting all regions, including established democracies such as the USA. There is growing awareness that democratic systems as well as democracy as an idea have come under pressure. Societies worldwide are grappling with how best to protect their democracies against undemocratic tendencies. For international efforts, there is an urgent need to rethink and adjust strategies. Over the past decades, the international and national context has shifted fundamentally and the traditional approach to international democracy promotion must now rebalance to go beyond supporting processes of democratization and incorporate measures that prevent autocratization and protect democracy more systematically.

Particularly in the last decade, pro-democratic actors and organizations have prominently developed strategies and measures to protect democracy and counter autocratization. However, these communities face two key challenges:

First, there is no comprehensive overview of existing strategies and measures for protecting democracy. Without this overview, we lack a common language to learn from each other, rethink strategies, and identify synergies. As a consequence, it is time to take stock of existing strategies, specific approaches, and what we know about their effectiveness.

Second, the diversity of actors and their work in different spheres has led to the creation of silos among democracy protectors. Broadly, there are two communities supporting democracy: actors aiming to protect democracy within their own societies, and international democracy promoters aiming to help protect democracy in other countries. However, these groups often work in parallel and fail to benefit from each other's insights and knowledge, even though the challenges they face are increasingly similar.

The novelty of this event lies in uniting this currently fragmented democracy promotion community by explicitly bringing together actors focused on strengthening democracy domestically and those promoting it internationally. The goal is to ensure that the wealth of experiences, ideas, and insights is shared and capitalized upon. In this sense, the expert meeting aims to be a starting point for fostering sustainable knowledge exchange and networks across actors and regions.

In particular, we aim to discuss three main questions:

- What are the main challenges to democracy in different parts of the world?
- What are the most prominent strategies and entry points currently used by actors engaged in protecting democracy? How do these strategies differ between contexts and actors?
- What do we know about the effectiveness of measures to protect democracy, both within and across different contexts?

Programme

08:30 - 09:00 h **Registration & Coffee**

09:00 - 09:30 h **Welcome & Introduction**

Welcome by IDOS team & the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development

09:30 - 10:15 h **Interactive session on challenges to Democracy**

Several group discussions with possibility to move between tables

Guiding questions:

- What are the biggest current threats to democracy?
- What are the most significant vulnerabilities of democratic systems?
- What makes you optimistic about our ability to protect and promote democracy?

10:15 - 11:30 h **Panel: “Threats to Democracy as a Shared Problem: Perspectives of Democracy Defenders from North and South”**
(under Chatham House Rule)

Guiding questions:

- What are common threats to democracy?
- How can we best protect democracy?
- How can we improve mutual learning?
- How can efforts to support democracy defenders be improved?

Panelists:

- Ernest Gyapon-Quast („Wir sind der Osten“)
- Democracy Activist from MENA
- Zuher Jazmati (Desk officer, Association of Counseling Centers for Victims of Right-wing, Racist and Antisemitic Violence (VBRG), Germany)
- Ma Thida (founder of PEN Myanmar, writer and civil society activist)

Moderation: Jasmin Lorch (IDOS)

11:30 – 11:45 h **Short Break**

11:45 - 13:00 h **Panel: “Corporate Civic Responsibility for Safeguarding Democracy”**

Guiding questions:

- What kind of democracy promotion does private sector engage in?
- What are political risks involved?
- What more can be done to involve businesses?

Panelists:

- Arda Batu (Secretary General of Turkish Business Confederation TÜRKONFED)
- Monika Kočiová (Program Manager at the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE))
- Marcel Schepp, Advisor for the International Party Dialogue, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS)

Moderation: Semuhi Sinanoglu (IDOS)

13:00 – 14:00 h **Lunch break**

14:00 – 15:00 h **World Café: Protecting Democratic Institutions**

Several group discussions with possibility to move between two tables focusing on specific subfields of democracy protection:

- Rule of law, judiciary, human rights
- Integrity of the Information Ecosystem
- Political parties & elections
- Democratic culture & civic education
- Public administration

Guiding questions:

- What strategies can address this institution?
- What partners and coalition are needed?
- What worked, what did not?
- What may be new avenues to explore?

15:00 – 15:15 h **Short break**

15:15 – 16:30 h **Panel “How to Unlock Mutual Learning in Democracy Support?”**

Guiding questions:

- Which approaches and strategies exist?
- How can we adapt democracy promotion across contexts?
- What can democracy protection at home learn from democracy protection abroad and vice versa?

Panelists:

- Kathleen Addy (Chairperson of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), Ghana)
- Julia Iversen (Head of Competence Center Democracy, Digital Governance, Urban Development, German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ))
- Wouter Biesterbos (International IDEA’s Principal Adviser to the Secretary-General)
- Henrik Maihack, (Head of Africa Department, Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES))
- Julia Schulze Wessel (anDemos, Institute for applied Democracy and Social Science Research) (tbc)

Moderation: Daniel Nowack (IDOS)

16:30 – 16:45 h **Short Break**

16:45 - 17:30 h **Fishbowl Discussion: Takeaways and Outlook**

Guiding questions:

- What are the main challenges for democracy in the next decade?
- Which points of leverage are most promising to counter autocratization tendencies?
- How can we improve mutual exchange, learning and cooperation across internal-external divides?

17:30 - 17:45 h **Goodbye and Closing**

Organiser



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Directions

Link to Google Maps: [Berlin Central Train Station to dbb forum berlin - Google Maps](#)

- **S-Bahn** (S3, S5, S7, or S9): From Berlin Central Station head to the lower level where the S-Bahn is located. Take any S-Bahn line heading towards **Friedrichstraße**.
- **Bus** (Line 147): Board the 147 bus towards **S Ostbahnhof via Friedrichstr.** Stay on the bus for **8 stops**. Exit the bus at the stop **Französische Str.**
- **U-Bahn** (Metrostation Line U5): From Berlin Central Station Head to the lower level where the metro is located. Take a metro U5 line heading towards **U Kaulsdorf-Nord (Berlin)**. Stay on for 3 stops. Exit the metro at the stop **Unter den Linden**.

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