

EU Democracy Support to Civil Society Actors: Insights from a Comparative Perspective

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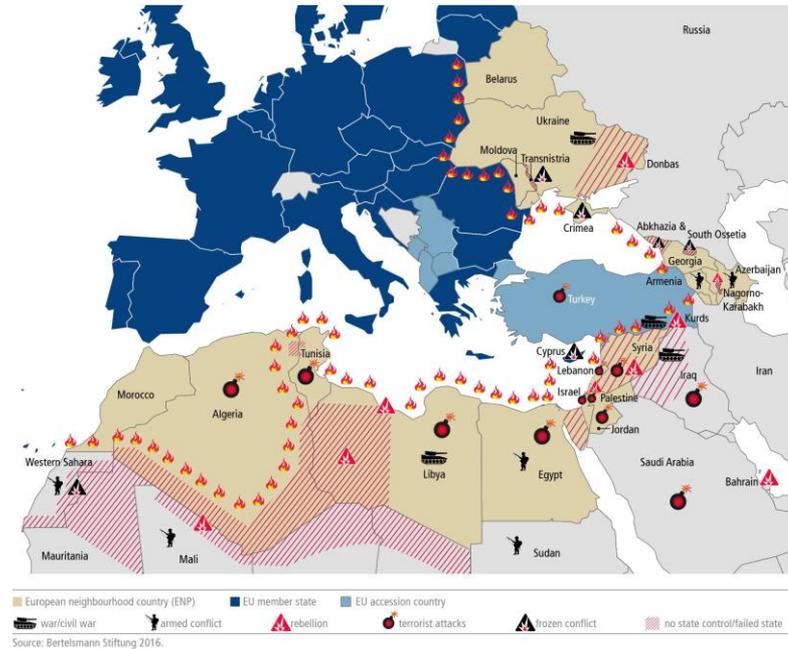
Webinar: Democracy in the Neighbourhood and EU Enlargement: Horizon Europe Insights

Panel 1: Geo-Scope on the Western Balkans

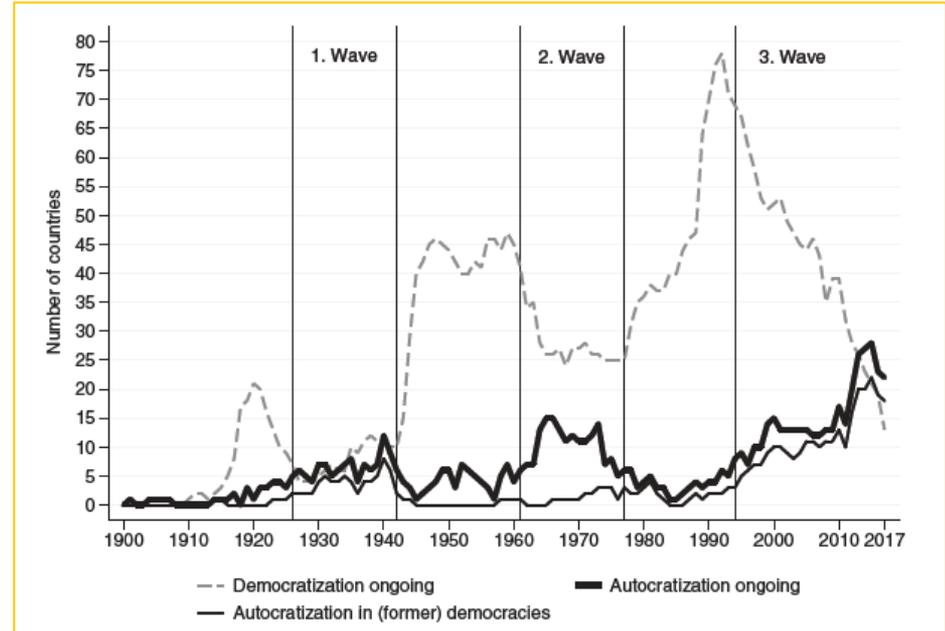
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The EU and its neighbourhood: crises, conflicts, de-democratization, autocratization

Europe's Ring of Fire

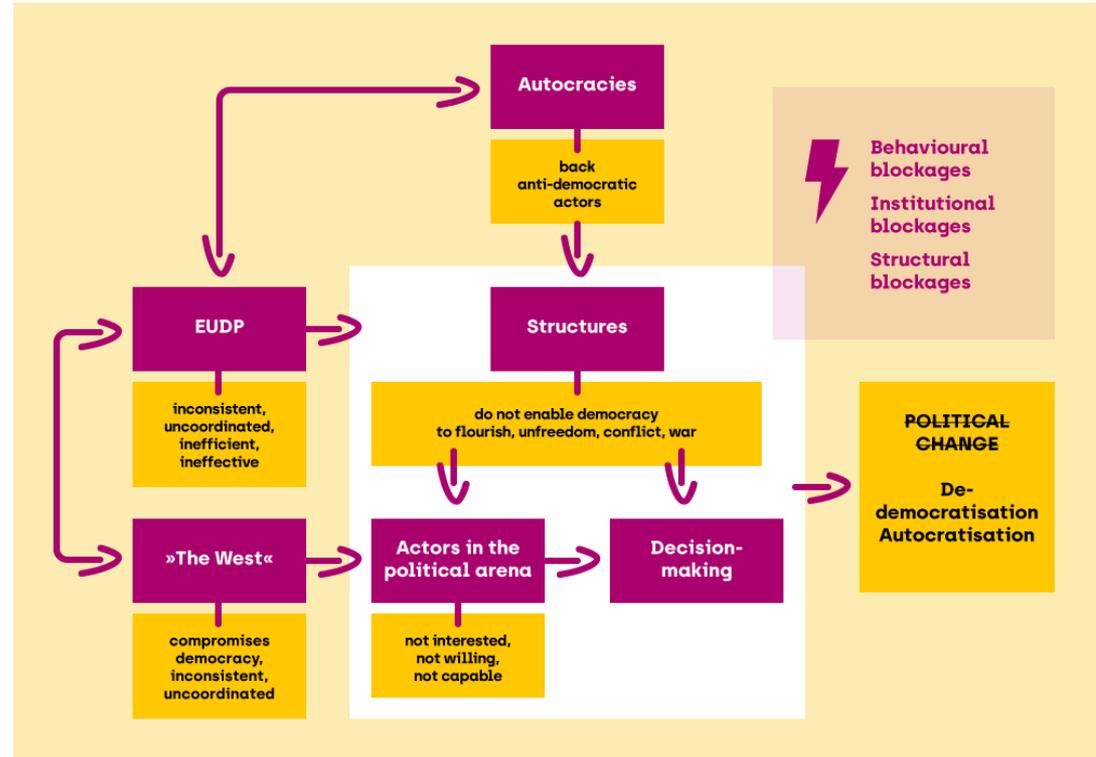


Source: Bertelsmann Stiftung 2016.



Source: Lüthmann/Lindberg 2019, in: *Democratization*.

Analytical approach: EU democracy promotion in a global perspective



More at: <https://embrace-democracy.eu/about/approach/>

Empirical focus on episodes of closure and opening allowing for structured-focused comparisons

	WP4: Popular uprisings (ARI*)	WP5: Autocratic resilience (UM*)	WP6: Peacebuilding (UMAN*)	WP7: Geopolitics of EUDP (ELIAMEP*)
Conflict Region	Political order after political uprisings	Economic modernisation	Societal peace	Spheres of influence between major powers
Eastern Europe	Ukraine (UESA) Belarus (UM)	Belarus (UM)	Ukraine (UESA)	(Eastern) Ukraine (UESA)
Southern Caucasus	Georgia (ILIAUNI) Armenia (ILIAUNI)	Azerbaijan (UGent)	Armenia (UGent)	Georgia (ILIAUNI)
Western Balkans	Serbia (FPN) N. Macedonia (ELIAMEP)	Serbia (FPN)	Bosnia and Herzegovina (UMAN)	Serbia (ELIAMEP) N. Macedonia (ELIAMEP)
Northern Africa	Tunisia (ARI) Algeria (ARI)	Algeria (ARI)	Algeria (ARI) Tunisia (UMAN)	Algeria (ARI)
Middle East	Lebanon (Berghof)	Lebanon (ARI)	Lebanon (Berghof) Palestine (PalThink)	Palestine (PalThink)

Source:
EMBRACE
proposal.

Key findings on small-scale political gains after political uprisings (WP4)

- Conditions under which bottom-up actors succeed in achieving small-scale democratic gains in the aftermath of popular uprisings: **(1) social capital, (2) formal bridges, (3) technical alignment, (4) constellation of power, (5) quality of coalition, and (6) civil society autonomy.**
- **EUDP has positively contributed** to the success of bottom-up actors in achieving small-scale gains by: (1) supporting civil society *before* uprisings and providing core support , (2) fostering thematic workshops and capacity-building across actor-types, (3) applying leverage to encourage inclusive transition processes.
- However, as **EU prioritizes stability over democracy**, EUDP is best able to assist bottom-up actors to achieve small-scale democratic gains when such gains are seen as contributing to the stabilisation of the new democratic regime.

Policy recommendations (WP4): Part I

In moments *before* a political transition is underway, EU democracy assistance to bottom-up actors should:

- **Provide core support to civil society organizations** → support for key positions and higher running cost eligibility to strengthen organizational sustainability and strategic autonomy, to build political capital.
- **Develop and expand democracy assistance mechanisms that diversify the actors receiving support** → to create, design, implement own initiatives, more inclusive and locally driven process.
- **Safeguard democratic potential by supporting spaces where it can exist** → deep consultative and co-design process.

Policy recommendations (WP4): Part II

Once a *window for democratic transition has opened* or a transition process is underway, EU democracy assistance to bottom-up actors should:

- **Develop new technical competencies within civil society to contribute to democratic reforms** → technical expertise and capacity-building (legal frameworks, institutional design, policymaking) to advocate concretely for achievement of democratic gains.
- **Apply leverage to ensure civil society's inclusion in democratic transitions** → use conditionality and leverage to ensure that formal spaces for consultation and joint decision-making with civil society are integrated into transition process.

Literature recommendations

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Thank you very much for your attention!

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