

DREMS

DEMOCRACY BRIEF FOR SERBIA AND MOLDOVA

Project title: **Enhancing EU's role in
consolidating local democratic
resilience in Moldova and Serbia**

Acronym **DREMS** /101085517

DREMS

ERAMUS +

EECEA

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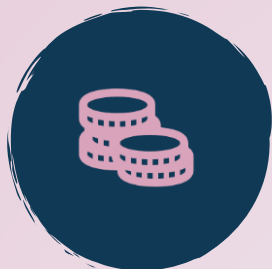
About Us

Work packages



WP 1

Project management



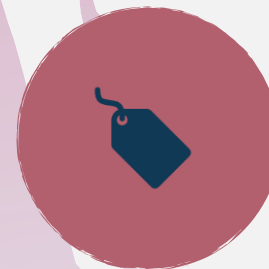
WP 2

Research & design



WP 3

Teaching



WP 4

Awarding Civil society
actors and democratic
resilience tools

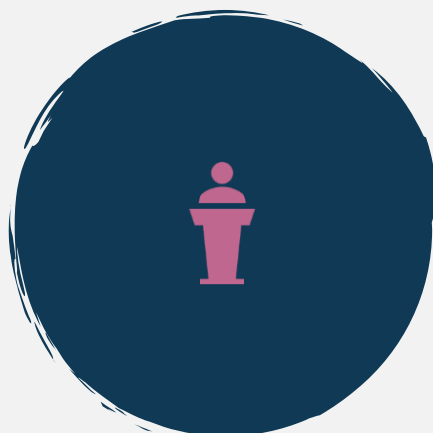


WP 5

Impact and
Dissemination



EU as a
democracy
exporter



Trends of
democratic
culture in
Eastern Europe



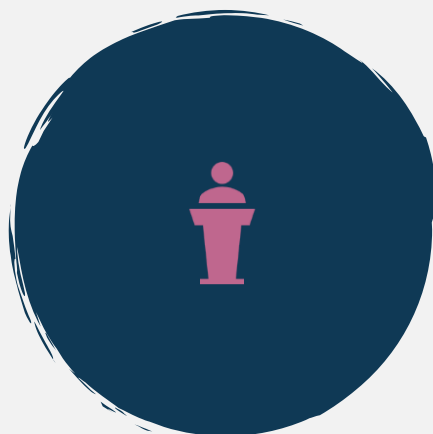
From
democratization
to democratic
resilience

Research and design

The creation and introduction
of three pilot courses in the
curriculum of Babeș-Bolyai
University



EU as a
democracy
exporter



Trends of
democratic
culture in
Eastern Europe



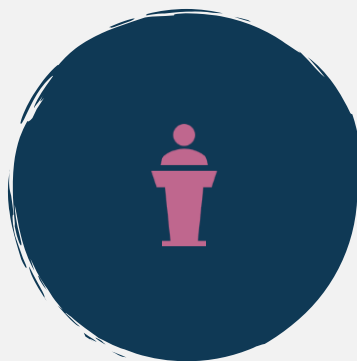
From
democratization
to democratic
resilience

Teaching

Three optional courses
introduced in the curriculum of
Babeș-Bolyai University



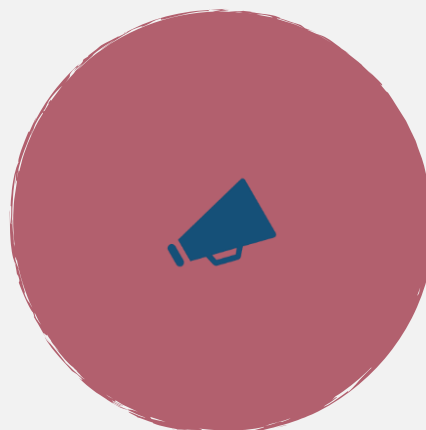
4 civil society
actors selected



One training
programme
organised



Awards to 4 civil
society actors

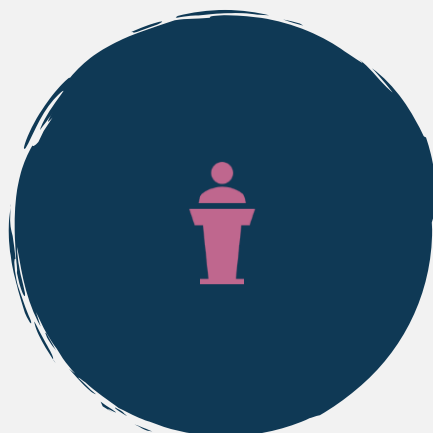


4 dissemination
events organized

Awarding civil society actors and democratic resilience tools



4 scientific
articles



One conference



Open access
materials

Impact and dissemination

DEMOCRACY BRIEF

The key tool meant to present research results and recommendations to a non-specialized audience, in this case, students, and civil society.

The policy brief serves as a vehicle for providing evidence-based policy advice to help readers make informed decisions. Serbia and R. Moldova are hot points, and a strong policy brief boasts research findings in plain language and draws clear links to policy initiatives.



DREMS

INTRODUCTION 1.

Democracy is a system of government where the power lies with the people, who can elect their leaders and have a say in decisions that affect their lives. In the context of Serbia and Moldova, democracy has faced numerous challenges, including political instability, corruption, and the influence of external actors. This brief aims to explore the state of democracy in these two countries, the concept of democratic resilience, the protection of rights, and the impact of disinformation.

THE STATE OF DEMOCRACY IN SERBIA 2.1

Serbia has experienced significant political changes over the past few decades, transitioning from a socialist republic to a democracy. However, this transition has not been smooth. The country has faced challenges such as political corruption, media freedom restrictions, and the influence of powerful political elites.

The State of Democracy in Serbia



**Political
Landscape**



Media Freedom



Civil Society

The State of Democracy in Serbia

How will we scale in the future?

Political Landscape

- The political landscape in Serbia is characterized by a dominant party system, with the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) holding significant power.
- The concentration of power in one party has raised concerns about democratic backsliding and the erosion of democratic norms.
- Elections, while competitive, have often been marred by allegations of fraud and irregularities.



Media Freedom

- Media freedom is a critical component of a functioning democracy.
- In Serbia, media outlets often face pressure from political authorities, leading to self-censorship and biased reporting.
- Independent journalists are frequently targeted, and disinformation campaigns are prevalent, undermining public trust in the media and democratic institutions.



Civil Society

- Despite these challenges, civil society in Serbia remains active and resilient.
- NGOs and grassroots movements play a crucial role in advocating for democratic reforms, human rights, and government accountability.
- However, these organizations often operate under difficult conditions, facing legal and financial obstacles.

THE STATE OF DEMOCRACY IN MOLDOVA 2.2

Moldova, like Serbia, has undergone significant political changes since gaining independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. The country has faced challenges such as political instability, corruption, and the influence of oligarchs, which have hindered its democratic development.

The State of Democracy in Moldova



**Political
Landscape**



**Judicial
Independence**



**Anti-Corruption
Efforts**

The State of Democracy in Moldova

How will we scale in the future?

Political Landscape

- Moldova's political landscape is fragmented, with frequent changes in government and coalitions.
- This instability has made it difficult to implement consistent democratic reforms.
- The country has also struggled with the influence of oligarchs, who wield significant power and often undermine democratic processes.



Judicial Independence

- Judicial independence is a cornerstone of democracy, ensuring that laws are applied fairly and without political interference.
- In Moldova, the judiciary has been criticized for being susceptible to political influence and corruption, undermining the rule of law and citizens' trust in democratic institutions.



Anti-Corruption Efforts

- Corruption remains a significant challenge in Moldova.
- Efforts to combat corruption have been inconsistent, and high-profile cases often go unpunished.
- This lack of accountability erodes public trust in government institutions and hampers democratic development.

DEMOCRATIC RESILIENCE ₃

Democratic resilience refers to the capacity of a democracy to withstand and recover from challenges, such as political corruption, external interference, and societal divisions. Building democratic resilience in Serbia and Moldova is crucial for ensuring long-term stability and the protection of democratic values.

Democratic resilience



**Institutional
Strengthening**



**Civil Society
Engagement**



**Public
Participation**

Democratic resilience

Institutional Strengthening

- Strengthening democratic institutions is essential for enhancing democratic resilience.
- This includes ensuring the independence of the judiciary, enhancing the transparency and accountability of government institutions, and protecting the integrity of elections.
- Both Serbia and Moldova need to focus on building robust institutions that can withstand political pressures and uphold democratic principles.



Civil Society Engagement

- Civil society plays a vital role in promoting democratic resilience.
- NGOs, grassroots movements, and independent media provide oversight, hold authorities accountable, and advocate for democratic reforms.
- Supporting and protecting civil society organizations is crucial for maintaining a vibrant and resilient democracy.



Public Participation

- Encouraging public participation in democratic processes is essential for building democratic resilience.
- This includes fostering a culture of civic engagement, promoting voter education, and ensuring that citizens have a voice in decision-making processes. In Serbia and Moldova, increasing public participation can help build a more resilient and inclusive democracy.

PROTECTION OF RIGHTS 4

Protecting human rights is fundamental to any democracy. In Serbia and Moldova, ensuring the protection of rights such as freedom of expression, assembly, and association is crucial for democratic development.

Protection of rights



**Freedom of
Expression**



**Freedom of
Assembly and
Association**



Minority Rights

Protection of rights

Freedom of Expression

- Freedom of expression is a cornerstone of democracy, allowing citizens to voice their opinions and hold authorities accountable.
- In both Serbia and Moldova, freedom of expression is under threat, with journalists and activists facing harassment and intimidation.
- Ensuring the protection of this right is essential for a functioning democracy.



Freedom of Assembly and Association

- Freedom of assembly and association allows citizens to come together, organize, and advocate for their interests.
- In Serbia and Moldova, these rights are sometimes restricted, with authorities imposing limitations on protests and the activities of NGOs.
- Protecting these freedoms is crucial for democratic resilience and the empowerment of civil society.



Minority Rights

- Protecting the rights of minorities is essential for an inclusive democracy.
- In Serbia and Moldova, ethnic and religious minorities often face discrimination and marginalization.
- Ensuring equal rights and opportunities for all citizens, regardless of their background, is crucial for democratic development and social cohesion.

IMPACT OF DISINFORMATION 5

Disinformation poses a significant threat to democracy, undermining public trust in democratic institutions and processes. In Serbia and Moldova, disinformation campaigns are prevalent, often fueled by external actors seeking to destabilize the region.

Impact of disinformation



**Sources of
Disinformation**



**Effects on
Democracy**



**Combating
Disinformation**

Impact of disinformation

Sources of Disinformation

- Disinformation in Serbia and Moldova comes from various sources, including state actors, political parties, and foreign influences.
- These campaigns often aim to manipulate public opinion, sow discord, and undermine democratic processes.



Effects on Democracy

- Disinformation erodes public trust in democratic institutions and processes, increasing polarization and skepticism.
- It can influence election outcomes, distort public discourse, and hinder informed decision-making.
- Combating disinformation is crucial for protecting democratic integrity.



Combating Disinformation

- Addressing disinformation requires a multi-faceted approach.
- This includes promoting media literacy, enhancing the transparency and accountability of media outlets, and implementing regulations to prevent the spread of false information.
- Both Serbia and Moldova need to develop comprehensive strategies to combat disinformation and protect democratic resilience.

Strengthening Institutions

- Enhance the independence and capacity of the judiciary to ensure fair and impartial justice.
- Improve the transparency and accountability of government institutions to reduce corruption and increase public trust.
- Ensure the integrity of electoral processes through robust monitoring and oversight mechanisms.



Recommendations for Enhancing Democratic Resilience in Serbia and Moldova

Supporting Civil Society

- Provide legal and financial support to NGOs and grassroots movements to enable them to advocate for democratic reforms.
- Protect the rights of journalists and activists to ensure freedom of expression and prevent harassment and intimidation.
- Foster collaboration between civil society organizations and government institutions to promote democratic resilience.



Recommendations for Enhancing Democratic Resilience in Serbia and Moldova

Promoting Public Participation

- Increase civic education and awareness to encourage public participation in democratic processes.
- Create inclusive platforms for citizens to voice their opinions and participate in decision-making processes.
- Promote voter education and engagement to ensure informed and active participation in elections.



Recommendations for Enhancing Democratic Resilience in Serbia and Moldova

Combating Disinformation

- Develop comprehensive strategies to address disinformation, including regulatory measures and media literacy programmes.
- Enhance the transparency and accountability of media outlets to ensure accurate and unbiased reporting.
- Foster collaboration between government, civil society, and international organizations to combat disinformation and protect democratic integrity.



Recommendations for Enhancing Democratic Resilience in Serbia and Moldova

- Democracy in Serbia and Moldova faces significant challenges, including political corruption, media freedom restrictions, and the influence of disinformation.
- However, by strengthening institutions, supporting civil society, promoting public participation, and combating disinformation, these countries can build democratic resilience and ensure the protection of democratic values and rights.
- It is essential for all stakeholders, including government, civil society, and international partners, to work together to promote and protect democracy in Serbia and Moldova.



Conclusion

Democracy is not a given. It must be cultivated, continuously strengthened with effort and dedication, and sometimes defended at the cost of one's life. Looking around us, we see how seriously democracy is under threat.

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