ELECTION-WATCH.EU

MEMO 98

European Partnership for Democracy

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US midterms: international assessment highlights risks to electoral integrity and recognises institutional resilience

Election-Watch.EU and MEMO 98 today publish the Pre-Election Report of their International Remote Election Assessment (IREA) ahead of the 3 November US mid-term elections. Drawing on previous ODIHR findings, the report examines changes since 2024 and their implications for electoral integrity.

The report recognises the professionalism and commitment of state and local election officials and the mobilisation of civil society for observation, voter protection, education and legal assistance. Judicial review and decentralised election administration remain important safeguards, although some court decisions have narrowed electoral protections.

Increased federal executive intervention, including investigations and demands for sensitive voter data, has raised concerns about the potential partisan use of government authority and resources. Reduced federal election-security support, persistent threats and uneven resources add to pressures on election officials. Mid-decade redistricting and unequal voting and ballot-access requirements raise concerns about electoral equality, while immigration enforcement has generated concerns about potential voter intimidation.

Record independent expenditures for this stage of a midterm cycle, opaque political financing, pressure on independent journalism and misleading electoral narratives present further challenges to transparency and informed participation. AI-generated political advertising, often without disclosure, and gaps in platform transparency complicate public scrutiny.

Rasťo Kužel, Executive Director of MEMO 98, said: *"Elections are not only about casting and counting votes, but also about enabling voters to make informed choices. Independent journalism, transparent political financing and scrutiny of misleading content, including deceptive uses of AI, are essential to public trust."*

Armin Rabitsch of Election-Watch.EU highlighted: *"Election officials and civil society organisations are showing resilience despite growing political pressure. Their commitment deserves recognition. Independent scrutiny remains essential, while safeguards against interference will face further tests during counting, certification and electoral disputes."*

The independent, non-partisan IREA was launched after the US government decided not to invite the OSCE to observe the elections. Guided by the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation, it is conducted remotely through documentary research, expert analysis and stakeholder interviews. IREA does not directly observe voting or counting, is institutionally independent of the OSCE and does not substitute for an OSCE observation mission. Its findings reflect the scope and limitations of the available evidence. The assessment will continue after election day, with a final report presenting findings and recommendations.

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Election-Watch.EU and MEMO 98 jointly lead the assessment. Both organisations are members of EPD.

Read the full Pre-Election Assessment Report: download here