

Declaration
for
**GOOD CONDUCT OF
POLITICAL PARTIES AND
CANDIDATES**
in social media during the
2021 LOCAL ELECTIONS



Introduction

Democracy for Development (D4D), with the support of HD Centre is implementing a pilot activity which aims at improving the electoral environment through good conduct in social media during the 2021 local elections in Kosovo. In workshops held during August 2021 with political parties, media, civil society organizations, election commission, and other independent agencies, there appeared a need to develop and implement a Declaration for Good Conduct in Social Media for the upcoming election. This activity foresees the cooperation of electoral stakeholders to commit to this declaration in order to combat negative content in social media encountered in the previous elections such as hate speech, fake news, dis-information, slanderous language and other content that negatively affects the election environment.

This activity is in the pilot phase for the 2021 local elections. This activity will supplement existing legal and ethical requirements and will be implemented voluntarily in close collaboration with the electoral stakeholders. There will be a monitoring mechanism to follow-through on the commitments undertaken by the various stakeholders. It is hoped the activity will address the existing and emerging challenges related to undesirable content in social media, and will provide the lessons learned and recommendations to improve the electoral environment in Kosovo in the future.

Key activities

- ☑ Signing of the *Declaration for Good Conduct in Social Media* from main stakeholders and monitoring its implementation.
- ☑ Establishing a trained team of at least 10 persons with educational background in journalism to monitor content on social media.
- ☑ Collecting data from the monitoring mechanism through field reporting, partner CSOs, and citizens.
- ☑ Encouraging stakeholders and citizens to monitor content on social media and submit any remarks and complaints to respective election complaints bodies.
- ☑ Submitting formal remarks and complaints to violators and respective election complaints bodies.
- ☑ Completing a final monitoring report.

Monitoring methodology

- ☑ The monitoring will cover electoral campaigns in all municipalities. Specific attention will also be given to social media content that affects non-majority communities and women.
- ☑ The social media that will be monitored include but are not limited to: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, Youtube, Website/Blogs, Viber/Whatsapp. The monitoring will cover all political and election advertising and content created by third parties, supporters, and other actors in broadcast and written form, including, posts, declarations, comments, responses, and any other forms of communication.
- ☑ The kind of content that will be monitored include: hate speech, degrading language, fake news, disinformation, and other slanderous or malicious content that may damage the electoral environment.

Key commitments from stakeholders

- Sign the Declaration for Good Conduct in Social Media during local elections in 2021 (see the declaration below). The declaration was drafted in consultation with stakeholders.
- Respect the commitments, and cooperate with other stakeholders in combating negative content during the election period.
- Report and keep in touch with D4D and other stakeholders to improve the election campaign environment on social media.

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Principles

With the purpose of respecting and properly implementing election laws and regulations,

In order to improve the environment of the election campaign of the local elections of 2021,

In order to respect the principles of non-discrimination, accurate information, and protection of privacy, and

In order to combat negative content on social media,

We pledge to:

- Respect the election laws, regulations and the code of conduct for political entities, candidates and their supporters*
- Ensure that advertisements, positions and messages given during the campaign do not contain negative content such as hate speech, fake news, dis-information, and slanderous language*
- Use official accounts to communicate, and refrain from using third-party or fictitious accounts*
- Disclose the expenditures incurred for the paid advertising in social media*
- Provide objective and constructive criticism for other political entities, candidates and their supporters*
- Check the facts and take proper care of all information during the political campaign.*
- Take responsibility only for the official channels of the political parties and candidates*

Date:

Name of Political Party/Candidate/ Name and Surname:

Signature: