



REDEMOS

RECONFIGURING EU DEMOCRACY
SUPPORT. TOWARDS A SUSTAINED
DEMOS IN THE EU'S EASTERN
NEIGHBOURHOOD

Policy Brief 5

The challenges and demands of democratic consolidation in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine

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Setting the Scene

Moldova and Ukraine, and to a lesser extent Armenia and Georgia, have traditionally been viewed as countries on a 'democratisation' trajectory within the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood policy framework. However, as this policy paper argues, political regimes should not be understood as static or monolithic, but as dynamic and evolving. For the design and implementation of effective, needs-based democracy support, it is therefore essential to assess a country's current regime trajectory – whether it is moving towards democratic consolidation or experiencing authoritarian drift – alongside the maturity of its democratic institutions and the factors shaping recent trends.


To this end, this policy paper combines macro-level democratic indicators with expert assessments to provide an up-to-date diagnosis of regime conditions and trajectories in Moldova, Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia. This approach allows for a nuanced comparison among the region's democratic frontrunners, identifies key vulnerabilities requiring policy attention, and informs tailored recommendations at both the country and regional levels.

Key Findings

- Four distinct regime trajectories are observed in the region:
- Armenia has experienced democratic backsliding since 2020, reflected in persistently weaker judicial independence, electoral trust deficits, and increased media censorship.
- Georgia remained a stable electoral democracy until 2022 but is now undergoing democratic deterioration, visible in declining media pluralism, growing government disinformation, and restrictions on civil society.
- Moldova demonstrated democratic gains from 2019 to 2022, particularly in electoral and judicial domains, but has since shown signs of regression due to weak public oversight, implementation gaps and limited governance effectiveness.
- Ukraine, under wartime conditions, has shown institutional resilience and overall LDI improvement, though persistent challenges around executive dominance and judicial politicisation remain.

Policy Recommendations

- In the case of **Armenia**, the EU should recalibrate its engagement by prioritising technical and institutional support for electoral integrity, judicial independence, and media freedom, with a particular focus on implementing outstanding Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR recommendations. Assistance should emphasise capacity-building and structured political dialogue to rebuild public trust and consolidate democratic gains.
- In **Georgia**, to reverse democratic backsliding, the EU should link cooperation and support more clearly to measurable improvements in electoral integrity, media pluralism, judicial independence, and the operating environment for civil society. A conditional but constructive approach – combining technical assistance with firm political expectations – is essential to restoring trust and safeguarding democratic institutions.
- In **Moldova**, the EU should prioritise the protection of the country’s proportional electoral system and strengthen judicial accountability through enhanced oversight, vetting, and transparency as core elements of accession conditionality. Targeted technical assistance and clear benchmarks are needed to reinforce the rule of law, and sustain public confidence in democratic governance.
- In support of democratic consolidation in **Ukraine**, the EU should encourage reforms that rebalance executive power, strengthen judicial independence, and reinforce oversight institutions, particularly in preparation for post-war reconstruction. Continued conditionality, combined with sustained support for civil society, watchdog organisations, and investigative media, will be critical to reinforcing democratic accountability.
- **Across the Eastern Neighbourhood region**, democracy support priorities should focus on addressing the drivers of recent authoritarian shifts while capitalising on the factors underpinning renewed momentum towards democratisation. At the regional and multilateral levels, engagement should consistently prioritise strengthening judicial independence and electoral integrity, as these remain key areas of vulnerability across most Eastern Neighbourhood countries, regardless of their overall level of democratic development.



The full study – **REDEMOS Policy Paper: Regime Clusters and Challenges to Democratisation in the Eastern Neighbourhood: Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine** – can be found at [Policy Papers – REDEMOS](#)



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Towards a sustained demos in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood**

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