



Summary of Defend Democracy strategy 2023-2025

Defend Democracy is a nonpartisan, nonprofit NGO operating from Brussels and The Hague. We work transatlantically at the intersection of freedom, security and technology.

Mission

To strengthen and defend democracy against foreign, domestic and technological threats.

Vision

Defend Democracy works for a world where citizens live in freedom and security in democracies.

Problem

The need for an organisation like Defend Democracy has never been more evident. Democracy is under pressure worldwide, even in countries where we took it for granted:

- 1) [foreign interference in our democracies](#) a.k.a. [hybrid threats to democracy](#)
- 2) [affective polarisation](#), [domestic extremism and terrorism](#) and [democratic backsliding](#)
- 3) [technological threats to democracy](#)

Unfortunately, our governments and other stakeholders are doing too little to defend democracy against foreign interference, to prevent further polarisation and erosion of democracy “at home” and to protect our democracies from technological threats. Worse, few understand that **these three threats to democracy are *interconnected* and are *reinforcing* each other.**

Solution

The future of our democracies will depend on building resilience to this triple threat as of now.

Defend Democracy proposes a *Zeitenwende* for democracy. Not by publishing reports but as a do-tank that gets to work. We encourage citizens, governments and their EU & NATO alliances to build resilience against the triple threat to democracy and as civil society actor we help them do it.

Activities

We [help build societal resilience](#) to hybrid threats for a whole-of-society defence of democracies. Our program [C4DR](#) aims to accelerate strengthening civil preparedness and societal resilience.

Outputs

Awareness; Advocacy; Action (building societal resilience by capacity & community building)

Outcomes

- Society sees and understands the triple threat and makes it a political priority
- New policies, institutions, resources and skills enable countries to tackle triple threat
- Increased capacity, coordination and collaboration in building resilience to triple threat

Scope

Because prevention is [better](#) (more effective and cheaper) than cure, Defend Democracy initially focuses on the Transatlantic region: EU, NATO and its current and future member states.

Organisation

Currently consists of Executive Director, Board, Advisory Board, pro-bono advisers and volunteers. We are still small but we have big ambitions; we are looking for support for our '23-'25 scale up. Project funders include(d): Democracy and Media Fund, SIDN Fund, the US Mission to the EU, NATO Public Diplomacy Division, Friedrich Naumann Foundation, Heinrich Boell Foundation. We also receive support in kind and small donations from private persons.

Track record (highlights)

Defend Democracy is well-known for its expertise in *hybrid and technological threats* to democracy, in dealing with *disinformation* (e.g. training [Act On Disinfo](#), watchdog [Kieskijker](#)), for its *advocacy*, and for its *convening power*: community building for democracy defenders ([#DemocracyDrinks](#)), the high-level [Transatlantic Democracy Dialogue](#), and the [Coalition for Democratic Resilience](#).