



Budapest, 15 January 2021

Dear ACEEEO Members,

First of all I would like to wish you a Happy and Healthy New Year!

In the previous letter Tamar Zhvania, President of ACEEEO and I briefly wrapped up the activities of the previous year (<https://aceeeo.org/en/newsletter/seasons-greetings-aceeeo-5>), and hereby I intend to share some news and plans for the upcoming period. With the beginning of 2021 I strongly believe that this year will provide us less uncertainty and more opportunity of joint and meaningful action. The past year was challenging, we have learnt a lot from it, and I think that the community of election officials became even more resilient during the last year. With this in mind, it is high time to plan for the next year. Thus, I would like to highlight a few of the cornerstones of the ACEEEO's activities during 2021.

1. We are 30!

This year the ACEEEO has reached a milestone in its history, again. It was already 30 years ago that leading electoral officials of six former socialist countries decided to establish the Association of Central and Eastern European Election Officials. Since 1991 the name has changed a bit, but the abbreviation remained, and ACEEEO has grown to include representatives of Election Management Bodies of 25 countries and established effective links with many international and intergovernmental institutions working on elections and democracy.

In order to celebrate the 30-year-anniversary of this outstanding example of international cooperation, the ACEEEO invites its Members and Partners to take an active part in the programs planned to be implemented this year. Among others, we invite our colleagues to commemorate the Global Elections Day on the first Thursday of February; to share their memories about the elections of the last 3 decades in form of photos; to voice their ideas about the future of elections and send messages to future young voters; and participate in the upcoming Anniversary Annual Conference of the ACEEEO. For further reference please find enclosed the Roadmap of the events in *Annex 1*.

2. Global Elections Day (GED)

On the 4 February 2021 Electoral Management Bodies all over the world will celebrate the Global Elections Day for the 16th time.

On the occasion of this celebration the Electoral Management Bodies open the doors of their offices, emphasizing once again the transparency in their work. They invite young voters, the media and other key stakeholders to present their achievements in organization of the electoral process, but at the same time they initiate conversation about the improvement of the processes. As the initiators of the GED underlined back in 2005, the main goals of this day are:

- to confirm our belief in the irreversibility of democratic processes;
- to inform the public about new achievements and challenges related to various types of voting systems;
- to draw the attention of parliaments, governments, politicians and world leaders on the importance of their leadership role that they play in promoting a culture of democracy and high levels of voter participation;
- to influence first-time voters and young voters to commit themselves to democratic values.

Therefore, we encourage all our Members and Partners to join the celebration and send us your short reports and photos about the activities. For further reference please visit: <https://aceeeo.org/en/projects/global-elections-day>.

3. Online Symposium on 'Youth and elections'

4 February 2021, online

Undoubtedly, the matters of voters' education, consciousness of the electorate, and a special focus on youth participation are not a new topic in electoral business. However, in the light of the developments in terms of new technologies the topic gained a new relevance in the recent decade. Thus, it is of utmost importance that the new generations of voters inherit the experience and knowledge about democratic processes and constantly polish their skills of being able to properly filter information and making a conscious decision about their future.

Therefore, the ACEEEO continues its long-lasting tradition of focusing to the electoral education of youth and organizes an Online Symposium on 4 February 2021.

The topic is not new for us; we kept this topic on the agenda of our annual conferences since the late 90', beginning with the 8th ACEEEO conference in Bratislava, Slovakia titled '*A Decade of Democracy: Increasing Voter Participation through Education*', continuing with the 13th ACEEEO conference in Tirana, Albania with the title '*Voter turnout with special regard to the first time voters*', and since the topic of education came up at almost all of our conferences.

As the first step in our journey this year, the ACEEEO invites all the interested to attend the ***Online Symposium on 'Youth and elections' on 4 February 2021***, which will deal with the topic from an international comparative angle on the one side, and from a country specific perspective from the other side, tackling the experiences of international organizations and Electoral Management Bodies.

The Online Symposium is freely accessible, however, prior registration is needed. If you wish to participate, please send an e-mail to aceeeo@aceeeo.org.

– DRAFT AGENDA –

(Time zone: CET – UTC+1)

14.00 – 14.10 – Greetings from Zsolt Szolnoki, Secretary General, ACEEEO

14.10 – 15.00 – Youth programs in Europe

Speakers:

Augusta Featherston, Youth Focal Point, OSCE/ODIHR

15.00 – 15.45 – Case studies on citizen and youth education

Speakers:

CEC of Georgia (TBC)

CEC of the Republic of Moldova (TBC)

15.45 – 16.00 – Debate and closing remarks

4. *Institutional issues*

- The 30th Jubilee Annual Conference is planned to be held in a hybrid way, in September. The topic, the host-country and the exact dates of the conference should be discussed and decided upon at the upcoming Executive Board meeting of the ACEEEO.
- The ACEEEO Executive Board meeting will be conducted online on 25 March 2021. The Secretariat will send out further details soon.
- We would like to remind our Members that in accordance with the decision of the General Assembly meeting held on 24 September 2019 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, the increasement of the amount of the annual fee from 1800 EUR to 2100 EUR, came into force on 1 January 2021 (see the *Annex 2*)

On behalf of the ACEEEO Secretariat I would like to wish all of you good health and further successes in your personal and professional life.

Yours sincerely,



Zsolt Szolnoki
Secretary General