**IDEA UPDATES AND EXPANDS THE CONTENT OF ELECTORAL JUSTICE DATABASE**

Elections are considered to be of paramount importance in most countries for establishing a legitimate government. Yet, this is only true when elections are fully trusted and perceived to be fair. At the same time, competition and struggle are an inherent part of elections. Subsequently, this has the potential to lead to various types of misconduct at different stages of electoral cycle: such as the rejection of qualified voters and candidates, electoral fraud, obstruction of electoral processes both by election officials and voters, campaign finance infractions, to name a few. Any of these may lead to electoral disputes. How disputes are handled is one of the important indicators of the impartiality of elections. Therefore, free, fair and credible elections necessitate the adoption of efficient and transparent electoral dispute resolution (EDR) mechanisms that are explicitly defined in legislation.

In 2010 International IDEA published the *Electoral Justice: The International IDEA Handbook*. In parallel to development of this handbook, the initial global research was conducted to study EDR mechanisms around the world. The data was then published in IDEA’s Electoral Justice Database. Taking into account the importance of and overall interest in the topic, International IDEA has conducted more comprehensive global study of EDR mechanisms during 2013-2014. The aim was to update the previous database and also expand its content by providing more in depth data about different types electoral disputes. The main target of the study was the legislation of countries providing for EDR mechanisms.

So far, the legal documents of 176 countries have been analyzed and the results are now available online in the new version of the Electoral Justice Database. The comparative data covers only the rules provided by law, rather than their application. Whenever possible, the data is supported by real life examples. International IDEA invites researchers and practitioners to contribute with the examples of application of EDR regulations in order to make this database more informative.

The legal provisions for EDR mechanisms are complex in many countries, which posed a challenge when classifying the data in the database. Nevertheless, the researchers engaged in the study tried to be consistent in the interpretation of the law. When the laws are not clear in certain provisions, the relevant explanations have been provided.

The old version of the database consisted of two parts: (1) challenges related to election results and (2) other electoral disputes. The second part was too broad, and, thus, was not so useful in understanding how EDR mechanisms work in some particular cases. The new database is now more targeted and consists of four specific parts dealing with:

1. challenges related to elections results;
2. challenges related to political party/candidate registration or nomination;
3. challenges related to campaign financing; and

### election related criminal offences.

Each part consists of several questions that are crucial in the EDR process.

The database will be updated continuously by following the changes in the legislation of countries.

Link to the database: <http://www.idea.int/elections/ej/>

