

2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

2021 YEAR IN REVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
ELECTORAL COOPERATION AND OBSERVATION
OF THE OAS



2021



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2021 YEAR IN REVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ELECTORAL COOPERATION AND OBSERVATION (DECO) OF THE SECRETARIAT FOR STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY (SSD)

General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (GS/OAS)



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INTRODUCTION

This document summarizes the work of the Department of Electoral Cooperation and Observation (DECO) of the Secretariat for Strengthening Democracy (SSD) in 2021. It highlights key aspects of the Electoral Observation Missions (EOMs) deployed by the Organization of American States (OAS) in the Americas, as well as the cooperation projects and activities developed by DECO throughout the year to contribute to the strengthening of electoral processes, institutions, and democracy in the region.

In 2021, DECO deployed twelve (12) Electoral Observation Missions (EOMs) in nine (9) countries of the continent: Ecuador (General Elections and Presidential Runoff), El Salvador (Municipal Elections), Bolivia (Departmental, Regional and Municipal Elections and Departmental Runoff), Peru (General Elections and Presidential Runoff), Mexico (Federal and Local Elections), Saint Lucia (General Elections), Bahamas (General Elections), Paraguay (Municipal Elections), and Honduras (General Elections).

Due to the global health context and mobility restrictions, the OAS continued to combine face-to-face and virtual components into its observation tasks, which allowed for a comprehensive and complete analysis of all the electoral processes. Thanks to the financial support of 18 donors, a total of 394 international specialists and observers (196 women and 198 men) participated in the EOMs in-person or virtually.

In an effort to continue strengthening the OAS' electoral observation capabilities, in 2021 DECO started the development of a methodology to observe mechanisms of direct democracy. Likewise, in compliance with the mandate of the 2021 General Assembly, DECO has begun the review of the Manual for OAS Electoral Observation Missions.

In terms of cooperation, DECO launched an electoral support program for Latin America and the Caribbean, which will address issues such as the political participation of women and the impact of disinformation in electoral processes, as well as provide training for civil society in electoral observation methodologies and research in areas of electoral interest, among other topics.

Among the first activities carried out under this program, an initial workshop on disinformation in electoral contexts took place. It fostered a participatory dialogue with civil society actors, fact checkers and social media companies. Additionally, virtual training on electoral observation methodologies was provided to members of the Honduran Council of Private Enterprise (COHEP) and to students and researchers from the University of São Paulo (USP) in Brazil.

In addition, DECO provided technical cooperation to the National Electoral Council of Ecuador to develop a diagnosis to contribute to the modernization of its information technology infrastructure. Likewise, it collaborated with the Court of Electoral Justice of Honduras through a legal analysis on the normative harmonization between the system of administrative appeals and the system of judicial appeals.

In compliance with General Assembly resolution 2931 (XLIX-O/19), in 2021 DECO published the Good Practices Guide for Strengthening Electoral Processes, a document that seeks to guide and support the continuous improvement of electoral matters in Member States. Additionally, throughout the year, different people from the department's team participated in various international forums, seminars and events related to electoral matters.

This document reflects the permanent commitment of the Department of Electoral Cooperation and Observation with democratic consolidation and strengthening in the Americas, which will continue in 2022 with the observation of electoral processes in Costa Rica and Colombia, among other countries, along with the implementation of several cooperation projects, and the creation of cutting-edge tools that will allow Member States to advance in the improvement of their electoral processes and institutions.



YEAR IN REVIEW 2021





1

OBSERVING ELECTORAL PROCESSES

“Electoral Observation Missions are the heart of the defense of democracy in the Americas. Despite the complex challenges that the health emergency has brought, to date we have deployed 18 Electoral Observation Missions since the start of the pandemic. The courage of the observers and the heads of the EOMs to challenge the pandemic conditions is commendable. Their technical ability is superior. Our Missions on the ground, including the EOMs, have taken risks. They have acted with determination, with talent, with courage, with absolute institutional responsibility and they are the best demonstration that the OAS has never stopped”.

– Luis Almagro, OAS Secretary General

1. ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSIONS

EOMs 2021

Ecuador, General Elections and Presidential Runoff – February 7th and April 11th

El Salvador, Municipal Elections – February 28th

Bolivia, Departmental, Regional and Municipal Elections and Departmental Runoff – March 7th and April 11th

Peru, General Elections and Presidential Runoff – April 11th and June 6th

Mexico, Federal and Local Elections – June 6th

Saint Lucia, General Elections – July 26th

The Bahamas, General Elections – September 16th

Paraguay, Municipal Elections – October 10th

Honduras, General Elections – November 28th







ECUADOR

General Elections

February 7th

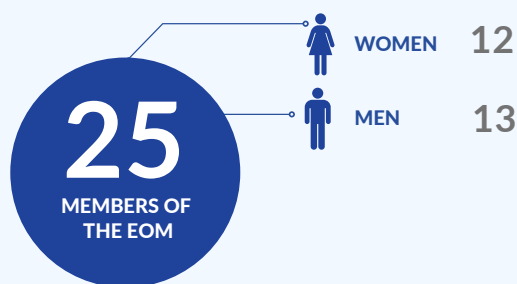
Presidential Runoff

April 11th

DONORS



General Elections



NATIONALITIES 13

Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

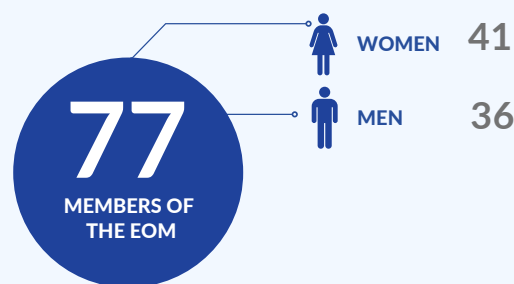
DEPLOYED IN:

Manabí, Los Ríos, Azuay, Guayas and Pichincha.

TOPICS OBSERVED

Political financing, electoral justice, electoral organization and technology, information technology security, the political participation of women, indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants.

Presidential Runoff



NATIONALITIES 21

Argentina, Austria, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, El Salvador, Spain, United States, France, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

DEPLOYED IN:

Azuay, Cañar, Carchi, Chimborazo, Cotopaxi, El Oro, Esmeraldas, Guayas, Imbabura, Loja, Los Ríos, Manabí, Morona Santiago, Pastaza, Pichincha, Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas, Sucumbios, and Tungurahua.

TOPICS OBSERVED

Electoral justice, electoral organization and technology, information technology security.

The OAS/EOMs deployed for the General Elections and the Presidential runoff of Ecuador were led by Isabel de Saint Malo, former Vice President and Foreign Minister of Panama. The Mission highlighted the civic and responsible behavior of Ecuadorian citizens, who peacefully expressed their will and participated massively in both the general elections and the presidential runoff. Likewise, it recognized polling station members and the security forces, who fulfilled their duty with professionalism and patriotism.

The OAS/EOM applauded the National Electoral Council (CNE) for organizing an electoral process with a high degree of complexity in the midst of a health emergency, which presented great challenges of various kinds, and valued its openness to consider and fully or partially implement a large part of the recommendations issued in the first round's preliminary report.

The OAS has deployed 23 Electoral Observation Missions in Ecuador since 1968.

Some recommendations of the OAS/EOM:

- Improve the monitoring system on Election Day, in order to collect data on the number of members, alternates, and citizens waiting in line who served as members of polling stations.
- Issue clear, complete rules and regulations that all Provincial Electoral Boards are required to follow, in order to ensure uniformity in the procedures for counting and reviewing tally sheets with inconsistencies.
- Grant sufficient resources to the institutions that perform electoral functions and in a timely manner to fulfill their responsibilities throughout the electoral cycle.
- Create or designate a unit within the CNE responsible for promoting the exercise of community democracy, as well as the implementation of inclusion measures across the board during the electoral cycle.
- Have an electoral timetable that provides certainty, sufficiently in advance of the election, about which political organizations will be in contention, as well as exactly when the candidates participating in the electoral process will be determined.
- Ensure that the electoral bodies that assume the responsibilities related to the election perform their functions with complete autonomy, without external interference or pressure.

Reports presented by the Mission:

- Preliminary Report: <https://www.oas.org/eomdatabase/GetFileA.aspx?id=430-1268-25-0>
- Preliminary Report: <https://www.oas.org/eomdatabase/GetFileA.aspx?id=430-1279-37-0>
- Final Report: <https://www.oas.org/eomdatabase/GetFileA.aspx?id=430-1318-27-0>



Visiting polling stations in Quito, Ecuador



EL SALVADOR

Municipal Elections
February 28th



WOMEN 11

MEN 10

NATIONALITIES 10

Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, Spain, United States, and Uruguay.

DEPLOYED IN:

San Salvador, La Libertad, Santa Ana, San Miguel and Sonsonate.

TOPICS OBSERVED

Electoral organization and technology, political financing, women's political participation, and electoral justice.

DONORS



The OAS/EOM for the Municipal Elections of El Salvador was headed by María Eugenia Vidal, former governor of the province of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

On Election Day, the Mission was deployed in 5 departments of the country. It visited voting centers and observed the process from the installation of the polling stations to the counting and transmission of results. The Mission highlighted the high level of citizen participation that, despite the conditions imposed by the pandemic, exceeded the rate recorded in previous similar processes.

The OAS has deployed 17 Electoral Observation Missions in El Salvador since 1982.

Some recommendations of the OAS/EOM:

- Ensure that TSE officials who are not part of the plenary have strictly technical and non-partisan profiles, so as to build a more solid institution than can earn greater public trust and credibility.
- Improve the training of polling station and Temporary Electoral Bodies (OETs) staff.
- Develop a catalogue of penalties for violating the electoral finance regulations. These should be both gradual and proportional. They should also consider recidivism as a complicating factor.
- Introduce a system of limits on individual contributions and on campaign expenditures for each political party and each candidacy.
- Analyze the possibility of implementing a gender quota for uninominal positions at the local level.
- Ensure an adequate budget for the proper functioning of the electoral authority.
- Strengthen the jurisdictional functions of the electoral authority. To that end, as previously recommended by OAS Missions, it would be advisable that the judges' term are set at 5 years or more, so that it does not align with the electoral cycle. A staggered renewal of positions is also recommended.

Reports presented by the Mission:

- Preliminary Report: <https://www.oas.org/EOMDatabase/GetFileA.aspx?id=431-1272-25-0>



Election Day. San Salvador, El Salvador



BOLIVIA

Departmental, Regional and Municipal Elections

March 7th

Departmental Runoff

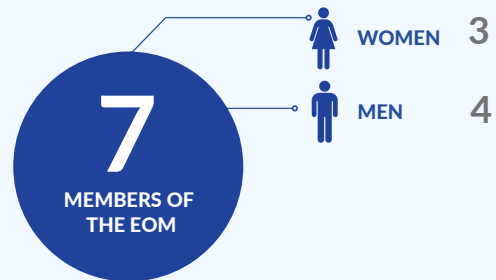
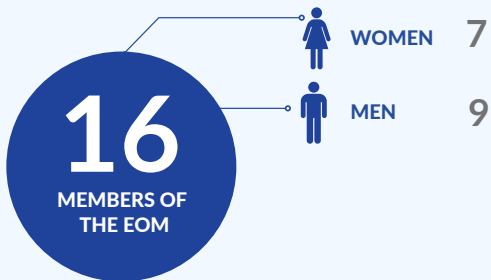
April 11th

DONORS



Departmental, Regional and Municipal Elections

Departmental Runoff



NATIONALITIES 8

Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela

DEPLOYED IN:

La Paz.

TOPICS OBSERVED

Electoral organization, electoral technology, information technology security, electoral justice, political financing, political participation of women and political participation of indigenous peoples.

NATIONALITIES 7

Argentina, Brazil, Chile, France, Guatemala, Mexico and Venezuela.

DEPLOYED IN:

La Paz, Chuquisaca, Pando and Tarija.

TOPICS OBSERVED

Electoral organization, electoral technology, information technology security, electoral justice, political financing, political participation of women and political participation of indigenous peoples.

The OAS/EOMs deployed for the Departmental, Regional and Municipal Elections and the Departmental runoff in Bolivia were headed by the former Counselor of the then Federal Electoral Institute of Mexico, Rodrigo Morales Manzanares.

The Missions congratulated the Bolivian people, the authorities and the political parties for the successful development of both election days and highlighted the work of the Supreme Electoral Court (TSE by its Spanish acronym) and the Departmental Electoral Tribunals (TEDs), which once again had to organize an electoral process in a few months and in a scenario complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The OAS has deployed 21 Electoral Observation Missions in Bolivia since 1966.

Some recommendations of the OAS/EOM:

- Evaluate the possibility of pushing the deadlines to define the candidacies.
- Develop effective mechanisms that promote equal access of women to subnational executive office.
- Establish public financing mechanisms, both direct and indirect, for subnational elections.
- Ban parties from receiving funds from anonymous sources.
- Strengthen the Technical Oversight Unit (UTF) by providing it with additional human resources and improving its technological capacities.
- Consider the possibility of offering incentives to electoral committee members who participate in the training sessions.
- Design a pre-established schedule of simulations and tests to be carried out in a timely manner and with the necessary stress loads to ensure greater effectiveness.

Reports presented by the Mission:

- Preliminary Report: <https://www.oas.org/EOMDatabase/GetFileA.aspx?id=432-1280-37-0>
- Statement: https://www.oas.org/en/media_center/press_release.asp?sCodigo=E-037/21



Visiting polling stations in La Paz, Bolivia



PERU

General Elections

April 11th

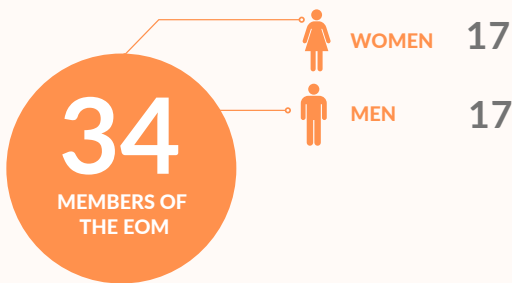
Presidential Runoff

June 6th

DONORS



General Elections



NATIONALITIES 17

Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Italy, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Spain, Switzerland, United States and Uruguay.

DESPLÉGADOS EN:

Arequipa, Cusco, Junín, Callao, Piura, Cajamarca, Lambayeque, Puno, Lima, La Libertad. Abroad: Barcelona, Spain; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Landover and Miami, United States; and Rome, Italy.

TOPICS OBSERVED

Electoral organization and technology, information technology security, electoral justice, political financing, political participation of women, political participation of indigenous peoples and afro-descendants, and voting abroad.

Presidential Runoff



NATIONALITIES 16

Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ecuador, Guatemala, Italy, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Spain, Switzerland, United States and Uruguay.

DEPLOYED IN:

Callao, Cusco, Ayacucho, la Libertad, Junín, Arequipa, Tumbes, Piura, Cajamarca, Puno, Lima, Tacna, Huánuco, Lambayeque, Ucayali, Madre de Dios, Loreto, y San Martín. Abroad: Barcelona, Spain; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Washington DC and Miami, United States and Rome, Italy.

TOPICS OBSERVED

Electoral organization and technology, information technology security, electoral justice, political financing, political participation of women, political participation of indigenous peoples and afro-descendants, and voting abroad.

The OAS/EOMs deployed for the general elections and the presidential runoff of Peru were headed by the former Foreign Minister of Paraguay, Rubén Ramírez Lezcano. The Mission observed the different phases of the Peruvian electoral process. During the pre-electoral stage, the Mission visited the country two times, in November 2020 and March 2021, and later returned for the general elections and presidential runoff. Likewise, it closely followed the post-electoral stage, in which the political forces presented various appeals that were analyzed and resolved by the electoral justice system.

The OAS/EOM expressed its appreciation to the Peruvian people, who went to the polls to express their will peacefully and democratically. It also congratulated the country's electoral authorities, who once again had to carry out their work in a complex context dominated by the pandemic and political polarization.

The OAS has deployed 22 Electoral Observation Missions in Peru since 1992.

Some recommendations of the OAS/EOM:

- Evaluate the possibility of extending the legal deadline for citizens to point out mistakes and make comments on the initial electoral registry.
- Unify current electoral provisions into a single legislation through the enactment of an official electoral code.
- Evaluate the convenience and feasibility of implementing a preliminary results system.
- Allow public financing to cover other campaign activities beyond advertising in media outlets.
- Introduce horizontal parity into current legislation in order to ensure that half the lists are headed by women.
- Conduct campaigns to raise awareness regarding political harassment that help women identify when they experience it and the mechanisms for reporting it.
- Incorporate information that allows for ethnic self-identification of voters on the electoral registry, in order to produce official data on the indigenous population and its electoral behavior. This will enable the design, implementation, and evaluation of public policies oriented toward their full political participation.

Reports presented by the Mission:

- Preliminary Report: <https://www.oas.org/EOMDatabase/GetFileA.aspx?id=433-1289-37-0>
- Preliminary Report: <https://www.oas.org/EOMDatabase/GetFileA.aspx?id=433-1288-37-0>



Visiting polling stations in Lima, Peru.

YEAR IN REVIEW 2021

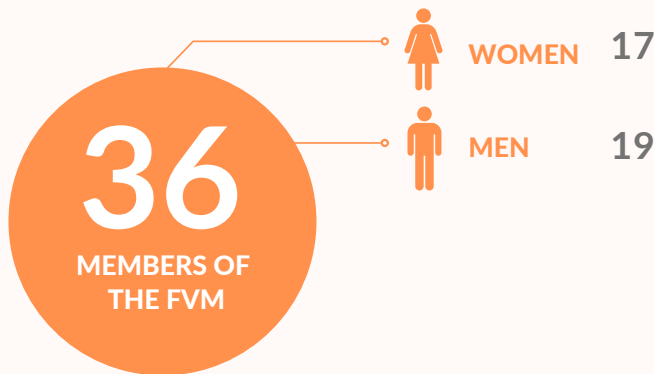






MEXICO

Federal and Local Elections
June 6th



NATIONALITIES 16

Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, France, Guatemala, Haiti, Paraguay, Peru, Spain, United States, and Venezuela.

DEPLOYED IN:

Mexico City, México, Baja California, Baja California Sur, Campeche, Chihuahua, Guerrero, Jalisco, Michoacán, Nayarit, Nuevo León, Querétaro, San Luis Potosí, Sinaloa, Sonora, Tlaxcala, Veracruz, and Zacatecas.

DONORS



TOPICS OBSERVED

Electoral organization and technology, information technology security, political financing, political participation of women, indigenous people, and afro-descendants, electoral justice, voting abroad, electoral security, and access to the media and freedom of expression.

The OAS Foreign Visitors Mission (FVM)* for the Federal and Local Elections of Mexico was headed by the Argentine lawyer Santiago Canton.

On Election Day, the OAS observers were present in 18 states, from the installation and opening of the polls, to the counting of votes and transmission of results. The Mission congratulated the citizens for its commitment to democracy, along with the Government of Mexico and electoral authorities for successfully holding these elections. It also highlighted the participation rate, which, according to preliminary data, exceeded 52%, four percentage points higher than the previous midterm elections.

The OAS has deployed 5 Missions in Mexico since 2009.

* A "Foreign Visitors Mission," established under Mexican law, enjoys the same functions, privileges, and immunities established in the Inter-American Democratic Charter for OAS Electoral Observation Missions.

Some recommendations of the OAS/MFV:

- Move forward in defining standards for identifying, preventing, addressing, punishing, and providing redress for gender-based political violence, and strengthen the institutional capacity of the local public electoral bodies (OPL by its Spanish acronym) in these matters.
- Establish concrete sanctions to discourage failure to follow the regulation that establishes the equitable distribution of resources within parties.
- Evaluate the possibility of allowing residents living abroad to vote for candidates for the Chamber of Deputies of the Congress of the Union.
- Foster a communications model that allows for the free circulation and plurality of ideas, which stimulates debate and provides information for voters to make an informed decision.
- Intensify measures to prevent violence against journalists, including early warning initiatives. Adapt responses to specific contexts, such as electoral periods.
- Adopt a system to assess the risk and assignment of protective mechanisms for candidates and political leaders. The system should also be mindful of gender and ethnic differences.

Reports presented by the Mission:

- Preliminary Report: <https://www.oas.org/EOMDatabase/GetFileA.aspx?id=434-1287-37-0>



Observation of polling stations in Mexico City



SAINT LUCIA

General Elections
July 26th



WOMEN 7



MEN 5

NATIONALITIES 10

Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Grenada, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago and United States.

DEPLOYED IN:

The 17 districts of Saint Lucia.

TOPICS OBSERVED

Electoral organization and technology, electoral registries, political finance, and the political participation of women.

DONORS



The OAS Electoral Observation Mission (EOM) for the Saint Lucia General Elections was led by the OAS Secretary for Access to Rights and Equity, Maricarmen Plata.

On election day, the members of the Mission were present in all of Saint Lucia’s 17 constituencies, and observed the process from the opening of the polling stations to the tallying and transmission of preliminary results. Members of the Mission visited 227 polling stations in 64 polling divisions during the day and reported that the process was conducted in a well-organized and generally peaceful manner.

The OAS has deployed 3 Missions in Saint Lucia since 2006.

Some recommendations of the OAS/EOM:

- Amend the Elections Act to provide for the conduct of a full house-to-house enumeration exercise to replace the Voters' List in existence and thereafter allow for periodic reverification of the List.
- Evaluate the arrangement of polling stations and considering the addition of a second voting booth to expedite the voting process, while ensuring that this change does not compromise the secrecy of the vote.
- Formalize and enforce policies to ensure access to and expedite the voting process for pregnant women, women with young children, the elderly and people with disabilities.
- Ensure that the planned results page, as well as the technological ecosystem to be used for transmitting results, is included in pre-election testing of any electoral technology, in order to test its security and attack mitigation barriers.
- Establish direct or indirect public financing for political parties and campaigns, including state subsidies for media access.
- Implement an effective gender quota mechanism in order to progressively adopt parity measures and thus level the playing field for women in elections.

Reports presented by the Mission:

- Preliminary Report: <https://www.oas.org/EOMDatabase/GetFileA.aspx?id=435-1298-37-0>



Election Day in Castries, Saint Lucia.



THE BAHAMAS

General Elections
September 16th



WOMEN 9



MEN 8

NATIONALITIES 9

Canada, Colombia, Dominica, Ecuador, Grenada, Jamaica, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago and United States.

DEPLOYED IN:

New Providence, Grand Bahama, Abaco and Eleuthera.

TOPICS OBSERVED

Electoral organization and technology, electoral registries, political finance, and the political participation of women.

DONORS



The OAS Electoral Observation Mission for the General Elections of The Bahamas was headed by the Grenada diplomat, Dr. Denis G. Antoine.

On Thursday, September 9, members of the Mission observed the conduct of the overseas poll at the Consulate of The Bahamas in Washington, D.C. On Election Day, members of the Mission visited 184 polling stations in 53 polling divisions and found that the process was conducted in a well-organized and peaceful manner. The Mission congratulated citizens on their democratic commitment, as displayed during the Advanced and Overseas Polls on September 9 and on Election Day, September 16.

The OAS has deployed 3 Missions in The Bahamas since 2012.

Some recommendations of the OAS/EOM:

- Amend Section 59 (1) c of the Parliamentary Elections Act to require that voters sign or otherwise place their mark on the copy of the register used at polling stations on Election Day, as a means of further certifying that an individual has voted in the particular polling division.
- That the Parliamentary Registration Department (PRD) consider developing and implementing permanent and fluid communication strategies between the electoral authority and the different political actors, in order to provide greater certainty and transparency in the process.
- That decisions be made further in advance of future electoral processes, in order to provide certainty in the process. In keeping with good practices, it would be important to engage with and take the perspectives of all relevant stakeholders into consideration in the decision-making process.
- Implement an integrated electronic results transmission system with key security features to ensure the accuracy and delivery of preliminary election results.
- Facilitate the development of training programs and information materials for specific groups, in order to ensure accurate information on the electoral process.
- Implement an effective gender quota mechanism in order to progressively adopt parity measures that level the playing field for women in elections and support an improved gender balance within the leadership of political parties and within the candidate lists presented to voters.

Reports presented by the Mission:

- Preliminary Report: <https://www.oas.org/EOMDatabase/GetFileA.aspx?id=436-1300-37-0>

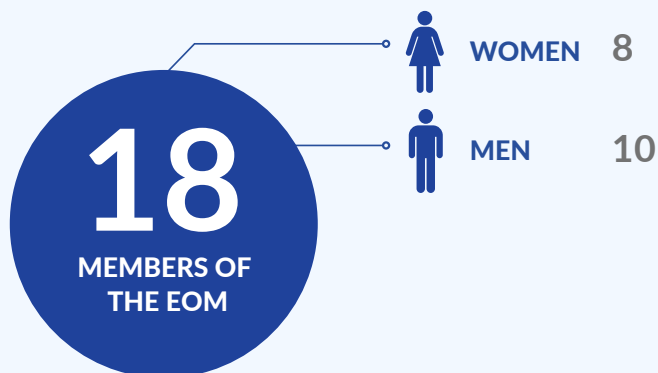


Election Day in Nassau, Bahamas.



PARAGUAY

Municipal Elections
October 10th



NATIONALITIES 12

Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

DEPLOYED IN:

Asunción and the departments Central, Guairá and Presidente Hayes

TOPICS OBSERVED

Electoral organization, electronic vote, electoral justice, political financing, political participation of women, and the political participation of indigenous peoples.

DONORS



The OAS/EOM for the Paraguayan Municipal Elections was headed by Juan Pablo Corlazzoli, from Uruguay.

On Election Day, the Mission visited 26 polling places in Asunción and in the departments of Central, Guairá, and Presidente Hayes, and observed the elections from the opening to the closing of the polling places, as well as the counting of votes. The Mission applauded the public's participation and congratulated the authorities on organizing the elections in circumstances marked by the implementation of electoral reforms and the coronavirus pandemic.

The OAS has deployed 15 Electoral Observation Missions in Paraguay since 1991.

Some recommendations of the OAS/EOM:

- Establish mechanisms to guarantee parity in the composition of candidates' lists. If the system of unblocked lists is maintained, it is suggested that a double preferential vote be introduced, so that all voters must choose one male and one female candidate of their preference.
- Move forward with the development of regulations for preventing and punishing political violence against women. The Model Inter-American Law drafted by the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) could serve as a reference in that undertaking.
- Explore mechanisms to include information on ethnic self-identification in the electoral registry and to generate statistics on these populations' electoral participation. This information should be collected and safeguarded in accordance with the highest international standards for personal data protection.
- Evaluate the distribution of electoral subsidies prior to the election and establish rules to guarantee the equitable distribution of those funds within parties.
- Adopt new legislation to regulate exit polling, to ensure that all media outlets are on an equal footing and prevent voters from being unduly influenced on Election Day.
- Evaluate mechanisms to ensure that new or smaller parties and subnational movements have some degree of participation as polling station officials, especially in municipal elections.

Reports presented by the Mission:

- Preliminary Report: <https://www.oas.org/EOMDatabase/GetFileA.aspx?id=438-1307-37-0>

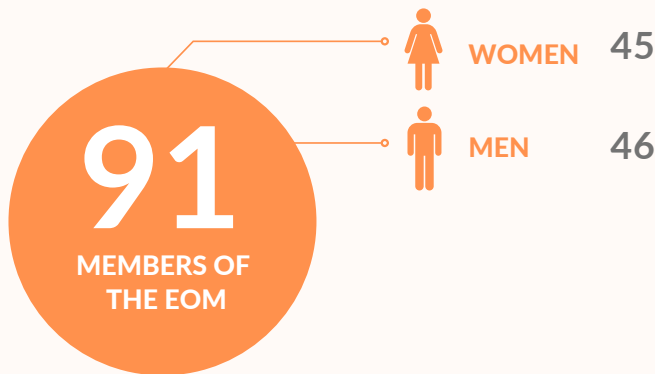


Election Day in Asunción, Paraguay



HONDURAS

General Elections
November 28th



NATIONALITIES 22

Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Spain, Switzerland, United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

DEPLOYED IN:

Francisco de Morazán, Atlántida, Choluteca, Colón, Comayagua, Copán, Cortés, El Paraíso, Intibucá, Islas de la Bahía, La Paz, Lempira, Ocotepeque, Olancho, Santa Bárbara, Valle, and Yoro.

DONORS



TOPICS OBSERVED

Electoral organization and technology, political finance, political participation of women, electoral justice, access and quality of information, and voting abroad.

The OAS/EOM for the General Elections of Honduras was headed by the former President of Costa Rica, Luis Guillermo Solís.

The work of the OAS/EOM included the deployment of a technical team for the primary elections held in March. After a preliminary visit in October 2021, the members of the Mission began to arrive in the country on November 12. On Election Day, the Mission visited 1,295 polling stations (JRVs) and 404 voting centers in 17 of the 18 departments of the country, and observed the elections from the opening to the closing of the boards, the counting of votes and the transmission of the preliminary results. The Mission congratulated the Honduran people for having voted with conviction, good spirits, and responsibility in an adverse health context marked by the pandemic and violence.

The OAS has deployed 12 Electoral Observation Missions in Honduras since 1963.

Some recommendations of the OAS/EOM:

- Establish effective and timely mechanisms for political parties to submit the lists of their JRV members, in order to include the name of the designated person in the ID cards.
- Set limits on campaign spending by political parties for general elections.
- Ban state propaganda for a reasonable time before the elections and establish effective control and sanction mechanisms for those who violate this prohibition.
- Establish horizontal parity in the lists of legislators in uneven districts and in counties, so that at least half are headed by women.
- Include the definition of political violence against women in the law and establish effective prevention and sanction mechanisms that are not reduced to pecuniary sanctions.
- Consider electoral justice deadlines when elaborating the electoral calendar.

Reports presented by the Mission:

- Preliminary Report: <https://www.oas.org/eomdatabase/GetFileA.aspx?id=439-1326-37-0>



Election Day in Tegucigalpa, Honduras

YEAR IN REVIEW 2021



YEAR IN REVIEW 2021





2

TECHNICAL COOPERATION AND FOLLOW-UP TO THE OAS/EOMS RECOMMENDATIONS

“In 2021, the work of the OAS in the vigorous defense of democracy throughout the hemisphere never wavered thanks to the quality and experience of our valuable teams who understand the tireless mission of the Organization and respect their professional responsibility to fulfill institutional obligations. Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, the OAS continued to implement electoral observation missions and electoral technical cooperation projects, resolutely upholding its historic position as the gold standard in electoral matters, in the process of presenting and implementing balanced recommendations to improve democratic processes that support free and fair elections in an environment in which democracies thrive.”

– **Ambassador Néstor Méndez**
OAS Assistant Secretary General



DIAGNOSIS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE MODERNIZATION OF THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL COUNCIL OF ECUADOR

DONOR 

At the request of the National Electoral Council (CNE) of Ecuador, DECO carried out a diagnosis of the capabilities of the CNE's information technology (IT) infrastructure at the national level. This diagnosis included an analysis of the feasibility and requirements to develop a cloud-based contingency computing architecture, which would guarantee the continuity of the operations of the CNE's main data center for future elections.

This OAS technical cooperation effort also sought to contribute to the production of inputs for making technical and strategic decisions on the use of existing information technology assets and the adequacy of those that have reached the end of their useful life. Likewise, the project worked on strengthening team management and reducing the risks associated with the investment of human and financial resources in modernizing the IT infrastructure.

DECO delivered a final report to the CNE that contains findings, proposals and technical recommendations regarding the technological infrastructure of the electoral body.



ELECTORAL REFORMS IN HONDURAS

DONOR 

DECO collaborated with the Honduras Court of Electoral Justice (TJE by its Spanish acronym) on a legal analysis to facilitate regulatory harmonization between the system of administrative challenges available for the resolution of electoral disputes, in force after the approval in 2021 of the new Electoral Law, with the system of electoral judicial appeals. The content of this latter system is pending approval by the National Congress, as part of the new Electoral Procedure Law.

The technical team analyzed the resources of the new Electoral Law and the experience of the TJE during the primary elections of March 2021 to identify key points and comparative experiences that could contribute to having a system of resources in electoral matters that is harmonious and coherent.

DECO delivered a final report to the TJE that provides recommendations to be taken into consideration in anticipation of the negotiations regarding the new Electoral Procedure Law.



THE IMPACT OF DISINFORMATION ON ELECTORAL PROCESSES

DONOR



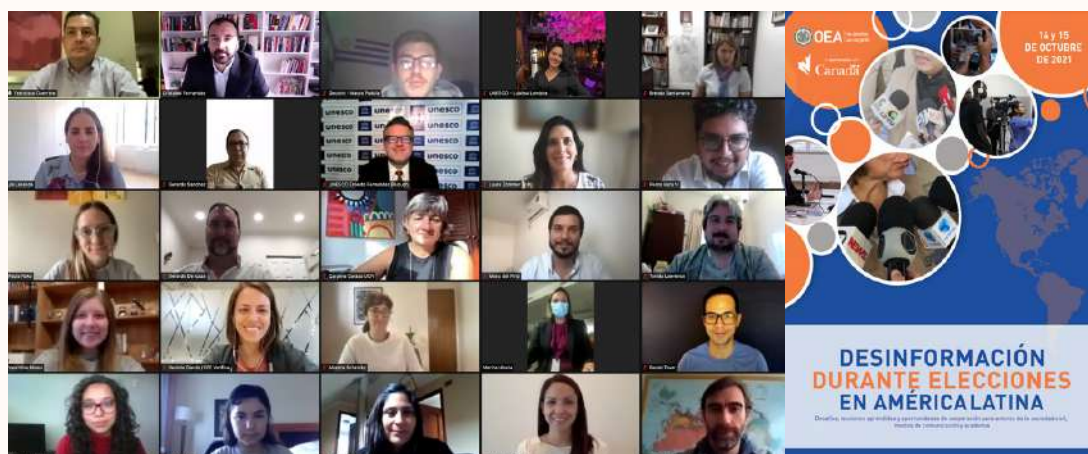
DECO began a process in 2021 to address the issue of disinformation in elections. This effort, which includes various activities over the next few years (guides, training, among others), began with the organization of a virtual workshop on disinformation in electoral contexts in order to promote a participatory dialogue between different actors in the region.

The workshop was held on October 14 and 15 and was attended by 30 people from civil society organizations, academia, the media and social media companies, who currently carry out programs or activities related to disinformation and who work in countries that had electoral processes in the 2020-2021 period.

The workshop participants exchanged points of view regarding the phenomenon of disinformation in Latin America, including the challenges and lessons learned in recent electoral processes. Opportunities for cooperation to combat this threat and possible measures to strengthen the capacities of electoral bodies to promote information integrity were also discussed.

In addition, within the framework of efforts to address the phenomenon of disinformation, DECO participated in the working group on "New Information Ecosystems: A matter of trust, truth and freedom of expression" as a preparatory activity for the Club de Madrid Annual Policy Dialogue 2021. Through conceptual proposals and a series of virtual dialogues with different institutions such as NDI, the Carter Center, Internews, the Baltic Center for Media Excellence, the European Partnership for Democracy, among others, DECO collaborated in the preparation of a document with scenarios, action plans and recommendations on information ecosystems, which addresses issues such as disinformation in electoral contexts. These recommendations were presented in the Action Lab of the working group on October 18, 2021, and later put into consideration for the Heads of State who are members of the Club de Madrid.

<https://www.clubmadrid.org/policy-dialogue-2021-concluding-document-our-commitment-to-democracy/>



TRAINING FOR NATIONAL OBSERVERS

DONOR 

As part of the electoral support program for Latin America and the Caribbean, which includes the previous disinformation component, DECO provided virtual training on electoral observation methodologies. The first training was held on October 19 for the members of the Honduran Council of Private Enterprise (COHEP), in which more than 20 people participated. The second was held on December 16 and was aimed at students and researchers from the University of São Paulo (USP) in Brazil, with more than 50 participants.

Additionally, DECO participated in the "2021 Electoral Observation Training Cycle: Rights and Duties of Electoral Observers" organized by the Association for a Fairer Society (ASJ) of Honduras. The event was held virtually on November 12 and addressed several aspects of electoral observation, such as the guarantees and responsibilities of the observers.

COOPERATION AGREEMENTS

In addition to the cooperation work with Ecuador and Honduras, DECO signed Cooperation Agreements with the Supreme Electoral Court of Guatemala, as well as with the National Electoral Council and the Civil Registry Office of Colombia. These framework agreements are the first step for the development of joint work initiatives, including technical-electoral cooperation projects.





3

EXCHANGES, PROFESSIONALIZATION OF ELECTORAL OBSERVATION AND PUBLICAITIONS

“OAS Electoral Observation Missions have undergone a significant evolution in recent years. They have not only established themselves as a fundamental tool for improving electoral processes in the region but have also advanced in their professionalization with the development of new methodologies to observe key issues in the elections. The OAS remains at the forefront of electoral matters through the preparation of manuals and guides that offer standardized criteria for the formulation of recommendations and the use of innovative tools during their deployments.”

-Francisco Guerrero
Secretary for Strengthening Democracy
Organization of American States

MANUAL FOR THE OBSERVATION OF DIRECT DEMOCRACY MECHANISMS

DONANTE 

In February 2021, DECO began a 15-month project to strengthen the OAS's capacity to observe direct democracy mechanisms through the development of a specific observation methodology for these types of exercises.

As part of this project, a Virtual Seminar of Experts on Direct Democracy was held on May 25 and 26, 2021. The participants reviewed and analyzed the work previously carried out by DECO, including a conceptual document and the recommendations of the OAS Missions that have observed direct democracy exercises. During the seminar, the central ideas and issues that should be addressed in the development of the methodology for the observation of direct democracy mechanisms were identified.

In addition, from September 22 to 27, 2021, officials from the Secretariat for the Strengthening of Democracy and the Department for Electoral Cooperation and Observation traveled to Switzerland, with the aim of analyzing the Swiss model of direct democracy and observing the voting and counting process of the referendum held on September 26. During this visit, the OAS officials held meetings and information sessions with federal, state and local authorities, political analysts and academics in order to gather information on key technical elements for the planning and implementation of direct democracy processes.

This project is financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

UPDATING OF THE MANUAL FOR OAS ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSIONS

DONANTE 

In compliance with resolution AG/doc.5729/21 of the OAS General Assembly, DECO began the process of updating the Manual for Electoral Observation Missions. The revision of the Manual seeks to include the new tools used in Missions, such as the EOM security protocol. This updated version will provide a key document to be used by the members of future Missions.

EXCHANGES

IN 2021, DECO PARTICIPATED IN THE FOLLOWING INTERNATIONAL EVENTS:

- On March 16, the Chief of the Electoral Observation Section, Brenda Santamaría, participated virtually in an event organized by the President of the National Democratic Institute (NDI), Madeleine Albright, to address lessons learned and opportunities for action on political violence against women. During the meeting, the DECO specialist, along with other different experts, discussed the growth of this phenomenon in electoral contexts.
- DECO was invited by the National Electoral Institute of Mexico (INE) to share its experiences for the preparation and development of elections in times of pandemic, based on the guide developed by the department on the matter. The Chief of the Technical Cooperation Section, Cristóbal Fernández, and the Specialist Ignacio Álvarez, participated in 3 sessions held on March 18, 23 and 26, where they spoke before more than 200 directors of the Local Public Electoral Bodies of Mexico and other areas of the INE.
- On April 19, the U.S. State Department invited DECO to make a presentation on “Civic participation in elections” to a group of participants from the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). The Chief of the Technical Cooperation Section, Cristóbal Fernández, spoke about the OAS programs on elections and its contribution to strengthening democracy.
- On August 16 and 17 the high-level meeting: "The impact of the pandemic and fake news in electoral processes" was held in Quito, Ecuador. The event was organized by the National Electoral Council of Ecuador in conjunction with UNESCO and the United Nations Development Program. DECO Specialist, Yerutí Méndez, participated as a panelist, where she shared the actions of the OAS to combat disinformation in electoral contexts.
- The 19th Brazilian Conference of International Law, organized by the CBDI, took place virtually from August 25 to 28. On August 27, the Director of DECO, Gerardo de Icaza, presented the topic: International Law of Democracy. This conference provided a dynamic space for an academic exchange of ideas and projects on the impact of humanization in the interpretation of Law.

- On August 27 and 28, DECO specialists Daniel Tovar and Alex Bravo participated in the workshop “Validation of the Findings and Recommendations on Electoral Organization – General Elections 2021,” which was organized by the National Electoral Council of Ecuador. The workshop included the participation of various international and national organizations that deployed Electoral Observation Missions for the 2021 general elections and presidential runoff in Ecuador. During the workshop, the recommendations issued in their electoral observation reports were analyzed, with the aim of improving the organization and development of future electoral processes in the country.
- On September 9, DECO specialist Gerardo Sánchez participated in the conference “Access to information and electoral processes (Chile, Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia)”, an event organized by the College of Law from the University of Arizona. The discussion centered on the impact of the pandemic on electoral processes and the electoral calendar in Latin America, in addition to its effects on institutional trust for future elections, especially in terms of transparency and access to information.
- On September 20, Cristóbal Fernández participated as a speaker in the “Youth Bootcamp: Ibero-America for Democracy” organized by the Ibero-American Youth Association. At the meeting, the Chief of the Technical Cooperation Section gave a presentation on the importance of electoral observation in the Americas.
- On September 23, the Chief of the Technical Cooperation Section, Cristóbal Fernández, gave a presentation as part of the series of conferences “International Learning for Colombian Democracy”, organized by the Colombian Electoral Observation Mission. The goal of the event was to discuss the lessons learned from the electoral processes held in the region during the pandemic.
- The Director of DECO, Gerardo de Icaza, participated in the II International Congress on Democracy and Electoral Processes: Current State of Democracy held on September 30. He gave a keynote address on the International Law of Democracy. The congress was organized by the Andean Area University Foundation, through its National Law School.
- On October 18, the Director of DECO, Gerardo de Icaza, was a panelist at the event “Democracy and Elections in Times of Pandemic” organized by the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). He presented the topic “How to do electoral observation in times of pandemic.”
- The consulting firm Strategia Electoral held a series of events to reflect on the elections in Latin America. The Director of DECO, Gerardo de Icaza, participated on October 25 with the presentation: The state of democracy in the region.

- On November 3, the Director of DECO, Gerardo de Icaza, participated in a panel organized for the launch of the Electoral Observation Manual and Code of Conduct, which was developed by Transparencia Electoral Brazil.
- As part of the course “Elections” of the Institute of Legal Research of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), the Director of DECO, Gerardo de Icaza, gave the keynote address: “The importance of observation and the legitimacy of elections,” on November 11.
- On November 12, the Director of DECO, Gerardo de Icaza, was a speaker for the Virtual Conference on the Consultative Opinion 28/21 on indefinite reelection, organized by the Mexican Bar Association.
- DECO participated in the Meeting of the Signatories of the Declaration of Principles for International Electoral Observation held on November 15 and 16 in Brussels, Belgium. The Director of DECO, Gerardo de Icaza, and the head of the electoral observation section, Brenda Santamaría, participated in the discussions about the challenges of democracy and electoral observation, the experiences of electoral observation in times of pandemic, as well as well as tools to improve the observation of electoral campaigns online.
- DECO Specialist Paula Lekanda participated on the 51st Meeting of the Group of Experts for the control of Money Laundering, held virtually from November 15 to 17. She spoke about the use of resources of illicit origin and how to combat it during electoral processes.
- On December 8, the Chief of the Electoral Observation Section, Brenda Santamaria, was a speaker at an event organized by the Department of Political Studies of FUSADES, as part of the VII Seminar on Electoral Studies. She addressed the topic: "Electoral observation as an instrument to monitor the integrity of the elections".
- On December 9, DECO Specialist Gerardo Sánchez participated in the event “Electoral Observation at a Distance. Hybrid observation experiences”, organized by the Mexico City Electoral Institute. The discussion aimed to reflect on the experiences and good practices of observation exercises that used a hybrid modality as a result of the pandemic.
- DECO Specialist Yerutí Méndez participated as a panelist in the Specialized International Virtual Course for Latin America “Direct Democracy and Citizen Participation” organized by the International Center for Electoral Training and Research (CICIE) of the National Electoral Institute of Mexico on December 9, 2021. In her presentation, the specialist presented good practices in direct democracy.

YEAR IN REVIEW 2021



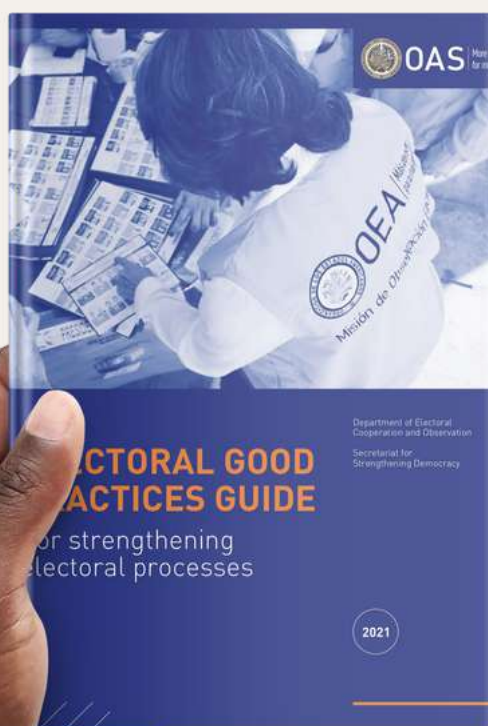
PUBLICATIONS

ELECTORAL GOOD PRACTICES GUIDE FOR STRENGTHENING ELECTORAL PROCESSES

In compliance with resolution number 2931 (XLIX-O/19) of the General Assembly, the Secretariat for Strengthening Democracy, through the Department for Electoral Cooperation, prepared the Electoral Good Practices Guide for Strengthening Electoral Processes.

This document is a substantive contribution of DECO, compiling for the first time, in a single text, the principles, rights, electoral procedures, and substance of the juridical development of the Inter-American system, such as: the decisions of the Inter-American Juridical Committee, the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights, and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, as well as the resolutions of the OAS General Assembly and the Permanent Council, and the recommendations of Electoral Observation Missions.

The Guide provides Member States with a reference tool that will allow them to access the best practices in electoral matters, thus fostering their improvement and modernization.



The Guide is available in the four official languages of the OAS. The English version can be consulted at the following link:

https://www.oas.org/documents/eng/press/FV_OEA_good_practices_eng_WEB.pdf





4

EXECUTION OF FUNDS



OEA

Misión de Observación

EXECUTION OF FUNDS DECO - 2021*

The amounts provided correspond to the funds executed during the period January 1 to December 31, 2021 for the EOMs and projects corresponding to the year 2021. This data is approximate, and amounts have not been audited.

Electoral Observation Missions	USD 2,867,333.30
Technical cooperation projects and follow-up on the recommendations of OAS/EOMs	USD 283,215.56
Professionalization of Electoral Observation	USD 65,740.27
TOTAL	USD 3,216,289.13

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



Bolivia



Japan



Brazil



Republic of Korea



Canada



Mexico



Chile



Netherlands



Dominican Republic



Peru



France



Spain



Ghana



Switzerland



Guatemala



Sweden



Italy



United States

¡Gracias! | Thank you! | Merci! | Obrigado!







OAS | More rights
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