

Democracy Index 2022

Frontline democracy and the battle for Ukraine



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Contents

List of tables and charts	2
Introduction	3
Democracy Index 2022 highlights	12
Why Ukraine matters	19
Democracy around the regions in 2022	30
Appendix	64
Bibliography	79

List of tables and charts

Table 1. Democracy Index 2022, by regime type

Chart: Democracy Index 2022, global map by regime type

Chart: Top 10 upgrades and downgrades

Table 2. Democracy Index 2022

Table 3. Democracy Index 2006-22

Chart: Two-thirds of the world's population live in countries that are neutral or Russia-leaning regarding the war in Ukraine

Table 4. Democracy across the regions

Table 5. Democracy Index 2006-22 by region

Table 6. North America 2022

Chart: US & Canada

Table 7. Western Europe 2022

Chart: Western Europe

Table 8. Latin America 2022

Chart: Latin America

Table 9. Asia and Australasia 2022

Chart: Asia and Australasia

Table 10. Eastern Europe 2022

Chart: Eastern Europe

Table 11. Sub-Saharan Africa 2022

Chart: Sub-Saharan Africa

Table 12. Middle East 2022

Chart: Middle East and North Africa

*Cover image: the Independence Monument in Maidan Square, Kyiv, commemorating Ukraine's independence in 1991.

Introduction

The Democracy Index, which began in 2006, provides a snapshot of the state of democracy worldwide in 165 independent states and two territories. This covers almost the entire population of the world and the vast majority of the world’s states (microstates are excluded). The Democracy Index is based on five categories: *electoral process and pluralism, functioning of government, political participation, political culture, and civil liberties*. Based on its scores on a range of indicators within these categories, each country is then classified as one of four types of regime: “full democracy”, “flawed democracy”, “hybrid regime” or “authoritarian regime”. A full methodology and explanations can be found in the Appendix.

This edition of the Democracy Index examines the state of global democracy in 2022. The global results are discussed in this introduction, and the results by region are analysed in greater detail in the section entitled “Democracy around the regions in 2022” (see page 30). According to the Economist Intelligence Unit’s measure of democracy, almost half of the world’s population live in a democracy of some sort (45.3%). Only 8% reside in a “full democracy”, compared with 8.9% in 2015, before the US was demoted from a “full democracy” to a “flawed democracy” in 2016. More than one-third of the world’s population live under authoritarian rule (36.9%), with a large share of them being in China and Russia.

Table 1
Democracy Index 2022, by regime type

	No. of countries	% of countries	% of world population
Full democracies	24	14.4	8.0
Flawed democracies	48	28.7	37.3
Hybrid regimes	36	21.6	17.9
Authoritarian regimes	59	35.3	36.9

Note. “World” population refers to the total population of the 167 countries and territories covered by the Index. Since this excludes only micro states, this is nearly equal to the entire estimated world population.

Source: EIU.

According to the 2022 Democracy Index, 72 of the 167 countries and territories covered by the model, or 43.1% of the total, can be considered to be democracies. The number of “full democracies” increased to 24 in 2022, up from 21 in 2021, as Chile, France and Spain re-joined the top-ranked countries (those scoring more than 8.00 out of 10). The number of “flawed democracies” fell by five to 48 in 2022. Of the remaining 95 countries in our index, 59 are “authoritarian regimes”, the same as in 2021, and 36 are classified as “hybrid regimes”, up from 34 the previous year. (For a full explanation of the index methodology and categories, see pp 66-68.)

From regression to stagnation: no post-lockdown revival

Overall the story is one of stagnation, with the global average score remaining essentially unchanged at 5.29 (on a 0-10 scale), compared with 5.28 in 2021. This is a dismal result given that in 2022 the world started to move on from the pandemic-related suppression of individual liberties that persisted

through 2020 and 2021. More countries managed to improve their score in 2022 than in 2021 (75 compared with 47), but more than half of the countries measured by the index (92) either stagnated or declined in terms of their average index score. With the exception of western Europe, which improved its average index score decisively, the scores for every other region of the world did not budge much, either upwards or downwards.

This picture of stagnation in the state of global democracy hides darker developments. Strikingly, the situation in two countries that are home to more than 20% of the world's population, China and Russia, took a decisive turn for the worse in 2022. Russia recorded the biggest decline in score of any country in the world in 2022. Its invasion of Ukraine was accompanied by all-out repression and censorship at home. Russia has been on a trajectory away from democracy for a long time and is now acquiring many of the features of a dictatorship. Meanwhile, until the end of 2022, China doubled down on its zero-covid policy, using the most draconian methods to stop the spread of the virus, locking up tens of millions of people for prolonged periods until protests erupted towards the end of the year. Fearing the spread of mass protests more than the spread of the disease, the Chinese authorities abandoned their zero-covid policy in December 2022. However, the state's repressive approach to all manifestations of dissent has not been jettisoned, resulting in a further decline in China's already low score in the Democracy Index in 2022.

Sovereignty, democracy and the battle for Ukraine

By far the biggest event of the year was Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, a flagrant violation of Ukrainian sovereignty that sent shockwaves around the world. Russia's actions have brought home to many the vital importance of defending national sovereignty, without which real freedom and democracy are unattainable. We examine the relationship between sovereignty and democracy in the context of Ukraine's fight for self-determination in a special essay in the second section of the report (see page 19). This suggests that Ukraine's defence of its national sovereignty is inseparable from the task of building a democratic nation state.

We also consider why many countries in the global south have not followed the US, UK, the EU and others in taking sides against Russia. Their reluctance to line up behind Western countries reflects, variously, frustration with the established international order; resentment of perceived Western hypocrisy in the context of past Western meddling and intervention in their affairs; and dependency on Russian minerals and other resources. The principle of national sovereignty is too important to be sacrificed on the altar of anti-Westernism, but the inconsistent application of the principle by Western powers has bred cynicism that is now making it more difficult for Western countries to attract support from the global south. Our special essay argues that national sovereignty is the bedrock of freedom, democracy and citizenship and is a principle that needs to be rehabilitated.

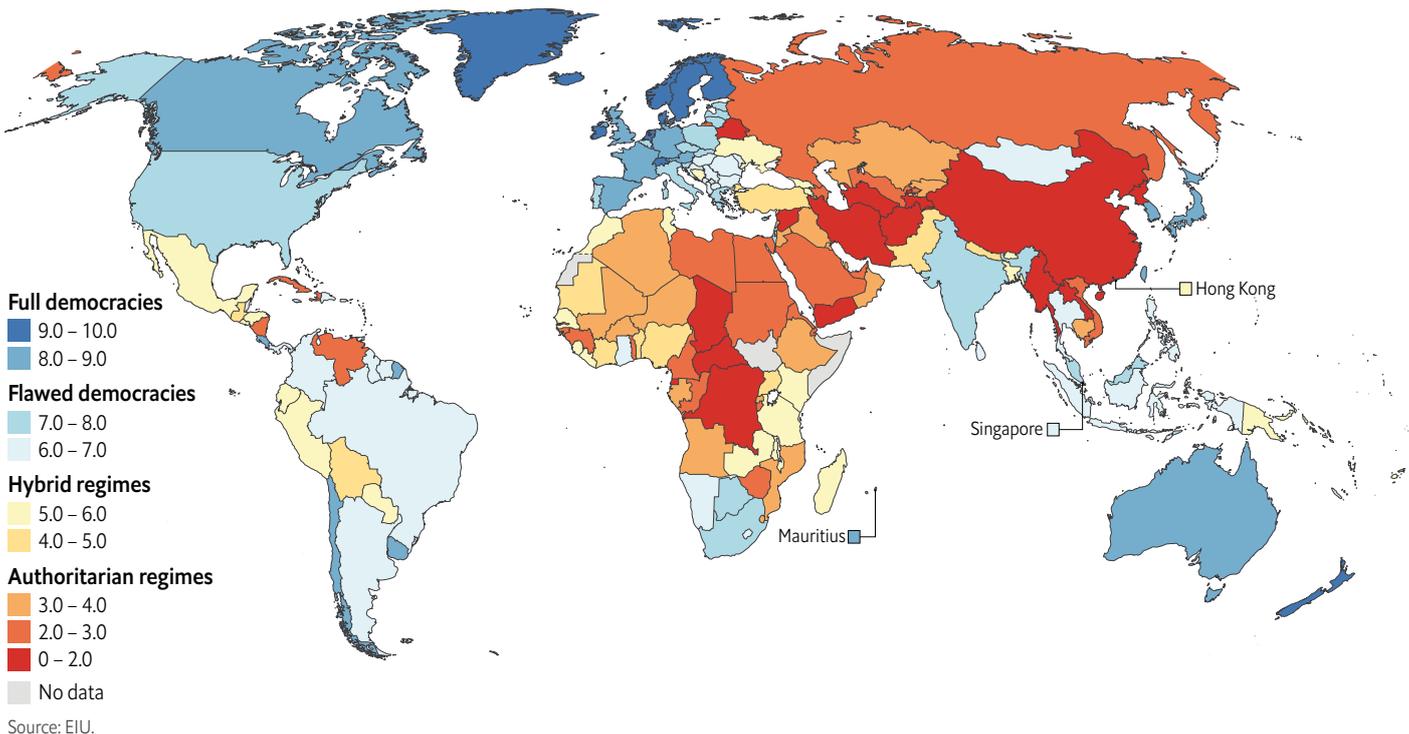
Democracy in the doldrums

From a global perspective the year 2022 was a disappointing one for democracy, given expectations that there might be a rebound in the overall index score as pandemic-related prohibitions were lifted over the course of the year. Instead, the average global score stagnated. At 5.29, it scarcely improved from the 5.28 recorded in 2021. This leaves the index score well below the pre-pandemic global average

of 5.44, and even further below the historical high of 5.55 recorded in 2014 and 2015 (and also in 2008, just before the global financial crisis).

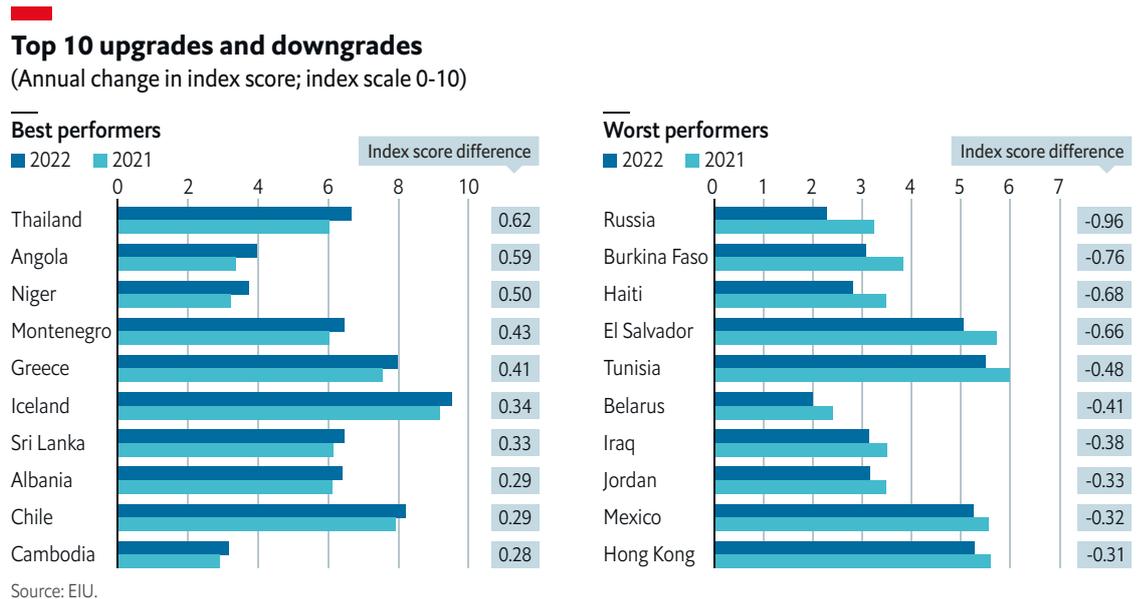
Governments around the world lifted many pandemic-related restrictions in 2022, resulting in improvements to several indicator scores across many countries, so it is striking that there was not a rebound in the index total score. The positive effect of the restoration of individual freedoms that had been temporarily curtailed by the covid-19 pandemic was cancelled out by other negative developments globally, as discussed in detail in the in-depth regional review at the back of the report. To illustrate the point, the chart on page 6 shows that the ten greatest country downgrades more than cancelled out the combined ten biggest upgrades. Overall, the positive and negative score changes globally cancelled each other out, resulting in an essentially unchanged global average score in 2022 compared with 2021. However, in the context of the rollback of pandemic-driven restrictions on individual rights in 2022, the stagnation in the global score is a disappointment.

Democracy Index 2022, global map by regime type



The view from the regions

The stagnation in the global score in 2022 is mirrored, as one would expect, in the regional results. The regional average score for Asia and Australasia in 2022 remains the same as in the previous year, at 5.46. The regional averages for North America (8.37), Sub-Saharan Africa (4.14) and eastern Europe (5.39) have scarcely changed either compared with 2021, when they were 8.36, 4.12 and 5.36 respectively. Only the Middle East and North Africa records a notable overall deterioration, with its average score falling



from 3.41 in 2021 to 3.34 in 2022, while Latin America and the Caribbean continues its recent decline, but at a slower pace than last year: its score falls from 5.83 in 2021 to 5.79 in 2022. Only western Europe records an emphatic improvement in its average score, which recovered from an all-time low of 8.22 in 2021 to reach 8.36 in 2022. This returns western Europe to where it was in 2019, prior to the pandemic, when it recorded a score of 8.35. However, the region, which is home to the majority of the world’s most developed democracies, continues to underperform compared with its peak score of 8.61 in 2008.

The good news is that the number of countries recording an improvement in their score (75) has risen compared with 2021, when only 47 managed to do so. However, the index scores for the other 92 countries have either stagnated (48) or declined (44) in 2022. This is a poor outcome given the scale of the upgrades to several indicators related to the restoration of individual freedoms after pandemic lockdowns and other measures were lifted in 2022. The results suggest that the rollback of these measures did not always mean a return to the status quo ante.

The biggest improvers and the worst downgrades

There were impressive democratic gains in some countries, but also some dramatic declines. Thailand recorded the biggest overall score improvement in 2022, increasing its total from 6.04 in 2021 to 6.67. Other big improvers were Angola and Niger, from a low base in the “authoritarian regime” category, and Montenegro and Greece, which are both classified as “flawed democracies”. Having improved its score by 0.41 points, Greece is now close to being reclassified as a “full democracy”.

Foremost among the countries that performed poorly in 2022 was Russia, which had the biggest deterioration in score of any country in the world. Russia’s score dropped by 0.96 points to 2.28 from 3.24 in 2021 and its global ranking fell from 124th (out of 167) to 146th, close to the bottom of the global rankings. Belarus, whose president Alyksandar Lukashenka is closely allied with his Russian counterpart, also suffered a sharp fall in its Democracy Index score. Other countries that registered a sharp decline in their index scores, also from a low base, included Burkina Faso in west Africa, where an Islamist insurgency has resulted in the state losing control of vast swathes of territory, the

displacement of about 1.7m people and the deaths of thousands. Haiti, the poorest country in the western hemisphere, appears to be in a state of internal dissolution, as the authorities have lost control completely. Several countries in Latin America, including El Salvador and Mexico, register big negative changes in their scores in 2022. In the Middle East and North Africa, the worst-performing region in terms of its absolute score and its year-on-year score change, Tunisia, Iraq and Jordan all register sharp declines in their scores.

In keeping with the overall theme of inertia and stagnation, there are only five changes of regime category in the 2022 Democracy Index, three positive and two negative. In terms of upgrades, Chile, France and Spain return to the “full democracy” category, mainly because of a reversal of pandemic measures that had infringed citizens’ freedoms in 2020-21. Two countries, Papua New Guinea and Peru, have been downgraded, both from a “flawed democracy” classification to that of a “hybrid regime”. As a consequence of these changes, the number of “full democracies” increases from 21 in 2021 to 24 in 2022, while the number of “flawed democracies” falls from 53 to 48 and the number of “hybrid regimes” increases from 34 to 36. The number of “authoritarian regimes” remains the same, at 59.

Table 2
Democracy Index 2022

	Overall score	Rank	Change in rank from previous year	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties
Full democracy								
Norway	9.81	1	0	10.00	9.64	10.00	10.00	9.41
New Zealand	9.61	2	0	10.00	9.29	10.00	8.75	10.00
Iceland	9.52	3	2	10.00	9.64	8.89	9.38	9.71
Sweden	9.39	4	0	9.58	9.64	8.33	10.00	9.41
Finland	9.29	5	-2	10.00	9.64	8.33	8.75	9.71
Denmark	9.28	6	0	10.00	9.29	8.33	9.38	9.41
Switzerland	9.14	7	2	9.58	9.29	8.33	9.38	9.12
Ireland	9.13	8	-1	10.00	8.21	8.33	10.00	9.12
Netherlands	9.00	9	2	9.58	8.93	8.33	8.75	9.41
Taiwan	8.99	10	-2	10.00	9.64	7.78	8.13	9.41
Uruguay	8.91	11	2	10.00	8.93	7.78	8.13	9.71
Canada	8.88	12	0	10.00	8.57	8.89	8.13	8.82
Luxembourg	8.81	13	1	10.00	8.93	6.67	8.75	9.71
Germany	8.80	14	1	9.58	8.57	8.33	8.13	9.41
Australia	8.71	15	-6	10.00	8.57	7.78	7.50	9.71
Japan	8.33	16	1	9.17	8.57	6.67	8.13	9.12
Costa Rica	8.29	17	3	9.58	7.50	7.78	6.88	9.71
United Kingdom	8.28	18	0	9.58	7.50	8.33	6.88	9.12
Chile	8.22	19	6	9.58	8.21	6.67	7.50	9.12
Austria	8.20	20	0	9.58	7.14	8.89	6.88	8.53
Mauritius	8.14	21	-2	9.17	7.86	6.11	8.75	8.82
France	8.07	22=	0	9.58	7.86	7.78	6.88	8.24

DEMOCRACY INDEX 2022

FRONTLINE DEMOCRACY AND THE BATTLE FOR UKRAINE

Table 2
Democracy Index 2022

	Overall score	Rank	Change in rank from previous year	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties
Spain	8.07	22=	2	9.58	7.50	7.22	7.50	8.53
South Korea	8.03	24	-8	9.58	8.57	7.22	6.25	8.53
Flawed democracy								
Czech Republic	7.97	25=	4	9.58	6.43	7.22	7.50	9.12
Greece	7.97	25=	9	10.00	7.14	6.67	7.50	8.53
Estonia	7.96	27	0	9.58	7.86	6.67	6.88	8.82
Portugal	7.95	28	0	9.58	7.50	6.67	6.88	9.12
Israel	7.93	29	-6	9.58	7.86	9.44	6.88	5.88
United States of America	7.85	30	-4	9.17	6.43	8.89	6.25	8.53
Slovenia	7.75	31	4	9.58	7.14	7.22	6.25	8.53
Botswana	7.73	32	-2	9.17	6.79	6.67	7.50	8.53
Malta	7.70	33	0	9.17	7.14	5.56	8.13	8.53
Italy	7.69	34	-3	9.58	6.79	7.22	7.50	7.35
Cabo Verde	7.65	35	-3	9.17	7.00	6.67	6.88	8.53
Belgium	7.64	36	0	9.58	8.21	5.00	6.88	8.53
Cyprus	7.38	37	0	9.17	5.36	6.67	6.88	8.82
Latvia	7.37	38	0	9.58	6.07	6.11	6.25	8.82
Lithuania	7.31	39	1	9.58	6.43	6.11	5.63	8.82
Malaysia	7.30	40	-1	9.58	7.86	7.22	6.25	5.59
Trinidad and Tobago	7.16	41	0	9.58	7.14	6.11	5.63	7.35
Jamaica	7.13	42	0	8.75	7.14	5.00	6.25	8.53
Slovakia	7.07	43	2	9.58	6.07	5.56	5.63	8.53
Timor-Leste	7.06	44	-1	9.58	5.93	5.56	6.88	7.35
South Africa	7.05	45	-1	7.42	7.14	8.33	5.00	7.35
India	7.04	46=	0	8.67	7.50	7.22	5.63	6.18
Poland	7.04	46=	5	9.17	6.07	6.67	6.25	7.06
Suriname	6.95	48	1	9.58	6.43	6.11	5.00	7.65
Panama	6.91	49	-1	9.58	6.07	7.22	3.75	7.94
Argentina	6.85	50	0	9.17	5.00	7.78	4.38	7.94
Brazil	6.78	51	-4	9.58	5.00	6.67	5.00	7.65
Philippines	6.73	52	2	9.17	5.00	7.78	4.38	7.35
Colombia	6.72	53	6	9.17	6.07	6.67	3.75	7.94
Indonesia	6.71	54	-2	7.92	7.86	7.22	4.38	6.18
Thailand	6.67	55	17	7.42	6.07	8.33	5.63	5.88
Hungary	6.64	56	0	8.33	6.79	4.44	6.88	6.76
Bulgaria	6.53	57	-4	9.17	5.36	6.11	4.38	7.65
Namibia	6.52	58	-3	7.00	5.36	6.67	5.63	7.94
Croatia	6.50	59	-3	9.17	6.07	6.11	4.38	6.76

DEMOCRACY INDEX 2022

FRONTLINE DEMOCRACY AND THE BATTLE FOR UKRAINE

Table 2
Democracy Index 2022

	Overall score	Rank	Change in rank from previous year	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties
Sri Lanka	6.47	60	7	7.00	5.71	7.22	6.25	6.18
Montenegro	6.45	61=	13	7.42	6.79	7.22	3.75	7.06
Romania	6.45	61=	0	9.17	6.43	5.56	3.75	7.35
Ghana	6.43	63	-7	8.33	5.00	6.67	6.25	5.88
Albania	6.41	64	4	7.00	6.43	5.00	6.25	7.35
Dominican Republic	6.39	65	-5	9.17	5.36	7.22	3.13	7.06
Mongolia	6.35	66	-4	8.75	5.36	6.11	5.63	5.88
Guyana	6.34	67	-2	6.92	6.07	6.67	5.00	7.06
Serbia	6.33	68	-5	7.83	6.07	6.67	3.75	7.35
Moldova	6.23	69	0	7.42	5.36	7.22	4.38	6.76
Singapore	6.22	70	-4	4.83	7.86	4.44	7.50	6.47
Lesotho	6.19	71	-7	9.17	4.14	5.56	5.63	6.47
North Macedonia	6.10	72	1	7.83	6.07	6.11	3.13	7.35
Hybrid regime								
Bangladesh	5.99	73	2	7.42	6.07	5.56	5.63	5.29
Papua New Guinea	5.97	74	-5	6.92	6.07	3.89	5.63	7.35
Peru	5.92	75	-4	8.75	5.71	5.56	3.13	6.47
Malawi	5.91	76	2	7.00	4.29	5.56	6.25	6.47
Paraguay	5.89	77	0	8.75	5.36	6.11	1.88	7.35
Zambia	5.80	78	1	7.92	3.64	5.00	6.88	5.59
Senegal	5.72	79	9	6.58	5.71	4.44	6.25	5.59
Madagascar	5.70	80	3	7.92	3.57	6.67	5.63	4.71
Ecuador	5.69	81	0	8.75	5.00	6.67	1.88	6.18
Armenia	5.63	82	7	7.92	5.71	6.11	3.13	5.29
Fiji	5.55	83	1	6.58	5.00	5.56	5.63	5.00
Bhutan	5.54	84	-3	8.75	5.93	3.33	5.00	4.71
Tunisia	5.51	85	-10	6.17	4.64	6.11	5.63	5.00
Liberia	5.43	86	4	7.42	2.71	6.11	5.63	5.29
Ukraine	5.42	87	-1	6.50	2.71	7.22	6.25	4.41
Hong Kong	5.28	88	-3	2.75	3.29	5.56	6.88	7.94
Mexico	5.25	89	-3	6.92	4.64	7.22	1.88	5.59
Georgia	5.20	90	1	7.00	3.57	6.11	3.75	5.59
Honduras	5.15	91	1	8.75	3.93	5.00	2.50	5.59
Tanzania	5.10	92	0	4.83	5.00	5.00	6.25	4.41
El Salvador	5.06	93	-14	8.33	3.57	5.56	3.13	4.71
Kenya	5.05	94	0	3.50	5.36	6.67	5.63	4.12
Morocco	5.04	95	0	5.25	4.64	5.56	5.63	4.12

DEMOCRACY INDEX 2022

FRONTLINE DEMOCRACY AND THE BATTLE FOR UKRAINE

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Sierra Leone	5.03	96	1	6.58	2.86	4.44	6.25	5.00
Bosnia and Hercegovina	5.00	97	-2	7.00	4.00	5.00	3.13	5.88
Guatemala	4.68	98	1	6.92	3.93	3.89	2.50	6.18
Uganda	4.55	99	1	3.42	3.57	3.89	6.88	5.00
Bolivia	4.51	100	-2	4.75	4.29	6.67	1.25	5.59
Nepal	4.49	101	0	4.83	5.36	4.44	2.50	5.29
Gambia	4.47	102	-1	4.42	4.29	3.89	5.63	4.12
Turkey	4.35	103	0	3.50	5.00	5.56	5.63	2.06
Benin	4.28	104	2	1.67	5.71	3.33	6.25	4.41
Nigeria	4.23	105	2	5.17	3.93	3.89	3.75	4.41
Côte d'Ivoire	4.22	106	-1	4.33	2.86	4.44	5.63	3.82
Pakistan	4.13	107	-3	5.67	5.00	2.78	2.50	4.71
Mauritania	4.03	108	0	3.50	3.57	5.56	3.13	4.41
Authoritarian								
Angola	3.96	109	13	4.50	3.21	4.44	5.00	2.65
Palestine	3.86	110	-1	2.92	0.14	8.33	4.38	3.53
Kuwait	3.83	111	-1	3.17	3.93	4.44	4.38	3.24
Niger	3.73	112	13	2.92	1.50	3.89	5.63	4.71
Algeria	3.66	113	0	3.08	2.50	3.89	5.00	3.82
Qatar	3.65	114	0	1.50	4.29	3.33	5.63	3.53
Lebanon	3.64	115	-4	3.50	0.79	6.67	3.13	4.12
Kyrgyz Republic	3.62	116	-1	4.33	1.50	4.44	3.13	4.71
Mozambique	3.51	117	-1	2.58	1.43	5.00	5.00	3.53
Gabon	3.40	118	3	2.17	1.86	4.44	5.00	3.53
Mali	3.23	119	0	1.17	0.00	5.56	5.63	3.82
Comoros	3.20	120	6	2.08	2.21	4.44	3.75	3.53
Cambodia	3.18	121	13	0.00	3.21	5.00	5.63	2.06
Ethiopia	3.17	122=	1	0.42	2.86	6.11	5.00	1.47
Jordan	3.17	122=	-4	2.67	3.21	3.89	3.13	2.94
Iraq	3.13	124	-8	5.25	0.00	6.11	3.13	1.18
Oman	3.12	125	5	0.08	3.93	2.78	5.00	3.82
Rwanda	3.10	126	1	1.42	4.29	2.78	4.38	2.65
Burkina Faso	3.08	127=	-16	0.00	2.50	5.00	4.38	3.53
Kazakhstan	3.08	127=	1	0.50	3.21	5.00	3.75	2.94
Eswatini	3.01	129	-1	0.92	2.50	2.78	5.63	3.24
Togo	2.99	130	6	0.92	2.14	3.33	5.63	2.94
Egypt	2.93	131	1	1.33	3.21	3.33	5.00	1.76
Zimbabwe	2.92	132	1	0.00	2.50	3.89	5.00	3.24

DEMOCRACY INDEX 2022

FRONTLINE DEMOCRACY AND THE BATTLE FOR UKRAINE

Table 2
Democracy Index 2022

	Overall score	Rank	Change in rank from previous year	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties
United Arab Emirates	2.90	133	1	0.00	4.29	2.22	5.63	2.35
Azerbaijan	2.87	134	7	0.50	2.86	3.33	5.00	2.65
Haiti	2.81	135	-16	0.00	0.00	2.78	6.25	5.00
Congo (Brazzaville)	2.79	136	1	0.00	2.50	4.44	3.75	3.24
Djibouti	2.74	137	2	0.00	1.29	4.44	5.63	2.35
Vietnam	2.73	138	-7	0.00	3.93	3.33	3.75	2.65
Cuba	2.65	139	3	0.00	3.21	3.33	3.75	2.94
Cameroon	2.56	140=	3	0.33	2.14	3.89	4.38	2.06
Guinea-Bissau	2.56	140=	-2	4.00	0.00	3.33	3.13	2.35
Bahrain	2.52	142	2	0.42	2.71	3.33	4.38	1.76
Nicaragua	2.50	143	-3	0.00	2.14	3.33	4.38	2.65
Sudan	2.47	144	1	0.00	1.43	4.44	5.00	1.47
Guinea	2.32	145	2	0.83	0.43	3.33	4.38	2.65
Russia	2.28	146	-22	0.92	2.14	2.22	3.75	2.35
Venezuela	2.23	147	4	0.00	1.07	5.56	1.88	2.65
Burundi	2.13	148	1	0.00	0.00	3.89	5.00	1.76
Uzbekistan	2.12	149	1	0.08	1.86	2.78	5.00	0.88
Saudi Arabia	2.08	150	2	0.00	3.57	2.22	3.13	1.47
Libya	2.06	151	3	0.00	0.00	3.89	3.75	2.65
Eritrea	2.03	152	1	0.00	2.14	0.56	6.88	0.59
Belarus	1.99	153	-7	0.00	0.79	3.33	4.38	1.47
Iran	1.96	154	0	0.00	2.50	3.33	2.50	1.47
Yemen	1.95	155	-1	0.00	0.00	3.89	5.00	0.88
China	1.94	156=	-8	0.00	3.21	2.78	3.13	0.59
Tajikistan	1.94	156=	1	0.00	2.21	2.22	4.38	0.88
Equatorial Guinea	1.92	158	0	0.00	0.43	3.33	4.38	1.47
Laos	1.77	159	0	0.00	2.86	1.67	3.75	0.59
Chad	1.67	160	0	0.00	0.00	2.22	3.75	2.35
Turkmenistan	1.66	161	0	0.00	0.79	2.22	5.00	0.29
Democratic Republic of Congo	1.48	162	2	1.17	0.00	2.22	3.13	0.88
Syria	1.43	163	-1	0.00	0.00	2.78	4.38	0.00
Central African Republic	1.35	164	-2	0.83	0.00	1.67	1.88	2.35
North Korea	1.08	165	0	0.00	2.50	1.67	1.25	0.00
Myanmar	0.74	166	0	0.00	0.00	0.56	3.13	0.00
Afghanistan	0.32	167	0	0.00	0.07	0.00	1.25	0.29

Source: EIU.

Democracy Index 2022 Highlights

Ukraine's example for democracy

A focus of this year's Democracy Index report is Russia's war in Ukraine and its importance for the future of democracy in Europe and globally. The commitment of the Ukrainian people to fight for the right to decide their own future is inspiring. It shows the power of democratic ideas and principles to bind together a nation and its people in the pursuit of democracy. If it was not immediately possible to identify a coherent Ukrainian national identity at the time of the Maidan protests in 2014, when the country was still divided between west and east, in 2022 Ukraine's fightback against Russian domination has strengthened national sentiment and demonstrated the incontrovertibility of Ukrainian nationhood. We consider the links between national sovereignty and democracy in our special essay in section two of the report.

Russia: the biggest loser in 2022

If Ukraine's fight to defend its borders is a demonstration of democracy in action, Russia's violation of Ukraine's sovereignty is the product of an imperial mindset (an "empire state of mind"). Vladimir Putin's dream of restoring Russia's position as an imperial power is foundering. After more than ten months of fighting in Ukraine, it was clear by the end of 2022 that Russia was not only losing on the battlefield, but also struggling to win the propaganda war at home and abroad. Its bungled military campaign was provoking criticism from diehard nationalists, while the high death toll and the regime's clumsy mobilisation were bringing the war home to ordinary Russians and unsettling them. A corollary of the war has been a pronounced increase in state repression against all forms of dissent and a further personalisation of power, pushing Russia towards outright dictatorship. Russia recorded the biggest annual fall in its index score of any country in the world in 2022 and dropped further down the global rankings.

Room at the top: the Nordics and Europe dominate

The Nordics (Norway, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Denmark) dominate the top tier of the Democracy Index rankings, taking five of the top six spots, with New Zealand claiming second place. Norway remains the top-ranked country in the Democracy Index, thanks to its high scores across all five categories of the index, especially *electoral process and pluralism*, *political culture*, and *political participation*. Countries in western Europe account for eight of the top ten places in the global democracy rankings and more than half (14) of the 24 nations classified as "full democracies". Western Europe was also the best-performing region in 2022 in terms of the increase in its index score, which rebounded to pre-pandemic levels after the lifting of coronavirus-related restrictions.

The best and the worst of 2022: upgrades, downgrades and regime changes

Unsurprisingly in a year characterised by inertia in the Democracy Index global score, there are few changes in regime classification in 2022—five, compared with 13 in 2021. Chile, France and Spain move up to the "full democracy" category, while Papua New Guinea and Peru have been downgraded from "flawed democracies" to "hybrid regimes". These countries are not the best and worst performers in

terms of their score changes, however. Thailand tops the world for the biggest score increase (+0.62), as the space for the political opposition opened up and the insurgency threat to the country receded. At the opposite end of the spectrum, close behind Russia (-0.96) in terms of score regressions, are Burkina Faso (-0.76), Haiti (-0.68) and El Salvador (-0.66). The African country experienced a coup at the start of the year as the democratically-elected president was overthrown as a result of growing dissatisfaction with the regime's inability to contain an Islamist insurgency, and nine months later the coup leader was himself overthrown in another coup, for similar reasons. Meanwhile, Haiti descended into chaos in 2022. The government's authority ebbed away as it ceded ground to armed gangs, many linked to drug-trafficking networks. The prime minister's plea for foreign intervention to re-establish order symbolised the loss of state control over the country. A failure to call elections led to significant score downgrades. In El Salvador, democratic backsliding under the president, Nayib Bukele, has led to a big downgrade in the country's index score. The president undermined checks and balances, flouted constitutional limits by saying he will run for consecutive re-election, and introduced a State of Emergency that curbed civil liberties and criminal measures that threaten media freedoms.

Drug traffickers, insurgents, warlords, cyber hackers and other threats to sovereignty and democracy

Threats to national sovereignty come not only from invading armies such as Russia's, but also from non-state actors such as drug-trafficking groups, private armies, Islamist and other insurgencies, and hackers committing cyber-attacks. Powerful drug cartels in Latin America and the Caribbean challenge state control over territory and are corrosive of national institutions, as well as threatening the security of ordinary citizens. This problem has exacerbated already high levels of corruption in the region and is eroding democratic norms in many countries. In many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, especially the Sahel and west Africa, the writ of the state no longer runs across the country as militant Islamist groups establish control over territory and terrorise the inhabitants. This power vacuum has sometimes resulted in outside powers, often former colonial powers, providing military and other assistance to governments. It has also resulted in private armies, whether indigenous or external such as the Russian Wagner Group, becoming involved in the country's internal affairs. Another increasing threat to state sovereignty and control is the proliferation of cyberattacks, either by private criminal enterprises or individuals or by hostile state actors. There were many examples of all these forms of subversion in 2022.

DEMOCRACY INDEX 2022

FRONTLINE DEMOCRACY AND THE BATTLE FOR UKRAINE

Table 3
Democracy Index 2006-22

	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2008	2006
Canada	8.88	8.87	9.24	9.22	9.15	9.15	9.15	9.08	9.08	9.08	9.08	9.08	9.08	9.07	9.07
US	7.85	7.85	7.92	7.96	7.96	7.98	7.98	8.05	8.11	8.11	8.11	8.11	8.18	8.22	8.22
average	8.37	8.36	8.58	8.59	8.56	8.56	8.56	8.56	8.59	8.59	8.59	8.59	8.63	8.64	8.64
Austria	8.20	8.07	8.16	8.29	8.29	8.42	8.41	8.54	8.54	8.48	8.62	8.49	8.49	8.49	8.69
Belgium	7.64	7.51	7.51	7.64	7.78	7.78	7.77	7.93	7.93	8.05	8.05	8.05	8.05	8.16	8.15
Cyprus	7.38	7.43	7.56	7.59	7.59	7.59	7.65	7.53	7.40	7.29	7.29	7.29	7.29	7.70	7.60
Denmark	9.28	9.09	9.15	9.22	9.22	9.22	9.20	9.11	9.11	9.38	9.52	9.52	9.52	9.52	9.52
Finland	9.29	9.27	9.20	9.25	9.14	9.03	9.03	9.03	9.03	9.03	9.06	9.06	9.19	9.25	9.25
France	8.07	7.99	7.99	8.12	7.80	7.80	7.92	7.92	8.04	7.92	7.88	7.77	7.77	8.07	8.07
Germany	8.80	8.67	8.67	8.68	8.68	8.61	8.63	8.64	8.64	8.31	8.34	8.34	8.38	8.82	8.82
Greece	7.97	7.56	7.39	7.43	7.29	7.29	7.23	7.45	7.45	7.65	7.65	7.65	7.92	8.13	8.13
Iceland	9.52	9.18	9.37	9.58	9.58	9.58	9.50	9.58	9.58	9.65	9.65	9.65	9.65	9.65	9.71
Ireland	9.13	9.00	9.05	9.24	9.15	9.15	9.15	8.85	8.72	8.68	8.56	8.56	8.79	9.01	9.01
Italy	7.69	7.68	7.74	7.52	7.71	7.98	7.98	7.98	7.85	7.85	7.74	7.74	7.83	7.98	7.73
Luxembourg	8.81	8.68	8.68	8.81	8.81	8.81	8.81	8.88	8.88	8.88	8.88	8.88	8.88	9.10	9.10
Malta	7.70	7.57	7.68	7.95	8.21	8.15	8.39	8.39	8.39	8.28	8.28	8.28	8.28	8.39	8.39
Netherlands	9.00	8.88	8.96	9.01	8.89	8.89	8.80	8.92	8.92	8.84	8.99	8.99	8.99	9.53	9.66
Norway	9.81	9.75	9.81	9.87	9.87	9.87	9.93	9.93	9.93	9.93	9.93	9.80	9.80	9.68	9.55
Portugal	7.95	7.82	7.90	8.03	7.84	7.84	7.86	7.79	7.79	7.65	7.92	7.81	8.02	8.05	8.16
Spain	8.07	7.94	8.12	8.18	8.08	8.08	8.30	8.30	8.05	8.02	8.02	8.02	8.16	8.45	8.34
Sweden	9.39	9.26	9.26	9.39	9.39	9.39	9.39	9.45	9.73	9.73	9.73	9.50	9.50	9.88	9.88
Switzerland	9.14	8.90	8.83	9.03	9.03	9.03	9.09	9.09	9.09	9.09	9.09	9.09	9.09	9.15	9.02
Turkey	4.35	4.35	4.48	4.09	4.37	4.88	5.04	5.12	5.12	5.63	5.76	5.73	5.73	5.69	5.70
UK	8.28	8.10	8.54	8.52	8.53	8.53	8.36	8.31	8.31	8.31	8.21	8.16	8.16	8.15	8.08
average	8.36	8.22	8.29	8.35	8.35	8.38	8.40	8.42	8.41	8.41	8.44	8.40	8.45	8.61	8.60
Albania	6.41	6.11	6.08	5.89	5.98	5.98	5.91	5.91	5.67	5.67	5.67	5.81	5.86	5.91	5.91
Armenia	5.63	5.49	5.35	5.54	4.79	4.11	3.88	4.00	4.13	4.02	4.09	4.09	4.09	4.09	4.15
Azerbaijan	2.87	2.68	2.68	2.75	2.65	2.65	2.65	2.71	2.83	3.06	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.19	3.31
Belarus	1.99	2.41	2.59	2.48	3.13	3.13	3.54	3.62	3.69	3.04	3.04	3.16	3.34	3.34	3.34
Bosnia and Hercegovina	5.00	5.04	4.84	4.86	4.98	4.87	4.87	4.83	4.78	5.02	5.11	5.24	5.32	5.70	5.78
Bulgaria	6.53	6.64	6.71	7.03	7.03	7.03	7.01	7.14	6.73	6.83	6.72	6.78	6.84	7.02	7.10
Croatia	6.50	6.50	6.50	6.57	6.57	6.63	6.75	6.93	6.93	6.93	6.93	6.73	6.81	7.04	7.04
Czech Republic	7.97	7.74	7.67	7.69	7.69	7.62	7.82	7.94	7.94	8.06	8.19	8.19	8.19	8.19	8.17
Estonia	7.96	7.84	7.84	7.90	7.97	7.79	7.85	7.85	7.74	7.61	7.61	7.61	7.68	7.68	7.74
Georgia	5.20	5.12	5.31	5.42	5.50	5.93	5.93	5.88	5.82	5.95	5.53	4.74	4.59	4.62	4.90
Hungary	6.64	6.50	6.56	6.63	6.63	6.64	6.72	6.84	6.90	6.96	6.96	7.04	7.21	7.44	7.53
Kazakhstan	3.08	3.08	3.14	2.94	2.94	3.06	3.06	3.06	3.17	3.06	2.95	3.24	3.30	3.45	3.62

DEMOCRACY INDEX 2022

FRONTLINE DEMOCRACY AND THE BATTLE FOR UKRAINE

Table 3
Democracy Index 2006-22

	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2008	2006
Kyrgyz Republic	3.62	3.62	4.21	4.89	5.11	5.11	4.93	5.33	5.24	4.69	4.69	4.34	4.31	4.05	4.08
Latvia	7.37	7.31	7.24	7.49	7.38	7.25	7.31	7.37	7.48	7.05	7.05	7.05	7.05	7.23	7.37
Lithuania	7.31	7.18	7.13	7.50	7.50	7.41	7.47	7.54	7.54	7.54	7.24	7.24	7.24	7.36	7.43
Moldova	6.23	6.10	5.78	5.75	5.85	5.94	6.01	6.35	6.32	6.32	6.32	6.32	6.33	6.50	6.50
Montenegro	6.45	6.02	5.77	5.65	5.74	5.69	5.72	6.01	5.94	5.94	6.05	6.15	6.27	6.43	6.57
North Macedonia	6.10	6.03	5.89	5.97	5.87	5.57	5.23	6.02	6.25	6.16	6.16	6.16	6.16	6.21	6.33
Poland	7.04	6.80	6.85	6.62	6.67	6.67	6.83	7.09	7.47	7.12	7.12	7.12	7.05	7.30	7.30
Romania	6.45	6.43	6.40	6.49	6.38	6.44	6.62	6.68	6.68	6.54	6.54	6.54	6.60	7.06	7.06
Russia	2.28	3.24	3.31	3.11	2.94	3.17	3.24	3.31	3.39	3.59	3.74	3.92	4.26	4.48	5.02
Serbia	6.33	6.36	6.22	6.41	6.41	6.41	6.57	6.71	6.71	6.67	6.33	6.33	6.33	6.49	6.62
Slovakia	7.07	7.03	6.97	7.17	7.10	7.16	7.29	7.29	7.35	7.35	7.35	7.35	7.35	7.33	7.40
Slovenia	7.75	7.54	7.54	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.51	7.57	7.57	7.88	7.88	7.76	7.69	7.96	7.96
Tajikistan	1.94	1.94	1.94	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.89	1.95	2.37	2.51	2.51	2.51	2.51	2.45	2.45
Turkmenistan	1.66	1.66	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.83	1.83	1.83	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.83
Ukraine	5.42	5.57	5.81	5.90	5.69	5.69	5.70	5.70	5.42	5.84	5.91	5.94	6.30	6.94	6.94
Uzbekistan	2.12	2.12	2.12	2.01	2.01	1.95	1.95	1.95	2.45	1.72	1.72	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.85
average	5.39	5.36	5.36	5.42	5.42	5.40	5.43	5.55	5.58	5.53	5.51	5.50	5.55	5.67	5.76
Argentina	6.85	6.81	6.95	7.02	7.02	6.96	6.96	7.02	6.84	6.84	6.84	6.84	6.84	6.63	6.63
Bolivia	4.51	4.65	5.08	4.84	5.70	5.49	5.63	5.75	5.79	5.79	5.84	5.84	5.92	6.15	5.98
Brazil	6.78	6.86	6.92	6.86	6.97	6.86	6.90	6.96	7.38	7.12	7.12	7.12	7.12	7.38	7.38
Chile	8.22	7.92	8.28	8.08	7.97	7.84	7.78	7.84	7.80	7.80	7.54	7.54	7.67	7.89	7.89
Colombia	6.72	6.48	7.04	7.13	6.96	6.67	6.67	6.62	6.55	6.55	6.63	6.63	6.55	6.54	6.40
Costa Rica	8.29	8.07	8.16	8.13	8.07	7.88	7.88	7.96	8.03	8.03	8.10	8.10	8.04	8.04	8.04
Cuba	2.65	2.59	2.84	2.84	3.00	3.31	3.46	3.52	3.52	3.52	3.52	3.52	3.52	3.52	3.52
Dominican Republic	6.39	6.45	6.32	6.54	6.54	6.66	6.67	6.67	6.67	6.74	6.49	6.20	6.20	6.20	6.13
Ecuador	5.69	5.71	6.13	6.33	6.27	6.02	5.81	5.87	5.87	5.87	5.78	5.72	5.77	5.64	5.64
El Salvador	5.06	5.72	5.90	6.15	5.96	6.43	6.64	6.64	6.53	6.53	6.47	6.47	6.47	6.40	6.22
Guatemala	4.68	4.62	4.97	5.26	5.60	5.86	5.92	5.92	5.81	5.81	5.88	5.88	6.05	6.07	6.07
Guyana	6.34	6.25	6.01	6.15	6.67	6.46	6.25	6.05	5.91	6.05	6.05	6.05	6.05	6.12	6.15
Haiti	2.81	3.48	4.22	4.57	4.91	4.03	4.02	3.94	3.82	3.94	3.96	4.00	4.00	4.19	4.19
Honduras	5.15	5.10	5.36	5.42	5.63	5.72	5.92	5.84	5.84	5.84	5.84	5.84	5.76	6.18	6.25
Jamaica	7.13	7.13	7.13	6.96	7.02	7.29	7.39	7.39	7.39	7.39	7.39	7.13	7.21	7.21	7.34
Mexico	5.25	5.57	6.07	6.09	6.19	6.41	6.47	6.55	6.68	6.91	6.90	6.93	6.93	6.78	6.67
Nicaragua	2.50	2.69	3.60	3.55	3.63	4.66	4.81	5.26	5.32	5.46	5.56	5.56	5.73	6.07	5.68
Panama	6.91	6.85	7.18	7.05	7.05	7.08	7.13	7.19	7.08	7.08	7.08	7.08	7.15	7.35	7.35
Paraguay	5.89	5.86	6.18	6.24	6.24	6.31	6.27	6.33	6.26	6.26	6.26	6.40	6.40	6.40	6.16
Peru	5.92	6.09	6.53	6.60	6.60	6.49	6.65	6.58	6.54	6.54	6.47	6.59	6.40	6.31	6.11
Suriname	6.95	6.82	6.82	6.98	6.98	6.76	6.77	6.77	6.77	6.77	6.65	6.65	6.65	6.58	6.52

DEMOCRACY INDEX 2022

FRONTLINE DEMOCRACY AND THE BATTLE FOR UKRAINE

Table 3
Democracy Index 2006-22

	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2008	2006
Trinidad and Tobago	7.16	7.16	7.16	7.16	7.16	7.04	7.10	7.10	6.99	6.99	6.99	7.16	7.16	7.21	7.18
Uruguay	8.91	8.85	8.61	8.38	8.38	8.12	8.17	8.17	8.17	8.17	8.17	8.17	8.10	8.08	7.96
Venezuela	2.23	2.11	2.76	2.88	3.16	3.87	4.68	5.00	5.07	5.07	5.15	5.08	5.18	5.34	5.42
average	5.79	5.83	6.09	6.13	6.24	6.26	6.33	6.37	6.36	6.38	6.36	6.35	6.37	6.43	6.37
Afghanistan	0.32	0.32	2.85	2.85	2.97	2.55	2.55	2.77	2.77	2.48	2.48	2.48	2.48	3.02	3.06
Australia	8.71	8.90	8.96	9.09	9.09	9.09	9.01	9.01	9.01	9.13	9.22	9.22	9.22	9.09	9.09
Bangladesh	5.99	5.99	5.99	5.88	5.57	5.43	5.73	5.73	5.78	5.86	5.86	5.86	5.87	5.52	6.11
Bhutan	5.54	5.71	5.71	5.30	5.30	5.08	4.93	4.93	4.87	4.82	4.65	4.57	4.68	4.30	2.62
Cambodia	3.18	2.90	3.10	3.53	3.59	3.63	4.27	4.27	4.78	4.60	4.96	4.87	4.87	4.87	4.77
China	1.94	2.21	2.27	2.26	3.32	3.10	3.14	3.14	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.14	3.14	3.04	2.97
Fiji	5.55	5.61	5.72	5.85	5.85	5.85	5.64	5.69	5.61	3.61	3.67	3.67	3.62	5.11	5.66
Hong Kong	5.28	5.60	5.57	6.02	6.15	6.31	6.42	6.50	6.46	6.42	6.42	5.92	5.92	5.85	6.03
India	7.04	6.91	6.61	6.90	7.23	7.23	7.81	7.74	7.92	7.69	7.52	7.30	7.28	7.80	7.68
Indonesia	6.71	6.71	6.30	6.48	6.39	6.39	6.97	7.03	6.95	6.82	6.76	6.53	6.53	6.34	6.41
Japan	8.33	8.15	8.13	7.99	7.99	7.88	7.99	7.96	8.08	8.08	8.08	8.08	8.08	8.25	8.15
Laos	1.77	1.77	1.77	2.14	2.37	2.37	2.37	2.21	2.21	2.21	2.32	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.10
Malaysia	7.30	7.24	7.19	7.16	6.88	6.54	6.54	6.43	6.49	6.49	6.41	6.19	6.19	6.36	5.98
Mongolia	6.35	6.42	6.48	6.50	6.50	6.50	6.62	6.62	6.62	6.51	6.35	6.23	6.36	6.60	6.60
Myanmar	0.74	1.02	3.04	3.55	3.83	3.83	4.20	4.14	3.05	2.76	2.35	1.77	1.77	1.77	1.77
Nepal	4.49	4.41	5.22	5.28	5.18	5.18	4.86	4.77	4.77	4.77	4.16	4.24	4.24	4.05	3.42
New Zealand	9.61	9.37	9.25	9.26	9.26	9.26	9.26	9.26	9.26	9.26	9.26	9.26	9.26	9.19	9.01
North Korea	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	0.86	1.03
Pakistan	4.13	4.31	4.31	4.25	4.17	4.26	4.33	4.40	4.64	4.64	4.57	4.55	4.55	4.46	3.92
Papua New Guinea	5.97	6.10	6.10	6.03	6.03	6.03	6.03	6.03	6.03	6.36	6.32	6.32	6.54	6.54	6.54
Philippines	6.73	6.62	6.56	6.64	6.71	6.71	6.94	6.84	6.77	6.41	6.30	6.12	6.12	6.12	6.48
Singapore	6.22	6.23	6.03	6.02	6.38	6.32	6.38	6.14	6.03	5.92	5.88	5.89	5.89	5.89	5.89
South Korea	8.03	8.16	8.01	8.00	8.00	8.00	7.92	7.97	8.06	8.06	8.13	8.06	8.11	8.01	7.88
Sri Lanka	6.47	6.14	6.14	6.27	6.19	6.48	6.48	6.42	5.69	5.69	5.75	6.58	6.64	6.61	6.58
Taiwan	8.99	8.99	8.94	7.73	7.73	7.73	7.79	7.83	7.65	7.57	7.57	7.46	7.52	7.82	7.82
Thailand	6.67	6.04	6.04	6.32	4.63	4.63	4.92	5.09	5.39	6.25	6.55	6.55	6.55	6.81	5.67
Timor Leste	7.06	7.06	7.06	7.19	7.19	7.19	7.24	7.24	7.24	7.24	7.16	7.22	7.22	7.22	6.41
Vietnam	2.73	2.94	2.94	3.08	3.08	3.08	3.38	3.53	3.41	3.29	2.89	2.96	2.94	2.53	2.75
average	5.46	5.46	5.62	5.67	5.67	5.63	5.74	5.74	5.70	5.61	5.56	5.51	5.53	5.58	5.44
Algeria	3.66	3.77	3.77	4.01	3.50	3.56	3.56	3.95	3.83	3.83	3.83	3.44	3.44	3.32	3.17
Bahrain	2.52	2.52	2.49	2.55	2.71	2.71	2.79	2.79	2.87	2.87	2.53	2.92	3.49	3.38	3.53
Egypt	2.93	2.93	2.93	3.06	3.36	3.36	3.31	3.18	3.16	3.27	4.56	3.95	3.07	3.89	3.90
Iran	1.96	1.95	2.20	2.38	2.45	2.45	2.34	2.16	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.94	2.83	2.93

DEMOCRACY INDEX 2022

FRONTLINE DEMOCRACY AND THE BATTLE FOR UKRAINE

Table 3
Democracy Index 2006-22

	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2008	2006
Iraq	3.13	3.51	3.62	3.74	4.06	4.09	4.08	4.08	4.23	4.10	4.10	4.03	4.00	4.00	4.01
Israel	7.93	7.97	7.84	7.86	7.79	7.79	7.85	7.77	7.63	7.53	7.53	7.53	7.48	7.48	7.28
Jordan	3.17	3.49	3.62	3.93	3.93	3.87	3.96	3.86	3.76	3.76	3.76	3.89	3.74	3.93	3.92
Kuwait	3.83	3.91	3.80	3.93	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.78	3.78	3.78	3.74	3.88	3.39	3.09
Lebanon	3.64	3.84	4.16	4.36	4.63	4.72	4.86	4.86	5.12	5.05	5.05	5.32	5.82	5.62	5.82
Libya	2.06	1.95	1.95	2.02	2.19	2.32	2.25	2.25	3.80	4.82	5.15	3.55	1.94	2.00	1.84
Morocco	5.04	5.04	5.04	5.10	4.99	4.87	4.77	4.66	4.00	4.07	4.07	3.83	3.79	3.88	3.90
Oman	3.12	3.00	3.00	3.06	3.04	3.04	3.04	3.04	3.15	3.26	3.26	3.26	2.86	2.98	2.77
Palestine	3.86	3.94	3.83	3.89	4.39	4.46	4.49	4.57	4.72	4.80	4.80	4.97	5.44	5.83	6.01
Qatar	3.65	3.65	3.24	3.19	3.19	3.19	3.18	3.18	3.18	3.18	3.18	3.18	3.09	2.92	2.78
Saudi Arabia	2.08	2.08	2.08	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.82	1.82	1.71	1.77	1.84	1.90	1.92
Sudan	2.47	2.47	2.54	2.70	2.15	2.15	2.37	2.37	2.54	2.54	2.38	2.38	2.42	2.81	2.90
Syria	1.43	1.43	1.43	1.43	1.43	1.43	1.43	1.43	1.74	1.86	1.63	1.99	2.31	2.18	2.36
Tunisia	5.51	5.99	6.59	6.72	6.41	6.32	6.40	6.72	6.31	5.76	5.67	5.53	2.79	2.96	3.06
UAE	2.90	2.90	2.70	2.76	2.76	2.69	2.75	2.75	2.64	2.52	2.58	2.58	2.52	2.60	2.42
Yemen	1.95	1.95	1.95	1.95	1.95	2.07	2.07	2.24	2.79	2.79	3.12	2.57	2.64	2.95	2.98
average	3.34	3.41	3.44	3.53	3.54	3.54	3.56	3.58	3.65	3.68	3.73	3.62	3.43	3.54	3.53
Angola	3.96	3.37	3.66	3.72	3.62	3.62	3.40	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.32	3.32	3.35	2.41
Benin	4.28	4.19	4.58	5.09	5.74	5.61	5.67	5.72	5.65	5.87	6.00	6.06	6.17	6.06	6.16
Botswana	7.73	7.73	7.62	7.81	7.81	7.81	7.87	7.87	7.87	7.98	7.85	7.63	7.63	7.47	7.60
Burkina Faso	3.08	3.84	3.73	4.04	4.75	4.75	4.70	4.70	4.09	4.15	3.52	3.59	3.59	3.60	3.72
Burundi	2.13	2.13	2.14	2.15	2.33	2.33	2.40	2.49	3.33	3.41	3.60	4.01	4.01	4.51	4.51
Cabo Verde	7.65	7.65	7.65	7.78	7.88	7.88	7.94	7.81	7.81	7.92	7.92	7.92	7.94	7.81	7.43
Cameroon	2.56	2.56	2.77	2.85	3.28	3.61	3.46	3.66	3.41	3.41	3.44	3.41	3.41	3.46	3.27
Central African Republic	1.35	1.43	1.32	1.32	1.52	1.52	1.61	1.57	1.49	1.49	1.99	1.82	1.82	1.86	1.61
Chad	1.67	1.67	1.55	1.61	1.61	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.62	1.62	1.52	1.52	1.65
Comoros	3.20	3.20	3.09	3.15	3.71	3.71	3.71	3.71	3.52	3.52	3.52	3.52	3.41	3.58	3.90
Congo (Brazzaville)	2.79	2.79	3.11	3.11	3.31	3.25	2.91	2.91	2.89	2.89	2.89	2.89	2.89	2.94	3.19
Côte d'Ivoire	4.22	4.22	4.11	4.05	4.15	3.93	3.81	3.31	3.53	3.25	3.25	3.08	3.02	3.27	3.38
Democratic Republic of Congo	1.48	1.40	1.13	1.13	1.49	1.61	1.93	2.11	1.75	1.83	1.92	2.15	2.15	2.28	2.76
Djibouti	2.74	2.74	2.71	2.77	2.87	2.76	2.83	2.90	2.99	2.96	2.74	2.68	2.20	2.37	2.37
Equatorial Guinea	1.92	1.92	1.92	1.92	1.92	1.81	1.70	1.77	1.66	1.77	1.83	1.77	1.84	2.19	2.09
Eritrea	2.03	2.03	2.15	2.37	2.37	2.37	2.37	2.37	2.44	2.40	2.40	2.34	2.31	2.31	2.31
eSwatini	3.01	3.08	3.08	3.14	3.03	3.03	3.03	3.09	3.09	3.20	3.20	3.26	2.90	3.04	2.93
Ethiopia	3.17	3.30	3.38	3.44	3.35	3.42	3.60	3.83	3.72	3.83	3.72	3.79	3.68	4.52	4.72
Gabon	3.40	3.40	3.54	3.61	3.61	3.61	3.74	3.76	3.76	3.76	3.56	3.48	3.29	3.00	2.72
Gambia	4.47	4.41	4.49	4.33	4.31	4.06	2.91	2.97	3.05	3.31	3.31	3.38	3.38	4.19	4.39
Ghana	6.43	6.50	6.50	6.63	6.63	6.69	6.75	6.86	6.33	6.33	6.02	6.02	6.02	5.35	5.35

Table 3
Democracy Index 2006-22

	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2008	2006
Guinea	2.32	2.28	3.08	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.01	2.84	2.79	2.79	2.79	2.09	2.02
Guinea-Bissau	2.56	2.75	2.63	2.63	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.93	1.93	1.26	1.43	1.99	1.99	1.99	2.00
Kenya	5.05	5.05	5.05	5.18	5.11	5.11	5.33	5.33	5.13	5.13	4.71	4.71	4.71	4.79	5.08
Lesotho	6.19	6.30	6.30	6.54	6.64	6.64	6.59	6.59	6.66	6.66	6.66	6.33	6.02	6.29	6.48
Liberia	5.43	5.43	5.32	5.45	5.35	5.23	5.31	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	5.07	5.07	5.25	5.22
Madagascar	5.70	5.70	5.70	5.64	5.22	5.11	5.07	4.85	4.42	4.32	3.93	3.93	3.94	5.57	5.82
Malawi	5.91	5.74	5.74	5.50	5.49	5.49	5.55	5.55	5.66	6.00	6.08	5.84	5.84	5.13	4.97
Mali	3.23	3.48	3.93	4.92	5.41	5.64	5.70	5.70	5.79	5.90	5.12	6.36	6.01	5.87	5.99
Mauritania	4.03	4.03	3.92	3.92	3.82	3.82	3.96	3.96	4.17	4.17	4.17	4.17	3.86	3.91	3.12
Mauritius	8.14	8.08	8.14	8.22	8.22	8.22	8.28	8.28	8.17	8.17	8.17	8.04	8.04	8.04	8.04
Mozambique	3.51	3.51	3.51	3.65	3.85	4.02	4.02	4.60	4.66	4.77	4.88	4.90	4.90	5.49	5.28
Namibia	6.52	6.52	6.52	6.43	6.25	6.31	6.31	6.31	6.24	6.24	6.24	6.24	6.23	6.48	6.54
Niger	3.73	3.22	3.29	3.29	3.76	3.76	3.96	3.85	4.02	4.08	4.16	4.16	3.38	3.41	3.54
Nigeria	4.23	4.11	4.10	4.12	4.44	4.44	4.50	4.62	3.76	3.77	3.77	3.83	3.47	3.53	3.52
Rwanda	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.16	3.35	3.19	3.07	3.07	3.25	3.38	3.36	3.25	3.25	3.71	3.82
Senegal	5.72	5.53	5.67	5.81	6.15	6.15	6.21	6.08	6.15	6.15	6.09	5.51	5.27	5.37	5.37
Sierra Leone	5.03	4.97	4.86	4.86	4.66	4.66	4.55	4.55	4.56	4.64	4.71	4.51	4.51	4.11	3.57
South Africa	7.05	7.05	7.05	7.24	7.24	7.24	7.41	7.56	7.82	7.90	7.79	7.79	7.79	7.91	7.91
Tanzania	5.10	5.10	5.10	5.16	5.41	5.47	5.76	5.58	5.77	5.77	5.88	5.64	5.64	5.28	5.18
Togo	2.99	2.80	2.80	3.30	3.10	3.05	3.32	3.41	3.45	3.45	3.45	3.45	3.45	2.43	1.75
Uganda	4.55	4.48	4.94	5.02	5.20	5.09	5.26	5.22	5.22	5.22	5.16	5.13	5.05	5.03	5.14
Zambia	5.80	5.72	4.86	5.09	5.61	5.68	5.99	6.28	6.39	6.26	6.26	6.19	5.68	5.25	5.25
Zimbabwe	2.92	2.92	3.16	3.16	3.16	3.16	3.05	3.05	2.78	2.67	2.67	2.68	2.64	2.53	2.62
average	4.14	4.12	4.16	4.26	4.36	4.35	4.37	4.38	4.34	4.36	4.32	4.32	4.23	4.28	4.24
World average	5.29	5.28	5.37	5.44	5.48	5.48	5.52	5.55	5.55	5.53	5.52	5.49	5.46	5.55	5.52

Source: EIU.

Why Ukraine matters

Every so often in history something happens that requires people to take sides as a matter of principle. In 2022 Russia's invasion of Ukraine posed such a choice. Many have sided with Ukraine, notably in developed countries. Others have chosen not to take sides or to back Russia's invasion. Whoever they have sided with, many have underestimated the importance of Ukraine's fight for self-rule. Yet the outcome of this war matters very much for democrats.

Believers in sovereignty should support Ukraine's struggle and oppose Russia's war of conquest. Russia, and some of its defenders, accuse the West of flouting the principle of national sovereignty on countless occasions, as if this justifies Russia's current violation of the principle. But there is no moral high ground for those who sacrifice a principle using the argument of precedent. A principle is inviolate. Russia lost the moral high ground on non-intervention in 2014, when it illegally annexed Crimea. With its full-scale invasion in February 2022, Russia lost any claim to be on the right side of history on the question of respecting state sovereignty and international law.

Sovereignty and democracy are indivisible. Ukraine's fight to defend its sovereignty has drawn attention to the importance of a principle that has been much denigrated. The idea that nation states and their borders do not matter in a globalised world has taken root in recent decades. In 2022 it became clear how important those things are for any country aspiring to determine its own future. Without having full control of its territory and borders, there would be no hope of freedom and democracy in Ukraine.

This is a story about Ukraine and its attempt to build an independent, democratic state after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The country's struggle is intertwined with Russia's post-Soviet transition, gradual slide into authoritarianism and subsequent attempt to restore its status as a great power—at Ukraine's expense. This essay attempts to explain what went wrong after the end of the Cold War, exploring the factors that held back democracy in both Ukraine and Russia, and that led Russia down a dark path towards a brutal war of imperial conquest.

Ukraine's struggle for sovereignty and democracy

For three decades, Russia has cast a long shadow over Ukraine's democratic development, which has suffered from a number of homegrown flaws too. At its peak in 2006-08, after the "Orange Revolution" of 2004, which brought about important democratic reforms, Ukraine's Democracy Index score was 6.94. The country was classified as a "flawed democracy", ranking among the top 50 countries in the world. However, from 2010 until after the Maidan protests of 2014, Ukraine's Index score slumped, reflecting the rollback of democratic gains under the pro-Russian presidency of Viktor Yanukovich (2010-14); the impact of the 2009 economic crisis on attitudes towards markets and democracy; and the persistence of systemic corruption under an oligarchic clan system that controlled political institutions and the media. By 2011 Ukraine's score had fallen to 5.94 and it was downgraded to a "hybrid regime". Ukraine had many of the formal institutions and features of a democracy, but beneath the façade there was little substance.

“Hybrid regimes” enjoy elements of democracy, but suffer from weaknesses that are more pronounced than in a “flawed democracy”. Ukraine’s elections were marred by substantial irregularities that prevented them from being free and fair. There were serious constitutional flaws, with power being concentrated in the presidency rather than the legislature. The judiciary was far from being independent. Corruption was rife under a system dominated by oligarchs, who exercised huge influence over the main institutions of power. There was a pluralist media, but many outlets were owned by wealthy businessmen or controlled by vested interests. Public trust in government, political parties and the electoral process was very low.

In the five years after the 2014 Maidan protests that overthrew the regime of Mr Yanukovich up until the covid-19 pandemic in 2020, Ukraine’s Democracy Index score had been steadily improving. Like the “Orange Revolution” of 2004, the Maidan protests gave impetus to a pro-reform and anti-corruption drive. However, progress was piecemeal and the grip of the oligarchic clan system over political life seemed to be as strong as ever, despite a more engaged civil society and a desire to move the country closer to the EU. As on previous occasions, popular frustration with a lack of progress made itself felt, not in the form of protests, but in the election of an outsider and critic of the system, Volodymyr Zelenskyi. A lawyer by training but best known as a popular comedian, Mr Zelenskyi won the 2019 presidential election with 73% of the vote in the second round. Despite his popularity, Mr Zelenskyi struggled to push through anti-corruption and other reforms in the face of resistance from vested interests, leading to growing popular disenchantment with his rule. That all changed on February 24th 2022, when Russian tanks rolled across the border into Ukraine. By refusing to flee the country, instead donning battle fatigues and leading his country’s resistance to Russia, Mr Zelenskyi united his country as never before.

It had sometimes seemed that Ukraine would never be able to break with its corrupt political patronage system, despite a strong popular desire for democracy, and two huge popular mobilisations in 2004 and 2014. Russia’s invasion of 2022 may have provided the shock that will ensure no return to the status quo ante in Ukraine. Russia’s war of aggression has raised the level of national consciousness and will amplify expectations of change afterwards. Historically, wars have been among the biggest drivers of political and social change; this may also be the case for Ukraine, provided that it wins.

Why democracy failed in Russia

So how did it come to this between Ukraine and Russia? After recognising Ukraine’s independence in 1991, why did Russia go to war to destroy Ukraine in 2022? Today discussions about the war in Ukraine often suggest that Russia’s actions were inevitable; yet this judgement was not obvious in the 1990s and the 2000s, and it does not tally even with the consensus view on the eve of the invasion. Instead of seeing the war as inevitable, it may be more helpful to try to understand the factors that led to this tragic outcome—to learn the lessons of what has happened for the future.

Why democracy failed in Russia after 1991 and why Ukraine fell victim to a revanchist Russian imperialism is a complex story. There were many reasons why democracy was still-born in Russia in the 1990s and why the country followed a path towards authoritarianism under the presidency of Vladimir Putin. Some of the factors that might help to explain what went wrong include:

- **Empire state of mind:** Russia's history over several centuries as an imperial power spanning most of Eurasia and ruling over more than 125m subjects, which continued in a different form during the Soviet era, bred an imperial mindset that never went away after 1991.
- **Humiliation and hubris:** Russia's leaders found it hard to come to terms with the loss of "great power" status after 1991 and deeply resented the triumphalism of the West.
- **Brothers and compatriots:** Russia found it difficult to accept the independence of former republics, especially Belarus and Ukraine, and that millions of former Soviet citizens suddenly found themselves outside of Russia's borders.
- **Political and institutional legacies:** a tradition of subservience to the state and respect for strong leaders under Tsardom, empire and communism left a deep imprint on a society that had no previous experience of democracy.
- **Trauma zone:** the chaotic transition from a communist to a capitalist system was brutal, resulting in plummeting living standards and rocketing death rates, and the traumatic experience discredited democracy and the market among many Russians.
- **Moral collapse:** the first president of the new Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin (1991-99), and his ministers adopted pro-market policies that were often inappropriate to conditions in Russia, without regard for their disastrous consequences for ordinary Russians, and allowed criminality and corruption to flourish, breeding disenchantment with democracy.
- **The Putin counter-revolution:** Mr Yeltsin's anointed successor was greeted as a saviour for restoring order, but began rolling back democratic norms and, eventually, pursuing a foreign policy agenda aimed at restoring Russia as an imperial power.

Empire state of mind

Historical and institutional legacies matter, perhaps nowhere more so than in the eastern parts of the continent of Europe. Here are nations that were once former empires or were subjugated by them, and whose histories shape how they see themselves, their neighbours and the rest of the world. Russia was an imperial power over a period spanning several centuries, and this bred a "great power" mindset, one that persisted during the existence of the Soviet Union. Having ruled the third biggest empire in history until 1917, Russia still sees itself as unique and different. When the Soviet Union was dissolved in December 1991, Russia became a nation state but remained the largest country in the world by size. The Russian Federation is a transcontinental country with a total area of 17.1m sq km (the Soviet Union covered 22.4m sq km)—still an empire-sized home to almost 200 ethnic groups.

Russia is also unique in that it had a revolution that overthrew the capitalist order and created an alternative economic and social system. It established the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1922 and after the Second World War came to dominate the seven socialist countries in eastern Europe that joined the Warsaw Pact military alliance. Today many Russians, including their leaders, are critical of the Soviet system but are proud of its contribution to defeating fascism and of the USSR's global status during the Cold War. The Soviet Union acted as a pole of attraction for developing countries,

anti-colonial struggles and national liberation movements for 70 years, which gave it a global reach and superpower status.

The Soviet Union was one of two superpowers in a bipolar world order. But its demise differed from that of other “empires” in the sense that its successor state, Russia, inherited many of the prestigious status symbols associated with the USSR. Russia kept a seat on the UN Security Council; it retained the USSR’s nuclear weapons; it became the signatory to arms control agreements; it kept the embassies; and it continued to benefit from the USSR’s diplomatic ties and trade relationships. Formally at least, Russia retained the status of a great power in the international system and this encouraged a sense of entitlement and an empire state of mind.

Russian humiliation and Western hubris

By 1992, Russia’s inherited great power status was more form than substance: the decade that followed was experienced as one of humiliation for Russia amid Western hubris. The way that the collapse of the USSR is viewed in Russia and in the West is in stark contrast; for one side it was seen as a defeat and for the other a victory. Western triumphalism was hard to swallow for many Russians, whose experience of the 1990s was one of loss, suffering and despair amid economic collapse, rampant corruption and demographic catastrophe.

Thirty years later, the collapse continues to be a controversial and painful topic, as was clear in August 2022 when the death of Mikhail Gorbachev, who led the Soviet Union from 1985 until its dissolution in 1991, reopened old wounds. Some Russians say that the USSR lost the Cold War and some say that it surrendered. Many drew the conclusion that their rulers gave up because they were weak, confused and incompetent. This realisation did not prevent Russians from resenting the triumphalism of Western countries and fuelled the Russian belief in the importance of having a strong leader.

Brothers and compatriots

The USSR fell apart overnight into 15 pieces and suddenly 25m Russians found themselves outside the borders of Russia. Mr Putin has been widely quoted as saying that the collapse of the Soviet Union was the “biggest tragedy of the 20th century”. What he went on to say was that the disintegration of the USSR left 25m Russians outside of their homeland—mainly in Kazakhstan, where Russians constituted 37% of the population before the collapse of the Soviet Union, Latvia (34%), Estonia (30%) and Ukraine (22%)—and that was a tragedy. The plight of these 25m “lost” Russians is a theme to which Mr Putin has returned many times and which he has exploited in his expansionist policies in Ukraine.

There is little doubt that this perceived catastrophe informed subsequent Russian thinking about, and policies towards, Russia’s new neighbours. Russian leaders have had great difficulty accepting this separation or the idea that former Soviet republics were sovereign nation states. This was especially true for Belarus and Ukraine. In 1992 Russia coined the term “the near abroad” to describe the 14 successor states to the Soviet Union. Boris Yeltsin said in 1994 that Russia should be “first among equals” in its dealings with the former Soviet republics. In 2008, the then-president, Dimitry Medvedev (2008-12), said that the Commonwealth of Independent States should recognise Russia’s “privileged interests”. The old imperial mindset never went away, and it began to loom larger as resentment grew in Russia over the perceived unwillingness of Western countries to integrate Russia in the post-Cold

War security architecture. Feeling excluded and taking no meaningful steps to improve the situation, Russia began to revive the idea of a Eurasian union instead.

Political and institutional legacies

In 1991, weary with Soviet shortages and a lack of freedom, Russians were eager for change, democracy and the prosperity that many associated with Western market capitalism. Some feared change and held fast to the old certainties, especially among the older generation and rural dwellers. However, the willingness of ordinary Muscovites to confront the organisers of the anti-Gorbachev coup of August 1991 demonstrated that others were no longer afraid to confront authority and were seeking a new life. Unfortunately, those aspirations were crushed over the course of the 10 years that followed the break-up of the Soviet Union.

A key difference between Russia and former Warsaw Pact countries such as the Czech Republic or Poland is that Russia never had any prior experience of democracy, except for a brief moment between the February and October revolutions of 1917. Nor did the Soviet Union have experience of experimenting with market reforms, as was the case in Hungary and other satellite states. From 1917 onwards, with the exception of the New Economic Policy period in the 1920s, there was a root and branch elimination of market mechanisms, meaning that very few people who were alive in 1991 had any memory or experience of how the capitalist market works.

The Russia that emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union was thus a tabula rasa experiment in democracy, lacking any historical experience of democratic statehood. Unlike other countries in eastern Europe, Russia had no previous examples of democratic rule to look to, no democratic parties to be revived and no prior experience of democracy to draw upon. Democracy would have to be built from scratch in what turned out to be extremely inhospitable conditions of economic dislocation during the post-communist transition.

Trauma zone: the transition shock

Adam Curtis's 2022 documentary for the BBC, *Russia 1985-1999: TraumaZone—what it felt like to live through the collapse of communism and democracy*, is a grim portrayal of the chaos and suffering endured by ordinary Russians in those years. The result was that by the end of the decade, many Russians had given up on democracy and the market.

The combination of adverse legacies, upheaval and dislocation unleashed by the transition from communism to capitalism had few parallels. The USSR fell apart overnight and lines of authority disappeared, replaced by vacuum or anarchy. Nowhere were the difficulties of initial conditions more obvious than in the two largest countries of the former USSR, Russia and Ukraine. More than 70 years of communist rule meant that there had been much more time to destroy all vestiges of a market economy. The problems of the transition were amplified by the collapse of all administrative structures and the effective dissolution of the state. There were no institutions in place to manage the introduction of market mechanisms.

Average output plunged by more than 40% in Russia in the first decade of the transition; in Ukraine it plunged by 60%. This was the largest peacetime contraction on record, bigger even than the Great Depression of the 1930s. In its wake followed mass unemployment, rising poverty, income inequality, social crisis and a collapse of public services. In Russia male life expectancy declined from 64 to 58

years between 1991 and 1994, a decline previously seen only in wartime. It was a sign of a society under extreme stress.

The World Bank said that the transition was “a rough ride”, but for Western institutions the downsides were mostly seen to be a price worth paying. That was not the way that most Russians saw it. There was a popular backlash against capitalism and democracy. Public opinion surveys showed that support for core values associated with the transition, such as markets and democracy, were abysmally low and there was pervasive nostalgia for the old days. Most Russians came to associate markets and democracy with economic misery, insecurity, disorder, criminality and corruption.

Moral collapse: a failure of leadership

History was not on democracy’s side in Russia, but history is not everything. Ideas, people and policies matter too. Was the failure of democracy in Russia simply the result of adverse historical legacies, or might things have been different if its leaders had acted otherwise? Was the chaos, dislocation and misery an inevitable consequence of the transition from communism to capitalism, or was some of it avoidable? The answer to these questions depends on one’s view of the extent to which there were choices or alternatives. The role of leadership is important: to what extent did Soviet and Russian leaders abdicate responsibility and allow events to run out of control?

The roots of the collapse in the 1990s were deep and complex. Some experts argue that inherited structural and macroeconomic distortions were so large that the initial output decline was unavoidable regardless of the policies that were pursued. But what is at issue is precisely the response of policymakers to the crisis. China managed to reform its system after the crisis of the Maoist years because its communist elite kept its nerve and made astute choices, though it also demonstrated a willingness to use deadly force to preserve its rule. To portray the Russian situation in a totally different light is to treat the breakdown of the 1990s as a natural, unavoidable calamity, not the outcome of political decisions or policy choices.

Even after the bungled reforms of the Gorbachev era and the break-up of the Soviet Union, Russian leaders still had choices and alternatives. The state had not completely broken down at that stage. Mr Yeltsin and his ministers were too ready to pursue without question policy prescriptions that were unsuited to local conditions. Russian leaders must take primary responsibility for what went wrong in the 1990s, but Western advisers cannot escape some blame. Much of the policy advice was ideologically and politically motivated. They advocated a complete overhaul of existing economic structures in an attempt to engineer wholly new institutions of a private economy according to economic textbooks. They urged fast privatisation, irrespective of other considerations such as the country’s institutional set-up, and regardless of the economic and social consequences. All this was to ensure that there could be no chance of going back, to make sure that socialism was well and truly buried. Mr Yeltsin and his government not only put their faith in Western advisers, they also allowed former communist bureaucrats, oligarchs and crooks to enrich themselves, selling state resources and assets for a pittance and allowing corruption and criminality to spread throughout the system. Mr Yeltsin washed his hands of responsibility for the consequences of his policies and lost control of the situation so badly that Russia was brought to the brink of bankruptcy.

Russia had begun to establish a democracy of sorts in the early 1990s. It held parliamentary and presidential elections, there was competition among political parties and there was a free media and a

diversity of views. As the economic situation went from bad to worse, Mr Yeltsin began to undo some of the democratic progress that had been made. Democratic forces among the small intelligentsia were too feeble to resist as Mr Yeltsin concentrated power in the presidency and exercised it with scant concern for democratic procedures. He launched two brutal wars in Chechnya in a bid to deflect attention from the disastrous economic situation and restore his popularity. His contempt for democratic norms, tolerance of corruption and increasingly erratic behaviour bred public cynicism, resulting in declining levels of popular participation. He staggered on until the late 1990s, by which time Russia was in hock to the oligarchs.

The Putin “counter-revolution”

For the majority of Russians who lived through the 1990s, what was lost—security, savings, sons (the latter to wars in Chechnya)—became more important than what had been gained (political freedom). Enter Mr Putin, appointed prime minister in August 1999 and acting president four months later, promising to deliver security and order. He was embraced as a saviour and won the April 2000 election with 53% in the first round. He then cracked down on the oligarchs, focused on improving security on Russia’s streets and ruthlessly put an end to the war in Chechnya. In the 2004 presidential election he ran almost unopposed and won 71.3% of the vote. Mr Putin had no inclination to build democracy in Russia. He established his United Russia party as a means of consolidating his power. A counter-revolution against democracy had begun, alongside a campaign to restore Russia’s great power status.

Russia’s economy bounced back in the second decade of the transition. Russians were better off, crime was no longer impinging on people’s daily lives and the war in Chechnya had ended. Mr Putin continued to enjoy high popularity ratings through the 2000s as president and then as prime minister after 2008. However, the structural and demographic problems holding back the Russian economy began to be felt, and from 2010 growth rates slowed as oil prices slumped. Mr Putin’s popularity declined and he turned increasingly to foreign policy to try to bolster support for his regime, illegally annexing Crimea in 2014 and intervening in Syria to prop up the regime of dictator Bashar al-Asad in 2015.

The Democracy Index closely tracked the changes in Russia’s political and democratic environment. In 2011 Russia was downgraded from a “hybrid regime” to an “authoritarian regime” after Mr Putin confirmed that he would stand for a third term as president in 2012 in blatant disregard for constitutional norms. Changes to the constitution had extended the term limit from four to six years, meaning that he would not have to face re-election until 2018. This was a watershed moment, signalling the dropping of any pretence by Mr Putin that he would preserve democratic norms. Since 2012 Mr Putin has presided over increasing corruption, the erosion of freedom of speech, harsh repression of political protest and the slow suffocation of democracy. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine marked another step towards dictatorship under a highly personalised regime: it led to a harsh crackdown on dissenters, the media and the opposition. Those who refuse to comply are subject to extremely punitive measures. Russia’s index score falls to 2.28 in the 2022 Democracy Index, down from 3.24 in 2021, and Russia now ranks 146th out of 167 countries, having fallen 22 places since 2021 (see page 53).

Putin's anti-Western turn

As the war in Ukraine began to go badly wrong for Russia in 2022, Mr Putin increasingly recast his so-called “special operation” as an existential struggle between Russia and the West. This far-fetched claim illustrates the Russian president's deep-seated resentment of the US-led international order. It was not always that way. In the early days of his presidency, Mr Putin even mentioned joining the EU and NATO. This was never likely to happen, especially as Russia became increasingly authoritarian, and Mr Putin's frustration gradually turned into deep-seated resentment against Western states.

The corollary of Mr Putin's anti-Westernism was a growing hostility towards Ukraine, which it accused of “disloyalty” and of becoming a NATO stooge. In 2014 Russia illegally annexed Crimea and started to sponsor separatist forces fighting against Ukrainian forces in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine. Western sanctions followed, reinforcing Russia's anti-Western stance, but the relatively muted Western response at the time may have emboldened the Kremlin and sown the seeds of the invasion of 2022.

Nothing that the Western powers did forced Russia to go to war in Ukraine. Russia had in late 2021 listed its grievances and concerns about NATO expansion, arms control and other matters, and the US's door remained open for further discussion and diplomacy. The US made clear that it was ready to pursue negotiations with Russia. That Russia went to war in Ukraine is all down to the Kremlin, but the war nevertheless represents a failure of diplomacy. Historians will one day write books about whether something could have been done to prevent the war.

Indeed, a contemporary historian, Mary Sarotte of John Hopkins University, has already written a book about post-Cold War US-Russian relations (*Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate*). Without in any way exculpating Russia, Professor Sarotte suggests that the US also made mistakes in its dealings with Russia, whether because of being fixated on the domestic policy agenda or on dealing with problems elsewhere such as in the Middle East.

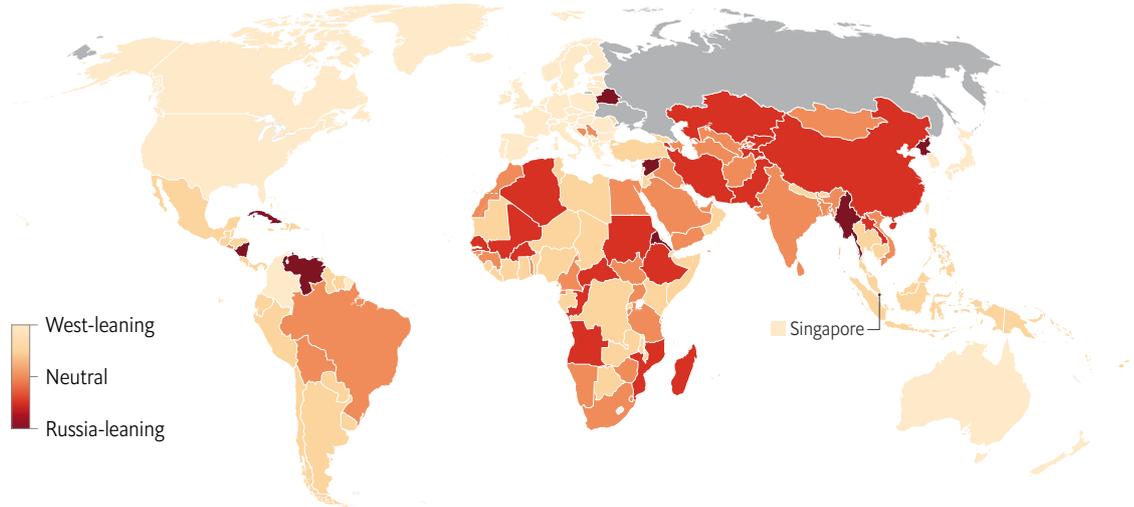
Yet the main error of US and EU policymakers was probably a failure to learn the lessons of history—the German question should have been foremost in mind when the Russian question reappeared on the agenda in 1991. There was also a lack of long-term strategic thinking about how to refashion the international security order after the end of the Cold War. A failure to do so has also led Western countries into difficulties with the developing world, which now wields much more economic and political clout than it did during the Cold War, and is resentful of being excluded from playing a greater role in global institutions.

Whose war is it anyway? The global south and the war in Ukraine

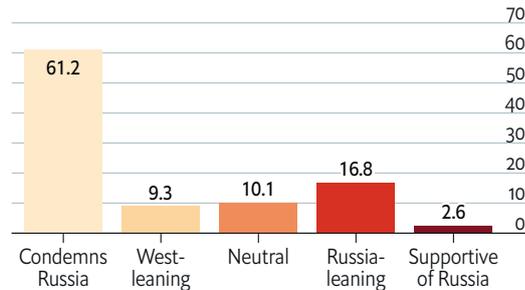
Russia's war of aggression has united the US, Europe and its close allies behind Ukraine, but many developing countries do not see things the same way. The countries of the global south see this as the West's war and not necessarily their concern. Their reluctance to line up behind Western countries reflects, variously, frustration with the established international order and an emphasis on first-world issues; resentment of perceived Western hypocrisy in light of past Western intervention in their affairs; and dependency on Russian minerals and other resources.

The international system established after 1945 is based on the principle of national sovereignty. This is a principle that developing countries cherish and one that Russia is trampling over in its war

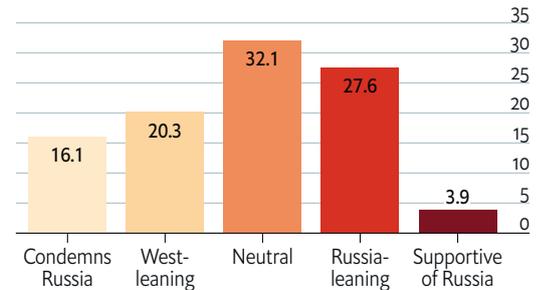
Two-thirds of the world's population live in countries that are neutral or Russia-leaning regarding the war in Ukraine



By global GDP (%)



By global population (%)



Source: EIU.

in Ukraine. Most developing countries are appalled by Russia’s unprovoked attack on a sovereign state. Yet the Western powers have been unable to persuade them to take sides against Russia. EIU conducted an analysis into the position taken by most countries in the world in relation to the war in Ukraine. It showed that two-thirds of the world’s population live in countries that are either neutral or Russia-leaning when it comes to the war in Ukraine. When asked to take sides with the West and against Russia, the countries of the global south would prefer to remain non-aligned.

One of the reasons why the US finds it difficult to persuade developing countries to take sides against Russia is America’s own track record of intervention. During the Cold War the US intervened to counter real or imagined communist threats, including by waging war for 10 years in Vietnam and backing right-wing movements engaged in fighting leftist forces in Latin America and the Caribbean. In the post-Cold War period justifications for intervention by the US and other Western powers have included overthrowing a dictator (Iraq, Libya), defending human rights (Kosovo), nation-building (Afghanistan) and saving a country from itself (Somalia). The perceived inconsistent application of the principle of national sovereignty by the US has bred cynicism that is now making it more difficult to attract support from the global south for Ukraine.

Russia likes to remind all those who care to listen that the US has a long track record of “intervention” in other states to justify its indefensible invasion of Ukraine. But this is sheer sophistry and casuistry: two wrongs do not make a right and there can be no excuses for Russia’s bloody war to dismember and occupy Ukraine. Nor should the principle of national sovereignty be sacrificed on the altar of anti-Westernism. The future of Ukrainian statehood and democracy is at stake: Ukraine deserves the support and solidarity of all of the world’s democracies in its fight to repel Russia’s invasion and defend its sovereignty.

Democracy state of mind

So where does Russia stand today, and is there any hope that democracy might one day come? The six factors outlined above show that the odds were stacked against Russia becoming a democracy after 1991. However, it would also be wrong to suggest that Russians are immune to democracy. The idea that some peoples are incapable of democracy is a deterministic and essentialist fallacy. History matters, but it is not an immanent force that determines a nation’s path forever: men and women are shaped by history, but they can also change it.

There is no people on earth who should be written off as being unfit for or unworthy of democracy, whether in Africa or China, or Russia. As EE Schattschneider, an American political scientist, once said, “democracy does not turn its back on anyone”. Democracy is a moral system as well as a system of government, and it is moral in the sense that it expresses an attitude towards people. The basic moral premise of democracy is the idea that all people are equal. Democracy is made for people, not the people for democracy.

From the idea of the equality of people follows the idea of the equality of nations: the principle of national sovereignty also has a moral dimension and is a bedrock of democracy. Russians have been educated in the hard school of obedience to the state and political passivity under various authoritarian regimes. But they have on occasions demonstrated that they too share the basic human aspiration for freedom and control over their destiny. Such aspirations cannot be extinguished even under the harshest of dictatorships. It is up to Russians to find their own path to democracy, in opposition to an increasingly dictatorial regime that is waging war abroad and inflicting repression at home.

DEMOCRACY INDEX 2022

FRONTLINE DEMOCRACY AND THE BATTLE FOR UKRAINE

Table 4
Democracy across the regions

	No. of countries	Democracy index average	Full democracies	Flawed democracies	Hybrid regimes	Authoritarian regimes
North America						
2022	2	8.37	1	1	0	0
2021	2	8.36	1	1	0	0
Western Europe						
2022	21	8.36	14	6	1	0
2021	21	8.22	12	8	1	0
Eastern Europe						
2022	28	5.39	0	16	4	8
2021	28	5.36	0	16	4	8
Latin America & the Caribbean						
2022	24	5.79	3	9	8	4
2021	24	5.83	2	11	7	4
Asia & Australasia						
2022	28	5.46	5	9	7	7
2021	28	5.46	5	10	6	7
Middle East & North Africa						
2022	20	3.34	0	1	2	17
2021	20	3.41	0	1	2	17
Sub-Saharan Africa						
2022	44	4.14	1	6	14	23
2021	44	4.12	1	6	14	23
Total						
2022	167	5.29	24	48	36	59
2021	167	5.28	21	53	34	59

Source: EIU.

Democracy around the regions in 2022

Introduction

Stagnation is the story of 2022 as far as the headline Democracy Index score is concerned (5.29 compared with 5.28 in 2021). It is also the main takeaway in terms of the regional index scores. With the exception of western Europe, the only region to improve its score decisively in 2022 compared with 2021, every other region registers a negligible improvement, no improvement or a decline (Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East and North Africa). The improvements in the average regional scores for eastern Europe, North America and Sub-Saharan Africa are tiny, while the score for Asia and Australasia is the same as recorded in 2021.

Regions and regime types

The developed countries of western Europe dominate among the world's "full democracies", accounting for 14 of the total of 24 in 2022. Canada is the sole "full democracy" in North America, as the US continues to languish as a "flawed democracy", where it was relegated in 2016. Asia and Australasia has five "full democracies", including three Asian ones (Japan, South Korea and Taiwan) alongside Australia and New Zealand. Three Latin American countries are classed as "full democracies" (Chile, Costa Rica and Uruguay), as is one African country (Mauritius). The predominance of OECD countries among those ranked as "full democracies" suggests that the level of economic development can be a significant, if not binding, constraint on democratic development. Other factors that are important in determining the quality of democracy are a history of independent statehood; the nature of state development; and the quality of state institutions.

"Flawed democracies" are concentrated in developing regions such as eastern Europe (16 in 2022), Asia (9), Latin America (9), and Sub-Saharan Africa (6). Eastern Europe does not have a single "full democracy", despite the preponderance of upper-middle-income countries in the region. This is striking in comparison with other later-developing regions such as Latin America and demands an explanation that takes account of the region's unique experience under the domination of the Soviet Union after 1945 and during its post-Communist transition after 1989. In 2022 several countries in eastern Europe came close to being classified as "full democracies" (which requires a score above 8.00)—Czech Republic (7.97), Estonia (7.96) and Slovenia (7.75). Other countries in the region, including the EU member states in central Europe and the Baltics, have tended to regress rather than improve in recent years. The region continues to struggle with core weaknesses in institutions and political culture.

"Hybrid regimes" and "authoritarian regimes", which constitute 95 of the 167 countries and territories covered by the Democracy Index, are concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa. They comprise 37 of the 44 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (84%) and 19 of the 20 countries in the Middle East and North Africa (95%). Asia and Australasia has its fair share of non-democratic regimes, which make up 14 or exactly half of the 28 countries in the region. "Hybrid" and "authoritarian regimes" also constitute half the 24 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Eastern Europe has a slightly smaller share, with 12 of the region's 28 countries (43%) being classified in

this way. They are concentrated in the far east of the region, among the countries of the former Soviet Union. Typically there is little change from year to year in the index scores for authoritarian regimes.

Developments in 2022 and in longer term perspective

Western Europe had a good year in 2022, rebounding from a pandemic-related decline in 2020-21, with an average score of 8.36 up from a low of 8.22 in 2021. This is the region's best score since 2017, reflecting some positive developments unrelated to the pandemic, including a big improvement in Greece's score as the country cements its protracted recovery from the crisis of the 2010s. Nevertheless, the region's score remains substantially below the peak of 8.61 recorded in 2008, before the onset of the global financial crisis and southern European debt crisis.

By contrast, North America has failed to recover the ground lost during the worst pandemic years of 2020-21. The US score remains the same as in 2021, at 7.85, as some negative developments cancelled out the positive impact of the lifting of pandemic restrictions. It is the same story for Canada, whose total score improves by just 0.01. Similarly to western Europe, the two-country North America region has much ground to make up compared with where it stood at the launch of the Democracy Index in 2006. It has recorded a decline of 0.26 points over that 16-year period, more or less in line with the deterioration recorded on average in western Europe (0.25) over the same period. The US's score has fallen by 0.37 points and that for Canada by 0.19 points.

Latin America had another bad year in 2022, following an even more dramatic decline in 2021. Despite the lifting of pandemic restrictions across the region in 2022, the region failed to improve its average score. The fall in the region's average score in 2021, of 0.26 points, was the worst annual decline of any region during the lifetime of the index. The 2022 deterioration is much more modest, at 0.04, but several countries (Haiti, El Salvador, Mexico) are among the countries suffering the worst year-on-year declines in their index scores. The result is that Latin America has recorded the biggest democratic recession of any region over the past two decades, with its average regional score falling from a peak of 6.43 in 2008 to 5.79 in 2022, a decline of 0.64 points.

Asia and Australasia's 2022 score is unchanged compared with 2021, at 5.46. This is despite having the most-improved country (Thailand) in the Democracy Index in 2022. A dozen countries in the region registered a decline in their scores, with China and Hong Kong suffering significant deteriorations, and seven stagnated compared with 2021. The region remains 0.21 points below its pre-pandemic score of 5.67 and its peak score of 5.74 in 2015-16. In the decade up to that point, Asia and Australasia had made steady progress, but the decade-long improvement in the score has now almost totally reversed.

The average score for Sub-Saharan Africa has scarcely changed, rising slightly from 4.12 in 2021 to 4.14 in 2022, with the region failing to reverse a decline in its average score since its peak of 4.38 in 2015. Democracy has been in retreat in the region for seven years now, beginning before the covid-19 pandemic. In 2022 14 countries improved their scores, but the score stagnated in 22 countries and in eight it declined. There are some positive stories coming out of Africa, but democratisation has made disappointingly slow progress over the past two decades, as it has in the worst-performing region in the Democracy Index, the Middle East and North Africa.

The Middle East and North Africa suffers a further decline in its already low score in the 2022 Index, to 3.34, down from 3.41 in 2021. Its regional score is now worse than it was in 2010 (3.43), before the start

of the Arab Spring. The latter led to a brief flowering of democracy in the region and the country that made most progress, Tunisia, became a “flawed democracy” in 2014. This classification was lost in 2021 when Tunisia was downgraded to a “hybrid regime”, and its score fell further in 2022.

In the following pages, we look in detail at developments in all the regions in 2022. The section is organised in descending order, from the highest-scoring region to the lowest-scoring one. The accompanying charts illustrate where each region stands in relation to the global average.

Table 5
Democracy Index 2006-22 by region

	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2008	2006
Asia & Australasia	5.46	5.46	5.62	5.67	5.67	5.63	5.74	5.74	5.70	5.61	5.56	5.51	5.53	5.58	5.44
Eastern Europe	5.39	5.36	5.36	5.42	5.42	5.40	5.43	5.55	5.58	5.53	5.51	5.50	5.55	5.67	5.76
Latin America	5.79	5.83	6.09	6.13	6.24	6.26	6.33	6.37	6.36	6.38	6.36	6.35	6.37	6.43	6.37
Middle East & North Africa	3.34	3.41	3.44	3.53	3.54	3.54	3.56	3.58	3.65	3.68	3.73	3.62	3.43	3.54	3.53
North America	8.37	8.36	8.58	8.59	8.56	8.56	8.56	8.56	8.59	8.59	8.59	8.59	8.63	8.64	8.64
Western Europe	8.36	8.22	8.29	8.35	8.35	8.38	8.40	8.42	8.41	8.41	8.44	8.40	8.45	8.61	8.60
Sub-Saharan Africa	4.14	4.12	4.16	4.26	4.36	4.35	4.37	4.38	4.34	4.36	4.32	4.32	4.23	4.28	4.24
World average	5.29	5.28	5.37	5.44	5.48	5.48	5.52	5.55	5.55	5.53	5.52	5.49	5.46	5.55	5.52

Source: EIU

North America

North America, comprising only the US and Canada, retains its place as the top-ranked region in the Democracy Index. With a score of 8.37, it is just ahead of western Europe, which has an average score of 8.36. However, the gap between the two regions has narrowed considerably since 2021, reflecting stronger improvements across western Europe. Scoring 8.88, Canada maintains its lead over the US, again placing the country in 12th position in the global ranking and retaining its classification as a “full democracy”. The US again scores 7.85, unchanged from 2021, but drops four spots in the global ranking, to 30th, as other countries improved. The US remains in the “flawed democracy” category, where it has stood since 2016.

Table 6.
North America 2022

	Overall score	Global Rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
Canada	8.88	12	1	10.00	8.57	8.89	8.13	8.82	Full democracy
United States of America	7.85	30	2	9.17	6.43	8.89	6.25	8.53	Flawed democracy
Regional score	8.37			9.58	7.50	8.89	7.19	8.68	

Source: EIU.

US democratic institutions continue to show resilience

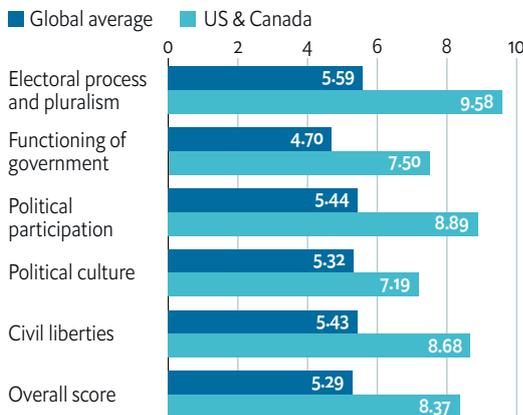
The US score for *political participation* remains among the highest worldwide (at 8.89, alongside Canada) and stands at its highest level since the Democracy Index first launched in 2006. American voters continue to exhibit strong political engagement. Turnout during the November 2022 midterm elections was among the highest on record, with nearly half of eligible voters casting ballots. (US midterm elections traditionally generate low turnout.) The same was true of the December 2022 Georgia runoff election, which decided the balance of power in the Senate (the upper house), mirroring a similar election two years earlier. This followed record turnout during the 2020 presidential election, at 66%, which marked the highest turnout rate in more than a century, as well as record turnout during the previous midterms in 2018. Strong voter engagement in recent years has run parallel with an increasing tendency by both mainstream parties, the Democrats and the Republicans, to frame elections in high-stakes, existential terms. It also reflects a politicisation of more aspects of American life, from personal health decisions to school lesson plans and even books available in public libraries.

The US also scores highly for *electoral process and pluralism* (9.17). The past two years have underscored the resilience of the country’s democratic institutions. The run-up to the change of administration in January 2021 was tumultuous, marked by a riot at the US Capitol and attempts by the outgoing president, Donald Trump, and several Republican lawmakers to overturn the election results, citing baseless claims of voter fraud. However, the inauguration of the incoming president, Joe Biden, a Democrat, proceeded smoothly, and his presidency has not faced significant disruptions. The Biden administration has even succeeded in passing major components of its policy agenda in a highly polarised Congress, with some headline legislation (including on infrastructure development and competition with China) garnering Republican support.

US & Canada:

Democracy Index 2022 by category

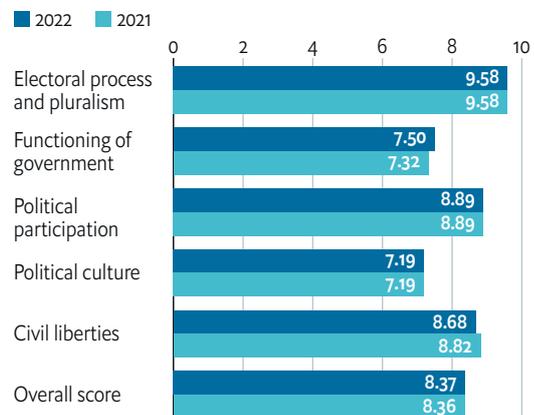
(Index score out of 10, 10 being best)



Source: EIU.

Change in category scores 2021-22

(Index score out of 10, 10 being best)



Potential upside: voters may be repudiating election denial

The 2022 midterm results highlight another example of the resilience of US democratic institutions. In contrast to the 2020 elections, the recent midterms played out without systemic disruptions,

irregularities or scandals. Voters also broadly rejected “election deniers” (who still dispute the 2020 results without evidence) from state offices responsible for administering elections. Many of these candidates peacefully conceded once their races were called, defying expectations that they would refuse to acknowledge defeat.

Election denial is unlikely to disappear from American politics, particularly as some politicians, including Mr Trump, continue to keep the issue alive ahead of the next elections in 2024. However, the general trend so far, as reflected by the midterm results and restraint by voters and politicians, is that scepticism towards electoral processes may be receding.

Polarisation remains the biggest threat to US democracy

The US’s overall score in the Democracy Index remains weighed down by the country’s intense levels of political and cultural polarisation. Pluralism and competing alternatives are essential for a functioning democracy, but differences of opinion in the US have hardened into political sectarianism and almost permanent institutional gridlock. This trend has long compromised the *functioning of government*, and the US score for this category remains at a low of 6.43 in 2022, unchanged from 2021. The 2022 midterms have yielded a sharply divided Congress, with Democrats retaining a slim Senate majority and Republicans taking control of the House of Representatives (the lower house) by a narrow margin. This will cripple the legislative process, particularly as neither party will be eager to cede ground and compromise ahead of the 2024 elections. Intra-party divisions will present another obstacle. An unusually drawn-out process of selecting a new Republican House speaker in January 2023 required concessions to far-right lawmakers that will complicate passing even essential legislation, such as basic spending bills or an increase to the federal government’s debt ceiling. (Failing to do so would risk a government shutdown and the US defaulting on its debt.) Party unity could erode further ahead of the 2024 presidential primaries as both Mr Biden and Mr Trump, the *de facto* leaders of their parties, face doubts over their electability.

Political culture is still the weakest category for the US, with a score of 6.25 in 2022, unchanged from 2021. Social cohesion and consensus have collapsed in recent years as disagreements over an expanding list of issues fuel the country’s “culture wars”. Alongside the covid-19 pandemic, election outcomes and racial equity, additional fault lines have emerged and deepened during the past year, including over LGBTQ+ rights, climate policy and reproductive health. These debates have extended beyond the usual set of actors (such as politicians and activists) and now implicate corporate executives as well as primary school teachers and librarians (over lesson plans and books discussing sexuality, gender and racial identity). A highly politicised media, including popular TV channels and social media platforms, continue to foment and amplify these divisions. According to the Pew Research Center, more than half of Republicans (62%) and Democrats (54%) held “very unfavourable” views of the other party in 2022. These tensions will intensify ahead of the 2024 elections as both parties stake out positions on culture war issues.

Abortion restrictions weigh on the US’s strong civil liberties record

The US continues to score highly on *civil liberties* (scoring 8.53 in 2022), well above the global average (5.43). However, its score is unchanged from 2021, despite such developments over the past year as the lifting of coronavirus restrictions and the passage of federal protections for same-sex and interracial

marriages. The lack of movement on this score reflects the June 2022 ruling by the US Supreme Court that eliminated the constitutional right to an abortion, overturning nearly 50 years of legal precedent. The ruling has resulted in an inconsistent patchwork of state-level laws, with a quarter of states enacting new blanket abortion bans, others introducing partial restrictions and still others providing additional protections for abortion access. In many states, the future of abortion rights remains up in the air, subject to court challenges or changes in state governments.

The sudden removal of abortion as a constitutional right has weighed on the US's performance on our indicators for "personal freedoms" (which considers gender equality) and "citizen control" (which gauges the degree to which citizens feel that they have control over their lives). Over half of American adults (57%) and nearly two-thirds of American adult women (62%) disapprove of the ruling, according to a survey conducted by Pew in the week following the court's decision.

Canada remains a top performer despite civil liberties setbacks

Canada continues to score highly in our Democracy Index, thanks to the country's history of stable, democratic government. The country remains a top performer in *electoral process and pluralism* (10.00) and *political participation* (8.89). Voter turnout fell in the most recent parliamentary elections in September 2021 (to 62.3%) compared with the previous poll in 2019 (67.7%), but it remained well above the 50% threshold—meaning that Canada comfortably avoided a downgrade on this indicator. Canada also performs strongly in *functioning of government*, with its score of 8.57 up from the 2021 score (8.21). This improvement reflects the lifting of all remaining coronavirus restrictions in 2022, including vaccination and testing requirements for entering the country, which in turn translated into an upgrade in the country's performance on our "citizen control" indicator.

Canada continues to outperform the US in *political culture* (8.13). According to the latest AmericasBarometer survey, published in December 2021 by the Environics Institute and Vanderbilt University, the largest concentration of Canadian voters (32%) self-identify in the political centre, while the smallest shares place themselves at the left/right extremes (4% each). In contrast, the share of Americans self-identifying on the ends of the political spectrum was about the same size as those in the centre (roughly 12-18% each). Studies published by the Environics Institute in 2021-22 also point to a broad consensus among Canadians on issues that traditionally divide US voters, including race, gender, inequality and climate change. Despite a large-scale protest in early 2022 against coronavirus vaccine requirements for cross-border truckers, vaccines have proved less controversial in Canada than in the US; over 80% of the country's total population had received a full initial course of vaccination against the coronavirus by end-2022, compared with 69% in the US.

Canada continues to perform better than the US on *civil liberties* (8.82). However, its score for this category slid from 2021 (9.12), reflecting downgrades in our "emergency powers" and "discrimination" indicators. The federal government's response to the truckers' protest, which involved the unprecedented use of expanded powers under the Emergencies Act, represented a disproportionate curbing of civil liberties, including the forced clearing of demonstrations, a ban on public gatherings and freezing protestor's bank accounts. Meanwhile, the marginalisation of Canada's Indigenous population has gained greater visibility over the past year, particularly following the 2021 revelation of systemic human rights abuses at state-led boarding schools between the 1880s and the 1990s. Although the federal government

has made Indigenous rights a priority, recent surveys continue to highlight widespread discrimination against Indigenous people in Canadian society. Quebec's ban on wearing religious symbols in certain public-services jobs, which led to a downgrade in Canada's *civil liberties* score in 2021, continues to weigh on this category.

Western Europe

Western Europe has the second-highest Democracy Index score in the world after North America, and it includes some of the world's strongest democracies, including eight of the top ten ranked countries. The region boasts the largest number of "full democracies" of any region in the world (14 out of a total of 24 globally). All but one of the remaining countries are classified as "flawed democracies", with almost all of these scoring close to the boundary to qualify as a "full democracy".

Western Europe was a positive outlier among all regions in 2022, being the only one to register a marked improvement in its average score. This rose from 8.22 (out of 10) in 2021 to 8.36 in 2022. Of the 21 countries in the region covered by the index, 19 have improved their score, one stays the same and one

Table 7.
Western Europe 2022

	Overall score	Global Rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
Austria	8.20	20	12	9.58	7.14	8.89	6.88	8.53	Full democracy
Belgium	7.64	36	19	9.58	8.21	5.00	6.88	8.53	Flawed democracy
Cyprus	7.38	37	20	9.17	5.36	6.67	6.88	8.82	Flawed democracy
Denmark	9.28	6	5	10.00	9.29	8.33	9.38	9.41	Full democracy
Finland	9.29	5	4	10.00	9.64	8.33	8.75	9.71	Full democracy
France	8.07	22=	14	9.58	7.86	7.78	6.88	8.24	Full democracy
Germany	8.80	14	10	9.58	8.57	8.33	8.13	9.41	Full democracy
Greece	7.97	25=	15	10.00	7.14	6.67	7.50	8.53	Flawed democracy
Iceland	9.52	3	2	10.00	9.64	8.89	9.38	9.71	Full democracy
Italy	7.69	34	18	9.58	6.79	7.22	7.50	7.35	Flawed democracy
Ireland	9.13	8	7	10.00	8.21	8.33	10.00	9.12	Full democracy
Luxembourg	8.81	13	9	10.00	8.93	6.67	8.75	9.71	Full democracy
Malta	7.70	33	17	9.17	7.14	5.56	8.13	8.53	Flawed democracy
Netherlands	9.00	9	8	9.58	8.93	8.33	8.75	9.41	Full democracy
Norway	9.81	1	1	10.00	9.64	10.00	10.00	9.41	Full democracy
Portugal	7.95	28	16	9.58	7.50	6.67	6.88	9.12	Flawed democracy
Spain	8.07	22=	13	9.58	7.50	7.22	7.50	8.53	Full democracy
Sweden	9.39	4	3	9.58	9.64	8.33	10.00	9.41	Full democracy
Switzerland	9.14	7	6	9.58	9.29	8.33	9.38	9.12	Full democracy
Turkey	4.35	103	21	3.50	5.00	5.56	5.63	2.06	Hybrid regime
United Kingdom	8.28	18	11	9.58	7.50	8.33	6.88	9.12	Full democracy
Regional score	8.36			9.39	8.04	7.59	8.10	8.66	

Source: EIU.

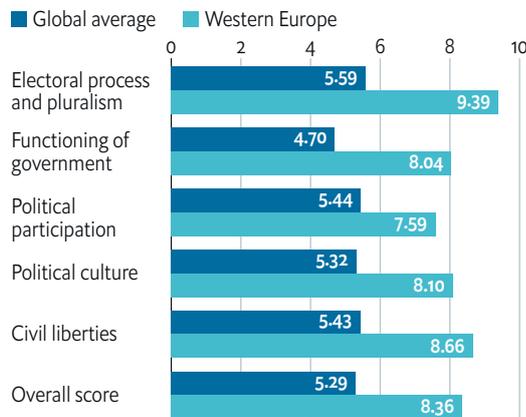
has deteriorated. Two countries, France and Spain, have been upgraded from “flawed democracies” to “full democracies”.

The region registers an improvement across four of the five categories of the Democracy Index, with the average scores for *electoral process and pluralism*, *functioning of government*, *political culture* and *civil liberties* all rising compared with 2021. The only category for which the score remains unchanged, at 7.59, is *political participation*. Several of the region’s category scores return to where they were prior to the covid-19 pandemic, so the improvement marks a return to something approaching the status quo ante. Western Europe was one of the first regions in the world to lift pandemic restrictions, which

Western Europe:

Democracy Index 2022 by category

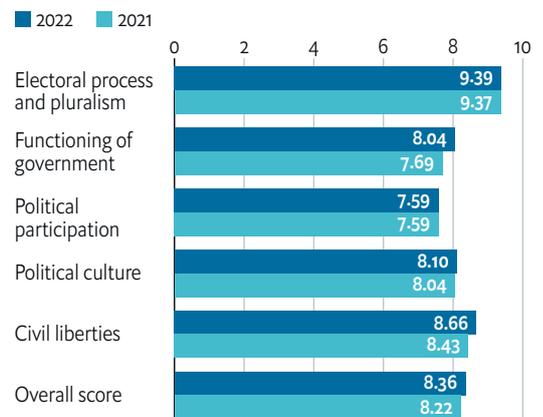
(Index score out of 10, 10 being best)



Source: EIU.

Change in category scores 2021-22

(Index score out of 10, 10 being best)



contributed to an improvement in several indicator scores in the *functioning of government* and *civil liberties* categories, boosting the region’s overall average score.

Compared with the pre-pandemic period, the region’s average score for *electoral process and pluralism* has improved, rising from 9.35 in 2019 to 9.39 in 2022. The regional score has also increased in the *functioning of government* category, from 7.95 in 2019 to 8.04 in 2022. The *political participation* score has stagnated at 7.59, as has the *political culture* score at 8.10. The only area where the score has declined is *civil liberties*, for which the score has fallen from 8.78 in 2019 to 8.66 in 2022. The region’s average score in the *civil liberties* category fell sharply in 2020 as pandemic lockdown measures curtailed freedom of movement and association. These score downgrades largely remained in place in 2021 as governments retained the right to re-impose restrictions in the face of fresh waves of the pandemic. Many of these restrictions were lifted in 2022, but the score for *civil liberties* has yet to return to its pre-pandemic level owing to some remaining restrictions and because several emergency laws have remained on the statute books, to be used to tackle future crises.

Spain and France return to being classified as “full democracies”

France and Spain are upgraded from “flawed democracies” to “full democracies” in the 2022 Democracy Index. France’s previous score of 7.99 meant that it was on the cusp of being upgraded in 2021 and a

small improvement in its score in 2022, to 8.07, is sufficient to result in an upgrade. This improvement is related to the lifting of the covid-19 restrictions. Nevertheless, France continues to underperform compared with many of its western European peers; there is widespread popular dissatisfaction with the political elite and social polarisation is entrenched. Spain's score improves from 7.94 in 2021 to 8.07 in 2022, driven by the lifting of pandemic-related measures by the government, resulting in an improvement in the *civil liberties* and *functioning of government* categories. However, political polarisation remains high ahead of the elections in 2023, and political scandals and Catalan separatism continue to pose challenges to governance.

The rise of the right: how much of a threat to democracy?

Recent elections in western Europe have brought right-wing parties to government, most notably in Italy and Sweden. The representation of right-wing parties such as the Sweden Democrats or Fratelli d'Italia (Fdi) in parliament and government is not necessarily detrimental to democracy; indeed, the exclusion of such parties when they have the support of large sections of the electorate could be construed as anti-democratic. At the same time, there are justifiable concerns that far-right parties could undermine democracy by promoting intolerance or passing illiberal legislation or censoring the media.

The right-wing coalition led by Fdi won a comfortable parliamentary majority at the general election in Italy in late September and can therefore pursue its particular agenda should it wish to. Led by Italy's first female prime minister, Giorgia Meloni, the government was inaugurated in October. Italy now has the most right-wing government since the end of the second world war. Ms Meloni has initially adopted a moderate stance (motivated in part by a desire to absorb available EU funds), but her mandate was for a harder right-wing stance and she could revert to this under pressure from her coalition partners.

In Sweden, a centre-right government led by the Moderates was sworn in in October, led by the party leader, Ulf Kristersson, and also comprising the Christian Democrats and the Liberals. The government is supported by the far-right anti-immigration Sweden Democrats, now the second-largest party in parliament, but shunned by previous governments for its extreme political outlook. The presence of the Sweden Democrats will influence Sweden's policy at home and externally: Sweden holds the presidency of the Council of the European Union for the first half of 2023, and we expect the country to drag its heels on migration. The Swedish government has already decided to shelve the EU's migration pact, no doubt influenced by the hard-line immigration stance of the Sweden Democrats.

Nordics remain at the top of the Democracy Index rankings

The Nordics stand out as particularly high-scoring, occupying five of the top six positions in the global rankings. Norway is in first place, followed by New Zealand. The next four countries are all Nordic nations—Iceland, Sweden, Finland and Denmark. These countries boast high scores across all categories, particularly *electoral process and pluralism* and *functioning of government*. Switzerland, Ireland and the Netherlands also rank among the top ten countries in the index; all three improved their scores in 2022. However, Finland, Ireland and Italy all drop down the rankings despite improving

Greece: a big improver despite the spyware scandal

Greece remains a “flawed democracy” but its overall score improved from 7.56 in 2021 to 7.97 in 2022. It has thus come close to being upgraded to a “full democracy” after languishing in the lower category since 2010, when the Greek sovereign debt crisis led to a political and economic meltdown. In 2006 Greece had a score of 8.13, higher even than that of the UK, with 8.08. In 2022 Greece’s global ranking improves from 34th in 2021 to joint 25th, making the country one of the best performers in our index. It registers the fifth-biggest increase in score of all the countries covered by the index.

The improvement occurs across most categories of the index in 2022. The *electoral process and pluralism* category improves, driven by the authorities’ increased effort to promote political participation and facilitate the diaspora vote. Greece’s score for *functioning of government* also improves markedly, driven by the ending of the post-bailout enhanced surveillance regime, to which Greece had been subject since 2015. Greece managed the fallout from the covid-19 pandemic well, helping to restore public trust in political parties and government, which had been shattered during the crisis years after 2010. Greece’s tourism industry, the mainstay of the economy, could have been permanently scarred if the pandemic had been mishandled. Instead, in 2022 tourism rebounded strongly, returning almost to pre-pandemic record levels. Similarly, the government

handled the economic fallout from the war in Ukraine in 2022 capably and in a way that avoided the sort of social and political polarisation that characterised the 2010s. Finally, Greece organised an effective vaccination campaign and moved faster than most other countries to roll back pandemic-related restrictions, resulting in improved scores on several indicators in 2022.

Greece is penalised in the 2022 index in relation to freedom of the press. There is freedom of expression in Greece, but there is evidence to suggest that journalists are not free to investigate uncomfortable truths. There is considerable censorship on issues related to the police, the army and the church, and journalists often face harassment, threats and violence. Furthermore, it was revealed in August 2022 that the state had been engaged in wiretapping journalists and politicians using spyware technology on the grounds of national security. The prime minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, strenuously denied having personal knowledge of the activity, but apologised for it, saying that it should never have happened. The scandal damaged the government’s reputation, especially as the government official who would have had oversight of the wire-tapping was Grigoris Dimitriadis, the general secretary of the prime minister’s office. The affair led to Mr Dimitriadis’s resignation and that of the head of the National Intelligence Service, Panagiotis Kontoleon. The government subsequently introduced legislation to make the possession and use of spyware a criminal offence punishable by up to ten years’ imprisonment and sought to distance itself from the scandal.

scores, as other countries made faster progress. Greece makes the most notable overall improvement, rising nine spots in the rankings.

The UK’s democracy score strengthens in spite of governmental disarray

The index score for the UK improves in the 2022 Democracy Index, rising from 8.10 in 2021 to 8.28.

This may seem somewhat surprising given the political tumult that engulfed a country that had until recently been renowned for its political stability. In the space of less than four months, Boris Johnson resigned as prime minister (July 7th), Liz Truss was elected prime minister (September 6th) before resigning 45 days later amidst a legitimacy crisis (October 20th), and Ms Truss was then replaced inside a week (on October 25th) by Rishi Sunak, who is now the sitting prime minister. The ruling Conservative Party was in serious disarray, and its poll ratings slumped, to the benefit of the opposition Labour Party. However, this party and governmental crisis did not affect the overall index score because the UK's scores for many indicators that measure things such as confidence in government and political parties, citizens' control, voter turnout and, social cohesion were already low and either could not go lower or did not merit being downgraded further. The UK has always been positioned towards the bottom of the "full democracy" category ranking, precisely because of certain negative features of the British democratic system. The boost to the UK's score in 2022 comes from an improvement to the "personal freedoms" sub-indicator of the *civil liberties* category. The UK removed covid-19 isolation restrictions in February 2022 and lifted travel restrictions in April 2022, being one of the first countries to do so. The UK's score for "perceptions of democracy" also improves; the annual British Social Attitudes survey shows that 90% of the population believe that it is vitally important to live in a democracy.

Turkey's democratic values keep eroding

Turkey is the only "hybrid regime" in the region, meaning that democracy is seriously circumscribed. Elections are not usually free and fair, the media is subject to censorship, the rule of law is weak, and corruption is rife. Turkey has suffered a steep decline in its score over the past decade, under the leadership of the president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan. From a high of 5.76 points in 2012, Turkey's average score has fallen by 1.41 points to 4.35 in 2022. This downwards trajectory reflects the increasingly autocratic rule of its strongman president.

Turkey's score remains unchanged. Mr Erdogan ramped up pressure on the media, the opposition and public dissent in 2022, but the country already has very low scores across all categories, so they could not go much lower for many indicators. The trend towards increasing repression was highlighted in October 2022 by the passing of a new disinformation law, which includes a jail sentence for "disseminating false information" about the country's security and public order. In April 2022 Mr Erdogan's Justice and Development Party also amended the election law to facilitate the appointment of sympathetic judges to electoral boards and make it even more difficult for smaller parties to enter parliament via electoral alliances.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Latin America and the Caribbean experiences its fourth consecutive year of decline in 2022, its average score falling to 5.79, down from 5.83 in 2021. The decline in the region's overall score occurs despite a

Table 8.
Latin America 2022

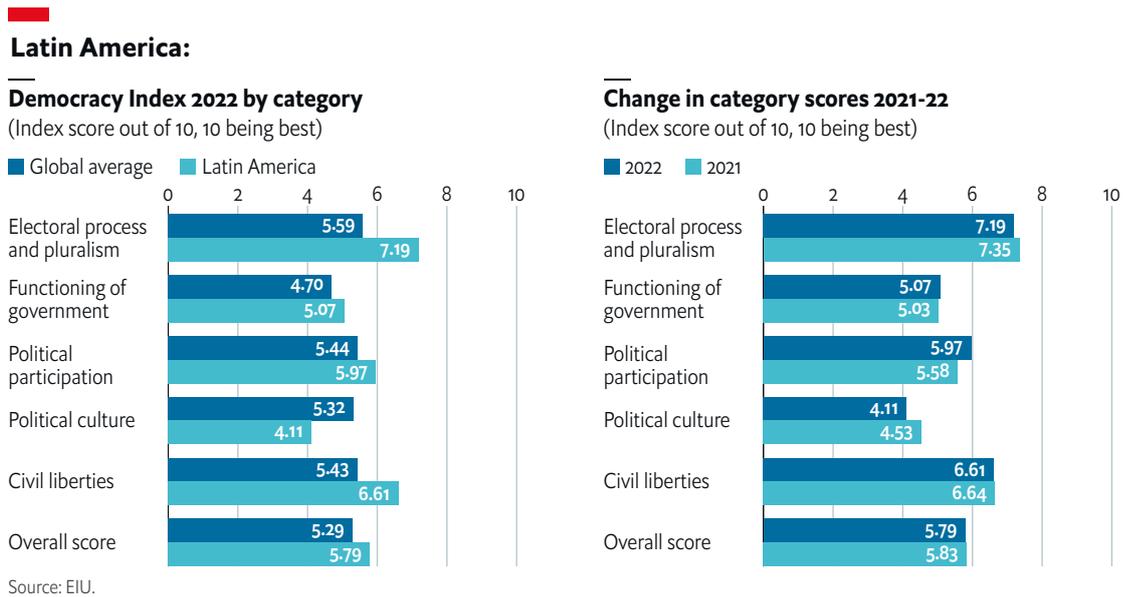
	Overall score	Global Rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
Argentina	6.85	50	6	9.17	5.00	7.78	4.38	7.94	Flawed democracy
Bolivia	4.51	100	18	4.75	4.29	6.67	1.25	5.59	Hybrid regime
Brazil	6.78	51	7	9.58	5.00	6.67	5.00	7.65	Flawed democracy
Chile	8.22	19	2	9.58	8.21	6.67	7.50	9.12	Full democracy
Colombia	6.72	53	8	9.17	6.07	6.67	3.75	7.94	Flawed democracy
Costa Rica	8.29	17	1	9.58	7.50	7.78	6.88	9.71	Full democracy
Cuba	2.65	139	20	0.00	3.21	3.33	3.75	2.94	Authoritarian
Dominican Republic	6.39	65	9	9.17	5.36	7.22	3.13	7.06	Flawed democracy
Ecuador	5.69	81	13	8.75	5.00	6.67	1.88	6.18	Hybrid regime
El Salvador	5.06	93	16	8.33	3.57	5.56	3.13	4.71	Hybrid regime
Guatemala	4.68	98	17	6.92	3.93	3.89	2.50	6.18	Hybrid regime
Guyana	6.34	67	10	6.92	6.07	6.67	5.00	7.06	Flawed democracy
Haiti	2.81	135	19	0.00	0.00	2.78	6.25	5.00	Authoritarian
Honduras	5.15	91	15	8.75	3.93	5.00	2.50	5.59	Hybrid regime
Jamaica	7.13	42	3	8.75	7.14	5.00	6.25	8.53	Flawed democracy
Mexico	5.25	89	14	6.92	4.64	7.22	1.88	5.59	Hybrid regime
Nicaragua	2.50	143	21	0.00	2.14	3.33	4.38	2.65	Authoritarian
Panama	6.91	49	5	9.58	6.07	7.22	3.75	7.94	Flawed democracy
Paraguay	5.89	77	12	8.75	5.36	6.11	1.88	7.35	Hybrid regime
Peru	5.92	75	11	8.75	5.71	5.56	3.13	6.47	Hybrid regime
Suriname	6.95	48	4	9.58	6.43	6.11	5.00	7.65	Flawed democracy
Uruguay	8.91	11	1	10.00	8.93	7.78	8.13	9.71	Full democracy
Venezuela	2.23	147	22	0.00	1.07	5.56	1.88	2.65	Authoritarian
Regional score	5.79			7.19	5.07	5.97	4.11	6.61	

Source: EIU.

broad-based increase in scores related to the lifting of pandemic-related restrictions that had affected civil liberties; however, these improvements are offset by a sharp deterioration in scores in a handful of countries in 2022.

The countries driving the 2022 decline are Haiti (-0.68), El Salvador (-0.66) and Mexico (-0.32). Countries recording more modest declines include Peru (-0.17) and Brazil (-0.08). Peru's declining score knocks it down to a "hybrid regime" from a "flawed democracy". On a positive note, Chile regains its status as a "full democracy", as covid-19 restrictions were lifted. Of the 24 countries measured, the scores for 13 decrease compared with 2021, nine increase and two are unchanged.

Latin America and the Caribbean remains the region with the highest average score outside of North America and western Europe. The region's score is bolstered by having some of the world's strongest democracies, such as Uruguay, Costa Rica and Chile, but they account for only 4% of the region's total population; meanwhile 45% of the region's population live in a country that is either a hybrid or an



authoritarian regime. Moreover, 62% of Latin Americans reside in a country whose score declined in 2022.

Dividing Latin America and the Caribbean into its constituent sub-regions (South America and Central America and the Caribbean) reveals a growing bifurcation in the quality of democracy in the two sub-regions. South America experienced a sharp decline in its score in 2021, largely owing to the impact of the pandemic, but in 2022 the region’s score increased as restrictions were lifted. Central America and the Caribbean, on the other hand, has recorded a consistent decline in its score starting in 2018, owing largely to developments in Mexico and Nicaragua, with the latter turning into an autocracy in 2018 and the former being downgraded to a hybrid regime in 2021.

Institutional resilience amid hyper-polarisation

Democratic institutions in Latin America were tested in 2022 as some of the region’s largest democracies held elections in a charged atmosphere of hyper-polarisation and anti-incumbency. The most polarised election occurred in Brazil, where the far-right president, Jair Bolsonaro (2019-22), faced-off against a former left-wing president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-10). Mr Bolsonaro said that he had little confidence in Brazil’s electronic voting machines and threatened to not recognise the results. Lula narrowly won the presidency in a runoff election and, after days of tense silence, Mr Bolsonaro conceded. Mr Bolsonaro’s supporters held demonstrations refusing to accept the results and demanded that the armed forces intervene. His party filed a complaint with the electoral authorities to annul half of the votes from the runoff election, alleging malfunctioning voting machines (the complaint was rejected for a lack of evidence).

A week after Lula assumed the presidency, thousands of Mr Bolsonaro’s supporters stormed the presidential palace, Congress and the Supreme Court. Their goal was to get the armed forces to depose Lula from power. Brazilian security forces eventually quashed the rebellion, but their slow response raised suspicions about the potential complicity of some members of the security apparatus. Brazilian

democratic institutions have withstood the attacks from Mr Bolsonaro and his hard-line supporters, who have questioned the integrity of the elections. However, the use of political violence by Mr Bolsonaro's supporters and their calls for a military coup have illustrated risks to the future of Brazilian democracy.

Colombians also went to the polls in 2022 to cast ballots in what became the country's most polarised presidential election in recent history. Colombia was hit hard by the covid-19 pandemic in 2020-21 and anti-establishment sentiment was high, resulting in candidates from traditional parties failing to reach the presidential run-off election; instead, a left-wing candidate, Gustavo Petro, defeated Rodolfo Hernández, a right-leaning populist. Mr Petro's victory was a watershed moment, as he became Colombia's first left-wing president. Bolstering Mr Petro's legitimacy was the high voter turnout, which was at the highest level in nearly 25 years. Mr Petro's pragmatism opened the door for centrist parties to join a governing coalition, which has given him a majority in Congress that should ensure governability amid an ambitious left-wing reform agenda.

Chile's constitutional reform process, which began after the October 2019 uprising, culminated in September 2022 with an obligatory vote to either ratify or reject the new document. Chileans rejected the proposed constitution by a huge 24-point margin, a devastating loss for the political left that dominated the reform process and for the president, Gabriel Boric, who backed the process. Following the loss Mr Boric moved towards the political centre, which has helped to reduce previously high levels of political polarisation. Most of Chile's political parties agreed to a second reform process that will take place in 2023. The new process corrects the flaws in the institutional design of the first process and defines norms that cannot be changed in the new constitutional reform process, which the vast majority of Chileans support.

Weak state capacity threatens to undermine democracy

Weak state capacity is a major cause of the region's low scores related to the *functioning of government* and *political culture*. With some exceptions, Latin Americans have a low level of confidence in state institutions; the region is home to some of the world's most unequal and corrupt countries. State capacity has also been weakened by the growth of transnational criminal organisations, especially related to the narcotics trade, which is leading to high levels of crime and corruption even in the region's strongest democracies, such as Chile and Uruguay.

The most extreme case of weakening state capacity in the region is Haiti, which experiences the region's steepest fall in score in 2022 (and the third worst globally) as it nears total state collapse. Haitians are still reeling from the aftermath of the assassination of the former president, Jovenel Moïse, in July 2021. The interim prime minister, Ariel Henry, has failed to re-establish the state's control over parts of the country, ceding ground to heavily armed gangs, many linked to drug-trafficking networks. Mr Henry also failed to call elections, which led to significant score downgrades. Amid the dire humanitarian and security situation, Mr Henry called for foreign intervention to help re-establish order, an abdication of leadership and a damaging admission that the country is no longer capable of self-rule.

The region is a global hub for transnational drug cartels, which pose a significant threat to democracy. Drug trafficking erodes state capacity by making corruption extremely lucrative and

expands the use of violence by non-state actors, which, in turn, leads to an erosion of civil liberties as governments seek to address citizens' demands for more security. One of the region's countries adversely affected by drug trafficking in 2022 was Ecuador. In November the country experienced a wave of violence by drug gangs protesting against the government's efforts to reduce drug-related violence in the country's overcrowded jails. The president, Guillermo Lasso, introduced a 45-day State of Emergency in affected regions. In Honduras, the president, Xiomara Castro, also introduced a 30-day State of Emergency in major cities to address rampant extortion by the country's powerful gangs. Draconian measures to address rising crime rates raise the risk of creeping authoritarianism.

A darkening path towards autocracy

Latin America is home to three authoritarian regimes: Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela. There is a risk that the list of autocracies in the region will grow, as a number of countries are undergoing a process of democratic backsliding. The most prominent example is El Salvador, which recorded the region's

An attempted coup in Peru batters a weak democracy

On December 7th the embattled president, Pedro Castillo (in power since 2021), unexpectedly announced that he intended to shut down Congress, call for early legislative elections, govern by decree, restructure the judiciary and impose a curfew. The announcement followed a vote in the unicameral Congress to decide whether to oust Mr Castillo from office (the third impeachment vote faced by Mr Castillo after only 15 months in office). Mr Castillo's self-declared coup failed almost immediately; within hours of the announcement Congress removed Mr Castillo from office and he was detained on his way to the Mexican embassy, where he had been granted asylum. Mr Castillo's failed coup was similar in intent to that of a former president, Alberto Fujimori (1990-2000), who closed down Congress in 1992 in a bid to concentrate power.

Dina Boluarte, Mr Castillo's vice-president, was sworn in as president on the day of the failed coup, becoming Peru's first female president. Despite the orderly transition, Ms Boluarte soon confronted nationwide protests that demanded

her resignation, early general elections and, to a lesser degree, the release of Mr Castillo from jail. More than 20 fatalities related to the protests were reported in the days following Mr Castillo's ouster. In response, Ms Boluarte submitted to Congress a constitutional reform to call for early elections (which Congress approved in the first of two required votes) and imposed a month-long State of Emergency.

Owing to these events, Peru's overall score declined in 2022 and the country is now categorised as a "hybrid regime". The decline in Peru's democracy score also reflects an increasingly unstable political environment that has led to six presidents coming to power and three different congresses governing the country since 2016. Unsurprisingly, Peru's *political culture* scores are among the lowest in the region, reflecting extreme polarisation and a high tolerance for military rule. Moreover, under Mr Castillo, state capacity weakened greatly owing to more than 80 ministerial changes during his brief period in office and the appointment of many ministers lacking relevant experience. This legacy will weigh on Peru's economy, as well as on the quality of its governance and democracy, for many years to come.

second sharpest decline in score, after Haiti, in 2022.

Tough-on-crime policies and anti-establishment rhetoric have made the president, Nayib Bukele, extremely popular. This popularity allowed Mr Bukele to undermine checks and balances, including replacing the entire bench at the Supreme Court. In 2022 he announced that he will run for consecutive re-election despite constitutional limits, and a pliant Supreme Court approved the move. In March 2022 Mr Bukele introduced a State of Emergency that severely restricted civil liberties and led to the imprisonment of about 1% of the population on suspicion of being gang members. Many caught in the dragnet end up in the nation’s overcrowded jails, often without due process, and dozens have died in custody, where torture is allegedly rampant. In April 2022 the government introduced criminal measures that threaten to curb media freedoms, further eroding civil liberties.

The region’s second-largest country, Mexico, is also undergoing a process of democratic backsliding under the president, Andrés Manuel López Obrador. Mr López Obrador has used his position to attack his opponents, including the electoral authorities. In 2022 the government passed a reform that reduces the financing of the electoral authority and restricts its oversight powers, putting election integrity at risk. Media freedoms are also under grave threat: at least 13 journalists were killed in 2022 and Mexican intelligence services routinely spy on journalists and activists. The role of the military in public affairs has expanded greatly under Mr López Obrador. The government intends to expand the armed forces’ role in the economy and over public security, including by giving them control over the National Guard until 2028. Mr López Obrador’s attacks on democratic checks and balances, as well as the growing role played by the armed forces in the economy and security, led to a further downgrade in Mexico’s overall score in 2022, following a decline in 2021.

Asia and Australasia

Asia and Australasia’s regional score in the Democracy Index stands at 5.46 in 2022, unchanged from the previous year. This halts a deteriorating trend in the quality of governance and civil liberties that

Table 9.

Asia and Australasia 2022

	Overall score	Global Rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
Afghanistan	0.32	167	28	0.00	0.07	0.00	1.25	0.29	Authoritarian
Australia	8.71	15	3	10.00	8.57	7.78	7.50	9.71	Full democracy
Bangladesh	5.99	73	15	7.42	6.07	5.56	5.63	5.29	Hybrid regime
Bhutan	5.54	84	18	8.75	5.93	3.33	5.00	4.71	Hybrid regime
Cambodia	3.18	121	22	0.00	3.21	5.00	5.63	2.06	Authoritarian
China	1.94	156=	24	0.00	3.21	2.78	3.13	0.59	Authoritarian
Fiji	5.55	83	17	6.58	5.00	5.56	5.63	5.00	Hybrid regime
Hong Kong	5.28	88	19	2.75	3.29	5.56	6.88	7.94	Hybrid regime
India	7.04	46=	8	8.67	7.50	7.22	5.63	6.18	Flawed democracy
Indonesia	6.71	54	10	7.92	7.86	7.22	4.38	6.18	Flawed democracy

Table 9.
Asia and Australasia 2022

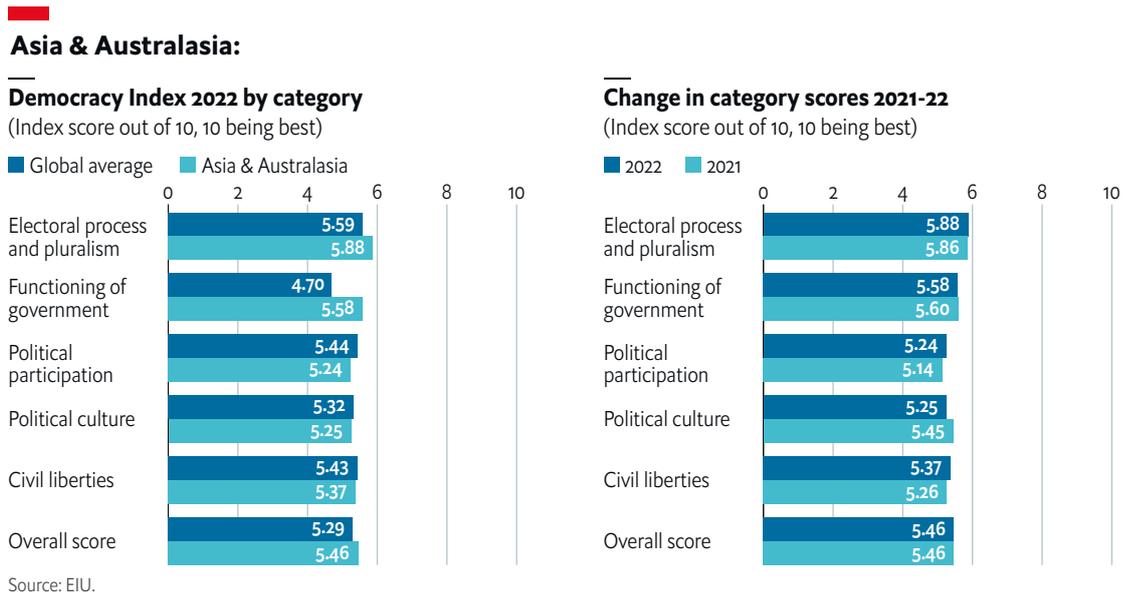
	Overall score	Global Rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
Japan	8.33	16	4	9.17	8.57	6.67	8.13	9.12	Full democracy
Laos	1.77	159	25	0.00	2.86	1.67	3.75	0.59	Authoritarian
Malaysia	7.30	40	6	9.58	7.86	7.22	6.25	5.59	Flawed democracy
Mongolia	6.35	66	13	8.75	5.36	6.11	5.63	5.88	Flawed democracy
Myanmar	0.74	166	27	0.00	0.00	0.56	3.13	0.00	Authoritarian
Nepal	4.49	101	20	4.83	5.36	4.44	2.50	5.29	Hybrid regime
New Zealand	9.61	2	1	10.00	9.29	10.00	8.75	10.00	Full democracy
North Korea	1.08	165	26	0.00	2.50	1.67	1.25	0.00	Authoritarian
Pakistan	4.13	107	21	5.67	5.00	2.78	2.50	4.71	Hybrid regime
Papua New Guinea	5.97	74	16	6.92	6.07	3.89	5.63	7.35	Hybrid regime
Philippines	6.73	52	9	9.17	5.00	7.78	4.38	7.35	Flawed democracy
Singapore	6.22	70	14	4.83	7.86	4.44	7.50	6.47	Flawed democracy
South Korea	8.03	24	5	9.58	8.57	7.22	6.25	8.53	Full democracy
Sri Lanka	6.47	60	12	7.00	5.71	7.22	6.25	6.18	Flawed democracy
Taiwan	8.99	10	2	10.00	9.64	7.78	8.13	9.41	Full democracy
Thailand	6.67	55	11	7.42	6.07	8.33	5.63	5.88	Flawed democracy
Timor-Leste	7.06	44	7	9.58	5.93	5.56	6.88	7.35	Flawed democracy
Vietnam	2.73	138	23	0.00	3.93	3.33	3.75	2.65	Authoritarian
Regional score	5.46			5.88	5.58	5.24	5.25	5.37	

Source: EIU.

started in 2020, when the onset of the covid-19 pandemic resulted in wide-ranging curbs on civil liberties across the region. However, deterioration began before the pandemic, with the region's score having declined steadily since a peak in 2014-15. The region's score is now almost back to the low-point of 2006 (5.44).

Across all categories of the index, the region records the largest gain for civil liberties, with an increase of 0.11 points, mainly as a result of the lifting of most of the restrictions that were introduced at the height of the covid-19 pandemic. China persisted with draconian restrictions for most of the year, so its score does not benefit from the easing of zero-covid measures that began in earnest when 2022 was almost over. The region also improves its average score for *political participation*, as citizens in several countries, notably China, Mongolia, Sri Lanka and Thailand showed a greater willingness and propensity to organise and participate in public demonstrations and protests. On the other hand, the region's score for *political culture* falls slightly, owing to more negative public perceptions of the role of leadership and democracy in places such as Hong Kong and South Korea.

Of the 28 countries in the region that are included in the index, nine improve their scores, seven register no change and the scores for 12 decline. Myanmar is among the worst performers in the region once again—its score falls by 0.28 to 0.74, as political participation was progressively circumscribed



and media freedom suppressed following a military coup in 2021. This is a precipitous decline from a highpoint of 4.20 in 2016, a year after the country held its first multi-party elections, which the opposition won by a landslide. Myanmar’s global ranking remains unchanged at 166th, placing the country almost at the bottom of the 167 countries in the Democracy Index. Hong Kong and China also record big decreases in their index scores, of 0.31 and 0.27 respectively. They drop three and eight positions respectively in the ranking, to 88th and 156th places.

At the other end of the spectrum, Thailand records an increase of 0.62 in its score and is the top-performing country in the index in this respect. The improvement is due to a widening political space for the country’s opposition parties, greater popular political participation and a receding threat from secessionist movements. Consequently, Thailand climbs 17 places in the global rankings, to 55th position.

There is only one change in country classification by regime type in the region this year: Papua New Guinea has been downgraded from a “flawed democracy” to a “hybrid regime”. The change was prompted by the new government’s policy commitment to codifying the country’s Christian identity in the constitution, infringing the democratic principle of separation of church and state. Overall, Asia and Australasia is home to five “full democracies”, nine “flawed democracies”, seven “hybrid regimes” and seven “authoritarian regimes”. The latter category includes Afghanistan, Myanmar and North Korea, the bottom three countries in the global ranking.

An end to covid-19 restrictions, but new curbs on civil liberties

Three years into the covid-19 pandemic, most countries in Asia and Australasia have vaccinated the majority of the population against the virus (China being a notable exception). This development has significantly reduced the necessity of harsh restrictions on mobility and public gatherings, which lasted longer in the region than almost everywhere else in the world. The resulting return of freedoms and normal life has boosted civil liberties-related scores across the region. However, in some cases

there has been a deterioration in scores on some metrics. Cambodia is a good example: in 2022 the authorities completely lifted covid-related restrictions but at the same time curbed citizens' rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. The authorities imposed heavy censorship on the local print and digital media and restricted trade union activity. There is little sign that this situation is going to improve any time soon, given that the Cambodian People's Party continues to dominate the political landscape following the dissolution by court order in 2017 of the main opposition party.

An upsurge of pent-up anger and public protests

In 2022 a deterioration in the economic situation in many countries, partly related to the spill-over effects of the war in Ukraine (notably rising inflation), fuelled public dissatisfaction and led to greater political participation. With elections in many cases failing to provide an outlet for public anger, demonstrations and protests erupted throughout the region. The combination of a hamstrung economy, low savings and surging inflation made old cracks in the political and economic system less tolerable and public anger boiled over in some low-income countries.

In Sri Lanka, an economic crisis set off mass public protests that eventually brought down the strongman president, Gotabaya Rajapaksa, whose family had long dominated the political scene and key government positions. Meanwhile, residents in the Mongolian capital city, Ulaanbaatar, organised a week-long protest in December 2022 against corruption and alleged embezzlement involving a state-owned mining firm. In China, where collective action in protest against government policies is usually localised and swiftly suppressed, nationwide demonstrations against the government's "zero-covid" policy erupted in November. The spark for the mass protests was a deadly fire in a blockaded apartment building in the north-western city of Urumqi. The protests contributed to the Chinese government's U-turn on its "zero-covid" policy. However, most of the protests were small in scale, suggesting that the overwhelming majority of the Chinese population either does not feel the need to protest or remains reluctant to engage in political participation for fear of retribution or for some other reason.

Protests across the region were accompanied in 2022 by an increase in citizens' interest in political news, resulting in improved scores on these metrics in some countries. Greater enthusiasm for political participation in many countries in the region highlighted dissatisfaction with the status quo but did not produce any durable improvement in the respective countries' political systems. Without institutional and wide-ranging reforms to protect political rights, strengthen government accountability and eliminate incentives for official corruption, such venting of public anger risks degenerating into recurrent disruption to political stability. It is also likely that the development of a modern surveillance society based on facial recognition and tracking technologies will enable authoritarian governments to control public protests, deter people from attending them and identify demonstrators.

Democracy in retreat in Hong Kong and South Korea

Elsewhere in Asia and Australasia, governance faces challenges of both conventional and new types. Hong Kong's position in the Democracy Index has continued to worsen for a number of reasons. The quality of the territory's renowned civil service was undermined by an exodus of experienced staff in 2022 in response to the deteriorating political situation and the shrinking space of freedom. Meanwhile,

the enforcement of the national security law is making it increasingly difficult to organise independent trade unions, resulting in a downgrade in the relevant indicator in the Democracy Index. These setbacks come on top of the erosion of media and academic freedoms that has occurred in recent years. Hong Kong's index score declines from 5.60 in 2021 to 5.28 in 2022, now more than 1 full index point below its peak in 2015 of 6.50, after the 2014 "Umbrella Movement" protests against attempts to reform Hong Kong's electoral system in an anti-democratic direction.

Years of confrontational party politics have taken a toll on South Korea's democracy. A Manichaean interpretation of politics has shrunk the space for consensus-building and compromise, often paralysing policymaking. Politicians focus their political energies on taking down rival politicians rather than working to find consensus and improve the lives of citizens. This pattern of confrontational politics has been detrimental to the country's *political culture* score in the Democracy Index, as the public has increasingly grown disenchanted with democratic politics and lost faith in public officials. The result is increasing public support for rule by the military or a strong leader unencumbered by political constraints.

Old and new threats to sovereignty

Asia and Australasia is prey to conflicting territorial claims and geopolitical flashpoints. From the Himalayan mountains through a littoral of islets and rocks in the South and East China Seas to Taiwan,

Thailand: progress, albeit fragile

No country in Asia and Australasia, or among the 167 countries covered by the Democracy Index, improved as much as Thailand in 2022. With improvements across many indicator scores, the country's overall score in the index increases by a whopping 0.63 points. Thailand rises from 72nd in the global rankings in 2021 to 55th in 2022.

A series of victories for the political opposition in parliamentary by-elections and municipal elections in 2022 revealed the increasing electoral appeal of non-government parties. EIU expects opposition parties to make significant gains in the next general election, which must be held by May 2023. This will open up political space, bolster representation for a broader set of social and economic groups and encourage further political participation. The local insurgency in the three Muslim-dominated southern provinces has been largely contained and ceased to be a main threat to the state authorities in 2022. Thailand was also

one of the first countries in the region to withdraw covid-19-related restrictions in 2022, which further boosted the country's index score.

On the other hand, Thailand is a good example of the fragility and provisional nature of democratic progress in many countries in the region that are categorised as a "flawed democracy" or a "hybrid regime". Despite increasing public dissatisfaction with the pro-military ruling party and the electoral ascendancy of the opposition parties, the government retains command over the security and judiciary apparatus. Furthermore, the military-aligned bloc enjoys the advantage of a constitutional provision that allows the appointed Senate (the upper house of parliament) to vote on the selection of the prime minister. Any parties that seek to form a governing coalition will have to secure the backing of the military establishment, and certain policy areas such as the defence budget and reforms to the monarchy are off the agenda. The military-aligned government will continue to use *lese-majeste* laws, which make it a crime to defame, insult or threaten the monarch.

territorial disputes are a constant challenge to state sovereignty. Countries such as the Philippines and Myanmar also face local paramilitaries and secessionist forces that are challenging the state's ability to exercise complete territorial control.

Globalisation and technological advances have introduced new threats to state sovereignty. The proliferation of the internet and handheld electronic devices connects most residents in the region to people, places and ideas previously beyond access, leaving governments facing a new digital dimension of governance to manage. Ownership of and access to personal data has emerged as a new dimension of state sovereignty, as well as giving rise to new means for the state to control its citizens. China and India have demanded that foreign firms operating in their territories must store citizens' personal data within their borders. The idea of digital sovereignty is being explored widely in Asia, with implications for personal data privacy and freedom of speech in the digital realm. The demand for state access to personal communications data is likely to be an increasingly contentious issue. Meanwhile, the continuing evolution of cyberattacks and ransom-taking perpetrated by state actors and private criminal groups demonstrates that new threats to state sovereignty have assumed a more intangible, asymmetrical form.

Eastern Europe

Eastern Europe's average regional score in the 2022 Democracy Index stands at 5.39. This is a slight improvement from 2021 when the score stood at 5.36. The score remains markedly below the 5.76 peak

Table 10.
Eastern Europe 2022

	Overall score	Global Rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
Albania	6.41	64	13	7.00	6.43	5.00	6.25	7.35	Flawed democracy
Armenia	5.63	82	17	7.92	5.71	6.11	3.13	5.29	Hybrid regime
Azerbaijan	2.87	134	23	0.50	2.86	3.33	5.00	2.65	Authoritarian
Belarus	1.99	153	26	0.00	0.79	3.33	4.38	1.47	Authoritarian
Bosnia and Hercegovina	5.00	97	20	7.00	4.00	5.00	3.13	5.88	Hybrid regime
Bulgaria	6.53	57	9	9.17	5.36	6.11	4.38	7.65	Flawed democracy
Croatia	6.50	59	10	9.17	6.07	6.11	4.38	6.76	Flawed democracy
Czech Republic	7.97	25=	1	9.58	6.43	7.22	7.50	9.12	Flawed democracy
Estonia	7.96	27	2	9.58	7.86	6.67	6.88	8.82	Flawed democracy
Georgia	5.20	90	19	7.00	3.57	6.11	3.75	5.59	Hybrid regime
Hungary	6.64	56	8	8.33	6.79	4.44	6.88	6.76	Flawed democracy
Kazakhstan	3.08	127=	22	0.50	3.21	5.00	3.75	2.94	Authoritarian
Kyrgyz Republic	3.62	116	21	4.33	1.50	4.44	3.13	4.71	Authoritarian
Latvia	7.37	38	4	9.58	6.07	6.11	6.25	8.82	Flawed democracy
Lithuania	7.31	39	5	9.58	6.43	6.11	5.63	8.82	Flawed democracy
Moldova	6.23	69	15	7.42	5.36	7.22	4.38	6.76	Flawed democracy
Montenegro	6.45	61=	12	7.42	6.79	7.22	3.75	7.06	Flawed democracy

Table 10.
Eastern Europe 2022

	Overall score	Global Rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
North Macedonia	6.10	72	16	7.83	6.07	6.11	3.13	7.35	Flawed democracy
Poland	7.04	46=	7	9.17	6.07	6.67	6.25	7.06	Flawed democracy
Romania	6.45	61=	11	9.17	6.43	5.56	3.75	7.35	Flawed democracy
Russia	2.28	146	24	0.92	2.14	2.22	3.75	2.35	Authoritarian
Serbia	6.33	68	14	7.83	6.07	6.67	3.75	7.35	Flawed democracy
Slovakia	7.07	43	6	9.58	6.07	5.56	5.63	8.53	Flawed democracy
Slovenia	7.75	31	3	9.58	7.14	7.22	6.25	8.53	Flawed democracy
Tajikistan	1.94	156=	27	0.00	2.21	2.22	4.38	0.88	Authoritarian
Turkmenistan	1.66	161	28	0.00	0.79	2.22	5.00	0.29	Authoritarian
Ukraine	5.42	87	18	6.50	2.71	7.22	6.25	4.41	Hybrid regime
Uzbekistan	2.12	149	25	0.08	1.86	2.78	5.00	0.88	Authoritarian
Regional score	5.39			6.24	4.74	5.36	4.84	5.77	

Source: EIU.

recorded in 2006, when the index was first published. This year’s Democracy Index shows diverging trends as a result of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, which happened just as countries were emerging from the shock to civil liberties induced by the covid-19 pandemic.

Poor institutions continue to be a drag on the quality of democracy in the region, and the score for *functioning of government* remains eastern Europe’s worst-performing category: its score of 4.74 represents only a modest improvement from the previous year. The *political culture* and *civil liberties* categories register the biggest improvements. Coronavirus-related restrictions were lifted across the

Eastern Europe:

Democracy Index 2022 by category

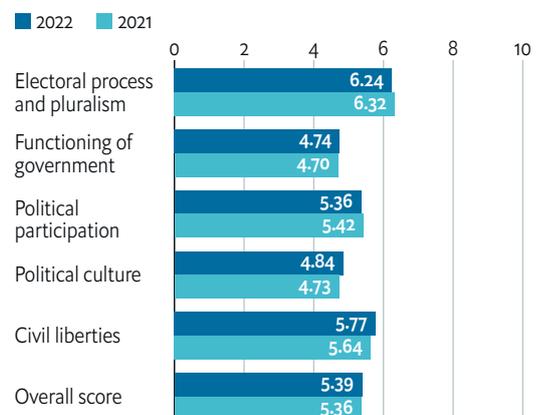
(Index score out of 10, 10 being best)



Source: EIU.

Change in category scores 2021-22

(Index score out of 10, 10 being best)



region in 2022, enabling the restoration of some civil liberties that were curbed during the pandemic, improving people's sense of control over their lives. Meanwhile, the war in Ukraine and the unfolding cost-of-living crisis have increased citizens' engagement with politics and news in some places.

A total of 16 countries in eastern Europe improve their score in the Democracy Index in 2022, with Montenegro and Albania registering the biggest improvements. Six countries suffer a deterioration in their score, with Russia facing the largest decline (the largest of any country in the index in 2022). There are still no "full democracies" in the region: of the 28 countries, there are 16 "flawed democracies" (comprising EU eastern member states and most of the western Balkans), four "hybrid regimes" (Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Ukraine), and eight "authoritarian regimes" (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Russia and all of the Central Asian Commonwealth of Independent States member nations).

Last year's winners consolidate their gains

Three east European countries—Moldova, Montenegro and North Macedonia—were upgraded from "hybrid regimes" to "flawed democracies" in 2021. These countries again register improvements in their scores in 2022. Montenegro's score improves from 6.02 in 2021 to 6.45 in 2022, as it continued to make improvements in its scores for *political participation*, *political culture* and *civil liberties*. The Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS), which monopolised political power in the country for three decades until 2020, has not managed to return to power. Interest in politics has also risen, according to results from the World Values Survey. However, as we had anticipated in previous reports, Montenegro continued to suffer from political instability in 2022, with a minority government, led by the pro-Western United Reform Action collapsing in August, just four months after it was formed. Adding to the difficulties of improving democratic practices in Montenegro, the DPS continues to exercise significant influence in state institutions.

North Macedonia's score improves marginally, from 6.03 in 2021 to 6.10 in 2022, owing to improvements in its *civil liberties* score, while its *functioning of government* score declines. The parliament of North Macedonia endorsed an unpopular proposal in July that resulted in Bulgaria lifting its veto on North Macedonia's EU accession talks. The proposal was unpopular with the public, given concerns that the concessions made to Bulgaria would undermine Macedonian national identity. At the same time, however, the country finally published the first official datasets from the 2021 national census in 2022, and successfully navigated highly divisive social and political issues related to the number of ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians in the country.

Moldova's score improves from 6.10 in 2021 to 6.23 in 2022, with improvements in the categories of *electoral process and pluralism* and *political participation*. The government, led by the pro-EU Party of Action and Solidarity, has embarked on a reform agenda to tackle corruption and improve transparency, while the country's sizeable diaspora has remained politically engaged. However, unlike most other east European countries, the *civil liberties* score failed to improve, owing to a worsening of basic citizen security. The Russia-Ukraine war has led to a deterioration in the security situation, given Moldova's 1,222-km land border with Ukraine. The conflict has once again brought to the surface tensions in the pro-Russian breakaway region of Transdniestria and ignited fears that the war in Ukraine could spill over into Moldova. Polarisation along pro-EU and pro-Russian lines remains pronounced.

Countries register a confidence boost

The impact of the coronavirus pandemic diminished in 2022, and citizens enjoyed a return of personal freedoms. This was due to a relaxation of emergency measures and restrictions on freedom of movement, resulting in improvements in the *civil liberties* scoring category. Nearly all of the region's EU member states—Bulgaria and Croatia are the exceptions—register improvements in their scores in 2022. The EU states that register the strongest improvements in 2022 are Poland (+0.24), the Czech Republic (+0.23) and Slovenia (+0.21). The lifting of pandemic restrictions has also had a positive effect on the *functioning of government* and *political culture* categories. There were improvements in levels of trust in government, according to World Values Survey, Eurobarometer and Balkanbarometer data, and in perceptions of the extent to which people had free choice and control over their lives.

Romania's index score hardly improves (+0.02), while Bulgaria's declined (-0.11) for the third year in a row. Both countries' *civil liberties* scores improve, but both record a decline in the score for *political participation*. Election turnout has been declining in Bulgaria for some years; the snap election in 2022—the fourth election to be held in two years—saw turnout drop below 40%. As Bulgaria's political crisis has deepened and become protracted, fatigue with politics has increased and voters have become further alienated from political processes. Citizens' engagement with politics has also fallen in Romania, but confidence in political parties has risen according to the Eurobarometer. The coalition government that came to power in November 2021 governed with relative stability throughout 2022.

Russia records a huge decline and plummets in the global rankings

The average score for the region's "authoritarian regimes" falls further in the 2022 Democracy Index, from 2.59 in 2021 to 2.14. Russia registers the steepest decline of any country in the region and in the world, with its score falling from 3.24 in 2021 to 2.28 in 2022, and its position in the global rankings sinking to 146th (out of 167). This precipitous decline reflects the deleterious impact on domestic political life in Russia of the Kremlin's war against Ukraine. The war has accelerated and deepened authoritarian trends that have been in train for many years. In particular, it has led to a further concentration of power in the hands of the president, Vladimir Putin. This has further undermined the legitimacy of constitutional mechanisms for the transfer of power—which we now regard as being neither clear, established or accepted—a process that began with the constitutional reforms undertaken by the regime in 2020.

The biggest regressions in Russia's scores occur in the *political participation* and *civil liberties* categories, whose scores fall to 2.22 and 2.35 respectively (down from 4.44 and 4.12 respectively in 2021). The Kremlin has long cultivated the idea that people should leave politics to the politicians in return for a quiet life with a degree of economic security. The majority of Russians were content to accept this sort of social contract and had long shown little interest in politics. A small minority had continued to contest the direction in which Russia was heading and had been meeting increasingly direct repression. At the start of the war, these people went on to the streets to express their opposition to the invasion: they met the full force of state violence and repression.

The regime sharply curtailed civil liberties in the aftermath of the invasion, further clamping down on dissenting voices and eradicating the last remnants of any opposition or critical media. Anybody participating in any form of protest, however small, risks not only a beating but also a lengthy prison

sentence. The Kremlin has imposed restrictions on internet use and broadened the list of so-called “foreign agents” to include more civil rights organisations, media, artists and other public figures. Critics of the regime were forced to leave the country. By extending government control over the economy and private property, introducing more repressive measures, mobilising wider sections of society to

Frontline Ukraine: democracy under pressure

Ukraine’s score in the 2022 Democracy Index declines compared with 2021, from 5.57 to 5.42. This regression underlines the difficulties of building democracy in a country whose existence is threatened by an invading army and all-out war.

Despite the overall decline in Ukraine’s Democracy Index score in 2022, there were also many positive developments, not least in the way in which the war has given rise to a sense of nationhood and national solidarity. Ukraine’s resistance to the Russian invasion is a demonstration of how ordinary people are prepared to fight to defend the principles of national sovereignty and self-determination. It suggests that, provided Russia does not succeed in defeating Ukraine, Ukraine will be in a better position to build a democratic state than it has ever been over the past 30 years.

Ukraine’s score for the categories of *functioning of government*, *political participation* and *political culture* all improve. Russia’s invasion led to a strong “rally-around-the-flag” effect, after which trust in the country’s president, government and armed forces surged to all-time highs. Citizens’ engagement with politics and the news also increased.

However, in fighting a war that is widely understood to be existential, Ukraine’s leaders have sometimes curtailed the rights and freedoms of citizens, political parties and the media. Much of this is par for the course in wartime, but such extraordinary measures have inevitably resulted in downgrades in various indicators in the Democracy Index.

In response to the invasion, the Ukrainian government imposed martial law, which curtailed freedom of movement and placed sweeping emergency powers in the hands of the president, Volodymyr Zelenskyi. Checks and balances on Mr Zelenskyi’s authority were effectively suspended as normal political processes assumed a lower priority in the face of an existential external threat. The banning of pro-Russian political parties, such as Opposition Platform—For Life, as well as media outlets reporting pro-Russian views, is understandable in the context of the invasion and amid Ukraine’s attempts to consolidate and defend its national identity. However, wartime measures set dangerous precedents that could be used by the authorities to restrict political activity using the pretext of national security—but this will be something for the people of Ukraine to watch out for in future.

Ukraine’s democracy has struggled to rebound to levels similar to those in the immediate aftermath of the “Orange revolution” in 2004-2005

(Democracy Index score, 10=most democratic)



Source: EIU.

fight in Ukraine, and expanding state coercion beyond the usual suspects, for example by placing some of Russia’s regions under martial law, the Kremlin has effectively broken the unwritten social contract of recent decades. It is no longer possible for people to ignore politics as the invasion of Ukraine runs into trouble and the consequences of the war increasingly impinge on people’s lives in Russia. The regime’s ability to continue the war for an extended period of time without encountering broader domestic dissent is open to question. This realisation will probably lead the country’s rulers to double down on repression. This will only increase the brittleness of the regime.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Many of the nations in Sub-Saharan Africa continue to be concentrated at the bottom of the Democracy Index rankings. The continent has only one “full democracy”—Mauritius—and six “flawed democracies” in 2022, unchanged from the 2021 index. The number of countries classed as “hybrid regimes”, at 14, also remains unchanged from the 2021 index. Authoritarian forms of government continue to dominate, with 23 countries still classified as such. The overall average regional score

Table 11.
Sub-Saharan Africa 2022

	Overall score	Global Rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
Angola	3.96	109	22	4.50	3.21	4.44	5.00	2.65	Authoritarian
Benin	4.28	104	18	1.67	5.71	3.33	6.25	4.41	Hybrid regime
Botswana	7.73	32	2	9.17	6.79	6.67	7.50	8.53	Flawed democracy
Burkina Faso	3.08	127=	30	0.00	2.50	5.00	4.38	3.53	Authoritarian
Burundi	2.13	148	39	0.00	0.00	3.89	5.00	1.76	Authoritarian
Cabo Verde	7.65	35	3	9.17	7.00	6.67	6.88	8.53	Flawed democracy
Cameroon	2.56	140=	37	0.33	2.14	3.89	4.38	2.06	Authoritarian
Central African Republic	1.35	164	44	0.83	0.00	1.67	1.88	2.35	Authoritarian
Chad	1.67	160	42	0.00	0.00	2.22	3.75	2.35	Authoritarian
Comoros	3.20	120	27	2.08	2.21	4.44	3.75	3.53	Authoritarian
Congo (Brazzaville)	2.79	136	34	0.00	2.50	4.44	3.75	3.24	Authoritarian
Côte d’Ivoire	4.22	106	20	4.33	2.86	4.44	5.63	3.82	Hybrid regime
Democratic Republic of Congo	1.48	162	43	1.17	0.00	2.22	3.13	0.88	Authoritarian
Djibouti	2.74	137	35	0.00	1.29	4.44	5.63	2.35	Authoritarian
Equatorial Guinea	1.92	158	41	0.00	0.43	3.33	4.38	1.47	Authoritarian
Eritrea	2.03	152	40	0.00	2.14	0.56	6.88	0.59	Authoritarian
Eswatini	3.01	129	31	0.92	2.50	2.78	5.63	3.24	Authoritarian
Ethiopia	3.17	122=	28	0.42	2.86	6.11	5.00	1.47	Authoritarian
Gabon	3.40	118	25	2.17	1.86	4.44	5.00	3.53	Authoritarian
Gambia	4.47	102	17	4.42	4.29	3.89	5.63	4.12	Hybrid regime
Ghana	6.43	63	6	8.33	5.00	6.67	6.25	5.88	Flawed democracy
Guinea	2.32	145	38	0.83	0.43	3.33	4.38	2.65	Authoritarian
Guinea-Bissau	2.56	140=	36	4.00	0.00	3.33	3.13	2.35	Authoritarian
Kenya	5.05	94	14	3.50	5.36	6.67	5.63	4.12	Hybrid regime

Table 11.
Sub-Saharan Africa 2022

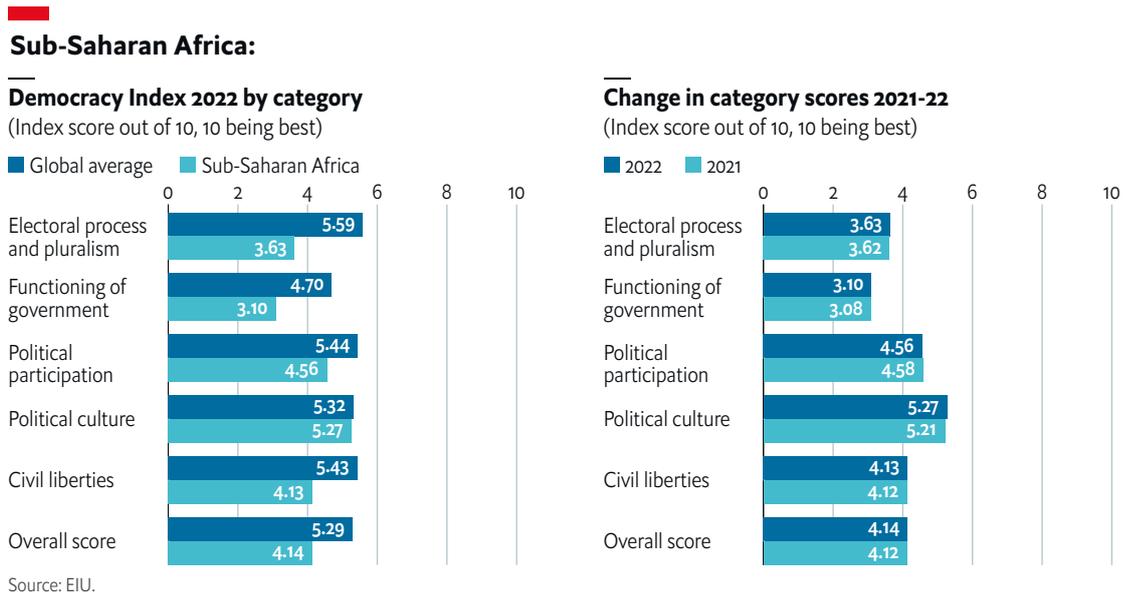
	Overall score	Global Rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
Lesotho	6.19	71	7	9.17	4.14	5.56	5.63	6.47	Flawed democracy
Liberia	5.43	86	12	7.42	2.71	6.11	5.63	5.29	Hybrid regime
Madagascar	5.70	80	11	7.92	3.57	6.67	5.63	4.71	Hybrid regime
Malawi	5.91	76	8	7.00	4.29	5.56	6.25	6.47	Hybrid regime
Mali	3.23	119	26	1.17	0.00	5.56	5.63	3.82	Authoritarian
Mauritania	4.03	108	21	3.50	3.57	5.56	3.13	4.41	Hybrid regime
Mauritius	8.14	21	1	9.17	7.86	6.11	8.75	8.82	Full democracy
Mozambique	3.51	117	24	2.58	1.43	5.00	5.00	3.53	Authoritarian
Namibia	6.52	58	5	7.00	5.36	6.67	5.63	7.94	Flawed democracy
Niger	3.73	112	23	2.92	1.50	3.89	5.63	4.71	Authoritarian
Nigeria	4.23	105	19	5.17	3.93	3.89	3.75	4.41	Hybrid regime
Rwanda	3.10	126	29	1.42	4.29	2.78	4.38	2.65	Authoritarian
Senegal	5.72	79	10	6.58	5.71	4.44	6.25	5.59	Hybrid regime
Sierra Leone	5.03	96	15	6.58	2.86	4.44	6.25	5.00	Hybrid regime
South Africa	7.05	45	4	7.42	7.14	8.33	5.00	7.35	Flawed democracy
Tanzania	5.10	92	13	4.83	5.00	5.00	6.25	4.41	Hybrid regime
Togo	2.99	130	32	0.92	2.14	3.33	5.63	2.94	Authoritarian
Uganda	4.55	99	16	3.42	3.57	3.89	6.88	5.00	Hybrid regime
Zambia	5.80	78	9	7.92	3.64	5.00	6.88	5.59	Hybrid regime
Zimbabwe	2.92	132	33	0.00	2.50	3.89	5.00	3.24	Authoritarian
Regional score	4.14			3.63	3.10	4.56	5.27	4.13	

Source: EIU.

improves marginally, by 0.02 points to 4.14 (compared with a global average of 5.29), up from 4.12 in 2021. This means that the region is the second-lowest ranked region in the world, above only the Middle East and North Africa, which has an average score of 3.34.

The improvement in the average regional score is supported by an improved score in the *political culture* category, which rises by 0.06 points compared with 2021 to an average of 5.27. This improvement reflects changing popular perceptions of military rule in the region, with citizens in some countries becoming more critical of such regimes. This is the case in Guinea, for example, where the authoritarian habits of the junta that has been in power since September 2021 have caused widespread disillusionment and sparked unrest. There were also protests against military rule in Chad. There are hardly discernible improvements in other category scores for Sub-Saharan Africa in 2022, including for *electoral process and pluralism* (+0.01), *functioning of government* (+0.02), and *civil liberties* (+0.01). Meanwhile, the region's average score for *political participation* decreases by 0.02 points.

Of the region's 44 countries, 14 register an improvement in their score—albeit from a low base—with the best performers being Angola (+0.59), Niger (+0.51), Senegal (+0.19), Togo (+0.19) and Malawi (+0.17). The scores for eight countries worsen, albeit moderately, with the exception of Burkina Faso



and Mali, which record 0.76-point and 0.25-point declines in their scores, taking their total scores to 3.08 and 3.23 respectively. The total index scores for a vast majority (22) of the region’s countries remain stagnant at their 2021 levels.

Democratic retreat continues in Sahel and west Africa

The Democracy Index’s 2022 findings reveal a stagnation of democracy in west Africa, a continuation of the trend in 2021, when there were three successful military coups in Chad, Mali and Guinea. In 2022 Burkina Faso became the next country to fall prey to military rule. In January, the democratically elected president, Roch Marc Christian Kaboré (in office since 2015), was overthrown in a military-led popular coup following weeks of protests over the government’s failure to tackle spreading Islamist insurgency and rising insecurity. Only nine months later, coup leader Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba was himself overthrown by Captain Ibrahim Traoré for the same reason (along with several political missteps). That both military coups received strong popular support highlighted an erosion in public confidence in existing political institutions in the country and widespread disinformation campaigns by external actors (notably Russia). Failed coup attempts also occurred in Guinea Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe, and The Gambia in 2022.

Recording a decline in its score from 3.84 in 2021 to 3.08 in 2022, Burkina Faso suffers the biggest score decline of any country in the African continent and the second-biggest decline in score globally (after Russia). Unconstitutional transfers of power have turned many countries in west Africa into hotbeds of instability, but these anti-democratic events are also being driven by a failure of existing institutions to tackle security crises. The insurgencies in the Western Sahel, mainly in Mali, Burkina Faso and, to a lesser extent, Niger, had led to about 9,000 fatalities by the end of 2022.

In the overlapping Sahel and west Africa sub-regions (including in Mali and Guinea-Bissau), state control—whether democratic or military-led—over domestic territories is limited to the main urban centres, constraining the effective functioning of government. Following the failed coup attempt in Guinea-Bissau—symbolising the heightened state of volatility in the country—the president,

Umaro Sissoco Embaló, dissolved parliament in May 2022, citing irreconcilable differences between himself and the legislature. The dissolution and subsequent postponement of the legislative elections epitomised the authoritarian tendencies of Mr Embaló and his undue control over the legislative electoral process. This contributed to a deterioration in Guinea Bissau's *electoral process and pluralism* score, which falls from 4.99 in the 2021 Index to 4.00 in the latest edition.

The political and security landscape in Mali remains dire, with the state being largely absent from large swathes of the country and unable to provide basic security to many of its citizens following the withdrawal of French forces in August 2022. Internal conflict has further consolidated military rule in the country since two military takeovers in 2020 and 2021. In June 2022 Mali's ruling military junta advanced electoral reform proposals that would permit members of the military to participate in national elections, further limiting chances of opposition political parties coming to power. (Presidential elections are currently scheduled for early 2024.) Accordingly, the *electoral process and pluralism* score for Mali worsens from 2.42 in 2021 to 1.17, reflecting the military's increased authority and control over the electoral process.

State fragmentation and sub-nationalism: the Ethiopian case

Conflicts over differing views on state power are not new to Africa since decolonisation, but they have re-emerged violently over the past decade. State fragmentation and poor institutional building are prevalent across all sub-regions of the continent today, often overlaid by a complex mix of social, ethnic and political cleavages. The two-year long civil war between the Ethiopian central government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) has been the world's deadliest conflict in recent years, claiming the lives of between 300,000-600,000 people between November 2020 and November 2022. In November 2022 both sides signed a peace agreement to end hostilities. The war is part of a growing trend of fragmentation in several Sub-Saharan countries, which is accompanied by a redefinition of conceptions of political identities.

The TPLF, an ethnic party that effectively ruled Ethiopia from 1991 to 2018 until the prime minister, Abiy Ahmed, assumed power, has been at loggerheads with the central government over the political direction of the country. Mr Ahmed's attempt to re-centralise state power and weaken the ethno-federal system in recent years fuelled the conflict and weakened political institutions. As a result, the country's score in the *functioning of government* category drops to a new low of 2.86 in the 2022 Democracy Index, down from 3.21 in 2021. The war also exacerbated authoritarian trends, causing the *civil liberties* score to drop from 1.76 in 2021 to 1.47 in 2022. Despite the recently secured peace deal in Tigray, fresh military operations against rebel forces in other ethno-national regions, including Oromia and other parts of southern Ethiopia, as well as the ongoing disarmament process in the north, will result in the military and security forces having a greater influence over government and civilian life.

Social movements remain resilient in the face of sustained coercion

Citizens have shown a commitment to take part in demonstrations. Demand for democracy remains high in Sub-Saharan Africa, and citizens are increasingly holding their leaders to account, driven by a combination of young populations, sustained socioeconomic challenges and ethnically driven politics. Increased public discontent with governments across the region in 2022 stemmed from soaring domestic prices (stoked by Russia's invasion of Ukraine), alongside high levels of unemployment, food

insecurity and corruption, and poor public services. Anti-government public protests erupted over rising inflation in several parts of Sierra Leone in August 2022, and the country's *political participation* score rises to 4.44 in 2022, up from 3.89 in 2021. Similar widespread popular protests driven by the cost of living crisis erupted in Malawi, Kenya and South Africa. Concurrently, in Eswatini, protests that began in June 2021, owing to serious discontent with the continued rule of King Mswati III under an absolute monarchical system, continued throughout 2022.

Increasing social unrest across the region seems to be correlated with a decline in public confidence in governments' ability to live up to their electoral promises. This was evident in Ghana, where demonstrations and strikes continued throughout 2022. As citizens challenged political structures, repression of dissenting voices and coercion increased apace. There has been a clampdown on media freedoms and civil rights over the past year. A nationwide disruption to internet service on multiple providers across Sierra Leone was reported in August 2022, following anti-government protests. A three-day national curfew was also imposed, and police opened fire on civilians and used tear gas, with 21 civilians and six security personnel being killed in the clashes. These methods to contain demonstrations and disperse crowds demonstrate a pivot towards an increasingly authoritarian clampdown on dissent in the region. Similarly, the Ethiopian government's intolerance towards critical political coverage increased over the course of the conflict in the Tigray region in 2022. The government has arbitrarily cracked down on both domestic and foreign media agents and agencies.

Elsewhere in the region, 50 people were killed by security forces in Chad during protests in October calling for an end to military rule after the transitional military government delayed democratic elections by two years to 2024. The military authorities originally promised an 18-month transition to elections when Mahamat Déby seized power in April 2021 after his father, the previous president Idriss Déby, was killed on the battlefield during a conflict with rebel groups. Hundreds of people were sentenced to prison for their involvement in the protests. On the whole, despite suppression of civil liberties and media freedoms across the region, citizens' movements calling for deeper democratisation and accountability remain a core part of Sub-Saharan Africa's politics. Reflecting this, *political participation* and *political culture* continue to be the best performing categories for the region in 2022, at 4.56 and 5.27 respectively, compared with global averages of 5.44 and 5.32.

Electoral institutions hold up amid heightened volatility

Electoral institutions in Angola, Kenya and Senegal proved resilient in 2022 as they were tested against a backdrop of heightened public discontent and an anti-incumbent backlash. A substantial decline in vote share of incumbent governments in Angola and Senegal indicated citizens' desire for greater political accountability in the face of rising socioeconomic challenges and lack of representation. In an historic election, Angolans challenged their one-party state in the August 2022 legislative polls, which saw the parliamentary majority of the incumbent Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola drop from 61% to 51.2%. The election was held in an uncharacteristically competitive manner—with no bans on opposition political parties from contesting the polls—and was deemed free by international observers. This supported a 3.17-point boost, from 1.33 in 2021 to 4.50 in 2022, to the country's score for *electoral processes and pluralism*. The main opposition party, the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola, received 43.9% of the vote. With abstention at its highest level since the country's

post-civil war election in 2008, low turnout helped to strengthen the opposition and highlighted growing dissatisfaction with the political class over its failure to improve living standards and tackle unemployment, particularly among the youth.

Senegalese voters ended the ruling Alliance pour la république’s absolute majority in parliament following the July legislative elections in a first since the country’s independence from France in 1960. Although the ruling camp was subsequently able to secure a narrow absolute majority by just one seat, totalling 83 out of 165, after forming an alliance with another political party, the results have strengthened opposition oversight of the executive. In a major success for the opposition, two other coalitions, Yewwi Askan Wi and Wally Senegal, won 56 and 24 seats respectively. The remaining two seats were taken by two other small parties, which remain in opposition.

The peaceful and clear-cut conclusion to the Kenyan presidential election in August 2022, which ushered in a new president, William Ruto, bodes well for Kenya’s institutional strengthening and political stability. The win for Mr Ruto (aged 55) also hands power to a younger generation of politicians and sidelines the old guard, which will allow for much-needed fresh policy perspectives. In addition, the election result hints that economic factors—such as unemployment and poverty—are becoming more important than ethnicity in determining voter preferences, at least at the margins.

The Middle East and North Africa

The Middle East and North Africa experiences another consecutive deterioration of its regional score in the 2022 Democracy Index, further reinforcing the region’s position as the lowest ranked among those

Table 12.
Middle East 2022

	Overall score	Global Rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
Algeria	3.66	113	6	3.08	2.50	3.89	5.00	3.82	Authoritarian
Bahrain	2.52	142	14	0.42	2.71	3.33	4.38	1.76	Authoritarian
Egypt	2.93	131	12	1.33	3.21	3.33	5.00	1.76	Authoritarian
Iran	1.96	154	18	0.00	2.50	3.33	2.50	1.47	Authoritarian
Iraq	3.13	124	10	5.25	0.00	6.11	3.13	1.18	Authoritarian
Israel	7.93	29	1	9.58	7.86	9.44	6.88	5.88	Flawed democracy
Jordan	3.17	122=	9	2.67	3.21	3.89	3.13	2.94	Authoritarian
Kuwait	3.83	111	5	3.17	3.93	4.44	4.38	3.24	Authoritarian
Lebanon	3.64	115	8	3.50	0.79	6.67	3.13	4.12	Authoritarian
Libya	2.06	151	17	0.00	0.00	3.89	3.75	2.65	Authoritarian
Morocco	5.04	95	3	5.25	4.64	5.56	5.63	4.12	Hybrid regime
Oman	3.12	125	11	0.08	3.93	2.78	5.00	3.82	Authoritarian
Palestine	3.86	110	4	2.92	0.14	8.33	4.38	3.53	Authoritarian
Qatar	3.65	114	7	1.50	4.29	3.33	5.63	3.53	Authoritarian
Saudi Arabia	2.08	150	16	0.00	3.57	2.22	3.13	1.47	Authoritarian
Sudan	2.47	144	15	0.00	1.43	4.44	5.00	1.47	Authoritarian
Syria	1.43	163	20	0.00	0.00	2.78	4.38	0.00	Authoritarian
Tunisia	5.51	85	2	6.17	4.64	6.11	5.63	5.00	Hybrid regime

Table 12.
Middle East 2022

	Overall score	Global Rank	Regional rank	I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties	Regime type
United Arab Emirates	2.90	133	13	0.00	4.29	2.22	5.63	2.35	Authoritarian
Yemen	1.95	155	19	0.00	0.00	3.89	5.00	0.88	Authoritarian
Regional score	3.34			2.25	2.68	4.50	4.53	2.75	

Source: EIU.

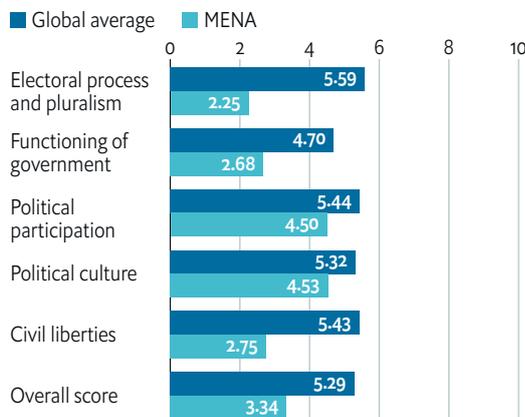
covered. A total of five of the region’s 20 countries rank among the bottom 20 in our global rankings, with only one (Israel—the region’s only “flawed democracy”) ranking in the top half of the Index.

The average score continues to be weighed down by civil conflict and chronic instability in a number of countries, including Yemen and Syria, where sovereignty and, consequently, the prospects for democratisation continue to be undermined by a patchwork of foreign military forces, local militias and insurgent groups. Although still ranking extremely low in the Index overall (151st out of 167 countries surveyed), Libya emerges as one of just three countries in the Middle East and North Africa to receive a higher score than in 2021 (2.06, compared with 1.95) as the country’s peace process gradually progresses despite some early challenges.

Instead, the deterioration of the regional score by 0.07 points, to 3.34 (compared to a global average of 5.29), is driven primarily by regressions across the region’s highest-scoring countries, including Tunisia, Israel, Palestine and Kuwait, following particularly contentious domestic political transitions. The majority of countries in the region experience no score change either way, emphasising the political stasis that has largely defined the trajectory of democracy in the Middle East and North Africa since the Arab Spring in 2011.

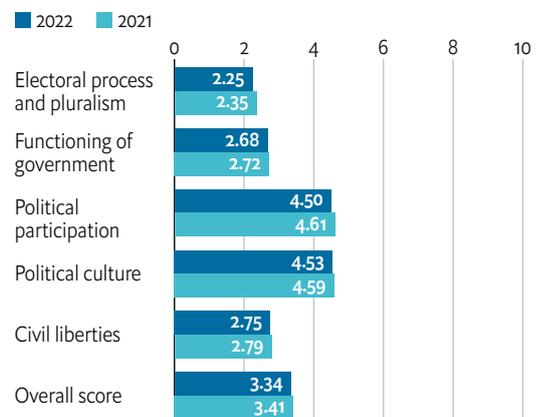
Middle East and North Africa:

Democracy Index 2022 by category
(Index score out of 10, 10 being best)



Source: EIU.

Change in category scores 2021-22
(Index score out of 10, 10 being best)



Tunisia continues its descent into autocracy

Last year we downgraded Tunisia from a “flawed democracy” to a “hybrid regime” amid a sharp deterioration of the country’s score following a constitutional coup led by the president, Kais Saied, in July 2021. His subsequent suspension of the constitution and dismissal of the democratically elected government marked the end of Tunisia’s transition to democracy, which began in the wake of the 2011 Arab Spring protests. Presidential control over the levers of power in Tunisia was consolidated further in 2022, resulting in a decline in Tunisia’s *civil liberties* and *electoral processes and pluralism* scores. Mr Saied ordered the dissolution of the Supreme Judicial Council in February, dismissed parliament in March and assumed control over the electoral council in April, paving the way for a constitutional referendum in July that formalised Tunisia’s shift from a parliamentary democracy to a model centred on presidential supremacy. Many critics of the government were arrested.

Turnout in the referendum was low, with just 30.5% of registered voters participating, signalling mounting dissatisfaction with Mr Saied’s government as 2022 progressed. This fell further to just 8.8% in the first parliamentary election held under the new constitution in December. Both results have contributed to a notable deterioration in Tunisia’s *political participation* score in the Democracy Index, which falls from 7.22 in 2021 to 6.11 in 2022. In contrast, Tunisia’s *political culture* score improves from 5.00 in 2021 to 5.63 in 2022, driven by the growing momentum of anti-government protests in the country organised by trade unions, civil society organisations and political parties who oppose Mr Saied’s consolidation of power.

The worst-performing countries are concentrated in the Levant

Aside from Syria and Egypt, countries across the Levant record deteriorations in their scores across a broad range of categories. Iraq is the biggest mover in this regard, with its overall score depreciating by 0.38 points compared to 2021. The country’s fragile democratic credentials were tested by a prolonged political impasse that followed the October 2021 general election after a Federal Supreme Court ruling in February established a two-thirds quorum for the election of a president, a constitutional prerequisite for forming a government. The move allowed a coalition of established Iran-backed Shia parties known as the Co-ordination Framework to block efforts by the populist Sadrist Movement to form a government, despite the latter having a parliamentary majority. This aroused popular suspicion of judicial manoeuvring by officials sympathetic to Iranian interests in Iraq. Subsequent violent protests and the eventual formation of a Framework-led government in October 2022 drove a sharp deterioration in Iraq’s *political culture* scores, as surveys increasingly showed a weary population expressing greater support for military, technocratic and one-man rule.

Elsewhere in the region, controversial constitutional amendments approved by the Jordanian parliament in January granted further authority to King Abdullah II to select and dismiss the country’s top judges. This prompted a decline in the country’s score for *functioning of government* and *civil liberties*. Promises made in the wake of the Arab Spring to shift Jordan’s model of governance towards a constitutional monarchy appear increasingly unlikely to materialise, despite some token reforms in 2022, such as allowing political parties to establish a presence on university campuses. Meanwhile, in Lebanon, similar concerns over the growing lack of accountability of ruling officials and increasing frustration with failing institutions amid the country’s prolonged political and economic collapse

resulted in a further decline in the country's overall score, from 3.84 in 2021 to 3.64 in 2022.

Israel's slippage in the rankings following a small deterioration in its score is primarily attributable to the end of the brief stint in government of the Ra'am Party, the first Arab party to form part of a governing coalition in the country, after the November 2022 parliamentary election. Ra'am's inclusion in the coalition government formed in mid-2021 led to an improvement in the indicator score for citizen control in that year. However, the formation in December of a government led by the conservative, right-wing Likud party and including a number of far-right, ethno-religious nationalist parties has put an end to this level of representation for the country's Arab community. There are also concerns that the new government may try to pass a law giving the Knesset (parliament) power to override the Supreme Court, which would undermine the separation of powers and possibly imperil civil liberties in future.

A rare upswing for Iran amid persistent protests

Iran recorded a rare, albeit tiny upgrade in its overall score, of 0.01 points in 2022, reflecting an improvement in the *political culture* category amidst a deterioration in other areas. The improved category score came about because of the willingness of citizens to engage in anti-regime protests in the face of brutal repression. According to surveys, Iranians are expressing a growing desire for the installation of a democratic system of government to replace Iran's authoritarian theocracy. These aspirations were manifested in the latter half of the year in the form of nationwide anti-government protests sparked by the death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Kurdish-Iranian woman, while in the custody of the country's morality police. Major protests have occurred regularly in Iran in recent years, but have been driven primarily by socioeconomic grievances. The most recent bout of unrest, which continued into 2023, is unmatched in its intensity, geographical spread and in political focus. Protestors are demanding an overhaul of the state and an expansion of civil liberties. Despite the persistence of the demonstrators, the prospect of the protests bringing about meaningful democratic change seems unlikely without a wider mobilisation of society, notably in rural areas. So far, control of the state apparatus remains firmly in the hands of those who seek to preserve the status quo: the government, religious establishment and, increasingly, the economically powerful Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Appendix

Defining and measuring democracy

There is no consensus on how to measure democracy. Definitions of democracy are contested, and there is a lively debate on the subject. The issue is not only of academic interest. For example, although democracy promotion is high on the list of US foreign-policy priorities, there is no consensus within the US government as to what constitutes a democracy. As one observer put it: “The world’s only superpower is rhetorically and militarily promoting a political system that remains undefined—and it is staking its credibility and treasure on that pursuit,” (Horowitz, 2006, p. 114).

Although the terms “freedom” and “democracy” are often used interchangeably, the two are not synonymous. Democracy can be seen as a set of practices and principles that institutionalise, and thereby, ultimately, protect freedom. Even if a consensus on precise definitions has proved elusive, most observers today would agree that, at a minimum, the fundamental features of a democracy include government based on majority rule and the consent of the governed; the existence of free and fair elections; the protection of minority rights; and respect for basic human rights. Democracy presupposes equality before the law, due process and political pluralism. A question arises as to whether reference to these basic features is sufficient for a satisfactory concept of democracy. As discussed below, there is a question as to how far the definition may need to be widened.

Some insist that democracy is, necessarily, a dichotomous concept: a state is either democratic or not. But most measures now appear to adhere to a continuous concept, with the possibility of varying degrees of democracy. At present, the best-known measure is produced by the US-based Freedom House organisation. The average of its indexes, on a 1 to 7 scale, of *political freedom* (based on 10 indicators) and of *civil liberties* (based on 15 indicators) is often taken to be a measure of democracy.

The Freedom House measure is available for all countries, and stretches back to the early 1970s. It has been used heavily in empirical investigations of the relationship between democracy and various economic and social variables. The so-called Polity Project provides, for a smaller number of countries, measures of democracy and regime types, based on rather minimalist definitions, stretching back to the 19th century. These have also been used in empirical work.

Freedom House also measures a narrower concept, that of “electoral democracy”. Democracies in this minimal sense share at least one common, essential characteristic. Positions of political power are filled through regular, free and fair elections between competing parties, and it is possible for an incumbent government to be turned out of office through elections. Freedom House’s criteria for an electoral democracy include:

- 1) A competitive, multi-party political system.
- 2) Universal adult suffrage.
- 3) Regularly contested elections conducted on the basis of secret ballots, reasonable ballot security and the absence of massive voter fraud.
- 4) Significant public access of major political parties to the electorate through the media and through generally open political campaigning.

The Freedom House definition of political freedom is more demanding (although not much) than its criteria for electoral democracy—that is, it classifies more countries as electoral democracies than as “free” (some “partly free” countries are also categorised as “electoral democracies”). At the end of 2015, 125 out of 193 states were classified as “electoral democracies”; of these, on a more stringent criterion, 89 states were classified as “free”. The Freedom House political-freedom measure covers the electoral process and political pluralism and, to a lesser extent, the functioning of government and a few aspects of participation.

A key difference in measures is between “thin”, or minimalist, and “thick”, or wider, concepts of democracy (Coppedge, 2005). The thin concepts correspond closely to an immensely influential academic definition of democracy, that of Dahl’s concept of polyarchy (Dahl, 1970). Polyarchy has eight components, or institutional requirements: almost all adult citizens have the right to vote; almost all adult citizens are eligible for public office; political leaders have the right to compete for votes; elections are free and fair; all citizens are free to form and join political parties and other organisations; all citizens are free to express themselves on all political issues; diverse sources of information about politics exist and are protected by law; and government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference.

The Freedom House electoral democracy measure is a thin concept. Its measure of democracy based on political rights and civil liberties is “thicker” than the measure of “electoral democracy”. Other definitions of democracy have broadened to include aspects of society and political culture in democratic societies.

The Economist Intelligence Unit measure

The Economist Intelligence Unit’s index is based on the view that measures of democracy which reflect the state of political freedoms and civil liberties are not thick enough. They do not encompass sufficiently, or, in some cases, at all, the features that determine how substantive democracy is. Freedom is an essential component of democracy, but not, in itself, sufficient. In existing measures, the elements of political participation and functioning of government are taken into account only in a marginal and formal way.

Our Democracy Index is based on five categories: *electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of government; political participation; and political culture*. The five categories are interrelated and form a coherent conceptual whole. The condition of holding free and fair competitive elections, and satisfying related aspects of political freedom, is clearly the sine qua non of all definitions.

All modern definitions, except the most minimalist, also consider civil liberties to be a vital component of what is often called “liberal democracy”. The principle of the protection of basic human rights is widely accepted. It is embodied in constitutions throughout the world, as well as in the UN Charter and international agreements such as the Helsinki Final Act (the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe). Basic human rights include freedom of speech, expression and of the press; freedom of religion; freedom of assembly and association; and the right to due judicial process. All democracies are systems in which citizens freely make political decisions by majority rule. But rule by the majority is not necessarily democratic. In a democracy, majority rule must be combined with

guarantees of individual human rights and the rights of minorities. Most measures also include aspects of the minimum quality of functioning of government. If democratically-based decisions cannot be or are not implemented, then the concept of democracy is not very meaningful.

Democracy is more than the sum of its institutions. A democratic political culture is also crucial for the legitimacy, smooth functioning and, ultimately, the sustainability of democracy. A culture of passivity and apathy—an obedient and docile citizenry—is not consistent with democracy. The electoral process periodically divides the population into winners and losers. A successful democratic political culture implies that the losing parties and their supporters accept the judgment of the voters and allow for the peaceful transfer of power.

Participation is also a necessary component, as apathy and abstention are enemies of democracy. Even measures that focus predominantly on the processes of representative, liberal democracy include (albeit inadequately or insufficiently) some aspects of participation. In a democracy, government is only one element in a social fabric of many and varied institutions, political organisations and associations. Citizens cannot be required to take part in the political process, and they are free to express their dissatisfaction by not participating. However, a healthy democracy requires the active, freely chosen participation of citizens in public life. Democracies flourish when citizens are willing to participate in public debate, elect representatives and join political parties. Without this broad, sustaining participation, democracy begins to wither and become the preserve of small, select groups.

At the same time, even our thicker, more inclusive and wider measure of democracy does not include other aspects—which some authors argue are also crucial components of democracy—such as levels of economic and social wellbeing. Therefore, our Index respects the dominant tradition that holds that a variety of social and economic outcomes can be consistent with political democracy, which is a separate concept.

Methodology

The Economist Intelligence Unit's index of democracy, on a 0 to 10 scale, is based on the ratings for 60 indicators, grouped into five categories: *electoral process and pluralism*; *civil liberties*; *the functioning of government*; *political participation*; and *political culture*. Each category has a rating on a 0 to 10 scale, and the overall Index is the simple average of the five category indexes.

The category indexes are based on the sum of the indicator scores in the category, converted to a 0 to 10 scale. Adjustments to the category scores are made if countries do not score a 1 in the following critical areas for democracy:

1. Whether national elections are free and fair.
2. The security of voters.
3. The influence of foreign powers on government.
4. The capability of the civil service to implement policies.

If the scores for the first three questions are 0 (or 0.5), one point (0.5 point) is deducted from the index in the relevant category (either the *electoral process and pluralism* or the *functioning of government*). If the score for 4 is 0, one point is deducted from the functioning of government category index.

The index values are used to place countries within one of four types of regime:

1. Full democracies: scores greater than 8
2. Flawed democracies: scores greater than 6, and less than or equal to 8
3. Hybrid regimes: scores greater than 4, and less than or equal to 6
4. Authoritarian regimes: scores less than or equal to 4

Full democracies: Countries in which not only basic political freedoms and civil liberties are respected, but which also tend to be underpinned by a political culture conducive to the flourishing of democracy. The functioning of government is satisfactory. Media are independent and diverse. There is an effective system of checks and balances. The judiciary is independent and judicial decisions are enforced. There are only limited problems in the functioning of democracies.

Flawed democracies: These countries also have free and fair elections and, even if there are problems (such as infringements on media freedom), basic civil liberties are respected. However, there are significant weaknesses in other aspects of democracy, including problems in governance, an underdeveloped political culture and low levels of political participation.

Hybrid regimes: Elections have substantial irregularities that often prevent them from being both free and fair. Government pressure on opposition parties and candidates may be common. Serious weaknesses are more prevalent than in flawed democracies—in political culture, functioning of government and political participation. Corruption tends to be widespread and the rule of law is weak. Civil society is weak. Typically, there is harassment of and pressure on journalists, and the judiciary is not independent.

Authoritarian regimes: In these states, state political pluralism is absent or heavily circumscribed. Many countries in this category are outright dictatorships. Some formal institutions of democracy may exist, but these have little substance. Elections, if they do occur, are not free and fair. There is disregard for abuses and infringements of civil liberties. Media are typically state-owned or controlled by groups connected to the ruling regime. There is repression of criticism of the government and pervasive censorship. There is no independent judiciary.

The scoring system

We use a combination of a dichotomous and a three-point scoring system for the 60 indicators. A dichotomous 1-0 scoring system (1 for a yes and 0 for a no answer) is not without problems, but it has several distinct advantages over more refined scoring scales (such as the often-used 1-5 or 1-7). For many indicators, the possibility of a 0.5 score is introduced, to capture “grey areas”, where a simple yes (1) or no (0) is problematic, with guidelines as to when that should be used. Consequently, for many indicators there is a three-point scoring system, which represents a compromise between simple dichotomous scoring and the use of finer scales.

The problems of 1-5 or 1-7 scoring scales are numerous. For most indicators under such systems, it is extremely difficult to define meaningful and comparable criteria or guidelines for each score. This can lead to arbitrary, spurious and non-comparable scorings. For example, a score of 2 for one country may be scored a 3 in another, and so on. Alternatively, one expert might score an indicator for a particular country in a different way to another expert. This contravenes a basic principle of measurement, that of so-called *reliability*—the degree to which a measurement procedure produces the same

measurements every time, regardless of who is performing it. Two- and three-point systems do not guarantee reliability, but make it more likely.

Second, comparability between indicator scores and aggregation into a multi-dimensional index appears more valid with a two- or three-point scale for each indicator (the dimensions being aggregated are similar across indicators). By contrast, with a 1-5 system, the scores are more likely to mean different things across the indicators (for example, a 2 for one indicator may be more comparable to a 3 or 4 for another indicator). The problems of a 1-5 or 1-7 system are magnified when attempting to extend the index to many regions and countries.

Features of The Economist Intelligence Unit's Index

Public opinion surveys

A crucial, differentiating aspect of our measure is that, in addition to experts' assessments, we use, where available, public-opinion surveys—mainly the World Values Survey. Indicators based on the surveys predominate heavily in the *political participation* and *political culture* categories, and a few are used in the civil liberties and functioning of government categories.

In addition to the World Values Survey, other sources that can be leveraged include the Eurobarometer surveys, Gallup polls, Asian Barometer, Latin American Barometer, Afrobarometer and national surveys. In the case of countries for which survey results are missing, survey results for similar countries and expert assessment are used to fill in gaps.

Participation and voter turnout

After increasing for many decades, there has been a trend of decreasing voter turnout in most established democracies since the 1960s. Low turnout may be due to disenchantment, but it can also be a sign of contentment. Many, however, see low turnout as undesirable, and there is much debate over the factors that affect turnout and how to increase it.

A high turnout is generally seen as evidence of the legitimacy of the current system. Contrary to widespread belief, there is, in fact, a close correlation between turnout and overall measures of democracy—that is, developed, consolidated democracies have, with very few exceptions, higher turnouts (generally above 70%) than less established democracies.

The legislative and executive branches

The appropriate balance between these is much disputed in political theory. In our model, the clear predominance of the legislature is rated positively, as there is a very strong correlation between legislative dominance and measures of overall democracy.

The model

I Electoral process and pluralism

1. Are elections for the national legislature and head of government free?
Consider whether elections are competitive in that electors are free to vote and are offered a range of choices.
1: Essentially unrestricted conditions for the presentation of candidates (for example, no bans on major parties).
0.5: There are some restrictions on the electoral process.
0: A single-party system or major impediments exist (for example, bans on a major party or candidate).
2. Are elections for the national legislature and head of government fair?
1: No major irregularities in the voting process.
0.5: Significant irregularities occur (intimidation, fraud), but do not significantly affect the overall outcome.
0: Major irregularities occur and affect the outcome.
Score 0 if score for question 1 is 0.
3. Are municipal elections both free and fair?
1: Are free and fair.
0.5: Are free, but not fair.
0: Are neither free nor fair.
4. Is there universal suffrage for all adults?
Bar generally accepted exclusions (for example, non-nationals; criminals; members of armed forces in some countries).
1: Yes.
0: No.
5. Can citizens cast their vote free of significant threats to their security from state or non-state bodies?
1: Yes.
0: No.
6. Do laws provide for broadly equal campaigning opportunities?
1: Yes.
0.5: Formally, yes, but, in practice, opportunities are limited for some candidates.
0: No.
7. Is the process of financing political parties transparent and generally accepted?
1: Yes.
0.5: Not fully transparent.
0: No.

8. Following elections, are the constitutional mechanisms for the orderly transfer of power from one government to another clear, established and accepted?
 - 1: All three criteria are satisfied.
 - 0.5: Two of the three criteria are satisfied.
 - 0: Only one or none of the criteria is satisfied.
9. Are citizens free to form political parties that are independent of the government?
 - 1: Yes.
 - 0.5: There are some restrictions.
 - 0: No.
10. Do opposition parties have a realistic prospect of achieving government?
 - 1: Yes.
 - 0.5: There is a dominant two-party system, in which other political forces never have any effective chance of taking part in national government.
 - 0: No.
11. Is potential access to public office open to all citizens?
 - 1: Yes.
 - 0.5: Formally unrestricted, but, in practice, restricted for some groups, or for citizens from some parts of the country.
 - 0: No.
12. Are citizens allowed to form political and civic organisations, free of state interference and surveillance?
 - 1: Yes.
 - 0.5: Officially free, but subject to some unofficial restrictions or interference.
 - 0: No.

II Functioning of government

13. Do freely elected representatives determine government policy?
 - 1: Yes.
 - 0.5: Exercise some meaningful influence.
 - 0: No.
14. Is the legislature the supreme political body, with a clear supremacy over other branches of government?
 - 1: Yes.
 - 0: No.
15. Is there an effective system of checks and balances on the exercise of government authority?
 - 1: Yes.
 - 0.5: Yes, but there are some serious flaws.
 - 0: No.

16. Government is free of undue influence by the military or the security services.
 - 1: Yes.
 - 0.5: Influence is low, but the defence minister is not a civilian. If the current risk of a military coup is extremely low, but the country has a recent history of military rule or coups.
 - 0: No.
17. Foreign powers and organisations do not determine important government functions or policies.
 - 1: Yes.
 - 0.5: Some features of a protectorate.
 - 0: No (significant presence of foreign troops; important decisions taken by foreign power; country is a protectorate).
18. Do special economic, religious or other powerful domestic groups exercise significant political power, parallel to democratic institutions?
 - 1: Yes.
 - 0.5: Exercise some meaningful influence.
 - 0: No.
19. Are sufficient mechanisms and institutions in place for ensuring government accountability to the electorate in between elections?
 - 1: Yes.
 - 0.5: Yes, but serious flaws exist.
 - 0: No.
20. Does the government's authority extend over the full territory of the country?
 - 1: Yes.
 - 0: No.
21. Is the functioning of government open and transparent, with sufficient public access to information?
 - 1: Yes.
 - 0.5: Yes, but serious flaws exist.
 - 0: No.
22. How pervasive is corruption?
 - 1: Corruption is not a major problem.
 - 0.5: Corruption is a significant issue.
 - 0: Pervasive corruption exists.
23. Is the civil service willing to and capable of implementing government policy?
 - 1: Yes.
 - 0.5: Yes, but serious flaws exist.
 - 0: No.
24. Popular perceptions of the extent to which citizens have free choice and control over their lives.
 - 1: High.
 - 0.5: Moderate.
 - 0: Low.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who think that they have a great deal of choice/control.

1 if more than 70%.

0.5 if 50-70%.

0 if less than 50%.

25. Public confidence in government.

1: High.

0.5: Moderate.

0: Low.

If available, from World Values Survey, Gallup polls, Eurobarometer, Latinobarometer

% of people who have a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in government.

1 if more than 40%.

0.5 if 25-40%.

0 if less than 25%.

26. Public confidence in political parties.

1: High.

0.5: Moderate.

0: Low.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who have a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence.

1 if more than 40%.

0.5 if 25-40%.

0 if less than 25%.

III Political participation

27. Voter participation/turn-out for national elections.

(Average turnout in parliamentary elections since 2000. Turnout as proportion of population of voting age.)

1 if above 70%.

0.5 if 50%-70%.

0 if below 50%.

If voting is obligatory, score 0. Score 0 if scores for questions 1 or 2 is 0.

28. Do ethnic, religious and other minorities have a reasonable degree of autonomy and voice in the political process?

1: Yes.

0.5: Yes, but serious flaws exist.

0: No.

29. Women in parliament.

% of members of parliament who are women.

1 if more than 20% of seats.

- 0.5 if 10-20%.
0 if less than 10%.
30. Extent of political participation. Membership of political parties and political non-governmental organisations.
Score 1 if over 7% of population for either.
Score 0.5 if 4-7%.
Score 0 if under 4%.
If participation is forced, score 0.
31. Citizens' engagement with politics.
1: High.
0.5: Moderate.
0: Low.
If available, from World Values Survey
% of people who are very or somewhat interested in politics.
1 if over 60%.
0.5 if 40-60%.
0 if less than 40%.
32. The preparedness of population to take part in lawful demonstrations.
1: High.
0.5: Moderate.
0: Low.
If available, from World Values Survey
% of people who have taken part in or would consider attending lawful demonstrations.
1 if over 40%.
0.5 if 30-40%.
0 if less than 30%.
33. Adult literacy.
1 if over 90%.
0.5 if 70-90%.
0 if less than 70%.
34. Extent to which adult population shows an interest in and follows politics in the news.
1: High.
0.5: Moderate.
0: Low.
If available, from World Values Survey
% of population that follows politics in the news media (print, TV or radio) every day.
1 if over 50%.
0.5 if 30-50%.
0 if less than 30%.

35. The authorities make a serious effort to promote political participation.

1: Yes.

0.5: Some attempts.

0: No.

Consider the role of the education system, and other promotional efforts. Consider measures to facilitate voting by members of the diaspora.

If participation is forced, score 0.

IV Democratic political culture

36. Is there a sufficient degree of societal consensus and cohesion to underpin a stable, functioning democracy?

1: Yes.

0.5: Yes, but some serious doubts and risks.

0: No.

37. Perceptions of leadership; proportion of the population that desires a strong leader who bypasses parliament and elections.

1: Low.

0.5: Moderate.

0: High.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who think it would be good or fairly good to have a strong leader who does not bother with parliament and elections.

1 if less than 30%.

0.5 if 30-50%.

0 if more than 50%.

38. Perceptions of military rule; proportion of the population that would prefer military rule.

1: Low.

0.5: Moderate.

0: High.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who think it would be very or fairly good to have military rule.

1 if less than 10%.

0.5 if 10-30%.

0 if more than 30%.

39. Perceptions of rule by experts or technocratic government; proportion of the population that would prefer rule by experts or technocrats.

1: Low.

0.5: Moderate.

0: High.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who think it would be very or fairly good to have experts, not government, make decisions for the country.

1 if less than 50%.

0.5 if 50-70%.

0 if more than 70%.

40. Perception of democracy and public order; proportion of the population that believes that democracies are not good at maintaining public order.

1: Low.

0.5: Moderate.

0: High.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who disagree with the view that democracies are not good at maintaining order.

1 if more than 70%.

0.5 if 50-70%.

0 if less than 50%.

Alternatively, % of people who think that punishing criminals is an essential characteristic of democracy.

1 if more than 80%.

0.5 if 60-80%.

0 if less than 60%.

41. Perception of democracy and the economic system; proportion of the population that believes that democracy benefits economic performance.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who disagree with the view that the economic system is badly run in democracies.

1 if more than 80%.

0.5 if 60-80%.

0 if less than 60%.

42. Degree of popular support for democracy.

1: High.

0.5: Moderate.

0: Low.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who agree or strongly agree that democracy is better than any other form of government.

1 if more than 90%.

0.5 if 75-90%.

0 if less than 75%.

43. There is a strong tradition of the separation of Church and State.

1: Yes.

0.5: Some residual influence of Church on State.

0: No.

V Civil liberties

44. Is there a free electronic media?

1: Yes.

0.5: Pluralistic, but state-controlled media are heavily favoured. One or two private owners dominate the media.

0: No.

45. Is there a free print media?

1: Yes.

0.5: Pluralistic, but state-controlled media are heavily favoured. There is high degree of concentration of private ownership of national newspapers.

0: No.

46. Is there freedom of expression and protest (bar only generally accepted restrictions, such as banning advocacy of violence)?

1: Yes.

0.5: Holders of minority viewpoints are subject to some official harassment. Libel laws heavily restrict scope for free expression.

0: No.

47. Is media coverage robust? Is there open and free discussion of public issues, with a reasonable diversity of opinions?

1: Yes.

0.5: There is formal freedom, but a high degree of conformity of opinion, including through self-censorship or discouragement of minority or marginal views.

0: No.

48. Are there political restrictions on access to the Internet?

1: No.

0.5: Some moderate restrictions.

0: Yes.

49. Are citizens free to form professional organisations and trade unions?

1: Yes.

0.5: Officially free, but subject to some restrictions.

0: No.

50. Do institutions provide citizens with the opportunity to petition government to redress grievances?

1: Yes.

0.5: Some opportunities.

0: No.

51. The use of torture by the state.

1: Torture is not used.

0: Torture is used.

52. The degree to which the judiciary is independent of government influence.
Consider the views of international legal and judicial watchdogs. Have the courts ever issued an important judgement against the government, or a senior government official?
1: High.
0.5: Moderate.
0: Low.
53. The degree of religious tolerance and freedom of religious expression.
Are all religions permitted to operate freely, or are some restricted? Is the right to worship permitted both publicly and privately? Do some religious groups feel intimidated by others, even if the law requires equality and protection?
1: High.
0.5: Moderate.
0: Low.
54. The degree to which citizens are treated equally under the law.
Consider whether favoured groups or individuals are spared prosecution under the law.
1: High.
0.5: Moderate.
0: Low.
55. Do citizens enjoy basic security?
1: Yes.
0.5: Crime is so pervasive as to endanger security for large segments.
0: No.
56. Extent to which private property rights are protected and private business is free from undue government influence
1: High.
0.5: Moderate.
0: Low.
57. Extent to which citizens enjoy personal freedoms.
Consider gender equality, right to travel, choice of work and study.
1: High.
0.5: Moderate.
0: Low.
58. Popular perceptions on protection of human rights; proportion of the population that think that basic human rights are well-protected.
1: High.
0.5: Moderate.
0: Low.
If available, from World Values Survey:
% of people who think that human rights are respected in their country.
1 if more than 70%.

0.5 if 50-70%.

0 if less than 50%.

59. There is no significant discrimination on the basis of people's race, colour or religious beliefs.

1: Yes.

0.5: Yes, but some significant exceptions.

0: No.

60. Extent to which the government invokes new risks and threats as an excuse for curbing civil liberties.

1: Low.

0.5: Moderate.

0: High.

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