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Democracy Ranking 2012: New Results

Key Findings of the Democracy Ranking 2012

The Democracy Ranking is an international civil society initiative and measures annually the quality of democracy in global comparison. The Democracy Ranking applies a broader understanding of the quality of democracy and refers to the following dimensions (with the following weights for the aggregate ranking scores): politics (50%), gender (10%), economy (10%), knowledge (10%), health (10%), and the environment (10%). See for more information: <http://www.democracyranking.org/en/index.htm>

The Democracy Ranking 2012 compares 104 countries (democracies and semi-democracies) over the years 2007-2008 and 2010-2011 (using 42 indicators and scales from 1-100). Prerequisite for a country to enter the ranking is a population of one million or more and a categorization as “free” or “partly free” by Freedom House in the years 2010 and 2011 (therefore, scores for Bahrain, China, Egypt, Libya, the Russian Federation, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen are only virtual scores).¹ All countries are scored comparatively on scales from 1-100, with 100 indicating the most top value. Quality of democracy has progressed worldwide, on average 0.7 score points per country.

The top 10 countries in 2010-2011 are: Norway (88.5), Sweden (86.9), Finland (86.3), Switzerland (85.4), Denmark (84.1), Netherlands (83.0), New Zealand (82.7), Germany (81.6), Ireland (81.0), and Austria (80.6). The Nordic countries and Switzerland rank top in world comparison.

¹) In 2011, Tunisia also has been already categorized as “partly free” by Freedom House.

The United States dropped from ranking position 14 to 15, but improved in scores from 78.3 to 78.5, with gains in politics, environment, health, and knowledge, but losses in economy and gender.

South America realized levels of quality of democracy comparable to levels in Eastern-Central and Southern Europe.

The highest relative democracy progress (Democracy Improvement Ranking) was achieved in: Tunisia (+8.1), Bangladesh (+6.3), Libya (+4.1), Zambia (+3.6), Pakistan (+3.6), Moldova (+3.3), Tanzania (+3.1), Georgia (+2.7), Togo (+2.7), and Kenya (+2.7). Of the “Arab Spring” countries, prospects for democracy are the best in Tunisia. Bangladesh represents another Muslim-majority country with gains in democracy.

Democracy suffered the most severe declines in: Hungary (-2.5), Bahrain (-2.5), Honduras (-2.3), Latvia (-2.2), Ukraine (-1.7), Sri Lanka (-1.7), Italy (-1.7), Greece (-1.7), Mexico (-1.3), and Guinea-Bissau (-1.2). Hungary and Italy lost also in the political dimension. Losses in quality of democracy are concentrated on countries in Central America and in Europe.

Europe is challenged by centrifugal tendencies, by improvements as well as declines in quality of democracy. This sets also challenges for the institutions of the European Union, and their mode of policy and strategy.

Earlier results of the previous Democracy Ranking 2011 are published in: Campbell, David F. J. / Thorsten D. Barth / Paul Pözlbauer / Georg Pözlbauer (2012). Democracy Ranking (Edition 2012): The Quality of Democracy in the World. Vienna: Democracy Ranking (Books on Demand). See:

http://www.amazon.com/Democracy-Ranking-Edition-2012-Quality/dp/3848217988/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1355136410&sr=8-3&keywords=quality+of+democracy

http://www.amazon.co.uk/Democracy-Ranking-Edition-2012-ebook/dp/B009KVQ19E/ref=tmm_kin_title_0?ie=UTF8&qid=1351498787&sr=8-8

In the coming spring 2013, a further book release on the new Democracy Ranking 2012 is being planned and set for publication.

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