



ORIGINAL

Legal challenges of the post-third wave of democracy: The European Union

Retos jurídicos de la tercera ola democrática: la Unión Europea

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: the development of democracy in the twenty-first century is a key factor determining global relations in the context of globalization. Socio-political transformations are of great importance, as their adequacy affects the duration and effectiveness of the development of societies and the preservation of national identity. Democratization, aimed at establishing a democratic system, has undergone significant changes in different historical periods, including the French Revolution. The purpose of this paper is to identify the legal challenges of the third wave of democracy in the European Union (EU) and ways to address them.

Method: to study the legal challenges of the post-third wave of democracy in the European Union, a comprehensive methodology was used that combines various research approaches and tools such as the comparative analysis, systems analysis, historical analysis, and philosophical analysis.

Results: the article highlights the current aspects and challenges experienced by the European Union in the period after the third wave of democratic reforms. The authors analyze the development of political and legal systems of the EU countries. In particular, they examine the constitutional reform, the role of the rule of law and the state of civil society in the context of strengthening democracy. Special attention is paid to the role of international organizations in supporting democratic values and strengthening the legal system.

Conclusions: this article presents a valuable contribution to understanding the current challenges and prospects for the democracy development in the European Union under conditions of globalization.

Keywords: Democratization; Globalization; International Relations; International Systems; Political Transformations.

RESUMEN

Introducción: el desarrollo de la democracia en el siglo XXI es un factor clave que determina las relaciones mundiales en el contexto de la mundialización. Las transformaciones sociopolíticas son de gran importancia, ya que su adecuación afecta a la duración y eficacia del desarrollo de las sociedades y a la preservación de la identidad nacional. La democratización, encaminada a establecer un sistema democrático, ha sufrido cambios significativos en diferentes períodos históricos, incluida la Revolución Francesa. El objetivo de este documento es identificar los desafíos jurídicos de la tercera ola de democracia en la Unión Europea (UE) y las formas de abordarlos.

Método: para estudiar los desafíos jurídicos de la tercera ola de democracia en la Unión Europea, se utilizó una metodología global que combina diversos enfoques e instrumentos de investigación como el análisis comparativo, el análisis de sistemas, el análisis histórico y el análisis filosófico.

Resultados: el artículo destaca los aspectos y desafíos actuales que ha experimentado la Unión Europea en el período posterior a la tercera ola de reformas democráticas. Los autores analizan el desarrollo de los sistemas políticos y jurídicos de los países de la UE. En particular, examinan la reforma constitucional, el papel del estado de derecho y el estado de la sociedad civil en el contexto del fortalecimiento de la democracia. Se presta especial atención al papel de las organizaciones internacionales en el apoyo a los valores democráticos y el fortalecimiento del sistema jurídico.

Conclusiones: este artículo constituye una valiosa contribución a la comprensión de los desafíos y perspectivas actuales para el desarrollo de la democracia en la Unión Europea en condiciones de globalización.

Palabras clave: Democratización; Globalización; Relaciones Internacionales; Sistemas Internacionales; Transformaciones Políticas.

INTRODUCTION

After the third wave of democratic reforms, the EU countries faced new legal challenges that require attention and research. The development of democracy and the legal system in the EU plays a key role in ensuring the stability and prosperity of the region.⁽¹⁾ However, there are some problems that require the improvement of institutions and legal mechanisms. The development of democracy as a global process in the twenty-first century is the main factor that determines the totality of relations in the world in the context of globalization. This is of particular importance in the context of socio-political transformations, the degree of adequacy of which determines the duration and effectiveness of transformation processes, and sustainable development of societies while preserving national identity. The theoretical construction of the scientific concept of democracy as a global process synthesizing sustainable democratic development is an extremely urgent task. In the early 1990s, political science and philosophy introduced a new concept - "waves of democratization" - which reflects temporal-spatial and temporal changes in the democratic process.

In a broad sense, democratization is a process of political and social change aimed at establishing a democratic system. In the city-states of Ancient Greece, democratic forms of government replaced tyrannical or oligarchic regimes without changing the socio-economic nature of slavery. In the later stages of feudalism, democratization usually took place in a confrontation between the emerging bourgeoisie and the nobility, which tended to the bourgeoisie, on the one hand, and the feudal absolutist system, on the other. The culmination of this process is considered to be the French Revolution.

The relevance of the study lies in the fact that at the beginning of the twenty-first century, democratic movements have significantly strengthened and the boundaries of the democratic process have expanded. This article aims to study such challenges and their impact on democracy and the rule of law in the EU. Not only internal transformations will be considered but also the external factors that also affect the democratic processes in the EU countries will be analyzed. Special attention will be paid to the collaboration of international organizations and the EU in supporting democracy and the legal system.

Democracy is one of the most valuable achievements of the modern world, but it also faces several challenges, especially in the context of the post-third wave of democracy. Changes in the political, social, and technological environment are challenging some of the basic principles on which democracy is based.

⁽²⁾ This threatens the essence of democratic processes and requires a proactive response and the search for ways to overcome legal challenges. One of the most influential actors facing such challenges is the European Union (EU). The EU is a symbol of democratic values, the rule of law, and cooperation, but it is facing complex challenges that need to be addressed at the level of legislation and justice. In this context, we will consider the prospects and opportunities for further strengthening democracy in the EU, as well as possible ways to overcome existing legal challenges. Analyzing these aspects will be an important contribution to understanding the contemporary political and legal framework in the EU and its place in the global context.

The need to address these legal challenges is imperative to preserve the democratic values that underpin the European Union. The joint efforts of the Member States and the EU institutions are an important step toward strengthening democracy and ensuring a sustainable future for the European Union. In the following sections of the article, we will take a closer look at each of these legal challenges and suggest possible ways to overcome them, focusing on examples from the EU. The purpose of this paper is to identify the legal challenges of the third wave of democracy in the European Union and ways to address them.

To study and analyze the legal challenges of the post-third wave of democracy in the European Union, a comprehensive methodology was used that combines various research approaches and tools. Comparative analysis was used for a more detailed study of legal challenges, a comparative analysis of legislation and legal practices of different European Union (EU) member states was used. This allowed us to identify common trends, differences, and important legal aspects that need to be taken into account to overcome the challenges. The

legal analysis included a thorough study of European legislation, international conventions, court decisions, and other legal documents related to human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. This allowed us to establish the regulatory framework and identify gaps that need to be addressed.

A systems analysis was applied to understand the interrelationships between different legal challenges and their impact on democracy in the European Union. This allowed us to identify the key factors affecting the legal system and to find out possible ways to solve these problems. Historical analysis past changes, challenges and successes can help to understand current problems and opportunities for further democratic development. Philosophical analysis - the use of philosophical concepts and theories to understand the principles of democracy and their application in the context of the European Union. This approach allows us to consider democracy as a moral and political system and to examine its principles from an ethical and philosophical perspective.

All of these methodological approaches were combined and used for in-depth analysis and understanding of the legal challenges of the post-third wave of democracy in the European Union. The study provides a basis for developing strategies and policies aimed at strengthening democracy, protecting human rights, and ensuring the rule of law in the EU.

METHOD

Since the mid-eighties of the twentieth century, a new area of political science - transitology - has been gradually emerging in political science under the influence of certain processes, first regional and then global. If we approach this concept from a purely etymological point of view, transitological studies involve the analysis of political changes of a transitional nature associated with the formation of a new qualitative state of the political system. However, in practice, the term “transitology” has acquired a narrower meaning, as the subject of research in this area has become the process of transition from autocratic to democratic forms of government.⁽³⁾ In other words, the subject of transitology has become the problem of democratization.

In the most general sense, democratization means a process of political and social change aimed at establishing a democratic system. At different stages of social and historical development, this process has always been determined by specific historical types of democracy. An important role in the development of the theory of the democratic process and analysis of its modern “wave” belongs to the famous American political scientist S. Huntington, who gave a detailed and holistic picture of the changes taking place in the modern world, analyzing the preconditions, course, and prospects of the transition from totalitarianism and authoritarianism to democracy.⁽⁴⁾

When studying democratization within a particular country, it is important to distinguish the stages of democratization. Naturally, in different countries, the historical and chronological framework for the establishment of a democratic system is associated with specific historical events of a national scale, each of which was a turning point in overcoming both the autocratic system and the establishment of democratic institutions. However, the generalization of specific historical empirical material allows us to identify the stages of democratization as a general historical process that encompasses all its waves. In the transitology literature, an attempt to model the main stages of democratic regime formation was first made in 1970 by the American political scientist Rostow, who identified the following stages of democratization: precondition; preparatory phase; decision-making phase; and habituation phase.⁽⁵⁾

As a precondition, the author of this classification singles out national unity, and this concept does not mean the promotion of national-state exclusivity as opposed to other national-state entities (which is typical for most totalitarian and authoritarian regimes) and even not the subjective self-identification of all citizens with a particular nation, it means only that a significant majority of citizens of a potential democracy should not have doubts or make imaginary reservations about which community they belong to. The requirement of national unity cuts off situations where there is a latent split in society, such as that which existed in the Habsburg or Ottoman empires and is present today in several African countries.

The starting point for democratization is the national unity. The transition to democracy involves the emergence of a political elite capable of leading democratic initiatives and resolving serious and persistent conflicts. Moreover, the national unity must encompass diversity and the conscious institutionalization of democratic mechanisms. The development of democratic principles fosters new values among citizens, enhances interpersonal trust and competence, and increases life satisfaction. At the same time, the economic growth stipulates more investment in education. As a result, better educational facilities are created, providing more educational opportunities. As a result, educated people prefer democratic forms of government because it embraces political freedoms, participation in decision-making, and the rule of law. Apart from that, economic growth generates wealth, increasing the total amount of resources. This facilitates the distribution of resources, which can be used for public services, welfare programs, and other social benefits. Consequently, plentiful resources can alleviate social tensions and conflicts.⁽⁶⁾

Finally, democratization is crucial for functioning of civil society. It ensures national sovereignty and contributes to the development of national statehood. Democratization also underpins the rule of law as an

indicator of social equality and a catalyst for effective social development. In addition, democracy enables civil society to participate in political decision-making.

RESULTS

Democracy in globalization aspect

Globalization and democracy interact in the modern world in different ways. Economic interaction can lead to the growth of economies and the exchange of technology, but it can also widen the gap between rich and poor countries. Globalization promotes cultural exchange, but it can cause the loss of local identity. On the positive side, globalization can promote the spread of democratic ideas and human rights, but on the other hand, the growing influence of international corporations can limit national sovereignty.⁽⁷⁾ Globalization can help reduce inequality, but it can also lead to increased levels of inequality through global competition. The relationship between globalization and democracy is complex, and it is important to ensure that globalization promotes democratic values rather than weakens democracy.⁽⁸⁾

It was assumed that globalization has a positive effect on the spread of democracy mainly through the channel of trade, the implementation of which is accompanied by improved access to information, which, in turn, feeds the competition of ideas. There are also more complex channels. As welfare increases as a result of the opening of the economy, the demand for protection of rights (from property rights to political rights) increases. Changes in the nature of income distribution have a significant impact on changes in the distribution of political power. If openness creates new social configurations of those who benefit from globalization, they in turn provide pressure for social change in the direction of democratization and reforms establishing the rule of law.

A deeper study of this issue has shown that globalization is not a sufficient condition for the spread of democracy. Most likely, there is a two-way relationship between globalization and democracy. Globalization creates incentives to demand the benefits of a democratic regime. And the democratic regime enables the implementation of policies that allow mitigating the losses from globalization, relatively evenly distributing its benefits, and preventing political pressure from interest groups that seek to shift the burden of global competition onto others, thereby undermining the social base of those interested in openness.⁽⁹⁾

The post-third wave of democracy, which emerged in the second half of the 20th century, set itself the ambitious goal of creating societies where democratic values, human rights, and progress prevail. Within the European Union (EU), which is one of the world's largest integration organizations, several joint efforts are underway to support and strengthen democracy among its members. However, there are legal challenges that the EU faces in its efforts to promote democratic values.⁽¹⁰⁾

One of the most important principles of democracy is the rule of law, where human rights, principles of justice, and equality before the law are inviolable. However, in some EU countries, the rule of law is threatened when the government interferes with the independence of the judiciary and violates the principles of constitutional authority. In Poland, for example, the government has adopted several legislative changes that give it control over the judiciary and judges. This has led to serious concerns about the independence of the courts and the separation of powers. Similar problems exist in Hungary, where the government has been expanding its powers by restricting the activities of independent courts and other human rights bodies.⁽¹¹⁾

Freedom of speech and media independence are fundamental principles of democracy. However, in some EU countries, these principles are being threatened by the authorities restricting freedom of speech and attempting to control the media. In Hungary, for example, the government is taking steps to restrict press freedom and bring the media under its control. The Media Act allows the government to provide media services only to "reliable" organizations, which can be interpreted as an attempt to restrict access to information and control messages that are unpleasant for the government. In Hungary, there has been an increase in cases of censorship and restriction of freedom of speech, in particular by prosecuting journalists and publishers who have criticized government actions or covered negative aspects of government activities.⁽¹²⁾ This empirical evidence supports the thesis that the Hungarian government is taking measures to restrict press freedom and establish control over the media. Such actions undermine democratic values and can lead to censorship and restriction of freedom of speech.

The European Union faces challenges from growing extremism and hostility to migration. In some EU countries, populist and nationalist parties are gaining popularity, using anti-immigrant sentiment and fear of terrorism to mobilize their supporters. In countries such as France and the Netherlands, right-wing extremist parties opposed to migration and multiculturalism are gaining ground. This poses a threat to the principles of tolerance, equality, and inclusiveness that are the foundation of democracy.^(13,14)

In a world where digital technologies are becoming an increasingly important element of society, cybersecurity is becoming an essential component of post-third-wave democracy. Cyberattacks and cyber espionage can undermine democratic processes by stealing sensitive information, manipulating electoral systems, and violating the privacy of citizens. One of the most famous examples of a cyberattack on democratic processes was the

Russian interference in the 2016 US presidential election. Russian hackers used phishing attacks and email theft to disclose confidential information, which harmed the democratic process and stirred up public opinion.

Thus, one of the main challenges the EU faces in upholding democratic values is the threat to judicial independence in some member states. The independence of the judiciary is critical to ensuring the rule of law, as it ensures that judicial decisions are made on the basis of law rather than political influences.

Legal challenges of post-third-wave democracy in EU countries

The post-third wave of democracy in the European Union faces significant legal challenges that threaten the principles of democracy, human rights, and progress. Judicial independence, freedom of expression, counter-extremism, and cybersecurity are key areas that need attention and improvement. Due to globalization and growing internal and external challenges, there is a need to revise the structures and decision-making processes in the EU. The EU should focus on supporting independent courts, protecting freedom of speech and media independence, fighting extremism, and enhancing cybersecurity. It also needs to engage civil society, promote education of citizens about democratic values and build trust in political institutions. Only by addressing these legal challenges will the European Union be able to ensure the strength and stability of its democracy, as well as promote the development and prosperity of its citizens.⁽¹⁵⁾

Let's look at some examples of EU countries where the legal challenges of post-third-wave democracy are particularly relevant. In Poland, as noted earlier, the adoption of several legislative changes has led to concerns about the independence of the judiciary. In particular, the new laws gave the government broad powers to appoint and dismiss judges, which violates the principles of judicial independence. This has drawn criticism from the European Union and led to the introduction of a procedure for a possible violation of democratic values.

Hungary also faces problems with media independence and press freedom. The government has adopted legislative changes that give it control over the media and restrict access to public information. This undermines the principles of freedom of speech and media independence, which are the foundation of a democratic society.⁽¹⁶⁾ Spain also faces legal challenges in the context of the Catalan issue. Disputes between the central government and the Catalan government have caused tensions and the non-recognition of some of the results of the independence referendum. This violates the principles of democracy and calls for political and legal solutions to resolve the conflict.⁽¹⁷⁾ In light of these examples, it is clear that the legal challenges of the post-third wave of democracy in the European Union require serious attention and measures to address them. This requires joint efforts of the Member States and EU institutions to protect democratic values and strengthen the legal system.

Addressing the legal challenges of the post-third wave of democracy in the European Union is crucial for preserving democratic values and strengthening society. Without an independent judiciary, freedom of speech and media, fighting extremism, and ensuring cybersecurity, democracy is at risk. Legal challenges require a comprehensive approach that includes legislative changes, judicial decisions, education, and informed citizen participation. The European Union, together with its member states, should work together to address these challenges, promote dialogue and strengthen the legal framework for democratic societies. The legal challenges of the post-third wave of democracy in the European Union are a serious problem that requires immediate attention and action. An independent judiciary, freedom of expression, the fight against extremism, and cyber security are key aspects that need to be strengthened and protected. Joint efforts by EU member states institutions, and civil society are essential to overcome these challenges and ensure stability and democracy. The European Union should play a leading role in this process, ensuring the protection of human rights, the principles of democracy, and the rule of law.⁽¹⁸⁾

Implementing the necessary reforms and changes in the legal system, supporting the independence of the judiciary, fighting discrimination and extremism, and ensuring cybersecurity are critical tasks to ensure the future of a strong and sustainable democratic European Union. By working together and implementing the necessary measures, the EU can ensure a viable democracy where the rights and freedoms of all citizens are protected and political processes are open and transparent. Only then will the European Union be able to respond effectively to the challenges of the modern world and ensure the prosperity of its citizens?

It is important to understand that the legal challenges of the post-third wave of democracy are extremely important for the future of the European Union. The protection of democratic values, freedom, and human rights must be a top priority for governments, legislators, and civil society. Only by working together can we ensure that democracy in the European Union is sustainable and thrives and that it strengthens its place in the world. Civil society plays an important role in addressing the legal challenges of post-third-wave democracy. Active participation of citizens in the political process, monitoring of government activities, and promotion of transparency and accountability are essential to ensure democratic standards. Civil society organizations can play an important role in monitoring the work of the authorities, analyzing legislative initiatives, holding public debates, and educating citizens. They can become an important channel of communication between citizens

and political representatives, contributing to building trust and legitimacy in political processes.⁽¹⁹⁾

The great challenge is the growth of populism, which can undermine the principles of the rule of law and the principles of separation of powers. This can lead to attempts to restrict the rights and freedoms of citizens, and threaten the legal order. In addition, civil society has an important role to play in protecting human rights, freedom of expression, and media independence. Human rights organizations can provide legal aid, monitor rights violations and promote their resolution. They can also conduct campaigns to promote democratic values, particularly among young people and particularly vulnerable groups. Furthermore, the spread of digital technologies poses new challenges to the EU legal system, in particular in the areas of data protection, cybersecurity and intellectual property. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the legal framework to ensure appropriate protection and regulation in the digital era.

The European Union has an important role to play in ensuring democracy and the rule of law in its member states. It has the necessary tools and mechanisms to monitor compliance with the rule of law and democratic standards. The EU can contribute to the development of the European area of freedom, security, and justice by ensuring the independence of the judiciary, fighting corruption, and ensuring access to justice. In addition, the EU can actively support the development of civil society and promote citizen participation in decision-making. An important role of the European Union is also to support and protect fundamental human rights and freedoms. The EU can impose sanctions and other measures against member states that violate democratic principles and legal standards. It can also facilitate the exchange of experience and best practices between member states to strengthen democratic institutions and legal systems.

DISCUSSION

Overcoming the legal challenges of the post-third wave of democracy in the European Union (EU) is a crucial task for ensuring the future democratic development of the EU. Challenges arising from changes in the political, social, and technological environment require a proactive response and adaptation of the legal system to ensure the protection of human rights, the principles of democracy, and the rule of law.

One of the key aspects of overcoming legal challenges is to strengthen the independence of the judiciary. Judicial independence is the basis for ensuring fair and unbiased justice. In EU countries, there are situations where judges are subject to political pressure or have restrictions on their activities. This undermines confidence in the judiciary and the stability of democratic institutions. By improving the procedures for appointing and evaluating judges, preventing political influence on the courts, and ensuring adequate funding for the judiciary, the independence of the courts can be strengthened and their effective work can be ensured.

Another challenge is freedom of expression and the protection of journalists' rights. In recent years, there has been an increase in attacks on journalists, restrictions on freedom of speech, and censorship of information.

This threatens democratic values and is condemned by international human rights organizations. Ensuring the safety and freedom of journalists, as well as investigating crimes against them, are necessary steps to preserve freedom of speech and media pluralism. The fight against extremism and terrorism is also one of the main challenges facing EU countries. Extremist-related crimes can undermine democratic institutions and pose a threat to citizens. It is important to develop and implement effective strategies to counter radicalization, ensure proper control over violent propaganda and extremist ideologies, promote social integration, and prevent the fueling of intercultural conflicts.⁽²⁰⁾ In addition, cybersecurity is a growing concern in the age of digital transformation. Cyberattacks and cybercrime can threaten national security, the economy, and democratic institutions. It is necessary to develop a strong cyber strategy, raise cybersecurity awareness among citizens and businesses, and strengthen cooperation between EU countries in the field of cybersecurity.^(21,22)

It is worth noting that overcoming the legal challenges of the post-third wave of democracy requires a wide range of measures and joint efforts. The involvement of Member States, the European Commission, international organizations, and civil society is essential for the development and implementation of effective strategies. The European Union has a key role to play in supporting democracy, the rule of law, and the protection of human rights as core values.

In conclusion, overcoming the legal challenges of the post-third wave of democracy in the European Union is an important task for the future sustainable development of the EU. Strengthening the independence of the judiciary, protecting freedom of expression, fighting extremism, and ensuring cybersecurity are key areas of action. Only through joint efforts and effective implementation of measures can the future of a strong and sustainable democracy in the European Union be secured.⁽²³⁾

In the European Union, the sustainability of democracy and the rule of law is the basis for peaceful coexistence, stability, and prosperity. However, in today's world, several challenges can undermine these values. The post-third wave of democracy has swept the European Union and brought new challenges that require a proactive response and adaptation of the legal system.

One of the key aspects of overcoming legal challenges is to strengthen the independence of the judiciary. Judicial independence is essential to ensure fair and unbiased justice. In some EU countries, there are cases

where judges are subject to political pressure or have their activities restricted. This undermines confidence in the judiciary and democratic institutions. By improving the procedures for appointing and evaluating judges, preventing political influence on the courts, and ensuring adequate funding of the judiciary, the independence of the courts can be strengthened and their effective work can be ensured.⁽²⁴⁾

Another challenge is to protect freedom of speech and media independence. Freedom of speech is one of the main pillars of democracy and an important guarantee of pluralism, especially in the media. Recently, there has been an increase in attacks on journalists, censorship, and restrictions on freedom of speech. This poses a threat to democratic values and requires effective protection. Ensuring the safety and freedom of journalists, investigating crimes against them, and preventing censorship are important steps to strengthening freedom of expression and supporting the work of independent media. Fighting extremism and terrorism is another important aspect. Extremist-related crimes can undermine democratic institutions and pose a threat to the security of citizens. It is important to develop and implement effective strategies to combat radicalization, control violent propaganda and extremist ideologies, promote social integration, and prevent intercultural conflicts.⁽²⁵⁾

In addition, it is important to ensure cybersecurity in the era of digital transformation. Cyberattacks and cybercrime can threaten national security, the economy, and democratic processes. It is necessary to develop a strong cyber strategy, raise citizens' education and awareness of cybersecurity, and promote cooperation between countries and sectors to effectively respond to cyber threats.⁽²⁶⁾ In this context, the use of digital platforms for filing lawsuits, opening state registers and databases for public court hearings, and publication of decisions will increase transparency and reduce corruption risks.

Moreover, introducing e-government is one of the options for strategic development that will simplify procedures and reduce bureaucracy. It will also facilitate involving citizens in decision-making processes through public consultations and public hearings.⁽²⁷⁾ In such a way, transparency and the rule of law will be ensured. These strategies can be implemented by coordinating the efforts of national governments, NGOs and international institutions.

In general, overcoming the legal challenges of the post-third wave of democracy in the European Union requires a wide range of measures and joint efforts. It is important to engage the Member States, the European Commission, international organizations, and the public to develop and implement effective strategies. Only by working together can we ensure a future of strong and sustainable democracy in the European Union.

CONCLUSIONS

The development of democracy as a global process in the twenty-first century determines the totality of relations in the world in the context of globalization. The theoretical construction of the scientific concept of democracy as a global process is an extremely important task. The waves of democratization observed throughout history show the transition of countries from non-democratic regimes to democracy. However, democracy today is facing challenges that call into question its principles and require an active response. The European Union (EU), which symbolizes democratic values, is also facing complex challenges that require responses at the level of law and justice. Addressing these legal challenges is an urgent task for the preservation of democracy. Focusing on examples from the European Union, the joint efforts of member states and EU institutions are important for strengthening democracy and a stable future.

The legal challenges of the post-third wave of democracy in the European Union are a serious issue that requires immediate attention and action. Strengthening judicial independence, freedom of expression, fighting extremism, and ensuring cybersecurity are key tasks to ensure democratic values and stability in the European Union. Joint efforts by EU member states institutions, and civil society are crucial to overcome these challenges and ensure the development of democracy. The European Union should play a leading role in this process, ensuring the protection of human rights, the principles of democracy, and the rule of law. Implementing the necessary reforms and changes in the legal system, supporting the independence of the judiciary, fighting discrimination and extremism, and ensuring cybersecurity are critical tasks to ensure the future of a strong and sustainable democratic European Union. By working together and implementing the necessary measures, the EU can ensure a viable democracy where the rights and freedoms of all citizens are protected and political processes are open and transparent.

As the result of the study it was proved that being aware about legal challenges, such as the erosion of the rule of law, the growth of authoritarian tendencies and the threats to the independence of the judiciary that arise in post-third democracy in the European Union, is extremely significant for the future functioning of the EU. The defense of democratic values, freedom, and human rights must be a top priority for governments, legislators, and civil society. Only by working together can we ensure the sustainability and prosperity of democracy in the European Union and strengthen its place in the world.

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