

# ITALY: Associazione Antigone Onlus

## Why Italy's democracy needs support

Italy is undergoing a phase of early but intensifying democratic backsliding marked by executive aggrandisement, repressive legislation, and the erosion of institutional checks and balances. The government has introduced laws that criminalise peaceful protest, expand police powers, and weaken judicial independence. A proposed constitutional reform would concentrate power in the prime minister, sidelining Parliament.

These changes are not isolated: Italy's leadership is increasingly aligned with illiberal networks seeking to normalise authoritarian tactics within core democratic alliances. What happens in Italy will have consequences for the future of democracy across Europe and abroad. With general elections in Italy approaching in 2027, there is a narrow window of opportunity to reverse this trajectory.

## How to support

Legal action paired with advocacy can constrain authoritarian power and reinforce democratic norms. This approach relies on expert legal interventions to contest authoritarian legislative advances, defending democratic safeguards through the courts. Other benefits include legal professionals receive training, popular protest is supported, and public

pressure is mobilised through media outreach and coalition-building.

These tactics produce immediate outputs: high-impact legal cases, legal tools for civil society, and informed public debate. In the short term, they lead to favourable court rulings, institutional scrutiny, and increased resistance to repressive measures. Over time, this builds lasting legal infrastructure and resilience, raises the cost of democratic erosion, and helps embed rule-of-law standards in both institutions and public culture.

## Who to support

*Associazione Antigone Onlus* ('Antigone') is one of Italy's most established civil society organisations working to protect human rights and constitutional democracy through legal defence and public advocacy. Founded in 1991, it has over three decades of experience in strategic litigation, legal analysis, and coalition-building. Antigone is deeply embedded in national and European human rights networks, and uniquely positioned to challenge authoritarian legislation through litigation, advocacy, and mobilisation.

Antigone is proposing a high-impact two-year initiative to challenge illiberal advances and defend civic space in Italy through strategic litigation and advocacy. As repressive reforms threaten judicial independence and concentrate executive power, Antigone offers a credible, immediate response.

Funding Antigone's work will ensure that legal safeguards and democratic resilience are strengthened ahead of Italy's 2027 elections before democratic checks are permanently eroded.

### About us

Power for Democracies strengthens and protects democracy by identifying, researching and recommending highly effective civil society initiatives for donors to support. It is non-profit and non-partisan. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of Power for Democracies.

### Registered office

c/o UES – Gemeinnützige GmbH für Effektiv Spenden  
Müllerstrasse 138D  
13353 Berlin  
Germany

Responsible: Markus N. Beeko

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