

DESTINATION: INNOVATIVE RESEARCH ON DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

The invasion of Ukraine by Russia, which unfolds ominously while this work programme is prepared, has deep and extraordinary consequences on European security, international relations, as well as trust in democratic systems and in the media. However, it cannot be seen as an isolated event. It is part of an accelerated and ever intensifying movement of rejection and challenge of democracy and of the liberal international order. Indexes and reports measuring the overall situation of democracies in the world confirm their increased fragility and vulnerability over the last years: a process labelled as a “long democratic recession”, a shift in the nature of “autocratisation” or a “global expansion of authoritarian rule”, which quantitatively translates into the increase of the number of countries moving towards authoritarianism and the overall decline of the quality of democracies.⁴

Interdisciplinary research on the past and present challenges to and facilitators of democracy can help to understand them better, with a view to strengthen their resilience and stability. It will also help to counter the shift from governance based on expertise, rules-based multilateralism and consensual policymaking towards majoritarianism, unilateralism, nationalism, populism and polarisation. It will foster democracy’s further development with a view to enhancing representation, participation, openness, pluralism, tolerance, the effectiveness of public policy, non-discrimination, civic engagement, the protection of fundamental rights and the rule of law. These reflect the European Union’s values as defined in Article 2 of the EU Treaty⁵.

Expected impact:

Proposals for topics under this destination should set out a credible pathway to contributing to the following expected impacts of the Horizon Europe Strategic Plan:

- Democratic governance is reinvigorated by improving the accountability, transparency, effectiveness and trustworthiness of rule-of-law based institutions and policies and through the expansion of active and inclusive citizenship empowered by the safeguarding of fundamental rights.

The implementation of the research activities of the destination will assist in the re-invigoration and modernisation of democratic governance. The aim is to develop evidence-based innovations, policies and policy recommendations, as well as institutional frameworks

⁴ Cfr. the latest reports from Freedom House or the V-Dem Institute:

<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2021/democracy-under-siege>;
<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2022/global-expansion-authoritarian-rule>
http://www.v-dem.net/static/website/files/dr/dr_2021.pdf;
https://v-dem.net/media/publications/dr_2022.pdf

⁵ Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union, Title 1 “Common Provisions”, Article 2: “The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail”.

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that expand political participation, social dialogue, civic engagement, gender equality and inclusiveness. Activities will also contribute to enhancing the transparency, effectiveness, accountability and legitimacy of public policymaking. They will help improving trust in democratic institutions, safeguarding liberties and the rule of law and protecting democracy from multidimensional threats. Rich historical, cultural and philosophical perspectives, including a comparative dimension, will set the frame for soundly understanding present developments and help to map future pathways. In the medium to long term, the knowledge, data, scientifically robust recommendations and innovations generated will enhance decision-making on all aspects relevant to democratic governance. As the Destination aims directly at citizen engagement and at producing lasting change, it is of particular importance that the research and innovation actions promote the highest standards of transparency and openness. When applicable, it is encouraged to open up the process, criteria, methodologies and data to civil society in the course of the research.

The following call(s) in this work programme contribute to this destination:

Call	Budgets (EUR million)		Deadline(s)
	2023	2024	
HORIZON-CL2-2023-DEMOCRACY-01	75.00		14 Mar 2023
HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01		95.00	07 Feb 2024
Overall indicative budget	75.00	95.00	

Call - Standing up for democracy

HORIZON-CL2-2023-DEMOCRACY-01

Conditions for the Call

Indicative budget(s)⁶

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ⁷	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2023		
Opening: 14 Dec 2022 Deadline(s): 14 Mar 2023				
HORIZON-CL2-2023-DEMOCRACY-01-01	RIA	9.00	2.00 to 3.00	3
HORIZON-CL2-2023-DEMOCRACY-01-02	RIA	9.00	2.00 to 3.00	3
HORIZON-CL2-2023-DEMOCRACY-01-03	RIA	12.00	5.00 to 6.00	2
HORIZON-CL2-2023-DEMOCRACY-01-04	RIA	9.00	2.00 to 3.00	3
HORIZON-CL2-2023-DEMOCRACY-01-05	RIA	9.00	2.00 to 3.00	3
HORIZON-CL2-2023-DEMOCRACY-01-06	RIA	9.00	2.00 to 3.00	3
HORIZON-CL2-2023-DEMOCRACY-01-07	RIA	9.00	2.00 to 3.00	3
HORIZON-CL2-2023-DEMOCRACY-01-08	RIA	9.00	2.00 to 3.00	3
Overall indicative budget		75.00		

General conditions relating to this call

⁶ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.

The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2023 and 2024.

⁷ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL2-2023-DEMOCRACY-01-01: Detecting, analysing and countering foreign information manipulation and interference

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 9.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Protect democratic processes in the EU from Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI)⁸ by foreign actors while preserving the fundamental rights and freedoms underlying these processes.

⁸ Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) describes a mostly non-illegal pattern of behaviour in the information domain that threatens or has the potential to negatively impact values, procedures and political processes. Such activity is manipulative in character, conducted in an intentional and coordinated manner, often in relation to other hybrid activities. Actors of such activity can be state or non-state actors, including their proxies inside and outside of their own territory. FIMI is to be understood within the wider context of hybrid threats, of which it is one concrete modality. A

- Increase our ability to pro-actively detect, analyse and counter foreign attempts to harm the integrity of our democratic processes by creating a better understanding of the Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs) involved in these attempts, with the aim to improve our ability to technically attribute them to specific foreign actors.
- Increase our understanding of the behavioural and societal effect – both short- and long-term – of those attempts.
- Develop and extend the solution-space for policymakers, private stakeholders, and civil society actors to counter FIMI and raise resilience to it. Also, improve our understanding of the efficiency and potential negative side-effects of such solutions and propose mitigating measures.
- Improve our normative and theoretical understanding of the tensions between the value/norm of a free, pluralistic, and democratic society, FIMI, and domestic anti-democratic forces.

Scope: Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) is a key global challenge and needs to be addressed in full respect of fundamental rights like the freedom of speech, freedom of expression and media freedom.⁹ A pre-condition for counter-acting efforts to undermine such democratic values is an understanding of the Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs) used to manipulate information environments in an intentional, harmful and coordinated manner. Understanding these TTPs and having the means to share them with stakeholder and partners, allow democratic governments to impose costs and efficiently disrupt the ‘supply chain’ for manipulated information.

This research will therefore look at (1) how to create a common understanding of parameters needed to provide technical attribution, (2) how these TTPs can be identified and gathered and (3) how they can be stored and shared in an adequate privacy-compliant environment. While there are existing proposals (like the DISARM framework¹⁰), more research is needed on the practicability and potential pitfalls of these frameworks. There are also ongoing efforts to create an interoperable Information Sharing and Analysis Centre (ISAC)¹¹ which would provide a means for the various stakeholders to systematically and efficiently exchange information of TTPs used by threat actors, to which this research could contribute.

As most of the activities qualified as FIMI are not defined as “illegal” under national and international law, another important research angle is to what extent FIMI is used in conjunction with illegal activity such as cyber-attacks or hate speech. More specifically, the research should look at the following specific contexts in which TTPs may appear: how

conceptual model of hybrid threats can be found in “The landscape of hybrid threats” (<https://op.europa.eu/s/vUUK>)

⁹ See the European Parliament resolution of 9 March 2022 on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the EU, including disinformation (2020/2268(INI)): https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0064_EN.pdf

¹⁰ <https://www.disarm.foundation/framework>

¹¹ https://euhybnet.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/EU-HYBNET_Policy-Brief_-_Information-Manipulation-and-Interference_Feb-2022.pdf.

foreign actors use proxies within their own territory and abroad to support their activities; how TTPs related to FIMI are used in combination with TTPs outside the FIMI remit, such as cyber criminality; how FIMI campaigns may target individual policymakers and/or social groups in attempts to influence decision-making processes in politics, economy or societal affairs, taking into account relevant characteristics of the targeted groups (e.g. gender, socioeconomic background, ethnicity). Likewise, the connections between foreign actors and their ecosystem with domestic democratic and anti-democratic forces should be explored – how do they influence each other, how do they align their TTPs and/or how could connections be addressed politically, without interfering in the democratic process. Other forms of foreign interference like elite capture, the use of foreign direct investment, or threats of armed attacks as means of influence, are also in the scope of the research this topic aims to cover. Contributions from behavioural, cognitive, political, legal and communication disciplines, among others, should ensure the required multidisciplinary coverage of such a research plan.

Based on these insights and research, response options should be proposed to give policymakers, but also stakeholders from civil society and private industry, solutions and options to implement as appropriate. These should take into account existing responses and tools, thereby extending and improving the solution space. All the possible response options need to be in full respect of fundamental rights and freedoms and potential risks of any such options should be outlined, e.g. how illiberal democracies, authoritarian regimes and domestic anti-democratic forces could exploit them for their own purposes. Given the very intense ongoing multilateral efforts to tackle this threat, international cooperation is strongly encouraged.

Proposals are encouraged to develop links and use outcomes in particular from the projects financed under HORIZON-CL3-2021-FCT-01-03: Disinformation and fake news are combated and trust in the digital world is raised. They should also foresee appropriate collaboration with the ongoing Horizon 2020 action EU-HYBNET¹². Clustering and cooperation with other selected projects under this call and other relevant projects are strongly encouraged.

HORIZON-CL2-2023-DEMOCRACY-01-02: Developing a better understanding of information suppression by state authorities as an example of foreign information manipulation and interference

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 9.00 million.

¹² <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/883054>

<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
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Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Better understanding on how to protect fundamental rights and freedoms from possible threats stemming from the use of information suppression as part of Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI¹³) by authoritarian regimes.
- In-depth conceptual and practical understanding of how authoritarian states worldwide have used and use information suppression – and the specific Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs) involved – in their foreign policy, foreign information manipulation operations.
- Increased understanding of the behavioural and societal effect – both short- and long-term – of information suppression.
- Develop policy recommendations, toolkits and methodologies to detect and address information suppression in the EU, associated and third countries.

Scope: Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) goes beyond the much-used concept of “disinformation”, which focusses on the active promotion of messages and pushing out of false/misleading content. FIMI also includes other aspects of how the information environment and civic discourse can be manipulated, notably through the suppression of independent and critical voices. Information suppression can take many forms but has the opposite goal to active promotion of messages. It aims to eliminate – or suppress – from the public sphere certain voices or messages. Information suppression by authoritarian actors can be domestic but also reach outside of their borders. Domestic information suppression has been observed, for instance, surrounding the Russian invasion of Ukraine with a large scale crackdown on freedom of speech and freedom of the media (including social media) and cutting internet connections and access to mobile data use. Information suppression is also systematically employed by the Chinese Communist Party domestically but also outside of its borders.

Different facets of information suppression should be examined by means of multidisciplinary approaches bringing together historical, social, legal, political, behavioural and communication disciplines among others. Which countries outside the EU have used information suppression in a systematic manner as part of their policies and how could a conceptual definition of information suppression look like to incorporate all parts of such activity? This should include a collection of cases and examples of information suppression

¹³ Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) describes a mostly non-illegal pattern of behaviour in the information domain that threatens or has the potential to negatively impact values, procedures and political processes. Such activity is manipulative in character, conducted in an intentional and coordinated manner, often in relation to other hybrid activities. Actors of such activity can be state or non-state actors, including their proxies inside and outside of their own territory. FIMI is to be understood within the wider context of hybrid threats, of which it is one concrete modality. A conceptual model of hybrid threats can be found in “The landscape of hybrid threats” (<https://op.europa.eu/s/vUUK>)

by different actors to establish such a conceptual definition and create an evidence base. The research should also look at both the domestic and cross-border dimensions of suppression and catalogue the tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) that have been used to suppress information by different actors. This should focus on different aspects, ranging from the individual (harassment, intimidation, etc.)¹⁴ to the society (restriction of fundamental rights and freedoms, including repression of women and minority rights) to the media (restriction of media freedom, pressuring foreign media outlets or journalists), academia (instigating self-censorship, using visa or archive access to pressure foreign researchers) as well as pressure on private industry (forcing social media companies to comply with national, authoritarian rules; using economic coercion to force international companies to be silent on certain issues, etc). A compendium of such TTPs should be created, with examples of such TTPs to document their use.

Information suppression can target any critical and independent voice; however, targeting the diaspora outside of the country's territory has been observed as one vector. The research should generate an understanding of how diaspora communities are being targeted by information suppression and how FIMI actors try to co-opt them as agents of information suppression.

This research will generate a better understanding of the functioning of information suppression as well as its behavioural and societal effects (e.g. self-censorship etc.). This research should contribute to an analytical methodology of how to identify and analyse information suppression in its different forms; it should give policy recommendations on how to reduce the vulnerability to information suppression, how to protect the targets of information suppression and how to respond to it. The policy recommendations, toolkits and methodologies on how to identify information suppression and protect against it should be made accessible to civil society and stakeholders.

Proposals are encouraged to develop links and eventually use outcomes from the projects financed in particular under HORIZON-CL3-2021-FCT-01-03: Disinformation and fake news are combated and trust in the digital world is raised. Clustering and cooperation with other selected projects under this call and other relevant projects are strongly encouraged.

HORIZON-CL2-2023-DEMOCRACY-01-03: New approaches for combatting corruption and other undue influences on political decision-making

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 5.00 and 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

¹⁴ See the Commission's initiative of 27 April 2022 to protect journalists and human rights defenders against the phenomenon of Strategic Lawsuits against Public Participation (SLAPPs).

<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Increased knowledge and data on political corruption and other undue influences¹⁵ on policymaking and policy implementation, and on how these impact the understanding of democracy and rule of law and the adherence of citizens to those values.
- Advance knowledge on the use of technologies (including AI, blockchain, encrypted data analysis...) to prevent and detect corruption and other undue political influence in the EU and its neighbourhood.
- Reinforce national and EU legislative tools for preventing and fighting corruption, so as to bridge the gap between a fertile corruption measurement landscape and the different levels of commitment shown by governments to the prevention of and fight against corruption.

Scope: Beyond its financial and economic costs, corruption and undue influence – whether real or perceived – erodes the social contract underpinning democracies, and hence the system’s credibility and legitimacy. By undermining democracy and exacerbating inequalities, corruption and policy/state/ elite capture in general decrease the legitimacy of the democratic system and pave the way for citizen’s distrust and populist narratives. Despite abundant strategies, toolkits, approaches and indicators produced over the last two decades to win the fight against corruption, it can be argued that the practical results of anticorruption efforts have been disappointing. The problem appears resistant to solution and new / digitally enabled forms of undue influence seem to emerge.

Corruption and anticorruption are about human behaviour and require therefore multifaceted and multidisciplinary research. Proposals should aim at bringing together the contributions from behavioural and political economists, psychologists and anthropologists, historians, lawyers, political scientists, communication scholars, etc. Their research findings should contribute to a deeper understanding of corruption and further the evaluation of the quality of democracy and good governance. Proposals under this topic should aim at reproducing the level of ambition, both in terms of consortium composition and the breath, range and duration of their research plan, of the FP7 collaborative project ANTICORRP.¹⁶

On the conceptual level, research under this topic should build a solid and encompassing understanding of (i) the cross-border character of new expressions of political corruption involving a constellation of actors cutting across the political, administrative, financial and

¹⁵ According to the OECD, undue influence is the act of attempting to influence the design, implementation, execution and evaluation of public policies and regulations administered by public officials, whether by providing covert, deceptive or misleading evidence or data, by manipulating public opinion or by using other practices intended to manipulate the decisions of public officials.

¹⁶ Anticorruption policies revisited. Global trends and European responses to the challenge of corruption: <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/290529>

commercial spheres; (ii) integrity and its relationship to corruption and the requirements of effective models of integrity management, both in the public and private sectors; (iii) the role played by the data analytics sector in political communication to malignly influence and disrupt politics in foreign jurisdictions; (vi) and the role played by investigative journalism in strengthening accountability by revealing transnational corruption and illicit financial flows. Studying, especially through comparative and historical research, rhetorical, linguistic and cultural aspects of corruption will help to develop a stronger theoretical ground for the critical analysis of social representations of corruption. The role of education and media, in particular social media, and their impact on how corruption is socially constructed, perceived and dealt with in the public sphere, deserves special attention.

On the practical side, international cooperation is encouraged, in particular with countries from the EU Neighbourhood and accessing countries. Proposals should look at tools to strengthen public-private partnerships for fighting corruption, including inter-institutional and inter-sectorial collaborations among different stakeholders (such as small/large enterprises mentorship), or transparent guidelines for the inclusion of interest groups in political processes. Understanding the potential use of technologies (e.g. artificial intelligence, encrypted data analysis, blockchain, building information modelling...) to detect, prevent and combat corruption and other undue influences should receive particular attention, without overlooking their potential misuse. The analysis of open government experiences and dissemination of practices of civic tracking systems, as opportunities of transparency and prevention of corruption, may also contribute to the assessment of the hopes and challenges of digital anti-corruption efforts. While abundant corruption indexes help to understand different angles of this problem, most of them are perception based and/or focus on particular issues. Overall overviews of corruption within the EU are difficult and proposals should aim to overcome this shortfall.

Proposals are encouraged to seek synergies and collaboration whenever possible with projects funded under the topic HORIZON-CL3-2022-FCT-01-05: Effective fight against corruption.

Clustering and cooperation with other selected projects under this topic and other relevant projects are strongly encouraged.

HORIZON-CL2-2023-DEMOCRACY-01-04: The emotional politics of democracies

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 9.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.
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Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Better informed political decision-making through a thorough understanding of the interactions between emotions, values, identities, collective and individual experiences, and beliefs in informing political decision-making, and how they impact democratic governance.
- Better integration of the emotional dimension of politics in policies to foster and promote European democracies and values.
- Boosted trust in governance through improved attention towards the emotional needs of citizens, and establishment of emotional ties when developing and communicating policies.
- Improved communication of evidence-based policies that resonate with the emotional needs and conditions of citizens.
- Enhance scientific evidence, from multidisciplinary disciplines, around emergent social interaction and communication concepts for the upcoming era of digital universes and intertwined real and virtual life. Build scenarios on how this may impact democracies and propose policy recommendations accordingly.

Scope: With a rise in polarisation and affective citizenship in European democracies, the role of emotions has become central in debates about democracy. This has become more evident when considering the role of social media and certain political narratives in targeting and capitalising on such emotions.

In this context, proposals under this call should examine the role of affect and emotions (such as hope, resentment, happiness, fear, dissatisfaction, frustration, solidarity, hatred, envy, shame, pride, humiliation, etc.) in European democracies, how they interact with values, identities¹⁷, experiences and beliefs, and how this impacts democracies and democratic governance.

Using longitudinal analyses and cross-country comparisons, proposals would contribute to understanding how changing emotional landscapes, feeling rules, display norms and shifts in popular feelings interact with practices and values core to democratic politics. Examples of this might include, but are not limited to, participation and political mobilisation; voting trends; trust, disinformation and post-truths; identitarian movements; activism and social movements; collective action and collective responsibility; extremism, etc. Proposals are

¹⁷ See for instance the JRC's "Values and Identities – a policymaker's guide": https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/projects-activities/values-identities-policymakers-guide_en

encouraged to consider political narratives, campaigns and styles of leadership that build on such emotional politics, and the role of traditional and social media in fostering such public emotions.

Proposals are invited to use current events as case studies. Climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences, as well as the brutal aggression of Ukraine by Russia, elicit a variety of collective emotions (anxiety, pessimism, nostalgia, etc.), which have broader societal and political implications. Emotion-based responses to these crises (e.g. blaming others, outgroup hostility, hope for the better future, collective solidarity, etc.) correlated with socio-demographic and political factors (including dis/trust in political institutions and leaders, perception of in/efficacy, dis/interest in politics etc.) might have an impact on political participation patterns. What might it be? And in what ways can emotional resilience be increased in a post-pandemic Europe? Proposals are also encouraged to evaluate the role and use of emotions in political communication.

In addition, proposals should ideate and pilot innovative ways to build on the emotional dimension of democracies to foster and promote democratic practices and European values. They should also provide concrete guidelines on how to better listen to the emotional needs of citizens and take them into account when developing policies, with a view to boost trust in governance. This includes exploring better ways to communicate evidenced-based policies that resonate with the emotional needs of citizens and create emotional ties. Proposals can also put forward training or awareness raising activities to ensure informed decision-making.

Finally, proposals should provide a robust evidence base and forward-looking scenarios around emergent social interaction and communication concepts for the upcoming era of digital universes and intertwined real and virtual life. At a time when social media monetise emotions, and with the growing popularity of metaverses and multiverses, how emotions displayed in and arising from digitally-mediated communication may impact democracies should be investigated.

Researchers are encouraged to use a combination of methods from different fields, to build novel and mixed-methods research designs, concepts and theories that allow understanding the interplay between emotion and democratic politics.

Case studies may include countries outside of the European Union and Associated Countries, with a view to shed light on the target geographical area by way of comparison.

Proposals are encouraged to seek synergies and collaboration whenever possible with relevant projects selected under previous EU-funded calls.¹⁸ Clustering and cooperation with other selected projects under this topic and other relevant projects are strongly encouraged.

¹⁸ For instance under the topic HORIZON-CL2-2022-DEMOCRACY-01-05: Evolution of political extremism and its influence on contemporary social and political dialogue, and the JRC initiative for Meaningful and Ethical Communication (Enlightenment 2.0, https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/evidence-informed-policy-making/topic/enlightenment-20_en).

HORIZON-CL2-2023-DEMOCRACY-01-05: The climate imperative and its impact on democratic governance

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 9.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Enhance the ability of democratic governance to address complex and long-term challenges, through better understanding of the socio-political dimension of the climate crisis (including climate movements) and its impact on democratic governance, participation and social cohesion; the impact of the green transition on public governance and democratic practices, their legitimacy and responsiveness; and the increasing role of non-majoritarian institutions in decision-making.
- Enhance the capacity of democratic governance to mobilise and engage citizens through participation, and better-informed decision-making and communication to citizens on climate related policies, based on learnings from the management of the COVID-19 pandemic, disaster and end-time scenarios analysis, and other historic examples for such political and societal imperatives.
- Improve policymaking approaches at all levels of government through recommendations to address the climate imperative in a democratic manner supported by citizens, balancing it with other policy imperatives, including the role of education in fostering climate literacy.
- Encourage international cooperation through better understanding of the supranational challenges of the climate crisis, and of the consequences of climate crisis scenarios on demand for democratic structures, international politics and citizen engagement.

Scope: Climate movements have highlighted the question of whether urgent climate goals can be met while respecting democratic processes, maintaining trust, legitimacy and efficiency of democratic institutions. A large segment of society, on the other hand, perceives the changes on their personal lifestyle needed to mitigate or adapt to climate change as too burdensome, or focuses on other priorities, e.g. policy imperatives linked to financial or security issues. Policies adopted under the climate transition will not be pain-free, increasing the difficulty for democratic governments seeking re-election to legislate effectively to meet the demands of the climate crisis. Social inequalities increase the risk that the less advantaged segments of society will be more negatively impacted by the climate crisis and policies made for the

climate transition. The common global goals for the climate transition also highlight the deficiencies of governance on supranational issues.

At the same time, the climate imperative also opens up avenues for innovative civic participation in an existential policy area.

Thus, proposals under this topic should help reinvigorate democratic governance by suggesting pathways for improved effectiveness of rule-of-law based institutions and policies, notably pathways for open government practices that enable active civic participation throughout the policymaking process. They should help strengthen social and economic resilience and sustainability through a better understanding of the relationship between democratic governance and the climate imperative.

Proposals should use the lessons of history as well as analysis of the current situation and best practices to make policy recommendations for the future. In the light of existing tensions between democratic governance and climate imperatives, proposals should examine how societies have dealt with bottom-up participation in the past, whether more inclusive and politically democratic societies are better able to develop prevention and mitigation policies, and what new structures we need to tackle the climate imperative, to effectively address its complexity, urgency, and long-term impacts. Proposals are encouraged to consider social innovation activities to stimulate social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake. Gender and intersectional aspects (e.g. ethnicity, socioeconomic background) should be considered, particularly regarding citizen engagement, civic participation, and climate literacy.

Proposals should seek synergies and complementarity with other clusters, partnerships and missions of the Horizon Europe Programme, notably the Clean Energy Transition Partnerships, as well as with other EU programmes and financing instruments to maximise its impact in the long term. Proposals within this call can be the needed link to get the project outcomes out of partnerships to the policymakers who can directly implement them for maximum effective results. Clustering and cooperation with other selected projects under this topic and other relevant projects are strongly encouraged.

HORIZON-CL2-2023-DEMOCRACY-01-06: Democratic governance for times of disruptive changes to the social contract

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 9.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Better understanding of ways to account for the need for evaluation and changes in the social contracts in the EU Member States countries through theoretical, philosophical, political, historical, legal, normative and comparative studies, amongst others.
- Investigate and propose safeguards and mechanisms that need to be in place in those circumstances when questioning the very foundations of the social contract.
- Scenarios for how new social contracts in EU Member States could look like or approaches for how to develop the narratives for new social contracts, accounting for the fact of the EU membership and the rights and duties that go with it.

Scope: A social contract is the intellectual construct referring to the agreement between members of a society, community, or organisation that spells out the obligations, functions, and rights of each citizen agreeing to the contract. The classic concept of social contract also implies the notion of the individual renunciation of some freedoms, in exchange for core public goods, including the right to democratic participation and the protection that societal life can offer. When the social contract fails to uphold its end of the bargain and leaves its citizens disappointed, there is a risk of social unrest and political instability. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed social and economic inequalities, leading to calls for a new social contract at national, EU and global levels based on inclusivity, participation and sustainability. Such calls may include requests for new articulations of the basic justifications, functions, rights and duties of democratic societies and their citizens likewise.

Some societies flourish while others struggle to maintain the social fabric, hardly avoiding the breakdown of their social contracts. Certain forms or configurations of the social contract appear more successful than others, and not necessarily because of their immutability or endurance. Instead, flexibility, adaptability, trust and resilience seem to be factors of success, in particular vis-à-vis external shocks or disruptive forces (a pandemic, abrupt technological changes, wars...). Such disruptions may hit a pre-existing equilibrium, bringing to the light dimensions unforeseen by the existing social contract and putting it under stress. In such situations, the social contract could withstand, in the case of better prepared societies, and continue delivering after necessary adaptations, or alternatively could break up, not resisting the pressure, and open the door to the establishment of a new contract through some dramatic or arduous exercise.

In order to identify the factors that drive, or contribute to, the social success of certain societies and their social contract models, proposals are invited to use narrative approaches (historical, legal, anthropological methods and analysis) or data-driven / computer-based approaches, or mixed approaches. In terms of the geographical scope of the research, proposals should focus on EU and/or Member States societies, while international cooperation allowing comparative perspectives in view of extrapolations relevant to EU policies is also encouraged.

Clustering and cooperation with other selected projects under this topic and other relevant projects are strongly encouraged.

HORIZON-CL2-2023-DEMOCRACY-01-07: Intersectionality and equality in deliberative and participatory democratic spaces

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 9.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Develop a thorough theoretical understanding of deliberative and participatory democratic practices through an intersectional lens that engages with structures of power, and identify limitations and opportunities for improvement of such spaces.
- Enhance the design, implementation and evaluation of deliberative and participatory processes at different levels of government (local, regional, national, European), with a focus on marginalised and vulnerable communities, by including an intersectional approach that allows accounting for power relations at all processes of design.
- Develop and pilot innovative designs for citizen engagement that consider intersectionality and allow for other types of participation and deliberation, and enhancing democracy, by addressing political inequality in such participatory spaces.

Scope: There has been a recent push to overcome the limits of representative democracy and reinvigorate democratic participation through participatory and deliberative democratic innovations at local, regional, national and European level. Such processes have aimed to bring power and decision-making closer to citizens, and have contributed to reimagining the meaning of democracy and to further fostering the involvement of citizens in democratic life.

Nevertheless, difficulties remain as regards the meaningful involvement of minorities and marginalised communities. Despite the implementation of quotas and processes to ensure parity in such democratic spaces, ensuring equality has been proved to be a challenge. In many cases, when the principle of parity has been achieved, there has been a difficulty to

ensure meaningful engagement and safe and equal spaces for all. And while many efforts are focused on better including under-represented groups into such spaces, less actions are targeted at making majority populations and non-marginalised communities more understanding and tolerant towards so-called, perceived 'Others'. Proposals should contribute to reinvigorating democracy and enhancing citizen participation by designing, envisioning and piloting processes of democratic innovation where overcoming the accumulation and intersection of discrimination or stigmatisation is a core part of the process.

For this, proposals should offer both conceptual and practical insights into designing, implementing and evaluating more inclusive participatory processes. Thus, research should help to identify the limitations of participatory exercises, and draw power analysis that provide insights into the systemic exclusion and reproduction of inequalities in certain democratic spaces. This could also include behavioural insights to enhance participation of marginalised groups and the deconstruction of biases or unwelcoming practices by majority groups and privileged communities. Furthermore, they should contribute to innovation through the piloting and testing of alternative models of participatory democratic practices and mini publics that allow for meaningful engagement between marginalised or vulnerable communities and mainstream communities (counter/alternative publics, community deliberation, intercultural dialogues, multilevel deliberations, theatre and artistic interventions, etc.). This should take into account the challenges marginalised communities face in different geographic locations, such as rural and urban areas. Proposals may consider the role of digital technologies in such innovative designs.

Proposals may draw on the results of deliberative / participatory democracy related EU projects, in particular under Horizon 2020. Clustering and cooperation with other selected projects under this topic and other relevant projects are strongly encouraged.

Proposals are encouraged to collaborate with the JRC Competence Centre on Participatory and Deliberative Democracy,¹⁹ particularly with respect to the design and evaluation of innovative and inclusive participatory processes, including concepts, frameworks and implementation thereof as part of alternative models of participatory democratic practices.

HORIZON-CL2-2023-DEMOCRACY-01-08: Political perspectives for the Eastern Neighbourhood and the Western Balkans

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 9.00 million.

¹⁹ https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/participatory-democracy_en

<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply: In order to achieve the expected outcomes of the action, the consortium must include at least one entity from the following countries: Georgia, Republic of Moldova or Ukraine.</p>

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Improvement of the European Union’s neighbourhood policy and accession process, thanks to a clear vision for the political agenda of the European Union towards the Eastern Neighbourhood countries and the Western Balkans, based on a deep and nuanced analytical basis.
- Forecast and scenarios of the geopolitical ambitions of Russia, China and other countries towards the countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood and accession candidates.
- Strengthened resilience and foreign policy arsenal of the European Union against military threats on the European continent thanks to policy recommendations.

Scope: The political and economic consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine go well beyond Ukrainian borders. The European Union had to change overnight from a neighbourhood policy focused on incremental reform to one that is about the survival of some Eastern Neighbourhood countries as independent, self-determined states. Ukraine’s application for European Union membership has been immediately replicated by Georgia and Moldova. Russian and Chinese influence in some accession candidate countries is on the rise. This opens crucial questions about the European Union’s enlargement strategy, requiring not only political answers but also academic reflection and expertise. Therefore, proposals are expected to analyse the European Union’s current neighbourhood and enlargement strategy and toolbox in the light of the new situation where military aggression or the threat with it and political exploitation of economic dependencies are once more used as foreign policy tools in Europe. Based on this, they should provide innovative perspectives on the origins and evolutions of policies aimed at stabilising and democratising the Eastern Neighbourhood along with evidence-based policy options to adapt this strategy to the new state of play.

Furthermore, in the context of the accession process, there is need to strengthen mechanisms of compliance with the *acquis* in the area of social policies and to strengthen social cohesion to avoid brain drain and care drain in Eastern Partnership and Western Balkans countries.

Proposals are invited to take this dimension into account when developing robust evidence-based, forward-looking visions for the political agenda of the European Union towards the Eastern Neighbourhood and the Western Balkans.

In addition, the Russian ambition to have a sphere of influence in the former Soviet Union countries puts governments in the Eastern Neighbourhood in a much more vulnerable position. It increased their dependencies on big geopolitical powers, be it the West, China or Russia. It also highlighted Russia's ambition to play an even more decisive political role in the larger region, including the power to install governments of its choice through a return to Cold War tactics. Is this shift back to brutal military intervention the sign of a new age in international relations and new geopolitical blocks? Proposals are expected to analyse and forecast possible scenarios regarding Russia, but also China and other countries' geopolitical ambitions towards the countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood, grounded in a historical perspective. Based on sound and robust analyses, they should provide policy recommendations, scenarios and options to strengthen the Union's resilience and diplomatic arsenal in a potential new era of military intervention on the continent. They are also expected to provide evidence-based advice on whether the European Union should factor military interventions into its foreign policy toolbox, and offer perspectives as to what implications that would entail.

Proposals are strongly encouraged to involve stakeholders, including non-state actors and citizens, from the countries in the topic scope. The consortium must include at least one entity from the following countries: Georgia, Republic of Moldova or Ukraine. Legal entities from these countries must take part in the project as beneficiaries.

Participation of Ukrainian researchers in exile with refugee status and employed by eligible beneficiaries is strongly encouraged and would be an asset.

International cooperation is strongly encouraged.

Proposals are encouraged to network with and build on previously funded projects under the Horizon Europe calls²⁰, Horizon 2020 or other EU programmes, e.g. Global Europe²¹, as appropriate. Clustering and cooperation with other selected projects under this topic and other relevant projects are strongly encouraged.

Call - Past, present and future of democracies

HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01

Conditions for the Call

Indicative budget(s)²²

²⁰ in particular HORIZON-CL2-2022-DEMOCRACY-01-09: Global governance for a world in transition: Norms, institutions, actors, HORIZON-CL2-2021-DEMOCRACY-01-04: Democratic politics in the EU's neighbourhood, as well as other relevant projects funded under other clusters and pillars of Horizon Europe,

²¹ https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/global-europe-programming_en

²² The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2023-2024
Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million)	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million) ²³	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
		2024		
Opening: 04 Oct 2023 Deadline(s): 07 Feb 2024				
HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-01	RIA	9.00	2.00 to 3.00	3
HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-02	RIA	9.00	2.00 to 3.00	3
HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-03	RIA	9.00	2.00 to 3.00	3
HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-04	RIA	9.00	2.00 to 3.00	3
HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-05	RIA	9.00	2.00 to 3.00	3
HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-06	RIA	9.00	2.00 to 3.00	3
HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-07	RIA	9.00	2.00 to 3.00	3
HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-08	RIA	9.00	2.00 to 3.00	3
HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-09	RIA	9.00	2.00 to 3.00	3
HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-10	RIA	6.00	2.00 to 3.00	2
HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-11	RIA	4.00	3.00 to 4.00	1
HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-12	CSA	4.00	3.00 to 4.00	1
Overall indicative budget		95.00		

General conditions relating to this call	
<i>Admissibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for years 2023 and 2024.

²³ Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

<i>Financial and operational capacity and exclusion</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
<i>Award criteria</i>	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
<i>Documents</i>	The documents are described in General Annex E.
<i>Procedure</i>	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-01: Protest politics and cultures of opposition in democracy

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 9.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Practical understanding of the role and evolution of all forms of opposition (protest, cultural opposition, non-compliance, subversion, activism), their different platforms (physical and online), and their impact on democracy, including in resisting the rise of authoritarian tendencies and in taking down authoritarian regimes.
- Policy recommendations based on a deep analysis of the potential shift from traditional party structures to social mobilisation and activism as means for democratic participation, including drivers and factors that might play a role in fostering such forms of politics.

- Innovative forms of non-conflictual constructive engagement, which can channel social and community mobilisation and protest resulting from lack of/limited channels for democratic civic engagement and collective political action.
- Rebuilding citizens' trust in the impact and validity of electoral processes at various levels.

Scope: Citizens increasingly disengage from traditional party politics and voting as a way to express political views, values and beliefs. On the other hand, recent years have seen diverse forms of political protest, social and artistic movements and activism, flourish both offline and online. In fact, the Eurobarometer Youth Survey 2021 showed that a majority of young people in Ireland, Spain and Belgium, amongst others, consider participating in forms of street politics equal to, or more effective, than voting.

Research proposals under this topic should analyse further the shift towards politics of collective action, and their impact on European democracies, including their role in resisting the rise of authoritarian tendencies and in taking down authoritarian regimes. This could refer to both online and offline forms of collective political action, including artistic forms of protest (audiovisual art, literature, music, etc.). Proposals should consider drivers and factors that play a role in fostering such forms of politics (emotional, gender, socioeconomic, cultural, historical, generational, geopolitical, geographical etc.), including the role of social media platforms. This should be contextualised in a historical study of the role of protest movements and their impact on democracy. Proposals may analyse local, regional, national as well as transnational movements, mobilisation, and democracy within the European Union.

Proposals should consider the relationship between (i) collective action as a way to channel democratic grievances and (ii) limited channels for citizen participation, thus analysing the implications of further citizen support for democracy combined with the dissatisfaction with the current democratic channels (with a special focus on accessibility and inclusiveness of democratic channels such as voting for vulnerable people, mobile citizens, migrants, etc.). This could also mean exploring self-organised alternative forms of citizen participation (such as assemblies) and other innovative forms of non-conflictual constructive engagement.

The growing defiance towards the 'usefulness' of voting and electoral processes should also be addressed. Voting abstention as a mean to protest against a perceived lack of options, and how to remediate disengagement with electoral processes, can be a particular focus. Proposals should propose concrete paths to rebuild citizens' trust in the impact and validity of electoral processes at various level, from local to European.

Special attention could be put on younger generations, who have vastly participated in shaping the public sphere with their activism in movements such as Pride, Fridays for Future and feminist mobilisations. A focus could also be on violence and extremist movements' influence, for instance on protests against COVID-19 public health measures. How social networks act as a factor to increase societal resilience and as a way to pressure political change could also be investigated. Finally, how formal education contexts are integrating these new manifestations into citizenship education could also be explored. As new forms of

political participation are still very much urban-based, proposals should include a specific focus on how to constructively channel rural youth's discontent.

Proposals are encouraged to make use of participative methodologies and to draw on a combination of methods and literature.

In order to achieve the expected outcomes, international cooperation is encouraged in particular with countries from the MENA region.

Clustering and cooperation with other selected projects under this topic and other relevant projects are strongly encouraged.

Proposals are encouraged to collaborate with the JRC Competence Centre on Participatory and Deliberative Democracy,²⁴ particularly in respect to innovative forms of non-conflictual constructive engagement and its potential to transform democracies and democratic systems.

HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-02: Multilevel governance in times of digital and climate transitions

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 9.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Encourage international cooperation through better understanding of the articulation between local, regional, international and transnational governance.
- Encourage the development and implementation of policy in two areas of transnational and multi-level importance: the digital and climate transitions, also taking into account how does the division of policy ownership in multi-level governance systems impact the effectiveness of policymaking in these two policy areas.

²⁴

https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/participatory-democracy_en

- Lead to better-informed decision-making and policy implementation at national and EU levels, based on the identification of where the tensions and the opportunities are in top-down and bottom-up policymaking. The development of community-based innovations in the field of democratic governance and processes, notably at the level of cities and regions, and evaluation of their implications for social development, cohesion and inclusion.
- Provide policy recommendations on improvements and alternative pathways for the national and local implementation of EU law that are endorsed by the targeted public administrations, including through experimentation in deliberative processes.

Scope: The threat of climate change will require changes in the ways in which we organise our societies, action at all levels of government, and coordination between these levels so that actions are taken at the most appropriate one and complement each other effectively. Optimising complementarity will also be important to face the challenge of staff shortage to tackle the climate transition.

The digital transition is also at the heart of the question of multi-level governance of major transitions: for instance, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed practices, and shown that further paths can be followed in order for digitalisation to be moulded to benefit the climate, and society.

The EU Green Deal and digital strategy, and their national and local implementation strategies, are the policy roadmaps to be examined under this topic.

Proposals should analyse how different levels of government in the EU work in developing and implementing policy on the digital and climate transitions. Where is collaboration and collective agenda-setting most effective, in order for climate and digital roadmap goals to be met? How does the division of policy ownership in multi-level governance systems impact the effectiveness of policymaking in these two policy areas: where are the gaps, and where are the duplications? Questions of responsiveness and legitimacy might also be considered.

Proposals should also analyse the development of community-based innovations in the field of democratic governance and processes, notably at the level of cities and regions, and evaluation of their implications for social development, cohesion and inclusion.

Given the very particular situation of border regions, proposals could analyse innovative legal instruments, organisational set-ups, cross-border democratic processes that strengthen cross-border cooperation and ultimately the resilience of cross-border territories.

As the innovation part of this action, proposals should experiment with community-led innovations in one or both policy areas, such as through deliberative processes, or engaging social innovation partners and citizens representatives.

Based on this analysis, proposals should suggest pathways for better-informed decision-making at national and EU levels based on the identification of where the tensions the opportunities are in top-down and bottom-up policymaking, and policy implementation.

Proposals should form partnerships with government authorities at the relevant levels, in order for their policy recommendations on improvements and alternative pathways for the national and local implementation of EU law to be more likely to be endorsed by the targeted public administrations.

Proposals are encouraged to collaborate with the JRC Competence Centre on Participatory and Deliberative Democracy²⁵, which provides expertise in particular with respect to experimentation with community-led innovations through deliberative and other participatory processes and approaches.

HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-03: What is the long-term impact of rule of law and other European values on socio-economic outcomes?

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 9.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Policy recommendations based on a better understanding of the impact of rule of law and other European Union values on socio-economic outcomes of individuals and states.
- Enhanced knowledge of the social cost aspects of weakening the rule of law and robust quantification strategies in the area of rights and freedoms in the national and European context.
- New datasets for this area of research, incorporating a systematic use of historical experiences, economic and econometric history approaches in conjunction with legal and political history analysis, where adequate.

Scope: Recent insights into the role of networks for the creation of value (for instance, the use of network models by human resources departments to estimate existing or future staff value, or the use of network theories to enrich the understanding of financial systems and related risks) have yet to be transferred in an important manner to areas of study dealing with important public/common goods such as rule of law and the various human and fundamental rights and freedoms established by European Union law. It is well understood that networks can amplify asset values in an important manner. How do structural features and metrics of societal networks impact that value of common/public goods? Is it possible to identify similar

²⁵ https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/participatory-democracy_en

magnifying effects? And how can they be measured, in which unit can they be expressed? On the other hand value created within one particular network may not be transferable to another network without significant losses. What factors will determine the importance of such losses?

Variables under scrutiny may go beyond those used in the European Commission’s annual Rule of Law Report (variables such as baskets of opportunities, capabilities, etc.) as well as areas of outcomes that do not figure in this report and yet have important impacts on justice and inequality.

In addition, networks can also create value for individuals and clubs (club goods) that transfer the benefits of public goods (such as tax-funded education in elite institutions) to individual families, specific social groups and their descendants. Such social and economic captures, which have always existed, persist and in many cases have become stronger over time, thus reinforcing inequalities in the modern age. Similarly, the value of environmental public goods/commons might benefit only better off residents of certain types of cities. Such examples can be multiplied. Proposals should also map this type of value creation in a quantitative manner.

Proposals should explore changing valuation of public/common goods depending on different network topologies. They should investigate how are metrics of social (persons, individuals, not social media networks) and contractual (private contracts, private trades) networks associated with varying valuations public/common goods. Based on that, proposals should improve knowledge of the social cost aspects of weakening the rule of law. They should provide robust quantification strategies in the area of rights and freedoms in the national and European context.

Proposals should investigate historical developments to provide better understanding of present situation and present challenges.

Clustering and cooperation with other selected projects under this topic and other relevant projects are strongly encouraged.

HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-04: The interrelation between social, cultural and political identities, as well as the sense of belonging, and democracies

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 9.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.
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Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Provide a comprehensive analysis of the interrelations between social, cultural and political identities, the sense of belonging and identification with a group, and democracy, including in matters of political representation, participation and trust. This includes considering the intersecting, fluid and fragmented dimension of identities and their relation to the need to belong as well as values.
- Build on findings to formulate policy recommendations to address, prevent and correct negative trends, including piloting of strategies and frameworks to prevent discrimination, marginalisation and alienation. Insights on how to contribute to encompassing identities with concrete policy recommendations are highly encouraged.
- Develop critical insights into the ways in which processes of social, cultural and political participation can contribute to further fostering the sense of belonging/ownership to local, national and European democratic institutions and processes, or the diffusion of antagonistic identities or social norms.

Scope: The role of identities and the sense of belonging in democracies is of uttermost importance, where both have been key to define and understand political participation in democratic societies. In the past few years, Europe has arguably experienced an increased fragmentation of identities, given rapid generational, demographic, social, religious and political changes. Simultaneously, the pandemic has highlighted the importance of communities in times of uncertainty. This has opened up questions about the negative impact that such fragmenting trends might have on democratic life, as well as the barriers that certain groups face to be actively and meaningfully engaged in democratic participation, among these youths, migrants, and LGBTIQ+ collectives.

Conversely, it can be argued that the involvement of certain communities in democratic processes of decision-making (through quotas, but also through other participatory processes at different levels such as participants sortition) can contribute to further foster the sense of belonging to a democratic society, and further increase their participation in democratic life.

In this context, proposals should help further investigate the way that democracy and its key tenets such as political representation, participation or trust are interrelated to social, cultural, and political identities and a sense of belonging and identification with different communities. This includes gender, ethnic, multicultural, multilingual and spatial identities and subjectivities, amongst others, taking into account the cumulative effects of discrimination. To better understand social identities and their role in shaping political and social discourse, proposals could consider the condition of migration and refugees, segregation as well as

inclusion; the notion of European identity and heritage; people with disabilities; perception of belonging to urban/rural communities, to local communities or to diasporas; the role of media and social media in identity fragmentation, mixtures of ethnic, political and religious identities; the role of the cultural and artistic sectors in representing the diversity of identities (cinema, film series, literature, etc.).

Proposals should identify and explore barriers and factors that limit or impact the engagement of certain communities in democratic practices and processes, and erode their political participation, representation or trust in democratic institutions. Moreover, they should consider and propose policies, frameworks and recommendations to prevent and revert such negative trends, as well as ways to further foster the sense of belonging to democratic societies. This could include the piloting of participatory processes or civic engagement activities targeted at identifying and discussing the issues underpinning the sense of democratic belonging in said communities. Identities do not happen in a vacuum. People are attached to groups that grant them an identity that has currency in the social domain: being identified as a member of a certain group grants social capital. They belong to groups they value and that cater to their social and psychological needs. Proposals should therefore also develop critical insights into the ways in which processes of social, cultural and political participation can contribute to further fostering the sense of belonging/ownership to local, national and European democratic institutions and processes.

Finally, proposals may also study social representations and intergroup stereotypes, which determine to which groups individuals choose to belong. The benefits of group membership and identification, including the social capital that comes with group projects as an inherent part of social representations, may also be analysed. In that regard, the role of identification and belonging in the diffusion of antagonistic identities or social norms online and offline should be studied.

It is important that proposals integrate an intersectional, historical, fluid and multiple approach towards identities, as well as consider the varying concepts and experiences of “belonging” and “identification”, as well as the possibility to develop several feelings of belonging to different communities simultaneously.

Proposals should also utilise participatory methods for research, involving academic and non-academic actors, with a focus on community empowerment. They might utilise methodologies that build on disciplines such as political and social psychology, behavioural politics, history, sociology, gender and race theories, religious studies, post-colonial studies, etc.

Clustering and cooperation with other selected projects under this topic and other relevant projects are strongly encouraged. Proposals may consider social innovation activities to stimulate social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake.

Proposals are encouraged to collaborate with the JRC Competence Centre on Participatory and Deliberative Democracy,²⁶ in particular with respect to the design and utilisation of

²⁶ https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/participatory-democracy_en

participatory methodologies and how they consider, shape or transform individual and group identities. Proposals are also encouraged to collaborate with the JRC unit working on the Enlightenment 2.0 research programme,²⁷ particularly with respect to the influence of identities in evidence uptake, political decision-making and effective remedies that can benefit collective decision-making.

HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-05: Gender-roles in extremist movements and their impact on democracy

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 9.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Develop a critical understanding of the construction and performance of gender roles in extremist, identitarian and nationalist movements and their impact on democracy, EU values and fundamental rights.
- Provide evidence-based insights into the role of online communities in the promotion of reactionary, identitarian and extremist ideals, focusing in particular on different forms of masculinity from an intersectional perspective and drawing on engagement with these communities and platforms.
- Examine gender roles in political leadership styles and narratives, especially in nationalist and extremist parties, and their impact on democratic participation, decision-making and trust in governance, and propose alternative models for more democratic leadership.
- Develop innovative methods, policy approaches and tools to tackle antidemocratic narratives and tendencies, characterised by identitarian, nationalist and extremist ideals.

Scope: While gender and feminist scholarship in democracy tends to focus on the role of women and female representation, the role of men and different forms of masculinity are equally important to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of gender roles and inequalities on democratic discourse, decision-making and governance.

The past years have witnessed a rise of identitarian (alt-right), reactionary and other extremist politics, arguably strengthened by the pandemic and the isolation it created. Many of these

²⁷ https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/evidence-informed-policy-making/topic/enlightenment-20_en

ideals and politics are developing in online forums and platforms, often characterised by a contempt for the ‘liberal’ elite and perceived as tools for the radicalisation of (young) men. In extreme cases, such politics have been openly hostile towards women, LGBTIQ+ collectives and people with a minority racial or ethnic background, and even openly advocated for violence towards them, leading to increased hate speech, harassment, and hate crimes. More research is needed into these groups and milieus, especially through active engagement and deliberation with them on their perceptions around socio-political change, fundamental rights, and anxiety about perceived threats to their gendered identity. Therefore, proposals should develop strategies and practical solutions for the engagement and deliberation with men involved in reactionary, identitarian, or far-right nationalist online forums, and examine the influence of the online discourse in such platforms on the constitution of extremist movements, as well as their relation to mainstream (online) platforms and political discourse. This includes, but is not limited to, an analysis and engagement with different types of masculinity, how these relate to political violence, gender-based violence, and hate crimes, and perceptions around EU values and socio-political change. Interdisciplinary approaches, connecting social and political sciences with the use of information and communication technologies, including artificial intelligence, are particularly encouraged for this topic.

Moreover, the increased uncertainty and political challenges generated by the pandemic, has been coupled with a turn towards hyper-masculinistic modes of leadership and politics that require further analysis. In this context, proposals should consider the interrelation between top-down hyper-masculinistic leadership styles and bottom-up identitarian, nationalist and other extremist movements developing in online spaces, and analyse their impact on democratic participation, decision-making and trust in governance. Historical experiences of leadership and politics in crisis situations may also be considered in this regard.

Building on the evidence-based insights, proposals should develop innovative methods, policy approaches and tools for policymakers and practitioners to address the underlying roots of violent, discriminatory and illiberal political discourse and actions in both public and online spaces. This could include awareness-raising and training activities on the threats of identitarian and reactionary ideals for democracy and EU values, as well as innovative practices to deliberate with the targeted communities.

Proposals are encouraged to build on past EU-funded projects as well as plan to exploit potential synergies with project(s) funded under HORIZON-CL3-2024-FCT-01-04: Radicalisation and gender.

HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-06: Computational Social Science approaches in research on democracy

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and

	selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 9.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Insights into various aspects of democracy, its institutions, its capacity to adapt to changing circumstances, interaction with structural socio-economic patterns utilising Computational Social Science²⁸ (CSS) to identify systematic patterns to test working hypotheses.
- Develop and test methodologies that combine and integrate CSS and other Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) methods to study democratic governance, overcoming traditional academic boundaries in the field and producing synthetic data and simulation environments to stage full scale experiments which otherwise are reserved to historical study.
- Use of critical approaches to data and datafication of social data, the development of alternative approaches to research including critical software studies, digital studies, and critical media studies, and development of clear and concise policy recommendations for harmonising CSS approaches with GDPR guidelines in order to encourage and facilitate such studies.

Scope: Social sciences have not yet fully embraced the breakthrough of computational science that took place in past years with costs for data transport and data storage ceasing to be a limiting factor for data-driven social science. Developing new crosscutting tools of social and computational science will indeed contribute to better understanding how the EU society acts.

At the same time, although big data (including personal data) has become widespread and minable, datasets available to researchers for scientific enquiry are not so easily available, only under restricted regimes, or they vary in quality. Another important limitation to using these datasets is the respect of data protection regulations put in place by the European Union legislation (for instance GDPR). With CSS it could be critically examined where there is need for more data access to what kind of data, and also where there is not enough high-quality data at all. Proposals are therefore expected to propose new strategies and approaches on how

²⁸ Computational Social Science (CSS) uses methods developed in statistical physics to take advantage of the very rich big data sets and identify systematic patterns to deliver new forms of testing hypothesis at comparably low costs.

to deal with data, and the lack thereof, in a way that fully complies with the EU's notion of privacy and personal data.

A promising avenue in this respect is the creation and use for research of synthetic data sets, including full-scale synthetic reference populations. Those can link, while not interfering with personal data use restrictions, highly granular data set. As a result, empirical analysis can much better cater for distributional impacts across a wide range of types of households, and individual socio-economic backgrounds, and the impact of socio-economic policies in different geographical settings can be studied at the same level of detail as currently the case in environmental studies.

Thematically, proposals may choose whichever research focus, in the area of democracy, deemed relevant to exploit the potential of CCS. They may concentrate on testing age-old questions of political economy and political sociology and see how they change or survive when tested in a highly granular simulation environment, as synthetic population data allows to do, or they may identify more recent topics such as political communication, political participation, or resilience of democracies, in relation to structural socio-economic patterns. They may also do methodological research with access to new data sources, develop new methods, or refine existing ones, like social network analysis.

Concrete efforts should be made to ensure that the data produced in the context of the funded projects is FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable), particularly in the context of real-time data feeds, exploring workflows that can provide "FAIR-by-design" data, i.e., data that is FAIR from its generation. Proposals should leverage the data and services available through European Research Infrastructures federated under the European Open Science Cloud, as well as data from relevant Data Spaces in the data-driven analyses. Additionally, efforts should be made to increase the data availability in European Research Infrastructures federated under the European Open Science Cloud by depositing generated data in relevant infrastructures.

Clustering and cooperation with other selected projects under this topic and other relevant projects are strongly encouraged.

Proposals are encouraged to collaborate with the JRC and its Centre for Advance Studies and project on Computational Social Science for Policy.

HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-07: Digital democracy

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 9.00 million.

<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Policymakers, practitioners and researchers gain increased understanding of digital democracy, the challenges and opportunities involved in digital democratic deliberations, the current state of the art and the framework conditions supporting its successful implementation.
- Informed investment decisions of (any level) government based on mapping future trends, emerging next practices, related participation culture and engagement strategies for building a thriving digitally enhanced public sphere in Europe.

Scope: The COVID-19 pandemic made e-democracy more relevant and influential than ever before since access to the physical public sphere was limited. Through digital platforms and social media, individuals continue to voice their opinions, expose and mobilise for social movements, fostering change and raising awareness of democracy and fundamental rights. Citizens turned to digital media and collaborative platforms to deal with public affairs, exercising active citizenship virtually. Digital democracy platforms expand the opportunities for democratic deliberations through better and faster political information exchange, public dialogue, engagement in public decision-making and exercising voting rights in political elections. Digital democracy can also play an active role in creating and deepening societal change. However, digital solutions are also more vulnerable to disruption e.g. cybersecurity and privacy threats, misinformation campaigns or digital lobbying, attempting to impact public decision-making, including political election outcomes, and is likely to bring important ethical challenges concerning digital education and digital literacy, access to information, built-in bias, etc.

Increased level of participation between government and citizens requires radical changes and major investment making public administrations more relevant to the social, economic, political and technological environment. To prepare public administrations for increased engagement with the broader public, structures and processes need to be put in place, human and financial resources allocated, an ecosystem of intermediaries and representative organisations defined, most suited technological solutions identified, making public deliberation and moderation in the digital age an integral part of a governmental and also societal ‘culture of participation’.

For this aim, proposals should investigate - building on existing literature and data - the most recent developments, especially as regards the pandemic-induced innovative e-democracy and e-participation solutions at all levels of governance (international, EU, national, regional,

local). Historical analysis will allow the consideration of the wider and long-term impacts of e-participation on democracy, political and civic culture, and international cooperation will facilitate the exchange of good practice and success stories. The framework conditions i.e. rules, policies and processes; ways of working (partnerships, structures, collaboration); people (skills, culture and values, leadership); knowledge (data, learning) that support next level democratic participation (emerging and next practices) should be investigated. Research should pay particular attention to digital inclusion as a key challenge and essential element of inclusive citizen participation in public deliberations for a healthy digitally enabled democracy through equal participation irrespective of citizen's income level, education, ethnicity, gender, religion, language used, ability, geographical location, etc., and to the digital divide between generations.

Based on lessons learnt from existing good practice cases and experiences, proposals should consider the citizens' perspectives in building digital democracy tools and processes, including related technical aspects (e.g. gamification, artificial intelligence). The involvement of different stakeholders, including public administrations, end-users, political actors and the private sector is strongly encouraged to foster dialogue and understanding between diverse interest groups in democratic deliberations, enhance the legal frameworks and safeguards against threats and challenges (e.g. fraud prevention in e-voting), overcoming polarisation and reaching better public policy outcomes.

Proposals are encouraged to collaborate with the JRC Competence Centre on Participatory and Deliberative Democracy,²⁹ particularly with respect to new emerging forms of democratic participation – through or assisted by – digital means, as well as to the innovative application of frameworks and methods for citizen engagement in building and experiencing digital democracy tools and processes.

HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-08: Culture, the arts and cultural spaces for democratic participation and political expression, online and offline

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 9.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the

²⁹ https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/participatory-democracy_en

	consortium selected for funding.
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Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to the following expected outcomes:

- Recommendations on how to foster civic participation through a deep analysis of the use of spaces beyond classic democratic institutions, especially cultural and artistic_spaces, as well as cyberspace and metaverses, for political expression.
- Forward-looking policy recommendations to ensure that digital spaces (including metaverses and social networks) can, by design, have a positive impact on democratic life and limit potential threats to democracy.
- Experimentation of solutions, methods and tools to support democratic behaviour and social well-being for the next generation of social media.

Scope: Participation in political life through conventional means, such as elections, has become a challenge. Participation rates decrease while parts of society feel unheard by political elites and see electoral processes as inefficient.

On the other hand, some citizens find alternative outlets to express political opinions, such as protests³⁰, expression on social media and in virtual spaces, art creation, music and vocal forms of expressive culture, etc. Cultural, artistic and online spaces (such as public libraries, art exhibition spaces, heritage sites, cultural centres, parks and other public places used temporarily to convey a message, social media platforms, metaverses, etc.) are increasingly positioning themselves as catalysers for social and economic changes. They become privileged places for deliberation and alternative engagement with politics through debate, education and free expression, for instance. Proposals should evaluate how effective they are at channelling bottom-up political energy. They should also propose options as to how those alternative initiatives could feed into the wider political debate (for instance through social innovation). In addition, proposals could look at art and cultural productions (in the broader sense, online and offline) as vectors of political expression, be it in democratic or non-democratic contexts. How efficient are they in mediating political messages? What kind of attacks and counterattacks are targeted at them, with what effects, from the side of the professional politicians and organisations? How are questions regarding the legitimacy of artistic activities answered?

Aside from physical spaces, virtual spaces for exchange and communication have been very active in the dissemination of political views and have influenced the political debate, notably through the use of popular culture references (memes, etc.) and through cyber-culture. While the link between social media and disinformation as well as political engagement has already been investigated, the revival of virtual alternative universes, such as metaverses, begs for more scientific evidence regarding what impact this will have on democracy. Digital universes have a strong potential to both threaten and nurture democracies. Proposals should

³⁰ See, under the same call, HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-01: Protest politics and cultures of opposition in democracy.

propose forward-looking policy recommendations to ensure that such digital spaces can, by design, have a positive impact on democratic life, and to limit the potential threats to democracy. How can these new spaces be exploited as positive tools for citizen engagement? Proposals should also experiment solutions, methods and tools to support democratic behaviour and well-being for the next generation of social media.

Proposals are expected to investigate cultural activity and engagement, online and offline, as political expression, civic participation and political engagement, historically, in contemporary society, and to provide forecasts for the future. Gender, decoloniality and intersectionality should be taken into account. Investigation of examples and initiatives from outside Europe will be instrumental, given the many interesting experiences of art and activism around the world. Therefore, international cooperation is encouraged. Proposals should produce concrete policy recommendations and design proposals to allow the potential for political engagement through physical and virtual non-traditional spaces to be fully expressed, in an inclusive manner.

Research methodologies should include field research and participative methods. They may also involve culture and art practitioners and art-based research.

Clustering and cooperation with other selected projects under this topic and other relevant projects are strongly encouraged.

Proposals are encouraged to collaborate with the JRC Competence Centre on Participatory and Deliberative Democracy,³¹ particularly in respect to the development of evidence-informed policy recommendations on how digital universes, such as metaverses, can have positive impacts on democratic systems and democratic life in general.

HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-09: The role and functioning of public administrations in democratic systems

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 9.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.

³¹ https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/participatory-democracy_en

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Better understanding of the changing concept and practices of public administrations and approaches to public management, emerging trends and paradigm shifts, and the role public institutions and public management play in fostering democratic, economic and social stability.
- Mapping emerging innovative solutions in public management and institutional framework conditions (e.g. human resource management policies, leadership, new ways of working, changing public decision- and policymaking, etc.) that enable innovation in public administrations and deepen democratic governance.
- Recommendations for European Union Member States on key focus areas and (from local to EU level) actions as regards public administration modernisation and reform agendas, and whole-government innovation strategies for effective, innovative, future-capable and citizen-centric government administrations in Europe.

Scope: Governments are excessively under pressure today to adapt and respond to rapidly changing global economic, social, political, ecological and technological trends, to develop better public policy outcomes and high-quality public services that respond to the needs of their citizens, and to transform their internal operations on the go, creating modern and innovative public administrations. This area of research intends to investigate how European Union governments are approaching public administration and governance reform i.e. what areas they strategically invest in, what challenges they encounter, what (national, European or international) support (expertise, finance) they capitalise on, and how they generally approach transforming their government administrations (through e.g. systems approaches, open government approaches, innovation portfolio approach, organisational framework conditions enabling innovation, etc.) as they face the challenges of today.

The true measure of the successful practice of public service lies in the ability of government administrations to remain faithful to the tenets of democratic society (e.g. respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities). Therefore, particular attention should be paid to the role and functioning of public institutions in democratic systems, their role in fostering democratic, economic and social stability, and in reforming public management and institutions in ways that enhance citizens' trust in government and active participation in public affairs [e.g. engagement with citizens, open and transparent public decision- and policymaking, e-democracy, participatory and deliberative democracy, experimentation, working with innovation ecosystems (Quadruple and Quintuple Helix models), etc.], including emerging visions and narratives for public management and institutions.

To this effect, beyond the available literature review and internationally comparable data (e.g. World Economic Forum, United Nations, World Bank, European institutions, etc.), this research will need to involve intensive engagement with national government officials orchestrating and engaged in internal innovation processes, large-scale data collection and

analysis, and drawing up illustrative cases from European Union Member States and OECD governments actively working towards improving democratic governance and innovation in government administrations.

Proposals are also encouraged to collaborate with the JRC unit working on strengthening and connecting science-for-policy ecosystems across the EU,³² particularly with respect to projects interested in building the analytical foundations for reforms in public administration and in the science, technology and innovation system to improve evidence-informed policymaking processes, the use of expertise in policymaking, the establishment of boundary organisations and competence-building of knowledge brokers, and the public deliberation between science, policymaking, and society at large.

HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-10: Political participation in multilingual spaces

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 6.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Development of a European public space for citizen deliberation through a better understanding of the tools and mechanisms that can overcome barriers to political participation in multilingual spaces.
- Better management of linguistic diversity in political participation, from the local to the European level.
- Effective use of automated language tools and multilingual means of communication, through analysis of these tools and their impact on democracy-fostering processes.

³² See https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/evidence-informed-policy-making/topic/science-policy-ecosystems_en or https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/projects-activities/strengthening-connecting-science-policy-ecosystems-across-eu_en

Scope: The European Union is made up of a population with a multitude of languages (including sign languages) and dialects, which reflect a mosaic of cultures in constant interaction and evolution. Although this is not new, managing political participation in multilingual spaces is a challenge, particularly with a view to creating a European public space for citizen deliberation.

The Conference on the Future of Europe has shown that solutions exist to facilitate multilingual communication in a democratic context, including thanks to the use of automated translation tools. However, multi-lingual deliberations tend to crystallise on ensuring that opinions have been rightly conveyed through translation rather than on the outcomes of the discussions and the understanding of cultural codes and perceptions. In other words, how to ensure that multilingual deliberations focus on the content, rather than the form of what is said? How to allow deep and meaningful engagement among participants from diverse linguistic communities? Technological tools may help in virtual settings, but how can these technical innovations be brought into the non-virtual world, in order to address such a deep-rooted societal challenge?

In addition, multilingual spaces are almost always also multicultural. In other words, the translation process is never limited only to translation between language(s), but involves also intercultural translation. How would it be possible to ensure that notions of identity and belonging at the local, national and European level, be coupled with democratic, open and trusting societies? What role can inter-cultural dimensions of social capital and social dialogue play in strengthening democratic dialogue and on building democratic communities and citizenship (at the national and EU level)?

Proposals should consider outcomes from the Conference on the Future of Europe. They should explore how deliberations in multilingual settings can be best mediated, by design or through technological assistance. Special attention could be paid to linguistic minorities and people with communication impairments. Proposals under this call are encouraged to make use of participative methodologies and experimental methods. Proposals are encouraged to consider social innovation activities to stimulate social change, new social practices, social ownership or market uptake.

Clustering and cooperation with other selected projects under this topic and other relevant projects are strongly encouraged.

Proposals are encouraged to collaborate with the JRC Competence Centre on Participatory and Deliberative Democracy³³, particularly with respect to experimentation with the design of multilingual deliberative and other participatory processes in light of lessons learned from the implementation of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

³³ https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/participatory-democracy_en

HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-11: Future scenarios and young visions for European democracy 2040

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 4.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to the following expected outcome:

- Future scenario workflows, roadmap and strategy playbook to achieve the most preferred scenarios for democracy in the European Union 2040, researched, debated and co-developed through iterative, large-scale engagement processes with diverse groups of stakeholders i.e. young European citizens, political and institutional actors and organised civil society.

Scope: Democracy in the EU faces challenges from rising extremism and polarisation, covert authoritarianism, election interference and the spread of manipulative information. Political democracies are looking for new balances in fast-changing societal contexts while facing countless number of internal and global challenges and changes in power relations. This – in turn – reduces the willingness to undertake reforms that could deepen the European Union further. Nationalistic and populist tendencies, tensions between national and international frameworks, political and social polarisation jeopardise established values and practices (e.g. parliamentary democracy, the rule of law, separation of powers, democratic dialogue, etc.) and seem to weaken the political clout of the European Union in the long run.

In light of the current discourse about the need to rethink and redesign virtual and real public spaces and civic engagement, this research will also investigate the future of democracy and its instruments, and will also explore the views of political institutions such as national parliaments and the European Institutions, and those of organised civil society actors as regards their visions for the future, emerging trends such as e.g. participatory and deliberative democracy models that better serve the public good, build trust between governments and citizens, and deepen democracy at large. Particular attention should be paid to the development of future European (and national) public spaces that mutually support one

another and work together, and the evolution of the current EU model (with its peculiarities and often quoted democratic deficit) into its best potential.

With the accelerating complexity of change, there is a growing need to combine solid scientific forecasting methods that rely on objective historical data with qualitative and speculative foresight practices, and with a series of iterative, large-scale (online and in-person) engagements in order to build and co-develop alternative future scenarios that can empower young people living in the EU to proactively shape their collective future in the European Union. In addition, proposals should help to understand the visions of the next generation and how to provide them with the tools to put those visions in practice. It is important to document (e.g. the making-of film, documentary, library of video interviews, etc.) the journey undertaken over time from research through large-scale stakeholder engagements, debates and co-development of outcomes for European citizens to engage with the content as the project is progressing and after its conclusion.

HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-12: Testing and implementation of research results fostering democracy and governance

Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 4.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Coordination and Support Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.</p> <p>Legal entities established in Algeria, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine³⁴ and Syria may exceptionally participate in this Coordination and Support Action as a beneficiary (or affiliated entity).</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The topic requires the active involvement, as beneficiaries, of at least two non-academic [end-user] organisations (for instance: local or regional or national government authorities, or any other relevant organisations) from at least two different EU Member

³⁴ This designation is not to be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue

	<p>States or Associated Countries. The proposals must draw on the results of research and innovation projects that were publicly funded (at EU or national level), and whose end date must be after 1st January 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed actions must not duplicate or replace dissemination and exploitation activities that are part of the initial R&I projects. Proposed actions should go beyond such actions aiming at knowledge transfer and exchange.
<i>Procedure</i>	<p>The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The granting authority can fund a maximum of one project.</p>
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	<p>The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025).³⁵</p> <p>Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties.</p> <p>The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants.</p> <p>The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 100,000 in order for selected projects to be of a scale ambitious enough to achieve the objectives of the action as outlined in the expected outcomes. The respective options of the Model Grant Agreement will be applied. Beneficiaries should refer to General Annex B of the Work Programme for further information and guidance.</p>

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Policymakers, practitioners and researchers have increased understanding of the validity of theoretical models, the possibilities to implement recommendations, toolkits, narratives and methodologies and other solutions for issues for democracy and governance stemming [in particular] from Horizon 2020 projects.

³⁵ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under ‘Simplified costs decisions’ or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- Testing and uptake of research results on democracy and governance relevant for the future of democracy in the EU, involving stakeholders (non-science actors, including public bodies, NGOs, civil society organisations, policymakers, educational bodies, other potential end-users of the research results, etc.) to explore their readiness to implement the solutions developed in the previous research and innovation project, possibly adapting the solutions to the respective societal / administrative / political context based on the tests.
- Better informed decision-making on changes in democratic processes and governance, based on scientific, policy, legal, etc. conclusions from experiments with the results of such earlier projects in a practical / real life context, that allow to replicate the methods, recommendations for legislative changes, or translate the research results into innovations.

Scope: The aim is to bring to society the benefits from previously EU-funded research in the field of democracy and governance be it in Horizon 2020 or other relevant programmes (such as Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme or the Global Europe Programme). The proposals have to build on the rich stock of actionable recommendations, knowledge, toolkits, educational material, and scientific methods etc. developed in particular by the over 300 Horizon 2020 projects on democracy and governance related issues. For proposals building on Global Europe research in particular, cooperation with third countries is encouraged.

Proposals have to credibly identify a targeted democracy and/or governance related issue that can be addressed by implementing existing research and innovation results. In addition, proposals should take those research and innovation results further through testing and experimenting in the relevant operational environment, and enhancing the potential take-up of innovative solutions by civil society, public institutions, including educational institutions, and policymakers at all governance levels, including in third countries. Potential instruments for this testing, such as twinning or the launch of open calls for pilots, are possible through financial support to third parties. Proposals suggesting financial support to third parties should lay out the selection criteria that will be used. In addition, proposals should demonstrate the need or interest for the solution they propose by involving end-users in the project design. Proposals should also provide a clear pathway to impact as well as a comprehensive risk assessment plan with different mitigation strategies.

Proposals should address issues in line with the European Democracy Action Plan or EU policy initiatives that emanated from this Action Plan.

Possibilities of coordination with related activities funded through in particular the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme or the Global Europe Programme should be analysed. Cooperation should be sought with the Network for innovative solutions for the future of democracy funded under HORIZON-CL2-2022-DEMOCRACY-02-01.

Proposals should involve end-users (including civil society organisations) and/or strategic partners who can foster the societal impact of the research and innovation results. Possible end-users and strategic partners could include for instance local or regional authorities,

schools/universities, cultural institutions, civil society, foundations, political parties, trade unions, or youth organisations. Proposals should also involve practitioners and experts in science communication.

Besides fostering the societal impact of previous democracy and governance related research and innovation actions, proposals should explore and draw lessons on how the translation between research results in this field and policy actions takes place and what kinds of expertise is needed for achieving this. Proposals could also develop strategies to promote citizens activism and community engagement to build inclusive societies.

Proposals are also encouraged to collaborate with the JRC Competence Centre on Participatory and Deliberative Democracy,³⁶ particularly with respect to actions and initiatives directly contributing to the provisions of the European Democracy Action Plan for the promotion of democratic engagement and active participation beyond elections.

³⁶ https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/participatory-democracy_en