



ECAS

Work Programme 2020

The **European Citizen Action Service (ECAS)** is an international, Brussels-based non-profit organisation with a pan-European membership and nearly 30 years of experience in empowering citizens in order to create a more inclusive and stronger European Union by:

- Promoting and defending citizens' rights and
- Developing and supporting mechanisms to increase citizens and citizen organisations' democratic participation in, and engagement with, the EU.

ECAS believes in an inclusive, transparent, citizen-centric and democratic European Union in which citizens' rights are at the heart of decision-making at all levels and in which citizens are informed, consulted and active participants.

ECAS delivers its mission by implementing projects, services to citizens, advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns, research and high-level events in two focus areas – **EU Rights** and **European Democracy**.

The **2020 ECAS Work Programme** is comprised of various activities aiming to both tackle challenges faced by European citizens when exercising their EU rights and to empower them to be active participants in the decision-making process.



EU Rights

European citizenship is at the core of the European project and freedom of movement is one of the most cherished rights of European citizens.

17,5 million Europeans currently live and work in another EU country but many of them face serious challenges and administrative hurdles. These preclude them from exercising their rights “under objective conditions of freedom and dignity” and, in practice, undermine the fundamental status of their rights.

ECAS activities under its **EU Rights Focus area** aim at ensuring that the practical implementation of the freedom of movement and other EU citizenship rights measure up to the spirit of the European legislative framework and the values of solidarity and non-discrimination it promotes.



Projects being implemented

Improving Inclusion of EU Mobile Citizens (IMPEU) aims at fostering political participation of mobile EU citizens and enhancing capacity and knowledge of civil servants and relevant national and local experts on EU citizenship and related political rights.

Mobility Rights Enforcement for EU citizens (MORE for EU Citizens) works to create more enabling environment for proper enforcement of freedom of movement rights through the EU and national level advocacy and awareness raising activities. In 2020, an open competition for the most mobile-EU citizens friendly location/city in the EU will be launched as part of the MORE for EU Citizens.

The Civic Observatory on the Rights of EU Citizens (CORE) is a joint initiative of ECAS, FEANTSA and Medecins du Monde (MdM), which aims at monitoring and taking stock on an annual basis of legal and political developments in the field of EU citizenship. This allows the organisations involved in the Observatory to run and implement joint cross-sectoral initiatives and advocacy actions in order to complement and increase the impact of their individual activities.



Services to Citizens

In the framework of the **Your Europe Advice** service, which ECAS manages on behalf of the European Commission, ECAS and its network of 59 legal experts provide legal advice to about **25,000 European citizens** and their family members annually on their **EU rights** in 72 hours and in all 24 official EU languages.



Research & Analysis

Monitoring and analysis of recurrent problems related to freedom of movement and political participation

The Civic Observatory on the Rights of EU Citizens (CORE) Policy paper on the most recent policy developments related to freedom of movement, political participation, access to health and homelessness among EU mobile citizens

EU RIGHTS

A Toolkit for mobile EU citizens composed of 50 Q&A on the right to free movement and political participation

An online course for civil servants on the rights of mobile EU citizens



Advocacy & Awareness-raising Campaigns

Advocacy campaign for a new Communication of the European Commission to the Member States on the Directive 2004/38 through meetings with the European Commission (DG JUST) and selected MEPs from EMPL, LIBE and PETI Committees and a digital public-awareness campaign

Advocacy campaigns at national level in the EU Member States where the most persistent problems to freedom of movement have been identified by ECAS (Spain and France)

Awards for Most EU Mobile Citizen-friendly Locations in Europe:

An **open competition** with the support of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions on the most EU mobile citizen-friendly city/location in three categories:

- Practices aimed at improving entry and residence rights of mobile EU citizens
- Practices aimed at improving social and cultural inclusion of mobile EU citizens
- Practices aimed at improving political inclusion of mobile EU citizens.

Citizens will select the most **EU mobile citizen-friendly city/location** by voting on ECAS's crowdsourcing platform



Events

Citizen dialogue to discuss obstacles faced by EU mobile citizens and their political participation, March 2020

Roundtable to analyse civil servants' training needs, March 2020

Two **awareness raising events** in the Member States where the most persistent obstacles to freedom of movement have been identified (France and Spain)

A series of awareness-raising **Info Days**

State of the Union Citizens' Rights Conference 2020, November 2020

European Democracy

An important societal transformation is taking place throughout Europe and across the world. On the one hand, a new **deliberative-collaborative e-democracy model** is emerging which can contribute to a more open and inclusive form of policy-making by involving citizens through the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). On the other hand, Europeans are confronted with increasing threats such as populism and online disinformation that undermine the foundations and institutions of our democratic societies.

ECAS believes that the EU should explore more fully the potential of ICT in reducing the gap between political elites and citizens in order to create an engaged citizenship through civic tech.

We are convinced that it is only through **understanding populism** that the EU will more fully appreciate how to take citizens' voices into account in our democratic political system.

ECAS also believes that the challenge of **online disinformation** should be countered by ensuring citizens' access to qualitative and objective information as a basis for a healthy public debate.

In 2020, ECAS will continue its work in the European Democracy Focus Area by focusing on:

- Digital Democracy;
- Understanding Populism;
- Online Disinformation.



Projects being implemented

Democratic Efficacy and the Varieties of Populism in Europe (DEMOS) project is built on the assumption that populism is symptomatic of disconnect between how democratic polities operate and how citizens perceive their own aspirations, needs and identities within the political system. As such, DEMOS explores the practical value of 'democratic efficacy' as the condition of political engagement needed to address the challenge of populism. ECAS is responsible for the action-oriented research and supports the results' dissemination of the project.

Promoting the Nexus of Migrants through Active Citizenship (NEXUS) aims to empower students (with special attention to newly arrived migrant students and under-served students) so that they can enjoy their rights, uphold human rights values, and contribute positively to their society and the global community. NEXUS examines the role that Higher Education Institutions play in promoting civic and social responsibility of students, with an emphasis on including migrant students in such initiatives.

Road to European Parliament 2019 – Empowering a New Generation of EU citizens (REP 2019) works to increase the participation of young people (aged 18-19) in the EU decision-making by designing and delivering a training programme that will involve 250 students from rural areas of 5 different EU countries – Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Spain and Romania.



Services to citizens

The European Citizens' Initiative Online Collaborative Platform (the Forum) offers support to citizens when organising a European citizens' initiative and is managed by ECAS (with the support of Democracy International and ProMedia Productions as subcontractors) on behalf of the European Commission.

A new, revamped version of the Forum has been launched on the 7th of January 2020 with enhanced possibilities, as well as new features available to users. Through the SEEK Advice function of the Forum, ECAS handles enquiries on legal aspects, campaigning, fundraising, and any other relevant topics within a maximum of 8 working days and in all EU official languages.



Research & Analysis

Chapter in the book: 'Democratic Participation in a Citizen's Europe' (edited by Prof. Alemanno and James Organ)

Case Study on Iceland's crowdsourced Constitution in the book: 'Smarter Together: 50 Case Studies on How Collective Intelligence Can Help Government' (Stephen Boucher and co-authors)

Chapter in a book on the Impact of Populism on the European Institutions (Prof. Carlo Ruzza, University of Trento, Italy)

ECAS Policy Paper on the Conference on the Future of Europe – highlighting the functioning of a multilingual digital platform



Advocacy & Awareness-Raising campaigns

Conference on the Future of Europe: ECAS will closely monitor the process on the Conference on the Future of Europe and advocate for citizen participation regarding a process that could lead to a revision of the European Treaties with the aim of making the Union more powerful and more democratic.



Events

ECI Day – Europe-wide conference organised in collaboration with the EESC, Feb 2020

European Commission's ECI Conference, March 2020

Brussels based **Workshop on Populism**, March 2020

Civil Society Days, in cooperation with the EESC and the Liaison Group, April 2020

Five **citizens assemblies** in Member States on soliciting citizen opinions on populism

Twelve **awareness-raising events** on the new ECI Regulation and support infrastructure



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