

WORK PROGRAMME 2022





European Citizen Action Service

The ECAS is an international non-profit organisation with a pan-European membership and more than 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**.

ECAS' headquarters are based in Brussels and the organisation has a branch office in Bulgaria.

The 2022 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.

AREAS OF ACTIVITY

Citizen empowerment to exercise rights

EU Citizens' Rights **Freedom of Movement**
European Citizenship **EU RIGHTS**
Participatory Democracy **Civic Engagement** **Disinformation-free citizen participation**
European Citizens' Initiative **EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY** **Understanding Populism**
Crowdsourcing **Digital Democracy** **Building capacities to safeguard democracy**
Online tools to foster democracy **Citizenship Competences**
Digital transformation that leaves no one behind **Civic Education**



EU RIGHTS

ECAS empowers citizens to exercise their rights and campaigns for an inclusive, transparent and democratic Europe, where the benefits of EU citizenship can be fully tapped.

Considering the deteriorating framework of free movement rights' enforcement in recent times, in addition to the populist rhetoric on the issue in certain Member States, ECAS advocates for the promotion and enforcement of citizens' rights.

EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY

Digital transformation that leaves no one behind

The challenges of digital inclusion can impact many aspects of societal life - including political participation. Making our democracies fit for the digital age is key for Europe in 2022. ECAS believes that equal access to the online world must be provided to every citizen throughout the Union.

Building capacities to tackle populist narratives

ECAS wants to shape a society that is increasingly resistant to anti-democratic movements. The "Civil Society Hub for Actors Addressing populist Movements" provides the space for diverse stakeholders to jointly work on resilient liberal democracies.

Disinformation-Free citizen participation

Civic engagement is vital to make a difference in the life of European communities. However, disinformation is challenging the foundations for democratic participation. ECAS will support the capacity-building for disinformation-free citizen participation in Europe.



2022 Highlights

to look forward to



Upscaled training and capacity building activities through the ECAS training centre

Foster disinformation-free citizen participation in Central and Eastern Europe through ECAS' newly established **branch in Bulgaria**



Crowdsource citizens' opinions and recommendations to improve Air Quality in 10 European cities

ECAS' strengthened commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



Provide advice to small European CSOs via the **Citizen Activation Mentoring Scheme**



FRAMEWORK CONTRACT *for ECAS' Core Activities*

European Citizenship Accelerator (EURECA) 2022

The EURECA 2022 project will further develop the capacities of ECAS and its network of members and strategic partners to empower citizens and promote EU citizenship rights. It will also give citizens the opportunity to contribute to the implementation of the European Democracy Action Plan and the EU Citizenship Report of 2020.

EURECA will strengthen European citizenship and identity through citizens' engagement, support the post-COVID restoration of freedom of movement in the EU, and foster EU mobile citizens' rights, including their voting rights in their host countries. This will be achieved through capacity building of 30 civil rights advice organisations and public authorities in Spain, Italy and France, awareness raising of about 370 000 EU mobile citizens on the 2022 EC Communication and their EU rights, and practical ideas on how to improve registration rates of mobile citizens prior to the local elections in Czechia and the Netherlands.

The EURECA European Democracy activities will develop and support mechanisms to increase citizens' and citizen organisations' democratic participation in and engagement with the EU, based on EU values. This impact will be achieved through capacity building of 30 CSOs and other stakeholders from Bulgaria, Hungary and Slovenia to counter disinformation and other forms of interference in the democratic debate. By creating synergies and fostering exchange among 15 CSOs from 11 EU countries within the Civil Society Hub addressing populist movements and by soliciting the input of 1,500 CSOs directly or through their networks on a civic agenda for a sustainable and democratic use of digital innovation, including digital inclusion guidelines. Three EURECA awards will promote European citizenship innovation, best practices and innovative images. Citizen Activation Mentoring Scheme will provide tailored advice to at least 50 citizens or small CSOs.

Funder: European Commission, Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme

Timeframe: January – December 2022, first year of a 4-year Operating Grant framework contract

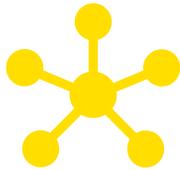


Citizen-centric Services

Your Europe Advice is an online **EU advice service** provided by legal experts from ECAS operating under contract with the European Commission. It consists of a **team of about 60 lawyers** who cover **all 24 official EU languages** and are familiar both with EU law and national laws in all EU countries. Your Europe Advice replies to questions from citizens or businesses on their personal EU rights. The experts respond to the questions within 72 hours, free of charge and in the language chosen by the user. Enquiries can be submitted either via an [online form](#) or by phone (**00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11**). In 2021 Your Europe Advice experts answered around 19,000 enquiries.

Funder: DG GROW, European Commission

Timeframe: multiannual, until the end of March 2024



Projects

Freedom of Movement in the EU

The project will aim at raising awareness on the new structured Guidelines (a new Communication is supposed to be issued in the first half of 2022) of the European Commission to the Member States on the Freedom of Movement Directive through awareness-raising campaigns, tailored training to public administration and rights advice organisations in the countries hosting the highest number of EU mobile citizens.

Funder: EPIM (European Programme of Integration and Migration)/Network of European Foundations

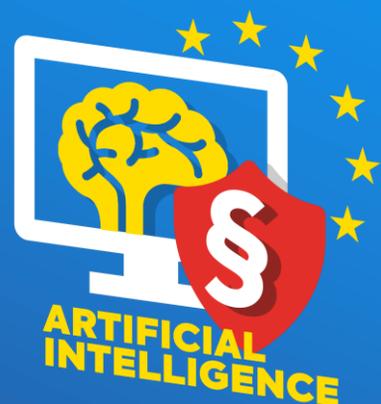
Timeframe: tentatively May 2022 – December 2023

A European Positive Sum Approach towards AI tools in support of Law Enforcement and safeguarding privacy and fundamental rights (pop AI)

brings together security practitioners, AI scientists, ethics and privacy researchers, civil society organisations as well as social sciences and humanities experts with the purpose to foster trust in AI for the security domain. The objective will be achieved via increased awareness, ongoing social engagement, consolidating distinct spheres of knowledge that offer a unified European view and specialised knowledge outputs, while creating an ecosystem that will form the structural basis for a sustainable and inclusive European AI hub for Law Enforcement.

Funder: Horizon 2020 research programme

Timeframe: multiannual, October 2021 – end of September 2023





Citizen-centric Services

The [European Citizens' Initiative \(ECI\) Forum](#) is an online collaborative platform that offers support to citizens when organising a European citizens' initiative. The forum allows citizens to learn more about the European Citizens' Initiative through best practices and enabling discussions on EU policies and European Citizens' Initiative proposals. Through the forum, citizens are also able to find partners in other countries, exchange experiences, and ask for legal, campaigning, and fundraising advice from experts. The Forum is operated by ECAS on behalf of and under contract with the European Commission.

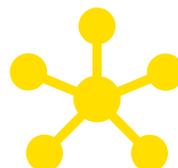
Funder: Secretariat-General of the European Commission

Timeframe: multiannual, until the end of November 2022





CITIZENSHIP COMPETENCES



Projects

The **NEXUS** project 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. The project includes the development of trainings, guides and handbooks, and an inventory of digital tools for civic education.

Funder: Erasmus + programme

Timeframe: multiannual, until the end of August 2022

The DEMOS project is built on the assumption that populism is a symptomatic disconnect between how democratic polities operate and how citizens perceive their own aspirations, needs and identities within the political system. DEMOS explores the practical value of 'democratic efficacy' as the condition of political engagement needed to address the challenge of populism. The project focuses not only on the polity, but equally on citizens' perspectives: how they are affected by, and how they react to, populism. Politically underrepresented groups and those targeted by populist politics are a particular focus, e.g. youth, women, and migrants. Based on developed indicators and predictors of populism, the DEMOS consortium will elaborate scenarios on the interactions of populism with social actors and institutions both at the national and the EU levels.

Funder: Horizon 2020 research programme

Timeframe: multiannual, until the end of April 2022



UNDERSTANDING POPULISM

Co-Deciding Europe (CODE Europe) project will pilot the collaborative method of crowdsourcing legislation in Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Latvia and Portugal on the subject of 'air quality' – a topic chosen because of its transnational nature and the problems associated with it (estimated 400.000 premature deaths in Europe each year). The consortium will develop a universally applicable methodology - the e-Participation Assessment Framework - to allow objective comparison of the results of e-participation projects across time and geographical space and use it for evaluating the crowdsourcing pilots. The consortium will also test a 'social listening' method through a Digital Dashboard to include citizens' opinions on 'air quality' beyond the actively engaged citizens participating in the crowdsourcing pilot. The project will deliver guidelines for ethical 'social listening' to benefit from the availability of big data while protecting individual privacy and safeguarding citizens against inappropriate access and use of data.

Funder: EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Regional Cooperation

Timeframe: multiannual, until the end of 2023

Digital Democratic Empowerment and Mobilisation for a Stronger EU (DigiDEM) will apply collaborative methods of crowdsourcing legislation and 'social listening' in Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and Montenegro on the subject of 'air quality' and will ensure that the collected citizens' contributions on the topic feed into and impact EU policy-making. By piloting crowdsourcing and social listening exercises across four EU countries, the project will contribute to providing a blueprint for innovative methods of citizen engagement that are implemented as complementary to representative democracy. Through its activities and outputs, DigiDEM also aims to establish a transnational community of policy makers, academics, businesses, NGOs and citizens which will continue to apply and advocate for the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to ensure inclusive and collaborative decision-making processes at all levels.

The project is designed to go hand in hand with [CODE Europe](#) - a 3-year project funded by the EEA regional cooperation grants, piloting the collaborative method of crowdsourcing legislation in Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Latvia and Portugal.

Funder: EACEA, Europe for Citizens programme

Timeframe: multiannual, September 2021 – February 2023





ECAS Events

- **State of the Union Citizens' Rights** Conference – March 2022
- Concluding **DEMOS** event on understanding populism – May 2022
- **NEXUS** Concluding event – June 2022
- **ECI Day 2022** – June 2022
- **Stakeholder Policy Lab on Artificial Intelligence** in 2022
- **EU Rights Training delivery** in France, Italy and Spain
- **Voting Rights Focus groups** in the Netherlands and Czechia
- **Campaigns** of national alliances in Bulgaria, Slovenia, Hungary on **Disinformation - Free Citizen Democratic Participation**
- **Digital transformation cluster events** in five Member States: Estonia, Luxembourg, Portugal, Ireland and Latvia - March to November 2022
- **Civil Society Hub** events (three plenary sessions in 2022) – March, June, November 2022
- **Alliance for Citizenship competences** event - September 2022
- **Digital Democracy Day** 2022 – November 2022
- **Your Europe Advice seminar** – 24-25 November 2022
- **Civil Society Hub public event** – December 2022



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