



Citizens' engagement: Launch of new centre for designing policies with citizens, for citizens

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Today the Commission is launching a [competence centre on participatory and deliberative democracy](#) in its Joint Research Centre (JRC). The competence centre will foster partnerships and provide guidance, tools and resources to strengthen citizen engagement in policy.

The rise in citizens' assemblies, juries, and panels in recent years in Europe has shown both the increasing demand among citizens to take part in shaping laws and public policies, and that this participation is key to building trust in institutions and strengthening democracy as a whole.

The competence centre has been set up to help EU institutions and organisations across Europe build their capacities to support projects and policies on participatory or deliberative democracy. The ambition is for all policymakers to start any policy file by exploring how to involve citizens in the process. It is already working on several pilot projects, from green cities to future mobility solutions.

The competence centre supports the Commission's priority for [a new push for European democracy](#). The Commission aims to give Europeans a stronger role in decision-making, through initiatives such as the [Conference on the Future of Europe](#) and the [European Democracy Action Plan](#).

Members of the College said:

Vice-President for Democracy and Demography Dubravka **Šuica** said: *"This new competence centre on participatory and deliberative democracy shows the European Commission's determination to engage with citizens on the issues that matter to them. The Conference on the Future of Europe is offering Europeans a central role in shaping the future of the EU, encouraging them to discuss our common challenges and help define our priorities. The ongoing European Citizens' Panels are a truly unique exercise in deliberative democracy. They empower our citizens to have a greater say beyond elections, to help strengthen our democracy and make it fit for the future."*

Vice-President for Values and Transparency Věra **Jourová** said: *"We need to do more to protect European democracy, but also to cherish and nurture it. The need to support a vibrant civil society and enhance democratic participation of citizens within a healthy digital ecosystem across the EU is at the core of the Commission's work and will remain for the years to come. The new competence centre on participatory and deliberative democracy is an important new resource to help the Commission, and all other interested stakeholders, in achieving this objective."*

Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, Mariya **Gabriel** said: *"The JRC, as the Commission's science and knowledge service, is perfectly placed to become the meeting point for practitioners, researchers and policymakers, allowing them to work together on bringing participation into the heart of European policymaking. Citizens' input is more important than ever as the increasingly complex challenges we face as a society force us to rethink and reinvent many areas of our societies and our economies."*

Background

Managed by the JRC, the new competence centre will work on:

- **Policy guidance**, including advice and hands-on support to policymakers to co-design and manage their citizen participation actions;
- **Building capacity in-house**, including through training events;
- **Experimentation**, including pilot citizen engagement activities to experiment and innovate with new methods;
- **A knowledge repository**, and a database of citizen engagement organisations and projects in the EU, as well as toolkits to engage citizens in science and policymaking;
- **Community and networking**, including a platform for policymakers and researchers to connect and discuss their [experiences](#).

As well as offering knowledge, resources and tools, the competence centre provides both virtual spaces (such as citizens' engagement platform) and physical spaces (such as [the JRC collaborative and makerspace](#)) to share ideas. It will bring professionals and practitioners to collaborate across the EU.

The competence centre will also develop a framework to evaluate citizen engagement and deliberative democracy, including the extent to which these practices are being mainstreamed across the EU.

The JRC coordinates [several competence centres](#), each focused on providing analytical tools and bringing together expertise in their respective field. The centres offer training courses in the use of tools for policy-making, they advise on the choice of tools and they also work directly with Commission policy departments to apply the tools to the policy problems in hand.

For More Information

[Competence centre on participatory and deliberative democracy](#)

[Conference on the Future of Europe](#)

[European Democracy Action Plan](#)

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