



## Reporting on Deliverable D6.2- Report of mid-term conference

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DELIVERABLE	
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## ACTEU MID-TERM CONFERENCE

“Strengthening democracy: Building trust and tackling polarisation in Europe”

12 December 2024, Fondation Universitaire, Brussels

The banner features a dark red background with white text. On the left, it reads '#ActEU Mid-Term Conference' and 'STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY' in large, bold letters, followed by the subtitle 'Building trust and tackling polarisation in Europe'. Below this, the ActEU logo and the European Union logo are displayed. On the right side, the event details are listed: '12 DECEMBER 2024', '11 RUE D'EGMONT, 1000 BRUSSELS', and '09:45 - 18:15'. At the bottom right, it states 'UPON INVITATION ONLY'. To the far right, there is a vertical strip of three small images showing people at the event.

On 12 December 2024, the Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA) organised the mid-term conference of the ActEU project (Activating European Citizens' Trust in Times of Crises and Polarization), titled “*Strengthening democracy: Building trust and tackling polarisation in Europe*”. Structured as an academic conference, the event featured panel presentations by leading experts, interactive discussions, and opportunities for engagement with a select audience of scholars and practitioners. In total, 54 participants attended (54% women and 46% men).

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On 11 December 2024, the day before the conference, the ActEU consortium convened for a General Assembly, followed by a content exchange meeting. These sessions provided a vital opportunity to review recent progress, take stock of ongoing work, and align on upcoming tasks. On 13 December 2024, the day after the conference, ActEU researchers met with members of the Civil Society Network (CSN), who had also attended the conference, for a dedicated workshop. The CSN, comprising advisors specialising in areas such as multi-level governance, youth and citizen participation, gender equality, and migration, offers invaluable expertise and fresh perspectives that drive the project toward impactful outcomes. The workshop focused on refining the methodology and formats of ActEU toolkits and policy recommendations. Participants split into two groups - one targeting educators and the other policy-makers - ensuring that the project's outputs are practical and tailored to their respective audiences. This collaborative effort further bridged the gap between academic research and real-world application, enhancing the relevance and utility of ActEU's deliverables. Grouping these activities together not only enhanced efficiency but also fostered stronger relationships and deeper collaboration among consortium members and partners, reinforcing their shared commitment to the project's objectives.

In the conference's opening remarks, ActEU coordinator **Michael Kaeding** (University of Duisburg-Essen) welcomed participants and highlighted the project's primary objectives: investigating declining trust, legitimacy, and representation in a polarised Europe, and developing toolkits of



remedial actions. He noted that the mid-term conference marks the successful completion of the project's first review phase and provides an opportunity to present newly collected data and preliminary findings, while also launching the second phase of the project. ActEU remains committed not only to sharing research results but also to incorporating the perspectives of (young) European citizens through creative and engaging processes.



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The conference started with the first Session: "Assessing ActEU's initial findings: key challenges, successes, and future directions". After introductory remarks by the moderator **Alexander Hartland** (Saarland University), **Henrik Serup Christensen** (Åbo Akademi University) presented an ActEU publication on [the development of political trust in Europe](#). The findings revealed that political trust at the EU and national levels forms distinct dimensions. This diversity underscores the complexity of political trust and its reliance on both level and context. The findings also showed that developments in trust are more heterogenous than what has often assumed, which entails that there is no universal solution to addressing trust deficits; instead, responses must be carefully tailored to the unique circumstances of each country.

**Carles Pamies** (Spanish National Research Council) then presented a recently published report on [voting behaviour in Europe](#). While the literature consistently indicates that lower levels of trust are associated with lower levels of participation, this study aimed to provide a more nuanced and multileveled perspective over time and across regions. Pointing out these differences in the



association between trust and participation, he highlighted the need to contextualise analyses to better understand dynamics of protest voting and voting for radical parties in Europe.

The last presentation was given by **Matilde Ceron** (University of Salzburg) on [representation patterns](#), examining descriptive, substantive and subjective representation across country. She highlighted persistent descriptive underrepresentation in all groups (women, youth, ethnic and racial minorities, and LGBTIQ+) and mark cross-country differences in the salience of the related issues - with minority-related topics receiving limited attention. Notably, there is a weak correlation between descriptive representation (presence of specific groups) and substantive representation (promotion of their issues). She stressed the importance of national context also in shaping citizens' perceptions as overall levels of subjective representation and differences across groups vary extensively across country.

**Zora Siebert** (Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung EU & ActEU Civil Society Network Member), acting as discussant, praised the research for its relevance to policy-makers and its intersectional approach. She emphasised challenges in disseminating findings effectively and tailoring strategies to country-specific contexts. The session concluded with a dynamic Q&A, covering ActEU's efforts to analyse trust among societal groups, the mismatch between public priorities and government agendas, and strategies for translating research into actionable knowledge.





Chaired by **Alexander Hoppe** (University of Duisburg-Essen), the second Session "Is representative democracy in Europe under pressure?" examined the challenges facing representative democracy in Europe, exploring patterns of trust, disaffection, and political engagement at multiple levels of governance.

**Laura Morales** (Spanish National Research Council) presented the work of a group of scholars from Sciences Po, the Spanish National Research Council, and Åbo Akademi, who looked into the dimensionality of trust in political institutions and actors. She highlighted that while scholarship has traditionally considered trust in political institutions to be unidimensional (i.e. citizens have similar attitudes towards all of them regardless of the level of government), their research shows that trust should be looked at as a two-dimensional concept. This means that citizens may have different orientations depending on the government level (EU vs. national vs. subnational institutions).

**Ruth Berkowitz** (University of Duisburg-Essen) presented the work of scholars from the University of Duisburg-Essen and the University of Saarland on citizens' political disaffection in Europe. Through 16 focus groups conducted in 2023 and a public opinion survey run in 2024, they looked at the attitudinal and behavioural (i.e. related to participation) facets of citizens' political disaffection and identified four groups of citizens: 1) positive attitude and high participation; 2) positive attitude but low participation; 3) negative attitude but high participation; and 4) negative attitude and low participation. The politically disaffected group was identified as the one combining negative attitudes and low participation. In addition, the data from the focus groups extends the analysis by including the process-related, informal and emotional aspects as well as the demand side, i.e. the question of how citizens perceive the attitudinal and behavioural aspects of political disaffection.

**Felix-Christopher von Nostitz** (ESPOL-LAB, Université Catholique de Lille) and **Giulia Sandri** (Université Libre de Bruxelles) presented an ongoing work on the factors affecting trust towards subnational political institutions, also co-authored by Max-Valentin Robert. Using datasets covering the 27 EU Member States and 11 additional European countries, they found a positive relationship between the degree of autonomy of subnational authorities and trust therein, and a similar correlation between the quality of democracy in subnational authorities and trust therein. They also observed that subnational autonomy may reduce trust in national governments. With regard to trust in EU institutions, they found that the latter is negatively influenced by subnational autonomy, while subnational quality of democracy is positively linked to EU trust. Overall, they concluded that subnational democratic quality is a stronger predictor of trust than subnational autonomy, and that autonomy enhances local trust but may fragment trust at higher governance levels.



**Daniela Vancic** (Democracy international & ActEU Civil Society Network Member) acted as a discussant in the panel and shared her reflections on the work presented, as well as her broader considerations on the issue of declining trust in representative democracy. She stressed the need for a stronger political impact and greater accountability of the instruments and processes that already exist in Europe, citing the European Citizens' Initiative, which is the second most used democratic instrument at European level after elections, but still not used enough. She also shared her reflections on the recent US election, noting how citizens were not single-issue voters, but would rather express different opinions (and thus preference for different candidates) depending on the issue at stake. Reflecting on ActEU's research, she underlined the importance of also looking at the group of citizens combining negative attitudes and high participation. She also invited researchers to look at the relationship between citizens' political trust and their socioeconomic wellbeing.

The following Q&A session touched upon several important aspects of political trust, such as the impact of more participatory forms of democracy on citizens' trust, the forms of participation chosen by the high-participation groups, and how the combination of negative attitudes and high participation translates into voting behaviour.





The third session addressed the topic of “[What drives trust, representation, and political engagement in a changing Europe?](#)” was moderated by **Petr Kratochvíl** (Institute of International Relations Prague).

**H. Serup Christensen** presented an upcoming paper on [deceitful behaviour and political trust](#), exploring what factors affect the acceptance among citizens of deceitful behaviour by political elites. The findings revealed that deceitful behaviour by elites significantly diminishes favourability, likability, and perceived representation, with more severe forms of deceit causing even greater damage. Interestingly, deceitful behaviours affected likability and perceived representation more strongly in more corrupt countries, potentially creating a vicious cycle of distrust. Furthermore, political alignment appeared to mitigate the negative impact, with citizens being more tolerant of deceitful behaviour if the politician shared their ideology and/or policy preference.

**Janette Huttunen** (Åbo Akademi University) then presented a forthcoming publication on [preferences for representation by women and minorities and whether women and ethnic minorities face electoral penalties](#). The study examines how the gender and ethnic minority status of candidates influence voter choices as well as voter perceptions of likability and representativeness towards those candidates. The study finds that gender generally does not affect electability. Women were neither penalised nor rewarded in most countries. However, in Germany and Spain women face electoral penalties. In countries with lower female representation in national parliaments (under 30%), women candidates are rewarded in terms of likability and representation. The results also show that ethnic minority candidates are penalized in choice, likability and feelings of representation in all countries.

The final presentation, by **A. Hartland**, focused on [engagement triggers in response to controversial policies](#). This ongoing study investigates the drivers of political participation in an era marked by rising political discontent and polarisation, where citizens face the choice of either withdrawing from the political arena or raising their voices. The study explores whether willingness to engage in political activities depends on the policy area, the group organising the activity, or the form of participation. Key findings suggest that respondents are more likely to engage in lower-cost activities, are equally likely to participate across a range of issues, and are equally likely to engage with protest activities regardless of the organizing actors. The primary factor influencing participation appears to be the effort required: the less effort involved, the more likely citizens are to participate.

The session concluded with an insightful Q&A led by the discussant, **Anna Kern** (Ghent University). She praised the clarity of the results, noting that they stand in contrast to the mixed picture extant

in existing literature, making the findings both surprising and valuable. She also highlighted the added value of the cross-country data collection and encouraged further exploration of the country-specific differences, including a more precise focus on the types and geographies of these differences.

The session wrapped up with a dynamic discussion on several key topics, including the determinants of political participation, the influence of party affiliation on reactions to women and minority candidates, and how these findings can be communicated effectively to young people. Other points raised included the gap between claimed intent to participate and actual participation.



**Kristina Weissenbach** (University of Duisburg-Essen) moderated the fourth session, titled “How is polarisation fragmenting democratic norms and reshaping European politics?”, featuring four presentations on forthcoming papers.

The first study, presented by **L. Morales**, explored the dynamics of polarisation within the context of [culture wars and climate activism](#). She examined contentious issues such as the diversity brought by immigration, gender equality, LGBTIQ+ rights, and climate change. The research investigates how these emerging cleavages contribute to the so-called “culture wars,” contrasting these symbolic debates with policy discussions that have tangible impacts on people’s lives. The study focused on flags as symbols of visibility, identity, and celebration, showcasing their power to ignite deeper societal debates. While current findings reveal mixed levels of polarisation, they also highlight the



potential for future conflicts as symbolic issues intersect with broader societal divides. L. Morales emphasised the need to understand how symbols, seemingly minor, can serve as flashpoints for cultural and ideological divisions.

**M. Ceron** then presented another ongoing work on [public attitudes on gender equality and democracy](#), shedding light on the growing polarisation surrounding gender equality in democratic societies. She highlighted that polarization - could weaken support for democratic norms. The study hypothesises that lower support for gender equality correlates with diminished support for democratic values. Preliminary findings reveal a significant relationship: individuals opposing gender equality policies are less likely to prioritise living in a democracy. The research also This relationship holds across multiple European countries and policy areas, with some variations. These insights underscore the risks posed by cultural and social cleavages, particularly around gender equality, to democratic stability.

Next, **A. Hartland** presented on [polarisation among EU political parties](#), using ActEU's web-scraping data to analyse dynamics in social media spaces. He illustrated key findings from a preliminary analysis of Twitter activity by German Members of Parliament (MPs) in July and August 2023. Of the 733 MPs, 587 were active on Twitter, collectively posting 30,000 tweets during this period. Migration emerged as a central topic, with the most active parties being the AfD and FDP (each posting over 150 tweets), followed by the Greens. Public responses to tweets on migration were predominantly negative, regardless of the party or message, and the quantity of tweets had little impact on public sentiment. These findings raise questions about the effectiveness of social media as a tool for political engagement and reveal asymmetrical polarisation in online discourse. A Hartland concluded by questioning whether platforms like Twitter are genuinely essential for political communication.

**Daniel Gayo-Avello** (University of Oviedo) closed the session with a presentation on [tracking narratives related to gender, climate, and migration](#). He outlined ActEU's broader efforts to analyse political and cultural discourse across diverse platforms, including news websites, social media, and Telegram. Despite challenges such as data limitations and imperfect models, the research provides a robust foundation for examining polarisation and its societal implications. The dataset spans 1 million pages and articles from 300 outlets, 30 million tweets generating 70 million interactions, and 7 million posts from 8,000 Telegram channels. Preliminary findings reveal platform-specific trends: news websites and traditional media primarily focus on climate and gender, Twitter engages with all three issues, and Telegram emphasises gender-related discourse.

The session's discussant, **Manuel Müller** (Finnish Institute of International Affairs & ActEU Advisory Board Member), summarised the panel's key themes - migration, gender, and climate -



through the lens of inclusion and exclusion. He argued that culture wars fueled by these topics pose challenges to democratic systems that are ill-equipped to represent future generations or non-citizen residents. Müller critiqued the inadequacy of efforts to appease far-right narratives and urged media actors to consider their role in addressing and mitigating polarisation. His reflections underscored the need for proactive strategies to bridge societal divides and counteract the tensions highlighted by ActEU's research.

The Q&A session offered an engaging platform for further discussion, with audience members raising questions about public policy, polarisation, and the influence of digital platforms on democratic discourse.



In his concluding remarks, **M. Kaeding** quoted Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, who stated on the first day of the new European Commission that trust in the EU has reached 51% - its highest level in 17 years. He emphasised that this milestone reflects a significant shift in public perception, highlighting trust as a cornerstone of EU institutions. While trust is closely monitored within EU bodies, the work of ActEU provides valuable narratives that deepen the understanding of these trends. He noted that, although the reasons behind these changes remain unclear, it is evident that trust in EU institutions varies considerably across Member States and is less stable than trust in national institutions. This underscores the complexity of political trust, which is not uniform across the EU but shaped by diverse regional and societal dynamics. He concluded by



extending his gratitude to all contributors for their invaluable input and engagement in advancing this critical area of research, and closed the conference with an announcement that preparations are underway for the project's final conference, scheduled for 5 February 2026.



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## Dissemination & communication

The ActEU Mid-term Conference was promoted via TEPSA's social media accounts (LinkedIn, Twitter/X, Facebook, and Instagram). Each panel discussion was presented by LinkedIn and Twitter/X posts, accompanied by professional photography. Instagram stories were used to document the event and invite the audience to visit the ActEU website. At the end of the conference, a photography package was posted on TEPSA's Instagram account, using pictures taken during the panel presentations, and a throwback post was added to TEPSA's Facebook profile.

Furthermore, the project hashtag (#ActEU) was used by TEPSA and members of the consortium in social media communications regarding the conference. The flexibility of ActEU's decentralised social media strategy encourages the formation of a true community of stakeholders online, harnessing partners' and researchers' already existing audiences. Participants were able to provide their own comments on the conference, while contributing to the social media campaign for its dissemination. In addition, consortium members were able to choose their preferred social media platforms and tailor their messages according to their audience.



Furthermore, this platform-tailored approach to communication formed part of a strategy to reach people where they are and provide them with content relating to the conference in the most engaging way possible. As such, social media communication surrounding the Mid-term Conference on TEPSA's accounts reached a total of 6046 impressions and a 2.2% engagement rate.

Additionally, TEPSA recorded [each academic presentation and turned them into short videos](#), between 8 and 16 minutes long, which will be distributed on a regular basis via TEPSA's YouTube account and promoted on TEPSA's social media, including LinkedIn, Twitter/X, Facebook, and BlueSky. Making these detailed presentations publicly available in the form of a short online lecture series ensures the outcomes produced by the conference can serve as educational, research, and policy-relevant resources long after the implementation period. Likewise, the Mid-term Conference videos will be disseminated among the PhD researchers attending the ActEU's Doctoral School in February 2025 as preliminary material to stimulate discussion.

Finally, an announcement of the Mid-term Conference, including the final agenda and pictures, [was added](#) to the TEPSA website.



## About ActEU

How can we conceptualize and empirically measure political trust and legitimacy beyond the usual survey question “How much trust do you have in the parliament?”? Does the multi-level nature of European representative democracies require an identical level of citizen support at the regional, national and EU levels? How does social polarization on key policy issues of our times –immigration, climate change, and gender inequality– challenge the political trust in, and legitimacy of, democratic political systems? And what can policymakers and civil society do to master these challenges? ActEU aims at finding answers to these questions pursuing two overarching goals: In phase 1, we map and investigate persistent problems of declining trust, legitimacy and representation in Europe with a particular attention to the polarization of societies and the EU’s multi-level structures. Providing an innovative conceptual framework on political attitudes, behavior and representation across Europe, we establish an original empirical infrastructure based on an innovative combination of methods and newly collected quantitative and qualitative empirical data (focus groups, experimental surveys, web scraping). In phase 2, these results will flow directly into the creation of a toolbox of remedial actions to enhance political trust in and legitimacy of European representative democracies. In cooperation with a newly created Civil Society Network, Youth Democracy Labs across 13 European cities and in exchange with political cartoonists “Cartooning for democracy”, we will develop context-sensitive solutions for all polity levels and some of the most polarizing policy areas, and craft tailor-made toolkits for both policymakers and civil society and the educational sector. Finally, we deploy a differentiated dissemination strategy to maximize ActEU’s scientific, policy and societal impact in activating European citizens’ trust and working towards a new era of representative democracy.

[www.acteu.org](http://www.acteu.org)

## ActEU Consortium



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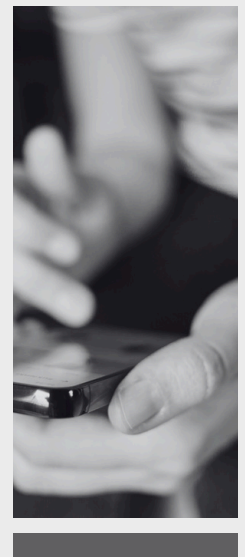
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# STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY

*Building trust and tackling polarisation in Europe*

**#ActEU**

# MID - TERM CONFERENCE



12 DECEMBER  
2024

11 RUE D'EGMONT,  
1000 BRUSSELS

09:45 - 18:15

# Agenda

09:45      *Registrations*

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10:15 - 10:30      **Welcome & Opening Remarks**

- Michael Kaeding, Professor & ActEU coordinator, University Duisburg-Essen
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10:30 - 12:00      **Session 1: Assessing ActEU's initial findings: key challenges, successes, and future directions**

This panel will explore the preliminary results from the ActEU project, discussing key deliverables with insights into research successes and methodological challenges. Our selected researchers, joined by experienced civil society members, will provide perspectives on the project's impact so far, addressing the complexities of assessing democratic engagement, polarisation, and public trust in Europe. Through a moderated conversation, panellists will highlight lessons learned and set the stage for the next phase of ActEU, fostering a collaborative approach to democratic resilience and social cohesion.

**Session Chair: Daniela Braun, Professor & ActEU Scientific Lead, Saarland University**

**1) Trust dynamics ([read the report](#))**

- Henrik Serup Christensen, Senior Lecturer, Åbo Akademi University

**2) Voting behaviour in Europe ([read the report](#))**

- Carles Pamies, ActEU Project Researcher, Spanish National Research Council

**3) Representation patterns ([read the report](#))**

- Matilde Ceron, Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Salzburg

**Discussant: Zora Siebert, Head of EU Policy Programme, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung EU & ActEU Civil Society Network Member**

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12:00 - 13:00      *Lunch Break*

13:15 - 14:30 **Session 2: Is representative democracy in Europe under pressure?**

This panel examines the challenges facing representative democracy in Europe, exploring patterns of trust, disaffection, and political engagement at multiple levels of governance.

**Session Chair: Alexander Hoppe, Lecturer, University Duisburg-Essen**

**1) Understanding trust in political institutions (read the abstract)**

- *Jens Carstens, PhD student, Sciences Po*

**2) Democracy under pressure: citizen disaffection in Europe (read the abstract)**

- *Ruth Berkowitz, Research Associate, University Duisburg-Essen*

**3) Political trust at local levels across Europe (read the abstract)**

- *Felix-Christopher von Nostitz, Associate Professor in Political Science, ESPOL-LAB, Université Catholique de Lille*
- *Giulia Sandri, Researcher & Scientific Advisor, Université Libre de Bruxelles*

**Discussant: Daniela Vancic, European Program Manager, Democracy International & Civil Society Network Member**

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14:30- 14:45 *Coffee Break*

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14:45- 16:00 **Session 3: What drives trust, representation, and political engagement in a changing Europe?**

This panel investigates the critical factors shaping trust, representational preferences, and public engagement in politics. It examines the influence of politicians' behaviours, representational diversity? and responses to controversial policies on citizens.

**Session Chair: Petr Kratochvíl, Professor, Institute of International Relations Prague**

**1) Deceitful behaviour and political trust (read the abstract)**

- *Henrik Serup Christensen, Senior Lecturer, Åbo Akademi University*

**2) Preferences for representation by women and minorities (read the abstract)**

- *Janette Huttunen, Postdoctoral Researcher, Åbo Akademi University*

**3) Engagement triggers in response to controversial policies (read the abstract)**

- *Daniela Braun, Professor & ActEU Scientific Lead, Saarland University*

**Discussant: Anna Kern, Associate Professor, Ghent University**

16:00- 16:30      *Coffee Break*

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16:30- 18:00      **Session 4: How is polarisation fragmenting democratic norms and reshaping European politics?**

This session explores how polarisation across Europe is impacting democratic norms, with a focus on the divisive forces shaping contemporary political and social landscapes. Presenters will discuss findings from a range of studies that examine culture wars, public attitudes, political polarisation, and media narratives. Together, these presentations provide a nuanced look at the role of polarisation in redefining civic values and influencing democratic cohesion in Europe.

**Session Chair: Kristina Weissenbach, Acting Professor, University Duisburg-Essen**

**1) Culture wars and climate activism (read the abstract)**

- *Laura Morales, Research Professor, Spanish National Research Council*

**2) Public attitudes on gender equality and democracy (read the abstract)**

- *Matilde Ceron, Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Salzburg*

**3) Tracking narratives on gender, climate, and migration (read the abstract)**

- *Daniel Gayo-Avello, Associate Professor, University of Oviedo*

**4) Polarisation among EU political parties (read the abstract)**

- *Alexander Hartland, Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Saarland*

**Discussant: Manuel Müller, Senior Researcher, Finnish Institute of International Affairs & ActEU Advisory Board Member**

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18:00 - 18:15      **Concluding Remarks**

- **Daniela Braun, Professor & ActEU Scientific Lead, Saarland University**

## About TEPSA



The Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA) was established in 1974 as the first transnational research network in the field of EU affairs. It comprises leading research institutes throughout Europe, with an office in Brussels. Its aim is to provide high-quality research on European integration to stimulate discussion on policies and political options for Europe. This is achieved by the interaction between the European and national institutions as well as the academic and research community. TEPSA is active on a wide range of research topics, focusing on differentiated integration, the EU's external relations, democratic participation and citizens' engagement.

More information on our activities can be found at <http://www.tepsa.eu>



## About ActEU

How can we conceptualise and empirically measure political trust and legitimacy beyond the usual survey question “How much trust do you have in the parliament?”? Does the multi-level nature of European representative democracies require an identical level of citizen support at the regional, national and EU levels? ActEU aims at finding answers to these questions and more by pursuing two overarching goals. First, in phase 1, we map and investigate persistent problems of declining trust, legitimacy and representation in Europe with particular attention to the polarisation of societies and the EU’s multi-level structure. Knowledge gained from phase 1 will flow directly into the development of a toolbox of remedial actions characterising phase 2, which will craft tailor-made toolkits for political and civil society actors, school teachers and university lecturers to deal with issues of declining political trust in representative democracies in flux and counteract a further decrease. We develop context-sensitive solutions for all policy levels and types of polarising fields (migration, environment, gender).

More information on our activities can be found at <https://acteu.org/>



# #ActEU

# Civil Society Network

## Empowering change with the ActEU Civil Society Network

At the heart of the ActEU project lies the Civil Society Network (CSN) – a vibrant and dedicated community passionate about shaping the future of Europe. With a focus on pivotal policy areas such as multi-level governance, citizens' and youth participation, gender equality, and migration, the network is uniquely positioned to make a significant impact. As a key advisory body to the ActEU scientific team, the CSN provides invaluable insights, expertise, and fresh perspectives that drive the project forward.

## Charting the course of innovation

The CSN is at the heart of our quest to understand and counter the decline in political trust and legitimacy. Through collaboration and expertise, it is pivotal in reaching significant milestones that encapsulate our journey towards meaningful change.

- 1.** *At the foundation of transformative action is robust methodology.* The CSN plays a crucial role in refining our approaches, ensuring that our research and initiatives are grounded in inclusivity and effectiveness.
- 2.** *Collaboration is key to innovation.* The CSN engages in the co-creation of comprehensive toolkits dealing with issues of declining political trust in representative democracies and counteracts any further decline. This reflects a tangible manifestation of our collective will to provide practical solutions that stakeholders across Europe can implement.
- 3.** *Knowledge is most powerful when shared.* The CSN actively participates in the dissemination of our research findings, ensuring that the insights and solutions we uncover reach the widest possible audience. This is about amplifying our impact, engaging with the community, and fostering a dialogue that drives societal progress.

### MILESTONE 1

Grounded research and methodological advice

### MILESTONE 2

Co-development of the toolkit for remedial actions

### MILESTONE 3

Dissemination of research results to all stakeholders

# Meeting the ActEU Civil Society Network

## Gender Equality

**Réka Sáfrány**  
Hungarian  
Women's Lobby

**Fiona McKay**  
Gender At  
Work

**Ivonne Pokropek**  
International  
Alliance of Women

**Daniela Vancic**  
Democracy  
International

**Assya Kavrakova**  
European Citizen  
Action Service

**Paul Zoubkov**  
Democracy Reporting  
International

**Pegah Maysa Moulana**  
Youth and Environment  
Europe

**Charlotte Billingham**  
European Climate Foundation

**Andreas Beckmann**  
WWF CEE

**Wim Gabriels**  
Erasmus  
Student Network

**Antonio Argenziano**  
Young European  
Federalists

**María Sierra**  
European Student's  
Union

**Dylan Ahern**  
De Kiesmannen

**Adrien  
Licha**  
ALDA

**Adam Nyman**  
Debating Europe

**Zora Siebert**  
Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung  
European Union

**Ophélie Masson**  
European Alternatives

## Youth

## Citizens' participation

## Multi-level governance

## Climate

## Migration

**Eva Valentová**  
Association for Integration  
and Migration

**Mirna Buić**  
PiNA

**Rasmus Alenius Boserup**  
Euromeds Rights

### For further information about the CSN

- Eva RIBERA (Project Manager, TEPSA) [eva.ribera@tepsa.eu](mailto:eva.ribera@tepsa.eu)
- Alexander HOPPE (Assistant Professor, University of Duisburg-Essen) [alexander.hoppe@uni-due.de](mailto:alexander.hoppe@uni-due.de)

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“The ActEU CSN offers an unparalleled opportunity to directly and collectively influence the course of European policy and innovation. We're not just discussing change; we're actively shaping the future of the EU.”

Michael Kaeding & Daniela Braun  
ActEU Project Leads



Funded by  
the European Union