# CULTIVATING EUROPE: Democratic Europe • Social Europe • Educated Europe

*Research On Societies in Europe*

## Introduction

Europe is presently confronted with internal and external challenges that need to be addressed urgently by policy makers. These challenges include social inequality, migration, demographic change, rising nationalism and populism, terrorism, digitalization, economic crises, loss of trust in established information channels and an overall waning confidence in Europe and democracy among European member states. Moreover, Europe is confronted with diverging ideas on its future direction and role in the world, which may be conducive of changes in the future European idea, values, and social cohesion.

Higher citizen participation in political processes is required in order to enhance trust in political life and democratic institutions. Good education that also provides citizens with instruments to address the present multicultural society and a balanced public sphere are important premises for such an endeavour in the context of the present networked society. Finally, the problems of economic and social inequality throughout Europe and within the member states are far from being solved and generate tensions in Europe. In the new framework programme for research and innovation ("Horizon Europe"), research on societies is needed in order to cultivate Europe as a democratic, social and educated Europe.

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### Challenge statement

The three areas *ROSE* has identified are closely interlinked and interdependent: **Democracy** relies on free and open **social** structures, and both are supported by **education** promoting citizens' autonomy and their ability to deal with the opportunities and insecurities of a free, democratic and open society.

*ROSE* values that the first public draft of "Horizon Europe" includes these concerns, mainly within the designated second global challenge, *'Inclusive and Secure Society',* which mentions 1) Democracy, 2) Cultural Heritage, 3) Social and Economic Transformations, 4) Disaster-resilient Societies, 5) Protection and Security and 6) Cyber Security as areas of intervention. Yet, *ROSE* argues that:

- *Cultivating Europe* must be based on continuous, well-financed research on societies at the European level. The budget of 2.8 billion euros for the cluster 'Inclusive and Secure Society' is insufficient for achieving an impact in line with the centrality of today's socio-political challenges in Europe. **A budget of 3 billion euros only for the three areas of intervention 'Democracy', 'Cultural Heritage' and 'Social and Economic Transformations' seems more appropriate. We also strongly suggest to rethink the coherence of the cluster structure and to define separate budget lines for the two subdomains 'Inclusion' and 'Security'.**

- Only a wide portfolio of projects on the socio-political challenges of our time is conducive of a wide mission-led impact of research for a Democratic, Social and Educated Europe. The higher the synergies among several thematically related projects, the higher their impact on politics and society will be. **We therefore recommend to finance a critical mass of (smaller) projects for each topic and ensure synergies through the definition of common missions.**

- Promoting the link between society and technology in our times is reasonable. Reducing the complexity of society to a matter of mere technological development is reductive. *ROSE* **strongly suggests putting in place measures for integrating research on societies in technology and innovation-driven projects, especially in the topic description and evaluation phase.**

- Europe also needs a better understanding of the key role that education plays in the development of our society, and a closer integration of educational research and concepts. **We argue that educational research shall play a central role among the areas of intervention planned for a stronger educated Europe.**

# Democratic Europe

## Underlying challenge

In his speech before the European Parliament Jean-Claude Junker in 2014 announced a new Agenda for Europe in which together with *Jobs, Growth* and *Fairness* also *Democratic Change*[1] should become *a main goal for a new start for Europe*. Indeed major challenges that may jeopardize the endurance of the European construct have affected Europe and its democracies in the last years. Research on Democratic Europe shall develop new ideas and knowledge-based solutions to foster democracy in the context of a changing, increasingly global, economically divergent and digital Europe. In particular, it shall:

1) **Address the political and social challenges for Democracy and Cohesion in Europe and the European societies:**

- Trust in national and European institutions has declined in the context of economic crisis.
- Nationalisms/localisms, support to antisystem parties, exit options have gained weight in the last years making each election in the EU member states an alarming matter.
- The refugee crisis is still a testing ground for European cohesion, solidarity and justice within and outside the European borders as well as fuel for populistic movements.
- The (mis)use of personal data and the diffusion of fake news for electoral purposes are able to influence democratic elections and generate insecurity on the use of digital media in general by citizens.

2) **Provide effective institutional designs in order to improve the functioning of European institutions and communication structures in democracies.**

### Research on Democratic Europe is in Europe's interest. The following challenges need to be addressed:

**Enhancing trust and transparency in Europe**
- Adjusting politics to ongoing structural transformations in politics and societies.
- Analyzing the loss of confidence in the ability of social/political institutions to solve problems and the consequences for the electoral behaviour of citizens (fear, protest vote, criticism towards established parties).
- Providing normative orientation for the legitimacy of policies, political institutions and citizens' expectations.
- (Re-)Balancing the public sphere as a means of reducing vulnerability in open, networked democratic societies.
- Designing a fair and transparent usage of new technological means and the role of big data systems.

**Bringing Europe to the citizens in times of crisis**
- Contested Europe. Lessons from the past for the security of the future.
- The EU in the perception of its citizens: loss of control vs opportunities for cooperation, solidarity and shared security systems.
- Identifying obstacles and reflecting upon the possibilities to allow for more public engagement[2].
- Developing long-term strategies to address populism and to include and engage disaffected citizens.

**Rethinking European Governance in times of crisis**
- Developing a better concept of interaction and cooperation between the EU and its member states and a new discussion of competences, rights and obligations in all fields.
- Reorganizing accountability in Europe to strengthen European problem-solving capacity.
- Analyzing and addressing the tension between transnational problems and national and local orders.
- Identifying peaceful forms of conflict resolution in a multi-polar world.
- New forms of transnational and cross-border collaboration in crime-control.

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[1] https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/juncker-political-guidelines-speech_en.pdf

[2] Mariana Mazzucato, 2016 *Mission-Oriented Research & Innovation in the European Union. A problem-solving approach to fuel innovation-led growth*. Report for the European Commision.

# Social Europe

## Underlying challenge

The joint signing of a European Pillar of Social Rights by the European Parliament[3], the Council and the European Commission in November 2017 further emphasizes the vision of a Europe of values, freedom and equality for its members, as citizens, workers and consumers. Nevertheless, member states still differ strongly in terms of economic conditions, inequality, social protection and hence in the capacity of reacting to potential crises. Moreover, work organisation is constantly changing by the use of new technologies, which challenges the capacity of adjustment of traditional social protection measures. Research on Social Europe shall support the movement towards an economic AND social Europe. In particular, it shall:

1)  **Investigate both macro and micro conditions and processes at the base of inequality in Europe:**

    * Demographic change has challenged established systems of social security especially in old age.
    * High unemployment rates, especially among young people have grown in some of the EU's member states in the last years and jeopardized their sustainable economic development.
    * The economic crisis has accentuated the economic and social inequalities in Europe.
    * Recent migration waves have shown the limits of traditional labour market and social policy measures to integrate less-well qualified migrants.
    * Digitalization and new technologies have created new jobs but also generated new forms of instable and unprotected work conditions.
    * The emergence of new business models such as crowd-working and platform-driven businesses that complement existing systems of work organization create challenges in terms of social security and social protection.

2)  **Reduce inequalities by designing new forms of social protection to deal with the present challenges.**

## Activities should include research in the following fields:

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| **Ensuring social security in times of transformation**<br>• Analyzing sources and forms of social inequality within Europe.<br>• Addressing the impact of new business models in the digital era on economies, societies and social protection.<br>• Designing common standards of social protection, unemployment security and guaranteed minimum resources in Europe. |
| **Enabling solidarity from the local to the global**<br>• Exploring the tensions between diversity and solidarity in migration-intensive regions.<br>• Analyzing the dynamics of normative orders in human rights between the local, the national and the transnational.<br>• Identifying and promoting best practices of local solidarity in Europe. |
| **Making social market economies sustainable**<br>• Exploring social, economic and legal perspectives on new models of work organization.<br>• Combining flexibilization of labour market and social security in times of crisis.<br>• Understanding the consequences of new trade protectionism.<br>• Assessing the sustainability of the EU financial architecture and law. |

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[3] https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en

# Educated Europe

## Underlying challenge

The UN's Sustainable Development Goal 4 demands to "*ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*"[4]. Seven targets call for equal access to education, better early childhood education and care, an increase of the number of highly educated youth and adults, the reduction of the illiteracy rate and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

Even among Europeans, almost one fifth of all citizens still show reading, writing or numeracy weaknesses[5]. High-quality education is therefore an indispensable constituent for a democratic and social Europe without which many other core objectives within Europe and across the world cannot be achieved. With its Lifelong Learning programmes, the EU responds to increasingly multifaceted and non-linear realities in life and work and to the short-lived nature of generated knowledge. In addition, the Bologna Process has aimed to ensure comparability of standards and quality in higher education in Europe. What we need for the future is more research on our educational systems and a strong link between education programmes and the new Horizon Europe. Before existing systems are altered and adjusted, research within Horizon Europe must:

1) **Analyze what, why and how changes have to be implemented to react on:**

   - The role of mass and social media for learning, which broadcast an excessive load of information competing with quality-assured formal education.
   - New digitized communication realities, globally shared information and education offers.
   - The effect of controlled and pre-filtered information coming from internet channels and smartphone apps.
   - Increasingly ethnically and culturally diverse, multilingual societies bringing together people of different origins, socialization, lifestyles, educational prospects and philosophies.
   - Longstanding and recently growing migration processes, and, at the same time, general education disparities as well as knowledge gaps with regard to cultures of origin and cultural heritage and a lack of intercultural awareness among residents and migrants in Europe alike.

2) **Identify the right measures to reduce the high level of inequality in access to education for people coming from different socio-economic backgrounds.**

**An educated Europe must build on the following research priorities:**

| **Ensuring equal education to citizens** |
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| <ul><li>Education in new family realities: early childhood and family education, improving opportunities through education for children and adults, student mobility, transnational and social mobility, permeability of education systems.</li><li>Promotion of European models of education also to the newly arrived (e.g. access to higher education for all).</li><li>New ways of digital access to education and knowledge, including new digitalizing and communication strategies.</li></ul> |

| **Fostering knowledge in a post-factual society** |
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| <ul><li>The influence of media (internet, social media, television) and the mechanisms of representation on education, opinion formation, and individual professional and civic action, in the face of phenomena like 'fake news', 'alternative facts' and our 'brave new digital world'.</li><li>(Multi-)cultural heritage as a social asset worth to be protected: understanding of cultural diversity in Europe and development of intercultural competence to respect and engage in active exchange with other cultures.</li><li>Multilingualism in Europe: a valuable cultural asset or a barrier to mobility and cooperation? Fostering of linguistic diversity and language skills as a basis for general cognitive abilities, education, societal and political participation.</li><li>Cultural translation processes for enhanced social cohesion and added perspective in and across European countries.</li></ul> |

| **Fostering innovation through education** |
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| <ul><li>High-level and continuing academic education as the basis of growth and a society able to understand the relevance of e.g. climate change, a responsible use of resources and the need for renewable resources.</li><li>Education as an engine for the economy, stable employment markets and high living standards.</li><li>A new understanding of a student life-cycle orientated education (LLL) instead of an outdated step-by-step-education.</li><li>Recognizing the mutual interdependence of education, research and innovation.</li></ul> |

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[4] http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/

[5] http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/policy/school/doc/literacy-report_en.pdf (2012).
http://www.basicskills.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/EBSN-Numeracy-Briefer-than-Brief-Policy-paper_digital-version.pdf (2014).

**With regard to the missions planned, *ROSE* proposes the following:**

*Mission 1*
> **Strengthening the European Idea, measurable through increased participation of citizens in the European Parliament elections by 2039 to an overall European level of over 60%.**

*Mission 2*
> **Reducing the average unemployment rate among adolescents and young adults in Europe to below 10% by 2035 through comprehensive research on new, not only technology-driven solutions for the labour market.**

*Mission 3*
> **Reducing the number of people (young people and adults) with difficulties in literacy and numeracy across Europe to less than 15% of the total population by 2035.**