



Joint policy event of the cluster of H2020 projects on Populism  
**Unmasking Populism: Modalities, Scenarios, and  
Responses to a Persistent Threat**

*When:* Thursday 19 May 2022, 13:00 – 17:00 CET

*Where:*

<https://europeancitizenactionservice.my.webex.com/europeancitizenactionservice.my/j.php?MTID=m1e51d31bcd57eec58d8ee4957fc59ffc>

*Register here:*

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeivaFOQA2\\_CnFDwnLbwvCnK4zISmo2bMiPpGWZShisRndViw/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeivaFOQA2_CnFDwnLbwvCnK4zISmo2bMiPpGWZShisRndViw/viewform)

### **Background and objective**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on our democratic societies, posing unprecedented challenges to personal freedoms, the reliability of information and, ultimately, the ability of democratic institutions to cope with the rapidly changing societal demands. This adds up to a tumultuous decade for European democracy, that saw the rise of populist movements and anti-European sentiments fuelling disintegration drives.

Three Horizon 2020 research projects, [DEMOS](#), [POPREBEL](#) and [PaCE](#) have analysed the phenomenon of populism and its consequences for European democracies and the EU at large, identifying and understanding the causes of populism as well as strategies for strengthening democratic values and practices.

Innovative, evidence-based research is vital to respond to the challenges faced by European democracy. This is why the research teams will host now, at the end of their research work plans, a policy event to present and discuss policy relevant insights and findings on the multifaceted phenomenon of populism, with a specific focus on possible policy actions and recommendations.

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## **AGENDA:**

### **13:00 – 13:10 Welcome**

Irene Norstedt, Director of the People Directorate, DG R&I, European Commission

### **13:10 – 14:05 Demand and drivers for populism: general and specific socio-political drivers of popular support**

- The role of economic problems in driving support for populism (POPREBEL, DEMOS, and PaCE)
- Socio-cultural factors behind populism: nationalism and religion (POPREBEL)
- A focus on competent government and not ignoring sections of the electorate in face of populist challenge (PaCE)
- Individual level variables: emotions, political knowledge, information, and values (DEMOS, POPREBEL)

*Q&A with the participants*

### **14:05 – 15:45 Socioeconomic, political, and cultural implications of populism**

- Economic policy of populist governments (POPREBEL)
- How populist governments use the concept of constitutional identity to justify their authoritarian governance? (DEMOS)
- Populist cultural policy: delegitimising liberal democracy and undermining of the EU's positive image (POPREBEL)
- Populist information strategies, social media, and the commercialization of modern media (DEMOS and POPREBEL)
- The minorities targeted by populist actors and their reactions (DEMOS and POPREBEL)
- The COVID crisis and populist reactions (DEMOS)
- Anti-vaxx and other emerging issues (PaCE)

*Q&A with the participants*

### **15:45 – 16:00 Break**

### **16:00 – 17:00 Scenarios for remedial actions**

- Future scenarios and how to deal with the threat of right-wing populism in each of them? (POPREBEL)
- The role of deliberative policy making in countering populism (PaCE)
- Why and how civic education can be useful in countering populism? (DEMOS, PaCE, POPREBEL)
- Communication strategies: how to reduce polarisation in discussion address the heterogeneity and complexity of different groups and communities (PaCE)

*Q&A and concluding remarks*



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