

Democracy Research in the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)

September 2026

About MSCA

With a budget of EUR 6.6 billion for the period 2021-27, the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) is a research and training programme that supports the career, skills development, and mobility of researchers at all stages of their careers and from across the world. The programme funds bottom-up research in all fields based on scientific excellence and competitive funding.

The MSCA have 5 main actions

Doctoral Networks

implement doctoral programmes (including joint doctorates and industrial doctorates) **by international partnerships** of organisations from different sectors. They train highly-skilled doctoral candidates, stimulate their creativity, enhance their innovation capacities and boost their employability in the long-term.

Postdoctoral Fellowships

support researchers' careers and foster excellence in research and innovation. Researchers holding a PhD can carry out their research activities, acquire new skills and develop their careers abroad, whilst developing competences in non-academic sectors and working within interdisciplinary teams.

Staff Exchanges

offer researchers and innovators short term international and inter-sectoral exchanges through sustainable, collaborative projects in Europe and beyond. These promote the transfer of both knowledge and skills, while also increasing organisation's capacities for research and innovation.

MSCA and Citizens

brings research and researchers closer to schoolchildren, families and the wider public at large through actions such as the European Researchers' Night - the annual research communication and promotion event taking place at the end of September across EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries.

COFUND

co-finance regional, national and international doctoral and postdoctoral programmes for researchers' training and career development. COFUND spreads MSCA's best practices by setting high standards and excellent working conditions, through international, interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral mobility.



Supporting democracy through research and training in MSCA

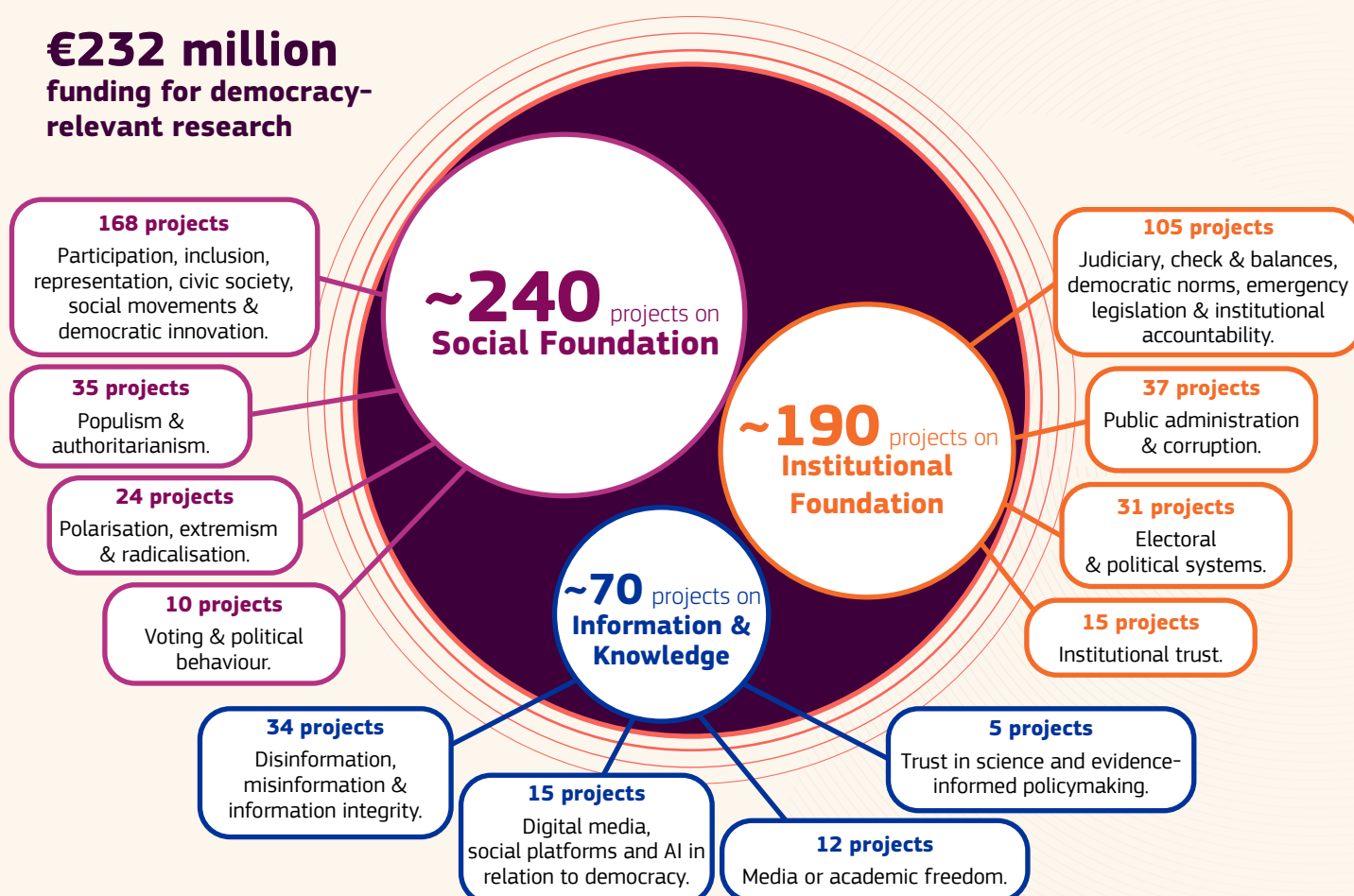
Under Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe¹, **close to 500 MSCA projects have conducted democracy-related research**, addressing areas such as democratic institutions and the rule of law, civic participation, polarisation and extremism, disinformation, media freedom, digital democracy, trust in science and evidence-informed policymaking. While many projects contribute to more than one policy area, **democratic resilience** and the **rule of law** are at the core of most MSCA projects on democracy.

MSCA-funded projects on democracy strongly contribute to EU's key policies such as the **European Democracy Shield** and **EU Strategy for Civil Society**, by addressing a wide range of topics on fundamental rights and values through interdisciplinary and comparative research and training. More than 400 of these projects address diversity-related issues, including gender, identity, aging population, social representation, migration, and intercultural interaction.

¹ The results are based on AI-assisted screening and manual checks; figures are indicative and may vary depending on the information available. Data extracted in July 2026.

~500 relevant or highly relevant projects to democracy

€232 million
funding for democracy-
relevant research



Success Stories

Below are some examples of success stories from close to 500 MSCA projects on democracy. They illustrate the diversity of topics in MSCA-funded research and training on democracy, and the comprehensive knowledge base available to EU policymaking.

Longitudinal research into political discourse in Europe

O Social Groups, Where Art Thou?

[A cross-national and longitudinal analysis of the place of social groups at the core of the party-voter representative linkage](#)

MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships (PF), Horizon Europe

GAPREP project has developed a new software library (SL) for analysis of political texts (an R package) using insights from political science, communication studies and computational linguistics. Its analysis focused on political language to better understand how to ensure free and fair election processes. The project has examined group appeals in 950+ election manifestos spanning 1949 to 2022 from Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the UK, creating a new, easily accessible data set. GAPREP also analysed cross-national survey data from the past four decades to investigate how political parties represented various social groups and how voters responded to these group appeals.

Educational tools for young people through multidisciplinary networks

I-CIVIC

[Innovating Civic Engagement: Pedagogies for a Resilient Generation](#)

MSCA Staff Exchanges (SE), Horizon Europe

To address democratic deficits and the rise of anti-democratic movements that the youth face today, the MSCA-supported I-CIVIC project aims to create a multidisciplinary network of international experts to enhance democratic engagement, civic participation, and digital literacy among Europe's youth. Specifically, the project will develop scalable, community-based educational frameworks. These will draw on various fields such as pedagogy, sociology, and political science. Success hinges on the collaboration between educational institutions and local organisations like museums, libraries, and sports clubs, addressing declining civic engagement, misinformation, and inclusivity gaps in democratic education.

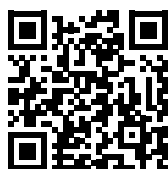
Fighting health-related misinformation through interdisciplinary research

REMEDY

[The Effect of Resistance to Epidemic Measures on Disease Spread and Mortality – What's the Role of Online Misinformation?](#)

MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship (PF), Horizon Europe

The REMEDY project uncovered the mechanisms behind the spread of misinformation and its influence on behaviour in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and related widespread resistance to essential public health measures, fuelled by misinformation from various sources. The project employed innovative interdisciplinary research, blending social science insights, economic and statistical methods, and data science techniques. Through data analysis and sentiment tracking on social media, REMEDY connected resistance behaviour to its devastating health consequences. This project underscored the need to combat misinformation's grip on the internet.



Follow us on:



Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

© European Union, 2026

Reuse of this document is allowed, provided appropriate credit is given and any changes are indicated (Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license). For any use or reproduction of elements that are not owned by the EU, permission may need to be sought directly from the respective right holders. All images © European Union, unless otherwise stated.

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2026

PDF ISBN 978-92-68-34338-8

doi: 10.2766/1370644

NC-0125-213-EN-N