

D5.10 Final report on dissemination

WP5 – Dissemination and Engagement



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**Populism and
Civic Engagement**



About this document

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Disclaimer

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Purpose of Report

This deliverable is described as “*A final report with set of policy recommendations*” in the grant agreement. Given the overlaps between this (D5.10) and other deliverables (D5.4, D5.5, and D5.9) we briefly report on the main policy recommendations here, and then summarise all the dissemination activities of the project.

Policy Recommendations

The full detail about the recommendations, including importantly each of the recommendation’s context, are described in “*D4.4 Policy Recommendations*”. They are merely summarised here.

Recommendation 1: Populism and Nativism

Policy making should take on board the difference between different types of populist parties, especially as between populist and nativist parties.

Recommendation 2: exaggeration of impact of populism

Political rhetoric concerning the “rise of populism” as a potential end to liberal democracy exaggerates its impact and becomes itself an element of populist propaganda. The problem should be raised but not over dramatized.

Recommendation 3: dangers are present in many countries

Western European countries should not be complacent, assuming populism is only a danger in CEE countries, guarding against erosion of liberal institutions.

Recommendation 4: leadership and constitution

Populism could be impeded by two factors: political leadership (defining goals, building support, being consistent etc.) of the liberal-democratic parties and a robust, hard to amend constitutional framework.

Recommendation 5: focus on strategic voters

Whilst radical populist parties should not generally be engaged with, their less radical supporters (e.g. protest voters) should be actively engaged with. In particular, liberal-democratic parties should design strategies, which prevent defection of voters due to strategic reasons.



Recommendation 6: defending constitutional safeguards

We suggest strategic alliances between other parties to prevent present or future weakening of the constitutional foundation of the state.

Recommendation 7: responsible and responsive leadership

Focus on liberal-democratic leadership that is responsible and is responsive to the concerns of all groupings of citizens.

Recommendation 8: when nativism incorporates elements of populism

Watch out when nativism combines elements of populism, it is more dangerous then.

Recommendation 9: avoid coalitions with Nativists

Mainstream political parties should avoid coalitions with nativists. Nativists have rarely demonstrated the intention and/or ability to mature politically and evolve organizationally, which makes them unreliable government partners and entering in coalition with them can validate their agenda. On the occasion that nativists are invited to participate in a coalition government, mainstream political parties should always ensure that sound institutional checks and balances are in place.

Recommendation 10: use of experts

Expert discourses should be open but kept separate from policy communication. Once policy is decided, the policy messages should enlist persons from the targeted community to make communication more effective.

Recommendation 11: inconstancy of populist policies

Remind potential supporters of the policy positions or the ideological orientation of their fellow policy travellers and that their policies often change opportunistically over time.



Recommendation 12: challenging populist parties

Since populists effectively use communication to achieve their goals, the counter-strategy is also communicative. It must target the two central premises of the relationship between populist leader and his followers:

Challenging the symbolic appeal of the populist leader. *To this end, the true nature of the bond must be properly identified and so critique can be in terms that their followers care about (not what you care about).*

Challenging the promise of return. *The appeal of populism often rests on the credible promise of change, particularly back to a ‘golden age’. Rather than fighting the direction of change that a populist promises, it might be more effective to point out the populist's inability to bring about that change.*

Recommendation 13: importance of positive narratives

*Political narratives should not be relinquished to populist parties. Liberal-democratic parties should develop **positive** narratives (in particular of a vision of the future, of empowerment etc.) and communicate them.*

Recommendation 14: promotion of liberal checks and balances

Illiberal narratives should be publicly countered with narratives of liberal democracy promoting the relevance and desirability of checks and balances, rule of law, and of minority rights and by suggesting alternatives.

Recommendation 15: respecting emotions, identities and grievances

Policy makers have to also engage voters at an emotional level, respecting their identity and addressing grievances.

Recommendation 16: flexibility of policy

An ability to rapidly adapt policy or messages can give short term advantage to a party. Attend to the needs of populist supporters.

An infographic to more effectively disseminate these recommendations (and other major project outputs) is in the process of being designed and produced.



Dissemination Activities

More about *future* policy dissemination plans can be found in D5.5. Here we will concentrate only what has been achieved *so far*.

Democracy Labs

The most important dissemination and engagement activities done by PaCE were the Democracy Labs that occurred in: Italy, Iceland, Scotland, Spain, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria and Brussels. These engaged the public in the project, but also gave the chance for citizens to contribute suggestions into the project. Details concerning these can be found in deliverables: D5.3, D5.4, D5.6 and D5.7.

There are also reports on the outcomes from the individual labs, as follows.

- **Bulgaria:** <https://popandce.eu/2021/09/10/report-on-the-pace-local-democracy-lab-in-bulgaria/>
- **Poland:** <https://popandce.eu/2021/08/10/report-on-the-pace-local-democracy-lab-in-poland/>
- **Hungary:** <https://popandce.eu/2021/07/02/report-on-pace-local-democracy-lab-in-hungary/>
- **Scotland:** <https://popandce.eu/2021/06/23/report-on-pace-local-democracy-lab-in-scotland/>
- **Spain:** <https://popandce.eu/2021/04/26/report-on-pace-local-democracy-lab-in-spain/>
- **Iceland:** <https://popandce.eu/2021/04/23/report-on-pace-local-democracy-lab-in-iceland/>
- **Italy:** <https://popandce.eu/2020/05/19/messina-democracy-lab-september-2019/>
- **Brussels:** <https://popandce.eu/2022/02/24/d5-7-a-two-day-democracy-event/>

Final Conference

A final conference was held in Brussels, 15-18 November 2021 at the Residence Palace, Brussels. Held just as a big wave of COVID has passed through Belgium was fading, this was necessarily had fewer face-face participants that was hoped for, and was in a hybrid format with also zoom participants. The event lasted the whole week and was a combination of different kinds of session. The numbers refer to how many were registered for the session, roughly half of those registered actually attended – for a complete list of attendees see <https://pace-conference.b2match.io/participants>

- A face-face event directed at policy makers consisting of seven expert roundtables, on:
 - *Understanding individual characteristics of populists* (19)
 - *Liberal Europe, no longer?* (24)
 - *Identifying and Analysing Causal Mechanisms of Populism* (18)
 - *Computational level and power - how to apply this* (8)
 - *Future & foresight scenarios - How should policy actors react to populism?* (24)
 - *Avenues of machine learning* (12)
 - *Citizen engagement in policy making: learning from European and national examples* (13)
- A series of online academic workshops, on areas covered by the project results
 - *Understanding the Populist Sympathizer* (69)
 - *Light spots through the cracking wall. From crisis to policy innovation for transformative change* (57)
 - *Simulating Politics - the agent-based simulation of voting behaviour* (62)
 - *PaCE Dashboard - Populist & nativist topic trends 2014-2020* (59)
 - *The ethics of making policy recommendations about populism* (57)

The electronic programme for this is available at: <https://pace-conference.b2match.io/>. This event is documented in D5.9.



Website, Social Media and Newsletter

Early on, a coherent set of website (<http://popandce.eu>), facebook (<http://facebook.com/popandce>) and twitter (<http://twitter.com/popandce>) accounts were created (D5.2). These were quickly enhanced with coherent style created by the talented designer Vito Raimondi (<http://vitoraimondi.com>), who went on to design the infographics. Dissemination via these channels were amplified by the blogs and twitter feeds of participants (including: cfpm.org, @cpm_org, trilateralresearch.com, @TRIRResearch_, demsoc.org, @demosoc, @demosocUK, @demosocScotland, cls-sofia.org, @cls-sofia, pappaspopulism.com, @takispappas). There was also a low-volume newsletter that people could subscribe by email.

Infographics

To increase penetration and impact, some of the major messages coming out from the project were distributed in the form of a series of infographics. See D.10 for details and the project website to see the infographics themselves at: <https://popandce.eu/infographics/>

Educational Pack

A pack of educational materials, designed for classroom use with 17-18 year olds has been produced. This uses a combination of the comic “I, the People” (to start discussion off) and the foresight scenarios (D4.5, D4.6) to develop the discussion on the issues concerning illiberal politics. This pack is described in “D5.9 Future and foresight programme for schools”. The wonderful comic was written by Takis Pappas and realised by Alecos Papadatos (who previously has published the full-length books: “Logicomix” and “Democracy” (alecos.eu, @AlecosPapadatos). The comic is freely available at: http://cfpm.org/pace/I_the%20People_web.pdf

Release of Open Source Software

- The **PaCE Keyword Scanner** is an open-source project allows us to reveal relative trends between different topics driving the discourse regarding populism, nativism, and civic engagement. The platform searches CommonCrawl for thousands of keywords at the same time, granting us the ability to scan web crawls from every year, 2013 to the present. We developed search criteria, testing then targeting hundreds of keywords; those keywords then got filtered through AI algorithms which we trained to recognize the different narrative topics. The open-source software can be found at: <https://github.com/CitizensFoundation/pace-keyword-scanner>
- The **PaCE Dashboard** is an open-source web application and backend API to access and display data coming out of the PaCE CommonCrawl Scanner. The open-source software can be found here: <https://github.com/CitizensFoundation/pace-dashboard>. The dashboard itself can be accessed.

These tools are freely available for others to use. They are already being used in the: DEMOS dashboard, CODE Europe and H2020 POP AI project.

Agent-based Simulations

All code and documentation for the PaCE simulations are documented in D2.2, D2.3, D2.4 and D2.5. The code and documentation will be freely available to others on the CoMSeS.org model archive. The free availability of this will make it easier for others to check an build upon the simulation work in PaCE.



New Data Set

The underlying data developed as part of the comparative analysis has been made freely available.

- The data itself was made available as a spreadsheet as part of D1.5 and is accessible at: <https://popandce.eu/2021/04/30/d1-5-report-containing-tools-excel-file/>
- A report about the data, presents the structure of the Excel file that consists of 21 spreadsheets including 10 variables which provide users with some basic information about the 18 selected parties/case studies by: *country, party name, full party name, year founded, party type, political position, predecessor name, the total number of party splits, the total number of terms in power and the total number of leaderships* was also made available as part of D1.5 and is freely available at: <https://popandce.eu/2021/04/30/d1-5-report-containing-tools-on-populist-and-nativist-parties/>

Other Dissemination and Engagement Activities

Other dissemination and engagement activities are summarised in the excel sheet at: http://cfpm.org/pace/PaCE_Dissemination-Activities.xlsx due to the difficulty of fitting this long list into a pdf document, whilst remaining readable. This includes conference/workshop presentations, podcasts, interviews, press releases, blog posts and a TeDx talk.