The European Citizen Action Service (ECAS) is an international, Brussels based non-profit organisation with a pan-European membership and 30 years of experience in empowering citizens in order to create a more inclusive and stronger European Union by:

- Promoting and defending citizens’ rights and
- Developing and supporting mechanisms to increase citizens and citizen organisations’ democratic participation in, and engagement with, the EU.

ECAS believes in an inclusive, transparent, citizen-centric and democratic European Union in which citizens’ rights are at the heart of decision-making at all levels and in which citizens are informed, consulted and active participants.

ECAS delivers its mission by implementing projects, services to citizens, advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns, research and high-level events in two focus areas – EU Rights and European Democracy.

The 2021 ECAS Work Programme is comprised of various activities aiming to both tackle challenges faced by European citizens when exercising their EU rights and to empower them to be active participants in the decision making process.

ECAS through the eyes or Members, Funders and Partners

Citizens
Professional
European
Participatory
Policy-making
Expertise
Empowering Democracy

Idea Shaker

Strategic

Citizen Centric

Projects

2021

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Citizen-centric Services

Activities

Publications

Events

9

6

12
Projects

Improving Inclusion of EU Mobile Citizens (IMPEU) aim is to foster political participation of EU mobile citizens and enhance capacity and knowledge of civil servants and relevant national, regional and local experts on EU citizenship and related political rights. Based on researched best practices on political inclusion policies across the European Union and analysis of civil servants’ training needs related to political participation of EU mobile citizens, a needs-based online training course was developed for civil servants and relevant national, regional and local experts. Relevant and tailored information on EU citizenship will be also available for citizens, public officials, civil servants and experts through provision of online information toolkits and establishment of Info Kiosks.

Funder: DG JUST, European Commission  
Timeframe: until the end of March 2021

Mobility and Political Rights Enhancement for EU Citizens (MORE for EU Citizens) tackles the challenges experienced by EU mobile citizens, in particular those affecting their rights to family reunification and political participation. The objective is to improve the enforcement of EU citizens’ rights by the EU institutions, increase the awareness of EU citizens on what their EU rights are and involve national decision-makers in the discussion on the obstacles faced by mobile EU citizens.

Funder: EPIM (European Programme of Integration and Migration)/Network of European Foundations  
Timeframe: until the end of January 2021
**Freedom of Movement narrative change campaign (pilot project in Germany)**

Objective is to positively shift the attitudes of “movable middle” audiences to EU mobility in Germany and so open the space for support for the target policy proposals. Based on segmentation research, the campaign targets two segments that are among the conflicted, movable middle at European level. Together they make up approximately 40% of the European public.

Funder: Foundations  
Timeframe: pending approval, tentatively February – October 2021

**A European Positive Sum Approach towards AI tools in support of Law Enforcement and safeguarding privacy and fundamental rights (pop AI)** brings together security practitioners, AI scientists, ethics and privacy researchers, civil society organisations as well as social Sciences and humanities experts with the purpose to foster trust in AI for the security domain via increased awareness, ongoing social engagement, consolidating distinct spheres of knowledge and offering a unified European view, and specialised knowledge outputs, while creating an ecosystem that will form the structural basis for a sustainable and inclusive European AI hub for Law Enforcement.

Funder: Horizon 2020 research programme  
Timeframe: multiannual, June 2021 – May 2023

**Citizen-centric Services**

**Your Europe Advice** is an online EU advice service provided by legal experts from ECAS operating under contract with the European Commission. It consists of a team of about 60 lawyers who cover all 24 official EU languages and are familiar both with EU law and national laws in all EU countries. Your Europe Advice replies to questions from citizens or businesses on their personal EU rights. The experts respond to the questions within 72 hours, free of charge and in the language chosen by the user. Enquiries can be submitted either via an online form or by phone (00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11). In 2019 Your Europe Advice experts responded to more than 28,000 enquiries.

Funder: DG GROW, European Commission  
Timeframe: multiannual, until the end of March 2023
Projects

Road to European Parliament 2019 – Empowering a new generation of EU citizens (REP2019) aims to contribute to the growth of a new generation of young citizens capable of critically assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the European Union and to propose innovative solutions for enhancing citizens participation in the European democratic life. This goal will be achieved by designing and delivering a training programme on the role and functioning of the EU institutions, tailored to interest students attending their last year of high school.

Funder: EACEA, Europe for Citizens programme
Timeframe: until the end of 2021

The NEXUS project aims to empower students (with special attention to newly arrived migrant students and under-served students) so that they can enjoy their rights, uphold human rights values, and contribute positively to their society and the global community. NEXUS examines the role that Higher Education Institutions play in promoting civic and social responsibility of students, with an emphasis on including migrant students in such initiatives. The project includes the development of trainings, guides and handbooks, and an inventory of digital tools for civic education.

Funder: Erasmus + programme
Timeframe: multiannual, until end of August 2022

DEMOS project is built on the assumption that populism is symptomatic of disconnect between how democratic polities operate and how citizens perceive their own aspirations, needs and identities within the political system. DEMOS explores the practical value of ‘democratic efficacy’ as the condition of political engagement needed to address the challenge of populism. The project focuses not only on the polity, but equally on citizens’ perspectives: how they are affected by, and how they react to, populism. Politically underrepresented groups and those targeted by populist politics are a particular focus, e.g. youth, women, and migrants.
Based on developed indicators and predictors of populism, DEMOS consortium will elaborate scenarios on the interactions of populism with social actors and institutions both at the national and the EU levels.

**Funder:** Horizon 2020 research programme  
**Timeframe:** multiannual, until the end of April 2022

**Co-Decisioning Europe (CODE Europe)** project will pilot the collaborative method of crowdsourcing legislation in Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Latvia, and Portugal on the subject of ‘air quality’ — a topic chosen because of its transnational nature and the problems associated with it (estimated 400,000 premature deaths in Europe each year). The consortium will develop a universally applicable methodology - the E-Participation Assessment Framework - to allow objective comparison of the results of e-participation projects across time and geographical space and use it for evaluating the crowdsourcing pilots. The consortium will also test a ‘social listening’ method through a Digital Dashboard to include citizens’ opinions on ‘air quality’ beyond the actively engaged citizens participating in the crowdsourcing pilot. The project will deliver guidelines for ethical ‘social listening’ to benefit from the availability of big data while protecting individual privacy and safeguarding citizens against inappropriate access and use of data.

**Funder:** EEA and Norway Grants for Regional Cooperation  
**Timeframe:** multiannual, until the end of 2023

**Digital Democratic Empowerment and Mobilisation for a Stronger EU (DigiDEM)** will apply collaborative methods of crowdsourcing legislation and ‘social listening’ in Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, and Montenegro on the subject of ‘air quality’ and will ensure that the collected citizens’ contributions on the topic feed into and impact EU policy-making. By piloting crowdsourcing and social listening exercises across four EU countries, the project will contribute to providing a blueprint for innovative methods of citizen engagement that are implemented as complementary to representative democracy. Through its activities and outputs, DigiDEM also aims to establish a transnational community of policy makers, academics, businesses, NGOs, and citizens which will continue to apply and advocate for the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to ensure inclusive and collaborative decision-making process at all levels. The project is designed to go hand in hand with CODE Europe — a 3-year project funded by the EEA regional cooperation grants, piloting the collaborative method of crowdsourcing legislation in Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Latvia, and Portugal.

**Funder:** EACEA, Europe for Citizens programme  
**Timeframe:** multiannual, September 2021 – February 2023

**Citizen-centric Services**

**The European Citizens’ Initiative (ECI) Forum** is an online collaborative platform that offers support to citizens when organising a European citizens’ initiative. The Forum allows citizens to learn more about the European Citizens’ Initiative through best practices and enables them to discuss EU policies and European Citizens’ Initiative proposals, to find partners in other countries, to ask for legal, campaigning and fundraising advice from experts, and to exchange experiences. The Forum is operated by ECAS on behalf of and under contract with the European Commission.

**Funder:** Secretariat-General of the European Commission  
**Timeframe:** multiannual, until the end of November 2022
**Main Activities**

**Advocacy and campaigning** for a positive change in the freedom of movement narrative in key Member States (MS) and for a meaningful Guideline of the Commission to the MS on the application of the Freedom of Movement Directive

**Crowdsourcing citizen opinions** on “air quality” and on “addressing populism”

Development of an universally applicable **assessment framework** for e-participation initiatives

Development of **ethical guidelines** for social listening

**Mapping stakeholders** in the AI (artificial intelligence) law enforcement field

Launch of the **ECAS awards** for initiatives and ideas shaping the European Citizenship of the Future

**Celebration of ECAS’ 30th anniversary** with Members and Partners

**Relaunch of ECAS’ Training Centre**

Active participation in the **Civil Society Europe CSO Convention on the Future of Europe**

**Publications**

Study “Under a Double Lockdown: The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Mobile EU Citizens’ Rights”

Study “Next level participation: citizen-driven e-democracy tools”


Chapter in the book “The impact of populism on European institutions and civil society”
Forward looking book on European Citizenship

Report "Civic strategies addressing populism - initiatives to safeguard liberal democracies"

2021 Events

State of the Union Citizens' Rights 2021: Moving Together Beyond the Pandemic
Online Conference I January 21st – 22nd, 2021

Advancing Citizen-driven Participation through Digital Tools
Online event I February 25th, 2021

Civil Society Days 2021
Online event I March 1st – 5th, 2021

Towards a Citizen-Centric EU
Webinar and Q&A Session I April, 2021

Challenges to Democracy in 21 Century: Online Disinformation, Shrinking Civic Space
Online Plenary & Workshops I May, 2021

European Citizens’ Initiative (ECI) Day
Online event I June 3rd – 4th, 2021

Celebration of ECAS 30th anniversary with members, partners and supporters
July 2021

Civic Engagement with the EU and 10 Years European Citizens’ Initiative
Conference I September, 2021

How Democratic Innovation Can Narrow the Space for Populism
Online Workshop I October, 2021

How the Public Sees Freedom of Movement
Online Panel I October, 2021

Crowdsourcing Legislation: The Untapped Potential of Article 11 of Lisbon Treaty for an Engaged EU Citizenship
Online panel (multilingual) I November, 2021

The Future European Citizenship
Online Conference I December, 2021