

Aims of the Conference

DEMOCRAT conference aims to contribute to the debate about the role of civic education, and in particular democratic education, in fostering the resilience of the EU model of democracy.

Democracy is conceived not only as a political order, but also as a means of making collective, binding decisions in everyday life. Democracy is not a natural order. It has been achieved through social movements over the centuries and must be learnt and experimented with continuously in everyday life.

We believe that Education for Democracy can be implemented in schools and educational institutions not just through civic education classes, but as a distinctive pedagogical approach that acknowledges aesthetic, embodied and mutual learning, as well as co-creation.

All three projects view innovation in Education for Democracy as a bottom-up approach, with education centres, teachers, educators, students and parents as its central actors. This should be complemented by top-down activities involving political actors such as national and regional governments, public authorities responsible for education, democratic political parties, trade unions, entrepreneur associations and NGOs.

The conference aims to showcase the results of grassroots initiatives and promote political debate on how to support such initiatives so they can widespread in the education systems in the European Union and worldwide



Funded by
the European Union



Democrat
EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY

Conference on Education for Democracy 20th-21st of November 2025



UNIVERSITAT DE
BARCELONA

Facultat d'Economia
i Empresa

Diagonal, 690-696

08034 Barcelona

In collaboration with



AECED
aesthetic and embodied
learning for democracy

**CRITICAL
CHANGE**
LAB

With the support of



Generalitat de Catalunya
**Departament d'Educació
i Formació Professional**

within the framework of the



**20
25** EUROPEAN YEAR OF
DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP
EDUCATION

Conference Programme

20/11/2025

14:00-14:30 Registration

European and National Policy: Future of Democracy and EfD.

14:30-15:00 Welcome speeches

15:00-15:45 1st Keynote speech

15:45-16h15 Coffee Break

16:15-17:00 Presentation of the 3 SISTER Projects:

17:00-18:00 Future of EfD with invited experts

21/11/2025

EfD in practice

9:00-9:30 Registration

9:30-10h15 2nd Keynote speech

10:15-11:45 5 Parallel sessions: DEMOCRAT Pilots
+ AECED presentation + Critical
Change presentation

11:45-12:15 Coffee Break

12:15-13:00 DEMOCRAT Toolbox

13:00-13:45 Lunch

Future of EfD

13:45-15:15 World Café

15:15-15:45 Coffee Break

15:45 -16:45 Round Table: Future of Education for
Democracy

16:45-17h30 Closure Session

Intervention of Inter-
national Advisors

What unites the sister projects?

All three projects share a commitment to enhancing European democracy through a focus on education, encompassing schools, higher education, professional learning and non-formal education, with a range of approaches.

The three projects, funded by Horizon Europe, started in 2023 and are scheduled to be completed within the next year. They have the latest empirical evidence on how to best enhance education for democracy in Europe. The three Horizon projects approach democracy, not only as a formal political system, but as a lived experience, as a continuous negotiation that happens in everyday life.

This approach highlights the responsibility and potential of each person – educators and learners alike – to contribute to the creation of more democratic societies and Europe. Education for Democracy should be implemented and developed in schools and educational institutions, not just through civic education classes but as a distinctive pedagogical approach which acknowledges the aesthetic and embodied, mutual learning and co-creation.



To reinforce the resilience and sustainability of democracy, DEMOCRAT - Education for Responsible Democratic Citizenship - aims, through a participatory approach, to outline a European curricula for Education for Democracy based on a competence framework for responsible democratic citizenship (RDC) to test them in open, local, innovative learning projects and to develop a toolbox to support the development of transformative EfD practices in the EU and beyond.

DEMOCRAT achieve its result through a co-creation process with the communities of education. To structure the co-creation process, Living labs were implemented in six EU- member states Estonia, Finland, Germany with the focus on North Rhine Westphalia, Ireland, Poland and Spain, with the focus on Catalonia.

This approach is complemented by the analysis of international survey datasets with the focus on the analysis is the relationship between socio-economic and educational inequalities, and political and social participation. It provides insights into the factors influencing the impact of EfD on democratic participation and facilitates the refinement of the competence framework, curriculum outline and competence assessment tools.

These results, along with other, will be integrated into a toolbox to support effective transformative EfD practices in the EU and beyond.

The project DEMOCRAT is funded by the European Union within the Horizon Europe programme from March 2023 to February 2026. From its inception, the project has been supported by the Generalitat de Catalonia.



The AECED project aims to enhance democracy through aesthetic and embodied learning. To understand and get a feel for democracy, you have to experience acting and relating to others democratically; and you have to reflect on these experiences in ways that help you become aware of your own and others' feelings, sense of values and ethical impulses.

Education for democracy requires aesthetic and embodied learning that facilitates new ways of 'seeing', enhances awareness of self and others, fosters democratic attitudes and values and nurtures predispositions, capabilities and feelings for active democratic citizenship.

The AECED project is designing a research-based, innovative aesthetic and embodied pedagogical framework which, through associated guides to practice, has an impact on the practice of education for democracy.



Critical ChangeLab aims to build a resilient European democracy by reinvigorating the relationship between youth and democracy through civic interventions in which young people envision alternative futures for (shared) European democracy, and act on that.

The overall goal of Critical ChangeLab is to strengthen democracy in Europe by creating and implementing a flexible model of democratic pedagogy using a bottom-up approach, engaging with arts and technology, that empowers young people to 'own' everyday democracy and engage in direct action towards justice-oriented transformations.

Critical Change Labs is implemented by partners in 9 EU countries, and develops and tests its ChangeLab model in 15 EU countries.