



**DRC**  
Danube Rectors' Conference



Institute for the  
Danube Region  
and Central Europe

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# From Fictional to Functioning Democracy (FIFUDEM)

[www.idm.at/fifudem](http://www.idm.at/fifudem)

# **From Fictional to Functioning Democracy (FIFUDEM)**

**Developing Concepts and Strategies for an Inclusive and Participatory Europe**

**611482-EPP-1-2019-1-AT-EPPJMO-SUPPA**

## **Final project report**

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Project overview: facts and figures .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Project results .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3.1 Publications.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3.2 Events.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>3.3 Dissemination .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>4. Conclusions and outlook .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>ANNEX: List of expert contributors to the events and publications of FIFUDEM (in alphabetical order) .....</b>	<b>29</b>

## 1. Introduction

The Rationale behind the accepted project proposal was based on the observation that liberal democracy has been eroding for years, so that in some cases we could speak of fictional instead of functioning elements of democracies. Whereas the project focused specifically on the region of Central Eastern Europe (CEE) and Southeast Europe (SEE), events during the project period such as the attack of the US Capitol or the severe repression of protesters in Hong Kong by the authorities shed light on the global dimension of the problem.

Threats such as populism, attacks on the separation of powers as well as corruption are shared by both young and consolidated democracies. Nevertheless, countries of the Danube Region face region-specific issues regarding their geopolitical position, their historical legacies and non at least the existing socio-economic disparities between old and new EU member states and those waiting in limbo for potential EU accession.

Based on this status quo, present project aimed to scrutinize the contexts and causes of so-called illiberal, respectively fictional democracy, to develop concepts and strategies of strengthening liberal, respectively functioning democracy and its political communication as well as active citizenship in an inclusive and participatory EU. Furthermore, it followed the goal to disseminate this knowledge through awareness raising activities, events and publications for different target groups on the local, regional, national, international and EU level.

The consortium aimed to conduct research on European integration and enlargement in its focus region and disseminating the project's results through the IDM publications, events, and network as well as through the network of the IDM project partner, the Danube Rectors' Conference (DRC), including 65 university members. All these activities aimed to affect various segments of the public discourse on the importance of strengthening liberal and functioning democracy and to support active citizenship.

Then, the COVID-19 pandemic hit hard and required a high level of adaptability to keep track with the goals of the project. While some activities had to be cancelled, particularly those

outside of Austria, new digital formats were developed and offered the chance to connect people from various countries despite lockdowns and travel restrictions. In early 2022, when the pandemic seemed to finally calm down a bit thanks to vaccinations, the next crisis hit. With the Russian attack on Ukraine, some project activities had to be adapted once again.

In the following chapter we present an overview of the implemented activities throughout the project period including direct and indirect participants. The first is measured by people directly participating in the activity, e.g. speaker on a panel (also for virtual discussions), participant in a workshop or in the audience (included also virtually when registration was mandatory) and/or author of a publication. The number for indirectly reached people is calculated by number of visits of the website, number of watched videos, reach on social media channels as well as copies of printed publications, which have been delivered.

## 2. Project overview: facts and figures

Event	Indirect	Direct
<b>2020</b>		
Kick-off Event "Democracy is (No!) Fiction", 13 January 2020		80
Democracy Talks 1, 16 October 2020	172	4
Democracy Talks 2, 30 October 2020	105	5
Democracy Talks 3, 24 November 2020	104	61
Young Scholars Forum, 3 - 4 December 2020	195	20
	195	170
<b>2021</b>		
Train the trainer "Demokratie in der Krise?", 24 February 2021	126	14
Democracy Talks 4, 30 June 2021	97	4
DRC Annual Meeting 2021, 10-12 November 2021	1080	38
	1303	56
<b>2022</b>		
Train the Trainer, Status Quo der Europ. Integration, 23 February 2022	147	13
Globsec Forum "What's Next for Europe", 2 June 2022	945	30
DRC Summer School: "Shaping Tomorrows Research" 10-16 July 2020		32
Fifudem Final Conference "Functioning democracy in the making", 13 July 2022	65	39
	1.157	114
Visits on the website	1.257	
"Der Donauraum"	100	
Info Europa 2/2020	50.000	
Info Europa 2/2021	50.000	
Policy Paper Series (2 editions)	600	
IDM Info	650	
<b>Total</b>	<b>105.262</b>	<b>340</b>

### **3. Project results**

#### **3.1 Publications**

##### **IDM Info**

The "IDM Info" is the institute's information sheet for the Danube region and Central Europe and is published four times a year. Through analyses, editorial contributions and event reports, readers receive direct insights into the content of the work and the diverse activities of the IDM in the target countries, as well as an overview of the IDM events in Germany and abroad. The "IDM Info" regularly provides information about the latest publications of the IDM as well as about general innovations at the institute. Selected book tips and a preview of upcoming IDM events complete the newsletter.

In terms of content, the "IDM Info" primarily reflects the work and research activities of the scientific staff of the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe, but in exceptional cases also of external authors.

Within the project, every issue contained reports from the various implemented activities.

##### **Der Donauraum**

Der Donauraum (The Danube Region) is the scientific journal of the IDM.

The journal has a regional and interdisciplinary focus and collects contributions on the countries of the Danube Region in both German and English. Early-career academics and researchers from the region are particularly encouraged to gain publishing experience through contributing to "Der Donauraum". Since 1993, it has been available at Böhlau Verlag in Vienna.

Although one of the few journals with this specific regional and interdisciplinary focus, "Der Donauraum" is not yet indexed in any journal database. Editors and guest editors of the respective issue are committed to academic standards and responsible for the high quality of collected articles. Every issue is professionally proofread by a native speaker.

***Der Donauraum 4/2020, Democracy is (No!) Fiction***

Project activities include the publication of a thematic issue of the IDM's academic journal "Der Donauraum". The proceedings bring together contributions from experts in the fields of political science and communication studies, international relations, contemporary history and sociology and was conventionalized based on the FIFUDEM kickoff conference in January 2020. It includes analyses of public discourse and the changing role of journalists, didactic approaches to democracy education, civil society perspectives on the role of the European Union in the European Neighborhood, and assessments of democratic policy developments in individual countries. The authors are united in their goal of providing problem analyses with concrete strategies and concepts for active citizenship as a pillar of functioning democracies in the region.

Release date: January 2021

Editors: Erhard Busek and Silvia Nadjivan

Authors: Gerda Füricht-Fiegl, Gertraud Illmeier, Babrik Kushwaha, Daniela Mussnig, Edina Paleviciq, Alexandra Preitschopf, Zinaida Rozhkova and Franjo Steiner

E-Library: <https://www.vr-elibrary.de/toc/dedo/60/4>

Further information: <https://bit.ly/3Bf4iwz>

#### **Authors' recommendations:**

**Gerda Füricht-Fiegl:** The expression of common interests on issues (in social media) enables a union across national and language borders (...) with the potential to jump over in the real world. This development makes even the mobilization of civil society and thus its participation in political life more likely. Especially young people feel addressed by this possibility to express their opinion.

**Alexandra Preitschopf:** Holocaust education is one of many possibilities to counter problematic, hostile or anti-democratic attitudes in the classroom context. (...) It raises awareness not only for the importance, but also the fragility of democratic society and democratic participation (...) Optimally, an innovative, multi-perspective and empathic approach to Holocaust education raises students' general interest in politics, underscores the

relevance of civic vigilance, and promotes a shared responsibility for a functioning, modern democracy.

**Gertraud Illmeier, Daniela Mussnig, Franjo Steiner:** Democracy and civil society go together, one without the other is not possible. A democratic way of organizing society means respecting (and appreciating) the diversity inherent in any modern society, providing space where the interests of different groups can be expressed and negotiated, and enabling participation and co-determination of all citizens, not only through formal democratic instruments (e.g. elections) but also by means of an open civic space.

**Edina Paleviq:** Djukanovic is seen as a factor of stability in Montenegro and a politician who can limit Russia's influence in the Western Balkans. The facts that he embraces a pro-European language is another reason for European elites to have turned a blind eye on many of the undemocratic practices of the ruling party for so many years. Yet there is no doubt that EU integration has brought positive change in many areas in Montenegro. This shows that the EU has the power to intervene, albeit indirectly, acting as an additional check on ruling elites and holding them accountable for their actions.

**Zinaida I. Rozhkova:** Increasing inequality and political apathy accompany the development of democracy; economic inequality leads to inequality in political participation; to minimize this negative process rising of inequality, the mechanisms of a properly structured progressive tax scale can help. (...) Another example is the situation of decreasing interest in elections, and therefore the actual influence of citizens on the decision-making process. (...) the solution can be found in increasing the influence of civil education.

**Babrik Kushwaha:** Three types of cause-based democracies are presented: a light version of cause-based politics, where such movements are moulded to change political dynamics and punish representatives that neglect citizens' concerns; a mixed system where people can regularly vote on cause-based policies which are implemented by the elected government; and finally, a third radical version of democracy in which citizens, rather than electing representatives, vote on cause-based policies that are executed by and administrative

government. After all, if people can elect or vote on policies, are they not ‘of the people, by the people, for the people’?

### **Info Europa**

“Info Europa: Information on the Danube Region and Central Europe” is the thematic issue of the IDM. The publication addresses German-speaking readers and informs them about developments in the region in three issues per year.

The first issue of the year, entitled “Cultural Guide to Central Europe,” focuses on developments in the fields of art and culture. The two other issues are devoted to current socio-political topics – always from a deliberately cross-border perspective.

Since the creation of the publication in July 2000, then still under the title “Focus Europe”, the series has developed into a unique chronicle of European stories without losing sight of the country-specific features – a publication which is based in Vienna, but finds its home in all of Europe.

### ***Info Europa 2/2020: Rule of Law in the Danube Region***

with a preface by Christoph Grabenwarter, President of the Austrian Constitutional Court

Coinciding with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Austrian Federal Constitutional Law (BV-G), this issue of the thematic magazine *Info Europa* focused on "Rules of the Game of Power: Rule of Law in the Danube Region" and was published on October 1, 2020. The issue included a preface by Christoph Grabenwarter, President of the Austrian Constitutional Court, as well as numerous articles on issues of legal tradition, minority rights, legal practice and Europeanization by various guest authors. In the midst of the Corona pandemic, experts from Poland, Hungary, Austria and Germany dealt with current aspects of the topic. The booklet, creatively designed with the help of the Austrian illustrator Kathrin Seifert, was published as a supplement to the daily newspaper *Die Presse* and as a free of charge ePaper. The issue was presented at the end of October in cooperation with the Jewish Museum Vienna at the virtual discussion event.

Circulation: 50.000

Release date: 1 October 2020

Distribution: online (ePaper), print (as a supplement, via post for IDM members and at IDM events)

Further information: <https://bit.ly/3vfGFAu>

***Info Europa 2/2021: Rescue plans for democracy***

with a preface by Dubravka Šuica, EU Commissioner for Democracy and Demography

Populism, disinformation, attacks on independent media, and lost trust in institutions – the symptoms of a suffering democratic system are diverse and interrelated. What can we do to avoid a burn out? This the issue of "Info Europa", published on June 24 as a press supplement and free ePaper, follows the goal of FIFUDEM and searched for rescue plans for democracy. Guest authors from various countries of the Danube Region explored the facets of democracy - from political education, to questions of political and administrative reform, forms of citizen participation and protest, to digital anti-corruption and civil society engagement. Info Europa portraits actors and their projects that are working on concrete solutions of current threats.

Circulation: 50.000

Release date: 24 June 2021

Distribution: online (ePaper), print (as a supplement, via post for IDM members and at IDM events)

Further information: <https://bit.ly/3zvO2X2>

**Authors' recommendations:**

**Tobias Spöri:** In his article on the recent activities of the mayor's office of Budapest, Tobias Spöri presents opportunities and experiences on participation such as climate councils or crowd sourcing tools for citizens, e.g. pedestrians. The political scientist recommends to municipalities to try out new tools and to implement participatory formats as they can help to improve the trust of local population in administration and governing bodies. In addition, digital services have to be improved including accessible and user-friendly websites.

**Thomas Prorok** presents several activities of the KDZ – center for administrations research in the Western Balkan countries. Citizen-friendly budgeting approaches, open-data-formats as

well as processes of decentralization show the potential of administration reform. Prorok points out that with the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) the EU has a powerful tool in hands, yet should improve communications in order to make it more known. In addition to the improvement of participation, transparency and digitalization, reforms need to be embedded in a functioning democracy with rule of law and a certain service culture.

**Daniel Martínek/ Mikuláš Minář:** In his interview with Mikuláš Minář, former head of the “Million Moments for Democracy” civic movement, historian and IDM research associate Daniel Martínek explores the movement’s transformation from protest to party politics. The case of Million Moments shows that the campaign was successfully activating the civil society and mobilized citizens both on the country side and in urban areas. Nevertheless, the starting Covid-19 pandemic has changed the atmosphere and radically decreased the mobilization potential. The right timing and the ability to keep direct contact with mass events such as demonstrations have shown to be critical to stay in motion.

**Jack Gill** investigates the endeavors of Georgia to become member of the European Union. He gives an overview of historical roots, frozen conflicts and issues of external influence, geopolitical concerns and internal issues such as corruption. By focusing on civic actors such as the Europe-Georgia Institute (EGI), Gill shows the hard way of transforming cultures and attitudes within scientific, economic and political elites while still struggling with unresolved conflicts and parallel threats. The article recommends more bilateral programs, cross-border cooperation and the general internationalization at different levels.

**Sebastian Schäffer** shares his insights of the reactivation of the European Union based on treaties and decision-making processes. He recommends to further explore the lessons learned from inner conflicts within the EU regarding the migration crisis in 2015 and appeals to not neglect view points from CEE. According to Schäffer concrete proposals to reform the EU are on the table, yet need to be discussed more. While authoritarian approaches are on the rise, member states and institutions need to act quickly and start the reform process, be it via the Conference for the future of Europe or via a convent to change the treaties.

**Olga Ivanova** tells the readers about the activities of the Ukraine NGO “AC-HQ” and their innovative work in the fight against corruption. Digital tools such as crowd-sourcing based maps and platforms, public expenses and services can be controlled and improved by citizens. Participation seems to be an important aspect not just in the step of decision making, but also after the implementation of projects in order to safeguard standards and prevent corruption.

**Louisa Slavkova** outlines best practices of civic education activities in rural areas of Bulgaria. According to the author, the case of civic education in Bulgaria shows the urgent need of community building and reforms on local levels. Change of curricula towards a more flexible and qualitative history education, modernization of teacher education as well as the cooperation between schools and civic actors such as NGOs are promising “rescue plans” for democracy as they create possibilities and space for democratic learning.

### **The IDM Policy Paper Series (PPS)**

The IDM Policy Paper Series (IDM PPS) deals at regular intervals with current political issues with a focus on the Danube region, Central and South Eastern Europe. Changing renowned authors develop recommendations for action (Policy Solutions – PS), which are aimed at decision-makers, experts, journalists and the interested public. The aim is to describe the problem with a maximum of 12,000 characters and to show concrete solutions. Finally, further information on the specialisation can be provided (PPS). The editorial team selects the topics and identifies the authors. The content is edited editorially, but only reflects the opinion of the authors. The IDM PPS is barrier-free.

During the project period, altogether **10 issues of the IDM PPS (Policy Paper Series) were published**, including two issues particularly focusing on specific questions related to FIFUDEM and featuring the logo:

**No 1/2021 Home schooling, hybrid-learning and class room teaching: is COVID-19 changing things for good?**

### **1. Keep schools and their working conditions in the critical public eye**

It became ever more apparent how central schools are to societal functioning & well-being. Discourse and the necessity to adopt will eventually lead to movement in educational reform. Whether or not these reforms will revolve around digitization is unclear yet, but it will entail elements thereof. Fair pay for teachers will be one element contributing to an increased attractiveness of this profession.

### **2. Re-think educational goals**

This crisis is not only an opportunity to modernize schools and class rooms, but also to tackle the really big goals: Schools and education systems should be considered a success when inequalities are spotted and erased, and when all children are reached and supported according to their full abilities. And whilst students are using all sorts of apps to learn and to communicate right now, they need to be educated in digital basics, too. Now is the time to add this to the curricula of the region.

### **3. Teacher training sound and fair**

There is hope that the teacher lone-fighter syndrome becomes a rarity after the pandemic. The joint problem solving, coordination and intense communication to get things done need to be kept and incentivized. Considerable planning should now be put in place that this does not risk getting lost again, once schools operate in a way that is closer to what we believe where the good old days. They were probably not. More teacher support is needed, and these plans ought to be drafted now. They must include a broad range of digitization issues.

### **4. Political and administrative decision makers – decide and share**

It is the time to decide how to proceed after the pandemic (or, during the next pandemic). What can be kept, what needs to go - the unclear future circumstances and the current attention for school related issues might not appeal to decision makers, but teachers need certainty now. Working groups of teaching professionals need to come up with binding recommendations which IMs to use, and how digital progress will be monitored. Structures need to be in place to reward teachers with outstanding skills in this respect. The consequences of COVID-19 are so complex that it can be mind-boggling – but we still lack a concerted approach in the Danube Region to share best practices. Schools must not be left alone; they need access to cross-border learning systems.

## ***No 2/2021 Why the Western Balkans should join the EU immediately***

### **1. Reforming European decision-making**

The need for a reform of the EU institutions has been ignored for far too long. All decisions on the European level need to be taken with a qualified majority instead of unanimity. Brave and bold steps need to be taken. The conference on the Future of Europe is one possibility. However, the pressure from the civil society on the decision makers to really work on restructuring governance in Brussels needs to be increased. This should not only be done on the European level, but also on the national and regional level. Only if there is a demand from the general population, there will be a discussion on European politics during national election campaigns. A European referendum held jointly, and not separately in each member country, could foster discussion beyond national politics and provide a real basis for a reform of European governance. A legal basis for holding such a referendum needs to be passed.

### **2. Integrating regions into the institutional set-up**

In order to ensure a fast political integration of the WB6, the reform of the institutional set-up needs to provide safeguard mechanisms, which will prevent one or a few heads of state or government to interfere with decision-making and/or work against the democratic principles in their country. Next to the EP a new second chamber encompassing representatives from the European regions could replace the Council of Ministers. By granting both the EP and the Council of Regions the right of initiative, not only the role of the structural and cohesion funds would gain more importance but also the influence of national governments on European decision-making would be more balanced. Building a second chamber as a kind of a senate is necessary and would furthermore help to develop the common foreign policy of the EU.

### **3. Taking advantage of existing cooperation formats**

This shift in strategy should be implemented and accompanied by strengthening the already existing instruments, capacities, and regulations. Amongst others the activities of the RCC. CEFTA should be developed into an intensified cooperation modelled after the European Economic Area, which has been proposed already in 2019. This would in a next step also help the WB6 to fully economically become an EU member. The Energy Community successfully represents such an initiative for the energy market. The Transport Community has the potential to become one for mobility. The different cooperation formats regarding reform of

the judiciary, police training and fight against organised crime should further lead to increase their efficiency. With regards to youth, education, and culture, the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) can serve as a platform for integration.

#### **4. Fostering mutual understanding and exchange**

The institutional reform and immediate accession will need broad support of the EU population. It is necessary to increase the exchange with our neighbours, to foster mutual understanding and to decrease prejudices against each other. Instead of a one-way street there should be a circulation, not only by visiting the region for tourism, but also by working, studying and living there. It has been possible in the 1990s and this should be encouraged and incentivised again. The Austrian government has been a leading actor in this regard and could assume even more responsibility. Last, but not least, the fears of affluent societies in the EU to lose out should be taken into account, but also clearly addressed: European integration is not a zero-sum game and old member states have always gained from enlargement.

#### **5. Acting now for the future**

A truly accelerated membership will still require some time for preparation and can only be achieved gradually. In a symbolic gesture, a joining ceremony could take place on Europe Day 2022. The reform of the institutional set-up should happen within a clear time frame in order to ensure results, realistically by the end of the Multiannual Financial Framework in 2027. This would leave enough time for the results of the Conference on the Future of Europe to be taken into consideration. Nevertheless, the Convention for a treaty revision should be convened as soon as the process ends.

Further information and all policy recommendations: <https://bit.ly/3PURmQT>

### **3.2 Events**

#### **Kickoff Conference 2020**

As part of the IDM and DRC Jean Monnet project "From Fictional to Functioning Democracy. Developing Concepts and Strategies for an Inclusive and Participatory Europe (FIFUDEM)", with the support of the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, the Kickoff Conference that took place on 13 January 2020, brought up the issue of liberal fictional democracy - a

new form of façade democracy framed by one-sided political communication through ideological deception, hate speech and tribalism. The Conference pointed at new visions for effectively committed citizenship in a functioning democracy, immersed in a common and inclusive European Union. With the aim of achieving this, academics and researchers specialized in EU matters, as well as civil society activists, stakeholders and practitioners and EU representatives developed methodologies of reinforcing dynamic and participatory citizenship and functioning political communication techniques.

The keynote speech from Ivan Krastev introduced the two panels during which two topics could be discussed:

- Panel 1- Democracy in Crisis and Possible Ways Out of Illiberal, Tribalist and Stablocratic Tendencies
- Panel 2: Liberal Democracy in Need – Impact of Education, Civic Engagement and (Social) Media on Participation and Public Opinion

### **Young Scholars Forum 2020**

Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19, the 7<sup>th</sup> Young Scholars Forum on Central and South East Europe “European narratives – in search for common diversity” took place online from 3 to 4 December 2020. Twenty young researchers from all over Europe gathered to discuss their research work, under the direction of experts, covering four thematically different panels:

- Europe as an area of peace and stability
- Europe as a space of cultural diversity
- Europe as a global actor
- If not the EU, is there/has there been an alternative?

The focus of the Forum was the promotion and encouragement of the young scholars within Central and South East Europe, presentation of their research to a wider public, exchange among the participants on different topics, methods, sources and results, networking, promoting mobility within the region and publication of research contributions in the IDM scientific journal „Der Donauraum“.

## **Train the trainer seminar 2020: Demokratie in der Krise- Herausforderungen und Chance für den Donaauraum**

From 24 until the 25 of February 2021, the IDM organised the online *Train the Trainer Seminar* in cooperation with the University of Vienna and the KPH Vienna/Krems. Entitled '*Demokratie in der Krise? Herausforderungen und Chance für den Donaauraum*', the event consisted of presentations, speeches and follow-up discussions led by Dr. Dieter Segert, Teresa Reiter, Prof. Arkadiusz Radwan, Dr. Sieglinde Rosenberger, Dr. Daniela Ingruber, Dr. Laura Wiesböck, Mag. Katharina Stourzh, Cornelia Krajasits, Dr. Bernhard Köhle and Simone Jordan. Topics touched upon during the seminar concerned the historical developments of democracy and the rule of law in the Danube region, the foundations for the relevance of democracy in our current times and future: institutions and participation, current challenges for liberal democracies: political abstinence, dystopian tendencies and socio-economical asymmetries, as also lastly, communication in the media, awareness work, and initiatives for the strengthening of liberal democracies.

## **DRC Annual Meeting 2021**

Due to the Covid-restrictions at that time, the [DRC Annual Conference 2021](#) was held online via Zoom on the 10 – 12 of November 2021. The event was organized by the DRC in cooperation with the Uzhhorod National University. Issues stressed during the conference concerned the achievements of the past year, the welcoming of two new members of the DRC network (i.a. the University of Reutlingen and the J. Selye University of Komarno) and lastly also the agreement on two new DRC initiatives, namely the DRC Initiative Fund and the DRC Strategic Foresight.

## **IDM@GLOBSEC Bratislava Forum 2022**

Together with GLOBSEC, the IDM coorganised the a side event at the GLOBSEC Bratislava Forum 2022 with the name 'What's Next for Europe? From the Conference on the Future of Europe to a New Reality' on the 21 June 2022. During the event the results of the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE) were discussed in order to assess the overall success of the

initiative, in particular in view of this format's effectiveness to engage citizens. As the moderator of the event Sebastian Schaeffer led the discussions between the speakers Katarina Csefalvayova, Milena Hrdinkova, Roland Freudenstein and Bogdan Klich. The debate revealed that citizens call for an increased cooperation and more unified actions from the Union. Specific areas where more integration and closer cooperation would be aspired concerned the field of health policy, democratic efficiency, climate policy and energy independence, the rule of law, migration, as also lastly, defence and security. For the Union to be enabled to increase cooperation in many of the mentioned fields, the experts highlighted that a change of the EU treaties would be required. The speakers further stressed that the EU and its programmes currently suffers from mis- and disinformation of its own society, in particular the European Youth, which puts the whole EU project under threat. As for the shortcomings of the format, the speakers expressed their disappointment about the reach scale of the event due to a lack of knowledge about the Conference. Further, the participants criticized that the format, in most parts, is not solution oriented and that the issues addressed are already part of the old political debate. Overall, the experts concluded that the CoFoE is a useful tool for civil engagement and inclusion in the process of policymaking.

### **DRC Summer School 2022**

From 10 to 16 July 2022, the [17<sup>th</sup> DRC Summer School](#) with the topic "*Shaping Tomorrow's Research: What Future for Academia in the Danube Region?*" was held and organized by the IDM in Vienna. The agenda of the Summer School revolved around the topics of youth in academia – passive listeners or drivers for change?, university autonomy and academic freedom – regional perspective(s), education for a brighter future – role of research in policy-making and, lastly, learning and mobility in the shadow of the war – considerations and challenges. The program combined a set of presentations and speeches with fruitful follow-up discussions, a podcast production as also social and cultural activities. Speakers and presenters at the event were Zoltán Vörös, Judit Dombi, Yuriy Azhniuk, Anastasiya Lendel, Lukáš Danko, Andrea Pető and Enora Bennetot Pruvot. As a particular highlight, Prof. Shalini Randeria held the keynote speech of the summer school and informed the attendees of event about "*Embattled Universities: Academic Freedom and Democratic Backsliding*".

Besides the lectures and social events, the Summer School involved a presentation of and a feedback session on the work of the participants of the DRC's Strategic Foresight Project and the final conference of the FIFUDEM project. The latter consisted of a keynote lecture held by Daniela Ingruber and the *"Democracy Talk #5: Let's talk about anger management!"*. The democracy talk was moderated by Melanie Jaindl and the panelists Daniel Martínek, Dobrena Petrova and Thomas Prorok discussed recent examples of democracy shortcomings in the Danube Region, presented their action plan for respectful dialogue and reflected on participative elements in democratic societies.

Have a closer look at the summary of this year's Summer School [here](#).

### **Five Democracy Talks**

In previous months, Jean Monnet project FIFUDEM introduced a new series, the "IDM Democracy Talks" with the aim of addressing current democratic developments within and outside the European Union and exploring the various weak spots of "fictional" democracies.

#### ***IDM Democracy Talks/Session 1: „Participation and representation“***

16 October 2020

In the first edition of IDM Democracy Talks "Participation & Representation" participants discussed citizens' participation as an important requirement of democracy for its functionality and legitimacy, as well as the necessity of appropriate representation of citizens by elected decision-makers and their policies. Some other topics were touched upon, such as migration, political apathy, and immanent system critique regarding nepotism and state capture leading to the fact that existing governments do not entirely represent its population.

[IDM Democracy Talks - Session I: Participation & Representation](#)

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*IDM Democracy Talks:*  
Participation &  
Representation

***IDM Democracy Talks/Session 2: „(Un)civil Society“***

30 October 2020

The second edition of IDM Democracy Talks "(Un)Civil Society in Europe" addressed today's role of civil society and civil society protests in Europe and abroad, as two fundamental elements and principles of democracy that can turn up in many different shapes, forms and create the paradox between protest being able to strengthen democratic values and weaken them at the same time.

[IDM Democracy Talks - Session II: \(Un\)Civil Society in Europe](#)

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*IDM Democracy Talks:*  
(Un)Civil Society in  
Europe

***IDM Democracy Talks/Session 3: „What about Solidarity in Europe? What about the European idea?“***

24 November 2020

The third IDM Democracy Talk focused on the question of solidarity within societies and the European idea, that was emphasized during the outbreak of the global pandemic. As we could see, economic recovery became a priority in the past few years and the EU also proposed an additional recovery fund “NextGenerationEU (NGEU)” to be coupled with the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), but some answers that the EU is facing still remain open-immigration, [#Brexit](#), and necessary institutional reform, just to name a few.

The European Union worked to position itself and.

[IDM Democracy Talks - Session III: What about Solidarity in Europe? What about the European Idea?](#)

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Danube Region  
and Central Europe



From Fictional to Functioning Democracy

- FIFUDEM -

***IDM Democracy Talks:***

What about Solidarity in Europe?

What about the European Idea?

***IDM Democracy Talks/Session 4: „Tackling nationalism, challenging certainties: Joint history textbooks as magic wands?***

30 June 2021

During the Forth IDM Democracy Talk, participants could discuss the history and its most popular narratives that often interact with the development of nation states, tending to exclude motives and perspectives of neighboring countries.

[IDM Democracy Talks IV: Tackling nationalism, challenging certainties - Joint history textbooks](#)

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- FIFUDEM -

## IDM Democracy Talks: TACKLING NATIONALISM, CHALLENGING CERTAINTIES

Joint history text books as magic wands?

### ***IDM Democracy Talks/Session 5: „Let’s talk about anger management!”***

13 July 2022

[IDM Democracy Talks V: Let’s talk about anger management!](#)



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### From Fictional to Functioning Democracy (FIFUDEM)

[www.idm.at/fifudem](http://www.idm.at/fifudem)

FIFUDEM Final Conference – HYBRID EVENT

Functioning democracy in the making

13 July 2022, 14:00-17:00 CEST

Springer Palace, Tivoligasse 73, 1120 Vienna

Register now to participate online:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_wfqzDSfGRyG4aU1LOdaR2Q](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_wfqzDSfGRyG4aU1LOdaR2Q)

You would like to join us in Vienna? Please write us a short e-mail latest till 11 July 2022:

[idm@idm.at](mailto:idm@idm.at)

Hate speech and rage in politics are a wide-spread phenomenon. We experience parliaments turning into showrooms for political enemies, social media serving as public pillories and protests escalating into violent riots on the streets. While collective impatience for reaching consensus rises, populists offer supposedly quick and simple solutions. Their electoral successes are not only symptoms of weakened democracies. Some even take matters into their own hands by demolishing the pillars of democracy themselves - with the result of establishing a fictional rather than functioning democracy.

The upcoming conference presents the findings and activities of the Jean Monnet Project FIFUDEM (2019-2022) and provides a variety of in-depth problem analysis and practical policy recommendations. Following a regional perspective encompassing the countries of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the project report will share insights into specific political and societal challenges of democratisation and Europeanisation.

## FIFUDEM Final Conference 2022

During the 17<sup>th</sup> DRC Summer School 2022, all the participants had the opportunity to attend the final conference of the EU-funded Jean Monnet Project FIFUDEM (2019-2022): From Fictional to Functioning Democracy. The conference presented the findings and activities on specific political and societal challenges of democratization and Europeanization in the countries of Central, Eastern, and South-Eastern Europe and provided a variety of in-depth problem analyses and practical policy recommendations.

“We have to let loose of this paradigm that democracy is a self-maintaining institution. Democracy needs to be nurtured and cared for in order for it to serve its functions for our society as making government inclusive, fair, and progressive. We should abandon the phasing of a “dying democracy” as this notion indicates to people that our democracy has already reached a stage where all efforts are being wasted.”

Daniela Ingruber during the lecture “Democracy Dies in Darkness – does it?”

[FIFUDEM Final Conference: “Functioning democracy in the making”](#)



 

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### 3.3 Dissemination

#### Project website:

<https://www.idm.at/fifudem/>

#### Partner Website report:

<https://www.drc-danube.org/2020/01/14/democracy-is-no-fiction-fifudem/>

#### Social Media Accounts (@IDMVienna):

Facebook: 2360 Likes/Subscribers

Twitter: 575 Follower

Instagram: 298 Follower

LinkedIn: 809 Follower

#### Newsletter DRC & IDM

DRC Newsletter:

##### 230 Recipients

Open Rate .....	33.9%	Total Clicks .....	8
Clicks Per Unique Open	6.4%	Orders .....	0
Successful Deliveries .....	227	Average Order Revenue	\$0.00
Total Opens .....	180	Total Revenue .....	\$0.00

IDM Newsletter:

##### 668 Recipients

Open Rate .....	41.8%	Total Clicks .....	173
Clicks Per Unique Open	24.0%	Orders .....	0
Successful Deliveries .....	663	Average Order Revenue	\$0.00
Total Opens .....	623	Total Revenue .....	\$0.00

## Publications

The “IDM Policy Paper Series” and the thematic issue “Info Europa” are both accessible via the IDM website. In addition, the IDM provides free copies for all its members. The thematic issues “**Info Europa**” had a circulation of 50,000 and were distributed as print supplements to the Austrian daily “Die Presse”. In addition to the print edition, the IDM produced an e-paper version free of charge that is distributed via the online platform Joomag.com and the IDM website (archive). New releases are being advertised by the mailing list of the IDM and via Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn). Guest authors of Info Europa are utilized as crucial multipliers of Info Europa stories. IDM members (as well as additional subscribers of *Info Europa* (ca. 30 addresses) receive print copies via post. Issue no. 2/2021 was used for advertising the project by an one page sized advertisement (see Figure below).



Figure 1 Advertisement of the FIFUDEM project (*Info Europa* 2/2021, 24)

The scientific journal “**Der Donauraum**” is being distributed by the publishing house. E-prints are available via the e-Library of the publisher. In addition, the IDM distributes its 200 free copies via its professional networks. Authors and guest editors are functioning as important multipliers. All publications were promoted via the Social Media channels of the IDM.

#### 4. Conclusions and outlook

Project partners look back at a challenging, but fruitful project period. Together we could reach a broad range of different target groups including students, academics, teachers, professionals, political decision-makers and a variety of experts dealing with the challenges of democratic backlash particularly in the countries of Central and Southeast Europe. Altogether 72 experts from Europe and beyond contributed directly to the project activities. 340 people were directly reached and participated in the 12 implemented events despite the difficult pandemic situation. The output of the project was collected in thematic issue of the scientific journal "Der Donauraum" encompassing 112 pages. Including with the non-scientific publication formats "Info Europa" and "IDM Info" as well as the IDM's format for policy advice "IDM PPS", project managed to produce and share expertise and opinions on more than 300 pages. Years after submitting our proposal, we face enormous challenges that could not have been predicted back then. This is the reason why, although keeping a strong recommendation-oriented focus throughout the activities, the involved experts identified way more challenges than solutions. Nevertheless, publications and events show that a broad portfolio of convincing concepts and strategies to tackle the identified issues are existing. In our outlook we would like to emphasize one of many good recommendations that have provided us with food for thought for future projects. During the Final Conference in July 2022, project partners hosted a panel discussion on concrete actions for democracies in Europe. The 5<sup>th</sup> Democracy Talk entitled "Let's talk about anger management!" focused about forms of mobilisation and engagement. Thomas Prorok, panelist and Managing Director of the Centre for Public Administration Research (KDZ) in Vienna, brought up the idea of a "Greenpeace for Democracy". He stated that Europe, particularly the Danube Region, would need a membership-based international organisation similar to established civil society organisations in the areas of environment or Human Rights. Although starting as a small grassroots activist network, International Non Governmental Organisations (INGOs) such as Greenpeace managed to institutionalize and transnationalize to a certain level without losing certain national and regional autonomy and embeddedness. Based on strategic professional campaigns they are able to mobilise a broad and diverse pool of followers. Whereas Greenpeace is considered an influential actor on supra-national levels such as the EU institutions, practice lobbying and are very active in scientific research, they have not

neglected to organise local actions such as occupations, sit-ins or other media-friendly protest activities. We suggest to further investigate the successes and constraints of INGOs, to identify best practices for a new movement or organisation - similar to "Greenpeace for Democracy" - that could learn from past successes and failures. Such research could provide the basis of a more media-effective communications and a campaign-oriented way of democracy promotion e.g. by utilizing storytelling methods and other mobilisation strategies known from Social Movement Research. This would require to deconstruct the abstract topic of democracy to more tangible pillars (media freedom, inclusion, participation, etc.) and to further develop key stories and target groups for a more emotionalized and personalized approach. Also, Greenpeace's success is based on concrete wins against certain policies or projects. Therefore, a democracy-focused INGO would need to first identify concrete cases of democratic backsliding, and act very goal-oriented against such attacks (e.g. on the rule of law). Successes need to be measured and made visible which poses a challenge for many existing actors and projects. There is no doubt, that active citizenship and strengthened forms of participation are necessary to lay the foundations for a strong transnational movement. The continuous support of this work by EU programs such as Jean Monnet or CERV are crucial for this. The IDM is therefore delighted to continue and further develop its work within the recently approved project "Towards Democratic and Inclusive Europe: EP Elections and Active Citizens Participation and Contribution (EUAct2)".

**DISCLAIMER** – The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



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**ANNEX: List of expert contributors to the events and publications of FIFUDEM (in alphabetical order) – Total number: 72**

- Albrecht, Kristin Y.** (Fakultät der Paris-Lodron Universität Salzburg) - Austria
- Azhniuk, Yuriy** (National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, as well as Uzhhorod National University) - Ukraine
- Böttger, Katrin** (Institut für Europäische Politik) - Germany
- Busek, Erhard** (Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe) - Austria
- Danko, Lukáš**(Tomas Bata University Zlin) - Czech Republic
- Đapić, Snezana** (Bureau for Social Research) - Serbia
- Dombi, Judit** (University of Pécs) - Hungary
- Farkas, Lilla** (Budapester Anwaltskammer) - Hungary
- Füricht-Fiegl, Gerda** (Danube University Krems) - Austria
- Gill, Jack** (Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe) - Austria
- Gosejohann, Robin** (Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe as well as Sinnbildungsstiftung) - Austria
- Grabenwarter, Christoph** (Österreichischer Verfassungsgerichtshof, as well as Venice Commission of the Council of Europe) - Austria
- Guimaraes von Ridder, Sofia** (Grupo Positivo) - Brazil
- Hanzl-Weiss, Doris** (Wiener Institut für Internationaler Wirtschaftsvergleiche) - Austria
- Hontebeyrie, Emma** (Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe) - Austria
- Illmeier, Gertraud** (Interkulturelles Zentrum, Vienna) - Austria
- Ivanova, Olga** (AC-HQ) – France
- Jaindl, Melanie** (Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe) - Austria
- Káčer, Rastislav** (Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Republic) - Czech Republic)
- Kačič, Zdravko** (University of Maribor and Danube Rectors' Conference) - Slovenia
- Kąkolewski, Igor** (Centre for Historical Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences) - Germany
- Kocyba , Piotr** (Institute for Social Movement) - Germany
- Koulourim, Christina** (Panteion University of Political and Social Sciences) - Greece
- Krastev, Ivan** (Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), as well as Centre for Liberal Strategies) - Austria
- Küpper, Herbert** (Instituts für Ostrecht München) - Germany
- Kushwaha, Babrik** (Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe) - Austria

**Laborel, Emilie** (Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe) - Austria

**Le, Marietta** (Budapest Public Administration) - Hungary

**Lendel, Anastasiya** (Uzhhorod National University) - Ukraine

**Likmeta, Besar** (BIRN network) - Albania

**Mandl, Lukas** (Member of the European Parliament, Brussels) – Belgium

**Martínek, Daniel** (Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe) - Austria

**Mathernová, Katarína** (European Commission, Brussels) - Belgium

**Melaschwili, George** (Europa Georgien-Institut) - Georgia

**Minár, Mikuláš** (Political activist in the Czech Republic) - Czech Republic

**Mischke, Jakob** (Nationalen Universität der Kyïver Mohyla – Akademie) - Ukraine

**Mokre, Monika** (Austrian Academy of Science) - Austria

**Morvai, Hedvig** (Erste Foundation) - Austria

**Mussnig, Daniela** (IZ – Vielfalt, Dialog, Bildung) - Austria

**Nadjivan, Silvia** (Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe) - Austria

**Neubacher (Apaydin), Daniela** (Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe) - Austria

**Paleviq, Edina** (Andrassy University Budapest) – Hungary

**Pavloski, Toni** (Directorate for the European Union at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia, Skopje) – North Macedonia

**Pejović, Marko** (Centre for Democracy and Human Rights) - Montenegro

**Pető, Andrea** (CEU Vienna/CEU Democracy Institute Budapest/Hungarian Academy of Sciences) - Austria

**Petrova, Dobrena** (The Sofia Platform Foundation) - Bulgaria

**Popovic, Ivanka** (University of Belgrade/Danube Rectors' Conference, Serbia) - Serbia

**Preitschopf, Alexandra** (University of Sofia) - Bulgaria

**Prorok, Thomas** (KDZ Zentrum für Verwaltungsforschung) - Austria

**Pruvot, Enora Bennetot** (Funding & Public Policy Development, as well as European University Association) - Belgium

**Przybylski, Wojciech** (Visegrad Insight/Res Publica Foundation) - Poland

**Radwan, Arkadiusz** (Wissenschaftlichen Zentrums der Polnischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Vytautas-Magnus-Universität Kaunas, as well as Universität Warschau) - Austria

**Randeria, Shalini** (Central European University) - Austria

**Rozgonyi, Krisztina** (Department of Communication of the University of Vienna) - Austria

**Rozhkova, Zinaida** (RAS Institute of Philosophy) - Russia

**Satsunkevich, Natalie** (human rights defender) - Belarus

**Schäffer, Sebastian** (Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe, as well as Danube Rectors' Conference) - Austria

**Selmayr, Martin** (Representative of the European Commission in Austria) - Austria

**Slavkova, Louisa** (Sofia Platform Foundation) - Bulgaria

**Smolanka, Volodymyr** (Uzhhorod National University) - Ukraine

**Spöri, Tobias** (Forschungsgruppe Osteuropastudien der Universität Wien) - Austria

**Steiner, Franjo** (IZ – Verein zur Förderung von Vielfalt, Dialog und Bildung) - Austria

**Strahodinsky, Astrid** (Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe) - Austria

**Šuica, Dubravka** (European Commission) - Belgium

**Talik, Malwina** (Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe) - Austria

**Ugródsy, Márton** (Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade) - Hungary

**Ungureanu, Mihai Răzvan** (University of Bucharest) - Romania

**Velebit, Vuk** (Talas.rs) - Serbia

**Voko, Kristina** (Balkan Investigative Reporting Network) - Albania

**Vörös, Zoltán** (University of Pécs) - Hungary

**Voss, Florian** (Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe) - Austria