

TEPSA innovates with new Democracy Retreats

BRUSSELS: 26/03/2024: Within the EU's evolving landscape, there is a pressing need to understand how multi-layered levels of governance can exchange and learn from their experiences to **strengthen and renew democracy**. As the EU contemplates enlargement and internal reforms, TEPSA and the Egmont Institute have co-organised an innovative **'Democracy Retreat'** to address the challenges posed by backsliding, polarisation, citizen distrust in or dissatisfaction towards institutions, and national and internal frictions in EU decision-making.

With a keen eye on the 2024 European Parliament (EP) and Belgian elections, the next European Commission's strategic agenda, and the Belgian Presidency at the Council of the EU, these dialogues within the scope of the Horizon Europe-funded Nets4Dem project will delve into strategies to bridge the gap between theoretical ideals and practical implementations **fostering a more robust and resilient EU democratic fabric**.

The first Democracy Retreat takes place on the sidelines of the 41st COSAC Plenary and as a continuation of its discussion on 'Democracy and the Rule of Law in Europe'. The discussions will:

- Develop methods for the European Parliament and national parliaments to **ensure effective accountability of executive powers**;
- Establish new methods and strategies to **promote citizen engagement in democracy and policymaking** across different levels of governance, extending beyond elections;
- Identify and deploy practices that **foster the advancement and safeguarding of democracy**, with a focus on widespread adoption;
- Find synergies to **exchange democratic practices** among diverse stakeholders.

The discussions will be structured around opening remarks and interventions from leading experts on the themes tackled in the retreat, including: **Mariam Khotenashvili** (TEPSA), **Jean-Louis de Brouwer** (Egmont Institute), **Rieke Wönig** (Democracy Reporting International), **Ken Godfrey** (European Partnership for Democracy), **Kalypso Nicolaïdis** (European University Institute), **Karolina Borońska-Hryniewiecka** (University of Wrocław & University of Paris I: Panthéon-Sorbonne), and **Anthony Zacharzewski** (Democratic Society).

