

TEPSA

# AGENDA



*ActEU Doctoral School:*

## DEMOCRATIC FRONTIERS

*Charting Pathways for Trust and  
Participation in European Governance*

**Academic coordinator: Prof Dr Daniela Braun  
(Saarland University, ActEU Conceptual Leader)**

**ActEU**



Funded by  
the European Union



# MONDAY 10 FEBRUARY

13:15-13:30 **Registrations**

13:30-14:30 **Welcome address & introduction**

by Eva Ribera, Project Manager, TEPSA

14:30-16:00 **Lecture: Unpacking EU democracy: foundations, evolution, and contemporary challenges**

by Alexander Hoppe, Lecturer and Chair of European Politics, University of Duisburg-Essen

16:00-16:30 **Coffee break**

16:30-18:00 **Lecture: Activating trust in Europe: the ActEU Project and its research approaches**

by Daniela Braun, Professor, Saarland University

18:00-18:30 **Interactive working groups: Peer insights and feedback**


19:00-21:00 **Welcome drinks**

at Ultime Atome, Rue Saint-Boniface, 1050 Ixelles

# TUESDAY 11 FEBRUARY

- 09:00-10:30 **Methodological mastery: Focus group discussions**  
by Kristina Weissenbach, Acting Professor, University of Duisburg-Essen
- 10:30-11:00 **Coffee break**
- 11:00-12:30 **Meeting with International IDEA: Legitimacy at stake: addressing challenges to European democracies**  
By Sam van der Staak, Director Regional Europe, International IDEA
- 12:30-13:45 **Lunch break**
- 14:00-16:15 **Visit at the European Parliament: EU Parliamentary diplomacy in practice: EU values and political engagement across the continent and beyond**  
By Nikolina Vassileva, Head of Unit, Directorate-General for Parliamentary Democracy Partnerships, Innovation and Partnership Development Unit
- 16:30-17:15 **Brainstorming session**
- 17:15-18:30 **Interactive working groups: Peer insights and feedback**





## WEDNESDAY 12 FEBRUARY

- 9:30-10:30 **Interactive working groups: Peer insights and feedback**
- 10:30-11:00 **Coffee break**
- 11:00-12:30 **Meeting with the European Parliament: Understanding European public opinion: trends and challenges through Eurobarometer Data**  
by Gonzalo Velasco Monasterio, Public opinion analyst, Directorate-General for Communication, Public Opinion Monitoring Unit
- 12:30-13:30 **Lunch break**
- 13:30-15:00 **Meeting with FIDE: Deliberative Democracy in Action: Strengthening democracies through citizen engagement in policy-making**  
by Yves Dejaeghere, Executive Director, Federation for Innovation in Democracy - Europe
- 15:00-15:30 **Coffee break**
- 15:30-16:30 **Methodological mastery: experimental survey**  
by Daniela Braun, Professor, Saarland University
- 16:30-17:30 **Brainstorming session**

# THURSDAY 13 FEBRUARY

- 09:00-10:00 **Methodological mastery: Web scraping**  
by Alexander Hartland, Postdoctoral Researcher,  
Saarland University
- 10:00-10:15 **Coffee break**
- 10:15-11:45 **Panel Debate: Building trust in tomorrow's democracies: exploring the drivers of political trust with:**  
Moderated by Daniela Braun, Professor, Saarland University
- Elene Panchulidze, Research Coordinator, European Partnership for Democracy
  - Richard Youngs, Senior Fellow, Democracy, Conflict, and Governance Program, Carnegie Europe
  - Sebastian Rodriguez, Campaign Strategist, Community Building and Digital Outreach Lead, European Movement International
- 11:45-13:00 **Interactive working groups: Final presentations**
- 13:00-13:15 **Concluding remarks**  
by Daniela Braun (Professor, Saarland University)
- 13:15-14:30 **Lunch (provided)**
- 14:30-18:00 **Professional Workshop: “Storytelling and Effective Communication”**  
Learn more on the next page!



# PROFESSIONAL WORKSHOP

## **STORYTELLING AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION** with professional trainer **Elena Kienle**

This interactive workshop is designed to help PhD students transform their complex research into compelling stories that resonate with a broader audience. Through a combination of theory and hands-on exercises, participants will learn how to simplify scientific jargon, craft an engaging narrative, and create an impactful elevator pitch. The session focuses on enhancing visibility and improving communication skills to captivate an audience. By the end of the workshop, participants will gain practical tools and strategies to communicate the value of their work more effectively.

**Elena Kienle** is a certified leadership coach and facilitator who is passionate about supporting individuals and teams create meaningful impact. With an academic background in Human Resources and Business Psychology, and over seven years of experience working in People & Culture roles, she brings a thoughtful and supportive approach to her work. Elena works with people from all walks of life, helping them tap into their potential, communicate more effectively and increase their impact. Her passion for connecting with people and seeing them thrive is at the heart of her work.



# About TEPSA

The Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA) was established in 1974 as the first transnational research network in the field of EU affairs. It comprises leading research institutes throughout Europe, with an office in Brussels. Its aim is to provide high-quality research on European integration to stimulate discussion on policies and political options for Europe. This is achieved by the interaction between the European and national institutions as well as the academic and research community. TEPSA is active on a wide range of research topics, focusing on differentiated integration, the EU's external relations, democratic participation and citizens' engagement.

More information on our activities can be found at <http://www.tepsa.eu>.



# About ActEU

ActEU explores political trust and legitimacy beyond traditional survey methods, addressing whether European democracies require uniform citizen support across regional, national, and EU levels. In phase 1, the project investigates declining trust, legitimacy, and societal polarization, focusing on the EU's multi-level structure. Insights will shape phase 2, where tailored toolkits for political and civil society actors, educators, and policymakers will offer solutions to counter declining trust and address polarization in areas like migration, the environment, and gender.

More information on our activities can be found at <https://acteu.org/>

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