
Reconciling Europe with its Citizens through Democracy and Rule of Law (RECONNECT)

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RECONNECT starts from the observation that the European Union (EU) and the Member States are confronted with an existential crisis of the entire European project. As a result of several successive crises an increasingly large share of the population perceives the EU as an undemocratic and unjust political system. Overall trust in institutions at both Union and Member State levels is waning, while ever louder calls for a repatriation of powers to the national level are shaking the EU to its core. Against this background, our underlying assumption is that the deeply diverse and pluralistic Union of today needs to be more firmly rooted in justice and solidarity in order to be sustainable. With a unique multidisciplinary consortium of researchers, we analyse the existential challenges to the EU's authority and legitimacy, through a comprehensive examination of principles, practices, and perceptions of democracy and the rule of law in the EU. Our end-user approach enables us to point to how democratic and rule of law principles and practices of institutions resonate with the actual aspirations, perceptions and preferences of citizens. Our ultimate objective is to contribute to a new comprehensive narrative for Europe that "reconnects" European governance with citizens. By means of an effective impact and dissemination strategy and through tailor-made policy recommendations and proposals for Treaty changes, RECONNECT will strengthen the EU's normative foundations.