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Annex V

Horizon Europe

Work Programme 2026-2027

5. Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society

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DISCLAIMER

This draft has not been adopted or endorsed by the European Commission. Any views expressed are the preliminary views of the Commission services and may not in any circumstances be regarded as stating an official position of the Commission. The information transmitted is intended only for the Member State or entity to which it is addressed for discussions and may contain confidential and/or privileged material.

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Introduction

Cluster 2, 'Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society' aims to ....

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Proposals are invited against the following three (3) destinations:

Activities contributing to the **destination "Innovative Research on Democracy and Governance"**, tbc

Activities contributing to the **destination "Innovative Research on the European Cultural Heritage and the Cultural and Creative Industries"**, tbc

At the same time, through the **destination "Innovative Research on Social and Economic Transformations"**, actions will ...

tbc

The topics in this cluster require the effective and extensive contribution of SSH disciplines and the involvement of SSH experts, institutions as well as the inclusion of relevant SSH expertise, to produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related research activities.

CALLS 2026

Call - Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01

Overview of this call[1]

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million) 2026	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million)[2]	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
Opening: 16 Dec 2025 Deadline(s): 16 Sep 2026				
Destination Innovative Research on Democracy and Governance				
HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-DEMOCRACY-01: Understanding and addressing gender-based violence against politically active women and LGBTIQ people	RIA		3.50 to 4.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-DEMOCRACY-02: Understanding the forms of local democracy in low-income and low-middle income countries	RIA		3.50 to 4.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-DEMOCRACY-03: Government in transition – how governments change the way they work and prepare the civil service for the future	RIA		3.50 to 4.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-DEMOCRACY-04: Sustainable paths to media viability	IA		3.50 to 4.00	

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[1] The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for 2026 and 2027

[2] Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-DEMOCRACY-05: Research and Innovation Network for a Union of Equality	CSA		4.00 to 5.00
HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-DEMOCRACY-06: Governing global goods and commons sustainably	RIA		3.50 to 4.00
HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-DEMOCRACY-07: Supporting post-conflict democracy and reconstruction	RIA		3.50 to 4.00
HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-DEMOCRACY-08: Electoral integrity in the digital context	RIA		3.50 to 4.00
HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-DEMOCRACY-09: Lifelong learning of citizenship education and citizen participation	RIA		3.50 to 4.00
HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-DEMOCRACY-10: Democratic resilience and civic preparedness	RIA		3.50 to 4.00
Destination Innovative Research on European Cultural Heritage and Cultural and Creative Industries			
HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-HERITAGE-01: "Artistic intelligence": harnessing the power of the arts to address complex challenges, enhance soft skills and boost innovation and competitiveness	RIA		4.00 to 5.00
HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-HERITAGE-02: Towards a consolidated culture and creativity driven European innovation ecosystem	CSA		5.00 to 6.00
HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-HERITAGE-03: AI integration in CCSI work practice: catalysing innovation and competitiveness	IA		4.00 to 5.00
HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-HERITAGE-04: Towards a fair and transparent market for cultural and creative content in the era of generative AI and other emerging technologies	RIA		3.00 to 4.00
HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-HERITAGE-05: Creative alliances: Fostering global partnerships in cultural policies and CCI	RIA		3.00 to 4.00

innovation				
HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-HERITAGE-06: Safeguarding linguistic diversity in Europe	RIA		5.00 to 6.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-HERITAGE-07: Fighting illicit trafficking of cultural goods	CSA		5.00 to 6.00	
Destination Innovative Research on Social and Economic Transformations				
HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-01: How does access to nature-positive environments promote social cohesion and reduce inequalities in urban settings?	RIA		3.00 to 4.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-02: Strengthen Europe's social model and sustainable competitiveness through productivity	RIA		3.00 to 4.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-03: Tackling child poverty and ensuring disadvantaged children's access to ECEC	RIA		3.00 to 4.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-04: Closing the learning gap: uncovering causes and effective policy interventions for declining youth skills in mathematics, reading, and science	RIA		3.00 to 4.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-05: Long term contribution of basic skills to productivity, innovation, competitiveness and economic growth	RIA		3.00 to 4.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-06: Making Europe a global magnet for talent - Attracting and retaining students, researchers and high-skilled workers from outside the EU	RIA		3.00 to 4.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-07: Fostering competences for the green transition	RIA		3.00 to 4.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-08: Strengthened implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum focusing on inclusion, integration, and health	RIA		3.00 to 4.00	

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-09: Persons with disabilities: opportunities for labour inclusion and social protection through the life course	RIA		3.00 to 4.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-10: Rethinking long-term care policy in the face of EU demographic shifts	RIA		Around 4.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-11: Creation of a Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH)-Action for the fostering integration (and cooperation between) SSH and STEM research and innovation in EU and national R&I policies.	CSA		Around 3.50	
Overall indicative budget				

General conditions relating to this call	
Admissibility conditions	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
Eligibility conditions	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
Financial and operational capacity and exclusion	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
Award criteria	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
Documents	The documents are described in General Annex E.
Procedure	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Call - Cluster 2 Partnerships

HORIZON-CL2-2026-02

Overview of this call[3]

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million) 2026	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million)[4]	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
Opening: 09 Dec 2025 Deadline(s): 16 Sep 2026				
Destination Innovative Research on Social and Economic Transformations				
HORIZON-CL2-2026-02-TRANSFO-12: Co-funded European partnership for Social Transformations and Resilience	COFUND			
Overall indicative budget				

General conditions relating to this call	
Admissibility conditions	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
Eligibility conditions	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
Financial and operational capacity and exclusion	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
Award criteria	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
Documents	The documents are described in General Annex E.

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[3]   The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.
The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.
All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for 2026 and 2027

[4]   Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

Procedure	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G.

CALLS 2027

Call - Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society - 2027

HORIZON-CL2-2027-01

Overview of this call[5]

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million) 2027	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million)[6]	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
Opening: 09 Dec 2025				
Destination Innovative Research on Democracy and Governance				
HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-DEMOCRACY-01: Advisory support and network for countering and preventing radicalisation, extremism, hate speech and polarisation	CSA		3.00 to 3.50	
HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-DEMOCRACY-02: Women's, LGBTIQ and minority rights in a context of autocracy, conflict and geopolitical shifts	RIA		3.50 to 4.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-DEMOCRACY-03: Student and parental engagement for developing a culture of democratic/civic participation	RIA		3.50 to 4.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-DEMOCRACY-04: Addressing the impact of artificial intelligence,	RIA		3.50 to 4.00	

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[5] The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.

The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for 2026 and 2027

[6] Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

cyberviolence, and deepfakes on equality, democracy and inclusive societies				
HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-DEMOCRACY-05: Development aid and democratic governance	RIA		3.50 to 4.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-DEMOCRACY-06: Mapping EU news media sectors of special relevance for democracy	RIA		3.50 to 4.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-DEMOCRACY-07: The role of private companies in democracy	RIA		3.50 to 4.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-DEMOCRACY-08: Global Human Rights and EU values	RIA		3.50 to 4.00	
Destination Innovative Research on European Cultural Heritage and Cultural and Creative Industries				
HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-01: Boosting creative startups for disruptive innovation	RIA		4.00 to 6.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-02: AI4Creatives Support Platform: embracing a fair AI revolution	CSA		5.00 to 6.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-03: Crafting routes to a circular economy	RIA		3.00 to 3.50	
HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-04: Culture and creative industries for well-being	RIA		3.00 to 4.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-05: Re-imagining the creative economy: the interplay between the cultural and creative sectors and industries and the social economy	RIA		3.00 to 3.50	
HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-06: Future-proofing sustainable cultural tourism	RIA		4.00 to 5.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-07: Societal impact of cultural heritage	RIA		3.00 to 4.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-08: Strategies for safeguarding & transmission of intangible cultural heritage	RIA		3.00 to 4.00	

Destination Innovative Research on Social and Economic Transformations				
HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-TRANSFO-01: Impact of in-kind benefits on income distribution and on vulnerable populations	RIA		3.00 to 4.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-TRANSFO-02: How a competitive social economy can boost sustainable European competitiveness?	RIA		3.00 to 4.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-TRANSFO-03: Perspectives for EU labour mobility	RIA		3.00 to 4.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-TRANSFO-04: The effective use of artificial intelligence in learning environments in pre-primary and primary education	RIA		3.00 to 4.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-TRANSFO-05: The impact of the use of digital tools for leisure on educational outcomes	RIA		3.00 to 4.00	
Overall indicative budget				

General conditions relating to this call	
Admissibility conditions	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
Eligibility conditions	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
Financial and operational capacity and exclusion	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
Award criteria	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
Documents	The documents are described in General Annex E.
Procedure	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G.

Call - Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society - 2027 - Two-stage

HORIZON-CL2-2027-02-TWO-STAGE

Overview of this call[7]

Proposals are invited against the following Destinations and topic(s):

Topics	Type of Action	Budgets (EUR million) 2027	Expected EU contribution per project (EUR million)[8]	Indicative number of projects expected to be funded
Opening: 09 Dec 2025				
Destination Innovative Research on Democracy and Governance				
HORIZON-CL2-2027-02-DEMOCRACY-09-two-stage: Open topic on reinvigorating and shielding European democracy	RIA		2.00 to 4.00	
Destination Innovative Research on European Cultural Heritage and Cultural and Creative Industries				
HORIZON-CL2-2027-02-HERITAGE-09-two-stage: Impact-driven research on realising the full potential of cultural heritage, arts and cultural and creative industries	RIA		2.00 to 4.00	
Destination Innovative Research on Social and Economic Transformations				
HORIZON-CL2-2027-02-TRANSFO-06-two-stage: Improving social and socio-economic outcomes for people with dementia and informal caregivers	RIA		2.00 to 4.00	
HORIZON-CL2-2027-02-TRANSFO-07-two-stage: Scaling and deploying innovations in	IA		3.00 to 5.00	

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[7]   The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.
        The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.
        All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.
        The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for 2026 and 2027

[8]   Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

migration				
Overall indicative budget				

General conditions relating to this call	
Admissibility conditions	The conditions are described in General Annex A.
Eligibility conditions	The conditions are described in General Annex B.
Financial and operational capacity and exclusion	The criteria are described in General Annex C.
Award criteria	The criteria are described in General Annex D.
Documents	The documents are described in General Annex E.
Procedure	The procedure is described in General Annex F.
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G.

DESTINATIONS

Destination Innovative Research on Democracy and Governance

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Expected impact:

tbc

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-DEMOCRACY-01: Understanding and addressing gender-based violence against politically active women and LGBTIQ people

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.50 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [9].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- EU and national policymakers and relevant stakeholders get an enhanced understanding of the drivers of violence against politically active women and LGBTIQ people,

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[9] This [decision](#) is available on the Funding Wand Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

including intersectional dynamics involved such as racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

- Enhanced prevention and early intervention through a better understanding of the drivers of violence as well as the short- and long-term impacts of violence on women and LGBTIQ people engaged in online and offline political activities; and how these public activities of targeted individuals evolve following instances of violence, drawing on the lived experience of gender-based violence survivors.

- Uptake of evidence-based policy recommendations by policymakers and relevant stakeholders on tackling gender-based violence in conjunction with violence against politically engaged women and LGBTIQ people, promoting equal participation in political activities and addressing harmful narratives surrounding these issues, with a particular attention to those rooted in intersectional discriminations.

- Broader adherence to media guidelines on responsible, ethical, and safe portrayals of and reporting on gender-based violence in a political context, embedding gender-sensitive and intersectional reporting and incorporating successful initiatives with demonstrable and positive social outcomes.

- Promotion of an environment that encourages public participation of women and LGBTIQ people, notably from underrepresented groups, through greater collaboration among media outlets, political parties, cultural and educational institutions, and organisations on human rights, political empowerment, and gender-based violence prevention.

Scope: The increased participation of women and LGBTIQ people in public life[10] coincides with a rise in two severe forms of violence: politically motivated violence targeting public figures and gender-based violence. When these two forms of violence intersect, they obstruct progress toward gender equality, reinforce traditional gender norms and power imbalances, and pose significant threats to democratic societies. The EU Directive on combating violence against women acknowledges the impact of such violence on women active in public life, particularly its silencing effect and its undermining of principles of equality, inclusion, and representation. Moreover, the political guidelines for the European Commission (2024–2029) position the fight against gender-based violence as a central element of the Gender Equality Strategy for post-2025, notably to empower women in politics[11]. In this context, politics should be understood as extending beyond formal structures to include a wide range of public engagement activities, such as activism, community organising, and civic involvement.

This violence occurs in various forms, including sexual and physical threats and assaults, harassment, reputation smearing and/or character assassinations, disinformation campaigns

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[10] Entails but not limited to public representatives, journalists, investigative reporters, human rights defenders, activists, civil society actors, political figures, and anonymous individuals engaging in the public spheres.

[11] Political Guidelines for the next European Commission 2024-2029, https://europa.eu/!wywg4P, page 20.

exploiting misogynistic narratives, and deceptive image manipulation. With technological advancements, the methods of violence and harassment have moved online and become increasingly sophisticated and viral, exemplified by phenomena like deepfakes, which poses a threat through gender-specific and sexualised disinformation. Their consequences, however, extend to the physical world, causing physical and psychological harm, as well as impacting professional and personal reputations, quality of life, and family.

Both political and media spheres serve as influential platforms where norms are shaped and maintained. Media, including radio, television, newspapers, magazines, and the internet, are key sites of power and influence over public opinion and gender socialisation processes. However, coverage of gender-based violence cases is often sensationalised and biased, especially when combined with violence against public figures, perpetuating harmful stereotypes and narratives. There is a significant research gap in understanding how the dissemination of these narratives influences public perception and awareness. Proposals should gather data on this impact and counteract sensationalism, misogyny, and the propagation of harmful narratives to position the media as catalyst for positive change.

Critical research gaps remain in understanding the intersections of gender-based violence and politically motivated violence, particularly adopting an intersectional perspective and considering cultural factors. For instance, little is known on how fictional and non-fictional narratives influence public awareness and perceptions of gender-based violence against politically active women and LGBTIQ people. These gaps in knowledge can lead to inadequate responses and support systems, as well as victim blaming.

To address this, a comprehensive multi-country approach involving both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis is essential, including on how harmful representations of gender-based violence affect violence levels in democracies. Proposals are encouraged to look into cultural beliefs and practices, considering perspectives from diverse fields such as cinema, television, and literature to explore how different cultural representations and national context influence perceptions and responses to such intersecting violence.

In addition, politically driven violence and gender-based violence intersect with various forms of discrimination, including but not limited to racism, homophobia, and transphobia[12]. Proposals should look at researching intersectionality in this context to enhance our understanding of how the perpetration and experience of gender-based violence can vary based on the social identities and community belonging(s) of both the victim and the perpetrator, thereby necessitating a nuanced and multifaceted recognition and response.

Proposals should adopt a multidisciplinary approach, integrating fields such as political science, gender studies, media studies, cultural studies, sociology, psychology, history, and geography.

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[12]   Racist and anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric especially is on the rise:
https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2024/lgbtiq-crossroads-progress-and-challenges;
https://fra.europa.eu/en/news/2023/black-people-eu-face-ever-more-racism;
https://www.ilga-europe.org/report/annual-review-2023/

Proposals should engage stakeholders and civil society organisations in the development of research activities to ensure uptake.

Where applicable, proposals should leverage the data and services available through European Research Infrastructures federated under the European Open Science Cloud, as well as data from relevant Data Spaces. Particular efforts should be made to ensure that the data produced in the context of this topic is FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable).

Projects are encouraged to collaborate with the projects funded under HORIZON-CL2-2025-01-TRANSFO-01: "Tackling gender-based violence in different social and economic spheres". Projects are also encouraged to exploit potential complementarity with projects funded under HORIZON-CL2-2021-DEMOCRACY-01-03: "Feminisms for a new age of democracy" and HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-05: "Gender-roles in extremist movements and their impact on democracy". Moreover, projects could exploit potential complementarities with projects funded under Cluster 3 of Horizon Europe, for instance under the topic HORIZON-CL3-2021-FCT-01-06: "Domestic and sexual violence are prevented and combated". Synergies with projects funded under the call for proposals to prevent and combat gender-based violence and violence against children (CERV-2024-DAPHNE) are encouraged.

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-DEMOCRACY-02: Understanding the forms of local democracy in low-income and low-middle income countries

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.50 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [13].

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[13]   This decision is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link:

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- EU institutions and national decision-makers are equipped with science-based tools and recommendations to proactively promote human rights and democracy, in order to lead to more resilient and inclusive democratic societies in low-income and low-middle income countries, strengthening social inclusion through citizens' participation in decision-making, particularly through women's and youth participation.

- EU institutions and national decision-makers are better able to proactively promote democratic values, principles and practices in low- and low-middle income countries grounded in a better understanding of the actors at local level including their capacity and needs when engaging in democratic practices.

- EU institutions, national decision-makers, and civil society organisations can access and use (science-based) good practices for working in fragile contexts where connections/relations with governments and trust in democracy are weak or absent, due to the political and economic crisis or other context-specific factors.

- EU institutions and national decision-makers understand the role of decentralization processes in low-income and low-middle income countries, and its impact on the quality of public services and on acceptance of democratic processes among citizens.

In addition, projects should contribute to at least one of the following expected outcomes:

1. Policymakers and public institutions have a better understanding of the link between efficient delivery of public services and pro-democratic sentiment, experiences, and outcome in low-income and low-middle income countries.

2. Civil society organisations, and other relevant/credible actors, working in the fields of development cooperation and promotion of human rights have better tools to promote democratic practices at local level in low-income and low-middle income countries.

Scope: Various regions of the world are witnessing democratic regression and a rollback of human rights, which is particularly evident in low- and middle-income countries. In addition to centrifugal forces that destabilise and weaken democratic regimes or regimes undergoing democratisation processes, there are actions of malign interference coming from countries that have interests in promoting non-democratic governance models and that challenge the international rules-based order and universal human rights. These trends also represent a risk to the security of European citizens and businesses, and a destabilisation factor in the countries and regions with which the EU maintains diplomatic and economic relations, giving rise to phenomena such as conflict and regional insecurity, increased displacement, decreasing women's and LGBTQ people rights, the influx of refugees, economic migration, worsening poverty and hindering sustainable development.

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https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

In recent years, the EU has developed and started to implement several strategies to promote and defend democracy and human rights in third countries: such as the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020 – 2027[14], which is in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, the aim of promoting human rights in developing countries is closely linked to the objectives of the Global Gateway.

In addition, the EU's cooperation instruments and strategies with low- and middle-income countries promote respect for human rights and the strengthening of democracy. Among those, the "Team Europe Democracy" (TED), with the thematic Team Europe Initiative (TEI) dedicated to promoting democracy and human rights worldwide, the "Territorial Approach to local Development" (TALD) with the corresponding TALD Facility, and the "Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument" (NDICI), which is part of the Global Europe, which aims at promoting human rights and democracy by funding initiatives that support democratic governance, the rule of law, and the protection of human rights worldwide. Moreover, the Global Gateway initiative promotes human rights and democracy by investing in infrastructural projects that emphasize good governance, the rule of law, and inclusive, transparent practices. In the context of this call "low- and middle-income countries" are understood as the low to middle income non-associated third countries in the list of participating countries according to the Horizon Europe rules for participation and proposal procedure[15].

Developing countries where there is a solid democratic practice at a local level, with elections and representative democracy at an administrative level lower than the national one (municipal, district, etc.), seem to be more resilient to phenomena that can be attributed to democratic backsliding (such as coup d'état, regression of the rule of law, etc.).

Therefore, proposals should gather robust evidence on how actors in economic, political, and social ecosystems at the local level could foster democratic practices, increase citizens' trust in governance and democratic institutions, improve transparency of decision making, and promote respect for human rights in low- and middle-income countries. In addition, proposals are encouraged to assess the trends and the risks for the EU and the Member States of the regression of democracy or the lack of respect for human rights and are encouraged to gather evidence on different forms of democratic participation and governance at local level.

In developing countries where central governments have irremediably lost control of territory (even large parts of it), the EU and Member States are left to cooperate with administrations at a lower level than the national one. In these cases, the relationship with the EU can be achieved through cooperative relationships with local administrations and local civil society partners. Proposals should investigate how EU and national public authorities can operate in these fragile contexts, where central governments do not have sound control of areas of the country and in which it is therefore necessary to relate to societal actors at a local level.

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[14]   https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2024/Action-Plan-EN_2020-2027.pdf
[15]   See: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_horizon-euratom_en.pdf

Moreover, proposals are encouraged to investigate the link between efficient public service delivery and pro-democratic sentiment, experiences, and outcomes in low- and middle-income countries (measured, for example, by civic participation, trust in institutions and in the central government). Proposals are encouraged to deliver a critical analysis of the evidence collected and identify good practices, conditions and methods for their transferability to other contexts.

Their proposed research activities should meaningfully involve a wide range of stakeholders and societal actors at local level (such as local authorities, economic and institutional actors, trade unions, traditional and faith leaders, indigenous people, minorities, and others), including non-scientific and non-academic actors from non-associated countries and international organisations. Proposals are encouraged to involve entities in low- and middle-income countries, to rely on their first-hand competences to steer the methodological approach and perform the data collection and analysis. Proposals are also encouraged to make use of participative methodologies and experimental methods.

There are several projects funded under EU programmes whose aim has been to promote democratic governance and the defence and promotion of human rights in developing countries. Proposals should seek cooperation with relevant ongoing projects and should indicate which additional projects they would collaborate with. Clustering and cooperation with other selected projects under this topic are encouraged.

Proposals considering performing research in the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region are encouraged to foster collaboration with entities in alignment with the New EU Agenda for EU-Latin America and the Caribbean Relations.

Where applicable, proposals should leverage the data and services available through European Research Infrastructures federated under the European Open Science Cloud, as well as data from relevant Data Spaces. Particular efforts should be made to ensure that the data produced in the context of this topic is FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable).

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-DEMOCRACY-03: Government in transition – how governments change the way they work and prepare the civil service for the future

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.50 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions

Eligibility conditions	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [16].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

1. Public authorities, and society at large, have enhanced knowledge (through, for instance, country government innovation info sheets, with resulting trends in EU Member States' governments and inspirational good practice cases on the next generation of governance models, tools, examples, and innovative practices in government administrations) for better future-informed public decision making.

2. Policy recommendations for European Union level and Member State level actions to adopt new approaches to governance and innovation in government administrations, and for better (technical and financial) support to EU governments in their internal innovation efforts and preparation for the future.

3. Delivery of a comprehensive and easily digestible e-learning programme (MOOC - massive online open course) for government officials on the subject with illustrative examples.

Governments (and any other relevant) actors across EU Member States initiate collaboration to leverage national capacities in innovative governance and maintain channels for peer learning, exchange of findings, and an open forum for elaboration of policy solutions and responses.

Scope: Governments find themselves juggling with several demanding tasks in these times of polycrisis where global risks and challenges are interconnected making their cumulative impacts overwhelming. They are working to modernise their capacities to deliver on complex public policy challenges in a fast-evolving, volatile context further complicated by compounding crises, fading trust in public institutions, growing polarisation, challenges to information integrity, and disengagement with traditional democratic processes. The

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[16] This decision is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

traditional ways of operation and strategic (multiannual) planning paradigm, with reactive decision making, are increasingly ineffective. In this context, governments increasingly recognise that they can no longer do without changing the ways they work, plan ahead and develop public policies. They must take more coordinated, agile, and proactive action, work with complete (eco)systems, engage with stakeholders intensively and get prepared for the future. They need to reinvent government and innovate in public administrations.

This investigation will focus on how government and governance changes today and what innovation efforts EU governments invest in. It will study major internal strategies and change processes in government administrations; what changes governments introduce in the ways they govern, do strategic planning, coordinate efforts across departments to develop better public policy outcomes, work with the civil service (organizational development), and build trust with citizens.

This research should also give voice to the civil service, examining how civil servants (in various roles, functions and levels of decision making, and considering their age groups, gender and level of experience and seniority) see the changing role of the state in the current social, economic and political context, how they see their own role, organisational context and work environment, how they cope under the current pressures, and what their visions, hopes and needs are for the future.

This investigation intends to shed light on the complex tasks governments are dealing with, their internal innovation efforts and change processes little known by the public, and to showcase the immense investment and good practices governments developed and are developing to deal with their core business in radically new ways. The three main focus areas to be covered are as follows (non-exhaustive list):

i. **New governance paradigm - new approaches and reforms of governance:** With fading trust in public institutions extensively documented, this research should explore the changing role of government as required by the times we are living and the expectation of citizens, and the actions governments take to do a good job today and prepare for tomorrow e.g. good governance in disruptive times; intentional and agile public leadership; coordinated strategic decision making (including long-term vision, priority setting, financial planning, human resource policy); open government approaches; sound financial management, integrity and the use of financial information for decision-making; democratic governance and participation; new trends in public employment management; working with the civil service (e.g. capacity building, organizational framework conditions conducive to innovation, supporting intrapreneurship, bridging the political and administrative spheres of government), etc.

ii. **Innovative approaches to public policy development:** Traditional policymaking practices are ineffective and do not deliver the expected solutions to wicked problems. Solving wicked problems requires innovative and multidisciplinary approaches that include e.g. working with complexity, engagement with stakeholders, including citizens, systems thinking, the interconnection of data systems, experimentation and working in iterations, and adopting an innovation portfolio approach (adaptive innovation,

enhancement- and mission-oriented innovation, anticipatory governance) to strategic planning.

iii. **From crisis management to anticipatory governance:** Beyond their day-to-day business, governments today need to innovate and adopt novel approaches through which they not only obtain knowledge on what might happen in the future (foresight) but also shape and prepare for it through innovation and anticipatory capabilities. Anticipatory governance is the broad-based capacity to actively explore possibilities, experiment, and continuously learn as part of a broader governance system that requires systematically embedding and applying strategic foresight throughout the entire governance ecosystem, including policy analysis, stakeholder engagement, experimentation, future literacy and planning, that together underpin government decision making. Projects will explore government strategies from strategic foresight through crisis preparedness to anticipatory governance, related ecosystem building, capability development, including future literacy and preparing the civil service for the future. They will shed light on how these strategies are embedded in existing strategic planning processes (budget, human resources, data collection and monitoring) and how governments adopt a long-term view across political cycles and balancing neutral scientific advice with diverse stakeholder interests as a result.

Governments take various paths that best suit their ambition, vision, leveraging power and the characteristics of their national context. National governments in the European Union are the primary target for this investigation, but European regional and municipal governments as well as documented, highly inspirational good practice cases from the global context are of interest to learn from.

Thorough understanding of the existing work done (data, reports, case studies, networks) by the European institutions (e.g. Joint Research Centre of the European Commission), international organizations (such as the World Economic Forum, OECD, United Nations, Chandler Institute of Governance, etc.) and schools of governance, national governments and innovation agencies in European Union Member States, needs to be built on and complemented by large-scale (quantitative and qualitative) primary data collection and analysis through e.g. surveying, in-depth interviews, participatory exercises, strategic reflection workshops, etc. through intensive engagement with the relevant stakeholders. Beyond desk research, the collection and analysis of the primary data will need to be elaborated and justified in the proposal. The research teams are expected to engage with senior officials in national governments, at European level and international organizations (as relevant), and will need to reach deep into the body of national civil services, therefore, access to key people and information in government administrations (and in national schools of governance for investigating the future generation of civil servants) will need to be demonstrated in the proposal (as in consortium partners, demonstrated experience, solid methodology, etc.) as one of the key factors for the successful delivery of the work.

Inspirational good practice cases and powerful stories from national governments should provide valuable learning, and the selected projects should build a body of knowledge for

communication purposes (various channels e.g. policy briefs, publications, text and audio-video content on social media platforms, etc.) throughout the project and for learning in the form of government innovation info sheets and the MOOC for government officials. Active communication, outreach activities and learning opportunities will support building a more nuanced public image of the enormity of the task governments handle today.

The investigation should also assess the current landscape of technical and financial support made available for and used by governments in the European Union - as well as good examples from governments and international organizations outside the European Union - to reform and modernize their institutions and the civil service in order to identify radically new and more impactful ways of supporting governments' internal innovation efforts.

Proposals should be complementary to other EU funded projects, particularly those under HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-09: The role and functioning of public administrations in democratic systems, and to the work of the OECD Observatory of Public Sector Innovation, and are encouraged to seek cooperation with them as relevant.

The projects selected for funding are encouraged to collaborate with the JRC to seek synergies with its work on place-based transformative innovation and the changing roles of public and private actors at different governance levels.

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-DEMOCRACY-04: Sustainable paths to media viability

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.50 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:
	Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [17].

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[17]   This decision is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link:

<u>Expected Outcome</u>: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Reinforced digital transformation of the audio-visual and news media industry by facilitating the development of new business models, contributing to a more resilient democratic institutional framework.

- Citizens are empowered and better equipped to make informed decisions, and news media's role as contributor to a healthy and reinvigorated democracy is enhanced.

<u>Scope</u>: Democracies are at risk when reliable and independent journalism is at risk. Yet, in order to be truly independent, media need sustainable financing models. At present, journalistic newsrooms are under severe economic pressure. Social media forces them to compete for citizens' attention with other forms of infotainment, which sometimes entail unverified opinions and low-quality or malicious sources. To restore a well-informed democratic debate, citizens must be able to distinguish quality journalism abiding by professional standards, from opinion pieces and other forms of content. The debate around free speech should be addressed with a solution-driven approach: free speech can co-exist with systems that enhance verified information and empower citizens to recognize it.

To compete in the digital age, European media need to embrace innovation. The Commission's 2023 European Media industry outlook signalled that "an early adoption and usage of new technologies is key to adapt and open new markets". Thus, applicants are invited to enhance innovation across the news media sectors, in particular by involving news media organisations in their application and designing industrial and user-driven applications, on areas and aspects such as:

a) development and take up of transparent news-oriented algorithms, recommender systems that show multiple views and prioritise quality information;

b) usages of AI that can help media build innovative forms of revenues through dynamic paywalls, advertising, and copyright revenues;

d) initiatives to federate media industries along a joint innovation agenda;

e) development of truly pan-European platforms developing content and standards;

e) user-centric strategies and user engagement around professional media through digital tools, new standards and marketing.

Innovation projects should focus on concrete ways where journalistic sources can serve democracy by addressing aspects such as:

- ensuring that journalistic sources remain economically viable in an AI-intermediated information space;

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https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- ensuring that journalistic sources retain relevance and prominence in AI-driven search tools;

- making sure that citizens are confronted with multiple views online to make well-informed decisions;

- development and integration of journalistic trust indicators in recommender systems, browsers and/or European news aggregators;

- take-up of recommender systems that prioritise trusted sources and professional journalism;

- development of more lucrative digital advertising models through proprietary systems that offer brand safety and detailed feedback to advertisers through joint metadata and audience measurement tools;

- development of EU-level business case studies and impact on creation of advertising revenues, subscription revenues;

- development and adoption of prototypes for recommender systems, paywalls, advertising systems or other revenue-generating systems that can strengthen the economic viability of journalism.

Apart from the involvement of news media organisations and industry, the participation in the consortia of research and academic actors from relevant disciplines, such as information science and media studies, is strongly encouraged.

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-DEMOCRACY-05: Research and Innovation Network for a Union of Equality

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 4.00 and 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Coordination and Support Actions
Procedure	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: The granting authority can fund a maximum of one project.
Legal and financial	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions

set-up of the Grant Agreements	apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [18].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Policymakers are equipped with the knowledge and tools to integrate inclusive and intersectional perspectives into their policymaking, which strengthens their capacity to promote and protect democracy, fundamental rights, and EU values.

- Researchers gain insights on how to translate their findings on intersectional inequalities and democracy into actionable, evidence-based recommendations, enabling them to effectively inform policy and practice at local, regional, national, and EU levels.

- Innovative solutions developed under Horizon Europe and other innovations empower citizens across diverse demographics, including marginalised and vulnerable groups, to participate in democratic processes and decision-making, fostering a more inclusive, participatory, and democratic Europe.

Scope: This call topic aims to establish a Union of Equality in Research and Innovation Network. The proposed network should bring together a consortium of academic institutions, public bodies, civil society organisations, private sector stakeholders, and policymakers to collaborate and promote the advancement of inclusive, equal, and resilient democratic societies.

The proposed network should contribute to the development of a comprehensive and inclusive approach to democracy, fostering a culture of participation and inclusivity, and promoting the values of equality, justice, and human rights. More precisely, it should support the EU's commitment to a Union of equality by developing and implementing gender-inclusive and intersectional strategies to combat disinformation, reduce societal polarisation, and re-engage citizens in democratic practices. These efforts could also promote critical thinking, media literacy, and active civic participation across diverse populations, including youth, minorities, and vulnerable groups.

The proposals should provide policymakers with a dedicated platform to access evidence-based recommendations and innovative solutions to strengthen democratic practices and address challenges to democracy and inclusive societies. The network could leverage

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[18]   This decision is available on the Funding Wand Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

foresight to anticipate emerging challenges while integrating past lessons to inform effective policy responses.

This platform should be supported by a comprehensive repository that offers innovative tools, data, and methodologies to address intersectional inequalities, as well as information on funding options, knowledge sharing, and joint project opportunities related to inclusive democracy, gender equality, and intersectionality.

The proposed network should aim at raising awareness, building capacities, and empowering citizens, particularly underrepresented and vulnerable groups, to engage in decision-making. Key activities could include the design and implementation of training programmes and mentoring schemes to empower youth, girls, and underrepresented groups to participate fully in democratic processes and decision-making structures.

The proposed network should facilitate collaboration between researchers, civil society, private sector partners, and policymakers to address intersectional inequalities and democracy. As part of this effort, the network should investigate ways to ensure and support the translation of research findings into actionable, evidence-based proposals, and to enable the development of practical and effective recommendations that drive positive change. Living labs and innovation hubs could be used to provide a collaborative environment for stakeholders to co-create and test solutions. To foster collaboration and drive progress, the network should host a bi-annual forum with thematic focus, providing a platform for stakeholders to share innovative ideas, receive feedback, and learn from one another.

Its work should also be informed by close contact with elected representatives at local, regional, national and EU levels.

The proposals should also explore how to establish a safe and enabling research environment, protecting researchers from backlash, hate speech and harassment, and promoting academic freedom and integrity in researching on democracy, inclusive societies, and intersectionality.

The network's actions should contribute to ensuring that the results and innovations generated by Horizon Europe projects related to inclusiveness in the public space, democracy, and governance are taken up and made available to relevant stakeholders. It could particularly build on past and on-going EU-funded projects, such as projects under the calls HORIZON-CL2-2021-DEMOCRACY-01-03, HORIZON-CL2-2022-TRANSFORMATIONS-01-05; HORIZON-CL2-2022-TRANSFORMATIONS-01-08 and HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-05.

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-DEMOCRACY-06: Governing global goods and commons sustainably

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR

contribution per project	3.50 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Procedure	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: To ensure a balanced portfolio, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking but at least also to one project within the area A that is the highest ranked, one project highest ranked within the area B, and one project highest ranked within the area C, provided that the corresponding applications attain all thresholds. Proposals shall clearly indicate the thematic area they have selected to work on.
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [19].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to at least one of the following expected outcomes:

- EU institutions and national decision-makers, relevant international organisations, civil society organisations and other societal actors have a better understanding of the systemic challenges in managing global goods and commons sustainably, and the relevant drivers.

- EU institutions and national decision-makers, relevant international organisations, as well as academies, higher education institutions and research-performing organisations are equipped with the tools needed to improve the science-policy interface in the area of foreign and security policies in general, and multilateral / national science advisory bodies in the foreign policy domain in particular.

- Rules-based multilateralism is strengthened by the development of concepts, methods, processes, and institutional frameworks that foster the sustainable governance of global

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[19] This decision is available on the Funding Wond Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

goods and commons within the current geopolitical context, thereby informing also the EU's science diplomacy actions.

Scope: Global goods and commons are not managed by any nation alone, thereby requiring a global effort to manage them sustainably, while preserving them for future generations. Science itself is a driver of pressures through technological innovation, while also playing a key role as a provider of solutions, including by facilitating a deeper understanding of the issues at stake. In addition, spaces beyond national jurisdiction to a large extent have *de facto* been governed by science in the past.

The current geopolitical environment, characterised by a crisis of multilateralism and increased competition and fragmentation between nations, combined with technological accessibility, a rise of non-state actors seeking commercial advantage, and a decreasing lack of trust in science by the public and some governments, has substantially increased pressures on global goods and commons, while complicating the quest of coming to commonly agreed solutions for their governance. Additional pressures stem from the effects of global warming (e.g., thawing of the Arctic and Antarctic), making spaces beyond national jurisdiction more accessible and their exploitation economically viable.

Some instruments that served well in the past, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), require reform to be effective under these new conditions, while others, such as the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement), adopted in 2023, require research accompanying their implementation.

Proposals are expected to address only one of the following thematic areas:

Area A: Climate governance

Area B: Biodiversity governance

Area C: Governance of spaces beyond national jurisdiction

In area A, projects should review the lessons from past global climate governance efforts, including the relevant players (e.g., United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and related Conferences of the Parties, IPCC, etc.), and develop options for future climate governance in the current geopolitical context with a particular focus on Europe's role. This should include concrete proposals for enhancing the IPCC and related processes.

In area B, projects should review the lessons from past global biodiversity governance efforts, including the relevant players (e.g., Convention on Biological Diversity and related Conferences of the Parties (CBD COP), Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), etc.), and develop options for future biodiversity governance in the current geopolitical context with a particular focus on Europe's role. This should include concrete proposals for enhancing the IPBES and related processes.

In area C, projects should provide a cross-cutting assessment of how different types of spaces beyond national jurisdiction have been governed so far, notably oceans, polar regions, outer space including the Moon, Low Earth Orbit, and dark and quiet skies, as well as cyberspace including the use of the radio spectrum. This should include a comparative review of the legal frameworks (e.g., Antarctic Treaty, UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, Outer Space Treaty, Internet Protocols, etc.). Projects should study current pressures on these spaces, with specific emphasis on the role of non-state actors and develop potential approaches to governing these spaces sustainably in the future, despite current geopolitical fragmentation.

Results of the projects are deemed to inform future science diplomacy action of the EU. Therefore, it is important to involve relevant stakeholders, such as diplomats, from the outset. Projects are also expected to involve international partners, including international organisations, as appropriate.

Projects are expected to look at the thematic area of their choice from an interdisciplinary perspective, including natural sciences, engineering, political sciences, economic sciences, law, ethics, and other disciplines. Cooperation between the selected projects is strongly encouraged to identify synergies.

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-DEMOCRACY-07: Supporting post-conflict democracy and reconstruction

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.50 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Eligibility conditions	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: Some activities, resulting from this topic, may involve using classified background and/or producing of security sensitive results (EUCI and SEN). Please refer to the related provisions in section B Security — EU classified and sensitive information of the General Annexes.
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions

	under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [20].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- EU and national policymakers develop and implement effective strategies for sustainable peace and democratic reconstruction in post-conflict zones, promoting stability, inclusivity, equity, security, and human rights.

- EU and national policymakers inform their decision-making with evidence-based recommendations on international cooperation, EU democracy support, and civil society engagement in post-conflict reconstruction, leading to more effective, inclusive and sustainable reconstruction efforts.

- Local civil society organisations and community groups, with a focus on the most vulnerable in post-conflict countries provide guidance and support to educators, public administrators, and other stakeholders on promoting reconciliation, accountability, and sustainable peace.

- Specialised service providers, including NGOs and community organisations, offer support services and programmes to veterans and the most vulnerable affected by the conflict reintegrating into democratic societies, addressing their socio-economic and psychological needs and promoting successful reintegration into civilian life.

Scope: The aftermath of conflict poses significant challenges for rebuilding democratic institutions, promoting social dialogue, and achieving sustainable peace. In post-conflict zones, including Ukraine, the destruction of infrastructure, institutions, and social fabric can lead to prolonged instability, increased inequalities, human suffering, and a decline in democratic governance. To address these challenges, this research aims to investigate the complex relationships between post-conflict reconstruction, democracy, inequality and international cooperation.

The proposals should examine the economic, social, and institutional factors that influence post-conflict rebuilding efforts, with a particular emphasis on assessing the impact of EU support, civil society engagement, and international cooperation on sustainable peace and democratic governance.

Also, the proposals are encouraged to explore new approaches to post-conflict reconstruction, including the role of informal institutions, social norms, and local actors, as well as innovative

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[20]   This decision is available on the Funding Wond Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

methods such as participatory governance, inclusive economic development, and community-led reconstruction, to promote sustainable peace and democratic reconstruction.

The aim of this research is to promote reconciliation, accountability, and social dialogue in post-conflict zones, analyse the causes and consequences of conflicts, and examine the role of historical narratives in shaping international relations. This will inform the development of prevention, resolution, and reconciliation strategies, and involve gathering evidence on ethnic violence, inequalities, historical narratives, conflict legacies, and other factors to prevent and resolve potential conflicts.

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-DEMOCRACY-08: Electoral integrity in the digital context

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.50 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [21].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- EU and national policymakers possess the necessary intelligence to inform the development of election regulations and standards that address the use of AI and other digital tools in elections, and political campaigns, ensuring their fairness, transparency, and security.

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[21] This decision is available on the Funding Wand Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- Organisations involved in election processes develop and implement guidelines for the responsible use of AI in elections and political campaigns, aligned with EU and national regulations.

- Enhanced transparency and accountability in AI-powered political campaigns, achieved through requirements for AI system audits, data disclosure, transparency regarding algorithms, and responsible AI development.

Scope: The integrity of European elections is facing unprecedented challenges in the digital age. Concerns about external interference, exemplified by Russia's activities, have underscored the need for robust measures to safeguard the electoral process, including enhancing cybersecurity and voter verification to prevent electoral manipulation. Moreover, the increasing use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by political actors has raised important questions about its impact on opinion formation, trust, and polarization. As AI-generated content becomes increasingly sophisticated, the risk of disinformation and manipulation grows, threatening to erode the foundations of democratic decision-making.

The digital transformation of democratic processes has created new avenues for citizen engagement, but it also poses significant risks to the integrity of information and the electoral and other political processes. Social media platforms, in particular, have become critical battlegrounds in the fight for public opinion, with AI-powered tools being used to spread disinformation, manipulate public discourse, and influence voter behaviour.

To address these challenges, it is essential to examine the effects of digital technologies on public opinion and governance, and investigate the development of ethical AI, transparent political advertising, and tools to counter misinformation and disinformation. This includes exploring the potential of digital technologies to transform democratic processes and examining the implications of digital democracy for democratic institutions and outcomes.

The EU institutions have been actively engaged in addressing the key challenges for election integrity, including the spread of disinformation, online platform accountability, and the protection of democratic processes. Proposals should take into account the ongoing political and strategic initiatives, notably the recently announced Digital Services Act (DSA) election guidelines[22] and the Rapid Response System[23].

The ultimate goal is to create a robust and resilient electoral system that can withstand the challenges of the digital age, ensure the safety and integrity of electoral processes, and promote transparent and accountable elections. This requires investigating the risks of cyberattacks and foreign interference on electoral processes, developing strategies to enhance voting system security, and promoting election transparency. This also involves examining the safety of electoral processes, protecting the integrity of elections, and maintaining public trust in the democratic process, with a particular focus on ensuring the safety and security of political candidates, especially women, from violence, intimidation, and harassment.

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[22]   https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_1707
[23]   https://disinfocode.eu/eu-elections-2024/

To collect sound evidence and develop intelligence, projects are encouraged to collaborate with other initiatives under the Horizon Europe programme and complementary funding schemes, such as Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV) and the Digital Europe Programme, to enhance AI literacy among stakeholders and leverage AI-powered fact-checking solutions.

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-DEMOCRACY-09: Lifelong learning of citizenship education and citizen participation

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.50 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [24].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Policymakers have tools and recommendations to put in place opportunities for adult education and lifelong learning in matters of democracy, democratic participation in public policy-making, and media literacy, and critical thinking including media education.

- Policymakers at local, national and regional level have tools and recommendations for ensuring the civic participation of citizens for whom digital tools are a barrier to participation.

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[24]   This decision is available on the Funding Wand Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

Scope: A healthy democracy relies on citizens being able to make informed democratic choices, in free and fair elections. Meaningful and inclusive citizens' participation and engagement can further complement and reinforce representative democracies. Education plays a major role in supporting appetite for democratic participation and citizen engagement. Education in matters of democracy and participation in public-policy making is a lifelong process that concerns all age groups in society.

Taking into account that the EU has an increasingly ageing population[25], education and lifelong learning about democratic processes, civic rights and obligations is crucial. It is a long process that concerns not only young people but also older ones. A healthy democracy relies on meaningful, inclusive engagement from citizens across all ages and demographic groups on a continuous basis. It is important to sustain lifelong learning of citizenship education, as technological, geopolitical and economic changes pose new challenges to democratic knowledge and participation of citizens.

The focus of this topic is on how adult education and political awareness can boost democratic involvement and civic engagement. Research should look at how adult learning programmes raise civic knowledge, political awareness, and attachment to democratic values, and how involvement in these programs is linked to increased civic actions like voting or standing as a candidate in elections, engaging in public policy-making processes, or broader democratic participation such as volunteering or engaging with civil society organisations. Research could also explore how adult learning programmes could support citizens in making the most out of the rapidly changing democratic information ecosystem but also be prepared to recognise and address its challenges. Research on curriculum effectiveness should look at both formal adult education and non-formal learning offered by civil society or national agencies.

Research should test and pilot innovative methods and curricula.

Research under this topic should identify and examine opportunities for adult civic and citizenship education and make recommendations for best practices. Projects should test and pilot democratic innovations to increase lifelong participation.

Research should also examine digital literacy, media education, and critical thinking in the context of lifelong learning in order to form and develop media and other competence of citizens, and make recommendations for best practices in this area. It should examine the participation of an ageing population for which digital tools are a barrier, and propose recommendations for solutions to their participation.

Proposals should seek complementarities with the European Partnership on Social Transformations and Resilience.

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[25] More than one-fifth (21.6%) of the EU's population aged older than 65 years, and the median age has increased between 2014 and 2024 in nearly all EU Member States.

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-DEMOCRACY-10: **Democratic** **resilience** **and** **civic** **preparedness**

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.50 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Procedure	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:
	To ensure a balanced portfolio, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking but at least also to those two projects within the area A that are the highest ranked, and those two projects within the area B that are the highest ranked, provided that the proposals attain all thresholds. Proposals shall clearly indicate the area they have selected to work on.
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:
	Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [26].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- EU institutions and national decision-makers, have a better understanding of how to foster democratic resilience in view of preparing for and managing crisis situations.

- Education bodies and civil society organisations have access to innovative methods for improving civic preparedness for crisis.

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[26] This decision is available on the Funding Wand Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

Scope: As recalled by the "Safer together" report[27], "over the past years, the Commission has already taken steps to counter hybrid threats and enhance democratic resilience across the EU. It adopted the European Democracy Action Plan[28] to build more resilient democracies across the EU by promoting free and fair elections, strengthening media freedom and countering disinformation. With the adoption of the Digital Services Act[29] and its binding obligations for online platforms to combat the spread of disinformation, the Commission also strengthened the Code of Practice on Disinformation. Moreover, the launch of the European Digital Media Observatory and its national hubs increased the capacity to detect, analyse and expose disinformation campaigns."[30]

The upcoming Preparedness Union Strategy underlines how preparedness is a collective responsibility. It also points at the need to make our democracies more resilient, in particular in view of strengthening trust in institutions, which can be crucial in crisis situations as for instance seen during the COVID pandemic. Public authorities, schools, universities and training institutions, youth initiatives, civil society organisations and associations, social partners, businesses, local networks and communities, and citizens from an early age, all play a vital role in such collective endeavour.

Vulnerable groups in particular, such as children, senior citizens and people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, those suffering poverty and/or social exclusion, are disproportionately affected by crises, often exacerbating pre-existing disadvantages and inequalities. Disinformation is particularly harmful as it undermines public confidence and can exacerbate the impact of crises.

Engaged, informed and empowered citizens are the best guarantee for the resilience of our democracies.

Against this background, proposals are expected to address only one of the following areas:

Area A: Media literacy, digital literacy and informed critical thinking

Area B: Education for crisis preparedness

- In area A, the proposed research should explore the complex and dynamic patterns of user behaviours in the digital age, investigating how individuals seek, evaluate, and engage with information online, and offline. It should also examine the factors that influence digital literacy, information-seeking habits, and online engagement, with a focus on improving (digital) citizenship and informed decision-making. At a time when disinformation is used for sowing discord by exploiting the fears of citizens, it is crucial to ensure that democratic decisions are informed by the most reliable and widely accepted facts and sources of information available. Research should also explore the critical role media and digital literacy can play in fostering societal resilience, by

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[27]   https://commission.europa.eu/topics/defence/safer-together-path-towards-fully-prepared-union_en
[28]   https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_2250
[29]   https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/digital-services-act_en
[30]   https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/european-digital-media-observatory

allowing citizens to navigate and resist misinformation, disinformation and propaganda. The proposed research should plan a critical assessment of media and digital literacy initiatives in countering them to assess whether existing efforts are enhancing citizens' resilience, or whether new approaches are needed to more effectively equip citizens against evolving manipulation tactics? Research should identify strategies to improve media literacy and digital literacy, in order to enhance critical thinking, promote fact-based decision-making, and counter the negative impacts of disinformation on democratic societies.

- In area B, research should address the insufficient knowledge available on the intersection between crisis preparedness and citizenship education (how crisis-related education can empower students and communities to navigate both immediate and long-term societal disruptions). Research should also address the scarcity of cross-national comparative analyses on crisis preparedness in schools (little is known about how different regions, with varying risks of security threats or natural disasters, approach preparedness in education, which limits the transferability of lessons and best practices).

Policymakers, education and training institutions, and educators will develop a deeper understanding of how schools can serve as community hubs for resilience during crises by concentrating on facility preparedness, comprehensive emergency planning, and effective collaboration with local authorities and civil society organisations.

Policymakers, education and training institutions, and educators will receive tailored recommendations to strengthen the readiness of education systems for potential disruptions. By prioritizing inclusive and equitable access to safe learning environments, the recommendations should aim to enhance emergency response strategies and provide guidance on physical and socio-emotional protection, while ensuring continuity of learning during emergencies. The recommendations should cover preparedness initiatives prior to a crisis, strategies for effective response during emergencies, and continued support in the initial phases of recovery.

Policymakers, education and training institutions, and educators will receive recommendations, guidelines and tools on how to integrate preparedness elements into school curricula and extracurricular activities.

Research will examine how preparedness elements are integrated into school curricula and extracurricular activities across EU Member States. In this respect, the analysis will focus on key areas such as emergency procedures, basic medical training, and disaster awareness. It will also focus on risk assessment provisions, including the development of personal safety plans, and enhancing communication skills through technology and digital tools for effective information access and communication during emergencies. Additionally, research will explore fostering analytical skills for making informed decisions under pressure, building emotional resilience, and providing support resources for managing stress and anxiety during and after crises, with techniques for maintaining mental well-being. Furthermore, the research will emphasize promoting community preparedness involvement, such as participation in local emergency response efforts, as well as enhancing environmental awareness.

HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-DEMOCRACY-01: **Advisory support and network for countering and preventing radicalisation, extremism, hate speech and polarisation**

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society - 2027	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 3.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Coordination and Support Actions
Procedure	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: The granting authority can fund a maximum of one project.
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [31].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Political, societal, educational stakeholders, and researchers have improved understanding of theoretical models and provided pathways for implementing solutions to combat extremism, radicalisation, and polarisation, drawing from Horizon 2020 projects.

- Increased willingness among stakeholders, including public bodies and NGOs, to implement and adapt solutions to counter radicalisation, extremism, and polarisation in their respective contexts.

- EU institutions, national policy-makers and judicial bodies can draw on an enhanced evidence-base for their decision-making through scientific, political, and legal

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[31]   This decision is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

assessments of research results in real-life contexts, enabling replication of methods, legislative changes, and innovation.

- Improved understanding of methodologies to combat online hate ecosystems and the role of traditional media in shaping public opinion, including the correlation between media consumption and polarisation, to inform strategies for protecting victims and addressing hate crimes and speech.

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Scope: The European Union has been actively working to combat racism, xenophobia, hate speech, and extremism in recent years, developing and implementing various strategies to address these issues. Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe have also played a crucial role in funding projects that aim to develop research and collect evidence on how to counter and prevent radicalisation, polarisation, and extremism. These phenomena pose significant risks, as they can undermine trust in democratic institutions, weaken the social contract, and contribute to rising inequalities and instability.

Despite these efforts, the complexities of online hate ecosystems and the role of traditional media in shaping public opinion remain significant challenges. The spread of hate speech and extremist ideologies online has become a major concern, and the need for effective solutions to address these issues is pressing. Moreover, the polarisation of society and the erosion of trust in institutions pose a threat to social cohesion and democratic values.

To address these challenges, it is essential to build on the knowledge and evidence generated by previous research and innovation projects. This requires also collaboration with end-users, such as civil society organisations and practitioners, who can provide valuable insights and help develop solutions that are tailored to their specific needs and contexts.

Proposals should build on past EU-funded projects and seek cooperation with on-going ones as well as plan to exploit potential complementarities with project(s) funded under HORIZON-CL2-2022-DEMOCRACY-01-05: Evolution of political extremism and its influence on contemporary social and political dialogue; HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-01: Protest politics and cultures of opposition in democracy; HORIZON-CL3-2022-FCT-01-03: Enhanced fight against the abuse of online gaming culture by extremists; HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01-05: Gender-roles in extremist movements and their impact on democracy, HORIZON-CL3-2024-FCT-01-04: Radicalisation and gender; HORIZON-CL3-2024-FCT-01-05: Combating hate speech online and offline; HORIZON-CL2-2025-01-DEMOCRACY-05: Countering and preventing radicalisation, extremism, hate speech and polarisation; HORIZON-CL2-2025-01-DEMOCRACY-06: Towards a European research hub on contemporary antisemitism and Jewish life and culture. Proposals must indicate which additional Horizon Europe projects they would build on, should they go beyond those funded under the mentioned topics.

The EU Knowledge Hub on Prevention of Radicalisation [32] (previously Radicalisation Awareness Network) has been working to bring together experts and practitioners to share knowledge and best practices, and their research should be considered when developing initiatives to upscale and exploit solutions to combat extremism and radicalisation.

HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-DEMOCRACY-02: Women's, LGBTIQ and minority rights in a context of autocracy, conflict and geopolitical shifts

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society - 2027	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.50 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [33].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Policymakers, public administration, human rights organisations, and civil society actors have strengthened mechanisms to protect women, LGBTIQ people, and minorities in contexts of autocracy, conflict, and geopolitical instability, ensuring more effective legal and policy responses.

- Researchers and data collection bodies have developed robust methodologies to systematically document and analyse the impact of democratic backsliding, conflict, and geopolitical shifts on the rights of women, LGBTIQ people, and minorities, improving data availability and comparability across regions.

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[32]   https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/eu-knowledge-hub-prevention-radicalisation_en
[33]   This decision is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- Improved understanding of intersectional vulnerabilities by mapping and analysing the compounded effects of conflict, crises, forced displacement, geopolitical change and authoritarian governance on these groups, including access to rights, services, and political participation.

- Policymakers have access to evidence-based policy recommendations that strengthen legal and institutional frameworks safeguarding fundamental rights, advance gender justice, address gender-based violence, and integrate intersectional considerations into foreign policy, human rights, and migration policies.

Civil society organisations and grassroots movements have enhanced their resilience and advocacy strategies, identifying best practices and innovative approaches to counter repression, expand civic space, and promote inclusive governance, even in authoritarian or conflict settings.

Scope: Autocratic regimes, armed conflicts, and global geopolitical shifts pose significant threats to fundamental rights, particularly for women, LGBTIQ people, and ethnic, religious, and other minority groups. These challenges manifest in the rollback of legal protections, increased political violence, shrinking civic space, and targeted discrimination, both offline and online. In this context, a deeper understanding of these dynamics is essential to assess how different groups are disproportionately affected by democratic backsliding, armed conflict, and forced displacement, and to develop more effective responses to these challenges.

Research should examine the intersection of gender, sex, sexual orientation, and minority status in contexts of democratic erosion, authoritarian governance, and geopolitical crises. This includes analysing how legal and institutional frameworks are weaponised to restrict rights, the role of civil society in resisting repression, and the impact of digital surveillance and online disinformation on these communities.

Particular attention should be given to the restricted access to sexual and reproductive health rights during crises, armed conflicts, and geopolitical shifts, as well as the prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV). In such contexts, GBV is frequently used as a coercive tactic, reinforcing discrimination and reversing progress on gender equality. Hate-motivated violence becomes even more complex when directed at women and groups in vulnerable situations, such as minorities, refugees and forcibly displaced persons, further limiting their access to humanitarian assistance and undermining their fundamental rights. There is a critical need for research to assess and develop advanced prevention and response strategies for public administration, law enforcement, and military bodies to combat GBV effectively in crisis situations.

Projects should adopt a comparative and interdisciplinary approach to document the impact of crisis and conflicts on gender equality and equal rights, drawing from political science, economics, sociology, law, psychology, gender and human rights studies. A strong data-driven approach should be integrated, for instance including:

- Mapping and measuring the compounded effects of conflict, forced displacement, and democratic backsliding on access to rights, services, and political participation.

- Developing new methodologies and indicators to assess the impact of shrinking civic space and legal rollbacks on gender and minority rights.

- Creating data-driven tools or policy dashboards to monitor the evolving risks faced by women, LGBTIQ people, and minority groups in authoritarian and post-conflict settings.

Proposal should assess how international and European actors can effectively counter these trends through diplomatic efforts, development cooperation, and targeted support for civil society, thus contributing to strategies that strengthen democracy, the rule of law, gender equality, and fundamental rights in an emerging global order shaped by geopolitical tensions and security challenges Findings should directly inform European and international policy priorities on civic and military security, preparedness, and democratic resilience. Engaging with policymakers, human rights organisations, and affected communities is essential.

Proposals should include case studies covering different geopolitical regions, particularly those experiencing geopolitical shift and democratic backsliding, post-conflict transitions, or intensifying autocratic rule. An intersectional perspective should be systematically integrated throughout the research.

Where applicable, proposals should leverage the data and services available through European Research Infrastructures federated under the European Open Science Cloud, as well as data from relevant Data Spaces. Particular efforts should be made to ensure that the data produced in the context of this topic is FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable).

HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-DEMOCRACY-03: Student and parental engagement for developing a culture of democratic/civic participation

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society - 2027	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.50 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions

	under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [34].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Policymakers, education and training institutions, and educators will be provided with an evidence base, toolkits, and recommendations on types of collaboration mechanism with parents/caregivers that are most effective in supporting schools' efforts to provide citizenship education.

- Policymakers, education and training institutions, and educators will have a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of student councils and other student participatory mechanisms on influencing school decision-making and on student civic engagement.

- Policymakers, education and training institutions, and educators will have a deeper understanding of the impact of parental involvement on citizenship education in schools.

Scope: Research should examine schools as a locus for practicing participation and developing innovative participatory practices.

Research should examine student and parental engagement for a democratic school culture. It should consider schools as social places for intergenerational dialogue.

Research should examine the role of socio-emotional learning in tackling sensitive topics in the classroom and in fostering civic agency development among learners. Research could explore the emotions that drive civic engagement and investigate strategies to help students emotionally cope with frustrations when their civic engagement efforts do not unfold as expected.

Research should examine the active role of families in building children's civic identity. Parents/caregivers are key in child's informal learning, shaping their interests, values, and world-views; parental involvement in school citizenship education might vary in more diverse communities, depending on parents cultural, migrant or socio-economic backgrounds; some parents/caregivers may not appreciate the importance of teaching about social issues, democracy, or civic participation or may feel excluded or disconnected from schools' efforts to provide civic and citizenship education. Research should examine how citizenship education is reinforced or challenged outside the classroom, especially with growing polarization and diversity of our societies. The research should provide recommendations of how to effectively engage parents from diverse backgrounds in their children's citizenship education.

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[34] This decision is available on the Funding Wond Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

Research should examine parental and students' views on the content of citizenship education, and examine the role of curriculum design in promoting inclusive civic engagement among students from diverse backgrounds. Research should aim to identify the types of collaboration that not only bolster students' citizenship competence but also ensure inclusivity in their engagement.

The research should investigate the effectiveness of student councils and other participatory mechanisms in providing meaningful opportunities for student influence. It should address the lack of formal monitoring and evaluation of these participatory mechanisms.

Research should include pilots and living labs, developing innovative participation practices in schools, where students learn to recognise and exercise their citizenship rights and obligations, strengthen the value of democracy, and build their identity as active citizens. Projects should collaborate with schools and education authorities in the development and running of these pilots and living labs.

HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-DEMOCRACY-04: Addressing the impact of artificial intelligence, cyberviolence, and deepfakes on equality, democracy and inclusive societies

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society - 2027	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.50 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [35].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

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[35]   This decision is available on the Funding Wand Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- Enhanced understanding of the impact of AI-driven technologies, including AI-generated deepfakes and automated content generation on equality, political participation, democratic processes, public trust, and social cohesion, with evidence-based insights into their role in mitigating or exacerbating disparities.

- Uptake of evidence-based policy frameworks for responsible and transparent AI governance, integrating ethical, legal, and societal considerations to safeguard fundamental rights, mitigate risks of disinformation, and ensure fair AI deployment.

- Increased public awareness and media literacy to empower citizens to identify and critically assess disinformation, deepfakes, and online harms.

- Strengthened capacity of academic institutions to conduct societally relevant AI research and drive the development of inclusive AI models, enabled by enhanced access to computational resources, funding, and academia-industry collaboration.

Scope: The rapid development and deployment of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, alongside rising cyberviolence and deepfakes, profoundly impacts democracy, equality, and social inclusion. These technologies reshape governance, public discourse, political and civil engagement, economic systems, and public services, yet their benefits and risks are unequally distributed. While AI can offer numerous benefits, its misuse can amplify inequalities and power imbalances, facilitate the spread of harmful misinformation and gender-based cyberviolence, concentrating control over data, and undermine democratic processes.

AI's role in misinformation, media influence, and public trust demands urgent attention. The rise of AI-generated content, including deepfakes, threatens democratic processes and epistemic rights. Proposals should explore how AI-driven technologies either exacerbate or address socio-economic inequalities and discriminations based on sex, gender, sexual orientation, racial or ethnic background, religion or belief, age, and disability, particularly in access to information, decision-making, and representation. This includes a critical analysis of how data - often reflecting biases and systemic inequalities - can reinforce or challenge existing social structures, influencing the fairness and accountability of AI-driven outputs.

The research should also explore the risks these technologies pose to democratic integrity, particularly through the manipulation of public opinion, electoral processes, and governance systems. Deepfakes and AI-generated misinformation can distort reality, spread false narratives, and undermine public trust in political institutions and the media. Addressing these concerns requires a comprehensive understanding of how AI shapes political campaigns, media narratives, public engagement, and spread (gendered) disinformation.

Furthermore, cyberviolence, including online harassment, cyberbullying, threats, and gender-based violence, is exacerbated by AI-powered platforms through manipulated content like deepfakes, deepnudes and AI-driven sextortion. Research should identify how AI amplifies harm, particularly against women and minorities, and explore interventions to mitigate these risks.

Beyond democratic debate, AI increasingly shape public policy and judicial decisions. While its integration into these areas can offer efficiencies, concerns over bias and fairness persist. Proposals are encouraged to explore AI's influence on legal and policy outcomes, including unintended consequences.

Proposals should research on policy and regulatory solutions that can effectively address the challenges posed by these technologies. This includes developing frameworks that balance innovation with the protection of individual rights and democratic values. Proposals should identify best practices and regulatory measures that can ensure the ethical deployment of AI and related technologies, AI literacy while safeguarding equality and democratic integrity.

Policy and regulatory solutions should also account for AI's impact on youth. While AI is not specifically designed for minors, young people are among its most active users. Biases within AI-generated content, particularly those related to gender, sexual orientation, and ethnic and racial background, can shape young users' perceptions and mental well-being. Research should investigate how AI systems influence youth engagement and the potential psychological effects of exposure to biased or harmful content.

A key focus should be interdisciplinary research on AI's role in societal resilience, tackling misinformation, enhancing civic engagement, and supporting marginalised communities. Proposals should explore inclusive and innovative tools and methodologies for detecting and mitigating deepfakes, disinformation, and cyberviolence, which can be widely adopted and implemented by policymakers, technology companies, and media organisations.

A comprehensive assessment of unregulated AI-induced risks of sexual exploitation, violence, and gender-based harm- including sextortion - is largely missing for effective regulation, oversight, and prosecution. A multidisciplinary review is needed to evaluate AI-driven risks exposing children, women, and LGBTIQ individuals to such violence online and offline.

As addressing these multifaceted challenges requires expertise from a wide range of fields, proposals should integrate perspectives from disciplines such as computer science, ethics, law, political science, sociology, psychology, and gender studies.

This research will contribute to the EU's broader AI strategy, supporting the implementation of the Artificial Intelligence Act and aligning with the EU's Political Guidelines for 2024-2029. This research can also contribute to the implementation of other EU legislative frameworks, such as the Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence, that criminalises various cyberviolence offences, including deepfakes. It will also inform global discussions on ethical AI governance and responsible innovation.

HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-DEMOCRACY-05: Development aid and democratic governance

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society - 2027
Specific conditions

Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.50 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [36].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- EU and national policymakers have an improved understanding of the complexities and challenges in relations between the EU and low- and middle-income countries, and dispose of intelligence to develop EU strategies and policies that promote a more inclusive and equitable multilateralism.

- Organisations for development cooperation have enhanced capacity and solutions to support democratic institutions and processes, climate action, human rights, inequality reduction and sustainable development initiatives, leveraging their expertise and experience to promote sustainable development.

- Increased engagement and participation of in the field of organisation for development cooperation in relations between the EU and low- and middle-income countries and multilateral forums.

Scope: The European Union's development aid efforts face significant challenges in promoting democracy and stability in third countries, despite substantial investments in development assistance. Many countries continue to grapple with democratic governance, and the impact of aid on inequality and poverty reduction, democratic institutions and processes remains unclear. The resurgence of authoritarianism and the erosion of democratic values globally pose considerable challenges to EU foreign policy, underscoring the need for more effective diplomatic strategies and cooperation frameworks.

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[36]   This decision is available on the Funding Wond Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

There is a pressing need for research to elucidate the complex relationships between development aid, democratic governance, inequality reduction, and global challenges. This includes examining the effects of development aid on democratic institutions and processes, identifying gaps in funding for democratic governance, and exploring innovative approaches to supporting democratic governance and reducing inequality. The relationship between development aid and democratic governance outcomes is also crucial, including the analysis of gaps in development funding for democratic governance and the exploration of novel approaches to align development assistance with democratic strengthening.

The scope of this research topic encompasses the analysis of development aid and democratic governance, with a focus on identifying innovative approaches to supporting reducing socio-economic inequalities, democratic resilience and inclusive governance. Key areas of investigation include the impact of development aid on democratic institutions and processes as well as on socio-economic inequalities gaps in funding for democratic governance, and the effects of declining democratic indicators on global development strategies.

Proposals should also seek to identify new opportunities to enhance the EU's soft power and geopolitical influence through humanitarian and development assistance. This is important for defending EU funding values, maintaining strong bilateral relationships, and promoting global stability and security.

The geographical scope of this research includes the EU Neighbourhoods and low- and middle-income countries, with a focus on their relationship with the EU.

HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-DEMOCRACY-06: Mapping EU news media sectors of special relevance for democracy

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society - 2027	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.50 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy

	Community (2021-2025) [37].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Key data gaps affecting the news media industry at EU-27 are addressed and all relevant stakeholders dispose of an updated and comprehensive knowledge base.

- A more resilient public sphere is fostered, in particular in sectors of particular relevance to democracy.

- News media industries and journalists are equipped with better means to adapt to digital transformation.

Scope: Media are key tenets of our democracies. Free and independent media hold power to account, keep citizens informed during emergencies and crises, and contribute to informed debates and opinions, facilitating civic engagement across all democratic processes. Yet, the information market in which news media companies and journalists operate is undergoing rapid transformation in terms of production and consumption of news. While content is widely available on many forms, several key news media sectors struggle to find sustainable models, while others are subject to increasing forms of political influence and threats against media pluralism. This is particularly the case for forms of journalism genres relying on original content, which takes more time and resources to produce (e.g. local media, investigative journalism, public interest news, journalistic magazines, etc.), but is often less viable than other forms of entertainment. As a result, there is evidence of areas of market failures affecting these sectors, with phenomena such as emerging news deserts.

In spite of these concerns, there are still important quantitative data gaps at EU level as regards the news media sectors, which represent an obstacle to produce accurate diagnoses of the dimension and gravity of the problems affecting the sectors, as shown by the European Media Industry Outlook. Collaboration between the academia, local researchers, media organisations and the industry could help in addressing existing data gaps and detecting to what extent Europe's media are exposed to market failures. Hence, this topic invites applicants to build up usable and comparable EU-27 data on aspects such as:

- Emergence and evolution of news deserts

- Threats to news sectors of specific relevance to democracy, such as local media and investigative journalism.

- Development of typologies of innovative media formats and involvement of citizens in news production

- Situation of freelancers at EU-27 level

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[37]   This [decision](#) is available on the Funding Wond Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- AI adoption and its impact on journalistic standards

- Evolution of editorial responsibility, trustworthiness and transparency, and means to improve audiences access and consumption to professional information.

- Develop interoperability of tools and systems and the ways to achieve it.

Proposals should aim at mapping the evolution of news media and community media, in particular in local contexts. They should also develop means to align audience measurement systems and better interoperability of media systems.

Consortia should bring together academia, civil society organisations and industry.

Where applicable, proposals should leverage the data and services available through European Research Infrastructures federated under the European Open Science Cloud, as well as data from relevant Data Spaces. Particular efforts should be made to ensure that the data produced in the context of this topic is FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable).

Proposals are encouraged to seek collaboration whenever possible with relevant projects selected under previous EU-funded calls, such as the Horizon 2020 call TRANSFORMATIONS-10-2020 – "Evolving European media landscapes and Europeanisation" or the Horizon Europe one HORIZON-CL2-2022-DEMOCRACY-01-06 – "Media for democracy – democratic media". Clustering and cooperation among the selected projects under this topic and other relevant projects are strongly encouraged.

HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-DEMOCRACY-07: The role of private companies in democracy

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society - 2027	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.50 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:
	Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the

	Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [38].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- EU and national policymakers have access to evidence-based recommendations and develop more effective policies and regulations for promoting responsible corporate behaviour and protecting democratic values.

- EU and national policymakers have a better understanding of the impact of corporate power on democratic processes and outcomes, enabling them to develop strategies to mitigate any negative effects and promote a more just and equitable society.

- Civil society organizations and citizens have a greater understanding of the complex relationships between private companies and democratic governance, enabling them to hold corporations and policymakers accountable for their actions.

Scope: The relationship between private companies and democratic governance is becoming increasingly complex and contentious. As corporate interests continue to grow in influence, there is a pressing need to investigate the impact of private sector involvement on democratic processes and outcomes; as well as its long-term effects on political inequalities and shifts in power dynamics. This raises concerns about the potential risks and benefits of private sector involvement, including issues such as data protection, bias, and civic engagement.

The relationship between corporate interests and democratic processes is complex, as large corporations and lobbying groups can both inform policymaking with valuable evidence and expertise, and potentially exert undue influence that may compromise the public interest. The implications of corporate power for democratic values, human rights, and the public good are far-reaching and require careful examination. Furthermore, the role of external actors, such as foreign investors and multinational companies, can also shape democratic processes and outcomes, often in ways that are opaque and unaccountable.

To address these challenges, research is needed to explore the complex relationships between private companies and democratic processes, and to identify strategies to promote responsible corporate behaviour and ensure that private companies serve the needs of democracy and the public good. This research aims to investigate the influence of private companies on democratic governance, including possibly the potential risks and benefits of private sector involvement in sortition-based citizens' panels and other forms of participatory and deliberative democracy processes.

Proposals should investigate the influence of large corporations, lobbying groups, and external actors on democratic processes, exploring the implications of corporate power on

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[38] This decision is available on the Funding Wond Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

democratic values, equality, human rights, and the public interest. This examination should also extend to the impact of private companies on multilateral decision-making, including at the EU level, and analyse how corporate interests shape decision-making processes at the transnational level. Particular attention should be given to the role of corporate lobbying, public-private partnerships, and other forms of corporate engagement in shaping global governance outcomes, with a focus on understanding the complex interactions between corporate power, democratic governance, and the public interest.

HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-DEMOCRACY-08: Global Human Rights and EU values

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society - 2027	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.50 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [39].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- EU and national policymakers integrate human rights considerations into trade policies and practices, ensuring that trade agreements, supply chains, and labour standards promote human dignity, equality, fairness and well-being, and prevent human rights abuses

- EU and national policymakers promote accountability, stability, and human rights globally by developing and implementing effective mechanisms for investigating and prosecuting international crimes, and cooperation frameworks with third countries to ensure humanitarian assistance, security, and respect for international law.

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[39] This decision is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- Organisations in the Western Balkans, accession countries and low- and middle-income countries empower vulnerable and marginalized communities, including, by supporting and promoting human rights, providing essential services, and advocating for policy changes that advance equality and social justice, through enhanced capacity, awareness, strengthened partnerships, and effective reporting of human rights abuses.

Scope: The promotion of human rights is a pressing concern for the European Union in today's multipolar world, where vulnerable groups, including ethnic and religious minorities, people with disabilities, women, and LGBTIQ individuals, face persecution, discrimination, and violence. The EU's response to these issues is influenced also by the complexities of global governance, trade, human rights and geopolitical interests. The use of trade sanctions and conditionality to promote human rights is a highly debated topic, and ensuring accountability for human rights violations is a critical challenge.

The EU's values and human rights are being tested in a global context, where trade policies, supply chains, and labour rights are increasingly intertwined. The impact of trade sanctions, conditionality, and other measures on human rights is unclear, and the role of national courts and international organisations in promoting accountability is uncertain. Moreover, the EU's external actions can also have internal consequences, for instance undermining its democratic reputation and values if they are perceived as inconsistent or hypocritical, or negative impacts on EU enterprises in terms of access to markets or critical raw materials. For groups, such as refugees, women, LGBTIQ persons, and indigenous peoples, who are already subject to various types of exclusion and discrimination and who might be further disenfranchised by the EU's foreign policy, this is particularly problematic.

There is a need for research to better understand these complex relationships and to identify innovative approaches to promoting and protecting human rights. This includes examining the impact of trade policies and investments policies, including Global Gateway infrastructure investment strategy', on human rights, and on the perception of the EU as a value-based actor, developing effective diplomatic strategies and cooperation frameworks, and investigating the role of national courts and international organisations in promoting accountability.

The geographical scope of this research encompasses the Western Balkan region and neighbouring countries, with a focus on the EU accession process, as well as in low- and middle-income countries.

HORIZON-CL2-2027-02-DEMOCRACY-09-two-stage: Open topic on reinvigorating and shielding European democracy

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society - 2027 - Two-stage	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and

	selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [40].
Eligibility and admissibility conditions	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following additional eligibility criteria apply: In order to achieve the expected outcomes, consortia must include, as beneficiaries or affiliated entities, (i) at least one relevant public body with a policy-making role; and (ii) at least one relevant civil society organisation.

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- EU institutions and national decision-makers, civil society organisations and other societal actors, democracy practitioners and citizens at large are better equipped, with new data, knowledge and methods, to confront threats and challenges of democracies as well as to enhance their inclusiveness and participatory elan.

- Strengthened citizens' long-lasting engagement in the democratic life and increased trust in democratic institutions.

Scope: The Political Guidelines for 2024-2029 of the European Commission announced a new European Democracy Shield. Building on the European Democracy Action Plan[41] and the Defence of Democracy Package[42], this initiative aims to address the increasing threats to democratic systems, institutions and processes within the EU, arising from both internal and external sources, often driven by various hostile actors aiming to undermine citizens' trust in democracy and its institutions. The Shield should also contribute to rebuilding citizens' trust in democracy and the political sphere, including by responding to their social and economic needs. In addition, the Commission has also announced an updated strategy on LGBTIQ

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[40] This [decision](#) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

[41] https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_2250

[42] https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_6453

equality, a new anti-racism strategy, a new gender equality strategy and a roadmap for women's rights[43].

Both work strands, defence and promotion of democracy, its protection and the enhancement of its inclusiveness and fairness, should be seen as one and the same task. Ensuring full, equal and meaningful participation for everyone, regardless sex, gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, fosters more stable and resilient democracies. Decision-making processes that incorporate a wider range of perspectives and experiences leads to policies that are more comprehensive and attuned to the needs of all citizens.

Under this open topic, proposals are expected to address existing, upcoming or unforeseen challenges and/or creative or disruptive solutions for protecting European democracy, enhancing citizens' trust and political participation, and expanding inclusiveness and fairness of democratic institutions and practices. Proposals should address unmet research needs, complementing previous Horizon Europe calls (since Work Programme 2021-2022 and including also the present Work Programme).

In that sense, proposals should consider, build on – if appropriate – while not duplicating, previous research, including but not limited to, research by other Horizon Europe projects, in particular in the context of this destination. Coordination among the successful proposals from this topic should be envisaged to avoid duplication and to exploit complementarities as well as opportunities for increased impact.

Given the multifaceted character of the challenges confronted by democracies, applicants should ensure effective interdisciplinary collaborations by building consortia with the participation of all relevant disciplines, depending of course on the nature of the selected research angle.

Applicants are encouraged to adapt innovative approaches, facilitating the development and potential uptake of solutions. To ensure the active involvement of and timely feedback from relevant democracy practitioners and policy-makers, proposals should plan a mid-term deliverable consisting in the assessment of the project's mid-term outcomes, performed by the corresponding actors involved in the project.

Where applicable, proposals should leverage the data and services available through European Research Infrastructures federated under the European Open Science Cloud, as well as data from relevant Data Spaces. Particular efforts should be made to ensure that the data produced in the context of this topic is FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable).

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[43] For the roadmap for women's rights, see the announcement of its adoption with links to the communication and its annex: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_681

Destination Innovative Research on European Cultural Heritage and Cultural and Creative Industries

tbc

Expected impact:

tbc

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-HERITAGE-01: "Artistic intelligence": harnessing the power of the arts to address complex challenges, enhance soft skills and boost innovation and competitiveness

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 4.00 and 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [44]. Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000. However, if the objectives of the action would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult (and duly justified in the proposal) the maximum amount may be higher.

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[44] This decision is available on the Funding Wand Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

<u>Expected Outcome</u>: Proposals will contribute to the two first expected outcomes, plus either those listed under Focus 1, or those under Focus 2, depending on the specific focus chosen.

- The potential of art-science technology collaborations and their capacity to devise actions addressing societal challenges and spur innovation is better understood. Guidance, toolkits and actionable methodologies are developed to promote these collaborations, providing policymakers at all levels clarity on the scope of possible interventions, their applicability across various fields, and proposing evaluation methods, metrics, or tools.

- New and existing national and European networks for art-science-technology collaborations are either established or strengthened, opening opportunities for artists to engage with science and technology.

Focus 1

- Frameworks for the integration of the arts and creative practices to enhance soft skills within various public and private sectors and industries are developed, tested and disseminated.

Focus 2

- Three small scale low Technology Readiness Level (TRL) demonstrators on emerging technologies are developed by interdisciplinary teams involving artists and are ready for achieving higher TRLs.

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<u>Scope</u>: Artistic research facilitates inter-, multi-, trans-disciplinary "out of the box" thinking, inspiring innovative problem-solving approaches and offering viable avenues for innovation across multiple policy areas, akin to scientific research. EU programs such as SciArt and S+T+ARTS have demonstrated the capability of art-science-technology collaborations to enhance scientific and technological advancements. Art serves as a catalyst for innovation, developing creative solutions to complex challenges and fostering new perspectives in the scientific community.

Furthermore, artistic research makes complex concepts accessible and engages audiences emotionally and culturally. Artistic expression facilitates the appreciation and adoption of innovative concepts and practices, and can serve as catalyst for social innovation, driving forward positive societal transformations. The arts are precious allies to foster sustainable transformations.

Now is the time to consolidate the understanding of art-science-technology collaborations potential for transformative growth, to distil it for applicability at various levels and across a range of policy areas, and to devise methods to evaluate their impact quantitatively and qualitatively.

Projects will:

• Gather evidence on art-science-technology collaborations for addressing societal challenges and spurring innovation in science and technology.

• Collect case studies, produce and disseminate guidance, toolkits, and methodologies supporting policymakers in promoting these collaborations and strategies for cross-disciplinary innovation. Mechanisms, span of possible interventions, applicability to diverse fields and contexts will be clarified and exemplified.

• Develop concrete use cases. These could be, for example (but not limited to): artists supporting the development of ethical, humane AI; AI and artistic intelligence to address societal transformations; AI-powered emotional storytelling and experiential art; Real-time environmental data projects for policy and public engagement.

• Develop and test key performance indicators and methodologies for evaluating such interventions, assessing their impacts, identifying what constitutes success and how to measure medium to long-term benefits, both qualitative and quantitative.

• Increase opportunities for artists to engage in art-science-technology collaborations, through network establishment or consolidation, interdisciplinary initiatives or other methods.

Project consortia will include artists and creatives/representatives of creative industries. Through leveraging creativity, projects will boost EU productivity and competitiveness while improving artists and creative professionals' employment conditions and preserving the autonomy and freedom essential to artistic practice and democratic society.

Financial support to third parties of up to EUR 60.000 [or more in duly justified cases] in the form of grants may be considered, with the aim of actively engaging artists and creative professionals, for example through residencies, to facilitate development of solutions and innovative experimentations.

In addition to the main focus area, proposals will choose between the following two focuses:

Focus 1. Enhancing soft skills through creativity and the arts

Policies and strategies for introducing creative thinking and transdisciplinary methodologies in schools, universities, research centres, cultural institutions and in the broader public and private sectors are needed. In the workforce, engagement with creative practices and the arts can enhance transversal, or soft, skills such as creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, emotional intelligence, crucial for productivity and competitiveness in an increasingly automated world.[45] By leveraging creative and artistic practices, essential soft skills can be enhanced in both the public and private sectors, that will thus be equipped to meet the demands of a changing market, foster cross-disciplinary creativity-driven innovative solutions and enhance productivity and competitiveness.

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[45] M. Draghi (2024), The future of European competitiveness. Part B: In-depth analysis and recommendations, p. 258, 272.

Projects will create, experiment, and disseminate frameworks for using the arts and creative practices to enhance soft skills in various public and private sectors and industries and for implementing these practices in educational, lifelong learning or corporate settings, and will showcase best practices. Projects can freely select application areas, industries or sectors.

Focus 2. Pilots on emerging technologies

Proposals should develop at least 3 small scale pilots on emerging technologies in interdisciplinary settings involving artists, to assess, demonstrate and streamline research-intensive technologies. Candidate technologies could include, among others, grid sensing networks, multisensuality, ubiquitous XR, spatial computing, VLM/LLM and historical data, crowd digitization or virtual reality. Pilots should be ready for higher TRL levels and demonstrate the effectiveness of artists' engagement.

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-HERITAGE-02: Towards a consolidated culture and creativity driven European innovation ecosystem

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 5.00 and 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Coordination and Support Actions
Procedure	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: The granting authority can fund a maximum of one project.
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [46].

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[46] This decision is available on the Funding Wand Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

	Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- An increased number and impact of CCI-driven innovations, followed up with appropriate assessments and Key Performance Indicators.

- A long-term sustainable structure which continues supporting innovation driven by the cultural and creative industries beyond project funding.

- A broadly established vision of European CCIs as an essential engine of sustainable innovation and competitiveness, making CCIs a natural part of national, regional and local innovation efforts.

Scope: To secure Europe's future prosperity and competitiveness, it is necessary to unlock the innovative power of our cultural and creative industries[47] (CCIs). A large and dynamic economic sector and job creator in themselves, the CCIs also contribute strongly to drive innovation in other industries. CCIs shape new technologies and can contribute to user-driven innovation, open innovation and cross-sectoral innovation[48], and are often the first to find productive uses for new technologies, paving the way for wider uptake improving productivity and competitiveness. Europe's CCIs can act as a crucial technology incubator, in addition to their wider societal contributions such as to cultural wealth, social cohesion and resilience.

It needs to be ensured that CCIs are well integrated in Europe's innovation ecosystems, and have their place in local or national research and innovation policies, ensuring that their full potential is realised. Difficulties can be linked for instance to the fact that the CCIs consist mainly of small and micro enterprises with difficulties to fit into commonly applied innovation support models based on fast-growth start-ups, inconsistencies between cultural and innovation policies or the particularities of CCI entrepreneurs.

Significant research and innovation efforts have been made to boost CCIs and strengthen them as engines of innovation. Horizon Europe's Cluster 2 has launched more than 30 R&I projects with the collective objective to boost a culture and creativity driven European innovation ecosystem along with the project EKIP[49], the European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT) has launched the Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) EIT

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[47] CCIs as defined in the European Parliament Resolution 'A coherent EU policy for cultural and creative industries':
https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016IP0486&from=EN

[48] See for instance Open Method of Coordination report 'The role of public policies in developing entrepreneurial and innovation potential of the cultural and creative sectors'

[49] https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101112111

Culture and Creativity, and a Large-Scale Partnership [50] for the Cultural and Creative Industries Ecosystem has been set up, with currently almost 200 cultural and creative networks and organisations participating.

The challenge is to build on the key results, technologies, solutions and methods, developed by these R&I projects and initiatives as well as others, to achieve a long-term impact in terms of thriving CCIs that proactively engage in innovation and achieve significant economic growth. To achieve this, the project needs to go beyond common practice in innovation support and use for example portfolio approaches that consider a cluster of organisations as an investable entity, or other approaches that can be game changers. Furthermore, the project needs to build on and improve existing innovation ecosystems to make them effective for the CCIs. To properly follow up the results of its work, the project should develop suitable Key Performance Indicators, including with a base line for current and previous situations.

The project does not need to seek standardised approaches that work across the diversity of the EU and countries associated to Horizon Europe, but should allow for taking local contexts into account. Nevertheless, the project should seek to establish common principles and active knowledge exchange across Europe.

In order to ensure an enduring impact, the project should ensure long-term sustainable networks and support structures. This should, as appropriate, build on existing networks and/or platforms, and should involve the key stakeholders, covering most EU Member States and Associated Countries as well as a wide range of CCIs. Furthermore, the project should establish links to or create a legal entity with a sustainable economic model, which is able to continue the work after the end of project funding. Proposals should include an outline of the economic model envisioned, but do not need to describe it in full detail.

In order to engage entities which are not part of the project consortium, such as important innovation support actors or CCIs, projects may award financial support to third parties. Such support can only be given in the form of grants.

The Commission estimates that a project duration of at least 5 years is appropriate, in order to be able to achieve the expected long-term outcomes.

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-HERITAGE-03: AI integration in CCSI work practice: catalysing innovation and competitiveness

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 4.00 and 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed

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[50] The ***large-scale partnership for the Cultural and Creative Industries Ecosystem*** (LSP CCI) https://pact-for-skills.ec.europa.eu/about/industrial-ecosystems-and-partnerships/creative-and-cultural-industries_en was launched in 2022, as part of the EU Pact for Skills.

project	appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [51]. Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000. However, if the objectives of the action would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult (and duly justified in the proposal) the maximum amount may be higher.

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Insights, recommendations, strategies, methods and tools supporting full AI integration in CCSI practices become available to CCSI, policymakers, and stakeholders.

- Scenarios for co-created solutions tailored to CCSI needs, utilizing quality data and federated data sources, along with digital infrastructures, and inclusive cooperation processes, become available.

- Generally made available AI-powered and ethically designed solutions and services in several CCSI areas benefit creators, cultural professionals, and society, including persons with special needs, fostering innovative creative expressions and improving creative business models while preserving and enhancing cultural diversity and inclusion.

- By mastering ethical AI, CCSI are empowered drivers of culture, innovation, competitiveness and societal wellbeing.

Scope: AI technologies are transformative, providing unprecedented opportunities for human creativity, experimentations and co-creations. AI profoundly impacts cultural and creative

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[51] This decision is available on the Funding Wond Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

sectors and industries, changing practices, facilitating new ways of working and making innovative services and products possible. Artists, industry players, and cultural organizations increasingly use AI, for assistance in content creation, production, and management, to predict trends, personalize and market content, and enhance cultural heritage preservation and accessibility, and many more purposes.

Cultural and creative sectors and industries (CCSI)[52] need to fully harness AI's potential to maintain and improve relevance, increase competitiveness, and keep their vibrant, inclusive nature. Embracing and co-creating ethical AI solutions tailored to CCSI needs will, among other benefits, enable the automation of low-creativity tasks, allowing to increase focus on high-value activities that enhance creativity and productivity, thus unlocking unprecedented possibilities. Production times and costs can be reduced, market reach expanded, preservation, interpretation and inclusive access to cultural heritage enhanced, and new job categories could emerge.

Although several initiatives are on the ground, a comprehensive understanding of enabling frameworks and factors and of what is still lacking in terms of data, standards, infrastructures, computing power, tools, knowledge and capacity for the CCSI to fully embrace the opportunities opened by AI is essential for effectively integrating AI technologies into CCSI practices and workflows. Proposals should assess the current level of AI readiness in the CCSI, investigate the specific barriers to AI adoption in the sectors, and highlight areas where AI can offer the most benefits. In continuous engagement with the sectors, based on the analysis of current practices and through concrete use cases, proposals should produce strategic guidance to extensively and seamlessly integrate AI into CCSI operations, enhancing efficiencies, averting risks, and facilitating cross-sector collaboration. Based on this analysis, they should develop a set of tailored tools designed to address the specific gaps and leverage the opportunities uncovered during the assessment. These tools should be strategically aligned with the sector's needs, ensuring they provide targeted solutions to enhance AI adoption and maximize its potential benefits.

Proposals should address one of the following two options, and are allowed to address both:

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[52] "CCSI relate to all sectors and industries whose activities are based on cultural values, cultural diversity and individual and/or collective artistic and other creative expressions, whether those activities are market or non-market oriented, whatever the type of structure that carries them out, and irrespective of how that structure is financed. Those activities include the development of skills and talent with the potential to generate innovation, the creation of wealth and jobs through the production of social and economic value, including from intellectual property management. Those activities relate also to the development, the production, the creation, the dissemination and the preservation of goods and services which embody cultural, artistic or other creative expressions, as well as related functions such as education and management. The cultural and creative sectors include, inter alia, architecture, archives, the arts, libraries and museums, artistic crafts, audiovisual (including film, television, software, video games, multimedia and recorded music), tangible and intangible cultural heritage, design, creativity-driven high-end industries and fashion, festivals, music, literature, performing arts (including theatre and dance), books and publishing (newspapers and magazines), radio and visual arts, and advertising" Decision (EU) 2021/820 of 20 May 2021 on the Strategic Innovation Agenda of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) 2021-2027: Boosting the Innovation Talent and Capacity of Europe and repealing Decision No 1312/2013/EU, Appendix I, footnote nr. 26.

- Develop scalable pilots for innovative AI-enabled products and services across diverse segments of sectoral value chains, in cooperation with CCSI. These pilots will address identified gaps in CCSI operations and prioritise solutions that catalyse innovation in sectors whose business models are not yet taking full advantage of AI. Applicants will have flexibility to select their preferred application areas.

- Design and pilot innovative, ethically driven, transparent ~~AI~~ AI solutions to foster cultural and linguistic diversity and enhance accessibility, with a focus on engaging underserved audiences, particularly youth and individuals with special needs. Applicants will have the flexibility to select their preferred application areas.

Such applications should aim at leveraging AI for facilitating new revenue streams for the CCSI, as well as sustainable business models, and will highlight solutions with strong marketability.

Financial support to third parties of up to EUR 60.000 [or more in duly justified cases] in the form of grants may be foreseen, with the aim of engaging entities external to the consortium in the development of pilots.

Consortia should include representatives of the cultural and creative sectors and industries and technology developers.

Proposals should build upon existing research and innovation outcomes, particularly insights and resources from Horizon Europe-funded projects focused on digital transformation, innovation, or competitiveness in the CCSI, and science-tech-art collaboration, and will liaise with the EIT KIC Culture and Creativity. They might consider making use of facilities and platforms such as the European High-Performance-Computing network, the Cultural Heritage Cloud, the European Data Space for Cultural Heritage, ALT EDIC and other data spaces, European Digital Innovation Hubs, AI Factories and relevant research infrastructures.

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-HERITAGE-04: Towards a fair and transparent market for cultural and creative content in the era of generative AI and other emerging technologies

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions

Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [53].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- The socio-economic dimension and implications of generative AI on the cultural and creative sectors and on society at large is analysed in depth and better understood. Proposals to address identified challenges are operationalised.

- Scenarios, value chains and robust, agile solutions for a fair and transparent market of cultural and creative content become available, including the capability to detect AI-generated and manipulated creative content.

- Frameworks, policy recommendations and solutions for embedding cultural and ethical considerations in generative AI development and usage for, with and by CCSI and for establishing a fair and ethical market for cultural and creative content, products and services become available.

Scope: The impact of generative AI on the CCSI and society is complex and multifaceted. While it offers new possibilities and opportunities, it also raises concerns. Understanding the socio-economic impacts of AI, including shifts in revenue models, employment patterns, and audience engagement in the CCSI as well as in the way the arts and culture are understood, practised and learnt is crucial.

Generative AI can produce outputs potentially competing with human-created content. AI can also support the manipulation of creative content, misleading users/people. Increasing transparency of AI generated or manipulated content may help to distinguish between human-created and machine generated content and inform new practices for content dissemination and consumption.

Challenges related to the availability of quality data for AI applications and to the accuracy and reliability of cultural content should be investigated and addressed. The insights gained will inform novel practices for managing AI-generated cultural and creative content, including preservation of valuable outputs, such as artworks created by using AI, and will inform the establishment of adequate policy and legal frameworks.

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[53] This decision is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

This topic should primarily address the following dimensions:

- Investigate, including through analysing scenarios, and measure the economic and social dimension and implications of the impact of AI-generated outputs on the creative content market and related services, with a special focus on creators' rights, earnings and allocation of royalties, as well as on diversity, consumption and user perception of cultural products and services.

- Propose standards and robust and agile solutions to map the generative-AI-supply chain, identify, trace and find trusted content to ensure authenticity; tools for strengthening consent, control, and compensation for using artistic and creative data in AI; other measures to ensure a fair and transparent market for cultural and creative content, including solutions to increase the findability of trustworthy cultural and creative content.

- Investigate new efficient ways for redefining value creation and transformed business models. This includes looking at uncover opportunities that can increase profitability, such as simple frameworks for the distribution and sale of AI-assisted creative content, and measures for long term preservation of valuable works created with the use of AI.

- Systemic and agile innovation: propose a validated framework to experiment, design, prototype and test new business models that can easily adapt in a rapidly evolving market and comply with ethics and regulation.

By integrating findings and insights, risks associated with the use of generative AI and other emerging technologies will be mitigated and new positive prospects developed. Insights gained will contribute to the EU's global leadership in creativity and innovation.

Proposals selected under this call should collaborate and, if relevant, build upon the research developed by projects retained under call HORIZON-CL2-2025-01-HERITAGE-04.

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-HERITAGE-05: Creative alliances: Fostering global partnerships in cultural policies and CCI innovation

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Eligibility	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following

conditions	exceptions apply: Proposals should include at least three partners from at least one of the world regions identified (Africa, the Far East, South-East Asia, Latin America).
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [54].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Deepened understanding and comprehensive evaluation of cultural policy models, creative industry ecosystems and strategies for promoting creative industries across regions, identifying good practices and success stories. Innovative practices and policy approaches, shared challenges and opportunities for cross-regional collaboration and the development of creative industries on a global scale are identified.

- International partnerships and collaborations focused on exchanging cultural policy approaches, strategies for boosting creative industries, or collaborative production/co-creation, facilitating knowledge transfer and capacity building between participating actors are established.

- Actionable strategies are available to policymakers, businesses and stakeholders, for cross-regional collaborations that strengthen cultural ties, leverage creative industries as central to the idea of a Global Europe and support global culture- and creativity-driven innovation and resilience.

Scope: This topic aims to explore how international partnerships can strengthen both cultural policies and creative industries innovation, recognizing their complementary roles in sustainable development and global relations. Innovative approaches to cultural and creative industries that can benefit partners worldwide should be explored, while simultaneously strengthening Europe's global standing through cultural cooperation. The topic is organized around two distinct but interconnected focuses. Proposals should choose one focus and are allowed to combine both.

Focus 1: Cultural and creative industries' innovation beyond borders

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[54]   This decision is available on the Funding Wand Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

Creative industries are gaining significant global attention for their multifaceted impact on economies and societies. They drive economic growth and job creation, with special emphasis on opportunities for youth and women, generating value and fostering wellbeing across regions. By investing in digital and green transitions, adopting ethical and open approaches to AI, and leveraging rich cultural heritage, the EU offers a compelling paradigm for creative industries worldwide. This approach not only bolsters creativity within Europe but can inspire other regions developing their own cultural and creative economies, setting the stage for a flourishing global creative ecosystem. Creative industries can contribute to resilient, inclusive, and innovative global partnerships that create new markets and drive innovation while fostering a global Europe. There is a growing need for exploring various approaches to the promotion of cultural and creative industries, fostering knowledge and best practice exchange and mutual learning to amplify innovation and positive impacts worldwide. Africa, the Far East, South-East Asia, Latin America appear particularly interesting world regions for such cooperations.

Proposals should aim to establish **pilot projects** for cooperation around creative industries to demonstrate the potential of cross-regional collaborations in creative industries, addressing specific regional challenges and opportunities. Proposals can leverage the EU Global Gateway strategy to foster resilient, inclusive, and innovative global partnerships.

Focus 2: International cultural relations for global resilience

While cultural diplomacy often implies the strategic use of cultural exchanges to advance national interests, international cultural relations suggest a mutual and reciprocal engagement among nations, and soft power highlights the subtle influence of culture and creativity in shaping global perceptions without coercion - although often used interchangeably, each expression reflects layers of collaboration and competition on the world stage.

Cultural diplomacy and international cultural relations have become increasingly vital in a world where traditional diplomatic channels face mounting pressures. They enhance mutual understanding and build trust across borders by facilitating dialogue between different cultures and communities, offering a unique platform for cooperation even amidst political disagreements. They serve as a key tool for societal resilience and for peaceful coexistence in challenging times by highlighting common values, easing tensions, bridging divides, and promoting global cooperation.

International cultural relations present emerging opportunities to strengthen existing partnerships or forge new ones—important also for Europe's own strategic autonomy—by leveraging shared values, cooperation mechanisms, existing networks (including the EU Global Gateway), as well as various cultural diplomacy approaches in the current geopolitical landscape.

Proposals under this focus should also establish **pilot projects** aimed at testing innovative forms of international cultural relations on the ground. Such pilot actions could include initiatives fostering intercultural dialogue among communities experiencing tension or conflict; collaborative artistic projects promoting mutual understanding and countering

nationalist, xenophobic or war-driven tendencies; or joint activities demonstrating how culture can increase societal resilience by strengthening community bonds based on inclusion, diversity, openness.

Projects should establish mechanisms for ongoing collaboration that leverage each region's unique cultural assets and industry innovations to address both global and local challenges.

Research organisations, policy think-tanks, creative industries representatives, artist organizations/artists themselves, as well as cultural organisations from Europe and partner regions are encouraged to participate.

Proposals will explore synergies with other EU programmes focused on international partnerships for culture and creativity.[55]

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-HERITAGE-06: Safeguarding linguistic diversity in Europe

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 5.00 and 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the

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[55] Among others: *Cultural Relations Platform*, connecting cultural practitioners worldwide; S+T+Arts4Africa digital innovation in African sub-Saharan culture and digital innovation hubs; *Africa-Europe Partnerships for Culture*, focusing on artistic co-creation and cooperation; *European Spaces of Culture:* innovative collaboration models in cultural relations between EU and extra-EU local partner organisations; *Creative Africa: Audiovisual* for cross-border cooperation in the audio-visual sector across the entire value chain; *Strengthening African-European Museum Partnerships:* an African-European museums platform to develop a new multilateral framework based on co-creation; *CreatiFI:* Financial instrument to support creative industries; *ACP-EU Culture:* assist the socio-economic development of the ACP countries by supporting their cultural and creative sectors; *ProCultura:* contribute to the increase of employment and income-generating activities in the cultural and creative sector of the Portuguese-speaking African countries and East Timor; *EU-UNESCO Facility*: technical assistance to support cultural policy strengthening and the implementation of the UNESCO 2030 Culture Indicators, the framework to measure and assess culture's contribution to sustainable development; *Transcultura:* deepen integration within the Caribbean region and strengthening people-to-people cooperation with the European Union.

	Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [56].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Maps and visual presentations showing the linguistic diversity in Europe are available, including a variety of existing languages (regional and minority languages, low resources languages etc.) and offering suited terminology to describe the situation;

- Good practice identified, what works, that has led to reduced loss of language and encouraging multilingualism strategies available to involve users and especially the younger generation in taking ownership in safeguarding linguistic heritage – with a focus on intergenerational dialogue.

- Local communities empowered and citizens' engaged in the sustainable management of their own linguistic resources and the creation of linguistic maps.

Scope: Linguistic diversity is a fundamental part of Europe's cultural heritage. When languages disappear, a whole knowledge system disappears and cultural diversity is impoverished. Linguistic diversity plays a key role of in safeguarding cultural diversity.

Languages are the expression of the identity, culture and the way peoples perceive their world. Knowledge and culture are lost when languages are lost.

The EU has 24 official languages and some 60 other languages spoken in particular regions or by specific groups. They are an essential part of the rich fabric of European culture.

The projects would document/ map the situation of linguistic diversity /the regional and minority (heritage) languages of Europe, since this has not been done properly since the 1996 Euromosaic study. The study documented the linguistic diversity of the 12 original EC countries and later of its newer members who joined the EU.

The study should identify examples of actions that have resulted in richer use of languages and support exchange of knowledge and good practices between the different language communities.

Moreover, in the last decades demographics have changed, and migration has had an impact on the linguistic situation in different regions, leading to more complexity and requiring adapted policy responses. The study could explore how migration has changed the language situation in those areas and how the different regions have coped with it.

Another element that changing the game for language learning and safeguarding heritage are digital technologies. It would be important to monitor the online presence of these languages

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[56]   This decision is available on the Funding Wond Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

and how language technologies could overcome the deepening linguistic divide in the digital domain [57], also the availability of language data.

The projects could also look at how maintaining and learning heritage languages is good for people's wellbeing, health and self-respect and effects on the local economy.

Starting from mapping the situation of European linguistic landscape, the actions should propose ways to encourage and support multilingualism and intergenerational transmission.

Available results of existing research on safeguarding linguistic diversity and multilingualism should be taken into consideration, while identification of needs for further research in the field should be promoted.

The projects should have a dedicated place for linguistic cartography (meaningful representations of linguistic diversity) and explore what are the challenges of assigning language to space; current language mapping projects, and, what are the opportunities for improving language mapping with current technology.

The projects will explore how the linguistic maps could serve as educational or research tools, and other measures available, such as the linguistic diversity index. Pursuing cultural awareness and cultural diversity understanding makes language mapping a significant research objective. Language maps can also be used as educational tools to provide illustrations of linguistic and cultural diversity.

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-HERITAGE-07: Fighting illicit trafficking of cultural goods

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 5.00 and 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Coordination and Support Actions
Eligibility conditions	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:
	Subject to restrictions for the protection of European communication networks.
	Some activities, resulting from this topic, may involve using classified

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[57] Building i.a. on the European Language Equality (ELE) project reports analyzing the linguistic landscape of Europe, providing insights into the availability and quality of digital tools and resources for various European languages.

	background and/or producing of security sensitive results (EUCI and SEN). Please refer to the related provisions in section B Security — EU classified and sensitive information of the General Annexes. If projects use satellite-based earth observation, positioning, navigation and/or related timing data and services, beneficiaries must make use of Copernicus and/or Galileo/EGNOS (other data and services may additionally be used).
Procedure	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: The granting authority can fund a maximum of one project.
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [58]. Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.
Eligibility and admissibility conditions	This topic requires the active involvement, as beneficiaries, of at least three law enforcement authorities from at least three different EU Member States or Associated Countries and, at least two beneficiaries should be scientific research institutions working on illicit traffic in the specific field of Cultural Heritage. For these participants, applicants must fill in the table "Information about security practitioners" in the application form with all the requested information, following the template provided in the submission IT tool.

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Experts and law enforcement authorities benefit from increased cross-border and regional cooperation, capacity building, and enhanced collaboration through piloting and testing consolidated tools based on semi-automated and real-time information sharing of interoperable and high-quality data.

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[58]   This decision is available on the Funding Wand Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- Effective uptake by Law Enforcement Authorities (LEA) of the developed technologies integrated within their operational systems and methodologies, consolidating and refining existing solutions in accordance with the different user's requirements.

- Support intelligence gathering and evidence collection for cases of trafficking of cultural goods, illegal economic activities related to cultural goods through the uptake of consolidated solution, data analyses, and cross-border cooperation, in order to build a stronger knowledge base and a better intelligence picture of the phenomenon of trafficking in cultural goods and related offences.

- European law enforcement, judiciary and other competent authorities and practitioners gain a better understanding and enhanced capabilities in addressing crimes related to cultural heritage thanks to tailored training workshops and practical learning materials.

- Develop specific actionable policy recommendations and foster the uptake of previous projects' suggested measures aiming to reinforce and strengthen law enforcement authorities' cooperation and facilitate the operational deployment and interoperability of the developed technologies in the framework of the EU and Member States' existing legislation.

- Monitor the above-mentioned regulatory framework in combination with existing measures and legal frameworks on trafficking of cultural goods [59] [60] [61] beyond EU borders, to provide policy recommendation aimed at addressing existing gaps and enhance effective and efficient cross border collaboration, standardization, interoperable data and intelligence sharing.

Scope: Trafficking in cultural goods is a serious crime that poses significant threats to cultural heritage, particularly in conflict and crisis areas. This illicit trade involves the illegal import, export, and transfer of ownership of valuable cultural items, including theft from institutions and private collections, looting of archaeological sites, assets laundering and forgery of cultural goods.

At the EU level, combatting cultural goods' trafficking is supported by the EU Security Union Strategy 2020-2025 [62], the EU Strategy to Tackle Organised Crime 2021-2025 [63], the EU action plan against trafficking in cultural goods [64] and the related Council Conclusions [65] and Concept on Cultural heritage in conflicts and crises [66] and its related Council Conclusions [67].

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[59]   https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0605
[60]   https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0170
[61]   https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52022DC0800
[62]   https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0605
[63]   https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0170
[64]   https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52022DC0800
[65]   Council Conclusions on the fight against trafficking in cultural goods – Council conclusions (8 June 2023) (10249/23)
[66]   Concept on Cultural heritage in conflicts and crises. A component for peace and security in European Union's external action. (9962/21)
[67]   Council Conclusions on EU Approach to Cultural Heritage in conflicts and crises (9837/21)

Cultural goods' trafficking is a highly specialised criminal market. The criminals range from specialised criminal networks to corrupt dealers or expert dark web traders. Criminal networks and actors active in the area of cultural goods trafficking are characterised by a high degree of expertise and specialised knowledge[68]. To overtake the challenges there is the necessity to use advanced analytics, including machine learning and AI technologies, in order to process large volumes of data and transforming it into meaningful intelligence. By facilitating data exchange across borders and between stakeholders, it would ensure real-time access to relevant information, enhancing collaboration and coordination.

Proposals should strongly build on existing expertise and developments, focusing on (1) creating operational interface between existing systems (including LEA systems) and the solutions developed to prevent, trace, protect, safeguard and repatriate goods, including intelligence gathering systems and methodologies to enhance evidence collection and support combating crimes through data analysis and network analysis (2) fostering the adoption of the aforementioned systems by LEA and bringing them to market readiness level to ensure their effective impact on combating illicit trafficking cases (3) strengthening the collaboration between the different stakeholders involved in preservation and protection of cultural heritage from trafficking of cultural goods providing effective tools for boosting capacity in cataloguing and provenance information analysis (4) ensuring data quality, robust data governance, information gathering, data analysis, data exchange, and data interoperability across stakeholders and cross borders by conducting gap analysis and assessments, providing actionable recommendations to improve real time data sharing, integration, and standardization in order to provide support to evidence collection thanks to the analysis and interpolation of the available data generating intelligence.

While there are many different tools already developed more research is needed on the consolidation and real uptake and adoption of the different developments, mapping the different user needs, consolidating the solution space and sharing interoperable and high-quality data.

The proposals should build on the achievements and findings of related previous national and EU-funded projects as well as create synergies with research projects in the field, such as, for example the ones funded under Horizon Europe Cluster 2 and Cluster 3, ERC, the Internal Security Fund (ISF), Creative Europe, the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), in order to avoid duplication or the development of new tools and to exploit complementarities as well as opportunities for increased impact and consolidation. Proposals are encouraged to seek synergies, and collaboration, with relevant initiatives already developed from international stakeholders working in the field of cultural heritage as well as in the security sector.

Project may consider the collaboration with the Europol Innovation Lab during the lifetime of the project, including validating the outcomes, with the aim of facilitating future uptake of innovations for the law enforcement community. Scientists and practitioners doing research in

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[68]   EUROPEAN UNION SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME THREAT ASSESSMENT 2025. THE CHANGING DNA OF SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME.

the field of Cultural Heritage (like archaeologists, museologists, art historians or related fields) must have an essential role in the production of the outputs assuring that they efficiently take into to account the real needs and problems of the field, as well as in assuring scientific quality of information and data.

Proposals are encouraged to create synergies and develop integrations with the Cultural Heritage Cloud [69].

The scope of the research should include under-studied regions, zones in conflict areas and under environmental disasters, considering existing initiatives, for example the Recommendation on Safeguarding Cultural Heritage in Ukraine [70].

Beneficiaries may plan their activities opting for the Financial Support to Third Parties in order to support practitioners (such as Police Authorities, Non-Governmental Organisations/Civil Society Organisations, cultural and creative industries (CCIs), research groups and communities of practitioners in the field of Cultural Heritage) for expanding the proposed work in terms of, for instance, additional user groups and needs, complementary assessments, technology- or methodology-testing activities. Up to 15% of the EU funding requested by the proposal may be allocated to the purpose of financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants.

Proposals funded under this topic are expected to engage with the Europol Innovation Lab during the lifetime of the project, including validating the outcomes, with the aim of facilitating future uptake of innovations for the law enforcement community.

HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-01: Boosting creative startups for disruptive innovation

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society - 2027	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 4.00 and 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Procedure	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply:

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[69]   https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/research-area/social-sciences-and-humanities/cultural-heritage-and-cultural-and-creative-industries-ccis/cultural-heritage-cloud_en

[70]   https://culture.ec.europa.eu/news/the-eu-presents-expert-recommendations-on-safeguarding-cultural-heritage-in-ukraine

	To ensure a balanced portfolio, grants will be awarded to applications not only in order of ranking but at least also to one project that is the highest ranked within each of the two options given in the scope (Option a and Option b), provided that the applications attain all thresholds.
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000. However, if the objectives of the action would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult (and duly justified in the proposal) the maximum amount may be higher. Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [71].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Deepened knowledge of specific factors favouring the growth of creative startups[72] in particular those with potential for disruptive innovation[73] or cross-sectorial innovation impacts are available for policy-makers, investors, funding and enterprise support bodies. Access to examples of creative startups engaging in disruptive innovation, with a view to increase the visibility and recognition of the innovative power of Europe's creative startups.

- Tested methods to deploy these are developed and put at the disposal of industry, investors, funding and enterprise support bodies, and relevant decision makers.

In addition, the projects should contribute to at least one of the following expected outcomes:

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[71] This decision is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

[72] In the context of this topic, 'creative startups' should be understood as a private company that falls under the definition of cultural and creative industries as defined in the European Parliament Resolution 'A coherent EU policy for cultural and creative industries' (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016IP0486&from=EN), is younger than ten years and has an innovative product and/or service and/or business model that it aims to scale up.

[73] In the context of this topic, 'disruptive innovation' should be understood as [an innovation which radically changes the way of operation ('of doing things'), and therefore has a significant impact on the market, on economic activity of firms and/or on the public sector or society at large.] tbc with EIC / A4 colleagues

- At least one creative start-up supported via the action has become a scale-up[74] in a Member State or an Associated Country.

- At least one creative start-up supported via the action has succeeded in bringing a disruptive innovation to the market.

Scope: The cultural and creative industries (CCIs) count a high rate of startups. Data indicate CCIs are among the early adopters of new technologies, especially in the digital realm. For instance, the European Monitor of Industrial Ecosystems (2024)[75] notes that artificial intelligence-based technology startups were most common among the CCIs and in the health sector. Furthermore, creative startups drive innovation through crossovers with other sectors. They can be a motor of growth in local economies, unlocking opportunities, investment, jobs and higher productivity, that is why a host of initiatives like creative clusters, innovation hubs, smart specialisation strategies, innovation ecosystems, etc. foster the emergence of creative start-ups. Also at EU level, there are a number of initiatives to support creative start-ups.[76]

However, in order to better support European creative start-ups to grow into scale-ups and to multiply their potential as high-impact disruptive innovators, additional measures are needed.

The challenge is to deepen the knowledge of the most important factors that favour the scaling up of creative startups in Europe and unleashing their potential for high-impact disruptive innovation, with a particular emphasis on those factors that distinguish them from startups in other sectors.

Methods should be devised that boost the growth of creative startups in Europe, and encourage engaging in disruptive innovation. Methods developed may include existing methods, such as shared technological resources/platforms to lower investments needs, credible assessments of technologies, IPR or of creative companies to increase investor readiness, matchmaking platforms, etc. However, the proposed methods should be innovative and go beyond these. They should be effective and feasible across Europe under the current legal framework.

In order to validate and refine the proposed methods, projects should carry out at least 5 pilot trials in different settings under real-world like conditions. These will involve piloting the scaling-up of a creative startup or positioning a creative startup to scale up. Financial support to third parties of up to EUR 60.000 [or more in duly justified cases] in the form of grants may be considered, with the aim of engaging diverse innovative creative startups, facilitating the uptake of solutions devised by the project, experimenting with innovative approaches, or engaging other funders in co-financing.

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[74] The definition of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) of scaleups requires that a company grows at an annual rate of 20% or more over three consecutive years in terms of number of employees or turnover. In the context of this call, such growth rate in one year / 2 consecutive years will be sufficient.

[75] SWD(2024) 77 final https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52024SC0077

[76] E.g. the EIT Culture & Creativity KIC , Cultural and Creative Regional Ecosystems , Digital Innovation Hubs in the cultural and creative sectors , Creative Innovation Labs , …

Proposals are expected to focus either on:

Option a: Increasing the growth of creative startups [and their cross-sectoral impact].

Option b: Boosting creative startups with a potential for disruptive innovation.

To the extent appropriate, projects should build on and take advantage of previous research, networks, policy initiatives and infrastructure at European and national levels. This may include work done or structures developed by the project 'EKIP'[77] and other R&I projects funded under Horizon Europe or other EU funding programmes that focus on boosting the innovation potential of CCIs, the EIT Knowledge and Innovation Community 'EIT Culture and Creativity'[78] and other relevant projects and networks. Such existing networks and infrastructures may among others also include business incubators or accelerators, venture capital networks [[79]], etc.

To the extent appropriate, the Commission expects projects funded under this topic to establish coordination mechanisms in order to achieve the strongest possible common impact. One such area of cooperation may be communication and dissemination efforts.

HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-02: AI4Creatives Support Platform: embracing a fair AI revolution

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society - 2027	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 5.00 and 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Coordination and Support Actions
Procedure	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: The granting authority can fund a maximum of one project.
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for

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77   https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101112111
78   https://eit-culture-creativity.eu/
79   https://eic.ec.europa.eu/eic-fund/trusted-investors-network_en

	Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [80].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- The cultural and creative sectors and industries (CCSI) have access to a dedicated European virtual AI support platform. This hub will facilitate collaboration among a strong and open network of CCSI networks, professionals, researchers, AI tech companies, creative startups, ethical AI experts, other industries with a shared interest in the field of AI for culture and creativity and a focus on research and innovation.

- The AI4Culture Hub provides easy access to shared services, expertise, capacity building, training, and tools needed to design, develop and adopt AI solutions tailored to cultural and creative processes and needs, enhancing innovation and competitiveness.

- Filling a gap, the platform enables the development and sharing of AI applications that adhere to EU values, principles and regulations, implementing ethical standards, promoting cultural diversity, addressing biases, and ensuring equitable access to culture and creativity.

Scope: This topic addresses the pressing need to coordinate, support, disseminate and capitalise on relevant outcomes from Horizon Europe Cluster 2 funded projects aimed to equip CCSI to leverage the digital transformation, from other Horizon Europe projects, and from initiatives exploring AI in relation to CCSI under other EU programmes, such as the AI Innovation package, GenAI4EU, Apply AI, and others. The aim is maximising their impact and driving innovation and competitiveness.

AI offers significant opportunities for CCSI, but challenges persist, including skill gaps, limited interaction with technology partners, structural weaknesses of CCSI, mostly small and micro enterprises with weak bargaining power against big tech providers, and limited resources to train dedicated AI models. Other challenges relate to AI ethics and transparency and questionable regard for intellectual property rights and copyright. By transcending siloed approaches and establishing synergies, CCSI can take advantage of economies of scale, harness AI's potential and drive innovation. The goal is creating a permanent, networked reference point for CCSI through a virtual support platform that builds capacity and facilitates networking and collaboration among CCSI, stakeholders, researchers, technology developers, AI ethicists, and other industries and startups, with the overall aim to enable artists, cultural professionals, creative companies and cultural organisations to engage with AI, including dealing with biases and risks. The Support Platform will enable the CCSI to access and utilize available custom-made tools, quality data, resources, knowledge, training, and AI applications aligned with their specific needs and with EU principles and regulations, thus easing the

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[80] This decision is available on the Funding Wond Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

adoption of appropriate innovative ethical solutions and approaches tailored to the CCSI. Among the possible functions of the Support Platform should be:

- Disseminate or develop frameworks, standards, best practices, and toolkits serving as strategic guidance for integrating ethical AI into CCSI value chains.

- Facilitate cross-sector collaboration, synergies, and partnerships between CCSI professionals, AI tech companies, and startups, liaising with initiatives like the Cultural Heritage Cloud, AI Factories, research infrastructures on digital humanities, European Digital Innovation Hubs, ALT EDIC and LLMs4EU, European Data Space for cultural heritage and other data spaces, and other EU initiatives in the area.

- Provide training to foster effective AI use in CCSI. Encourage CCSI and SMEs to engage with available federated data sources, digital infrastructures, computational resources, other available platforms to develop their own AI-powered products and services.

- Develop a roadmap for emerging challenges in AI and other emerging technologies related to culture and creativity.

- Engage in policy dialogues with policymakers, industry leaders, and stakeholders to emphasize culture's contribution to quality, ethical, and fair AI developments.

The platform is expected to develop and operate based on a robust sustainability and business model plan, ensuring long-term viability beyond the initial project phase.

The project will liaise with the EIT KIC Culture and Creativity to establish synergies, exchange information, and enhance mutual outcomes. It will build on Horizon Europe funded projects in the area of AI and CCSI, and establish synergies with relevant projects, programmes and initiatives supported by other relevant EU programmes. Proposals will conduct a pilot of the virtual platform to ensure alignment with CCSI needs, assessing technical and operational feasibility to ensure sustainability over time. The virtual Support Platform must be fully operational by the project's conclusion.

HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-03: Crafting routes to a circular economy

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society - 2027	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 3.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	

Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [81].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- The cultural dimension of circular economy is better understood and addressed. Cultural factors and the potential of cultural and creative sectors and industries (CCSI) are leveraged to foster the implementation of circular economy in the EU through sustainable innovation.

- Scalable, sustainable business models are developed that leverage circular practices from across cultural and creative sectors and industries for economic and environmental benefits (eg reducing waste, increasing resource efficiency, promoting sustainable consumption patterns).

- Circular solution toolkit: A practical toolkit helps businesses in various sectors apply CCSI-inspired frugal innovation principles to their operations, promoting circularity and sustainability.

- Policy recommendations: Evidence-based recommendations and guidelines are available to policymakers to support the transition towards circular practices in CCSI and across other industry sectors and to support the integration of frugal innovation[82] in circular

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[81]   This decision is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

[82]   "The frugal innovation process is a problem-oriented, creative approach to problem solving which starts from user needs and works from the bottom up to develop contextually appropriate solutions. It tends to be frugal both in ends and means, i.e. relying on the recombination of existing knowledge and technologies from previous efforts rather than substantial, dedicated R&D investments. Frugal innovation processes often (though not always) involves some element of openness – for example, collaboration between innovators and potential customers/users, or between multinational firms and local partners." Study on frugal innovation and reingeneering of traditional techniques" 2027 https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/20d6095a-2a44-11e7-ab65-01aa75ed71a1
"Frugal innovations are products in the wider sense that appeal through their simplicity compared to more complex solutions but with sufficiently similar context-specific utility and robustness. Frugal innovations are further characterised by significant gains in affordability, reduced use of resources in manufacturing and application, lowered cost of ownership and use, and greater ecological compatibility." Study on scoping and mapping of frugal and reverse innovation in Europe, 2025 https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/639c142b-f260-11ef-981b-01aa75ed71a1/language-en

economy strategies. They emphasize local adaptations of global circular economy strategies, allowing for customized approaches that respect and enhance local cultures and economies.

- Skills Enhancement: Training modules to learn frugal innovation, circular design principles and practices of circular economy inspired by crafts and other CCSI practices are available to professionals in various industries.

Scope: The transition from linear to circular economy[83] is crucial for Europe's prosperity, long term competitiveness and strategic autonomy. This shift can reduce dependence on raw materials, decrease greenhouse gas emissions and pollution, limit biodiversity loss, create jobs, and support environmental sustainability. The New European Innovation Agenda[84] recognises circularity as a key challenge to accelerate innovation across the EU. Securing essential resources is a high priority in EU strategies, but the transition to circularity requires more than just novel materials and products. It demands a paradigm shift, combining sectoral and technological progress with deeper structural industrial and societal changes, necessitating a systemic approach to transition to both a circular economy and a circular society. In advancing a circular economy, cultural dimensions are paramount. Cultural barriers, which can be as significant as economic or technical ones, should be understood and addressed.

Cultural and creative sectors and industries can act as catalysts for change. Through storytelling and cultural engagement, they can reshape cognitive frameworks and consumers' attitudes and promote societal shifts towards embracing circular principles. They can encourage other industries, such as manufacturing, including in textile and fashion or construction, including housing and urban development, and tourism, to adopt circular economy approaches, promoting resource efficiency and designing for longevity and adaptability. Despite their potential, cultural facets remain underexplored in circular economy strategies. This topic aims to investigate effective strategies and synergies between culture, creativity, and the circular economy, to inform policy, enhance educational curricula/lifelong learning, and inspire innovative approaches. The goal is developing robust frameworks and systems supporting economic sustainability across Europe, fostering an environment where culture, creativity, and economy combine to form resilient circular systems.

Proposals can choose one or more of the following four focuses and are free to combine them with other focuses, if this suits their specific objectives.

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[83] "The circular economy is a model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible. In this way, the life cycle of products is extended. In practice, it implies reducing waste to a minimum. When a product reaches the end of its life, its materials are kept within the economy wherever possible thanks to recycling. These can be productively used again and again, thereby creating further value. This is a departure from the traditional, linear economic model, which is based on a take-make-consume-throw away pattern. This model relies on large quantities of cheap, easily accessible materials and energy." https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20151201STO05603/circular-economy-definition-importance-and-benefits

[84] The New European Innovation Agenda - European Commission

Focus 1. Crafts-Led Innovation for circular economy

Crafts often naturally align with circular economy principles, through their use of natural, renewable materials, small scale tools and production, and creation of durable products with cultural significance. By fully integrating circular economy concepts with craftsmanship, we can address sustainability challenges, preserve cultural heritage and foster local economic development. Craft practices often exemplify frugal innovation, making efficient use of local resources and minimising waste. This offers valuable insights for other sectors seeking to improve sustainability and resource efficiency. Key aspects of the relationship between crafts and the circular economy include: traditional knowledge systems (crafts are rooted in generations of sustainable practices and resource-efficient techniques); local resource utilisation (crafts often rely on locally available materials, promoting resource efficiency); upcycling and waste reduction (craft practices involve creative reuse and upcycling of materials, minimising waste).

Furthermore, craftmanship is key part of the value chain in high-end industries like fashion and textile, with potential synergies to enhance sustainability and use of recycled materials.

Through collaborative, open innovation approaches creative solutions can be unlocked that promote a more sustainable, resource-efficient future.

Proposals will develop a framework that integrates circular economy and frugal innovation principles derived from craft practices, applicable across various industries and sectors. This includes models for cross-sector collaboration and knowledge transfer between craft practitioners, designers, researchers, and industry professionals to drive circular innovation and foster capacity building.

UNESCO Creative Cities, in particular the City of Crafts and Folk Arts, could be considered as a reference.

Focus 2 Evaluating adaptive reuse of built cultural heritage

Cultural heritage buildings are critical for their historical and cultural significance, embodying community defining characteristics. The built environment is a leading driver of material demand, with significant economic and wellbeing impacts. [85] The Built4People SRIA [86] highlights the need for R&I in retrofitting, repair and reinforcing, including cultural heritage, using traditional materials that are bio-based and locally sourced, or innovative materials that are compatible with traditional materials. The EU Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI) highlights adaptive reuse of cultural heritage as key to enhancing urban sustainability and resilience. [87] There is a need for systematic urban planning approaches that transform building lifecycles from linear to circular models. This involves leveraging cultural heritage to

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[85]   "http://unep.org/resources/Global-Resource-Outlook-2024"Global Resources Outlook 2024
[86]   https://www.kowi.de/Portaldata/2/Resources/heu/coop/he-built4people-sria-2022-27.pdf
[87]   https://circular-cities-and-regions.ec.europa.eu/support-materials/papers-and-reports. On this topic, see also outcomes of the Urban Agenda for the EUm https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/sustainable_circular_reuse_of_spaces_and_buildings_handbook.pdf

improve energy efficiency, reduce waste, and generate cultural, economic, social and environmental benefits. Participatory planning and impact indicators are crucial for achieving circularity.

Proposals will develop methodologies to demonstrate the economic, social and environmental benefits of maintaining and reusing built heritage. They will develop criteria and indicators to evaluate cultural heritage's contribution to circular city objectives, including enhancing energy efficiency, reducing waste, and improving social cohesion and economic sustainability, and will investigate evaluation tools for innovative circular financing, business and governance models for adaptive reuse of cultural heritage become available.

Focus 3. <u>Food heritage and gastronomic innovation for circular futures</u>

Food is deeply intertwined with cultural and creative sectors through gastronomic heritage, food-related crafts, and intangible traditions that shape cultural identities. Addressing food's cultural dimensions offers unique opportunities to advance circular economy principles. Food heritage promotes local sourcing, biodiversity preservation, and waste reduction. Additionally, culinary tourism and creative food initiatives drive sustainable economic growth and cross-sectoral innovation.

Proposals will develop a framework to integrate circular economy principles into gastronomic heritage and food-related crafts. They will create transferable methodologies linking food-related creativity with other cultural industries to inspire sustainable practices.

Focus 4. <u>Designing circularity: creative pathways and open innovation</u>

Design plays a pivotal role in the transition to a circular economy, as it can underpin three principles: eliminating waste and pollution, circulating products and materials, and regenerating nature. By applying these principles, designers can create products and services that are durable, repairable, and recyclable, aligning with circular economy goals.

The creative sector is known for its dynamism and for catalysing innovation, making it an ideal platform for experimenting with new circular design approaches across non creative sectors, including through experimenting open innovation practices. These can include product-as-a-service or make-to-order models, sharing economy models, and closed-loop production systems.

Proposals should aim to develop a comprehensive framework for integrating circular economy principles into design processes across cultural and creative industries. This framework should guide designers in creating sustainable products and services that minimise waste and maximise resource efficiency. A collaborative platform should enable sharing circular design practices from across industries, which will facilitate the transfer of innovative design solutions.

HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-04: Culture and creative industries for well-being

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society - 2027	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:
	Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000
	Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [88].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Deepened knowledge of the potential positive effects of cultural experiences on well-being and validated scalable and replicable practices, including commercial, to reinforce these effects

- Key industrial, health, cultural and/or civil society actors are aware of validated systemic approaches to make cultural experiences improve well-being and are engaged in producing such cultural experiences

- Competitive European cultural and creative sectors and industries systematically contribute to well-being schemes

Scope: It is widely accepted that cultural experiences, such as those offered by cultural heritage institutions (CHIs) or cultural and creative sectors and industries (CCSI), can be

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[88] This decision is available on the Funding Wond Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

beneficial for well-being. Research done, though scattered and not always systematic, support this conclusion, with for instance the World Health Organisation arguing that cultural experiences contribute to health in four areas: prevention of ill-health, promotion of healthy behaviour, as well as management and treatment of disease.

However, there is a lack of systematic research into how cultural experiences should be designed and applied in order to support well-being. The challenge is to remedy this situation by developing evidence based and validated practices that can be understood and used by CHIs and CCSI to develop cultural experiences that support well-being.

A possible focus could be on cultural experiences as a societal first aid kit, in situations of crises or other circumstances where well-being is under threat. Decision-makers could thus benefit from a set of validated actions that help support well-being among the population in such situations. Such research could be based on a collection of good examples provided by Member States/Associated Countries and other stakeholders, with a view to build on existing knowledge.

Another possible focus could be on a particular cultural and creative industry, such as the video games industry. Ever more people, in particular younger persons, spend ever more time on games, making this an important and growing source of cultural experiences. Besides being a source of entertainment, video game communities give opportunities for isolated, underprivileged or discriminated people to find a sense of belonging, and to contribute to societal goals – sometimes saving lives by counteracting mental ill-health and suicide. At the same time, however, in a context of competitivity and anonymity, harassment and discrimination are rife in many online multi-player video games.

Proposals may alternatively take an implementation research approach, and focus on finding effective way(s) to achieve broad uptake of validated intervention(s) based on cultural experiences that support well-being.

Proposals may also choose a completely different focus; on different kinds of cultural experiences – online or in person – or/and on cross-sectoral approaches. Proposals should, however, credibly explain why the chosen focus and approach are likely to achieve a strong impact.

In order to achieve evidence-based and validated practices that can be understood and used by CHIs and/or CCSI as well as by other targeted key actors, projects should involve stakeholders from such sectors. To validate practices, projects may launch small scale pilot trials, but may also choose other validation methods appropriate to the focus chosen. Projects may award financial support to third parties in order to involve entities such as CCSI or CHIs which are not part of the project consortium. Such support can only be given in the form of grants.

To the extent appropriate, projects should build on previous research and established methods, and in particular, as appropriate, establish links to the project funded under call topic

'HORIZON-CL2-2025-01-HERITAGE-09: Impacts of culture and the arts on health and well-being'.

HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-05: Re-imagining the creative economy: the interplay between the cultural and creative sectors and industries and the social economy

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society - 2027	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 3.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [89].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Evidence-based policy frameworks/guidelines supporting integrated strategies that promote the convergence of creative and social economy models.

- Case studies, indicators, and evaluation methods to measure the social and economic impact of CCSI operating within social economy frameworks. These tools are provided for policymakers and stakeholders, with areas for improvement identified.

- Hybrid business models of cultural and creative economy that incorporate social economy principles and demonstrate the balance of profitability with social responsibility, showcasing scalable examples across different regions and sectors.

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[89]   This decision is available on the Funding Wand Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- Workforce development strategies: strategies to address issues of precarious employment in creative sectors, including alternative employment structures, skill-sharing initiatives, and professional development programmes. Strategies to enhance socio-economic diversity and mobility in creative industries, addressing systemic inequalities and unlocking potential in education and leadership.

Scope: The intersection of social economy [90] and the cultural and creative sectors and industries (CCSI) offers fertile ground for exploring how these two domains can be leveraged for sustainable and inclusive economic development. Studies emphasize the role of social economy enterprises (SEE) operating in CCSI for fostering local development through ecological approaches, territorial clustering and community engagement, improving employment and working conditions for creative professionals and promoting inclusive growth. [91]

The European Commission adopted in 2021 an Action Plan for the social economy, complemented by the EU Social Economy Gateway. [92] The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) underscores the CCSI potential to contribute to economic growth, job creation, and innovation. OECD highlights that integrating social economy models in culture and creativity can stabilise employment and enhance working conditions within creative industries, which often struggle with precarious employment and access to credit, and foster sustainability, innovation and social cohesion. [93] In April 2023, the UN General Assembly adopted a Resolution recognising the social economy as critical to inclusive and sustainable economies. [94]

Embracing social economy principles in CCSI can help address significant societal challenges, including income inequality and social cohesion, while catalysing culture- and creativity-driven innovation and inclusive growth across European regions.

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[90]   [1] The European Commission defines social economy in the Communication *'Building an economy that works for people: an action plan for the social economy'*, COM(2021) 778 final, p. 5"The social economy covers entities sharing the following main common principles and features: the primacy of people as well as social and/or environmental purpose over profit, the reinvestment of most of the profits and surpluses to carry out activities in the interest of members/users ("collective interest") or society at large ("general interest") and democratic and/or participatory governance. Traditionally, the term social economy refers to four main types of entities providing goods and services to their members or society at large: cooperatives, mutual benefit societies, associations (including charities), and foundations. They are private entities, independent of public authorities and with specific legal forms. Social enterprises are now generally understood as part of the social economy. Social enterprises operate by providing goods and services for the market in an entrepreneurial and often innovative fashion, having social and/or environmental objectives as the reason for their commercial activity. Profits are mainly reinvested with a view to achieving their societal objective. Their method of organisation and ownership also follow democratic or participatory principles or focus on social progress. Social enterprises adopt a variety of legal forms depending on the national context."

[91]   Among others, A. Costantini, *Social Economy Enterprises and Cultural and Creative Industries. Observations and best practices*, Bruxelles, Diesis 2018 CCIs-SEEs_-FINAL_2018.pdf

[92]   About the EU Social Economy Gateway - European Commission

[93]   The Culture Fix. Creative people, places and industries (2022) Full Report | OECD; Economic and social impact of cultural and creative sectors. Note for Italy G20 Presidency Culture Working Group Economic and social impact of cultural and creative sectors | OECD

[94]   Promoting the social and solidarity economy for sustainable development A-77-L60.pdf

This topic aims to explore and enhance the interplay between the social economy and the cultural and creative sectors and industries in Europe and to develop innovative frameworks and models that leverage social economy principles and models in culture and creativity to drive social impact, economic sustainability and creation of quality jobs, vibrant cultural and creative sectors, and innovation across the broader economy through new products, services, and business models. Key areas of focus, to be addressed through broad inter-, multi- and trans-disciplinary approach, including cross-sectoral cooperation and stakeholder involvement, could be:

1. Sustainability and growth

- Investigate the impact of social economy models on the sustainability and growth of CCSIs. Analyse how social economy principles enhance the resilience of CCSIs during economic crises or global challenges, such as pandemics.

- Examine how SEEs within CCIs contribute to inclusive growth by addressing territorial challenges, fostering innovation, and creating sustainable jobs.

- Explore financing mechanisms for social economy initiatives in creative industries, including microfinance tailored to social economy CCIs.

- Address sector-specific challenges such as accessing credit and propose solutions.

- Investigate fiscal instruments to incentivise profit reinvestment for collective benefit by cultural enterprises.

2. Workforce development and employment

- Examine how social economy models address issues of precarious or informal employment in creative sectors.

- Study alternative employment structures improving financial stability, skill-sharing initiatives, and professional development programmes. These will focus on stabilizing precarious creative workers and formalizing informal cultural workers.

- Analyse socio-economic diversity and income inequality in the creative economy, focusing on how social economy models address these issues. Investigate how social economy enterprises improve socio-economic diversity in the sectors and promote innovation within CCSI.[95]

3. Innovation, local development and social impact

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[95] The study "Social mobility in the Creative Economy: Rebuilding and levelling up?" published by the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC) in 2021, provides insights into class imbalances in the creative industries, highlights the need for systemic change to address deep-rooted structural inequalities in the creative industries and proposes a ten-point action plan for enhancing social mobility in the creative economy [Social mobility in the Creative Economy: Rebuilding and levelling up?](#)

- Investigate the role of social enterprises in fostering innovation across CCSI and in driving social innovation within CCSI, and beyond, including case studies.

- Analyse how CCSI SEE enterprises enhance social participation through cultural activities, fostering inclusivity and empowering marginalized groups.

- Investigate the contribution of CCSI to local development and social cohesion through social economy approaches.

- Analyse how SEEs in CCSI build diversified local economies and stimulate local responsible consumption.

4. Policy comparative studies

- Analyse existing policy approaches and propose new ones that foster synergy between CCSI and social economy. These frameworks will leverage CCSI within social economy agendas to enhance their contribution to sustainable and inclusive development, innovation, and social cohesion.

- Conduct comparative studies of social economy models in EU vs. non-EU creative sectors, highlighting best practices and lessons learned. These insights will inform policy recommendations and business model development.

HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-XX: Culture and heritage shaping future technologies and societies

HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-06: Future-proofing sustainable cultural tourism

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society - 2027	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 4.00 and 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the

	Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [96].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to the first expected outcome, plus either those listed under Focus 1, or those under Focus 2, depending on the specific focus chosen.

- Evidence-based policy recommendations and solutions for integrating cultural tourism into broader sustainability, digital transformation, and social inclusion strategies at all levels of government, with the aim of boosting cultural tourism as a resource for sustainable development, growing related workforce in numbers and skills, and improving working conditions in the cultural tourism sector. Return on research investments is maximised through coordinated dissemination channels and policy co-creation facilitating uptake by policymakers and stakeholders of research-based solutions and recommendations.

Focus 1

- A comprehensive analytical framework for ethical AI integration in sustainable cultural tourism that balances sustainable competitiveness with cultural authenticity and inclusivity.

- Methodological frameworks and tools for AI-assisted foresight in cultural tourism enabling policymakers and stakeholders to anticipate changes and adapt strategies proactively.

Focus 2

- Evidence-based, community-centric models and strategies for sustainable cultural tourism development in emerging and less-developed destinations, that can be adapted to diverse contexts within and beyond the EU.

- Establishment of an international collaborative network for small business in cultural tourism, to connect them with researchers, expertise, knowledge, resources and collaborative opportunities.

Scope: Cultural tourism comprises roughly 40% of all tourism globally[97] and continues to grow rapidly, as travellers seek unique, authentic, and immersive experiences. Beyond the multifaceted economic benefits, cultural tourism enriches societies through authentic cultural

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[96] This decision is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

[97] UN World Tourism Organization (2018), *Tourism and Culture Synergies*, p. 21. https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/epdf/10.18111/9789284418978

exchange and promoting cross-cultural understanding. The cultural tourism sector stands at a critical juncture, facing unprecedented transformation driven by technological advancement, shifting consumer expectations, climate change and growing sustainability imperatives, threats to cultural integrity (commodification, tangible and intangible heritage degradation). Furthermore, there is an emerging focus on inclusive and meaningful travel experiences, including accessibility for travellers with special needs.

This topic addresses through a multidimensional approach the urgent need to future-proof sustainable cultural tourism in the face of technological, social and environmental transformations across the European Union and beyond. Proposals will choose one focus between 1 and 2:

Focus 1: Transformative AI integration and strategic foresight for cultural tourism resilience

By integrating advanced AI-powered tools and other emerging technologies with cultural tourism approaches, proposals will strengthen the resilience, inclusivity, and sustainability of cultural tourism and enhance the authenticity of cultural experiences. Additionally, through AI-assisted participatory foresight they will address the recognized need for tourism systems to develop greater resilience in the face of global challenges, moving beyond reactive management toward anticipatory governance models.

Proposals should investigate applications of artificial intelligence that reshape cultural tourism experiences while preserving authenticity and cultural integrity and enhancing inclusivity. They could leverage available public and private data and infrastructures and cooperate with existing networks and platforms, such as the Data space for tourism.[98] Building on recent developments in AI and immersive technologies, proposals could for example examine how AI-powered virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technologies can enhance visitor engagement and cross-cultural appreciation of cultural sites while managing physical visitor pressure and preserving historical integrity. They should investigate novel approaches to AI-driven personalisation that create tailored, authentic cultural experiences while enhancing inclusivity and ensuring ethical data usage, fair representation of minority heritage or lesser-known cultural expressions and avoiding homogenization of cultural experiences. Proposals might analyse the integration of AI in multilingual interpretation and cultural mediation to overcome language barriers and deepen cultural understanding for diverse visitor groups, explore AI applications that can enhance accessibility of cultural sites for persons with disabilities through adaptive interfaces and customized information delivery, develop, test, and refine AI-powered tools and platforms aimed at visitor flow management, real-time heritage monitoring, or other approaches that balance preservation with inclusive tourism experiences.

Furthermore, proposals will develop methodological frameworks for applying AI-assisted foresight methods (scenario planning, horizon scanning…) to anticipate future trends and challenges in cultural tourism, including visitor behaviour shifts, cultural commodification

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[98]   https://hadea.ec.europa.eu/calls-proposals/data-space-tourism_en

risks, potential disruptions (related to climate, pandemics, energy crises and other), enabling the identification of opportunities and risks and fostering proactive, data-informed policy responses. AI-based predictive analytics will be combined with participatory workshops to engage local communities, authorities, and cultural organisations in co-creating forward-looking sustainable tourism strategies.

Focus2: Cultural tourism as a catalyst for sustainable local development

Proposals will aim at developing sustainable cultural tourism frameworks and strategies tailored at emerging and less-developed destinations, particularly in low-income and lesser-known regions seeking to leverage culture and creativity for economic growth and social development. Partnership with non-EU countries is encouraged. Proposals will investigate models of cross-border collaboration that enable mutual learning, upskilling, fair working conditions, knowledge transfer and capacity building between EU Member States and non-EU partners in cultural tourism development. Proposals will identify proven sustainable cultural tourism models and adapt them to diverse settings (urban, peri-urban, rural or otherwise less-developed destinations) with an emphasis on equitable benefit-sharing. The research will include the analysis of case studies of successful integration of local communities in cultural tourism decision-making processes. Partnerships between local communities, creative industries (including crafts), local businesses and cultural heritage organisations will be prioritised to ensure co-creation of tourism offerings that are economically viable, environmentally balanced, authentic and culturally respectful. Proposals might resort to co-creation living labs and pilot demonstrations. Proposals will establish one or more collaborative networks for small businesses in cultural tourism, supporting them through access to researchers, expertise, knowledge, resources and collaborative opportunities.

Regardless of the focus chosen, all proposals should work to ensure policy uptake of existing knowledge, tools, and best practices from current and past research projects on cultural tourism and related areas, to foster large-scale impact. They should develop frameworks for integrating cultural tourism objectives with broader sustainability, digital transformation, and social inclusion goals. Furthermore, they should create methodologies for co-creative policy development involving diverse stakeholders (policymakers across various government levels, local communities, NGOs, businesses and industry). These methodologies should translate research insights into evidence-based strategies and contextually appropriate interventions, boosting cultural tourism as a resource for sustainable development, growing related workforce in numbers and skills, and improving working conditions in the cultural tourism sector. Continuous knowledge exchange mechanisms [e.g. between researchers, practitioners, and policymakers] will ensure research remains relevant and applicable.

HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-07: Societal impact of cultural heritage

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society - 2027	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR

contribution per project	3.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [99].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Enhanced understanding of the societal impact of cultural heritage; Identification of the positive and negative social impacts of cultural heritage

- Good practices and effective models to enable positive societal impact described and documented.

- Capacity building and knowledge dissemination among practitioners and policymakers.

And one of the following, respectively:

- Strategies developed on how to engage youth in cultural heritage related activities, especially reaching out to those not likely to have access.

- Increased awareness and understanding of how social inequalities shape access to cultural heritage, cultural participation, and representation, leading to more inclusive cultural policies and practices.

Scope: Safeguarding of cultural heritage is no longer seen as an end in itself. Cultural heritage is seen as a resource that contributes to societal well-being and cohesion, a base for multiple uses. Cultural Heritage is central to social needs and to the preservation of social fabric and community cohesion.

In this context, social innovation could also translate into taking elements from cultural heritage and adapting them for solving some of today's societal challenges (achieving better

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[99] This decision is available on the Funding Wand Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

social inclusion, social cohesion, well-being). Our rich cultural heritage and traditions have offered solutions for tackling society problems for centuries.

Whereas previous research has explored developing heritage-based education, contribution of culture to rural development and cultural tourism, there are some fields that could benefit for more research : cultural participation and access to culture, with a focus on young people; gender roles and identities; a shared cultural heritage, shared responsibility in the light of security challenges.

Research projects could explore one or several of the following aspects:

A. Cultural participation and access to cultural heritage, with a focus on youth

Access to cultural capital, acquired through socialisation and education, plays a crucial role in shaping cultural practices and preferences. There is a need to improve access to cultural heritage, in particular for young people, and contribute to tackle cultural inequality and strengthen a sense of identity and sense of belonging. Attention should be paid also to disadvantaged groups or people in rural areas, eventually solidifying participatory culture, and fostering a sense of stewardship and responsibility towards cultural heritage.

Prior research indicates profound and multifaceted barriers to access to culture. These barriers include, for example, geography, including the challenge of rural isolation, belonging to minority groups; or economic disparities.

The proposals could explore good practice for fostering access to cultural heritage, with a focus on young people and ways to empower them to take an active role in their communities and strengthen social cohesion. They could also explore which are the main barriers for access to culture and effective means to increase cultural participation, particularly among marginalised or minority groups and/ or inhabitants of rural areas.

The proposals will employ interdisciplinary and participatory methods to identify effective models for inclusive cultural participation, examining outcomes in diverse participating countries. Results will guide policies on cultural access, with recommendations for digital infrastructure, educational programmes, and cross-sector partnerships to foster inclusive citizenship.

B. Gender roles and identities

Cultural heritage has the power to promote diversity and inclusion by showcasing diverse narratives and histories, but it can also perpetuate inequality of stereotypes, cultural role models, and representations are limited or biased, silencing marginalised voices.

The proposed research could explore the complex relationships between cultural productions, representations and societal attitudes towards different sexes and gender identities, with a focus on understanding how culture can shape our cultural landscape and influence our attitudes and imaginaries.

Proposals should provide an analysis of the representation and impact of different gender identities and intersecting factors such as racial or ethnical background, disability, socioeconomic background, in cultural fields. This research could be focused on specific areas such as literature, arts, media, music, and heritage conservation.

Proposals should provide actionable recommendations on how to promote a more inclusive and diverse representation, including in cultural content, and to address the absence of diverse representation in the cultural field/ cultural industries. These recommendations should be developed in a dialogue with researchers, policymakers, industry representatives, civil society, and relevant stakeholders from diverse demographic groups.

C. Shared cultural heritage, shared values, shared responsibility

Societies have always shared cultural practices, ways of doing, and worldviews. Nevertheless, there are cases where knowledge and practice may be closely guarded and shared only with some initiated persons (e.g. in some Indigenous cultures) or where they have been imposed on people. Moreover, cultural heritage has been destroyed or damaged for what it represents.

The proposed research could explore the role and conceptualisation of cultural heritage as a distinctive element of our shared identities, democratic values but also links between culture and security including issues of disinformation and propaganda etc. Proposals will explore the notions of shared heritage, shared cultures, and shared responsibility as an expression or our interrelationships, interdependence as human societies and factors of social cohesion.

The proposals could also explore the instrumentalisation of cultural heritage the political influence on museums or other cultural institutions. At the same time, attacks on cultural heritage can destabilise society, and also CCIs content can greatly influence public opinion and the imaginaries. The proposals could explore how to deal with polarising narratives and controversial aspects of cultural heritage.

The proposals would propose good practice, guidelines, run pilot projects and propose didactic materials to raise awareness on challenges, discuss on the concept of "neutrality" in cultural heritage management, and enhance collective responsibility and cultural resilience. It would explore and propose materials for the notion of care and repair applied to cultural heritage, its significant attributes, meanings, and values.

HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-08: Strategies for safeguarding & transmission of intangible cultural heritage

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society - 2027	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and

	selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [100].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Enhanced understanding of the state of play of the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in Europe, in the context set by the 2003 UNESCO Convention, and an overview of methods for documenting and preserving ICH, including digital, audio-visual, and/or advanced technologies.

- Recognition of the significance and value of ICH in different social, cultural and economic contexts.

- Empowered communities take ownership and responsibility for identifying and safeguarding their ICH, with a focus on how inter-generational transmission is ensured.

- Innovative policy solutions are available, for the safeguarding of ICH and mobilising it as a resource for innovation, social and economic creativity and competitive edge.

Scope: Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) refers to the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills, and traditions that are passed down from generation to generation. ICH is an essential part of a community's identity and is a vital component of its cultural diversity.

In 2003, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adopted the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH Convention). The convention was adopted by 148 countries and aims to recognize the importance of intangible cultural heritage as a driving force for social cohesion, cultural diversity, and sustainable development.

ICH continually transforms and evolves and therefore safeguarding encounters different challenges than the built heritage sector. It is rooted in territories and communities and is

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[100] This decision is available on the Funding Wand Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

essential for identity building and maintaining social cohesion. It is a source for creativity and innovation, and can be a critical factor for new competitive scenarios.

Different case-studies should explore various approaches to the safeguarding of ICH, taking into account the specific nature of skills, knowledge and cultural practices of creators and knowledge holders, and of intergenerational transmission.

The projects should contribute to defining the specificities of intangible cultural heritage. Additionally, they could examine and quantify the contribution of ICH to creativity, innovation, competitiveness and global economy. The projects should also contribute to the rethinking of cultural policies for the safeguarding of ICH in the European context.

Proposed research projects could address in depth the following research questions:

1. What is the state of play of the safeguarding of ICH in Europe, following the UNESCO 2003 Convention?

2. What are the main threats and challenges to the erosion and loss of ICH in Europe?

3. What are the most effective strategies for securing ICH safeguarding initiatives?

4. How can advanced digital technologies be leveraged for the safeguarding & transmission of intangible cultural heritage?

5. How can ICH provide inspiration for innovative approaches to existing societal challenges (competitiveness, security, intergenerational dialogue and fairness)?

6. What role can community-led initiatives play in safeguarding ICH, and how can they be supported and empowered?

HORIZON-CL2-2027-02-HERITAGE-09-two-stage: Impact-driven   research   on realising the full potential of cultural heritage, arts and cultural and creative industries

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society - 2027 - Two-stage	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the

	Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [101].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- New groundbreaking findings and methods are developed, verified and put into practice that significantly contribute to realising the full potential of cultural heritage, arts and cultural and creative industries (CCIs) as drivers of sustainable innovation and/or a European sense of belonging

Scope: Applicants are invited to design the best possible and groundbreaking research and innovation to achieve that the full potential of cultural heritage, arts and cultural and creative industries as drivers of sustainable innovation and/or a European sense of belonging is realised.

Proposals should build on previous research, networks or platforms, as appropriate for the focus chosen. Projects must not, however, duplicate activities already funded, but should explore new areas.

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[101] This decision is available on the Funding Wond Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

Destination Innovative Research on Social and Economic Transformations

tbc

Expected impact:

tbc

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-01: How does access to nature-positive environments promote social cohesion and reduce inequalities in urban settings?

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [102].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Policymakers and civil society organisations will have robust evidence on how inclusive management of urban environmental commons fosters climate and societal resilience, social inclusion, wellbeing and community participation, and vice-versa how lack of access to green or blue spaces exacerbates existing social inequalities (e.g. poverty, marginalisation, and community wellbeing of vulnerable groups) and people's sense of inequality and insecurity.

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[102]   This decision is available on the Funding Wand Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- Development of strategies and innovative solutions to quantify and integrate the distributional aspects of access to quality green and blue spaces into integrated spatial planning, accounting for non-market values when making decisions about long-term changes in land use, urban development and conservation.

Scope: Proposals should focus on exploring and better understanding the relationships between access to quality green and blue spaces in the pursuit of social justice goals such as social inclusion and well-being, community cohesion and overall social fabric.

Research to date has largely focused on the benefits of nature on individuals (e.g., improved health, reduced stress), while less is known about their effects at a societal level: across cultural, geographical and socioeconomic contexts.

This topic aims to bridge the knowledge gaps in our understanding of how urban communities benefit from access to quality green and blue spaces, in particular the link between nature-positive environments and their role in fostering social interactions that cultivate social cohesion, community wellbeing, shared identity and sense of belonging, and place-making.

Studies show that disadvantaged communities have fewer and lower-quality green and blue spaces, but less is known about the mechanisms through which access to nature-positive spaces strengthen cultural identities at individual and group level, cohesion and resilience in particular in lower-income communities also over generations.

Proposals may explore:

- The community-level impacts of projects aiming to introduce green and blue spaces and an understanding of how intentional design and planning of these projects can contribute to the improvement of the societal outcomes throughout the community, with special attention to how disadvantaged communities may be impacted.

- The role that community-based projects aimed at social participation and inclusion, environmental preservation, circular economy and food security, and preserving natural heritage (e.g., urban gardening, traditional ecological knowledge practices, rewilding, nature conservation and nature-based solutions and citizen science) play in strengthening community agency, identity and social capital.

- The link between green and blue spaces and pollution, ensuring they contribute to the mitigation of inequalities in pollution exposure, a source of concern in many disadvantaged communities.

- The potential contributions of local businesses to the implementation of green and blue spaces, as well as the meaningful participation of individuals, representing different economic/labour sectors and collective identities within the community.

- The contribution of nature to place-making and the ways in which approaches from the arts and humanities can contribute to how we understand place, and shape future places.

- Knowledge gaps around the long-term impacts of lack of access to quality green and blue spaces, and its impact on amplifying existing socioeconomic inequalities, in particular the intersection with other determining factors of sociopsychological and mental wellbeing such as education, employment, housing, health, and mobility that shape socioeconomic status, including aspects around ease of access, affordability and capacity to empower communities, particularly among vulnerable groups.

- The impact that the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment has on the realisation of related human rights such as the right to health and well-being, the right to water and other economic and social rights, not least in the context of poverty.

When considering the notion of access to quality green and blue spaces, researchers should consider not only the physical distance to these spaces, but other barriers such as the state of desolation of public green and blue spaces, privatisation of green and blue spaces; as well as cultural, social, economic barriers to access to nature, or different uses or needs of green / blue spaces.

Interdisciplinary approaches, combining insights from sociology, anthropology and systems science, are encouraged. Clustering and cooperation with other selected projects under this call and other relevant projects are strongly encouraged, in particular Topic HORIZON-CL6-2025-01-BIODIV-06: Assessing and modelling socio-economic impacts of nature restoration and topics under the New European Bauhaus.

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-02: Strengthen Europe's social model and sustainable competitiveness through productivity

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy

	Community (2021-2025) [103].

<u>Expected Outcome</u>: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- The concept of sustainable competitiveness is analysed taking into account the shifts in geopolitics, global trade patterns, as well as changes in climate, technology and demography.

- Policymakers are provided with recommendations and innovative solutions, including a toolbox to boost EU (labour) productivity while ensuring high social and environmental standards in Europe and increasing competitiveness.

<u>Scope</u>: The Future of European competitiveness report (also known as the Draghi report) analysed and discussed the reason for European declining competitiveness, productivity and growth vis-a-vis its main competitors. A competitive economy is defined as an economy whose sustained rate of productivity is able to drive growth and, consequently, income and welfare. As such, it is a prerequisite for the maintaining of the European social model, which has also to adapt to the great drivers of change, including demography, technology, global trade patterns, climate, and geopolitical shifts.

From its side, the social model is the basis of the still high level of productivity and competitiveness in the EU, and without continuously upgrading it and sustaining it, there is a risk of a series of negative consequences, ranging from increasing of poverty, to a deterioration of human capital.

Research carried out should lead to recommendations to help Europe to remain a world power through high level of welfare, competitiveness and productivity. Proposals should look into possible opportunities and tensions between driving competitiveness, maintaining Europe's social model and living within planetary boundaries.

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-03: Tackling child poverty and ensuring disadvantaged children's access to ECEC

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

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[103] This decision is available on the Funding Wand Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [104].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Policymakers gain insights into the cost of child poverty and the returns from securing access of disadvantaged children to quality Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in the EU.

- Policymakers receive operational advice on ways to reduce this cost and support participation of disadvantaged children in quality ECEC to close the gap with other children in the EU.

Scope: Studies research the cost of child poverty and the returns/ways to secure disadvantaged children's participation to ECEC, yet their relevance to the current EU context is limited (i.e. most of them were conducted outside of the EU, and may now be outdated). Producing EU-specific insights on these issues is the aim of this topic, which will help close the ECEC participation gap and improve social outcomes, while fostering fiscal sustainability and inclusive growth.

The proposals may:

- Define disadvantaged children, by going beyond monetary aspects of disadvantages, and building on the EU's concept of risk of poverty or social exclusion.

- Estimate cost of child poverty and the returns yielded by participation to quality ECEC by taking into account:

  o the short and longer-term cost/returns,

  o the economic, social, wellbeing and educational aspects of these cost/returns,

  o children, parents' and aggregate outcomes.

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[104] This decision is available on the Funding Wond Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- Investigate barriers preventing disadvantaged children from accessing quality ECEC.

- Provide a mapping of the most efficient policies to reduce child poverty cost, comparing ECEC policies' value for money with other policies.

- Develop operational advice, including ways to better account for these cost/returns in policymaking and good practices to close the ECEC participation gap.

- Include within and cross-country comparisons.

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-04: Closing the learning gap: uncovering causes and effective policy interventions for declining youth skills in mathematics, reading, and science

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [105].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Provide policymakers with a solid understanding of the structural causes for the decline in young people's skills levels in mathematics, reading and science, including low and top levels of achievement, observed in the EU over the past 15 years.

- Generate rigorous, policy-relevant evidence about which teaching practices, programmes and policy actions can be effective to reverse that decline, including the role of curricula,

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[105] This decision is available on the Funding Wand Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

structural aspects of education and training systems, physical and digital learning environments, and innovative teaching and learning methods.

- Develop actionable advice to inform policy measures, programmes, future evaluations and actions for education and training systems in the field of basic skills.

Scope: Young people's mathematics, reading and science skills, as measured by large-scale international assessments such as the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), have significantly declined in Europe over the past 15 years. This applies both to the low and top levels of achievement. Reversing that trend is one of the fundamental objectives of the Union of Skills.

While the research literature has well analysed the short-term impact of the COVID-19 crisis, the structural causes of the observed decline are still poorly understood. More in-depth research is necessary, using various data sources at national and international level. Several interrelated research questions remain to be addressed, such as:

- How have changes in teaching methods, curriculum design, and assessment practices influenced the decline in mathematics, reading and science skills over time?

- What role do digital distractions and shifts in reading habits from paper to digital devices play?

- Do different levels of parental involvement affect educational performance?

- How much do the teacher shortages and working conditions affect the educational performance of children?

Proposals should also take into account the perspective of young people and other relevant stakeholders as part of the data collection. Close cooperation with authorities and/or other institutions owning the data is essential and should be ensured.

Understanding the causes of this decline is the pre-condition for analysing the causal impact of various remedial measures and identifying effective policies and programmes to improve young people's skills in mathematics, reading and science. Proposals should apply experimental and/or quasi-experimental methods for their analysis and could complement them with qualitative research methods. Proposals should also evaluate the costs associated with the policy measures or programmes analysed. Interdisciplinary approaches, combining insights from economics, sociology, psychology and neurosciences, are encouraged. Clustering and cooperation with other selected projects under this call and other relevant projects are strongly encouraged.

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-05: Long term contribution of basic skills to productivity, innovation, competitiveness and economic growth

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026

Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [106].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Provide policymakers with a solid understanding the long-term impact of basic skills on the economy, with a focus on growth, contribution to innovation and productivity to sustain EU competitiveness.

- Develop actionable advice about how education and training systems can help foster productivity in a lifelong perspective by reducing gender and socioeconomic gaps in basic skills.

- Develop actionable advice about how EU education and training systems can nurture the links between basic skills and other skills to promote productivity, innovation, competitiveness and growth.

Scope: In the context of the Union of Skills, the 2025 European Commission's Action Plan on Basic Skills identifies five basic skills: literacy, mathematics (including also financial literacy), science, digital and citizenship. Strong basic skill levels among young people and adults are key to sustaining EU productivity, innovation, competitiveness and growth, as also explained in the 2024 Draghi Report.

Causal evidence on the economic impact of basic skills is still insufficient, both at microeconomic and macroeconomic levels, mostly due to limited use of longitudinal data. This also applies to the links between basic skills and other skills and disciplines (such as

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[106] This decision is available on the Funding Wand Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

socio-emotional skills, and social sciences and humanities) to promote productivity, innovation, competitiveness and growth

There is also a need for better evidence on which education and training policies and practices at all levels (school education, vocational education and training, higher education, adult education) can be effective in reducing gender and socioeconomic disparities in basic skill acquisition and in subsequent labour market outcomes.

Proposals should address those research gaps by applying rigorous quantitative methods with a longitudinal perspective for their analysis and could complement them with qualitative research methods. Proposals should also evaluate the costs associated with the policies or practices analysed. Cooperation with education and training stakeholders is encouraged. Clustering and cooperation with other selected projects under the call HORIZON-CL2-2024-TRANSFORMATIONS-01-10 - Effective education and labour market transitions of young people and other relevant projects, as well as the Social Transformations and Resilience Partnership are strongly encouraged.

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-06: Making Europe a global magnet for talent - Attracting and retaining students, researchers and high-skilled workers from outside the EU

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:
	Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [107].

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[107] This decision is available on the Funding Wand Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

<u>Expected Outcome</u>: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Generate rigorous, policy-relevant evidence on the factors that may influence students, researchers, and high-skilled workers from non-EU countries to move to and remain in the EU.

- Provide policymakers and higher education/research institutions with guidance on which policies and programmes could be effective in attracting talented students, researchers and high-skilled workers from non-EU countries to the EU.

- Develop actionable advice to policymakers and higher education/research institutions about how to retain talented students, researchers and high-skilled workers from non-EU countries to ensure a long-term positive impact on the EU economy's innovation and competitiveness.

- Provide evidence-based policy insights/options to improve the coherence of migration pathways for skilled talent across the EU. Support the development of more streamlined and attractive mobility schemes, reducing administrative barriers and enhancing retention mechanisms to enhance the EU's competitiveness in research, innovation, and cultural exchange.

<u>Scope</u>: The EU's ability to compete on a global scale depends not only on retaining homegrown talent but also on actively drawing talent from outside Europe. The Union of Skills aims to make the EU a global magnet for talent, to attract and retain brilliant extra-EU tertiary students, top-level researchers and high-skilled workers. There is still limited research on what specific factors and their variability across countries (e.g. academic quality, career opportunities, cultural appeal, political context or funding availability) most influence the decision-making process for international students when choosing destinations. The same applies to the factors that can make a destination desirable for researchers and other high-skilled workers (e.g. quality of life, wages, professional opportunities, integration and family reunification measures, support to innovation ecosystem). More evidence is also needed about how policies and programmes can be successful in retaining students, researchers and high-skilled workers from abroad into the EU in the medium-to-long term.

Proposals should apply rigorous quantitative methods for their analysis of the abovementioned factors, policies and programmes and could complement them with qualitative research methods. Proposals should also address the gender dimension of attracting and retaining talent. Cooperation with higher education institutions, research institutions, non-academic organisations and notably industry, and social partners, as well as clustering and cooperation with other selected projects under this call and other relevant projects, are strongly encouraged.

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-07: Fostering competences for the green transition

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026

Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:
	Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [108].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Provide policymakers, education and training institutions, and social partners with a solid understanding of which competences young people and workers need to support the EU economy towards the green transition.

- Develop actionable advice to policymakers and education and training institutions about which education and training programmes and policy measures can promote the acquisition of those competences by young people and workers in a lifelong perspective.

- Provide policymakers with guidance on how to address the interconnection between fostering the competences for the green transition and those for the digital transition.

Scope: Environmental change has been one of the key drivers of labour demand and skills supply across all sectors for the past years. More data and analysis from research on competences that young people and workers need for the green transition are warranted to properly implement the Union of Skills and support people in upskilling and reskilling. The availability of robust quantitative data is still limited, both at national and international levels. Moreover, most available research on the green transition focuses on macro-level policies, overlooking how workers and communities can drive change.

Fostering competences for the green transition also requires a better understanding of young people's and workers' attitudes, concerns and behaviours about climate change and climate

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[108] This decision is available on the Funding Wand Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

action, circular economy and sustainable economic growth, as well as of new ways of developing capabilities and skills. The transferability of skills across occupations and the need for upskilling and reskilling the current workforce are also key to advancing the green transition. These issues are interconnected with the ongoing digital transition.

The 'green transition' embraces a wide and diverse set of sectors and activities without one specific set of generic competences (in other words skills vary strongly depending on the sector). For example, according to Cedefop[109], among high climate impact sectors the demand for skills for the green transition is the highest in energy. Therefore, proposals should focus on one of the following sectors, which are particularly affected by an increasing demand for green expertise: 1) agriculture and food production, 2) automotive industry, 3) energy and 4) construction

Proposals should use quantitative and qualitative methods and apply a lifelong perspective to address several research questions, such as:

- What are the most relevant competences required to actively contribute to the green transition in these industries?

- Which assessment methods and frameworks are most effective in measuring readiness for green jobs and sustainable innovation?

- What roles do digital skills and technological literacy play in equipping young people and workers for the green transition and how can education and training systems exploit the synergies between the competences for the green and digital transitions?

- How can policymakers, education and training institutions and employers collaborate to identify and address skills shortages that may hinder the green transition?

- How can vocational education and training systems become more flexible to respond effectively to evolving labour market needs for the green transition?

Proposals should also consider the gender dimension in their analysis. Clustering and cooperation with other selected projects under this call and other relevant projects, such as related projects from the Horizon 2020 European Green Deal Call and their results, are strongly encouraged.

Proposals should also explore synergies with the European Partnership on Social Transformations and Resilience.

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-08: Strengthened implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum focusing on inclusion, integration, and health

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Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026

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[109] https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/9197_en.pdf

Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [110].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Improved implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum through evidence-based insights into legal pathways, asylum and migration management, age assessment of minors, and resettlement frameworks, ensuring fair and efficient migration governance.

- Enhanced health equity for migrants and refugees by integrating robust health data into national systems, addressing governance barriers, and tackling intersectional inequities in healthcare access.

- Comprehensive evaluation of long-term social inclusion and integration strategies, providing evidence-based policy recommendations for labour market access, housing, education, youth participation, and social, political, and cultural inclusion.

Scope: The EU Pact on Migration and Asylum has introduced several key mechanisms requiring robust evidence to support their effective implementation. Proposals should conduct a comprehensive analysis of the Pact's components, including the solidarity mechanism, the age assessment framework for minors, crisis and force majeure migration management, and the Union Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Framework. This analysis should account for diverse national institutional landscapes and propose tailored policy recommendations that uphold human rights and enhance practical implementation.

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[110] This decision is available on the Funding Wand Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

The landscape of health data concerning migrants and refugees is fragmented, incomplete, and often of low quality. This situation is compound by political, governance, and structural barriers that impede the effective integration and utilisation of available data.

Proposals should map the existing landscape of health data integration for migrants and refugees across national health information systems, evaluating existing data collection frameworks, methodologies, and technologies used to gather and integrate health information on migrant populations, taking into consideration potential systemic and organisational barriers. They should identify challenges and best practices that have successfully facilitated data integration while maintain high standard of data privacy and security and provide policy recommendations.

Moreover, there is a lack of research exploring how intersecting factors such as age, gender, and legal status influence health outcomes among migrant and refugee populations. Addressing these gaps is essential for the development of informed policies that ensure equitable health care access and improve overall health outcomes for these vulnerable groups. Proposals should incorporate analysis of the impact of intersectional factors in access to health for migrant and refugees' populations.

Beyond health, understanding the long-term impact of social inclusion and integration strategies is critical. Proposals should develop comprehensive evaluation frameworks to measure the effectiveness of existing strategies at the EU and national levels, identifying best practices and recommending innovative policy adjustments. Areas of focus should include labour market access, housing, youth participation, and the broader social, political, and cultural inclusion of migrant and refugee communities. Research should also explore the relationship between migratory movements and social identity formation, ensuring that integration policies are adaptable to evolving societal dynamics and sustainable over time.

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-09: Persons with disabilities: opportunities for labour inclusion and social protection through the life course

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:
	Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the

	Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [111].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to some of the following expected outcomes:

- Provide implementable, quality and evidence-based data to policymakers and research and innovation stakeholders to bridge the employment gap between persons with disabilities and persons without disabilities.

- Deliver scalable and replicable inclusive person-centred interventions addressing the situation of persons with disabilities, in a manner that they are transferable to the new contexts in labour, education, training and work, and studying and comparing their impacts.

- Develop innovative policy approaches to promote inclusive and quality employment in the open labour market for persons with disabilities and remove barriers to facilitate their labour inclusion on equal basis with others.

- Address the transition from shelter and protected employment for persons with disabilities to the open labour market with full respect for labour law and the rights of persons with disabilities.

- Develop innovative policy approaches in the area of social protection for persons with disabilities to compensate the cost associated to disabilities, removing barriers for their participation and encourage them to engage in employment in the open labour market, while at the same time guaranteeing them an adequate level of social protection.

Scope: The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[112] recognises the right to work for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others (Art. 27). However, only half of the 42.8 million persons with disabilities of working age in the EU is employed, this being translated into an employment gap in which only 51% of persons with disabilities are employed compared to 75% of persons without disabilities[113]. In addition, persons with disabilities are overrepresented among those inactive in the labour market, not looking for a job.

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[111] This decision is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

[112] Article 1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities: *Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.* https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-persons-disabilities

[113] https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/3e1e2228-7c97-11eb-9ac9-01aa75ed71a1/language-en

Thus, new and innovative ways of inclusion into the labour market of persons with disabilities need to be explored and tested with the objective to reduce the gaps between persons with and without disabilities, inequalities and promote their social and economic inclusion on equal basis with others. An assessment of the benefits of employment of persons with disabilities at micro (person with disabilities) and macro (work organisations) levels could be carried out.

Research should address the disadvantages and barriers faced for increasing inclusion in the labour market of persons with disabilities, collect data on proved effective measures to improve the situation, and provide a thorough analysis of the impact and efficacy of existing policy measures, such as positive discrimination provisions, quotas, employment targets and others. Research should also take stock of existing accessible working environments tools and equipment, as well as reasonable accommodation tools and support at work already provided or still needed and their impact on the employment of persons with disabilities. The role of accessible and assistive technologies and other advance technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its potential for advancing the labour inclusion of people with disabilities may be explored.

Different types of work adapted to the often-hidden talents of persons with disabilities, including persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities should be explored, taking into account their work-capacity and abilities, disability type level, sex and age. The transition from supported/sheltered employment to the open labour market, including self-employment and entrepreneurship, could be considered, looking for sustainable pathways to facilitate the process and to be maintained in the long run.

Research should involve persons with disabilities and their organisations, employers, including SMEs, address their concerns, assess their role and good practices for labour inclusion of persons with disabilities. Civil society organisations supporting persons with disabilities and trade unions should also be involved. The role of educational institutions, social enterprises including work integration social enterprises (WISE), social services, the family and family associations, supporting persons with disabilities on their way towards inclusion in the labour market, can be considered.

Research should aim to clarify employment models that are in compliance with labour law from models that fail to respect the rights of persons with disabilities, differentiating instances of rehabilitation or occupational therapy. Persons with disabilities are at a higher risk of poverty due to insufficient labour market participation in combination with insufficient social protection and insufficient compensation for extra costs related to disability, including family care. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognises the right to social protection and to the enjoyment of that right without discrimination on the basis of disability (Art. 28).

Thus, research is expected to address the issue of social protection through the life course of persons with disabilities, including disability benefits, possible in-kind benefits, coverage of extra costs associated to disabilities, the transition to pension age for persons with disabilities and acquiring disabilities after pension age. Attention should be paid to measures that disincentivise or create barriers to the employment of persons with disabilities in the open

labour market. Proposals should consider also the in and out of employment and the possible compatibility with other benefits, such as disability benefits avoiding the benefit trap. The benefit trap needs to be addressed since it may act as a deterrent to take employment for persons with disabilities since they may lose their disability benefits and may even lead them to in-work poverty.

Applicants are encouraged to involve stakeholders, policymakers and public authorities, social services, citizens and civil society organisations, end-users and service providers.

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-10: Rethinking long-term care policy in the face of EU demographic shifts

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Eligibility conditions	The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply: The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [114].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

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[114] This decision is available on the Funding Wand Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- Evaluate the effectiveness of existing long term-care policies at national and regional levels in terms of meeting the current long-term care needs and making formal long-term care affordable, accessible and of high quality.

- Provide policy makers with scientific knowledge and data for evidence-informed policies to address the rising demand for long-term care with adequate supply of formal long-term care services and optimal use of resources.

- Assess how active and healthy ageing policies can mitigate the rise in long-term care needs in the EU.

- Propose new policy solutions to address rising long-term care needs, including from the perspective of retirement age and active and healthy ageing policies, social protection, public budgets for health and social care, the role of private funding as well as optimal use of all available resources, including digitalisation and policies to ensure smooth (in)formal care transitions.

Scope: In the EU, the number of people with long-term care needs is projected to increase in the future. In 2070, this number is expected to be 21% higher than in 2020.

This increase is largely due to population ageing and to the fact that more people are entering older age groups than in the past. At the same time, many Member States already struggle to meet all the long-term care needs now due to workforce shortages, which are likely to aggravate in future as the long-term care workforce is itself ageing and the sector is not attractive due to difficult working conditions and lack of career prospects.

Scientific evidence from research and innovation is needed to help address the increasing demand for long-term care in the EU in the context of shrinking labour resources and increasing pressures on public budgets.

In line with the European Care Strategy [115] and complementing the activities of the Transforming Health and Care Systems Partnership[116], proposals should:

- evaluate the effectiveness of existing national and EU long-term care policies at national and regional levels in terms of meeting the current long-term care needs and making formal long-term care affordable, accessible and of high quality;

- model projections until 2070, for long-term care needs, supply requests and expected resources for at least X EU Member States;

- identify and provide in-depth analyses of innovative ways to address long-term care needs with available and/or new resources in an optimal and cost-effective way, while ensuring high quality of care;

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[115]

[116]   https://www.thcspartnership.eu/

- help shape new sustainable policy responses to address long-term care needs based on active ageing policies, optimal use of available resources, including public and private funding, and by exploiting the potential of digitalisation in long-term care.

- address the needs arising from care transitions, such as the emergence of new pathologies with the progression of age, change of residence at retirement or at advanced ages etc. and the need to ensure the continuity of care across various health and long-term care settings or different regions or even countries.

Applicants are encouraged to consider the data offered by European Research Infrastructures in the social sciences domain, particularly SHARE[117]. Where applicable, proposals should leverage the data and services available through European Research Infrastructures federated under the European Open Science Cloud, as well as data from relevant Data Spaces. Particular efforts should be made to ensure that the data produced in the context of this topic is FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable).

Applicants aiming to address the implications of demographic changes on health and care systems would need first to check which areas are covered by the Transforming Health and Care Systems partnership and what the partnership is performing in order to avoid a duplication of efforts and double funding.

Proposals should consider the involvement of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC)[118] based on its experience and with respect to the value it could bring in providing an effective interface between research activities and policymaking.

To maximize impact and avoid unnecessary duplication, proposals should envisage, as appropriate, cooperation with Horizon Europe projects such as the ones funded by the call topic HORIZON-CL2-2022-TRANSFORMATIONS-01-10, "Socio-economic effects of ageing societies"[119]and the HORIZON-CL2-2023-TRANSFORMATIONS-01-08 call topic entitled "Integrated care solutions leading to better quality, person-centred long-term care and overcoming territorial inequalities in their provision"[120].

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-11: Creation of a Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH)-Action for the fostering integration (and cooperation between) SSH and STEM research and innovation in EU and national R&I policies.

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society 2026
Specific conditions

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[117] ri-portfolio.esfri.eu/ri-portfolio/table/
[118] DG JRC research activity on long-term care and demography aims to analyse the prevalence of neurodegenerative diseases (such as dementia) and implication on LTC demand and analysis of household composition (family structure changes) and implications on LTC provision.
[119] https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/horizon-cl2-2022-transformations-01-10
[120] https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/horizon-cl2-2023-transformations-01-08

Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 3.50 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Coordination and Support Actions
Procedure	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: The granting authority can fund a maximum of one project.
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [121].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- The greater integration of SSH and STEM [122] in EU-funded R&I initiatives, national/regional and those publicly funded, as well as in R&I policies by promoting dialogue, exchange and strategic cooperation among research funders and policy makers in the EU [and globally].

- Developing and maintaining a new, common, comprehensive 'Monitoring and Impact Evaluation Framework' for SSH and STEM in current and future EU R&I initiatives.

- Enhanced facilitation of knowledge exploitation and support to the cooperation between projects and stakeholders, as well as R&I policies (link to European Research Area TBC) involved in projects and other types of cross-border networks dealing with SSH and STEM.

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[121]   This decision is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

[122]   SSH integration involves actively supporting interdisciplinary research and innovation that combines SSH with Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) to better address complex challenges such as climate change, public health issues, and technological innovation.

<u>Scope</u>: As mentioned in the Report 'Align, Act, Accelerate: Research, Technology and Innovation to boost European Competitiveness'[123], European RD&I can provide a new understanding of and solutions to tackle societal challenges. Social sciences and humanities (SSH) and Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) improve the research activities, outcomes and impacts of Horizon Europe, because they enable a greater understanding of societal and competitiveness benefits. The inclusion and integration of these is part of a science that is excellent, as it not only delivers excellence in the technical aspects, but also in taking account different societal needs. Thus, there is need for a leading role at European level for this cooperation.

Proposals must create an **SSH Action**, that focusses on SSH **monitoring,** SSH **facilitation** and SSH **promotion,** on European level, which must also include all the following aspects;

1. Monitoring:

Monitoring is a **major** part of the work. E.g. see 'Integration of social sciences and humanities in Horizon 2020'-report and the 'Horizon Europe Integration'-report for 2021-2023 [which is expected to be published mid-2025]

- The action must create a new strategy in the first year of the project with the aim to develop and to monitor the SSH-STEM cooperation (e.g. A.I. search tools).

- This monitoring strategy should meet the following requirements:

  o Applicants should provide a clear justification what significant steps forward they propose regarding methodology compared to previous reporting on SSH-STEM collaboration (see reports), data management, analytical methods, data collection. Robust (Open) data driven approaches are strongly encouraged.

  o Applicants should describe what steps they will undertake to ensure the delivering of yearly reporting, which should include the data collection, data analysis, and interpretation of SSH-STEM related cooperation data (in EU-funded projects in Horizon Europe where there is SSH-STEM cooperation).

2. **Facilitation and promotion**:

- It needs to develop guidelines for SSH-STEM cooperation and support stakeholders in their projects when SSH-STEM cooperation is possible within the project. Applicants will be encouraged to propose approaches, such as training to researchers on how to best integrate either STEM or SSH into their research.

- The action must organize an annual event showcasing SSH and STEM cooperation; with exchanges with / for policy makers, best practice examples and showcasing funded projects/ programs at EU, national and other levels.

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[123]   https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/2f9fc221-86bb-11ef-a67d-01aa75ed71a1/language-en

- The project will also provide a quantitative and qualitative R&D evidence base how to ensure that policies (including funding) aimed at stimulating research & innovation are appropriate for the sectors which have the greatest potential to contribute to Europe's competitiveness.

3. SSH/ STEM Science for Policy:

- An important part of promotion is that the action acts as a SSH/ Science for policy exchange as well, providing the European Commission with feedback and advise on SSH-STEM cooperation, and to inform the European Commission of the latest developments in SSH-STEM cooperation (which is why the inclusion of SSH experts is of the upmost importance).

- The action must be a forum that promotes dialogue and cooperation among research funders and policy makers in the EU (linked to European Research Area) and outside to further the integration of SSH and STEM in EU-funded R&I initiatives.

- The action must provide monitoring guidance in SSH and STEM cooperation in R&I programmes at national/regional and European level.

The consortium is expected to liaise with the two Cluster 2 co-funded European Partnerships, ongoing EJP (etc)

HORIZON-CL2-2026-02-TRANSFO-12: Co-funded European partnership for Social Transformations and Resilience

Call: Cluster 2 Partnerships	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 60.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Programme Co-fund Action
Procedure	The procedure is described in General Annex F. The following exceptions apply: The granting authority can fund a maximum of one project. Representatives of the EU institutions will be part of the evaluation committee.
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:

Agreements	The starting date of grants awarded under this topic may be as of the submission date of the application. Applicants must justify the need for a retroactive starting date in their application. Costs incurred from the starting date of the action may be considered eligible.
	Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties (FSTP). The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. Financial support provided by the participants to third parties is one of the primary activities of the action in order to be able to achieve its objectives.
	As financial support provided by the participants to third parties is one of the primary activities of the action in order to be able to achieve its objectives, the EUR 60 000 threshold provided for in Article 208(a) of the Financial Regulation does not apply.
	Given the type of action and its level of ambition, the maximum amount of FSTP to be granted to an individual third party is EUR 3 million, per grant. However, if the objectives of the action would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult (and duly justified in the proposal) the maximum amount may be higher.
	The funding rate is up to 30% of the eligible costs.

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Research funders, policymakers and research communities in the social sciences and humanities (SSH) are provided with a multi-annual R&I programme on social transformations and resilience, responding to the green, digital and demographic transitions and unexpected shocks.

- Research investments on social protection and essential services, future of work, education and skills, and a fair transition to climate neutrality are increased.

- Stakeholders, including social partners and civil society, and policymakers are provided with evidence-based knowledge, tools and innovative solutions, which contribute to new policies and strategies for strengthening resilience, fairness, inclusiveness and social cohesion at European, national and regional level.

Scope: Europe is undergoing critical social transformations driven by macro drivers of change, such as the green and digital transitions, and demographic change, which were accelerated by events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. These transformations bring challenges and opportunities such as changing skill demands and labour shortages, new digital and intergenerational divides, increasing inequalities and threats to social cohesion, and rising costs of social protection, among others. The magnitude of these social transformations as well as the heterogeneity in welfare systems and labour markets call for combined inter- and transdisciplinary knowledge and resource

sharing, and long-term concerted actions, on the basis of a Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA).

Proposals for the co-funded Social Transformations and Resilience (STR) partnership must aim at creating a 7-year research and innovation programme[124] which will make use of the potential of social sciences and humanities to build resilience, ensure fairness and inclusiveness and foster social cohesion in the light of changes in climate, technology, demography and unexpected shocks.

Innovations and scientific results achieved will contribute to reaching EU priorities on the European Pillar of Social Rights, the EU Green Deal, and strengthening the European Research Area (ERA), the European Education Area (EEA) and will contribute to designing better national, regional and local policies in line with their respective strategies.

They will also contribute to the implementation of United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 1 (No Poverty), 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 10 (Reducing Inequalities), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), 13 (Climate Action), and 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

To achieve these objectives, the partnership is expected to launch annual transnational calls for proposals and additional activities in four interconnected impact areas:

- Supporting the modernisation of social protection systems and essential services

- Shaping the future of work

- Fostering education and skills development

- Contributing to a fair transition to climate neutrality

The STR partnership is expected to organise activities along the following six operational objectives:

- Collect data and evidence to measure social transformations, drawing from a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods in the social sciences and humanities, and use these to inform the development of evidence-based public policies and strategies.

- Promote comparative studies to identify and share best practices and failures at regional, national and EU level.

- Construct new, innovative ways to connect researchers with policymakers, stakeholders, citizens and social innovators in working together, communicating needs and results

- Develop social and individual experimentations at all levels (subnational, national, European) to better understand the impact of social transformations and public policies.

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[124] With an additional three years to administer the last calls.

- Encourage the development of new analytical, methodological and epistemological tools to better understand social transformations and resilience

- Build capacity among the R&I community and policymakers to adjust and strengthen social infrastructures and services in light of unexpected shocks.

Proposals must build on the work of ERA-Nets CHANSE, as well as other networks and initiatives, such as HERA and NORFACE, the Trans-Atlantic Platform for Social Sciences and Humanities (T-AP) and the Joint Programming Initiative More Years, Better Lives (JPI MYBL). By bringing together different stakeholders in academia, policymakers, social partners and trade associations, civil society and international organisations, the partnership will create a critical mass of knowledge and resources to implement a long-term Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA).

The partnership should engage with the following stakeholders: (i) National research funding agencies and ministries in research and higher education; (ii) ministries responsible for labour, social affairs, employment, climate and environment, as well as other relevant public authorities in the four impact areas; (iii) researchers from the social sciences and humanities and transdisciplinary fields; (iv) social partners, citizens' organisations and NGOs at local, national and EU level, such as trade unions, employer associations and non-profit organisations advocating for the rights of disadvantaged groups; (v) private sector, which may include employment agencies, providers of essential services, social entrepreneurs, and private education institutions.

As the partnership touches upon fundamental aspects of peoples' lives (work, social protection, education, and a fair green transition), it is instrumental to involve relevant actors, interest groups and potential end-users of the research results in the partnerships' activities. Gender and intersectional aspects should be considered throughout all activities and joint calls.

EU agencies (e.g. Eurofound, ELA, CEDEFOP[125]) which deal with issues related to the four impact areas, such as working conditions, vocational education and training, and labour law, as well as international organisations such as the ILO and the OECD, need to be considered as stakeholders, as they can provide important inputs and resources to the partnership. Collaboration with existing research infrastructures (e.g. European Social Survey, SHARE, CLARIN, CESSDA, Eurostat) is encouraged. This should aim at facilitating access to data (e.g. on social security) and making use of relevant datasets in the projects that will be funded under this partnership.

The partnership is open to all EU Member States and countries associated to Horizon Europe and will remain open to third countries wishing to join. Partners are expected to contribute financially and/or in kind, depending on the level of ambition of the proposed activities. The partnership should be open to new partners throughout its lifetime.

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[125] In line with rules for Horizon Europe on working with EU's Decentralised Agencies

To ensure coherence and complementarity of activities and leverage knowledge and joint activities, the partnership is expected to establish synergies with relevant Horizon Europe projects under relevant Clusters of Pillar II, partnerships and missions, such as the Driving Urban Transitions (DUT) partnership, the Clean Energy Transition (CET) partnership, the Transforming Health and Care Systems (THCS) partnership, the Mission on climate-neutral and smart cities, as well as the Mission on Climate Adaptation, among others.

Proposals must consider a transition strategy, aimed at becoming sustainable and ensuring continuity, when the EU contribution has ended. This transition strategy must also prepare for changes under the next R&I Framework Programme.

HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-TRANSFO-01: Impact of in-kind benefits on income distribution and on vulnerable populations

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society - 2027	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [126].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Policy makers get a mapping of in-kind benefits across Member States and a comprehensive measurement framework.

- Policy makers gain insights on the availability of in-kind services, on potential gaps in their provision, and on reasons for non-take up.

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[126] This decision is available on the Funding Wand Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- Policy makers gain insights into the redistributive role of in-kind benefits and on the segregation of different social groups.

- Policy makers receive operational advice to make informed policy choices to reduce inequality, and strengthen fairness and cohesion.

Scope: In-kind benefits refer to non-cash goods and services provided to individuals or households, typically by the government (national, regional and/or local), to support their well-being or fulfil basic needs. Unlike cash transfers, which can be spent at the recipient's discretion, in-kind benefits ensure that resources are used for specific purposes for free or at a subsidised cost (e.g. food banks, social housing, health and long-term care services, childcare, schooling, sport infrastructure, public transport). Despite the wide range of in-kind benefits, there is poor empirical knowledge basis of the impact of in-kind benefits (except for healthcare) on the income distribution and on vulnerable groups, unlike the impact of cash benefits.

Research activities may focus as a baseline on establishing a full mapping of in-kind benefits (both for free and at a subsidised cost, universal and means-tested) provided by national, regional and local governments. This mapping, potentially structured along the life-cycle perspective and/or around specific groups, might help to develop EU indicators on in-kind benefits and improve comparability.

Proposals may develop a comprehensive measurement framework based on methods, tools and indicators, both qualitative and quantitative and both ex-ante and ex post. The framework would translate in-kind benefits into income and show their redistributive role (on income groups, vulnerable populations, marginal and/or small size groups).

Proposals may consider identifying the availability of in-kind benefits at local level, potential gaps, take-up rates for in-kind benefits and their reasons (e.g. capacities' incompatibility with the local needs).

Proposals may provide operational advice to policy makers on how to translate the research results into concrete actions to reduce inequality and strengthen fairness and cohesion.

The overall aim is to close the knowledge gap covering various dimensions.

HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-TRANSFO-02: How a competitive social economy can boost sustainable European competitiveness?

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society - 2027	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [127].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Social enterprises, traditional firms and investors will benefit from a better understanding of the sustainable competitiveness factors of the social economy [128] in Europe through knowledge development and know-how on innovative products and services, improving quality and productivity, and increasing adaptability, social inclusion and sustainable practices.

- Citizens and traditional private sector will benefit from the increased contribution of the social economy to the EU's sustainable competitiveness and shared prosperity goals. The research will inform policy makers and private sector on best practice, policy and regulatory reforms aimed at enhancing the social economy's contribution to the EU's competitiveness and prosperity goals.

- The social economy's principles for sustainable competitiveness are promoted, through the development of practical and innovative solutions..

Scope: The European Union is committed to fostering a social market economy that promotes sustainable growth, social justice, and economic competitiveness. In this context, the social

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[127]   This decision is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

[128]   The social economy covers entities sharing the following main common principles and features: the primacy of people as well as social and/or environmental purpose over profit, the reinvestment of most of the profits and surpluses to carry out activities in the interest of members/users ("collective interest") or society at large ("general interest") and democratic and/or participatory governance. Traditionally, the term social economy refers to four main types of entities providing goods and services to their members or society at large: cooperatives, mutual benefit societies, associations (including charities), and foundations. They are private entities, independent of public authorities and with specific legal forms. Social enterprises are now generally understood as part of the social economy.

The social economy (associations, cooperatives, mutual societies, foundations, and social enterprises) provides monetary and non-monetary services, impacting on European sustainable competitiveness. Social economy actors also have a different approach to their working environment due to the societal objectives of their employers and the democratic governance of their ecosystems.

economy has emerged as a potential driver of innovation, job creation, and social inclusion. On the other hand, there is still a persistent knowledge gap in the literature when it comes to appreciate the multifaceted contribution social economy actors make in shaping and advancing economic competitiveness within and across the EU society and its impact on inclusive wellbeing.

Sustainable competitiveness and shared prosperity are key a political priority of the new European Commission[129]. In this context, the notion of sustainable competitiveness is less about relative labour cost and more about skills, innovation, entrepreneurship and adaptation. It focuses on the ability for an individual, a firm, a sector, or a country to increase shared prosperity in relation to the current and future wider environment and society.

The link between social economy and sustainable competitiveness relies on innovation, which needs to be made broader, going beyond "mere" technological innovation and embrace social or even better societal innovation.

Proposals should focus on exploring the potential virtuous_relationships between social economy, sustainable competitiveness and shared prosperity.

Research should focus on a deeper understanding of the factors contributing to the sustainable competitiveness of social economy entities on one side and, on the other, it's possible impact on EU sustainable competitiveness. This requires addressing knowledge gaps, such as the lack of a comprehensive framework to measure the social economy's contribution to sustainable competitiveness in the European Union.

Research may undertake a review of existing literature, analysis and develop case studies to identify the key enabling factors that make social economy entities competitive in a sustainable way, while considering the social, economic, and environmental dimensions.

To better capture the role of the social economy as one of the drivers of sustainable competitiveness, the research may develop a framework to measure its contribution including with existing and new indicators and metrics.

Research may identify best practices, develop toolkit and policy recommendations on how social economy in Europe can boost public and private competitiveness linked to EU shared prosperity goals.

The regulatory context and its impact on the social economy's ability to contribute to sustainable competitiveness should be considered.

Activities may involve interdisciplinary research, stakeholder engagement, and policy analysis. Researchers may need to draw on expertise from different fields (economics, sociology, environmental science, public administration) to develop a comprehensive understanding of the social economy's role in promoting sustainable competitiveness.

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[129]   https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648_en?filename=Political%20Guidelines%202024-2029_EN.pdf

The scope of this call topic is not limited to any specific sector, value chain or enabling factors, however, proposals may put emphasis on a specific one. Collaboration with stakeholders from the social economy, private sector, and public sector to develop a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between social economy, sustainable competitiveness is encouraged.

HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-TRANSFO-03: Perspectives for EU labour mobility

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society - 2027	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [130].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Policymakers gain insights into the economic and social impacts of worker mobility across the EU, including effects on wages, fiscal budgets, and social systems for both sending and receiving regions.

- Actionable recommendations to maximise the benefits of mobility while considering challenges such as demographic changes, regional effects, digitalisation and, to the extent possible, suitable further developments such as climate change, discussions around the accession of further countries to the EU and wider geopolitical instabilities.

Scope: While the EU facilitates free movement as one of the four freedoms of the single market, the long-term social and economic implications for both receiving and, especially,

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[130] This decision is available on the Funding Wand Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

sending regions remain underexplored. These include not only direct effects on fiscal and social budgets but also more subtle impacts, such as on the networks, skills, and experiences that individuals bring back to their home regions, but also on the income inequality in the country from which the movers originate.

Gaining a deeper understanding of these diverse often complex impacts is crucial for shaping policies that effectively harness the benefits of mobility across Europe. In doing so the research shall contribute to the ongoing efforts of strengthening the internal market and make Europe more competitive, while also ensuring social fairness and delivering on the European Pillar of Social Rights, in particular on having fair working conditions and on ensuring access to adequate income and social protection. Harnessing the benefits of mobility is also to be seen in the wider context of green and digital transition, necessitating enhanced labour mobility to address skill mismatches and demographic challenges.

The research should build on previous research, some of which has been conducted in previous HORIZON Europe and Horizon 2020 projects.[131] Proposals should have a clear focus and be characterised by ambitious but realistic research questions and a promising methodology. Quantitative approaches and/or econometrics should be part of the proposed methodology. Approaches which can capture developments over time, such as longitudinal analysis or time series, might thereby be of added value.

In detail the projects may:

- Analyse the effects of labour mobility on the functioning of social security systems and their coordination

- Provide research which fosters an informed debate on potential strategies for a future-proof and efficient EU-level social security coordination.

- Explore ways to improve the quantification of the volume of various forms [e.g. long-term movers, seasonal work and other forms of short-term mobility, postings, cross-border (tele-)work etc] of labour mobility and/or make available figures more comparable across Member States

- Develop economic models to assess the EU-level economic effects of labour mobility

- Provide a comparative analysis of intra EU labour mobility with labour mobility in other world regions or to geographical mobility within Member States.

- Develop and test a model to forecast labour mobility in different scenarios (e.g. making assumptions about the economic and social development in different parts of the Union).

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[131]   See e.g. CORDIS Results Pack on migration - New tools and perspectives to understand movement in Europe (07/2023); or CORDIS Results Pack on migration and migrant integration – Enabling knowledge-based approaches to migration (2020) Role of European Mobility and its Impacts in Narratives, Debates and EU Reforms | REMINDER | Project | Fact sheet | H2020 | CORDIS | European Commission financed under 'Intra-EU mobility and its impacts for social and economic systems' and Return mobilities to rural Portugal: an assessment of the production of place | MigRural | Project | Fact sheet | H2020 | CORDIS | European Commission

- Analyse to which extent and under which conditions regions with net-outward mobility have benefited/can benefit – eventually in the longer run – from this mobility

- Investigate the economic and social differences between labour migration and labour mobility, the experience with EU enlargement might be used to analyse this, but also some of the other aspects.

- Provide evidence on which policy instruments are in practice most suitable to ensure a labour mobility not being perceived as unfair or linked to exploitation, social dumping etc.

These aspects illustrate thematic areas which could contribute to the objective of developing a vision for the future of labour mobility in the European Union and to discuss how legal and institutional frameworks can be adapted to support mobility in a way that is both economically and socially beneficial. This includes modernising the coordination of social security and ensuring that policies reflect the realities of modern work arrangements.

HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-TRANSFO-04: The effective use of artificial intelligence in learning environments in pre-primary and primary education

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society - 2027	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [132].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

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[132] This decision is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- Provide policymakers and educators with a solid understanding of the potential benefits and challenges stemming from the use of artificial intelligence tools in learning environments in pre-primary and primary education, including their ethical dimension.

- Generate rigorous, policy-relevant evidence on the impact of use of artificial intelligence tools in learning environments on educational performance.

- Develop actionable advice to educators about how they can make an effective use of artificial intelligence tools in their work, including for the assessment of learning outcomes.

Scope: The use of artificial intelligence (AI) in learning environments in pre-primary and primary education is rapidly growing. However, there is limited causal evidence on how AI can improve learning outcomes, enhance the teaching techniques and support the teaching profession. Most existing research is from extra-EU contexts, which limits the transferability of findings to EU education and training systems and is often conducted on a limited number of participants, hindering the possibility of generalising its findings. Moreover, research on the implications of AI tools for equity and inclusion in education is lacking. There is also a need to better investigate the challenges that AI poses to teaching and learning.

Relevant research questions to address include:

- How can AI-powered tools personalise learning experiences and support teachers in addressing diverse student needs?

- What are the potential benefits and challenges of integrating AI into initial teacher education and continuous professional development programmes?

- How can AI assist teachers in automating administrative tasks, allowing them to focus more on pedagogy and student engagement?

- What ethical considerations and potential risks should be taken into account when using AI in education to support teachers and students?

Proposals should apply rigorous experimental and/or quasi-experimental methods to evaluate the effectiveness of existing AI tools or to test new AI tools. Proposals should evaluate the costs associated with the policy measures or programmes analysed. Proposals should also apply qualitative research methods to cover the ethical dimensions. Interdisciplinary approaches and close cooperation with educational institutions and educators are essential. Clustering and cooperation with other selected projects under this call and other relevant projects are strongly encouraged.

HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-TRANSFO-05: The impact of the use of digital tools for leisure on educational outcomes

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society - 2027

Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [133].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Provide policymakers, education practitioners and citizens with a solid understanding of how social media, online gaming and other leisure uses digital tools affect the educational outcomes of young people, including through its impact on well-being.

- Generate rigorous, policy-relevant evidence about policies and practices aiming to regulate young people's use of digital tools for non-educational purposes, such as smartphones, at school.

- Develop actionable advice for policymakers and citizens about how to promote young people's healthy use of digital tools for leisure, both at school and outside school.

- Describe and quantify the effects of digital tools for leisure on students' motivation, study habits, attention span and concentration, time management and engagement.

Scope: The increasing prevalence of digital devices in young people's life has raised concerns about the potential impacts of the use of digital tools for leisure on primary-, secondary- and higher education students' well-being and educational outcomes. "Digital distraction" is emerging as a potential threat to academic performance and several countries have started to regulate the use of smartphones at school.

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[133] This decision is available on the Funding Word Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

There is still limited causal evidence on how the use of digital tools for leisure in-school or out-of-school affects educational performance, in both primary and secondary education, because most of the existing literature is purely correlational, or only focuses on effects on well-being. Moreover, most existing research is from extra-EU contexts, which limits the transferability of findings to EU education and training systems.

Several interrelated research questions remain to be addressed, such as: how does frequent smartphone, social media use and other online leisure activities (such as gaming) impact students' attention span and concentration? To what extent is the impact of digital tools for leisure on academic performance mediated by students' well-being? How do the effects of digital tools for leisure on students' motivation, study habits, attention span and concentration, time management and engagement vary with the intensity of use? How can schools, educators and parents balance the use of those tools to enhance, rather than hinder, educational performance?

Proposals should apply rigorous experimental and/or quasi-experimental methods for their analysis and could complement them with qualitative research methods. Close cooperation with educational authorities, educational institutions and educators in analysing existing policies and practices is essential. Proposals should also include the opinions of young people and other relevant stakeholders, for example in the form surveys, interviews, consultations, as part of the data collection. Proposals should also evaluate the costs associated with the policy measures or programmes analysed. Interdisciplinary approaches, combining insights from economics, sociology, psychology and neurosciences, are encouraged.

Clustering and cooperation with other selected projects under this call and other relevant projects are strongly encouraged.

HORIZON-CL2-2027-02-TRANSFO-06-two-stage: **Improving social and socio-economic outcomes for people with dementia and informal caregivers**

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society - 2027 - Two-stage	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 4.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions

	under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [134].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- People with dementia experience improved social and socio-economic well-being through the development and implementation of person-centred interventions that enhance autonomy, inclusion, and quality of life.

- Informal caregivers benefit from reduced emotional, financial, and physical burden thanks to evidence-based support measures, policies, and services that improve their well-being and economic resilience.

- Support networks and healthcare systems provide more integrated and accessible care for people with dementia and their caregivers through strengthened coordination between healthcare providers, social services, and community organisations.

- Researchers and policymakers have access to improved, gender-sensitive data on dementia care to inform policies, optimise resource allocation, and enhance the effectiveness of care models.

- The gender imbalance in informal dementia care is reduced by fostering policies, awareness campaigns, and support mechanisms that encourage a more equitable distribution of caregiving responsibilities between women and men.

Scope: Dementia is a progressive neurological disease. Currently, there is no cure for dementia. The number of people with dementia will double by 2050 in the European Union, from 10 million currently.

As patients with dementia lose their ability to care for themselves, care is often provided by informal caregivers, which mostly include family members, and more specifically women. In fact, 71% of the estimated time devoted to unpaid care for people with dementia is devoted by women. Women, especially those in vulnerable groups such as those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, often face additional pressures in managing caregiving responsibilities, which may exacerbate pre-existing inequalities. Furthermore, the provision of informal care has an impact of the social life, as the time spent on the person with dementia is time not spent on other friends and family, and often time not spent on paid work. Additionally, the informal care is unpaid and has been estimated to have an economic burden.

Studies have shown that patients with dementia and their informal caregivers have higher rates of depression than the general population.

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[134] This decision is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

While there is a lot of attention for clinical research, there is far less attention for the aspects surrounding the social life, financial stability and the mental health of patient and informal caregivers. Many innovative solutions have been proposed, but few have been implemented on a wide scale. What is needed, are interventions focussed on decreasing the burden of these aspects on patients and informal caregivers, addressing the gendered nature of caregiving while considering the broader socio-economic impacts and mental health needs.

Considering the focus, it is of the upmost importance that informal caregivers are involved in the research from start to finish: in design, implementation as well as outcomes.

Gender-based and intersectional approaches are crucial to understanding the unique challenges faced by caregivers, especially for those from marginalised or disadvantaged groups. Proposals may focus on vulnerable groups (e.g. migrants, lower socio-economic populations), involving informal caregivers in the research process from the outset to ensure that interventions are tailored to the real needs of caregivers and the individuals they care for.

Considering the already high burden of dementia, interventions should be implemented in at least eight Member States or Associated Countries. Applicants should provide a robust methodological framework for evaluating the effectiveness of the interventions. All proposals should include plans for longer-term follow-up and should include cooperation with policy makers on either regional/local or national level to ensure durability. Finally, proposals should contribute to improving social policies in the long run.

Every proposal should be geographically balanced between Eastern and Western European countries, as the divide in care and access to different form of care for people for dementia is large between Eastern and Western Europe. In general, inclusion of middle- and low-income countries is strongly encouraged. Proposals should outline clear, evidence-based strategies for tailoring, deploying, and assessing these interventions at individual, family, community, and societal levels, while addressing the specific needs of different caregiver demographics.

The end goal of every proposal should be improving the socio-psychological and economical risk of providing care, improving the unequal distribution of factors surrounding the care, and improving the general quality of life of all involved.

HORIZON-CL2-2027-02-TRANSFO-07-two-stage: Scaling and deploying innovations in migration

Call: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society - 2027 - Two-stage	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 3.00 and 5.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	

Type of Action	Innovation Actions
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) [135].

Expected Outcome: Projects should contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Enhanced impact of EU-funded migration research by identifying and scaling up promising innovations, methodologies, and tools from Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe projects.

- A policy innovation ecosystem: Foster collaboration between researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to adapt, scale, and deploy validated models, ensuring their scalability, sustainability, and practical application in diverse EU, national and local contexts.

Scope: Despite significant EU investment in migration research, many innovative solutions and insights remain underutilized in policymaking and practice. This topic aims to bridge that gap by systematically identifying, assessing, and facilitating the adoption of promising approaches developed in past EU-funded migration related projects.

Proposals should map and analyze research outputs, methodologies, and innovations from relevant Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe migration projects, selecting those with high potential for policy uptake, operational implementation, market deployment and scaling. Applicants are encouraged to engage key stakeholders - including policymakers, migration practitioners, researchers, the private sector and civil society - to ensure that identified innovations align with real-world needs and implementation pathways.

Proposals should consider ways to validate, adapt, and scale up these solutions across different governance levels and migration-related domains. Activities may include pilots, policy labs, co-creation processes, or other mechanisms to enhance the transferability of research outcomes into policies and operational frameworks.

A core element of the action will be fostering a structured dialogue between the research community and decision-makers to ensure continuous knowledge transfer and innovation mainstreaming. The initiative should contribute to a more dynamic and responsive EU

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[135] This decision is available on the Funding Wond Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

migration ecosystem in the intersection of policy and research, in line with the objectives of the EU Pact on Asylum and Migration and other relevant policy frameworks.

OTHER ACTIONS not subject to calls for proposals

Grants to identified beneficiaries

1. Presidency event (IE)

Expected Outcome:

The project is expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- tbc

Expected Impact:

- tbc

Scope:

- tbc

This grant will be awarded without a call for proposals according to Article 198(e) of the Financial Regulation and Article 20 of the Horizon Europe Framework Programme and Rules for Participation.

Procedure: The evaluation committee will be composed fully by representatives of EU institutions.

Legal entities:

tbc, tbc

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 198(e) - Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes

Indicative timetable: Second semester 2026

Indicative budget: EUR 0.30 million from the 2026 budget

2. Presidency event (LT)

Expected Outcome:

The project is expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- tbc

Expected Impact:

- tbc

Scope:

- tbc

This grant will be awarded without a call for proposals according to Article 198(e) of the Financial Regulation and Article 20 of the Horizon Europe Framework Programme and Rules for Participation.

Procedure: The evaluation committee will be composed fully by representatives of EU institutions.

Legal entities:

tbc, tbc

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 198(e) - Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes

Indicative timetable: First semester 2027

Indicative budget: EUR 0.30 million from the 2027 budget

3. Presidency event (EL)

Expected Outcome:

The project is expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- tbc

Expected Impact:

- tbc

Scope:

- tbc

This grant will be awarded without a call for proposals according to Article 198(e) of the Financial Regulation and Article 20 of the Horizon Europe Framework Programme and Rules for Participation.

Procedure: The evaluation committee will be composed fully by representatives of EU institutions.

Legal entities:

tbc, tbc

Form of Funding: Grants not subject to calls for proposals

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary according to Financial Regulation Article 198(e) - Coordination and support action

The general conditions, including admissibility conditions, eligibility conditions, award criteria, evaluation and award procedure, legal and financial set-up for grants, financial and operational capacity and exclusion, and procedure are provided in parts A to G of the General Annexes

Indicative timetable: Second semester 2027

Indicative budget: EUR 0.30 million from the 2027 budget

Public procurements

1. Studies, conferences, events and outreach activities

A number of specific contracts will be signed under existing framework contracts in order to: (i) support the dissemination and exploitation of project results; (ii) contribute to the definition of future challenge priorities; (iii) undertake citizen surveys such as Eurobarometers, (iv) carry out specific evaluations of programme parts; and (v) organise conferences, events and outreach activities. Should existing framework contracts prove unsuitable or insufficient to support the abovementioned activities, one or more calls for tender may be launched as appropriate.

Subject matter of the contracts envisaged: studies, technical assistance, conferences, events and outreach activities within the scope of Cluster 2 'Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society'.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: 2026

Indicative budget: EUR 1.00 million from the 2026 budget

2. Studies, conferences, events and outreach activities

A number of specific contracts will be signed under existing framework contracts in order to: (i) support the dissemination and exploitation of project results; (ii) contribute to the definition of future challenge priorities; (iii) undertake citizen surveys such as Eurobarometers, (iv) carry out specific evaluations of programme parts; and (v) organise conferences, events and outreach activities. Should existing framework contracts prove unsuitable or insufficient to support the abovementioned activities, one or more calls for tender may be launched as appropriate.

Subject matter of the contracts envisaged: studies, technical assistance, conferences, events and outreach activities within the scope of Cluster 2 'Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society'.

Form of Funding: Procurement

Type of Action: Public procurement

Indicative timetable: 2027

Indicative budget: EUR 1.00 million from the 2027 budget

Other budget implementation instruments

1. Expertise for the design, implementation and evaluation of Cluster 2, Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society

his action will support the provision of independent expertise for advising and assisting the Commission services with the design, implementation and evaluation of EU research and innovation policies in the thematic areas covered by Cluster 2. Individual experts will work in the following policy and thematic areas:

- Democracy and governance

- Cultural heritage, cultural and creative sectors and industries

- Social and economic transformations

- Migration, refugee and asylum policies

- Social sciences and humanities, including their integration in Horizon Europe programme parts

- Inter-, multi- and transdisciplinarity; impact assessment

The tasks of individual experts would include:

Portfolio analysis of projects funded under Horizon Europe or previous European research and innovation programmes; analysis of the state-of-the-art at European and international

level; participation in international symposia organised by Commission services, including the drafting of reports; assistance for setting-up a research and innovation strategy for selected domains; policy recommendations and options assisting Commission services in elaborating evidence-based and scientifically sound policy proposals.

The advice provided by each individual expert will focus on specific areas and policy relevant projects' results and how results and outcome could be used for policymaking and policy follow-up initiatives. These activities will not duplicate past or ongoing Commission work and will be essential to enable Commission services to support the policymaking process in the above-mentioned policy areas.

The individual experts' tasks will include attending bilateral meetings with Commission services, presentations at workshops and symposia, remote drafting and preparatory work. The experts will be highly qualified and specialised, and will be selected on the basis of their knowledge and experience.

A special allowance of EUR 450/day will be paid to the experts appointed in their personal capacity who act independently and in the public interest.

Form of Funding: Other budget implementation instruments

Type of Action: Expert contract action

Indicative timetable: 2026

Indicative budget: EUR 0.20 million from the 2026 budget

2. External expertise - Monitors

This action will support the use of appointed independent experts for the monitoring of running actions (grant agreement, grant decision, public procurement actions, financial instruments) funded under Horizon Europe and previous Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation and where appropriate include ethics checks, as well as compliance checks regarding the Gender Equality Plan eligibility criterion.

Form of Funding: Other budget implementation instruments

Type of Action: Expert contract action

Indicative timetable: 2026

Indicative budget: EUR 0.60 million from the 2026 budget

3. Expertise for the design, implementation and evaluation of Cluster 2, Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society

his action will support the provision of independent expertise for advising and assisting the Commission services with the design, implementation and evaluation of EU research and

innovation policies in the thematic areas covered by Cluster 2. Individual experts will work in the following policy and thematic areas:

- Democracy and governance

- Cultural heritage, cultural and creative sectors and industries

- Social and economic transformations

- Migration, refugee and asylum policies

- Social sciences and humanities, including their integration in Horizon Europe programme parts

- Inter-, multi- and transdisciplinarity; impact assessment

The tasks of individual experts would include:

Portfolio analysis of projects funded under Horizon Europe or previous European research and innovation programmes; analysis of the state-of-the-art at European and international level; participation in international symposia organised by Commission services, including the drafting of reports; assistance for setting-up a research and innovation strategy for selected domains; policy recommendations and options assisting Commission services in elaborating evidence-based and scientifically sound policy proposals.

The advice provided by each individual expert will focus on specific areas and policy relevant projects' results and how results and outcome could be used for policymaking and policy follow-up initiatives. These activities will not duplicate past or ongoing Commission work and will be essential to enable Commission services to support the policymaking process in the above-mentioned policy areas.

The individual experts' tasks will include attending bilateral meetings with Commission services, presentations at workshops and symposia, remote drafting and preparatory work. The experts will be highly qualified and specialised, and will be selected on the basis of their knowledge and experience.

A special allowance of EUR 450/day will be paid to the experts appointed in their personal capacity who act independently and in the public interest.

Form of Funding: Other budget implementation instruments

Type of Action: Expert contract action

Indicative timetable: 2027

Indicative budget: EUR 0.20 million from the 2027 budget

4. External expertise - Monitors

This action will support the use of appointed independent experts for the monitoring of running actions (grant agreement, grant decision, public procurement actions, financial instruments) funded under Horizon Europe and previous Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation and where appropriate include ethics checks, as well as compliance checks regarding the Gender Equality Plan eligibility criterion.

Form of Funding: Other budget implementation instruments

Type of Action: Expert contract action

Indicative budget: EUR 0.60 million from the 2027 budget

Budget[136]

	Budget line(s)	2026 Budget (EUR million)	2027 Budget (EUR million)
Calls			
HORIZON-CL2-2026-01			
HORIZON-CL2-2026-02			
HORIZON-CL2-2027-01			
HORIZON-CL2-2027-02-TWO-STAGE			
Other actions			
Grant awarded without a call for proposals according to Financial Regulation Article 198(e)		0.30	0.60
	from 01.020220	*0.30*	*0.60*
Public procurement		1.00	1.00
	from 01.020220	*1.00*	*1.00*
Expert contract action		0.80	0.80
	from 01.020220	*0.80*	*0.80*
Estimated total budget			

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[136]   The budget figures given in this table are rounded to two decimal places.
The budget amounts are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the general budget of the Union for 2026 and 2027.