



Mapping Media for Future Democracies: Final Report

(Abstract of the technical report)

DELIVERABLE 1.8, V1.0

MeDeMAP – Mapping Media for Future Democracies

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1. The Project

(1 March 2023– 28 February 2026)

“Independent media services play a unique role in the internal market. They represent a fast-changing and economically important sector and at the same time provide access to a plurality of views and reliable sources of information to citizens and businesses alike, thereby fulfilling the general interest function of ‘public watchdog’ and being an indispensable factor in the process of the formation of public opinion.” (European Media Freedom Act)

These words introduce the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA), which aims to establish a common framework for media services in the internal market amid an increasingly globalised media landscape. It entered into force on 7 May 2024, that is, at the beginning of the second project year, and gave the research new relevance—a relevance that, however, became increasingly worrying as threats to democracy grew.

Undoubtedly, any public communication, whether through traditional or social media, affects the people’s perception of the magnitude, the meaning, and the possible impact of events and issues, thus shaping political processes and the spectrum of possible political responses to these events and issues. In a democratic society, however, the media are supposed to fulfil this function in a specific way that encompasses five distinct roles: informing the public based on facts; controlling those in power; providing a forum for societal debate; representing a society’s social, cultural and political diversity; and facilitating public participation. This is why trust in the media and trust in politics are closely linked—and ultimately affect trust in democracy. However, any research into the democratic functions of the media has to take into account that ideas of a single public must be dismissed in favour of recognising multiple, perhaps even splintered and polarised, publics, which may also hold different views on what a democratic society and political participation should look like. This shift in how democracy is perceived in Europe is also reflected in EU policymaking aimed at increasing its legitimacy.

Starting from these reflections and by building a solid theoretical foundation and applying an innovative multi-method modular design consisting of data science methods, large-scale quantitative analyses, in-depth qualitative approaches and participatory action research, the Horizon Europe project 'Mapping Media for Future Democracies' (MeDeMAP) aimed, with the involvement of European citizens, to set out sustainable ways to strengthen democracy by improving the conditions under which media can fulfil their democratic roles. To meet this overarching objective, five (sub-)objectives had been pursued, , and were all fulfilled at the end of the project:

- (1) Establishing an up-to-date overview and understanding of the state of democracy in the European Union, its challenges, strengths and threats, and the roles and functions of media and journalism that can be derived from it.
- (2) Mapping legal and (self-)regulatory frameworks within which traditional and new media organisations and journalists operate.
- (3) Mapping democratic qualities of media supply and media-enabled participation across all media channels, mandates and sources of financing.
- (4) Mapping people's media use, information needs and democratic attitudes in diverse societies and high-choice media environments.
- (5) Mapping future pathways for building a more resilient democratic media system and enhancing political participation and civic engagement.

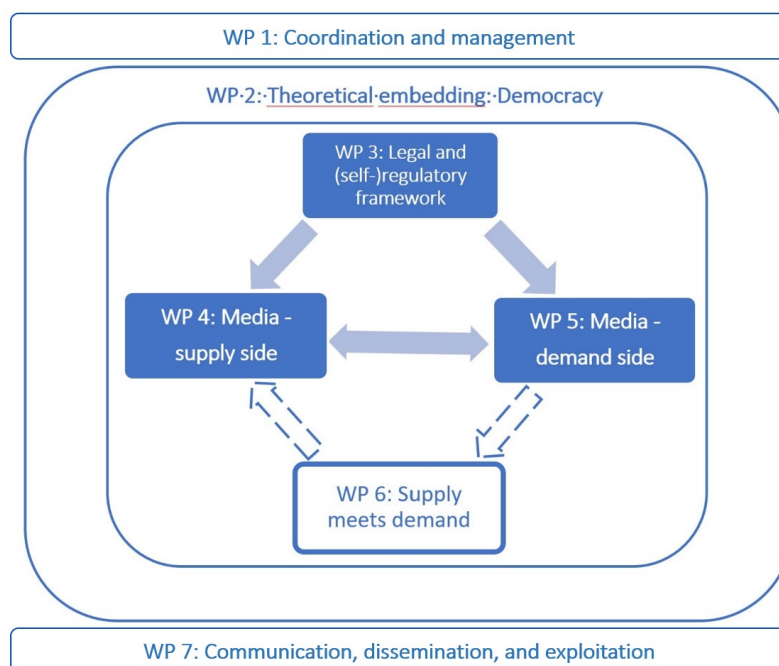
In line with these objectives, the project structure (Figure 1) comprised five scientific work packages (WP), which were concerned with

- (1) the theoretical embedding (WP2),
- (2) the legal and (self-)regulatory framework (WP3),
- (3) the media supply side (WP4),
- (4) the demand side (WP5),
- (5) and to what extent supply meets demand (WP6).

In addition, WP1 supervised all legal, financial, and administrative issues (including ethical requirements and GDPR matters), monitored and coordinated the research progress, organised meetings of the General Assembly and the Steering Committee, and was responsible for ICT matters—including web storage and the development of databases and mapping tools. WP7 focused on developing and implementing consistent strategies to reach, inform, involve, and engage different target audiences with the project's activities and results, including the

project website, social media channels, blogs, reports, posters, short videos and other communication artefacts, with the participation of all consortium partners.

FIGURE 1
THE MeDeMAP STRUCTURE



Following a multi-method modular design (see Figure 2),¹ research in the five scientific work packages was structured in phases and closely linked across them. In the first phase (coinciding with the first year of the project), WP2 developed a theoretical framework, based on democratic (and media) theory, and, in collaboration with WP3, WP4 and WP5, derived recommendations for the analytical models to be applied to the study of media supply and demand as well as the legal and regulatory context of both sides. WP3, WP4 and WP5 dealt with wide-scale quantitative inquiries in their respective fields of research. The data collection was based on secondary data, which represented the basis of the 'Map of EU Political Information Environments'.

The aforementioned models were applied, in the second phase, to the theory-driven collection of comprehensive primary (mainly qualitative) data as a necessary precondition of in-

¹ A multi-method modular design combines multiple distinct techniques, processes, or technologies into a single flexible, interchangeable, and scalable system. It allows users to swap out components or apply different methodologies as needed without overhauling the entire setup.

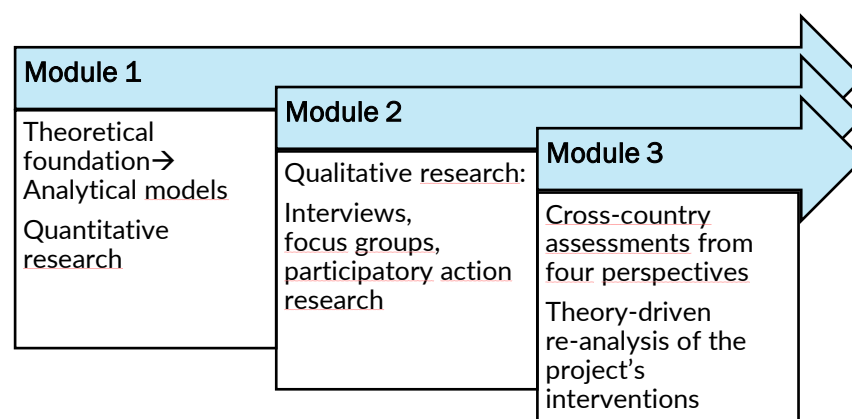
depth research on media regulation, media production and media audiences in EU countries. These findings enabled, in the third phase, thorough comparative assessments

- ❖ of regulatory frameworks from the perspective of securing and strengthening a democratic media system;
- ❖ of the relationships between production conditions and the democratic functions of the media, focusing on political participation through and in the media;
- ❖ and of media practices, the state of people's trust in the news media and democratic institutions, and their expectations of media and democracy.

Moreover, WP6, which started in month 17, organised citizens' parliaments in five countries (utilising participatory action research as a methodological approach) to learn more about the qualities that a future media ecosystem should have from a bottom-up perspective, thus involving citizens in the co-creation of the agenda for 'mapping media for future democracies'.

To finally bring the research full circle back to where it began, a re-analysis of existing empirical data and the project's interventions enriched the theoretical framework and provided a theory-driven understanding of how democracy and participation are perceived and practised in the European Union.

FIGURE 2
MULTI-METHOD MODULAR APPROACH



MeDeMAP focused primarily on the ten EU Member States as represented by the project consortium (Austria, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany,² Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia; see Table 1), but parts of the research cover the EU-27. The ten

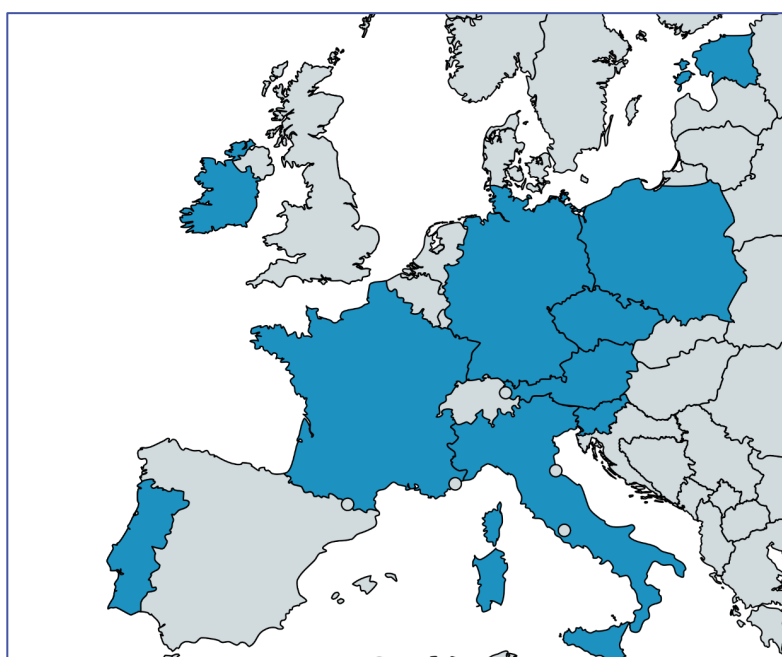
² Germany was not participating as a consortium partner, but was represented by Barbara Thomass as a member of the OEAW team.

countries cover large regions of the EU, consisting of three founding nations, four countries joining the Union in 2004, the biggest wave of accession in EU history, and three countries that joined in the 1970s, 80s and 90s (Figure 3). 53 researchers were part of the MeDeMAP team, for at least part of the project's duration, with many remaining on the team for the entire duration of the project. Of the 53 team members, 31 were women, and 4 of the 10 partner teams were led by women.

TABLE 2
THE MEDEMAP CONSORTIUM

Beneficiary		Team leader
OEAW (Austria)	ÖSTERREICHISCHE AKADEMIE DER WISSENSCHAFTEN (WP1 & WP3 lead)	Josef Seethaler
CU (Czech Republic)	UNIVERZITA KARLOVA (WP2 lead)	Nico Carpentier
JU (Poland)	UNIwersYTET JagiellONSKI (WP4 lead)	Beata Klimkiewicz
IULM (Italy)	LIBERA UNIVERSITA DI LINGUE E COMUNICAZIONE (WP5 lead)	Andrea Miconi
COMMIT (Austria)	COMMUNITY MEDIEN INSTITUT FUR WEITER-BILDUNG, FORSCHUNG UND BERATUNG (WP6 lead)	Helmut Peissl
Lusófona Uni (Portugal)	COFAC COOPERATIVA DE FORMACAO E ANIMACAO CULTURAL CRL (WP 7 lead)	Manuel José Damásio
TLU (Estonia)	TALLINN UNIVERSITY	Alessandro Naní
IMT (France)	INSTITUT MINES TELECOM	Inna Lyubareva
MIC (Ireland)	MARY IMMACULATE COLLEGE	Rosemary Day
MI (Slovenia)	MIROVNI INSTITUT	Brankica Petković

FIGURE 3
THE CONSORTIUM COUNTRIES



2. The Work Packages

In accordance with its overarching objective to set out sustainable ways to strengthen democracy by improving the conditions under which media can fulfil their democratic roles, the MeDeMAP project aimed to obtain scientifically sound insights into how the media could or should be reshaped to serve the public interest and to engage people in a way that empowers them to participate actively in public debate and decision-making. With this in mind, the project sought to clarify the extent to which certain media, under which legal and regulatory conditions, perform which democratic functions for which audiences, thus making it apparent what is at stake for democratic media—and for democracy itself. The five (sub-)objectives as described in *Chapter 1* were mainly addressed by one of the five scientific work packages (WP2 to WP6), even when collaboration across work packages was necessary to pursue and fully achieve these objectives.

2.1. *Work package 1: Coordination and management*

Based on a Coordination Plan (Deliverable 1.1) and a Data Management Plan (Deliverable 1.2), WP1 was responsible for a wide range of management, coordination, and monitoring tasks. Regular project meetings at various levels, a rigorous quality assurance system (entrusted to a steering committee), and an ongoing dialogue with various stakeholders to align the project's impact orientation to emerging needs were among the essential practices that allow for improved implementation of the project. The interdisciplinary approach, which combines elements of the social sciences and the humanities and has been translated into a multi-method modular design (see *Chapter 1*, Figure 2); the geopolitical scope of the consortium, which encompasses a wide range of culturally and structurally diverse EU Member States (Figure 3); and particularly the scientific excellence of the multi-disciplinary consortium can be considered as main pillars for the project's success and the validity of its results.

In cooperation with WP7, WP1 was also tasked with ensuring the project's impact in the academic, political, and societal fields. Among numerous relevant initiatives, it was particularly responsible for creating and maintaining a 'Map of EU Political Information

Environments', based on data collected in the empirical work packages (Deliverable 1.6), and for authoring policy papers for various stakeholders (Deliverable 1.7) – see **Chapter 3: Impact**.

[DELIVERABLE 1.1 \(v2.0\) – Coordination Plan](#)

[DELIVERABLE 1.2 \(v2.0\) – Data Management Plan](#)

[DELIVERABLE 1.6 – Data Input for the Map of EU Political Information Environments;](#)

[DELIVERABLE 1.6 – Appendix](#) (based on DELIVERABLES 1.3 and 1.4)

[DELIVERABLE 1.7 – Policy Papers for Different Stakeholders](#)

Work package lead: OEAW – Austrian Academy of Sciences (team leader: Josef Seethaler; team members: Olha Drozd, Maren Beaufort, Thomas Lentz)

2.2. Work Package 2: the theoretical embedding

Objective 1:

Establishing an up-to-date overview and understanding of the state of democracy in the European Union, its challenges, strengths and threats, and the roles and functions of media and journalism that can be derived from it.

WP2 established a state-of-the-art theoretical understanding of the democracy-media nexus, at its many levels (Deliverable 2.1). Particular attention was paid to the ongoing shifts in what democracy means, through an emphasis on the political struggles over and in democracy—through and in the media—in relation to both the logics of representation and participation. WP2 thus provided the theoretical foundation for the research in all other work packages. After an additional confrontation with the empirical literature (Deliverable 2.2), WP2 also provided more direct support and guidance, first through a series of operationalization plans (Deliverable 2.3), later through continuous interactions with the other WPs. Theoretical support was, in particular, provided to WP6, with its Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, and the requirement for permanent interaction between reflection (and theory-building) and action. These dynamics also allowed for a retheorization of the empirical results of the different WPs, with special attention for WP6, resulting in a (theoretical) reflection on participation and knowledge (Deliverable 2.4).

[DELIVERABLE 2.1 \(v2.0\) – Democracy and Media: A Discursive-Material Approach](#)

[DELIVERABLE 2.2 – Analytical Models for Examining Media Supply and Demand Side and the Legal and Regulatory Context of Both Sides: Operationalization Proposals](#)

[DELIVERABLE 2.3 – An integrative literature review on democracy and media in Europe: Theory driven re-analysis of existing empirical data](#)

[DELIVERABLE 2.4 – Participation and knowledge: A theory-driven re-analysis of the project's interventions](#)

Work package lead: CU – Charles University (team leader: Nico Carpentier; team members: Jeffrey Wimmer, Vaia Doudaki, Kirill Filimonov, Karolína Šimková, Miloš Hroch, Štěpán Šanda, Mazlum Kemal Dağdelen, Natálie Švarcová)

2.3. Work Package 3: the legal and (self-)regulatory framework

Objective 2:

Mapping legal and (self-)regulatory frameworks within which traditional and new media organisations and journalists operate.

In pursuing the objective to provide a mapping of the legal provisions, regulatory standards and self-regulatory mechanisms, under which media operate, journalists work (= supply side) and people seek to meet their everyday life information and communication needs (= demand side), WP3 has chosen an approach anchored in the newly revived tradition of value studies and close to EU policy in order to offer a real-world starting point for communication with stakeholders from politics, regulation and self-regulation. To examine the potential of national media legislation and regulation to secure the conditions for the possibility of democratic media, the analytical model developed in accordance with the overall theoretical framework consists of two pillars: first, the 'trinity' of EU foundational values, i.e. human rights (particularly human dignity, freedom and equality), democracy and the rule of law, and, second, so-called 'instrumental' values that currently set EU policy standards (Deliverable 3.1). The analysis is based on secondary data retrieved from 14 international databases and semi-structured interviews with representatives of regulatory authorities, self-regulatory bodies, and civil society or audience organisations (Deliverable 3.2). However, the adoption of the *European Media Freedom Act* in 2024 required far-reaching changes in the analytical model through newly introduced indicators and, consequently, in the underlying dataset. Moreover, the study has



been extended to all 27 EU Member States, thus resulting in the first EU wide comparative assessment of the democratic impact of media law and regulation, offering a foundation for future European and national research (Deliverable 3.3).

DELIVERABLE 3.1 – Data set for the map of legal and (self-)regulatory frameworks for media in the EU (*Dissemination level: Sensitive*)

[DELIVERABLE 3.2 – Legal and \(self-\)regulatory frameworks in ten European countries – Country reports](#)

[DELIVERABLE 3.3 – Comparative Assessment of Legal and \(Self-\)Regulatory Frameworks for Media in the European Union](#)

Work package lead: OEAW – Austrian Academy of Sciences (team leader: Josef Seethaler; team members: Barbara Thomass, Maren Beaufort, Ernest Thaqi, Andreas Martin, Thomas Lentz, Andreas Schulz-Tomančok [in-kind], Eva Tamara Asboth [in-kind])

2.4. *Work Package 4: the media supply side*

Objective 3:

Mapping democratic qualities of media supply and media-enabled participation across all media channels, mandates and sources of financing.

In studying media supply in accordance with the project's theoretical framework, WP4 work consisted of a robust empirical research contribution combining various research methods and levels of comparison. In general, WP4 followed three main rounds of research, each generating original data collection and analysis, accompanied by a 'Media Mapping Blog' (Deliverable 4.1). The first round focused on compiling comprehensive quantitative data sets on the media markets (print, radio, TV, online) in the ten MeDeMAP Consortium countries. Despite the lack of available—and comparable—data from secondary national sources, we managed this methodological and practical challenge quite well by relying on extensive primary research (Deliverable 4.2). The second round explored strengths and weaknesses of different media sectors (Public Service Media, commercial, and non-profit) in their ability to inform and engage citizens in the ten MeDeMAP countries, based on semi-structured interviews with journalists and media professionals (Deliverable 4.3), and the third round focused on the analysis of political participation *in* and *through* the media, based on surveys among media managers, chief

editors, and journalists, again conducted in the ten MeDeMAP countries (Deliverable 4.5). Each round was followed by comparative studies that integrated different levels of analysis (Deliverables 4.4 & 4.6). The final synthesis embedded WP4 findings into the results and insights from the entire MeDeMAP project, resulting in a book manuscript .

[DELIVERABLE 4.1 Media Mapping Blog](#)

DELIVERABLE 4.2 (v2.0) – Dataset for the Map of EU Media Systems and Country Reports
Combining the Results of Task 4.1 (*Dissemination level: Sensitive*)

[DELIVERABLE 4.3 \(v1.0\) – Media Production in Ten EU Countries – Country Reports and Preliminary Takeaways](#)

[DELIVERABLE 4.4 – Comparative Assessment of Media Supply and Production in Ten EU Countries – Media Mapping Blog](#)

[DELIVERABLE 4.5 – Political Participation through and in the Media in Ten European Countries – Country Reports](#)

[DELIVERABLE 4.6 – A Comparative Assessment of Political Participation Through and in the Media in Ten EU Countries](#)

[DELIVERABLE 4.7 – Journalistic production and its role in Democratic Participations: Report on Media and Democracy in the European Union](#)

Work package lead: JU – Jagiellonian University (team leader: Beata Klimkiewicz; team members: Monika Szafrńska, Katarzyna Vanevska)

2.5. Work Package 5: the demand side

Objective 4:

Mapping people's media use, information needs and democratic attitudes in diverse societies and high-choice media environments.

WP5 focused on the demand side of political information environments, aiming to provide an advanced understanding of how audiences interact with media and democracy across the European Union. WP5 consisted of three components which, although relatively different, are nevertheless related to each other. The first component offered a conceptual anchorage on the weavings between media audiences, politics and democracy as well as an

account on the state of media audience in the European Union through an analysis of statistical data. It discusses the histories, concepts and approaches of these weavings that has been incorporated in the qualitative analysis in the later deliverables of WP5. This research underlines the need for contextuality in the light of a cross-media environment, which is dominated by digital platforms and in which media can be used in countless different ways (political or not) by individuals and communities (Deliverable 5.1). The second component explored the relation between trust in the media and trust in democracy and democratic institutions in the European Union as well as the connection between media trust and the state of freedom of information, drawing on sociological conceptualizations of trust and highlighting the vital role of distrust (Deliverable 5.2). The third component developed a large-scale qualitative study, comprising interviews and focus groups discussions in the ten MeDeMAP countries (Deliverable 5.3), to explore citizens' conceptions of democracy, their perceptions of the relationship between media and democracy, their experiences of political participation, and the role of media in enabling or constraining democratic engagement. Building on analyses at the national level (Deliverable 5.4) and the comparative level (Deliverable 5.5), a mixed-methods triangulation approach was used to identify the key structural patterns that shape citizens' experiences with media and democracy across Europe (Deliverable 5.6).

DELIVERABLE 5.1 (v2.0) – Data set for the map of European audiences: Concepts, approaches and trends of media audiences (*Dissemination level: Sensitive*)

[DELIVERABLE 5.2 – Report on trust in media and democratic institutions in Europe](#)

[DELIVERABLE 5.3 – Methodological protocol for ethnographic research](#)

[DELIVERABLE 5.4 – Audiences' Media Practices in Ten European Countries](#)

[DELIVERABLE 5.5 – Comparative report on Audience Needs in Ten European Countries](#)

[DELIVERABLE 5.6 – People, Media and Democracy: A qualitative-quantitative assessment](#)

Work package lead: IULM University (team leader: Andrea Miconi; team members: Nello Barile, Sara Cannizzaro, Giulia Ferri, Anastasiia Iufereva, Panagiotis Kompatsiaris, Elisabetta Risi)

2.6. Work Package 6: supply meets demand

Objective 5:

Mapping future pathways for building a more resilient democratic media system and enhancing political participation and civic engagement.

WP6 focused on enabling dialogical interactions between citizens and media stakeholders through citizens' parliaments (CP), building on the theoretical understanding of the democracy-media nexus developed in WP2 and on results from WP3 to 5, with the main objective of mapping future pathways for building a more resilient democratic media system and enhancing political participation and civic engagement. The format of citizens' parliaments was developed on the basis of good-practice research (Deliverables 6.1), which drew on literature, a series of expert interviews, and WP6-partners' contributions on successful examples of participatory policy processes at the national level. Based on the results, the available resources and the commitment for a participatory action research approach (PAR), a joint format for the implementation of four citizens' parliaments in Austria, the Czech Republic, Ireland and Slovenia (and a fifth as an online methodological experiment in Germany) was developed (Deliverable 6.2). To ensure the comparability of the implementation and the results, a clear thematic and organisational framework was defined, and mandatory learning content was prepared for the four days of sessions. These format guidelines also included specifications for the accompanying blog, which made the citizens' consultation process transparent to various stakeholders and the interested public (Deliverable 6.3) and offered participating citizens insights into the work of their colleagues in the other countries. National and comparative analyses of citizens' parliaments' results and deliberative processes, using WP2's analytical concepts, served as the basis for the 'Future Roadmap for European Media and Democracy' (Deliverable 6.4). With the final reflection on successful activities for stakeholder engagement and participatory media practices based on citizens' parliaments' activities, WP6 identifies avenues for further exploitation of results and learnings for future projects on participatory policy development and research (Deliverable 6.5).

[DELIVERABLE 6.1 – Research Report on Successful Practice of Policy Development with Citizens' Parliaments in Europe](#)

[DELIVERABLE 6.2 – Design of Citizens' Parliaments](#)

[DELIVERABLE 6.3 – Blog on Citizens' Parliaments](#)



[DELIVERABLE 6.4 – Report: Future roadmap for European media and democracy](#)

[DELIVERABLE 6.5 – Leaflets and Online Guidance on Participatory Media Practices \(v1.1\)](#)

Work package lead: COMMIT – Community Medien Institut für Weiterbildung, Forschung und Beratung (team leader: Helmut Peissl; team members: Laurence Monnot, Tania Napravnik and Andrea Sedlaczek)

2.7. *Work package 7: Communication & dissemination*

WP7 work encompassed three interconnected dimensions. Dissemination activities focused on making project results publicly available to relevant audiences through publications, conference presentations, stakeholder roundtables and public events. Exploitation ensured concrete use of results by creating practical tools and frameworks that stakeholders could actively use, including the spatial data interface for mapping European political information environments, methodological guidelines for implementing citizen parliaments, and policy recommendations for media policy, journalism, and industry. Communication activities informed, promoted, and communicated the project's work and results to stakeholders, the media, and citizens through social media platforms, multimedia content, newsletters, and film screenings, ensuring awareness and understanding of MeDeMAP research across diverse audiences.

The updated Dissemination and Exploitation Plan (Deliverable 7.2) provides a reusable framework for communication strategies to inform future European projects. The Project Meetings and Impact Workshops Report (Deliverable 7.3) documents best practices for consortium coordination and stakeholder engagement, and can serve as a reference for similar large-scale research collaborations. In terms of lasting communication assets, the following results are considered to be exploitable beyond the project's lifetime:

- ❖ Project website (medemap.eu): will remain as an open-access repository for all public deliverables, ensuring continued visibility of results after the project ends.
- ❖ Mapping Media for Future Democracies Podcast series: will continue to be a standalone public engagement resource, remaining available on [Spotify](#) and [YouTube](#) and continuing to reach academic, policy, and general audiences.
- ❖ Social media presence: the audiences built across [LinkedIn](#) and [Mastodon](#) can support the dissemination of post-project publications and policy outputs.

- ❖ Finally, the policy engagement activities carried out through the impact workshops generated concrete and ongoing exploitation opportunities. The European Parliament seminar established direct channels between the MeDeMAP team and EU policymakers. This aspect can be particularly relevant to the ongoing implementation of the EU Media Freedom Act.

[DELIVERABLE 7.1 – Website and Project logo](#)

[DELIVERABLE 7.2 \(v2.0\) – Dissemination and Exploitation Plan](#)

[DELIVERABLE 7.3 – Project meetings and Impact workshops](#)

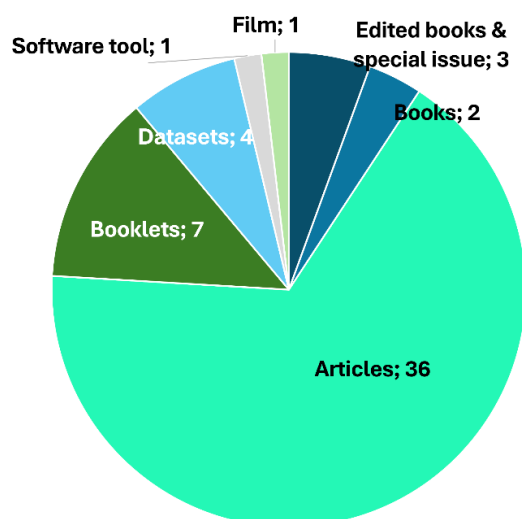
Work package lead: Lusófona University ULHT (team leader: Manuel José Damásio; team members: Ana Filipa Oliveira, Tatiana Chervyakova, Margaryta Kulichova, Timoteo Rodrigues, Ana Lamy Silva, Nuno Cintra Torres)

3. Output

MeDeMAP's publication strategy follows an open access approach. Zenodo has been chosen as an open-access repository to share, preserve, and showcase deliverables, publications, pre- and postprints of research articles, conference papers, data sets, and other research outputs. The **MeDeMAP Community on Zenodo** can be accessed at <https://zenodo.org/communities/medemap/>, and the MeDeMAP research outputs can also be accessed at the [EU Open Research Repository](#).

The project's open access policy applies to **all books presenting MeDeMAP results and the special issue of the journal ESSACHESS**, and it applies to most **articles in journals and anthologies**³, and, particularly important, to the publication of the **film essay “[AGON: Constructions of Democracy](#)”** in *Tecmerin*, one of the rare academic journals for audiovisual journals (which is open access). This has facilitated a wide distribution of this film essay as well. It goes without saying that all publications relevant to policy and the wider civil society are publicly available. Among these are, for example, the **resolution reports of the citizens' parliaments** in Austria, the Czech Republic, Ireland and Slovenia, and several **policy papers**.

FIGURE 4
OUTPUT



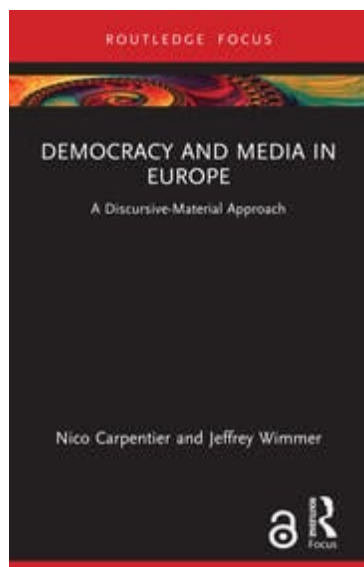
As for academic publications, the original plan to publish a book summarising the results of the entire project at its conclusion has been significantly expanded, given the wealth of outstanding research findings. A total of three open-access books reporting on the results will be published by renowned publishers, in addition to the already published theoretical book *Democracy and Media in Europe*) and a special issue of ESSACHESS, the only French journal in communication sciences to promote original

³ Invitations to publish research findings with highly prestigious publishers (without open access) have been accepted only in exceptional cases, but efforts are underway to enable the release of preprints or postprints.

contributions in the field of social, cultural, symbolic, or economic communication in both French and English. While the Macmillan-Palgrave book and the special issue will showcase the results of research conducted across all countries and work packages, the Routledge volume will provide an opportunity for dialogue between the MeDeMAP results and the contributions of external authors on the same topic: media, democracy, and political imagination in Europe. The Elgar book deals with the state of the media and democracy in Poland.

3.1. Books / Special Issue

- ❖ Nico Carpentier & Jeffrey Wimmer (2025). [*Democracy and Media in Europe: A Discursive-Material Approach*](#). Routledge.

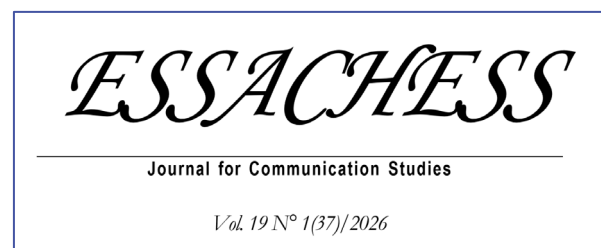


- ❖ Beata Klimkiewicz, Josef Seethaler & Jeffrey Wimmer (Eds.) (2026). *Journalistic Production and Its Role in Democratic Participation: A European Perspective*. Palgrave [accepted].

- ❖ Beata Klimkiewicz, Monika Szafrńska & Katarzyna Vanevska (2026). *A Potential and Limits of an Epistemic Public Sphere: Media, News Ecosystem and Democracy in Poland*. Elgar Publishing [accepted].

- ❖ Andrea Miconi, Giulia Ferri, Nico Carpentier, Beata Klimkiewicz, & Josef Seethaler (Eds.) (2027). *Platformed Democracy: Media, Trust, and Political Imagination in Europe*. Routledge [accepted].

- ❖ Giulia Ferri, Elisabetta Risi & Andrea Miconi (Eds.) (2026). [*Citizens' Perceptions of Media and Democracy across Europe*](#). ESSACHESS—Journal of Communication Studies, Special Issue: Vol. 19 No. 1 (37).



3.2. Film

- Ali Minanto, Nico Carpentier and Jhon Sany Purwanto, [*"AGON: Constructions of Democracy,"*](#) Tecmerin: Revista de Ensayos Audiovisuale, 16 (2025), no. 2



3.3. Articles and book chapters

Beaufort, Maren, "Exploring the Whole Picture: A Contemporary Perspective on Democracy, Societal Change, and Europe's Information Environments." *ESSACHESS – Journal for Communication Studies*, 19 (2026), no. 1: 149-171. <https://doi.org/10.21409/vsnr-dk19>

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3.4. Resolution reports of the citizens' parliaments

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3.5. Software tool

The “Map of EU Political Information Environments” (PIE) represents a particularly innovative contribution to scientific research. The PIE concept⁴ examines the relationships among the political and regulatory frameworks, media supply, and media use – and has been expanded by situating these three dimensions within the context of democracy and democratic participation (Figure 5). The map covers all 27 EU Member States: <https://medemap.cmclab.science>; for a detailed description see <https://zenodo.org/records/18768940>.

FIGURE 5
THEMATIC STRUCTURE OF THE MAP

Democracy & Participation		
Law & Regulation	Supply side	Demand side
• Human Dignity • Freedom • Pluralism • Equality • Rule of Law	• Market plurality • Market viability • Transparency • PSM Independence • Representation	• Media use (for political information) • Legacy and traditional media • Trust in the media

NOTE. BLUE = SEPARATE SECTIONS; GRAY = FOCAL POINTS WITHIN A SECTION

⁴ Concerning the PIE concept see: Van Aelst, P., Strömbäck, J., Aalberg, T., Esser, F., de Vreese, C., Matthes, J., et al. (2017). Political communication in a high-choice media environment: A challenge for democracy? *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 41(1), 3–27. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/23808985.2017.1288551>

Based on the suggestions of the review report on the first project period, the first beta version has been completely revised. It is no longer just a map – it is ‘mapping’, in the sense of creating visual representations and diagrams that show the relationships among different dimensions, concepts, indicators, and data to facilitate understanding *and* analysis. This means that, in addition to the geographical representation of data, users of our ‘Map’ are offered a range of different formats that encourage critical and creative work with the data (Figure 6).

FIGURE 6
REPRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS FORMATS OF THE MAP

Starting point: Indicator selection (all EU-27)	Alternative indicator and country selection	All data
•Choropleth map •Descriptive graphs •Histograms •Surface view •3D view	•3D view •Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) •Circular views •Eigenvalue decomposition	•Total table view •Circular views •Eigenvalue decomposition •Correlation heatmap

The ‘Map’ offers:

- ❖ data from 14 international databases relevant to the description of national PIEs, covering the entire project period, which allows comparisons to be made, at least for a short but politically turbulent time period;
- ❖ metadata such as the original definition, collection method, and calculation mode;
- ❖ data for similarly defined (but perhaps differently labeled) indicators from different sources and for similarly labeled indicators following different approaches, because a more reliable judgement on the plausibility of data can often only be made by comparison;
- ❖ re-coded data (ranging from 0 to 100) to make them comparable;
- ❖ calculated statistical measures that describe the structure of data and allow for defining threshold values that give an initial orientation of how a country behaves in comparison to other countries.

3.6. Data sets

Several measures have been adopted to ensure the transparency and reproducibility of the research conducted within the empirical work packages. First, all analyses are based on well-documented datasets, including publicly available sources such as Eurobarometer, Eurostat and international datasets from renowned sources, which are clearly referenced in the deliverables. Second, the research conducted within the work packages follows a shared methodological

protocol that defines the research questions, sampling strategies, data collection procedures, and analytical frameworks. Third, all **created datasets** are publicly available, enabling other researchers to replicate the results or build upon the data.

- ❖ **The dataset for the ‘Map of EU Political Information Environments’** presents a comprehensive and carefully edited collection of relevant data on (1) democracy and participation, (2) the democratic impact of media law and regulation, and (3) relevant features of media supply, media use and trust in the media. It is based on 14 international databases, including 95 indicators, 256 data sets, 1,024 statistical calculations, and 6,912 data points for the period from 2022 to 2024, thereby enabling researchers and media experts to critically use and make the most out of the data. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19661435>
- ❖ **The media system dataset** contains the data from the systemic analysis of media supply used in the MeDeMAP project. The data refer to ten EU countries: Austria, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia. The dataset is built on categorisation by media remit/mandate (public service media, commercial media, and non-profit media) and by production and distribution sectors (press, audiovisual, radio, internet/digital). Parameters for data collection and analysis include the following criteria: general (name, origin, remit/mandate, geographical scope, thematic focus), distribution-related (channel of distribution, frequency), economic (ownership, mode of financing, audience, audience share, transparency-related), professional (standards of production, membership in professional associations), political (political orientation). Open access from 1 January 2027; the embargo is necessary to allow for the production of publications based on this data. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19731128>
- ❖ **The news production dataset** contains the data from the interview extracts that were used for the analysis of news production in the MeDeMAP project. The data cover ten EU countries: Austria, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia. In each country, interviews were conducted with journalists and media producers representing six news media types: PSM, commercial TV and radio outlets, press, digital-native news media, local and regional media, and community and non-profit media. The categorisation focuses on news production from a political participation perspective. The questionnaire is structured into three basic thematic parts: the basic pro-democratic functions of the news media, participation and representation, and the conditions for media freedom, pluralism, and democracy. Open access from 1 January 2027; the embargo is necessary to allow for the production of publications based on this data. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19739007>
- ❖ **The qualitative dataset on citizens’ perceptions of media and democracy** is based on more than 70 interviews and over 40 focus groups conducted across ten European countries (Austria, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia). This dataset captures citizens’ everyday experiences with news and political information, their expectations regarding the democratic role of media, and their perceptions of opportunities for political expression and participation. The

qualitative material offers detailed insights into how individuals interpret and negotiate contemporary media environments and therefore represents a valuable empirical resource for further academic research, including comparative analyses of media trust, democratic engagement and political communication practices across European societies. Considering the scale of the investigation, the datasets offer a huge opportunity for reuse and further elaboration, using either statistical or qualitative methods. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18964079>

3.7. Policy papers



Deliverable 1.7: Policy Papers for Different Stakeholders, <https://zenodo.org/records/18826345>

- *Policy Paper 1:* Josef Seethaler, Gabriele Melischek, Maren Beaufort and Andreas Schulz-Tomančok, "Traces into the Future. UNESCO's Struggle for a Democratic, Citizen-Centred Media Policy";
- *Policy Paper 2:* Josef Seethaler and Gabriele Melischek, "Serving Democracy: Challenges to Journalism in the Age of Digital News";
- *Policy Paper 3:* Maren Beaufort, "The Audience Matters, "Some (Radical?) Thoughts on Future Perspectives for Public Service Media";
- *Policy Paper 4:* Alexander Baratsits and Josef Seethaler, "Sovereign Media Infrastructure, AI and the Future of Pan-European News Platforms: Building an Ecosystem for Data Readiness, Scale and Democratic Legitimacy".

4. Impact

The project's research has set new standards in many respects. The implementation of innovative approaches developed at a theoretical and methodological level to analyse the complex relationships between democracy and the media have led to a wealth of research findings in all empirical work packages, which have high scientific, policy and societal potential—like the innovative theoretical and methodological approaches themselves. The project offers

➤ **at a theoretical level:**

- a ground-breaking theoretical framework on media and democracy consisting of four elements: core components, struggles, threats and conditions of possibility;
- a unique reflection on the intersection between participation and knowledge, using six lenses: (1) DIKW (Data, Information, Knowledge, Wisdom), (2) stupidity, (3) identity, (4) time, (5) play and (6) creativity;

➤ **at a methodological level:**

- an innovative value-based approach (including EMFA criteria) for examining the impact of legal and regulatory provisions on the performance of democratically relevant media functions;
- a methodological framework for studying news media systems from a supply side, focusing on two dimensions: the general spectrum of the news media, and its potential to promote and support democratic viability through political participation;
- a news production analytical model that enables studying news media production routines through the operationalisation of news media functions supporting democratic participation, using interviews with journalists and media producers;
- an analytical model that offers an empirical approach to the study of political participation in and through the media, focusing on cognitive, deliberative and action-oriented dimensions;
- a methodological protocol that sets out the principles and procedures of qualitative research on audience expectations of democracy and the media, applicable to wide-scope comparative analysis;



- a citizens' parliament design that can serve as a blueprint for implementing deliberative and participatory processes of citizens' engagement in research, policy, civil society and education; supplemented by recommendations on what to be aware of when organising online citizens' parliaments, which would expand the opportunities for political participation;
- **at an empirical level:**
 - the first EU-wide empirical analysis of the potential of media law and regulation to promote democracy;
 - a detailed analysis combining the systemic level of media supply, news production and democratic participation, offering a unique comparative output in ten EU Member States;
 - an analysis that showcases the findings of an unprecedented wide-scale qualitative research on people's perception of media and democracy in ten EU countries, with more than 420 citizens interviewed;
 - an analysis of the 133 resolutions and the underlying processes of four European citizens' parliaments on the future of democratic media structures, media representation and participation, addressed to policymakers but also to media representatives at the regional, national, and European levels;
 - a map of EU political information environments that is not only a geographical visualisation tool, but allows examination of relationships among different dimensions and indicators of democracy, participation, regulation, media supply and media use;
- **and at an artistic level:**
 - a film essay using an artistic-academic repertoire to disseminate knowledge about the nature of democracy in ways that are still uncommon.

From the beginning of the project, the consortium has been working on pathways towards impact in the academic, political, and societal fields (as defined in the DoA) by pursuing the ambitious MeDeMAP objectives through high-quality research and applying appropriate dissemination and communication strategies. Today, we can report that we have made considerable impact in all three fields—and we will continue to work toward delivering impact in the future.

4.1 Impact in the academic field

TABLE 2
ACADEMIC OUTPUT AND DISSEMINATION

So far, MeDeMAP research results have been published in **1 book (Routledge), 1 special issues (ESSACHESS), 20 articles, 7 booklets** (on the citizens' parliaments), **1 film, 1 software tool and 4 datasets.**

In addition, in **2026, 1 book (Elgar), 1 edited volume (Macmillan Palgrave) and 10 articles,** and in **2027, 1 further edited volume (Routledge) and 6 articles** will be published.

This gives a preliminary **total of 54 publications.**

Several other papers have been submitted to journals in the fields of communication studies and political studies.

Among the **178 dissemination activities** in the second reporting period, **128 were mainly targeted at academic communities: 2 conferences, 6 conference panels, 7 round tables, 5 keynotes, 70 presentations at international conferences** (14 of which will be delivered between May and September 2026), **14 education and training activities** (one of which will take place in June 2026) and 24 presentations at (plenary) meetings

NOTE. FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT'S ACADEMIC OUTPUT SEE CHAPTER 3. THE DATA ON DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES REFLECTS THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE AS OF THE PROJECT'S COMPLETION ON FEBRUARY 28, 2026.

MeDeMAP's impact is—for a considerable part—scientific. This is particularly true for the theoretical framework. The publication of this framework in Nico Carpentier and Jeffrey Wimmer's book on [Democracy and Media in Europe](#), published by Routledge at the beginning of 2025, has generated significant attention, assisted through the organisation of the roundtable series in a variety of countries. Six reviews on the book (in the *European Journal of Communication*, the *Journal of Language and Politics*, *Discourse & Society*, the Croatian journal *Medijske Studije – Media Studies*, the German journal *MEDIENwissenschaft: Rezensionen | Reviews* and the Serbian journal *CM: Communication and Media*) provide support for this level of scientific impact. In March 2026, the book was nominated for the renowned [Media and Democracy Karol Jakubowicz Award 2026](#), and, in the previous year, it has been included in the ['Selected books'](#)

[of the EC Library Guides for 'European Values'](#). The unfortunate societal context of contemporary democratic backsliding has only increased the need for theoretical frameworks that allow for a better understanding of the democracy-media nexus. A similar argument can be made for the participation and knowledge manuscript (as materialised in Deliverable 2.4, which was only finalised in February 2026, in accordance to the MeDeMAP time plan). The first indications (e.g., the acceptance of the IAMCR panel proposal on this theme) suggest strong potential for impact.

All empirical findings are and will be published as articles in anthologies and academic journals, particularly in two anthologies published by the renowned publishers Macmillan-Palgrave and Routledge. The Polish team is also preparing a book manuscript on media and democracy in Poland, which will be published by Edward Elgar. These **three publishers, widely regarded as leading in the field of the social sciences**, attest to the quality and recognition of MeDeMAP's research.

For their value-based model, developed to examine the impact of legal and regulatory provisions on the performance of democratically relevant media functions ("Bringing Values Back in: An Analytical Model for Examining the Potential of National Media Laws and Regulations to Promote Democracy"), Josef Seethaler and Maren Beaufort received a **Top Paper Award from the Communication Law and Policy Division of the International Communication Association (ICA)** at its 75th Annual Conference in June 2025 in Denver, CO. A German version of this WP3 paper has been published in [M&K—Medien & Kommunikationswissenschaft](#), one of the leading German journals in media and communication research; further publications will follow.

The [Map of EU Political Information Environments](#), which covers all 27 EU Member States, represents a particularly innovative contribution to scientific research. Based on 14 thoroughly reviewed international databases and covering the entire period of the project, the map allows for various approaches to examine the relationships between legal and regulatory frameworks, media supply, media use and democratic participation on the one hand, and between all EU Member States on the other. Negotiations are currently underway to establish a follow-up project to ensure the continued operation and regular updating of this research tool.

In France, the MeDeMAP project laid the foundation for further research within **the French DemoCIS 2025-2032 research programme**, in which MeDeMAP beneficiary IMT participates as a partner and coordinates a work package titled "Addressing Polarisation and

Information Disorders”. DemoCIS is supported by the *Agence Nationale de la Recherche* (ANR) within the *Sciences Humaines et Sociales* (SHS) sector.

To deliver impact in the academic field, MeDeMAP research has been and continues to be presented at numerous conferences. There were special MeDeMAP panels at the annual conferences of the **International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR)**, the **International Communication Association (ICA)** and the **European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA)**. On the other hand, **round tables** at universities in China, Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, Pakistan, Portugal and Sweden, dealing with the project’s theoretical foundation, the [impact workshop](#) “Mapping Media for Future Democracies” at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, in collaboration with the DESIRE, ECHO and ENGAGE research centres, and the [final MeDeMAP conference](#) on “Beyond the Audience: Rethinking Participation and Power in the Age of Data Capitalism” at IULM University in Rome, **involving researchers from 22 countries** (both of which took place in January 2026), also contributed to positioning MeDeMAP’s research findings on the international stage.

An important tool for ensuring scientific impact is **collaboration with other Horizon Europe projects**, which was initiated as early as in the first year of the project (with EUMEPLAT and ReMeD, with the latter being funded under the same Call as MeDeMAP). In February 2025, ReMeD collaborated thematically with MeDeMAP in organising the Prague conference on “Regulation and Accountability in a Hybrid Media System: Content Creators, Algorithmic Plurality and Online Platforms”, and at which MeDeMAP colleagues gave 13 presentations. On the other hand, colleagues from DIACOMET, the other project funded under the same Call, discussed their results at MeDeMAP’s final conference in Rome. Representatives of ReMeD and DIACOMET—as well as external experts—joined the MeDeMAP team for a podium discussion on “[How to Prevent Data Misuse?](#)” at the MeDeMAP Plenary Meeting in Sankt Poelten in September 2025. MIC has shared its expertise in implementing citizens’ parliaments with colleagues at Dublin City University, who then used what they had learned to organise “Citizens’ Labs” as part of their ReMeD work. OEAW was invited by the Horizon Europe project “Eye of Europe – The Research and Innovation foresight community” to join the workshop “[Democracy – a long term project?](#)” on 27 February 2025.

An important aspect of academic impact is **teaching**. The data and research findings are widely exploited in courses and webinars at various universities (Jagiellonian University, Lusófona University, Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro, National University of Singapore, University of Vienna), the Regional Community College of Twente, the Laboratoire LEGO, Brest, and GIS Marsouin, a research network in social sciences that brings together

scholars from the four universities of Bretagne, on topics such as European Media Policy, The Media in the European Union, Media and Democracy, Journalistic Sources of Information and International and Intercultural Communication.

4.2 Impact in the political field

TABLE 3
DISSEMINATION SPECIFICALLY TARGETED AT STAKEHOLDERS IN POLITICS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

In the second reporting period, **50 dissemination activities** were specifically targeted at various stakeholders such as policy-makers at European, national and regional level, regulatory authorities, international organisations and journalists’ associations and civil society actors. Among these were **9 impact workshops, 1 conference, 11 round tables, 19 consulting presentations, and 10 film screenings**. However, representatives from various stakeholders took part at numerous academic events.

NOTE. THE DATA REFLECTS THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE AS OF THE PROJECT’S COMPLETION ON FEBRUARY 28, 2026.

In order to geberate impact in the societal sphere, MeDeMAP sought to focus on the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals**. The project contributed to *Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions* by raising awareness for the importance of information quality, participation and trust in democratic systems – which has proven even more important since the project proposal was submitted, as alarming political developments in Europe and beyond have since led to a decline in support for the project’s socio-political goals. Against this backdrop, the project’s contribution to *Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure* by highlighting essential characteristics of a democratic media system and a European digital public sphere appears particularly important. The same applies to its efforts to address *Reduced Inequalities* by analysing diversity in media offerings, access, and representation. Last but not least, the project supports *Quality Education* by deepening knowledge of information practices and approaches to media literacy.

Therefore, throughout the project and beginning with an inspiring keynote speech by Mrs Teresa Ribeiro, the **OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media**, at our kick-off

meeting in Vienna in March 2023, we have been in close contact with representatives of international and national organisations to feed our findings into political processes. This commitment is already evident in the fact that we included sessions with external experts and representatives from politics and the media in the programme of all MeDeMAP plenary meetings.

Following an invitation from two MEPs from Slovenia and Estonia, the MeDeMAP consortium presented its research findings on January 13, 2026, at the **European Parliament**. The seminar “Regulating Media for Future Democracies: Political and People’s Voices” brought together **six MEPs (Renew, S&D, EPP)**, **several European Commission officials**, and **representatives from journalists’ organisations** for a high-level discussion on the relationship between media regulation and democratic governance. The first roundtable addressed next steps following the adoption of the EU Media Freedom Act; the second gives representatives from the four citizens’ parliaments organised by MeDeMAP in Austria, the Czech Republic, Ireland, and Slovenia, the opportunity to present their 133 resolutions on the role of the media in democracy and discuss them with Members of the European Parliament. The MeDeMAP coordinator was invited by an Austrian MEP to discuss the importance of citizens’ parliaments for democratic processes on a [podcast](#).

SEMINAR

REGULATING MEDIA FOR FUTURE DEMOCRACIES: POLITICAL AND PEOPLE'S VOICES

HOSTED BY
IRENA JOVEVA MEP (RENEW EUROPE)
CO-HOSTED BY
MARINA KALJURAND MEP (SOCIALISTS AND DEMOCRATS)

13 January 2026
 09:30 AM - 11:30 AM
 SPAAK 7C50
 EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
 BRUSSELS (BELGIUM)

ROUNDTABLE
WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS AFTER THE EU MEDIA FREEDOM ACT (EMFA)?
SPEAKERS
 IRENA JOVEVA MEP (RENEW EUROPE)
 AUDRIUS PERKAUSKAS (AUDIOVISUAL AND MEDIA SERVICES POLICY DIRECTOR, EUROPEAN COMMISSION)
 JULIE MAJERCAK (EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS)
 RENATE SCHROEDER (EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF JOURNALISTS)
CHAIR
 BEATA KLIMKIEWICZ (LAGELLONIAN UNIVERSITY)

FILM ESSAY SCREENING
"AGON: CONSTRUCTIONS OF DEMOCRACY"
CHAIR
 NICO CARPENTIER (COX JAMES UNIVERSITY)

ROUNDTABLE
WHAT DO EUROPEAN CITIZENS HAVE TO TEACH EU MEDIA POLICY?
SPEAKERS
 JOSEF TOKAR & NETA CEDNA (SLOVAK CITIZENS' PARLIAMENT)
 KARIN ARINGER & ANDREAS MUTSCHLECHNER (AUSTRIAN CITIZENS' PARLIAMENT)
 NIAL MAHON & CON CROININ (IRISH CITIZENS' PARLIAMENT)
 MILIJKA DOJAK & MIRKA RACE (SLOVENE CITIZENS' PARLIAMENT)
RESPONDENTS
 HANNEKE REIJERS (LEFT PROGRESSIVE ALLIANCE OF SOCIALISTS AND DEMOCRATS)
 LENA SCHILLING (MEP, THE GREENS/EUROPEAN FREE ALLIANCE)
CHAIR
 HELMUT PEISL (COPRIN)

CLOSING REMARKS
 JOSEF SEETHALER (AUSTRIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES)

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 ORGANISED BY **renew europe.** **S&D**



At the EU level, MeDeMAP findings were discussed by Beata Klimkiewicz and Josef Seethaler at two meetings of the **EMFA Working Group of the European Parliament Committee on Culture and Education (CULT)** on 22 January and 9 July 2026, and by Helmut Peissl at the Copenhagen conference “Standing up for Democracy & Rights: Working together to turn hope into action” in November 2025, co-organised by the **European Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA)**. MeDeMAP findings have also been included in the 2025 Independent Expert Report on “[Fragilities of democracy in Europe](#)”, prepared on behalf of the **European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation**, and will be included in the forthcoming **EU Rule of Law Report** on Slovenia and the **Media Pluralism Monitor**, co-funded by the European Union. The **European Parliament’s Special Committee on the European Democracy Shield** invited MeDeMAP researchers to comment on its “Working Document on Protecting European Democracy and Our Values”; the MeDeMAP comments were submitted on 30 August 2025. In October 2025, the **DG Research & Innovation (RTD)**, requested project materials to be included in the European Commission’s presentation to the United Nations on research into social media, polarisation, digital citizenship and media systems, and MeDeMAP representatives were invited to the High-Level Event on Democracy, organised by the **DG Justice and Consumers** in Brussels in 24 June 2026.

WP3 provided advice to the Austrian Commission for **UNESCO** in establishing the “Platform Media Diversity”, which aims to continuously provide recommendations for political action for a sustainable media policy. On 21 November 2025, UNESCO Austria, the University of Salzburg and MeDeMAP were jointly organising a conference on strengthening democratic media spaces, titled “[The Future is Public](#)” and involving the UNESCO International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). One result of this collaboration is a MeDeMAP policy paper addressed to UNESCO based on WP3’s analytical model for examining the potential of media policy and regulation to promote democracy, which is currently being discussed with UNESCO representatives (Deliverable 1.7(1) – *see Chapter 3*).

Another MeDeMAP Policy Paper on how a ‘European Digital Public Space’ should be built to ensure democratic legitimacy and full diversity (Deliverable 1.7(4) – *see Chapter 3*) was discussed by [Display Europe](#), a ground-breaking media platform anchored in public values, in March 2026 at the Berlin conference “[Towards a European Multilingual AI Media Platform](#)”, organised by the [European Language Data Space](#) in close collaboration with the **European Commission**.

Besides the discussion with MEPs at the European Parliament, the resolutions of the citizens’ parliaments were presented at the national level to the **Senate of the Czech**

Parliament, the **Irish Joint Parliamentary Committee on Arts, Communications, Media, Culture and Sport**, the **Slovenian Ministry of Culture**, and **representatives of three Austrian ministries** (including the office of the Vice Chancellor who is responsible for media policy, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science and Research) at a roundtable at the Austrian Press Club Concordia. At the local level, they were discussed with members of the **Limerick City and County Council**, Ireland, and the **City of Vienna**, which has also supported the preparations for the Austrian citizens' parliament, not least because Vienna was the European Capital of Democracy 2025. The resolutions were also individually presented and discussed in follow-up meetings with political stakeholders on local, national and European level, including the **Head of the EC Representation in the Czech Republic**, the **Commissioner for Human Rights in Czech Republic**, two **Austrian MEPs** and two members and media spokespersons of the **Austrian National Council**.

MeDeMAP research findings were presented as evidence to demonstrate trends and **inform national policymakers and regulators** at various events, such as meetings of the French Regulatory Authority for Audiovisual and Digital Communication (**ARCOM**) in July 2025, the Irish Regulator **Coimisiún na Meán** in November 2025 and the Portuguese **Comissão da Carteira Profissional de Jornalista** (Journalists' Professional License Committee). Findings were also discussed in the context of the 18th Regular Session of the **Committee on Culture**, a working body of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, in April 2025, and the **OSCE/ODIHR** election observation mission in Slovenia in March 2026. In the field of education policy, the **Media Literacy Ireland** alliance, facilitated by Coimisiún na Meán, and the **Austrian Think Tank on Critical Media Literacy**, founded in cooperation with the Federal Institute for Adult Education, have been important points of contact. Implementation and resolutions of the citizens' parliaments were communicated via **EPALE**, the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe.

4.3 Impact in the societal field

In pursuing its socio-political goals (as outlined in the previous chapter), MeDeMAP researchers have been engaged in dialogue and discussions with **international and national organisations in the media sector and journalism**. This allowed to present the research findings as practically applicable, for example, at workshops and meetings with members of the **European Federation of Journalists (EFJ)**, **Reporters Without Borders (RSF)**, the **Alliance of Independent Press Councils of Europe (AIPCE)**, **Community Media Forum Europe (CMFE)**, the

Irish National Union of Journalists, the Polish Journalists' Society (Towarzystwo Dziennikarskie), the Portuguese Journalists' Union, the Austrian press club Concordia, and at the 2025 Journalism Festival "Naprej/Forward" in Maribor, Slovenia. Some of these experiences fed into the MeDeMAP Policy Paper "Serving Democracy. Challenges to Journalism in the Age of Digital News" (Deliverable 1.7(2) – see *Chapter 3*), which will be shared with the journalists' organisations mentioned above.

The **Austrian public broadcaster ORF** asked the coordinator to include MeDeMAP research, based on the WP5 methodology, in its 2025 "[Public Value Study](#)" on how it can better tailor its programme to the needs and expectations of people at risk of poverty and social. The **European Broadcasting Union (EBU)** was also involved in this study; together with the MeDeMAP coordinator and other experts, they discussed the findings on the [television programme 'Dialogforum', broadcast on ORF III](#) on 4 November 2025. There will be a follow-up discussion with the ORF Directorate-General as part of the statutory quality assurance process on 17 June 2026. Moreover, MeDeMAP representatives were also invited to join an ORF-EBU event on "Audiences & Citizens" in February 2026, which resulted in another MeDeMAP Policy Paper ("The Audience Matters: Some (Radical?) Thoughts on Future Perspectives for Public Service Media"; (Deliverable 1.7(3) – see *Chapter 3*).

Of particular significance in terms of the project's societal impact was the **involvement of more than 500 European citizens in MeDeMAP research**. (1) More than 100 citizens in five EU countries took part in citizens' parliaments, deliberating on the role of the media in democracy (Deliverable 6.4). They were not only involved in debating research findings, but also in creating resolutions addressed at European and national policymakers and in co-creating the methodological framework by deciding (within a given framework) on the rules of the debate and the acceptance of resolutions. As one of the citizens' parliaments was held online, In order to directly compare the advantages and disadvantages of online assemblies with those of in-person assemblies, the participants in this online parliament tested an innovative solution that could help make citizens' parliaments more cost-effective and, as a result, more frequent. (2) More than 400 other citizens in ten EU countries participated in focus groups and semi-structured interviews about their media use and democratic participation, thereby helping to generate extremely valuable data (Deliverable 5.5).

Regarding the citizens' parliaments, WP6 partners produced leaflets and infographics detailing good practices in media and information literacy, diversity and inclusion as well as in citizens' participation and community media, as formulated in their resolutions (see *Chapter 3*). They thus offer **blueprints for the future of accessible media production and programming**. In

Slovenia, the citizens' parliament methodology is being used to support participatory discussions on the future of **public service broadcasting** (RTV Slovenija) within a new national media policy project, ensuring that citizens' voices play a role in shaping future governance of public service media. Moreover, the Mirovni Institute strategically used the election period in Slovenia in the first months of 2026 to raise awareness of CP resolutions and MeDeMAP findings within political parties. As part of the **'Voice of the People' civil society coalition**, it formulated joint civil society demands for media policy reforms. The Mirovni Institute will continue to apply the Citizen Parliament (CP) model to future policy-oriented projects, including participatory discussions on the future of public service broadcasting and **local-level participatory processes on Roma integration, in cooperation with local communities in Southeast Slovenia.**

When considering broader and more direct societal impact, the **film essay "[AGON: Constructions of Democracy](#)"** has **great potential to achieve such an impact**, with the essay being released in open access early 2026. Here, the first screenings, as well as a first broadcast on the Öppna Kanalen Stockholm (the Swedish Stockholm open channel TV station) on April 11 and 12, 2026, **point to strong potential for impact.** Even though it is only anecdotal evidence, a short letter written by Eiliyah, a 9-year-old Pakistani spectator—and the child of a MCAP doctoral school participant—shows the capacity of this film essay to captivate even

young audiences, when she wrote: "I love it. (...) I liked other movies, but this one is made for age 30 and bigger than 18, but I am 9 years old. Still, I liked it." AGON is part of the **official selection of the [2026 Posibl. Festival](#) in Palermo** in August 2026.



Finally, it should be mentioned that the **MeDeMAP project has been covered by numerous media outlets** across all Consortium countries, particularly in public service and community media, with a potential reach of 27,944,01 (e.g., Bezirksblatt (A), ČRO Radio Wave (CZ), De Facto (CZ), Denik N (CZ), Der Standard (A), Die Furche (A), Doba seniorů (CZ), Dublin City Community TV (IE), Freies Radio Freistadt (A), Il Giorno (IT), Jornal Economico (PT), La Provincia (IT), Limerick Leader (IE), Live 95 (IE), MediaGuru (CZ), Mein Wien (A), N1 Slovenia (SLO), Oireachtas TV (IE), OKTO TV (A), Öppna Kanalen Stockholm (SE), ORF III (A), Radio Fro (A), Radio Orange (A), RAI3 (IT), RTE Raidió na Gaeltachta (IE), RTV (SLO), Skug-Magazin (A), among others).

MeDeMAP – Mapping Media for Future Democracies

Deliverable 1.8

Version 1.0

(August 2026)

