

# Workshop: The Changing Role of Citizens in Reforming EU Democracy

**Date: 15 May 2019**

**Time: 8:30am - 4pm**

**Venue: Room 222, Graduate Centre,  
QMUL Mile End campus, 404 Bancroft Rd,  
London E1 4DH**

This event is kindly supported by funding provided by a UACES Small Event grant, the Queen Mary Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences (IHSS), and the Queen Mary Department of Law. The event contributes to the IHSS research theme on Democracy.

The workshop addresses the rising challenges of reforming EU democracy and increasing citizen involvement in EU governance. These challenges have become particularly tangible with the exacerbation of existential crises in the EU, which require swift executive action, often at the expense of genuine democratic deliberation and citizen input.

The aim of this workshop is to analyse and reflect on the evolving institutional position of citizens in EU governance. The interdisciplinary pool of speakers will approach citizens not as passive recipients of rights, but as active participants in the shaping of EU decisions and policies. Aiming to assess the galvanisation of citizen participation “in the

democratic life of the Union” (Art 10(3) TEU), this workshop concentrates on the nature, benefits and shortcomings of the different instruments of direct and participatory democracy at both EU and national levels. The workshop thus explores the emerging transnationalisation of citizens in EU public law.

The workshop asks fundamental theoretical questions which remain understudied in the existing literature: Is the institutionalisation of citizens in EU public law a prerequisite for democratic legitimacy and an ‘ever closer union’ among the peoples of Europe? Is the transnationalisation and collectivisation of the citizens’ public power meaningfully possible beyond representative means?

To answer these queries, the speakers will examine recent initiatives and EU democratic reform proposals (e.g. the revision of the European Citizens’ Initiative, the increasing use of pre-legislative citizen consultations, democratic conventions, the growing use of referendums, the role of citizen petitions, the European Ombudsman, and the civil society) and would therefore make an important academic contribution to this ongoing debate, which is only likely to continue.

By evaluating the reform of the concrete instruments of EU democracy, the workshop will also contribute to important policy-related debates on how to improve citizen ownership of EU policy making.

# Programme

**Date: 15 May 2019**

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**8:30-8:55 Welcome coffee**

**8:55-9:00 Introductory remarks (Dr Davor Jancic, QMUL) and welcome (Professor Malgosia Fitzmaurice and Dr Violeta Moreno-Lax, CEILA)**

**9:00-10:45 Panel Session I – Citizen Conventions and Referendums**

**Pathways for Citizens to Engage in EU Policymaking**

Ms Sophia Russack, Researcher (Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels – CEPS)

**From Paris with Love: A Critique of President Macron's Democratic Conventions**

Dr Davor Jancic, Lecturer in EU Law (Queen Mary University of London)

**The European Citizens' Consultations: An Evaluation**

Ms Beth Wiltshire, European Programs Officer (The Democratic Society)

**Citizenship and Social protection: Lessons from the Referendums**

Professor Dr Jukka Snell, Professor of EU Law (Turku University)

**10:45-11:00 Coffee break**

**11:00-12:45 Panel Session II – Citizen Initiatives and Legitimacy**

**The European Citizens' Initiative: Unbridled Optimism?**

Professor Dr Justin Greenwood, Professor of European Public Policy (Robert Gordon University)

**Revising the ECI: Towards a More User-Friendly, Participatory and Powerful Agenda Initiative**

Dr Mario Mendez, Reader in Law (Queen Mary University of London)

**Participatory Democracy in the CJEU Case Law: Challenges and Implications for the Future of EU Democracy**

Dr James Organ, Assistant Professor in EU Law (University of Liverpool)

**Output Legitimacy, Input Legitimacy and Communication as Unstable Frames for Citizen Participation in the EU**

Dr Luis Bouza García, Assistant Professor of Political Science (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid/ College of Europe)

**12:45-13:45 Lunch with a presentation by Tiernan Mines from Hello Lamp Post on "Using On-Street Engagement Platforms to Empower Citizens in the Brexit Debate"**

**13:45-15:30 Panel Session III – Citizen Access to EU Legislative and Accountability Processes**

**What Role for Citizens in Ongoing Legislative Processes? The Legal Implications for Transparency and Access to Documents**

Dr Natassa Athanasiadou, Assistant Professor of EU Law (Maastricht University)

**The Past and Future of the Right to Petition the European Parliament: A Viable Alternative for Citizens' Participation in the EU?**

Dr Nikos Vogiatzis, Lecturer in EU Law (University of Liverpool)

**Public Consultations on New EU Initiatives: The Right Tool to Increase Citizens' Participation in the EU Legislative Process?**

Dr Robert Zbiral, Associate Professor, Department of Constitutional Law and Political Science (Masaryk University)

**Fostering Citizens' Control over and Participation in the European Union's Democratic Life: The Ever-Increasing Importance of the Ombudsman**

Dr Marco Inglese, Research Fellow (University of Parma)

**15:30-16:00 Conclusions and way forward**