Euroconnect

Strengthening Civic Competences and EU Democratic Life

Online Events Guidelines

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Summary of the Project

EuroConnect is an Erasmus+ cooperation project coordinated by the Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies at the University of Tartu, which runs until October 2027 and focuses on strengthening civic competences and participation in EU democratic life among young people. The consortium (University of Tartu, University of Göttingen, University of Siena, and CSC "Danilo Dolci") develops and tests transnational learning formats – online student debates, school workshops, teacher training activities, and a project-based university course – linking EU-level issues to local realities and curricula.

The best practices, the feedback and the results of the activities will be recorded and transformed in a toolkit, providing a set of concrete actions and guidelines, which can be implemented in the future practices of civic competence education. The project aims to generate both direct impact on students' civic skills and robust evidence and tools (guidelines, toolkit, recommendations) to help European education systems integrate civic competence development more systematically.

Key results of this project will be the improved knowledge of civic competences among students, as well as an enhancement of their own civic competences. There will also be the formulation of updated practical methods in civic competence education to achieve this enhancement. Additionally, teachers working on civic competence education will be able to facilitate more engaging experiences for students working on civic competences and students will find their educational experience improved.

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List of abbreviations

Acronym	Description
WP2	Work Package 2 - Emboldening Civic Competences Through Transnational Discussions
WP4	Work Package 4 - Collaborative Use of Civic Competences and Formalisation of Methods
EIDs	European Issues Debates
CDs	Curriculum Discussions
LIDs	Local Issues Discussions
DoA	Document of Agreement

Statement for open documents and Copyrights

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Executive summary

Work Package 2 *Emboldening Civic Competences Through Transnational Discussions* of the EuroConnect project is dedicated to creating structured, transnational online spaces in which university students can meet, discuss, and reflect together. In these spaces, participants can discuss key European issues and their implications, reflect on how higher education curricula (lack to) support civic competences and democratic engagement, and explore local issues with European dimension thinking about realistic pathways to change. Acknowledging the importance of youth engagement, WP2's ambition is twofold: on one hand, it provides an educational perspective by strengthening key civic and democratic competences; on the other hand, its analytical dimension aspires to gather comparable and replicable data to maximize the project's impact.

The following document presents the overall strategy that will be implemented to fully carry to terms the aforementioned ambitions outlining the technical, educational, and digital strategy that will be employed in achieving such scope corresponding to WP2A1 target. The *Guidelines* constitute a valuable document for future replicability of similar activities within the field.

Online Events Guidelines – an overview

Work Package 2 (WP2) *Emboldening Civic Competences Through Transnational Discussions* of the EuroConnect project is dedicated to creating structured, transnational online spaces in which university students can meet, discuss, and reflect together. In these spaces, participants can discuss key European issues and their implications, reflect on how higher education curricula support or lack to support civic competences and democratic engagement, and explore local issues with European dimension thinking about realistic pathways to change.

WP2 comprises three main types of synchronous online events, each with a specific targeted focus yet sharing the same pedagogical structure. All events share a discussion-based and debate format, highlighting the importance of engagement and active learning for pedagogical scope. The simple and inclusive format and the agile structure of the debates will help the audience to apply to more than one type of events and to persuade other instructors to consider such a tool, jointly designed and managed by different European universities, as a model of practical resource for other initiatives dealing with civic education in a truly supranational environment.

In the following sections, each typology of event is explored.

European Issues Debates

European Issues Debates (EIDs) constitute the first pillar of WP2A1 activities. EIDs are transnational online discussions where students from partner universities (Goettingen, Siena and Tartu) engage with broad, cross-border themes such as climate transition, social inequality, digital rights, democratic backsliding and EU social policy. Topics will be selected democratically by students through an anonymous survey from a curated pool of pre-defined options agreed by the partners. The

topic-selection survey will be distributed digitally (e.g. together with the registration confirmation). Students will also be given the option to suggest subtopics under each debate theme. The survey results will be shared with the students, which will provide transparency and strengthen project ownership. The co-selection of specific debate themes will also decrease the risk of disengagement in debates.

At the core of the activity lies the objective of encouraging informed, multi-perspective discussions of major European challenges while helping students to actualize and link abstract European issues to their own lives and personal context. Moreover, the interactive and transnational approach of the debates fosters a proactive approach to practicing key civic competences, (e.g. arguing one's position, listening respectfully and considering other points of view) (Council of Europe 2023; European Commission 2025). The overall aim of the EIDs is to create an informal environment in which students can explore their attitudes on EU issues, linking abstract policy discussions to their own personal experience with the ultimate scope of increasing awareness on how European-level decisions intersect with national and local realities.

The events will be carried out in a series of four, scheduled to start in May 2026. Recruitment will start from January 2026 onwards. Each event will be chaired by one partner institution and will be open to students from all partners. Activities will be carried out in English to facilitate the transnational exchange. The aimed target consists of at least 15 students per event (ideally, with a reserve pool of about 20 students-per-event, to minimize potential withdrawals), with participation of both Bachelor's (BA) and Master's (MA) students.

Curriculum Discussions

Curriculum Discussions (CDs) focus on the ways in which civic competences, democratic engagement, and the EU dimension are—or potentially could

be—integrated into higher-education programs and teaching practices. Students' voices are essential to defining strategies for embedding good practices within higher education, as they bring first-hand insights and primary, lived observations of how policies and practices work in everyday academic life. Potential topics range from how university courses prepare students for democratic participation to whether these themes are integrated into standard teaching practices or, instead, perceived as areas where gaps remain. The discussion will also focus on which teaching methods and learning formats can most effectively strengthen civic knowledge, skills, and engagement. Lastly, the conceptual notions of the European dimension and citizenship will be explored by analysing whether students effectively see that the EU is reflected in their curricular programme or if a more comprehensive format should be developed.

The ultimate objectives of CDs' implementation are:

1) To gather students' views on how existing courses and curricula prepare them for democratic participation and EU citizenship;
2) To identify gaps, needs, and best practices;
3) To collect ideas that can inform future course designs for the WP4's toolkit on the *Collaborative Use of Civic Competences and Formalisation of Methods*.

CDs will be organised in a series of three, running in parallel to EIDs. They will start in May 2026, with student recruitment from January 2026 onwards. The CDs will be chaired each time by a different partner institution. Participation will be open to students across the consortium, from BA to MA level. However, priority targets will be the students from humanities and social sciences degrees, and the members of students' unions and representative bodies in the academic governance.

In these events, students will be invited to reflect on how their programmes currently address civic competences, democratic engagement, and the European dimension, as well as the way in which said programmes might be improved.

Participants will be encouraged to share examples of good practices and perceived gaps, tentatively promoting new teaching formats, contents, or assessment methods that could better support said goal. Activities will be carried on in English to facilitate the transnational exchange and mutual dialogue across students from different nationalities and institutions.

Local Issues Discussions

Local Issues Discussions (LIDs) constitute the third and last pillar of WP2A1 activities. LIDs revolve around specific local or regional problems that clearly connect to European policies, norms, or debates. Potential discussion topics – that will be ultimately democratically selected by students – include:

- Housing, gentrification and urban regeneration;
- Migration, integration and social cohesion;
- Digitalization and local public services;
- Agriculture;
- Transportations, energy and infrastructures.

The ultimate objective of the LIDs is to highlight the local-European nexus, prompting students to propose practical solutions and identify the relevant actors at different levels (local, national, EU, civil society, universities) that can support said changes. Lastly, LIDs aim to generate ideas that may later be developed into collaborative projects in WP4.

As with the previous two series of events, LIDs will be delivered as a set of three sessions, coordinated with the other two event streams and starting in May 2026. Each event will be centred on specific case studies and/or policies prepared by the partner institutions. As above, the target for student recruitment is around 15 students per event, with English as language of conduct. The overarching aim is to help students better recognise how the issues they experience locally connect to

decisions made in Brussels or Strasbourg, and to encourage them to reflect on which actors should take responsibility—and what concrete actions could be taken—to tackle these challenges.

Methodological framework

The activities within WP2 are grounded in a participatory and pedagogical methodology that combines democratic decision-making with a structured format. Regardless of thematic focus, each event is designed as a deliberate learning and research process. Together, these methodological pillars ensure that WP2 events strengthen civic competences, encourage reflection on the practical aspects of democracy, and produce comparable evidence across diverse institutional and national contexts.

At the core of this framework are two interrelated elements. The first is a *democratic procedure* for topic selection, which gives students a direct role in shaping the agenda of each discussion. The second is a three-phase *Future Workshop format* based around the triad of *Critique*, *Utopia*, and *Realisation*. This structure strikes an appropriate balance between critical analysis, creative exploration, and pragmatic planning (Alminde & Warming, 2019). Together, these elements showcase participatory democracy in action and help participants experience—rather than simply study - what it means to discuss collectively on issues of shared concern.

Democratic topic selection

All WP2 events are preceded by an inclusive decision-making process that determines the specific topic to be discussed (i.e. using a digital questionnaire/Google forms). This procedure ensures that the discussions are relevant, engaging, and authentically grounded in the participants' interests and perspectives. Before the start of the

debates, partner institutions will jointly develop a shortlist of three to five potential subtopics linked to the overarching macro-theme assigned to that session. This shortlist is prepared through internal consultation between partners to ensure both thematic coherence and diversity of perspectives. Using a survey tool, registered students vote for shortlisted sub-topics and may also propose their own ideas related to the overarching themes. Two weeks before the start of the debates, the survey period ends. The two-sub topics with most votes will be discussed in the actual debate.

Proposed topics must meet three key criteria:

- They should be clearly worded and neutrally formulated, avoiding leading, ambiguous, or emotionally loaded language that might bias participants from the outset.
- They must be relevant to the larger objectives of the *EuroConnect* project; specifically, the cultivation of civic competences, a proper understanding of EU democratic life, and the interplay between local and European dimensions.
- They should be sufficiently broad to allow contributions from students across various national backgrounds and academic disciplines, ensuring inclusivity and comparability across events.

At the start of each event, the lead moderator will present the debate theme sub-topics decided by the students through a pre-debate survey distributed digitally and concluded one month/two weeks before the debates, briefly contextualizing the sub-topics, and clarify their connection to the project's goals. Each participant will then choose her or his preferred subtopic to determine the focus of the session and the compositions of the breakout sessions.

This simple yet meaningful act of collective decision-making embodies one of the key pedagogical aims of WP2, namely the ability for students to experience democratic

participation first-hand. By giving participants a genuine voice in shaping the project's agenda, this process seeks to strengthen engagement, enhance the perceived legitimacy of the discussion, and ensure that the chosen subjects resonate with the students' everyday realities and interests. It also offers a practical benefit for moderators: when participants help shape the agenda, discussions tend to be richer, more engaged, and more closely grounded in their personal experiences.

The Future Workshop Format

Once the discussion topics are selected, the event proceeds according to a *three-phase format* inspired by the well-established *Future Workshop* methodology. This format structures dialogue in a way that promotes critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving, leading participants from diagnosis to vision and action (Jungk & Müllert, 1987). Each phase has a distinct function but contributes to an overarching narrative of inquiry and transformation.

1. **Critique**. The first phase concentrates on articulating and analysing problems. Participants are invited to identify gaps, frustrations, or contradictions associated with the chosen topic—for example, perceived failures of policymaking, lack of access to information, experiences of exclusion, and/or mismatches between principles and practice. The focus is not on reaching consensus, but on gathering a wide range of perspectives and building a nuanced understanding of what participants perceive as "not working". Moderators may prompt students to illustrate their points with concrete examples or observations from their own contexts.
2. **Utopia**. The second phase deliberately shifts the tone and logic of the discussion. Here, participants are encouraged to suspend questions of feasibility and instead imagine desirable futures. Moderators invite them to explore how things might look if the previously identified problems were

resolved and processes were running smoothly. In this imaginative space, students can think creatively and express aspirations without constraint. The purpose of this phase is to stimulate visionary and innovative thinking—a temporary reprise from pragmatism that allows participants to articulate what values, ideals, and/or institutional arrangements they would like to see in an ideal scenario.

3. **Realisation**. In the final phase, the discussion turns to workable solutions and next steps. Participants are asked to consider how the desired futures envisioned in the *Utopia* phase could be translated into practice. Moderators guide reflection toward concrete proposals, prompting questions such as: Who would need to act? At which level—institutional, local, national, or European? What resources, partnerships, or policy changes would be required? Through this phase, participants distinguish between short-term achievable actions and longer-term structural changes, acknowledging both ambition and realism. This exercise fosters a pragmatic mindset while maintaining the inspiration derived from the previous stage.

This tripartite structure mirrors key aspects of democratic learning: critical awareness, creative visioning, and collective problem-solving (Vidal, 2006). By progressing through these stages, students learn not only to critique the status quo but also to imagine alternatives and take ownership of possible change processes. Ultimately, the *Future Workshop format* transforms each WP2 event into a microcosm of civic engagement -dynamic, participatory, and future-oriented. It bridges critique and creativity, combining intellectual rigor with imaginative exploration to foster precisely the kind of reflective and engaged citizenship at the heart of EuroConnect's mission.

Events organization and roles

Duration and structure

WP2 events are designed to foster substantive discussion and productive interaction within a manageable timeframe. Each session will last 75 to 90 minutes and will be structured to sustain participants' engagement while allowing for a reflective, multi-phase dialogue. The format is intentionally consistent across all sessions to create a familiar rhythm that encourages participants' confidence in the process, while leaving enough flexibility to adapt to specific contexts or themes.

Each session will open with a 10-minute introduction, during which the moderator will welcome the participants, outline the topic and objectives of the debate, and recall the basic ground rules for discussion. This opening moment also serves to allow all the participants to break the ice.. Instructors and moderators, who will be conveniently trained, participating to the preparatory meetings, will set an inclusive tone, making explicit that there are not "winners" or "losers", that this kind of debate is not intended as an examination of their intellectual preparation, that all participants are invited to contribute, and that differing viewpoints are to be not only expected but encouraged.

After the introduction, the group will be split into two sub-groups corresponding to the two sub-topics chosen by the students through a survey. The discussions will take place in virtual breakout rooms.

The first thematic segment, the *Critique* phase, will last approximately 20-25 minutes and will be devoted to identifying existing problems, challenges, or tensions related to the chosen topic. This phase encourages participants to share concrete

examples, experiences, or observations drawn from their personal or institutional realities. Within each breakout room, a note-maker will be appointed, and students will make use of padlet boards to add their ideas freely.

Following a short 5-minute break, the group will transition to the *Utopia* phase, a creative and imaginative exercise lasting another 20 minutes. Here, participants are encouraged to suspend immediate concerns about feasibility and to envision ideal, alternative scenarios. Moderators will explicitly invite participants to explore what a desirable future might look like if practical constraints—budgetary, political, or institutional—did not apply.

After another brief intermission, participants will move into the *Realisation* phase, again spanning 15 minutes, during which the discussion will shift from creative exploration to pragmatic reflection. Moderators will help participants identify concrete steps and responsibilities in order to connect vision with practice, ensuring that the session concludes with a sense of ownership and tangible follow-up possibilities.

At the end of the breakout session, the whole group of participants to the debate will reconvene for a wrap-up session of max 30 minutes. Moderators will ask the note-takers of each breakout session to summarise key takeaways. Then, they will thank participants, and explain the next steps of the project following the end of the debate—particularly how the insights gathered will feed into analysis and subsequent activities within the EuroConnect project (see Survey and Data Collection). Minute, results of the debates and the toolkit will be available to all the participants in due time.

Roles and responsibilities

Every session will be delivered by a small facilitation team to ensure smooth coordination and high-quality moderation. At minimum, each event should include a Lead Moderator alongside a Co-Moderator/Note-Taker for each breakout session.

Regardless of the specific configuration, roles must be clarified before each session to guarantee efficient division of responsibilities and continuity throughout the project.

The Lead Moderator serves as the main facilitator and representative of the event. This person will welcome participants, present the session's objectives and format, ensure compliance with ground rules, and guide the group through each phase while managing time effectively. Beyond procedural oversight, the Lead Moderator plays a key role in ensuring that all participants feel comfortable contributing, that power imbalances are minimised, and that no single voice dominates the discussion. This role does not necessarily require a senior academic profile. Trained early-career researchers, experienced practitioners, and staff members with facilitation experience are also well-suited to take on this responsibility.

The Co-Moderator/Note-Taker plays a complementary yet critical role in each breakout session. This person documents the session in a structured and systematic way, organising the notes according to the three phases (Critique, Utopia, Realisation). These records will later support both the analytical synthesis for WP2 and the pedagogical design work carried out in WP4. In parallel, the co-moderator observes the "backstage" of the event – monitoring chat activity, raised hands, and any signs of tension, discomfort, or disengagement. Their role provides real-time feedback to the Lead Moderator, helping ensure balanced inclusion and a supportive environment for open dialogue while at the same time providing technical support whenever needed by admitting participants into the waiting room, launching polls, and supervising screen sharing.

Attendance and engagement assurance

Each event will involve at least 15 student participants and will include students from multiple partner institutions. This cross-institutional participation enhances intercultural dialogue and reflects the European dimension of the project.

Participation will remain strictly voluntary for the students who do not apply for the recognition of ECTS/credits. In this case, students may leave at any time without any negative consequence. To have a full recognition of credits and a certification of attendance to the debate, active participation in the whole debate is required. Recruitment efforts should explicitly promote diversity in disciplinary background, study level, and social experience, in keeping with the project's inclusivity and equality principles. The organisers may design outreach strategies to attract both highly engaged students and those less accustomed to participatory discussions.During the sessions, moderators will foster equitable participation by encouraging contributions from students who have not yet spoken and by adapting their facilitation to potential barriers such as language proficiency or differing levels of familiarity with the topic. This is done to ensure that each debate genuinely serves as a pluralistic and democratic forum that is open to a wide range of differing views. Moderators will follow a common facilitation framework adapted to the specific goals of each discussion phase. Moderators should encourage specificity, periodically summarise points and invite clarification ("*Could you expand on that example?*"), emphasise psychological safety, strive to include diverse voices, as well as translate ideals into potential actions. Guiding questions such as "*Who would need to act?*", "*At what level should this happen?*", and "*What resources or alliances could make this possible?*" may help in this sense.

Constructive disagreement is treated as a natural—and often productive—feature of democratic dialogue. The organisers acknowledge that critical reflection may, at times, elicit strong emotions or spark contestation. Should this occur, moderators will respond with sensitivity and care, maintaining a respectful atmosphere and ensuring that all participants feel safe to contribute. If a discussion becomes heated, moderators should calmly restate the agreed ground rules and highlight the shared value of mutual respect. They may use neutral language to acknowledge emotions without taking sides, for example: *"I can see that this topic*

matters deeply. Let's take a moment to understand the different reasons behind these perspectives." This approach validates participants' feelings while reorienting the conversation back toward understanding. Should conflicts persist, moderators can employ de-escalation strategies such as temporarily switching speakers, shifting topics, or introducing reflective summarisation. As a last resort—and only in cases of repeated or serious breaches of conduct—a moderator may (temporarily) mute or remove a disruptive participant. Such interventions must be documented and reported to the WP2 coordination team to ensure consistent handling and accountability across events. By combining structure with openness—and empathy with procedural rigour—this facilitation model aims to create a safe, inclusive, and intellectually stimulating environment in which diverse European students can engage critically and constructively with one another.

Survey and Data Collection

Pre-and Post-Event Surveys

WP2 will also complement the qualitative insights generated during the events by including online surveys specifically designed to capture—amongst the others—changes in the participants' attitudes, knowledge, and experiences over time. These surveys will allow the consortium to evaluate the short-term and long-term effects of the debate process, contributing to an evidence-based understanding of the project's educational and civic impact.

The survey instruments will be developed in collaboration by all partner institutions under the coordination of the WP2 lead (University of Siena). This collective process will ensure that the questions reflect the diversity of institutional contexts while maintaining conceptual coherence across the consortium. A

designated partner will host the online survey platform, ensuring robust data security, GDPR compliance (see Ethical and GDPR Considerations), and overall technical reliability.

Each partner will contribute to refining the questionnaire items, agreeing on common indicators so that aggregated analysis can be carried out meaningfully.

The data collection process will follow a three-stage timeline designed to capture both immediate and delayed attitudes from the participants: 1) A pre-event survey, which is different to the questionnaire allowing students to choose debate topics, will be distributed either together with the registration confirmation or approximately one week before the beginning of the events. This baseline questionnaire will collect information about participants' prior attitudes, knowledge, and experiences relevant to the session's potential topics. The questionnaire will also include information about the number of debates in which each respondent intends to participate, as well as the motivation for participating.

2) A first post-event survey will be disseminated during the weeks following the events, allowing participants to reflect on the experience with sufficient distance while keeping memories fresh. This follow-up will explore perceived learning outcomes, satisfaction with the discussion process, and any shifts in civic interest or political self-efficacy. 3) A second post-event survey, to be administered 6-12 months after the end of the events, will gauge the longer-term persistence of any observed changes. This delayed measurement will provide valuable insight into the durability of the project's impact and the potential for long-lasting behavioural or attitudinal transformation.

The surveys will be concise (ideally around 5-10 minutes) to encourage participation while still capturing essential dimensions of the project's objectives. Indicatively, survey questions may cover:

- Interest in civic issues and political participation, assessing engagement levels before and after the debates.
- Perceptions of EU institutions and European integration, helping to understand students' attitudes towards the supranational level.
- Sense of self-efficacy and confidence in political discussion, a central aspect of democratic competence development.
- Previous experiences with deliberation, dialogue, or civic education activities to contextualise current participation.
- Basic socio-demographic data, collected minimally and ethically to facilitate analysis of diversity and inclusion patterns.

Together, these items may enable both quantitative comparison across events and qualitative reflection on participants' evolving relationship with civic and political engagement.

Data Management

Effective data management is fundamental to ensuring both the scientific validity and ethical integrity of WP2 outputs. The consortium is committed to adhering to the highest standards of data protection, transparency, and comparability across partner institutions.

To this end, a shared codebook will be developed early in the process, guaranteeing consistency across different institutional datasets and greatly facilitate joint analysis. All partners involved in survey administration will align their data collection procedures with this shared framework.

Data storage and access will be managed by the partner institution hosting the survey platform. Data will be stored on secure institutional servers protected by appropriate access controls, encryption where applicable, and regular backup

procedures. Access will be strictly limited to authorised project researchers, following GDPR-compliant data-sharing protocols.

To safeguard participants' privacy, any dataset circulated within the consortium for analytical purposes will be pseudonymised. This means that all direct identifiers (such as names or email addresses) will be removed and replaced with unique codes. The key linking these codes to actual identities will be stored in a separate, secure location accessible only to the designated data controller.

In addition to the quantitative survey data, qualitative materials—notably, the structured notes taken by moderators during the discussions—will be systematically archived. These notes—organised by event and phase—will be stored in a restricted-access shared repository clearly labelled and dated. This qualitative documentation will be invaluable both for integrating the various strands of WP2 analysis and for informing subsequent work packages, particularly WP4.

Ethical and GDPR Considerations

Basic Principles

All activities conducted under WP2 will be carried out in full compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, EU Regulation 2016/679), as well as relevant national data protection laws and the ethical standards of the participating institutions. Ethical integrity and respect for participants' rights are central to the design, delivery, and analysis of every event and research activity within WP2.

Three core principles underpin this ethical framework: 1) Participation in events, discussions, or surveys is entirely optional, and students are free to decline or

withdraw their participation at any time, without any negative consequences. This principle is set to safeguard participants' autonomy and reinforces the educational ethos of free and critical engagement. 2) Voluntariness is ensured throughout all stages of the process. Students who decide to withdraw after agreeing to participate in the debates have only to notify and justify their decision but cannot ask for the recognition of credits. 3) Data minimisation guides every aspect of data collection. Only the strictly necessary information to fulfil the project's research and evaluation objectives will be gathered, and all efforts will be made to avoid capturing unnecessary personal details. This ensures both proportionality and compliance with GDPR Article 5 (1)(c).

Confidentiality is maintained for all contributions made during events and surveys. Participants' statements and reflections will be treated as confidential material, and any use of this content in reports, publications, or teaching materials will involve careful pseudonymisation to prevent individual identification. These principles form the ethical foundation of WP2, ensuring that all activities respect participants' dignity, protect their privacy, and comply with EU data protection and institutional research standards.

Information for Participants

Transparency is an essential feature of ethical engagement. Before or at the start of each event, organisers must ensure that all participants receive clear and accessible information about the purpose, procedures, and data-handling aspects of their participation. This will typically be provided through a concise written information sheet or verbal briefing, using plain and inclusive language accessible to everyone. Participants will be informed about:

- The purpose of both the event and the broader project, including the dual focus on educational innovation and research-based civic learning.

- The types of data collected, such as survey responses and anonymised moderator notes.
- The identity and contact details of the data controller and/or data protection officer (DPO) at the hosting institution, so that participants can direct questions or lodge complaints if necessary.
- The duration of data retention and the criteria for access, ensuring that the participants understand who can view or analyse the data and for what purposes.

The potential uses of their contributions, which may include research reports, policy briefs, educational materials, or dissemination activities – always relying on anonymised and aggregated data for privacy protection purposes.

Events will not involve audio or video recording to avoid unnecessary strains on participants. In the case the debate coordinator wants to collect a screenshot to document and promote the activity, the names of participants will be anonymized. Participants will be anyway warned about the action of taking a picture, and they can switch off the camera before the shot.

Through these measures, WP2 ensures that ethical considerations are not treated as formalities but as integral elements of good research practice. By foregrounding voluntariness, transparency, and respect, the project maintains high ethical standards consistent with EU and institutional frameworks, fostering trust and integrity throughout all engagement and data collection processes.

Conclusions

WP2 establishes a coherent, operational framework for strengthening civic competences and EU democratic engagement among university students through structured, transnational online discussions. By combining three complementary event formats—European Issue Debates, Curriculum Discussions, and Local Issues Discussions—the work package establishes a multi-level learning environment that explores European challenges, higher-education practices, and local realities.

This deliverable sets out clear and replicable guidelines for the design and delivery of these events, including duration and structure, defined facilitation roles, and minimum standards for participation and inclusion. This shared framework ensures that all partner institutions can implement comparable activities while adapting to their specific contexts, thus enabling meaningful cross-case analysis within the consortium. The adoption of democratic topic selection and the *Critique–Utopia–Realisation format* further guarantees a consistent methodological backbone that directly supports the development of core civic competences such as critical thinking, argumentation, and perspective-taking.

On the analytical side, WP2 will generate evidence through pre- and post-event surveys, as well as systematically collected qualitative notes. These data will document changes in participants' attitudes, knowledge, and perceived self-efficacy, as well as their assessments of curricula and local–European linkages, thereby providing concrete input for subsequent work packages, particularly the development of the WP4 toolkit and teaching resources. The data management and GDPR framework outlined in the deliverable ensures that this knowledge production is ethically sound, cross-country comparable, and suitable for future secondary use within the boundaries of EU data protection law.

In outcome terms, WP2 will deliver:

- A series of transnational online events that directly engage students with EU-level, curricular, and local issues in a deliberative format.
- A tested methodological model (democratic topic selection combined with the *Future Workshop format* structure) that can be transferred to other courses and institutions.
- A set of quantitative and qualitative information on civic competences and democratic engagement in higher education contexts.
- Practice-oriented insights and examples that will feed into the EuroConnect toolkit and inform strategies for civic education.

Taken together, these outcomes position WP2 as an integral part of EuroConnect's impact, as it offers students meaningful opportunities to practice democratic participation while also equipping universities—and possibly other institutional figures, such as policymakers—with concrete, research-based guidance on how to embed civic competences more systematically in European higher education.

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