

Democracy versus autocracy

Why the democratic system is superior and how it can defeat autocracy

Rationale

The last years have bear witnessed to a [conventional wisdom that autocracy is ascendant and democracy is on the decline, yet the reality is more complex and the future is bleaker for autocrats](#). If the autocratic regimes seem to be on the rise it is also due to the failings of the democratic leaders that need to make a stronger case for democratic rule while ensuring that democracy delivered on its promises.

The COVID-19 pandemic has only accentuated this situation and we are currently witnessing the global expansion of authoritarian rule as Freedom House [Freedom in the World 2022](#) Report show that: “The global order is nearing a tipping point, and if democracy’s defenders do not work together to help guarantee freedom for all people, the authoritarian model will prevail.”

On a similar note the International IDEA [Global State of Democracy Report 2021](#) underlined that while the world is becoming more authoritarian, yet, democracy is resilient. This requires to act urgently and boldly for a democratic renewal by delivering a new social, rebuilding existing institutions and updating practices in established democracies and preventing democratic backsliding.

The European Union has presented in 2020 the [European Democracy Action Plan](#) to empower citizens and build more resilient democracies across the EU.

Yet it is not enough. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has galvanized the European project and provided a wake-up call for the European Union. In a matter of days, our Union took decisions of unprecedented importance and we all came to realise that throughout Europe we have [shared values of freedom and democracy](#).

These are not only European values but [worldwide values](#) as proved by the Biden-Harris Administration’s first Summit for Democracy. President Biden rightly said that “Democracy doesn’t happen by accident. We have to defend it, fight for it, strengthen it, renew it” – this is exactly what we stand for.

We need to study more on what democracy is, what are the dangers it faces and what can we do to make it prosper. The current Call for paper would thus address all things related to democracy in the 20th and 21st centuries, theories and measurement of democracy, types of democracy, its justifications as well as criticism, the future of democratization and disruption factors as we go further into a more technological and ideological future. [“Our Union needs to build “an arsenal of values” so autocrats do not claim the 21st century and we are then able to champion what we believe in.”](#)

- What are the opportunities and challenges associated with the new technologies as regards the aspects related to democracy versus autocracy? The main issues to be examined are those related to: social media, artificial intelligence, e-voting, etc.
- Another important aspect is related to the European instruments meant to support the democracy such as the European Democracy Action Plan. What is their current status? What are the problems that affect their successful implementation?
- The EU by itself cannot fight the autocracy rise alone. What are the options for the EU in the future? What about the perspectives of the Summit of Democracies or the Communities of Democracies? What about the cooperation with other international organizations on the topic of democracy?
- What was the impact of the pandemic on civil liberties and democratic societies? What are the lessons learned? What can we do better in the future? How can we protect democracy during emergency situations?
- Often, when analysing the EU institutions, a series of analysts spoke about the “democratic deficit” of the EU. What is the situation nowadays?
- Disinformation and the spreading of fake news often affect the democracy in many societies. How can we fight against them while also respecting the civil liberties?
- What are the tools that the EU can use in spreading democracy in the neighbourhood? Does the enlargement process or formats such as the Eastern Partnership are enough for that?
- Possible scenarios for the evolution of democracy as a system. What might we expect?
- Possible challenges to the democratic system (the cost related to the Green and Digital transition, etc.)

Research format and outcome

The aspects related to the topic Democracy versus autocracy, should be addressed and developed by **young researchers and policy analysts** through a series of **Policy Studies** meant to define and support with arguments why the democratic system is superior and how it can defeat autocracy.

The Research papers would address several key issues related to this topic, whilst:

- **anticipating possible European and regional trends,**
- **sticking to the concerns of the European and national societies**
- **bringing specific and concrete policy recommendations.**

The main purpose is to have a pragmatic approach that identifies the opportunities and challenges related to democracy versus autocracy in order to come up with a series of policy recommendations and also prospective scenarios, with concrete action plans, that can provide viable solutions to the relevant stakeholders.

The contributions should be policy orientated and have approx. **8 - 10 pages (maximum)** (without Annexes and Bibliography). Template and stylistic guidelines will be provided to the selected candidates.

In the frame of this fellowship, the selected candidates should:

- Draft a specific research paper on the proposed subject
 - Be prepared for the possible presentation of the research paper during conferences or similar events in 2022-2023.
 - be prepared to work on a possible publication

Funding

- 1.500 € gross amount
- the selected candidate is responsible for paying all the due taxes

A maximum number of 15 Research Papers may be selected for financing!

Eligibility criteria:

- Bachelor degree;
- Age limit of 35 years old by the 30 June 2022;
- Proven excellence in writing skills in English.
- Citizen of an EU Member State or of a state from the European Economic Area (EEA) or of a candidate or a potential candidate country or from a country member of the Eastern Partnership.

Candidacy to be sent by 30 June 2022 midnight (Brussels time) to

callforpapers@iedonline.eu with the subject “IED Call for papers 2022 Candidacy”

Please do not wait the last day or hours to send your candidature in order to avoid reception problems of your email.

- Candidatures are only on an individual basis; no research teams or multiple candidatures are accepted.

- The candidature dossier must contain:

-Europass Resume in English (maximum 3 pages)

- **Research Proposal** which must contain the title of the research proposal, the name of the candidate and a short description of the research proposal (**maximum 4 000 signs spaces included**) which presents the way in which the candidate wants to tackle the topic, the basic structure, research methodology and selected references.

Indicative Timetable*

- Publication of Call and period for candidature proposal: 25 May – 30 June 2022 at midnight.
- Selection period: 1 July – 17 July 2022
- Results of the selections: 18 July 2022
- Confirmation of selected researchers and signature of research contracts: 18 -26 July
- Research period: signature of the contract – 6 September 2022

Deadline for submission of the research papers: 7 September 2022 (at the latest).

- Internal evaluation period: 8 – 22 September 2022
- Communication of results & things to improve (if any) – 23 September 2022 (at the latest)
- Improvement period (if necessary): 26 September – 1 October 2022
- Final publications submitted: 2 October 2022 (at the latest)
- Publication on the IED website: 10 October 2022.

**** The above-mentioned timetable is tentative and subject to change by IED following the general evolution of this Call for papers.***