Democratic Innovations Against Polarisation in Europe

# Details

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Pausch M.

## Authors

Pausch M.

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## Implications For Policy Makers About

Stepping up awareness and empowerment

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Researchers

# Abstract

"In recent years, Europe has been confronted by strong polarisation, which revolves around different policy fields and world views but which primarily relates to two contrasting models of democracy: inclusive, cosmopolitan democracy with respect for human rights and exclusive, nationalist-oriented democracy. The future of the European Union is also subject to this polarisation. For some, the path to be taken is towards renationalisation. For others, the aim is to deepen the Union and strengthen it. In this article, I will first define and describe the phenomenon of polarisation in general terms and then outline the polarisation with respect to Europe. I will suggest possible democratic innovations to turn this polarisation to a constructive direction. The particular danger of polarisation is that positions become entrenched and the debate ends. Instead of talking to one another, people talk about one another. This development is worrying for the future of Europe and for democracy in the member states. Measures to promote dialogue and democracy can counteract this." (Pausch, 2020, 127)

# Outcome

"The future of the European Union is likely to continue to be characterised by polarising debate about the Union itself, about its form between federal state and international organisation and about its openness or unity with regard to immigrants and human rights. The opposing poles on all these issues are those of an inclusive, cosmopolitan democracy with respect for human rights and those of an exclusive democracy in which societies rely on their own supposed nation and exclude others from it. This polarisation can be countered only by democratisation of the EU, which leads to dialogue and gives everyone the opportunity to express political opinions both on an equal footing and with respect for other opinions. There are a number of measures that can support this process. These may relate to major constitutional or to practical and institutional issues and they should cover all levels of politics, from local to European. Without strengthening inclusive democracy, the European Union is at risk of anti-democratic, pernicious polarisation." (Pausch, 2020, 147)