

Proposal Evaluation Form

Associated with document Ref. Ares(2018)3666416 - 10/07/2018



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Horizon 2020 - Research and Innovation Framework Programme

Evaluation Summary Report - Research and innovation actions

Call: H2020-SC6-GOVERNANCE-2018
Funding scheme: RIA
Proposal number: 822478
Proposal acronym: PODEU
Duration (months): 40
Proposal title: Populism and Democracy in Europe: Challenges, Constraints and Opportunities
Activity: GOVERNANCE-03-2018

N.	Proposer name	Country	Total Cost	%	Grant Requested	%
1	UNIVERSITAT AUTONOMA DE BARCELONA	ES	385,375	12.70%	385,375	12.70%
2	UNIVERSITE DE GENEVE	CH	288,443.75	9.51%	288,443.75	9.51%
3	THE UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD	UK	384,490	12.67%	384,490	12.67%
4	UNIVERSITAET SIEGEN	DE	261,646.25	8.62%	261,646.25	8.62%
5	UNIVERSITA DEL SALENTO	IT	143,535	4.73%	143,535	4.73%
6	UNIVERSITETET I BERGEN	NO	297,167.5	9.79%	297,167.5	9.79%
7	SCUOLA NORMALE SUPERIORE	IT	170,343.75	5.61%	170,343.75	5.61%
8	KATHOLIEKE UNIVERSITEIT LEUVEN	BE	250,750	8.26%	250,750	8.26%
9	ETHNIKO KENTRO KOINONIKON EREVNON	EL	130,082.5	4.29%	130,082.5	4.29%
10	UNIVERZITA KARLOVA	CZ	177,531.25	5.85%	177,531.25	5.85%
11	INSTITUT CATHOLIQUE DE LILLE	FR	172,991.25	5.70%	172,991.25	5.70%
12	SWPS UNIWERSYTET HUMANISTYCZNOSPOLCZNY	PL	113,625	3.75%	113,625	3.75%
13	AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN BULGARIA	BG	144,916.25	4.78%	144,916.25	4.78%
14	ALTERNATIVES EUROPEENNES ASSOCIATION	FR	113,125	3.73%	113,125	3.73%
Total:			3,034,022.5		3,034,022.5	

Abstract:

The main goal of PODEU is to identify the consequences that populist ideas and discourses have for democracy and the process of European integration. The project will describe how populists characterize and criticize elements of liberal democratic regimes that limit the ability of governments to be responsive to citizens' concerns in the face of societal challenges such as increasing immigration flows and mounting social inequality. The political consequences of populism will be analysed focusing on three different dimensions of contemporary European democracies: (1) liberal institutions and values, with a special emphasis on the restriction of fundamental rights and freedoms, the rule of law, and horizontal accountability mechanisms; (2) citizens' empowerment through direct democracy measures and the introduction of legal reforms to enhance the citizens' participation in decision making; and (3) the process of European integration. The project seeks to estimate also the conditions under which such impact of populism on democracy unfolds, with special attention to the type of populism (as defined by host ideologies), incumbency, and the reactions to populism by non-populist actors. To address these questions, PODEU will follow a cross-national comparative design that includes 12 European countries with key differences in populist partisan supply. The project's methodology revolves around two levels of analysis (the supply and the demand side of the political system), and is based on an integrative multi-method approach that combines quantitative and qualitative methods, as well as observational and experimental designs. The proposed research will contribute to a better understanding of the consequences of the rise of populist parties, movements and ideas, and will provide guidance on how to address the threats and opportunities that populism poses for European democracies.

Evaluation Summary Report

Evaluation Result

Total score: 13.00 (Threshold: 10)

Form information

SCORING

Scores must be in the range 0-5.

Interpretation of the score:

- 0– The proposal fails to address the criterion** or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
- 1– Poor.** The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
- 2– Fair.** The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.
- 3– Good.** The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.
- 4– Very good.** The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.
- 5– Excellent.** The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

Criterion 1 - Excellence

Score: **4.50** (Threshold: 3/5.00 , Weight: -)

The following aspects will be taken into account, to the extent that the proposed work corresponds to the topic description in the work programme:

Clarity and pertinence of the objectives

The objectives are clearly and comprehensively described in the proposal according to a coherent and logical framework which makes each objective linked and related to the others. In particular, the proposal aims to improve the current understanding of populism through the analysis of how ideas, discourses, motivations of populist actors impact on the functioning of European nation-state democracies and the process of European integration. Objectives are also distinguished between descriptive, explanatory, and prescriptive. This distinction makes it possible to distinguish precisely between the overarching goals and the more detailed objectives, including the construction of indicators and the development of recommendations to contrast populist narrative. In addition, the objectives are significant and very well aligned with the work programme priorities, although the emphasis is more on consequences than on causes with a limited attention to the historical perspective.

Soundness of the concept, and credibility of the proposed methodology

PODEU is based on a sound theoretical background which is comprehensively and analytically described. The concept of populism is introduced in a critical way, which is highly appropriate for RIAs. Indeed, the proposal discusses current understandings of populism but also questions some stereotyped views which risk trivializing the demands for different answers to address contemporary challenges. It correctly underlines that the meaning of populism has to be contextualized. Criteria to distinguish between left-wing and right-wing populism are not fully explained though.

On methodology, the proposal follows an integrative multi-method approach, containing the use of secondary data, qualitative in-depth interviews, surveys, claim analysis and lab experiment. These methods are sound and credibly linked to the study of the proposed objectives. A rationale is provided for each method and methodological issues, such as how to select cases or how to ensure the tools' validity is addressed.

Extent that proposed work is beyond the state of the art, and demonstrates innovation potential (e.g. ground-breaking objectives, novel concepts and approaches, new products, services or business and organisational models)

PODEU tackles the issue of populism in Europe from a critical perspective, that is looking not only at threats but also at opportunities for European democracies of continuity, consolidation and advancement. This perspective does not make a strong contribution to the state of the art, due to the insufficient development of ground-breaking objectives. However the attempt to test it empirically is a strength of the proposal, with the potential of renewing the political debate on populism in Europe. In addition, the proposal provides a comparative analysis between its aims and the scope of other important projects on populism funded by the EU, showing that it does not overlap with previous initiatives but contributes in gathering new data and advancing the understanding of the phenomenon.

Appropriate consideration of interdisciplinary approaches and, where relevant, use of stakeholder knowledge and gender dimension in research and innovation content

Consistent with the work programme, the proposal addresses this criterion very well, approaching the study of populism from the philosophical, political, sociological, economic, historical and comparative perspective. Stakeholder knowledge is used from the start of the project in an open dialogue with a wide array of stakeholders. It also fully addresses the gender dimension as an important and transversal focus of the proposal, which runs through all objectives and methodologies. In particular, the gender question is well reflected at the micro level of the demand side, where the changing attitudes of the citizens will be investigated.

Criterion 2 - Impact

Score: **4.50** (Threshold: 3/5.00 , Weight: -)

The following aspects will be taken into account:

The extent to which the outputs of the project would contribute to each of the expected impacts mentioned in the work programme under the relevant topic

The expected impacts are fully and clearly described with reference to the enhancement of the knowledge base on populism, the generation of indicators, the support policies to address the consequences of populism and the elaboration of scenarios. For example, the proposal clearly explains how indicators will be generated and how they will be available to the different publics for the different purposes. It also explains how the actions related to the promotion of democratic values (i.e. field experiments to inform policy makers and teachers) will contribute to the increase of citizens' engagement, particularly young people. Although reaching the wider public or assessing the impact of educational materials will be a critical task, the expected outputs promise to produce the expected impacts. The analysis of obstacles for the realization of the expected impacts shows a high level of self-critical reflexivity.

Any substantial impacts not mentioned in the work programme, that would enhance innovation capacity, create new market opportunities, strengthen competitiveness and growth of companies, address issues related to climate change or the environment, or bring other important benefits for society

The proposal does not demonstrate any substantial impacts that are not mentioned in the work programme.

Quality of the proposed measures to:

- exploit and disseminate the project results (including management of IPR), and to manage research data where relevant
- communicate the project activities to different target audiences

The dissemination plan is clearly described. It addresses the key target audiences very well, and provides a detailed and convincing strategy for engaging with them through a range of appropriate activities such as "world café", comic book, tools for evidence-based policy making, scientific papers. The proposal includes as associated partners Team Populism and The Open Foundation Initiative for Europe, ensuring relevant links with academics and civil society actors.

The proposal presents a clear communication plan.

Data management is well organized and will maximize knowledge sharing and exploitation, while ensuring data protection and related standards. IPR is addressed, protecting the data ownership rights for the responsible investigators. This is a good measure to protect rights of less experienced team members, while possible collaboration risks are not fully addressed. However, the proposal does not adequately discuss when the data will be opened to the scientific community.

Criterion 3 - Quality and efficiency of the implementation

Score: **4.00** (Threshold: 3/5.00 , Weight: -)

The following aspects will be taken into account:



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Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, including extent to which the resources assigned to work packages are in line with their objectives and deliverables

The work plan is convincingly structured around nine different work themes operationalized in single packages. The first six encompass the research work, binding most of the research capacity. The last three of the packages centre around dissemination and management. This is appropriate and will avoid redundant bureaucracy. For each WP specific objectives, tasks, tools and deliverables are presented in detail. Also the role of partners is clearly indicated in the proposal and the coordination mechanisms are appropriate to secure the information flow between the researchers engaged in different work tasks. Furthermore the outline of the work plan is well thought, detailed, and appropriate. The resources assigned to the work packages and partners are in line with their objectives and deliverables, although the relatively high amount of resources assigned to WP2 is not fully justified.

Appropriateness of the management structures and procedures, including risk and innovation management

The management structures are clearly described and efficiently based on three pillars. The Project Manager Office (PMO) is the place where the steering capacity is concentrated. The concentration of the major steering competencies in one office is appropriate and aims at efficiency by avoiding double steering centres. The general assembly of all investigators secures the internal participation and information dissemination. Issues related to internal quality control, conflict resolution and risk management are fully addressed. In particular, critical risks to the implementation of the project are analytically described and appropriate measures are considered in the proposal.

Complementarity of the participants and extent to which the consortium as a whole brings together the necessary expertise

The consortium is led by a very experienced coordinator and assembles the skills and expertise (i.e., political science, social studies, communication studies, citizenship studies) necessary to develop the multi-method approach of the proposal and to answer the key substantive questions. The mix of academic and civil society organisations brings together not only different expertise but also different views on the topic under investigation. However, the proposal does not sufficiently justify the greater weighting for the political science component, while other disciplines such as legal scholars (for macro-level analysis) or social psychologists (for micro-level analysis) are under-represented. This weakness is partly mitigated by the support of the associated partner Team Populism and the Advisory Board which includes important scholars in the field.

Appropriateness of the allocation of tasks, ensuring that all participants have a valid role and adequate resources in the project to fulfil that role

The tasks are allocated in an appropriate way according to the partners' expertise. All team members have their clear goals and valid roles. The infrastructural resources are appropriately designed for the various task teams. Each partner has adequate resources to fulfil its role.

Scope of the proposal

Status: **Yes**

Comments (in case the proposal is out of scope)

Not provided

Operational Capacity

Status: **Operational Capacity: Yes**

If No, please list the concerned partner(s), the reasons for the rejection, and the requested amount.

Not provided

Exceptional funding of third country participants/international organisations

A third country participant/international organisation not listed in [General Annex A to the Main Work Programme](#) may exceptionally receive funding if their participation is essential for carrying out the project (for instance due to outstanding expertise, access to unique know-how, access to research infrastructure, access to particular geographical environments, possibility to involve key partners in emerging markets, access to data, etc.). (For more information, see the [Online Manual](#))

Based on the information provided in the proposal, I consider that the following participant(s)/international organisation(s) that requested funding should exceptionally be funded:

(Please list the Name and acronym of the applicant, Reasons for exceptional funding and the Requested grant amount.)

Not provided

Based on the information provided in the proposal, I consider that the following participant(s)/international organisation(s) that requested funding should NOT be funded:

(Please list the Name and acronym of the applicant, Reasons for exceptional funding and the Requested grant amount.)

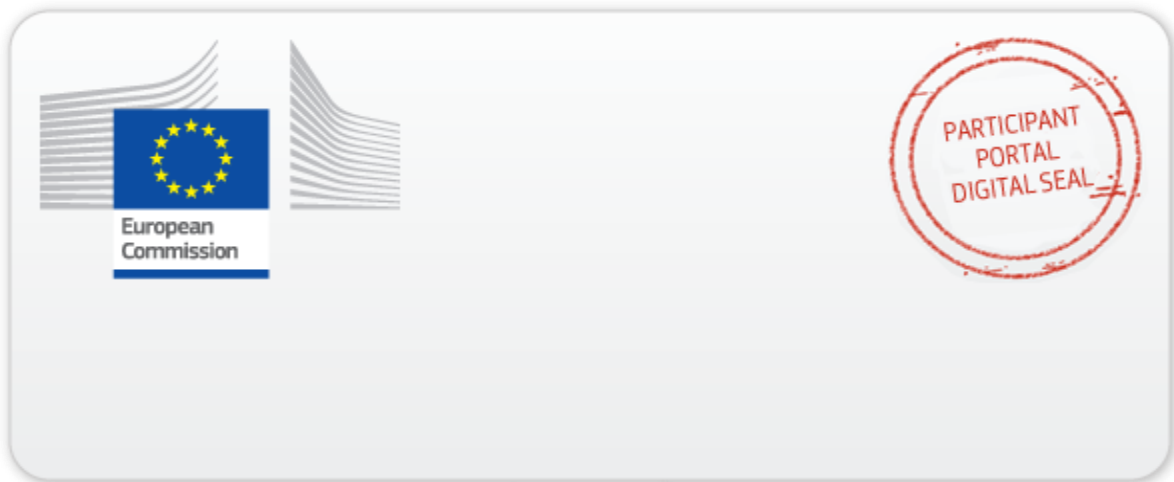
Not provided

Use of human embryonic stem cells (hESC)

Status: **No**

If yes, please state whether the use of hESC is, or is not, in your opinion, necessary to achieve the scientific objectives of the proposal and the reasons why. Alternatively, please state if it cannot be assessed whether the use of hESC is necessary or not because of a lack of information.

Not provided



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