

Proposal Evaluation Form

Associated with document Ref. Ares(2018)3666742 - 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: 822677
Proposal acronym: POPCON
Duration (months): 36
Proposal title: Mitigating Populism's consequences
Activity: GOVERNANCE-03-2018

N.	Proposer name	Country	Total Cost	%	Grant Requested	%
1	KOZEP-EUROPAI EGYETEM	HU	998,956.25	33.35%	998,956.25	33.35%
2	UNIVERSIDAD DIEGO PORTALES	CL	227,625	7.60%	227,625	7.60%
3	GIGA GERMAN INSTITUTE OF GLOBAL AND AREA STUDIES	DE	78,593.75	2.62%	78,593.75	2.62%
4	UNIVERSITAT ZURICH	CH	306,001.25	10.22%	306,001.25	10.22%
5	VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL	BE	102,725	3.43%	102,725	3.43%
6	IE UNIVERSIDAD	ES	227,731.25	7.60%	227,731.25	7.60%
7	UNIVERSITAET ZU KOELN	DE	322,718.75	10.77%	322,718.75	10.77%
8	SVEUCILISTE U ZAGREBU FAKULTET POLITICKIH ZNANOSTI	HR	104,062.5	3.47%	104,062.5	3.47%
9	ARISTOTELIO PANEPISTIMIO THESSALONIKIS	EL	101,575	3.39%	101,575	3.39%
10	SWPS UNIWERSYTET HUMANISTYCZNO-SPOŁECZNY	PL	148,125	4.94%	148,125	4.94%
11	COLLEGIO CARLO ALBERTO - CENTRO DI RICERCA E ALTA FORMAZIONE	IT	106,875	3.57%	106,875	3.57%
12	Political Capital Szolgáltató Korlátolt Felelossegű Társaság	HU	59,250	1.98%	59,250	1.98%
13	Democracy and Human Rights Education in Europe	BE	58,625	1.96%	58,625	1.96%
14	TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL EV	DE	152,687.5	5.10%	152,687.5	5.10%
Total:			2,995,551.25		2,995,551.25	

Abstract:

Populists are disruptive. The consequences of their emergence range from increased polarization (e.g. Trump) all the way to state failure (e.g. Venezuela) with disastrous social and economic consequences. In post-communist democracies like Poland and Hungary, still volatile democratic institutions are being eroded by populist majorities, while British populists, with Brexit, brought one of the greatest challenges to European integration. Some argue that populism has positive consequences, by enfranchising people excluded from the political process, driving up political interest, participation and engagement. Given populism's Janus-faced character, however, these potentially positive effects are likely outweighed by their inherent dangers - the potential positive outcomes can certainly be achieved without turning to anti-elitism, xenophobia and without turning people against each other. Our project is organized around three interrelated questions: a) Why has populism emerged with such strength in Europe in recent years? b) What are the consequences of the rise of populist actors for liberal democracies and European integration; and c) How can the negative consequences of populist forces and populist attitudes be mitigated? To answer these questions, our project tackles each one not in isolation, but comparatively, considering both the macro and micro-levels, understanding both historical trends and drawing on comparative experience of, for example, Latin America and its mature populism scholarship. Our theoretical approach integrates the supply (politicians) and demand (public) sides of populism and takes the existence of populist attitudes among individuals as a central point of departure. Our project advances theoretical and conceptual development and focuses on producing social science driven, causally tested, long-term positive impact. Our team has the ability to disseminate the findings to stakeholders, political elites, youth and youth workers, and the public.

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.

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 of the proposed work are clear and highly relevant. This is a well-crafted and detailed proposal that successfully addresses the three concrete objectives outlined in the work programme to enhance the current understanding of populism: analysis of its causes, its consequences and the possible strategies for mitigating its effects. Addressing the work programme does not go against its capacity to build a single theoretical framework linking macro and micro explanatory factors as well as quantitative, qualitative and experimental methodologies in a very comprehensive and coherent manner.

Soundness of the concept, and credibility of the proposed methodology

Key concepts are clearly defined. Focusing on attitudes and how these are susceptible to activation and deactivation, POPCON convincingly brings together individual and contextual factors, causes and consequences, and applied measures for countering populism. It clearly demonstrates the potential for conceptual innovation of "ideational populism" and, using methods from political sociology, political science and psychology will help explain when and why populist support is activated and deactivated in the political arena. From the analysis of individual attitudes it moves on to analyse the macro factors that activate individual attitudes. On the consequences of populism, POPCON does not make sufficiently clear how it will consider consequences in other contexts, beyond those of activation/deactivation. Methodology is well described and credible. On a minor note, the proposal does not sufficiently explain the absence of experimental testing of effectiveness of the educational material.

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)

The proposed work clearly adds to the existing literature on populism in three different ways: 1) bringing conceptual clarity to the concept of populism by combining insights from political sciences and from political and social psychology; 2) analysing together scattered data sets as well as bringing in new data on populist attitudes across a large number of cases, also beyond Europe (while noting, however, that measuring populist attitudes is less new than POPCON claims, and thus the proposal does not convincingly establish that it will bring new theories); and 3) integrating different and often experimental methodologies for the understanding of the consequences of populism as a first step to define very concrete and practical strategies for countering populism. The proposal has a high potential to contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon of populism with ground-breaking concepts and novel and relevant results both for academia as well as for policy and societal actors.

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

The proposal is interdisciplinary in its approaches – from political science to social psychology – but also in its methodology – from content analysis to expert surveys and survey experiments. The combination of these interdisciplinary approaches and methodologies is essential for the combined analysis of contextual and individual factors, causes and consequences. The presence of several non-academic partners and the organisation of two policy fora seem to ensure the participation of stakeholders, though this is mostly aimed to enhance the dissemination and exploitation of results rather than to contribute to knowledge building. The gender dimension is well addressed, incorporated into all relevant areas of the proposal.

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 proposal greatly contributes to each of the expected impacts, and especially on the factors that can activate populist attitudes, and in this way, it can build strong scenarios for a counter-narrative to populism: 1) it will enhance the knowledge base on populism by connecting voters' populist attitudes to their surrounding contexts; 2) it will bring in comprehensive assessments on the consequences of populism both in terms of mainstream parties and individual attitudes and behaviours. Less clear is how these insights can be turned into specific indicators and medium to long-term future scenarios; and 3) it will recommend policies and narratives to counter the rise of populism by empirically testing which strategies and narratives have been effective. The development of powerful indicators on how and when there is an activation of populist attitudes is a clear strength of the proposal.

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

POPCON has a well-crafted plan for the exploitation and dissemination of results. However, the selection of target groups as well as the exclusion of other relevant parties is not adequately justified. Non-academic partners are key for reaching target audiences, but their role is not specified in sufficient detail.

The proposed communication activities are highly relevant. The data sets are planned to be hosted at the GESIS archive, and the ethical control and management of research data is credible. The proposal demonstrates an excellent plan of dissemination, with a communication strategy towards the target audiences. WP6-7 demonstrate great capacity to offer communication frames to reduce the appeal of populism. In WP8 there is an excellent detail of actions for the target audiences. The lack of detailed information on how social media is integrated in the communication strategy is a minor shortcoming. IPR is mentioned, but it is presented in insufficient detail.

Criterion 3 - Quality and efficiency of the implementation

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

The following aspects will be taken into account:

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



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The proposal has a detailed, consistent and well-developed work plan. The WP structure follows the proposal's conceptual approach along causes, consequences and mitigation strategies of populism. This helps to bring clarity and coherence to the proposal. The WPs' objectives, tasks and results, together with partners' roles and responsibilities, are clearly specified. It is worth noting that overlaps and synergies between WPs are made explicit in the proposal, which is key to ensure coherent results. Deliverables are planned throughout the project, which is fundamental to report, monitor and build a smooth research process. The resources assigned to WPs are in line with their objectives and deliverables.

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

The management structures and procedures are appropriate. Management responsibilities, tasks and roles are defined, which is key. Open and responsive decision-making will be ensured through the creation of a Gen. Assembly. Scientific quality and policy relevance will be monitored by the Advisory Board, appropriately composed of well-known academics. The risk management strategy is adequate. However, while POPCON identifies possible core risks, with a detailed account of risk mitigation measures, it does not sufficiently discuss other risks, such as those related to possible difficulties in merging disparate datasets, and this is an important shortcoming. Redundancies within the project, each WP and within project partners are presented as the best way to ensure continuity in case a partner is unable to perform its job. Although this principle is correct in some situations, the proposal does not sufficiently weigh this as a measure for reduction of these risks individually or as a set.

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

The participants' expertise is highly complementary. The consortium includes acknowledged experts with extensive research and a strong track record of publications on populism. It counts leading scholars on the causes and consequences of populism, on democratic innovations and institutional mechanisms and on the different (and often very experimental) methodologies proposed. It is worth mentioning that the consortium draws upon a group of scholars that has been working together in a four years project (Team Populism) on the causes of populism across Europe and the Americas. This is key to ensure the academic relevance of the research results as well as the successful completion of the project. The consortium includes an excellent Latin American institution with strong expertise on the topic. The non-academic institutions have an excellent reputation and expertise in the tasks allocated to them.

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 resources are correctly allocated among partners according to their roles and tasks. The uneven distribution of tasks is well justified by different roles and responsibilities among partners: while some have a leading role within the project, others mostly contribute to a specific WP or are mostly part of the dissemination and communication strategy (as it is the case for the non-academic partners). All choices are very well justified and seem to ensure a smooth cooperation among partners as well as the successful completion of the project.

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.)

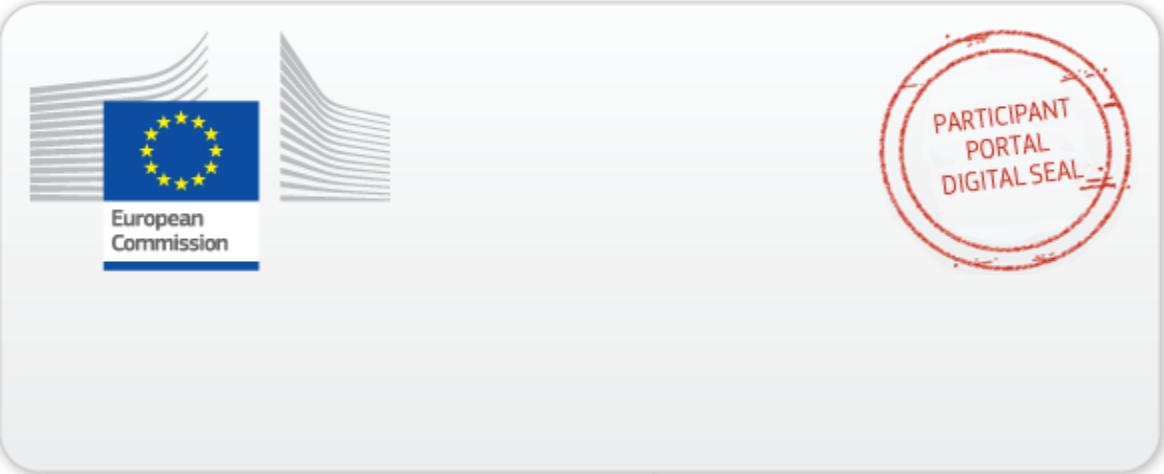
Not provided

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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