Making Sense of EU Enlargement *for, with* and *by* Citizens – *CitiSense*

#@APP-FORM-HERIAIA@#

List of participants

Participant No. *	Participant organisation name	Country
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7	Institute for European Politics (IEP)	Germany
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9	Stockholm University (SU)	Sweden
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12	University of Social Sciences and Humanities Warsaw (USWPS)	Poland
13	Ilia State University (ISU)	Georgia
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1. Excellence #@REL-EVA-RE@#

EU enlargement has been central to the European project, shaping its political evolution, economic cohesion, and global role.[1] As the EU prepares to expand beyond 30 members, it must navigate the accession process amid rising geopolitical instability, democratic backsliding, and renewed strains on European security and transatlantic relations. Policymakers face the dual challenge of **making enlargement work in practical terms** – enhancing security, prosperity, and institutional stability – while also fostering public understanding and support. In this context, enlargement is not only a geostrategic imperative but also a process of institutional reform and societal transformation. Yet research has so far paid limited attention to how citizens' perceptions shape the acceptability and resilience of the enlargement process.

This project, **CitiSense (Making Sense of EU Enlargement *for*, *with* and *by* citizens),** addresses the current gap by fostering understanding of the security, economic, and societal impacts of EU enlargement through an innovative, citizen-centred approach. At its core is the CitiSense analytical framework which conceptualises enlargement *for* citizens (by calculating its costs and benefits), *with* citizens (by taking public attitudes and concerns into account), and *by citizens* (through co-creation and participatory engagement). *CitiSense* combines citizens and sense-making to ensure that a flexible and adaptive enlargement is not only intelligible but meaningful for people: policies for citizens must be shaped with citizens and co-created by citizens.

For EU citizens, enlargement shapes labour markets, economic prospects, migration flows, and security – affecting both daily life and long-term opportunities. For candidate and potential candidate countries (CCs), it offers the prospect of peace, political stability, and economic growth, while demanding far-reaching reforms in governance, the rule of law, economic institutions, and social policy. As enlargement transforms political, economic, and societal landscapes across the continent, public understanding and engagement are essential to **fostering the credibility, legitimacy, and resilience of the process.**[2] Public acceptability cannot be taken for granted: it depends on citizens perceiving enlargement as fair, transparent, and beneficial.[3] Historical episodes of treaty rejection in national referenda highlight the risks of citizen disengagement, while misperceptions and unaddressed concerns continue to undermine support in both Member States (MS) and CCs.[4] Low levels of public trust and awareness can delay ratification, stall reforms, and erode the long-term viability of EU integration. These challenges – geopolitical, institutional, and societal – demand a rethinking of **how policy-makers assess, communicate, and implement enlargement across existing MS and CCs.**[5] As stressed in the 2023 and 2024 Enlargement Packages and the Mission Letter to Marta Kos as Commissioner for EU Enlargement, a citizen-centred approach is essential.[6]

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[1] Anghel, V. / Jones E. (2024): The Geopolitics of Enlargement: From Club to Commons, *Survival*, 66:4, pp. 101-114; Schimmelfennig, F. (2003): Strategic Action in a Community Environment: The Decision to Enlarge the European Union to the East. *Comparative Political Studies*, 36(1-2), 156-183; Schimmelfennig, F. / Sedelmeier, U. (2019): The Europeanisation of Eastern Europe: the external incentives model revisited, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 27.

[2] Bosse, G. (2025): Citizens Missing: Why Participation in EU Enlargement Matters Now More Than Ever, *European Democracy Hub*; Schwarzer, D. (2024): Growing Pains: EU Enlargement Must Not Endanger the Rule of Law and Capacity to Act, *Bertelsmann Stiftung*; Tallberg, J. / Zürn, M. (2019): The Legitimacy and Legitimation of International Organisations: Introduction and Framework, *Review of International Organisations,* 14, p.581-606.

[3] Kortenska, E.G./ Sircar, I. / Steunenberg, B. (2016): Public-Elite Gap on European Integration: The Missing Link between Discourses about EU Enlargement among Citizens and Elites in Serbia, *Journal of European Integration*, 42(6), 873–888; Habermas, J. (2012): The Crisis of the European Union in the Light of a Constitutionalisation of International Law, *European Journal of International Law*, 23 (2), pp. 335-348; Nissen, S. (2003): Who Wants Enlargement of the EU? Support for Enlargement among Elites and Citizens in the European Union, *Czech Sociological Review*, 39(2).

[4] Hobolt, S. B. / de Vries, C. E. (2016): Turning against the union? The impact of the crisis on the Eurosceptic vote in the 2014 European Parliament elections, *Electoral Studies*, 44. pp. 504-514; Kaeding, M./ Pollack J. / Schmidt P. (2024): Enlargement and the Future of Europe – Views from the Capitals, *Wiesbaden: Springer*.

[5] Bélanger, M. E. / Schimmelfennig, F. (2021): Politicisation and rebordering in EU enlargement: membership discourses in European parliaments, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 28(3), 407–426; Bosse, G. (2024): The EU's Response to the Russian Invasion of Ukraine: Invoking Norms and Values in Times of Fundamental Rupture, *Journal of Common Market Studies,* 62(5); Maier, J. / Rittberger, B. (2008): Shifting Europe's Boundaries: Mass Media, Public Opinion and the Enlargement of the EU, *European Union Politics*, 9(2), 243-267; Raik, K. / Blockmans, S. / Osypchuk, A., / Suslov, A. (2024): EU Policy towards Ukraine: Entering Geopolitical Competition over European Order, *The International Spectator*, 59(1), 39–58.

[6] European Commission, Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations. (2023): 2023 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy; European Commission, Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiation. (2024): 2024

CitiSense responds to that call by placing citizen perceptions, motivations, and understanding at the heart of the enlargement process.

Against this backdrop, CitiSense asks its central question: **How can the European Union pursue a more effective and resilient enlargement policy by fostering understanding of its security, economic, and societal impacts *for, with* and *by citizens*?** This question reflects CitiSense's commitment to **a citizen-centred approach**, grounded in the understanding that enlargement must not only be strategically sound and institutionally viable, but also socially embedded and publicly understood. Through the *CitiSense* analytical framework, the project translates this vision into practice – developing tools to analyse how enlargement is perceived, contested, and co-created *for, with, and by* citizens across both MS and CCs.

CitiSense has two overarching goals:
- *First,* to **generate integrated, evidence-based insights** into the security, economic, and societal impacts of enlargement and non-enlargement, real and perceived, drawing on historical lessons, comparative analysis, and scenario planning to support inclusive, adaptive, and democracy-enhancing policymaking.
- *Second,* **to develop and deploy innovative policy and educational tools** – including participatory and digital formats – that strengthen public understanding, engagement, and support for enlargement, while reinforcing governance and the rule of law across an expanding EU.

1.1 Objectives and ambition #@PRJ-OBJ-PO@#

In the service of these two overarching goals, CitiSense has **seven key objectives**:
1. Develop an innovative conceptual and methodological framework, CitiSense, integrating citizen-centred research *for*, *with*, and *by* citizens, combining conceptual analysis and empirical mapping with participatory piloting, foresight, and policy tool development. This objective includes mapping the historical, security, economic, and societal drivers of enlargement and identifying factors behind Euroscepticism and enlargement fatigue.
2. Assess the costs and benefits of enlargement and non-enlargement, both real and perceived, for MS and CCs, focusing on security, economic, and societal impacts.
3. Inform institutional and policy reforms by synthesizing lessons from past enlargements and examining how internal EU reforms and staged integration can enhance the effectiveness of enlargement, including flexible and adaptive approaches. Particular attention is given to democracy, rule of law, governance, and key acquis chapters related to Information Society and Media (10), Judiciary and Fundamental Rights (23), Justice Freedom and Security (24), and Institutions (34), using comparative insights to propose reforms for both EU and CCs.
4. Design and test participatory engagement tools – including Citizen Assemblies, Hackathons, and popular, easy-to-use digital platforms (e.g. Mentimeter, Kahoot!) – in four EU MS, to evaluate innovative and accessible formats for public engagement, intercultural learning, and inclusive dialogue on enlargement.
5. Conduct strategic foresight and scenario planning to explore plausible futures for enlargement in response to geopolitical shifts, regional dynamics, and security-enlargement interdependencies, including the implications of renewed transatlantic uncertainty.
6. Develop dual-use enlargement toolboxes for policymakers and for civil society and education stakeholders, offering manuals, engagement strategies, and communication guidance co-created with the CitiSense Civil Society Network, the EU Enlargement Expert Hub, and 14 Youth Labs.
7. Disseminate findings through innovative and inclusive outreach ensuring that diverse voices are represented and that benefits are clearly conveyed to three core audiences: policymakers and administrators, civil society and youth, and the research community. Provide continuous, audience-specific recommendations on enlargement costs, benefits, and lessons learned from previous accessions.

Communication on EU Enlargement Policy; European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen. (2024): Mission Letter to Marta Kos Commissioner for Enlargement.

Together, these objectives enable CitiSense to contribute not only to evidence-based insights on enlargement but also to the design of a **flexible** and **adaptive** enlargement approach that can withstand evolving geopolitical, economic, and societal challenges. To answer the core research question and achieve its objectives, CitiSense explores four core lines of inquiry:

1. **Historical Drivers, Cost-Benefit Analysis & Public Support**

How have the strategic, economic, and societal drivers of enlargement evolved since 2004 across MS and CCs? What lessons from past enlargements inform current governance and public attitudes? How do motivations in CCs compare to those in older MS – persisting, strengthening, or declining over time? What are the key costs and benefits of enlargement versus non-enlargement, and how do security, economic, and societal factors shape public support or opposition?

2. **Institutional Reforms, Accession Terms & Acquis Compliance**

How can staged accession and internal reforms (e.g. qualified majority voting) improve enlargement outcomes? What institutional lessons from past enlargements support rule of law and democratic resilience in CCs? How can the EU address enlargement fatigue and prepare for 30+ members? What challenges arise in implementing Chapters 10, 23, 24, and 34 of the acquis, and how are they affected by geopolitical pressures?

3. **Participatory Tools**

To what extent can participatory mechanisms – citizen assemblies, hackathons, but also popular, easy-to-access digital tools – be used to enhance awareness and engagement? Which formats best foster inclusive understanding, especially among the youth and across diverse publics?

4. **Strategic Foresight & Geopolitical Dynamics**

How might geopolitical disruptions (e.g. U.S. disengagement, Russian aggression) or internal trade-offs (e.g. defence vs. enlargement budgets) shape enlargement scenarios? What risks and opportunities lie ahead, and how can foresight and variable geometry approaches strengthen resilience, trust, and public ownership of the process?

These four lines of inquiry[7] define the CitiSense analytical framework, which marks a conceptual and methodological shift in enlargement research by placing citizen perspectives at the centre of inquiry. Whereas existing studies often prioritise institutional dynamics, geopolitical drivers, or elite-level negotiations, CitiSense responds to the need – both scholarly and policy-driven – to move beyond technocratic, top-down models of inquiry. It offers **a structured, citizen-centred approach capable of producing context-sensitive, policy-relevant evidence on how enlargement is understood, experienced, and contested.** By operationalizing the enlargement process *for citizens* (its tangible impacts), *with citizens* (their perceptions and interpretations), and *by citizens* (their participatory agency), CitiSense generates insights that speak directly to the legitimacy, communication, and public acceptability challenges facing policymakers, administrations, and civil society actors in both Member
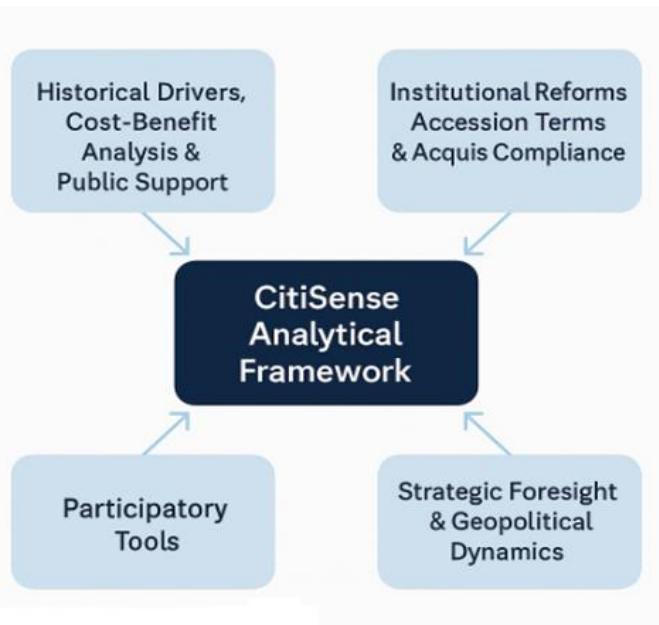

Figure 1: CitiSense Core Lines of Inquiry

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[7] Schimmelfennig, F./ Sedelmeier, U. (2005): The Politics of European Union Enlargement: Theoretical Approaches, *Routledge*; Moravcsik A. / Vachudova M. (2003): National Interests, State Power, and EU Enlargement, *East European Politics and Societies*, 17(1), pp. 42-57; Koval, N. / Vachudova, M. (2024): European Union Enlargement and Geopolitical Power in the Face of War, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 62.

States and candidate countries. The conceptual boundaries in the CitiSense analytical framework overlap, reflecting the interdependence of these dimensions in fostering a credible and inclusive enlargement process.

This approach enables the project to deliver **a multidimensional evidence base on the costs and benefits of enlargement,** the **drivers of public support or opposition**, and **the effectiveness of institutional reforms**, all of which are central to the Horizon Europe call's emphasis on supporting democracy, governance, and the rule of law. Moreover, by integrating comparative analysis, strategic foresight, and innovative but easily accessible communication tools, the project provides actionable recommendations and tailored toolboxes that can be used to increase societal awareness, improve the transparency and credibility of the enlargement process, and support inclusive, future-oriented policymaking across the EU and CCs.

The **Enlargement *for* Citizens** dimension of CitiSense focuses on shaping an enlargement process that strengthens EU security, economic performance, and institutional functionality, while reinforcing the democratic resilience of CCs. In line with the call HORIZON-CL2-2025-01-DEMOCRACY-03, it equips policymakers and administrators with insights into key challenges, particularly those concerning democracy, rule of law, and governance. CitiSense analyses the historical and strategic drivers of enlargement across both MS and CCs, assessing how evolving dynamics affect its legitimacy and effectiveness. It provides a comprehensive evaluation of the costs and benefits of enlargement and non-enlargement – especially regarding security, prosperity, peacebuilding, and post-war recovery – and examines how internal reforms and staged approaches, including in relation to key chapters of the acquis (10, 23, 24, 34), can improve policy design across sectors.

To anticipate the impact of enlargement, CitiSense conducts strategic foresight and scenario exercises, stress-testing enlargement strategies under different geopolitical and socio-cultural futures. These methods help policymakers and citizens evaluate the feasibility and acceptability of differentiated and inclusive pathways – directly supporting the call's emphasis on adaptive governance. Finally, CitiSense studies how enlargement is framed and communicated by policymakers. These findings inform the project's multidimensional toolboxes for policymakers and educators, designed to support clear, tailored, and accessible public communication and enhance the legitimacy of the enlargement process.

The **Enlargement *with* Citizens** component examines how people in EU MS and CCs perceive, interpret, and evaluate the enlargement process. CitiSense employs surveys, focus groups, and survey experiments to capture not only what citizens think about enlargement, but why they think it – probing how different framings, narratives, and trade-offs influence public attitudes. This approach allows the project to move beyond static opinion snapshots toward a deeper understanding of the cognitive, emotional, and contextual factors shaping support or opposition. The findings contribute to the Horizon call's goal of increasing societal awareness through a deep analysis of the political, economic, and social consequences of enlargement as perceived by diverse publics. These insights will directly inform the development of tailored communication strategies that enhance credibility and engagement across different societal groups and national contexts.

The **Enlargement *by* Citizens** dimension of CitiSense recognises that passive engagement is insufficient for building lasting public support for EU enlargement and the reforms it requires. It promotes direct citizen participation in shaping enlargement policies, engaging individuals in the security, economic, and societal implications of both enlargement and non-enlargement. Aligned with the Horizon call, this component prioritises participatory and transparent processes, using digital tools and formats such as citizen assemblies, hackathons, and strategic foresight exercises to foster inclusive dialogue and co-creation of policy ideas. CitiSense ensures the continuity of compatible participatory tools developed in previous Horizon projects, thus further investing in keeping and expanding insights already generated *by* citizens. This approach moves beyond awareness-raising, enabling citizens to take ownership of enlargement as a shared political project.[8] Strengthening civic agency and belonging in this way is essential to

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[8] Anghel, V. / Jones E. (2024): The Geopolitics of Enlargement: From Club to Commons, *Survival,* 66:4, pp. 101-114; Bosse, G. (2025): Citizens Missing: Why Participation in EU Enlargement Matters Now More Than Ever, *European Democracy Hub;* Pirozzi, N., / Bonomi, M. (2022): Differentiation and EU Governance: Key Elements and Impact, *The International Spectator*, 57(1), 160–178.

countering enlargement fatigue, addressing Euroscepticism, and supporting a credible and democratically grounded enlargement strategy.

What are the four key characteristics of CitiSense?

1. **CitiSense is innovative.** Its analytical framework moves beyond top-down analyses to focus on the acceptability of enlargement among diverse publics across MS and CCs. The project systematically examines historical drivers, costs and benefits, and lessons from past enlargements, with a focus on democracy, governance, and the rule of law. Civil society and citizens – especially the youth – are involved from the start and throughout (T1.1, D1.1; T3.1, D3.1; T8.3, D8.3). CitiSense generates original empirical data through large-scale public opinion surveys, survey experiments (WP2: T2.1-T2.5; D2.1), and fieldwork, including elite interviews and comparative case studies (WPs 4-6), to assess the impacts of enlargement versus non-enlargement, both real and perceived. Multidimensional toolboxes for policymakers, civil society, and educators translate findings into actionable recommendations (T8.1-T8.2, D8.1-8.2), including tailored communication strategies for different national contexts (D4.1, D5.4, D6.2, D8.1, D9.3). CitiSense also pilots scalable participatory formats – Youth Labs, Citizen Assemblies, Democracy Hackathons, and a Citizens' Art Exhibition (T3.1-T3.2, T7.3, T8.3, T9.13) – alongside easy-to-use digital tools like Mentimeter and Kahoot! (T3.1-T3.2). Additional outputs include a Digital Guidebook ('30 FAQs on Enlargement') (T8.1), an edited Collection of Short Country Reports 'Europe Next' written for a wider audience by graduate students based on CitiSense data (T8.4, D8.4), educational tools for schoolteachers and civil society (T8.2, D8.2), Instagram Reels (T9.8), five public panel discussions (T9.3), and a social media survey (T9.11), all designed to test new ways of informing, engaging, and gathering input from citizens – especially the youth. Participatory mechanisms also include social dialogues (T3.4, T9.12), fostering intercultural learning, peer-to-peer exchange, and collaborative problem-solving. These formats challenge stereotypes, counter misperceptions, and build deeper understanding and ownership of the enlargement process (D3.1-D3.3; D8.3; D9.3).

2. **CitiSense is pluralist, collaborative, and builds systematically on prior EU funded projects**. It conducts research across the EU and CCs through a purposefully large yet integrated consortium that includes partners from Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, and the Western Balkans. These partners contribute regional expertise, co-lead work packages, and play an active role in case studies and cross-cutting research. CitiSense is interdisciplinary (see Section 1.3), bridges academic and think tank communities, and fosters strong transnational networks. It builds on and advances the conceptual frameworks, findings, and tools of previous projects. Several consortium members participated in EMBRACE, InvigoratEU, SHAPEDEM, REDEMOS, EU JOINT, and REUNIR. Advisory Board members include the leads of EMBRACE and SHAPEDEM, and a representative of the EU Neighbors EAST programme. Successful pilots from InvigoratEU (Civil Society Network, EU Enlargement Expert Hub, Youth Labs) and RECLAIM (Citizens' Art Exhibition) are continued and further developed in CitiSense, with multiple work packages drawing on and extending insights from these and related initiatives (e.g. T1.1, T4.2, T5.1, T6.1, T7.1). The CitiSense coordination strategy includes collaboration with the other winning tenders of call HORIZON-CL2-2025-01-DEMOCRACY-03 (T9.3, T10.3).

3. **CitiSense is inclusive, co-creational, and broad in reach.** Citizens, civil society actors, and other stakeholders are engaged not just as recipients of findings, but as active partners – through the CitiSense Civil Society Network (T1.1, T1.5, T2.3, T3.5, T4.4, T5.4, T6.3, T8.5), the EU Enlargement Expert Hub (T1.1, T1.5, T2.3, T3.5, T4.4, T5.4, T6.3, T9.2), and participatory video formats where citizens pose questions to researchers (T9.12). CitiSense prioritises youth engagement via a four-day seminar for young professionals in Brussels (T9.4) and the co-creation of educational tools, including the edited student written collection of short country reports 'Europe Next' (D8.4). The project ensures gender inclusivity through a balanced consortium and mainstreams gender sensitivity across all research, communication, and dissemination activities. Leveraging the TEPSA network, CitiSense ensures broad outreach to policymakers and public administrations across all EU MS, CCs, and EU institutions – embedding its findings in decision-making at every level. The consortium ensures a purposeful presence across all candidate states. The Institute for Democracy Societas Civilis Skopje (IDSCS) connects CitiSense to all Western Balkan CCs via its Cooperation Instrument for the Western Balkans Think Tanks, THINK BALKANS. Ilia State University, the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, and WatchDog.MD are in Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova (respectively).

4. **CitiSense is a transparent and open science project.** It recognises the good practice of research, aims for open-access publications only, commits to transparent data storage, and makes data available to the public, fully complying with FAIR and open science principles.

Prior project	Key findings / outputs	CitiSense uptake & advance
InvigoratEU	Civil society networks; youth labs; alerts on shrinking civic space.	Extends CSO network & Youth Labs to CCs/potential CCs; adds resilience focus.
EMBRACE	Differentiated integration debates; citizen attitudes.	Builds foresight scenarios combining DI options with survey & pilot data.
SHAPEDEM-EU	Democratic resilience research; foresight tools.	Reuses participatory foresight methods; adds enlargement lens.
ENLARGE	Economic CBAs; regional inequality insights.	Feeds WP5 regional mapping & adaptive economic approaches.
Visegrad/other regional studies	Societal impacts of past enlargements.	Extended in WP6 case studies on cohesion/reform.

#§PRJ-OBJ-PO§#

1.2 Methodology #@CON-MET-CM@# #@COM-PLE-CP@#

The CitiSense analytical framework fuses 'citizen' and 'sense-making', highlighting the project's **commitment to understanding and co-creating knowledge about EU enlargement**. During CitiSense's three-year project lifetime, the consortium's research activities take place within three interconnected working blocks that collectively deliver on the project's mission to analyse and make recommendations for how the EU can pursue an inclusive, effective and adaptive enlargement policy that strengthens institutional functionality, fosters public engagement, and builds sustainable support for European integration.
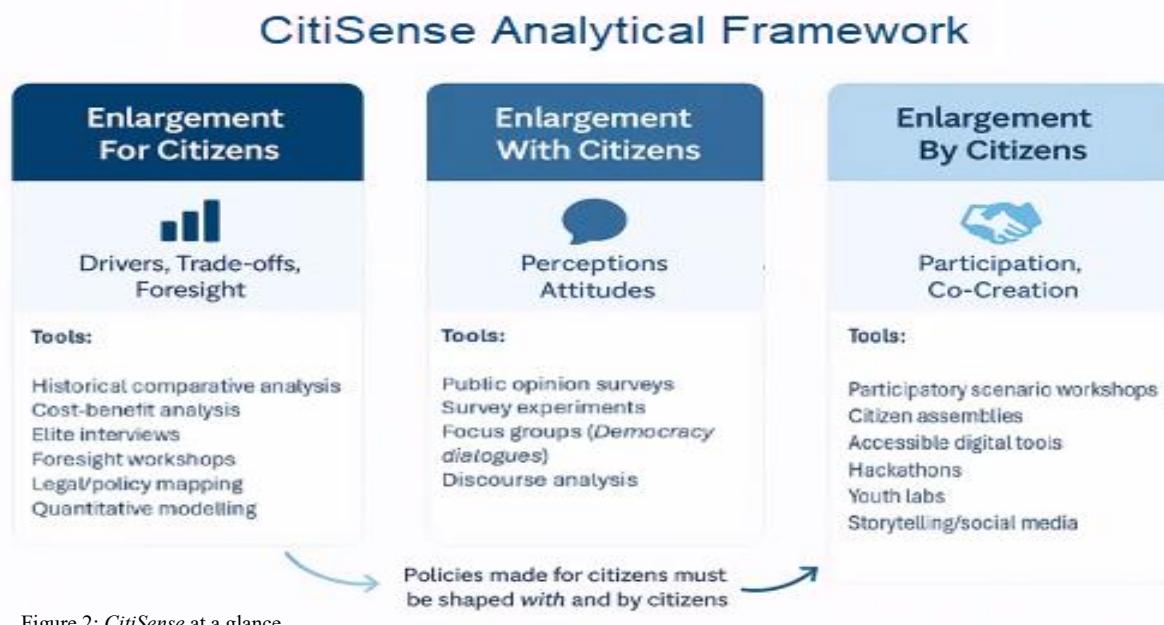
Figure 2: *CitiSense* at a glance

The **first working block** focuses on conceptualisation (M1-M12), laying the theoretical and analytical foundations for a citizen-centred study of enlargement. It develops its innovative analytical framework and the tools grounded in the logics of enlargement *for, with,* and *by* citizens. The **second working block** (M3-M24) is dedicated to analysis and piloting, based on empirical research (WPs 2, 4, 5, 6) with participatory mechanisms tested in WP3. This phase addresses enlargement *for* and *with* citizens through surveys, survey experiments, interviews, and case studies, and develops an understanding of enlargement *by* citizens through Democracy Hackathons, Citizen Assemblies, and other

digital tools. The **third working block** (M22-M36) centres on strategic foresight and toolbox development: WP7 develops future scenarios *for* and *by* citizens, while WP8 translates research and engagement into a multidimensional toolbox for policymakers, educators, and civil society – delivering tailored, actionable recommendations. By embedding stakeholder engagement throughout, this analytical framework ensures CitiSense combines scientific excellence with societal relevance for an inclusive and adaptive enlargement policy.

Case selection: CitiSense ensures broad case coverage across WPs to generate robust comparative insights. This design ensures systematic inclusion of perspectives from MS and CCs, allowing CitiSense to generate insights tailored to the specific needs of each group. WPs 1 and 7 encompass all MS and all categories of CCs, enabling a full-spectrum analysis of historical drivers and forward-looking scenarios. WP2 captures public opinion across nine countries, with a balanced mix of 'older' and 'newer' MS and current CCs. WPs 4-6 together cover six MS, including four former CCs (joined in 2004), and four current CCs, for in-depth comparative analysis, *inter alia* capturing different enlargement experiences and security perceptions, and historical, political, economic and societal diversity.[9]

1.2.1 Conceptual Framework

Citisense delivers on **Objective 1 – Develop an innovative conceptual and methodological framework** (WP1), which defines benchmarks and analytical categories to guide the project's research activities and ensure coherence across all empirical work packages (WPs 2-7). This framework is also informed by a systematic review of relevant conceptual and methodological tools developed in previous relevant Horizon projects, including EMBRACE, SHAPEDEM-EU, InvigoratEU, EUIDEA, EU3D, InDivEU or DICE. The resulting Conceptual and Methodological Framework Report (D1.1) ensures theoretical and methodological alignment across the consortium and serves as a common reference point for all empirical activities. It ensures that CitiSense perspectives are systematically integrated into all phases of the research, informing both survey and qualitative instruments used across WPs 2-6, and feeding directly into the outreach and communication activities in WPs 8 and 9.

In Task 1.2, WP1 conducts comparative socio-historical research across enlargement waves. Drawing on EU and national archives, public opinion data, and modelling tools, this task maps the geopolitical, economic, and societal motivations for enlargement, as well as the consequences for social cohesion and democratic participation. These findings are compiled in an innovative Comparative Dashboard of Drivers of Enlargement (D1.2), which visualises patterns of public sentiment, security alignment, and economic interdependence across MS and CCs, including manifestations of enlargement fatigue and Euroscepticism. In Task 1.5, WP1 integrates findings from across the consortium to produce the Synthesis of Key Findings (D1.5). This report highlights how enlargement affects democratisation and rule of law in both real and perceived ways and formulates actionable policy recommendations for EU and national authorities to dispel misunderstanding and better inform the citizens. The synthesis phase includes structured validation through the CitiSense Civil Society Network and EU Enlargement Expert Hub, reinforcing the participatory ethos embedded in the project's conceptual framework.

1.2.2 Empirical research on enlargement *for*, *with* and *by* citizens

The research phase of CitiSense systematically addresses **Objectives 2 and 3** through a comprehensive mixed-methods approach, with each work package targeting specific research questions aligned with the citizen-centred framework.

For Objective 2 – Assess the costs and benefits of enlargement and non-enlargement, **real and perceived** – the project seeks to answer what security, economic, and societal costs and benefits arise from enlargement versus non-enlargement, and how these differ across MS and CCs. Which factors – economic, security, societal – most significantly influence public opposition or support, and how do different framings of the process alter perceptions? WP2 is central to CitiSense's empirical research, providing large-scale comparative data on public attitudes toward EU enlargement across five EU MS (Estonia, Slovenia, France, Netherlands, Spain) and four CCs (Ukraine,

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9 CitiSense also acknowledges that, according to current national ambitions, **Montenegro could join the EU as the 28th Member State by 2028 and Albania as the 29th by 2029**, which would overlap with the project's duration. This context-sensitive horizon reinforces the urgency of the project's contribution to a flexible and adaptive enlargement approach.

Moldova, North Macedonia, Serbia). Grounded in the CitiSense approach, WP2 investigates the historical, geopolitical, identity-based, socio-economic, and cost-benefit factors shaping support for or opposition to enlargement. It combines **survey and survey experiment techniques** to assess how citizens interpret the enlargement process and how different framings of enlargement influence their views (T2.1-T2.5). The survey work begins with a systematic literature review and survey design (T2.1), followed by a pilot phase in select countries to refine questions and translations (T2.2). Full-scale surveys are then implemented online, with telephone interviews in some cases to enhance representativeness (T2.3). The data is cleaned and processed using statistical software (T2.4) and analysed using multilevel regression models to explore how demographic factors and narrative framings affect public support (T2.5). Based on these findings, WP2 formulates concrete, policy-relevant recommendations on how to communicate enlargement more effectively and engage citizens meaningfully in the process (T2.6). The findings are reported through three main deliverables: a harmonised dataset from the nine surveyed countries (D2.1), a comprehensive research report on the drivers of public opinion and the impact of information exposure (D2.2), and two policy papers – one comparing cross-country attitudes and another outlining the most effective communication strategies (D2.3). These outputs also inform the cost-benefit analyses in WPs 4-6 and contribute to the development of narratives and educational resources in WP8 toolboxes. In doing so, WP2 ensures that the voices of citizens – within and beyond the EU – inform the design of enlargement policy, strategy, and communication across the CitiSense project.

WPs 4, 5, and 6 each conduct a targeted cost-benefit assessment combining qualitative and quantitative research methods, supporting the *for citizens* logic within CitiSense. WP4, focusing on the security dimension, conducts qualitative cost-benefit analyses (T4.1) by reviewing academic and policy literature, conducting expert interviews, and analysing policy documents to assess how enlargement affects national and EU-level security. It compares perceptions and realities of security-related costs and benefits in five case studies – Ukraine, Georgia, North Macedonia, Estonia, and France – selected to reflect a spectrum of threat environments and EU membership experiences. These findings are synthesised in a policy paper (D4.1), which also includes tailored communication recommendations. Task 4.2 extends the analysis by extracting lessons from past enlargements, with a focus on the security dimensions of Estonia and Slovakia's accession experiences, and how public security concerns influenced attitudes toward EU integration (D4.2). Methodologically, this task combines a literature review with comparative analysis of accession treaty terms and public opinion trends, supported by inputs from WP2. To examine the EU's institutional readiness and the potential of staged integration into EU security and defence policy, T4.3 and T4.4 apply a forward-looking analysis based on policy document review and stakeholder interviews, culminating in a policy paper on security-related institutional reforms (D4.3). Across all tasks, WP4 integrates behavioural and constructivist theories to assess how security narratives are constructed and communicated, and how they influence public and elite perspectives.

WP5, focusing on the economic dimension, conducts a multi-layered assessment of the economic costs and benefits of enlargement through historical and contemporary lenses. Task 5.1 conducts a systematic review of literature and past Horizon project findings to assess the economic dimensions of EU enlargement. It examines the limits of static cost-benefit analyses, the economic terms of accession treaties (e.g. transition periods, funding), and compares integration strategies across Southern, Eastern, and recent enlargement waves (D5.1). This comparative institutional analysis integrates findings from prior Horizon projects (e.g., EU JOINT, EMBRACE, REDEMOS). Regional disparities and patterns of citizen inclusion or exclusion are addressed in Task 5.2, which maps subnational variation in EU fund absorption and investigates the political economy geography of enlargement, with particular attention to Hungary, Poland, and selected regions in Ukraine (D5.2). Task 5.3 uses survey data (including from WP2) to examine how socio-economic perceptions, trust in governance, and satisfaction with EU institutions shape political attitudes (D5.3). Task 5.4 synthesises the findings into actionable and adaptive policy recommendations, validated through iterative engagement with stakeholders from the CitiSense Civil Society Network and EU Enlargement Expert Hub (D5.4).

WP6, analysing the societal dimension, applies a historical-comparative approach (T6.1) to examine how past and current enlargements have affected social cohesion, public perceptions, and democratic resilience. The research focuses on four case studies – Austria, Slovakia, Moldova, and North Macedonia – selected for their diverse enlargement trajectories and societal profiles. Desk research and content analysis are combined with data from WP2 to assess how enlargement processes interact with institutional trust, democratic backsliding, and Euroscepticism.

These findings are synthesised in a comprehensive research report (D6.1), which also includes a cost-benefit analysis of societal impacts (T6.2), ranging from civic engagement and social trust to institutional strain and disinformation. The work package employs cost-benefit analysis methodology grounded in welfare and behavioural economics, while also drawing on social constructivist insights into how societal narratives are formed and evolve. Task 6.3 uses these insights to develop policy recommendations and a policy paper (D6.2) that outlines flexible communication strategies and tools to address societal concerns, strengthen public support, and foster social cohesion in future enlargements. This includes the development of educational guidelines and promising practices for public engagement, feeding directly into the WP8 communication toolkit.

For Objective 3 – Inform institutional and policy reforms by synthesizing lessons from past enlargements – the research in WPs 1, 4, 5, and 6 addresses how staged accession approaches enhance enlargement effectiveness across security, economic, and societal dimensions; what lessons from past enlargements strengthen democracy and the rule of law in CCs, and how CCs can implement critical acquis reforms (Chapters 10, 23, 24, 34) amid geopolitical and domestic challenges. This includes lessons learned from acquis adoption in the domains of security and the economy. To support this analysis, two comparative policy reports developed in WP1 based on the contributions from partners from Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and the WB6 countries provide foundational insights (D1.3, D1.4). The first, *Comparative policy report on motivations, challenges, and the role of EU support in* CCs' *paths to membership (D1.3)*, explores the political and economic conditions in (potential) CCs, their motivations to join the EU, and the implications of enlargement versus non-enlargement. It also assesses obstacles and drivers of reform – including domestic factors, geopolitical pressures, enlargement fatigue, and euroscepticism – along with views on differentiated integration and conditionality. It concludes with recommendations on how the EU can better support reforms and communicate enlargement in these contexts. The second, *Comparative policy report on the reform process in candidate countries regarding Chapters 10, 23, 24 and 34 (D1.4)*,[10] focuses specifically on how the EU can assist or learn from reform trajectories in these fundamental areas, offering recommendations for a flexible and adaptive enlargement approach that considers prevailing geopolitical and security challenges. Reform dynamics are analysed through theoretical lenses such as modernisation[11] and Europeanisation,[12] as well as drawing on findings from prior Horizon projects (EMBRACE, SHAPEDEM-EU, etc.) addressing democratisation and broader modernisation processes in the EU's neighbourhood. CitiSense assesses the impact of geopolitical factors through different analytical frameworks (e.g., securitisation)[13] and conceptual insights from InvigoratEU on balancing modernisation and geopolitical imperatives. The analysis (T1.2, T1.3, T1.4) involves extensive desk research, semi-structured interviews with policymakers from the EU and CCs, and expert interviews.

WP4 addresses Objective 3 by analysing the security-related components of past and current accession processes. Task 4.2 provides a comparative analysis of security provisions in past accession treaties and draws parallels with current CCs, while Task 4.3 evaluates how phased integration into EU security structures – such as PESCO or CFSP – could respond to citizens' security concerns. These tasks explore the relevance of institutional reforms for staged accession, producing a critical reflection of policy readiness in D4.2 and D4.3. WP5 examines the economic terms and institutional conditions in past treaties (T5.1, T5.2) and their post-accession impacts, particularly in Hungary and Poland, and selected regions of Ukraine. This includes a comparative evaluation of relative and absolute socio-economic changes and their effects on trust and political alignment (T5.3). By contrasting these with current candidate trajectories, WP5 identifies pathways and pitfalls in aligning economic integration with democratic resilience. Deliverables D5.2 and D5.3 provide the comparative basis for policy recommendations on institutional adaptation and sequencing (D5.4). WP6 focuses on societal readiness for enlargement and institutional resilience.

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[10] This includes a comparative study of those countries that are engaged in active accession negotiations with the EU, including Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, North Macedonia, Moldova and Ukraine, excluding countries with paused or suspended talks.

[11] Lipset, S. M. (1959): Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy, *American Political Science Review*, *53*(1), 69-105.

[12] Schimmelfennig, F./ Sedelmeier, U. (2005): The Politics of European Union Enlargement: Theoretical Approaches, *Routledge;* Lippert, B. | Umbach, G. (2005): Pressures of Europeanisation. From post-communist state administrations towards normal players in the EU system, Baden-Baden.

[13] Farinha, R. / Youngs, R. (2025): Securitisation and European Democracy Policy, *Carnegie Europe*; Kaunert, C. / Bosse, G. / Vieira A. (2023): Introduction: resilient states versus resilient societies? Whose security does the EU protect through the Eastern Partnership in times of geopolitical crises?, *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 31(4), 1048-1057; Orenstein, M. A. (2015): Geopolitics of a Divided Europe, *East European Politics and Societies*, *29*(2), 531-540.

Task 6.1 investigates how societal factors – such as social trust, civic participation, and cultural integration – have historically affected the success of EU accessions. Task 6.2 compares societal costs and benefits between CCs and EU members, while Task 6.3 assesses how flexible institutional integration could reduce societal disruption and reinforce democratic norms. These analyses culminate in the D6.2 policy paper, which offers models for assessing societal readiness and recommendations on managing social impacts through staged or adaptive approaches. WPs 4-6 coordinate the methods they use to ensure robust and context-sensitive insights. This includes the integration of desk research, survey data (via WP2), expert and stakeholder interviews, and comparative case studies. The outputs of WPs 4-6 feed directly into WP8 toolkits and WP3 and WP9 stakeholder dialogues (T3.4; T9.3-T9.7), ensuring that citizen perspectives and practical lessons shape the future design of EU enlargement policy. All three WPs actively engage the CitiSense Civil Society Network and Youth Labs (WP8) and the EU Enlargement Expert Hub (WP9) throughout the research process, ensuring that stakeholder input and policymaker relevance are embedded across all stages of analysis from day one.

WP3 directly addresses **Objective 4 – Design and test participatory engagement tools** – by piloting Democracy Hackathons and Citizen Assemblies in France, Belgium, Germany, and Czechia. These formats engage citizens in co-creating solutions to enlargement challenges, ensuring they help shape – rather than just understand – the process (T3.1, T3.2). Key research questions include: To what extent do participatory formats like Hackathons and Citizen Assemblies – enhanced by user-friendly digital tools (Mentimeter, Kahoot!) – increase awareness and engagement? How do they promote inclusive learning among youth and marginalised groups? Which tools are most effective in improving understanding of enlargement? Democracy Hackathons (France, Belgium) are fully online, 18-hour events bringing together diverse citizens – especially youth – to address enlargement challenges drawn from WP2 data. WP3 selects participants through open calls and targeted outreach to ensure broad demographic representation. Each Hackathon follows three phases: *Framing*, where experts present challenges such as defence-enlargement trade-offs using WP2 insights; *Co-creation*, where interdisciplinary teams develop solutions with support from facilitators and digital tools (Mentimeter for polling and mood-tracking; Kahoot! for gamified learning); *Presentation*, where teams pitch ideas to a panel of experts from the EU Enlargement Expert Hub for feedback and recognition (T3.1, D3.1). Citizen Assemblies (Germany, Czechia) follow OECD/EU best practices. WP3 selects 20 participants via stratified random sampling to ensure demographic representativeness. Held in hybrid format for accessibility, each assembly begins with a learning phase featuring balanced briefings by enlargement experts and programme representatives (Erasmus+, Interreg, etc.), grounded in data from WPs 4-6. Participants deliberate in small groups using inclusive methods like the Fishbowl format. Moderators ensure equitable dialogue. Final recommendations are agreed by consensus or secret ballot and submitted to national and EU parliamentary committees, feeding into WP9's dissemination strategy (T3.2, D3.1). Hackathons and Citizen Assemblies include innovations to enhance inclusion and policy relevance. Hackathons feature 'debunking sprints' to co-create counter-narratives against misinformation. Assemblies enforce gender-responsive design (min. 50% female or non-binary participants) and apply a gender lens throughout (T3.1, T3.2). WP3 selected France, Belgium, Germany, and Czechia for their diversity in geography, political culture, and public sentiment. France and Germany offer high-capacity contexts for testing participatory tools in elite-driven debates. Belgium provides a multilingual, transnational testbed. Czechia contributes recent accession memory and a more contested enlargement discourse. Feasibility, digital infrastructure, and strong partner networks also guided selection, ensuring lessons are grounded and transferable. WP3 will synthesise findings in a final policy paper evaluating effectiveness against democratic innovation literature and benchmarking against EU initiatives like the Conference on the Future of Europe.[14] (T3.5, D3.3).

WP9 reinforces WP3's participatory goals through citizen-driven dissemination. Initiatives include short videos featuring citizen questions to researchers (T9.12), a Citizens' Art Exhibition and interactive workshop in Maastricht (T9.13), and a social media survey gathering public views on past and future enlargement (T9.11). These formats broaden engagement, humanise the enlargement debate, and ensure citizens contribute directly to CitiSense's outreach and impact strategy.

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[14] e.g. Fung, A. (2006): Varieties of Participation in Complex Governance, *Public Administration Review*, 66, 66-75; Smith, J.A. / Flower, P. / Larkin, M. (2009): Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research, 6(4), pp. 346–347

1.2.5 Strategic Foresight: Security, Economic, and Societal Futures of EU Enlargement

WP7 directly addresses **Objective 5 – Conduct strategic foresight and scenario planning** to explore plausible futures for enlargement considering geopolitical shifts, regional dynamics, and security-enlargement interdependencies, including the implications of renewed transatlantic uncertainty. CitiSense embraces forward-looking governance and a future-oriented perspective to help policymakers and citizens prepare for unpredictable developments that may affect the enlargement process.[15] Rather than seeking to predict the future, CitiSense's foresight activities focus on developing plausible, diverse, and context-sensitive scenarios that minimise surprises and expand the strategic options available to decision-makers (T7.2). This approach is also fully aligned with Objective 6, which includes the development of engagement strategies that can inform both immediate and long-term policy responses.

The foresight methodology begins with a comprehensive scoping of key actors, factors, and pressures related to EU enlargement, drawing on systematic literature reviews, evidence synthesis, and concept mapping (T7.1). This foundational analysis is informed by the project's earlier work packages, including WP1's conceptual framework, WP2's public opinion survey data, WP3's engagement insights, and the cost-benefit analyses and reform assessments conducted in WPs 4-6. WP7 applies trend analysis, horizon scanning, and the identification of global and European trends, strategic uncertainties, and systemic constellations that may shape the future of enlargement. Analytical frameworks such as STEEP and SWOT are used to structure this exploration, while narrative policy frameworks and network analysis help to map the evolving landscape of actors, interests, and ideas. Building on this foundation, CitiSense develops a set of alternative futures scenarios for EU enlargement, ranging from projected and plausible to possible and preferable (T7.2). These scenarios are not only constructed by the research team but are also tested and refined through participatory engagement exercises, including two workshops and deliberative settings that involve academic experts, practitioners, and citizens (T7.3). This participatory approach, drawing on the Community of Practice (CoP) methodology, ensures that a broad range of perspectives and expertise informs the assessment of each scenario's socio-cultural, political, and practical acceptability and feasibility. The participatory approach also stress-tests ideas, supports policy innovation, and feeds directly into WP8 toolkits – promoting adaptive, forward-looking governance beyond path dependency. The scenarios will deliberately include not only differentiated pathways of successful enlargement but also at least one trajectory where enlargement is stalled or abandoned. This approach allows assessing the costs of non-enlargement and testing the resilience of EU and national strategies under both positive and adverse futures.

1.2.6 CitiSense Toolboxes for communicating EU Enlargement

WP8 addresses **Objective 6 – Develop dual-use enlargement toolboxes** for policymakers and for civil society and education stakeholders. The CitiSense toolboxes are evidence-based resources that synthesise the project's research, piloting, and foresight activities into actionable outputs for policymakers, educators, civil society actors, and citizens. Building on the project's citizen-centred approach, the toolboxes develop through a process of co-creation, iterative validation, and structured stakeholder engagement. This ensures that all materials are accessible, context-sensitive, and tailored to diverse audiences across the EU and CCs, while also reflecting specific regional, generational, and gender-related features (T8.5).

The CitiSense toolboxes consist of:
- **A policy toolbox** for policy makers and public administration in MS, CCs, and at the European institutional level (T8.1, D8.1). Drawing on insights from WPs 1-7, it provides robust, evidence-based strategies, scenario-based guidance, and tailored communication tools for addressing the security, economic, and societal dimensions of enlargement and non-enlargement. The toolbox incorporates findings from public opinion polls (WP2) and comparative case studies (WPs 4-6) on the costs and benefits of enlargement, and strategic foresight scenarios (WP7), as well as recommendations from WPs 4-6 on how to communicate enlargement narratives in different national and institutional settings. In alignment with CitiSense's threefold framework – *for, with, and by citizens*

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[15] Juhola, S. / Käyhkö, J. (2023): Maladaptation as a concept and a metric in national adaptation policy- Should we, would we, could we?, *PLOS Climate;* Umbach, G. (2024): Futures in EU governance: Anticipatory governance, strategic foresight and EU Better Regulation, *European Law Journal,* 30(3).

– the toolbox also includes the recommendations for communication strategies developed in WPs 4-6 (D4.3; D5.4; D6.2), informed by public opinion research from WP2, and manuals on participatory mechanisms (e.g. Hackathons, Citizen Assemblies) tested in WP3 to engage citizens directly in policymaking processes.

- **A citizen and education toolbox** aimed at civil society organisations, schoolteachers, youth educators, and citizenship education actors (T8.2, D8.2). This toolbox provides comprehensive, user-friendly educational materials – including digital learning modules, and the Citizens' Art Exhibition (T9.13) – designed to foster critical debate, enhance public understanding, and support participatory learning about EU enlargement. CitiSense co-creates these materials with the CitiSense Civil Society Network (T8.5) drawing upon insights from WPs 2, 4, 5, and 6 to ensure they address core concerns around democracy, rule of law, identity, security and societal resilience.

To further support the development of these toolkits, WP8 includes:
- The organisation of Youth and Citizens' Labs in cities across EU and non-EU countries (T8.3, D8.3), which serve both as dissemination and co-creation platforms where young people test and respond to CitiSense research outputs and contribute to policy recommendations.

- The compilation of 'Europe Next' (T8.4, D8.4), a collection of concise country reports authored by post-graduate students from the College of Europe and partner institutions. These reports analyse national narratives, reform agendas, and future visions of enlargement based on CitiSense data and offer recommendations to increase societal awareness and strengthen national engagement with the EU's enlargement agenda.

The development of these toolboxes is collaborative and iterative. Insights from WP3 participatory mechanisms (Hackathons, Citizen Assemblies), WP7 foresight scenarios, and continuous consultation with the EU Enlargement Expert Hub (WP9) and CitiSense Civil Society Network (WP8) are integrated throughout the process. To ensure practical relevance and usability, the draft toolboxes are tested and validated in a series of consultation meetings with policymakers, educators, and civil society stakeholders from WPs 1-7. Feedback from these sessions is used to refine content, format, and delivery modes. The final versions of the toolboxes are made available in multiple languages and formats (print, digital, and interactive online resources) through WP9 to ensure maximum accessibility and impact. In sum, the CitiSense toolboxes serve as a central, integrative output of the project – translating research, foresight, and participatory engagement into practical tools and manuals that support transparent communication, inclusive policymaking, and informed public debate on EU enlargement across Europe.

Mapping CitiSense Activities to Key Horizon Call Outcomes

Horizon Call Outcome/Requirement	CitiSense Activity
Policymakers and public administrations are provided with thematic insights on lessons learned from previous enlargements for future policies (focus on democracy…)	**Systematic review, synthesis of past enlargements** (WPs1,4-6): Provides lessons learned and comparative insights for policymakers. **Policy recommendations and toolkits** (WP8): Actionable advice based on research findings, tailored for public administrations. **Focus on critical acquis chapters** (WPs1,4-6).
Societal awareness of the enlargement process is increased (EU and candidate countries), through deeper understanding of political, social, and economic consequences of enlargement vs. non-enlargement…	**Public opinion surveys** (WP2): Capture citizen perceptions and knowledge gaps, comparative CBA in WPs 4-6. **Existing/new communication/educational tools** (WP3, WP8, WP9): e.g. Youth Labs, Hackathons, art exhibition, Citizen Assemblies, podcasts, Instagram Reels, educational tools for schoolteachers and civil society. **Dissemination/engagement strategies** (WP9): Reach diverse audiences, including civil society, youth, educators.
EU authorities and public authorities in Member States benefit from better use of existing interactive tools to better inform and promote educational opportunities…	**Pilot testing of engagement mechanisms including inter-cultural learning forums** (WP3): Hackathons, Citizen Assemblies, (WP9) Art exhibition. **Toolboxes for policymakers and educators** (WP8): Co-created with civil society, youth, policy-makers, tailored content and recommendations.
Public's … involvement in enlargement is enhanced through transparent and	**Participatory mechanisms** (WP3): Hackathons, Citizen Assemblies, both in-person and digital. **Deliberative democracy approaches** (WP3): Consensus-building, facilitated discussions,

participatory processes, leveraging digital tools for broader engagement…	secret ballots. **Gender and diversity** (all WPs): Equitable participation in all activities. **Continuous feedback loops** (WP9): Systematic input from citizens, civil society, experts. **Digital engagement tools** (WP3, WP9): i.e. Hackathons, Mentimeter, Kahoot!, interactive dashboard, Reels
Support EU citizens and civil society to gain a better understanding of challenges and opportunities related to potential future enlargements…	**Socio-historical, legal, and economic research** (WPs1,4-6): Deepens understanding of CCs and EU readiness. **Comparative analysis** (WP1, WPs4-6): Examines drivers, costs, benefits, and reform needs. **Citizen-centred approach** (all WPs): Research and engagement for, with, and by citizens. **Civil Society Network and Expert Hub** (WP9): co-creation and validation.
Reflect on previous enlargements, provide thematic insights, identify similarities with candidate countries (democracy, rule of law, governance)…	**Lessons learned from past enlargements** (WP1, WP4, 5, 6): Synthesise and apply to current context. **Case studies and comparative analysis** (WPs 4-6): Identify patterns and policy implications.
Utilise foresight and scenario planning to help EU and Member States anticipate future changes and manage enlargement strategically…	**Foresight exercises** (WP7): Alternative futures scenarios, horizon scanning, trend analysis. **Community of Practice approach** (WP7): Co-creation and validation of foresight outputs.
Conduct comparative analysis of terms and conditions of membership in accession treaties…	**Comparative case studies** (WPs 4-6): Analyse accession conditions and transition periods. **Expert interviews and document analysis** (WPs 4-6): Contextualise findings.
Address public support and engagement, consider enlargement fatigue and Euroscepticism…	**Surveys and case studies** (WP2): Measure public support, identify drivers of enlargement fatigue and Euroscepticism. **Communication strategies** (WPs 4-6, WP8, WP9): Tailored to address concerns and build credibility.
Build concrete knowledge through comparative analysis of motives of candidate countries to join the EU…	**Public opinion surveys and focus groups** (WP2): Identify motivations and perceptions. **Comparative analysis** (WP1, WPs4-6): Map drivers across countries.
Develop policy recommendations to promote inclusive strategic communication and citizen engagement on EU integration…	**Innovative communication tools** (WP3, WP9): Digital, participatory, and educational formats. **Policy recommendations** (WP8): Inclusive, accessible, and actionable. **Dissemination strategies** (WP9): Reach diverse stakeholders.
Identify effective tools for public administration and policymakers to improve citizens' understanding…	**Toolboxes for policymakers and educators** (WP8): Co-created, evidence-based, and tested. **Pilot testing** (WP3): Assess effectiveness of engagement tools.
Leverage emerging digital technologies for communication…	**Digital engagement tools** (WP3, WP9): i.e. Hackathons, podcasts, social media tools.
Explore how to support the reform process of candidate countries and/or learn from their existing reforms….	**Focus on critical acquis chapters** (WP1, WPs 4-6): Analyse and propose reforms. **Case studies and comparative analysis** (WPs 4-6): Identify best practices and challenges.

1.3 Interdisciplinary Dimension

CitiSense is an interdisciplinary consortium of 16 institutional research teams, bringing together a total of 36 researchers (see Part A of the project proposal for names and ORCID IDs) who will collaborate across the project's three-year duration and its ten work packages. While the majority of consortium partners have core expertise in political science and international relations, the project also draws on substantial additional disciplinary strengths, including peace, conflict and security studies, democratisation, diplomacy, econometrics, economics, European law, European studies, history, human rights, political economy, political philosophy, political theory, and public administration. CitiSense systematically integrates socio-historical analysis (WP6), legal and security studies (WP4), economic modelling (WP5), and comparative political science (WPs 1–3, 7) into a joint citizen-centred methodology, ensuring that each SSH discipline plays a distinct role in shaping the project's outputs.

The consortium's interdisciplinarity is matched by its breadth of regional expertise, with partners based both within and outside the European Union. Several partners bring direct connections to policy and practitioner networks, including Brussels-based TEPSA and EPD. CitiSense also benefits from deep, context-specific expertise from the EU's neighbourhood. These regionally embedded perspectives ensure that the project's conceptual framework, empirical research, and policy toolkits are fully informed by on-the-ground realities in CCs, reinforcing the project's capacity to produce context-sensitive, actionable recommendations.

1.4. Gender Dimension

Gender considerations will be integrated across all WPs. WP6 will place a key focus on the gender dimension throughout its analysis of societal factors. Gender will also play an essential role in the study of economic (WP5) as well as security (WP4) concerns. Gender issues are important to assess the development of future scenarios for EU enlargement (WP7) and the co-creation of a toolkit for both policymakers and educators (WP8). CitiSense will ensure gender-balance in all activities including the composition of its Hackathons and Citizens' Assemblies (WP3), the identification of potential interviewees (WPs 4-6), and the selection of participants for the enlarged CitiSense EU Enlargement Expert Hub (WP9) to prevent male-dominated discussion shaping the project's outputs. For our research outputs, CitiSense scholars will draw from a diverse range of literature to engage with wider subsectors of society and avoid male-dominated literature reviews. Furthermore, the CitiSense project adopts a pro-active gender-sensitive approach across all its research, communication, dissemination and exploitation methodologies. Lastly, the CitiSense consortium represents a gender-balanced team of scholars (15 men, 21 women) with women leading a majority of Work Packages. Building on lessons from Horizon projects such as EMBRACE, SHAPEDEM-EU, and REDEMOS, which have highlighted the gendered dynamics of enlargement reforms and participation, CitiSense integrates gender sensitivity into its data collection and analysis. For example, survey data (WP2) will be disaggregated by gender to identify differences in attitudes towards enlargement, while case studies (WPs 4–6) will systematically examine how gendered experiences shape perceptions of security, economic opportunities, and societal change in MS and CCs. This ensures that gender is systematically embedded in the study of security, economic, and societal dimensions, beyond consortium composition and leadership roles.

1.5 Open Science Practices

CitiSense is fully committed to **upholding Horizon Europe open science standards**, ensuring that research outputs are transparent, accessible, and reusable. The project will **apply FAIR principles** – making data Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Re-usable – throughout its lifecycle, as part of its broader management and governance framework (WP10).

All publications – whether scientific articles, datasets, code, or dissemination materials – will be made openly accessible to promote transparency and reproducibility. We will prioritise diamond or gold open access whenever possible and will guarantee at least green open access by sharing preprints in line with copyright agreements. Hybrid publishing models that involve paying article processing fees to subscription-based journals to publish open access will be avoided wherever possible. The European University Institute (coordinator) and Maastricht University will provide guidance on open access routes, support self-archiving, monitor uptake, and deliver training on best practices if needed. Researchers will also be encouraged to use the European Commission's *Open Research Europe* platform.

Data Management Plan (D10.3) – In line with Task 10.2, a detailed first draft Data Management Plan will be prepared for the Kick-off Conference and updated regularly. It will integrate FAIR and open access principles while ensuring personal data protection, compliance with ethics protocols, and respect for intellectual property rights. The plan will specify which datasets will be made public or restricted, outline long-term storage arrangements, and establish a formal Ethics Monitoring Protocol with regular compliance checks.

In applying FAIR principles, CitiSense will prioritise:
1. **Findability** – Assign persistent identifiers to all data types and ensure clear metadata, respecting IPR for collaboratively developed methods and innovations.

2. **Accessibility** – Share open data via the CitiSense project website and trusted repositories such as Cadmus at the EUI, adhering to 'as open as possible, as closed as necessary.'
3. **Interoperability** – Use standardised formats and shared vocabularies to promote compatibility and cross-disciplinary reuse.
4. **Reusability** – Provide thorough documentation, licensing information, and adherence to relevant community standards.

These open science practices are embedded in the project's management, ethics monitoring, and quality assurance processes under WP10, ensuring that outputs are accessible and valuable to the research community, policymakers, and civil society. Moreover, the researchers involved in CitiSense have a traceable record of adhering to FAIR practices.
#§CON-MET-CM§# #§COM-PLE-CP§# #§REL-EVA-RE§#

2. Impact #@IMP-ACT-IA@#

2.1 Project's Pathways Towards Impact

CitiSense achieves impact *for, with and by citizens* by translating research on security, economic and social consequences of enlargement into co-created tools, dialogues, and policy recommendations. It responds directly to the Horizon Europe Cluster 2 priority – **'Enhancing Democracy and Governance'** – by generating actionable knowledge, participatory frameworks, and adaptive tools that support inclusive, citizen-centred policymaking in times of geopolitical disruption, democratic backsliding, and social polarisation. CitiSense's impact strategy is explicitly structured around the Horizon call's expected outcomes and scope. It targets three main groups of actors: citizens and civil society organisations (CSOs), policymakers and public administrations, and the research/educational community across MS and (potential) CCs. This focus ensures that impact is directly aligned with the call's ambition to prepare all actors for a flexible and adaptive enlargement approach, ensuring that lessons learned, participatory inputs, and foresight analyses are translated into strategies that remain viable under shifting geopolitical, economic, and societal conditions, while supporting the development of local and regional initiatives led by CSOs. CitiSense ensures the continuity of impactful tools from previous Horizon projects and is engineered for sustainability, its impact designed to extend well beyond the project's duration, building a foundation for long-term democratic engagement, strategic foresight, and evidence-based enlargement policy.

2.1.1 Unique Contribution to Outcomes and Wider Impacts

Scientific Contribution. CitiSense will generate a comparative, empirically grounded knowledge base on the security, economic, and societal effects of enlargement and non-enlargement, both real and perceived, drawing on historical precedents and current challenges. It advances interdisciplinary research on democratic resilience through the CitiSense analytical framework, contributing to both citizen-centred theoretical foundations and the creation of participatory 'sense-making' methodologies. The open-access knowledge generated – via structured synthesis (WP1), data collection through public opinion surveys (WP2), scenario-building (WP7), and cost-benefit modelling (WPs 4-6) – will feed into both policy and academic debates, producing actionable knowledge for political scientists, economists, legal scholars, and practitioners.

Societal Impact. CitiSense empowers citizens – particularly the youth – in EU MS and CCs to participate meaningfully in the enlargement process. The CitiSense civil society-focused toolbox includes 14 Youth Labs, participatory pilots (Democracy Hackathons, Citizen Assemblies), educational materials, podcasts, and accessible visual media. By fostering public understanding of the enlargement's real-world consequences, the project counters misunderstanding of its effects, reduces Euroscepticism, and improves public trust in democratic institutions. CitiSense builds on and scales up proven formats such as the Civil Society Network, EU Enlargement Expert Hub and Youth Labs (initiated in InvigoratEU), Citizens' Art Exhibition (RECLAIM), and gender mainstreaming practices (EMBRACE, SHAPEDEM-EU). These formats are adapted, tested in new contexts, and integrated into the CitiSense toolboxes to ensure their direct transferability to policymakers, CSOs, and educators in MS and (potential) CCs.

Policy Impact. The policy-focused toolbox provides public authorities (administrators and decision-makers) with co-created, empirically tested recommendations for institutional reform, rule of law enhancement, acquis compliance (Chapters 10, 23, 24, 34), and communication strategies. CitiSense validates outputs with policymakers via the TEPSA EU Enlargement Expert Hub, TEPSA's policy dialogues, and targeted engagement with DG ENEST, EEAS, and national ministries. Participatory foresight tools enable decision-makers to adapt enlargement strategies to geopolitical conditions, such as Russian aggression or transatlantic shifts. By tailoring recommendations across MS and (potential) CCs, the toolbox supports differentiated yet coherent strategies as cornerstones of a flexible and adaptive enlargement approach.

Expected Outcome	CitiSense Impact Pathways (Examples)
Thematic insights for policymakers and administrators on democracy, rule of law, and governance	WPs 4-6 provide policy recommendations based on lessons from past enlargements (Southern, Eastern) on democratic reform and institutional adaptation. Policy toolboxes (WP8) deliver user friendly recommendations. Participatory foresight scenarios (WP7) help policymakers test responses to geopolitical shocks. Dissemination via the EU Enlargement Expert Hub and TEPSA's Pre-Presidency Conferences targets EU and national institutions (WP9).
Increased societal awareness of the enlargement process	WP2 collects public opinion data on enlargement attitudes and the sources for misconceptions. WPs 4-6 produce cost-benefit analyses of enlargement vs. non-enlargement, framed for public use. Public-facing outputs include a Digital Guidebook ('30 FAQs on Enlargement') (WP8), Instagram Reels, and podcasts (WP9). Youth Labs and Citizen Assemblies stimulate grassroots understanding and dialogue.
Better use of interactive tools to promote educational opportunities	WP8's educator toolbox provides manuals, classroom resources, and digital learning modules. WP3 participatory formats (Youth Labs) serve as living labs for civic and political education. Partnership with Erasmus+ and education ministries supports institutional uptake. Outputs are designed for reuse by teachers, lecturers, and youth leaders beyond the project also using popular online tools (Mentimeter, Kahoot!)
Enhanced public involvement through participatory and digital engagement	14 Youth Labs, Democracy Hackathons, and Citizen Assemblies engage diverse citizens directly in shaping enlargement narratives (WPs 3,8). WP7's participatory foresight tools invite citizens to co-create scenarios and test future policy options. Digital engagement via social media, podcasts, and regional broadcast partnerships ensures broad reach. Communication experts and journalists included in the CitiSense Advisory Board and the EU Enlargement Expert Hub provide continuous feedback to tailor content to underserved demographics, enhancing inclusivity.

2.1.2 Identification of Three Main Target Groups During and Beyond CitiSense's Lifetime

1. Policy Community. CitiSense targets a broad spectrum of policy actors at EU, national, and regional levels, including public administrations, institutional stakeholders, and elected officials across MS and (potential) CCs. These actors are engaged through structured co-creation and evidence-sharing mechanisms, notably in the development of the Toolbox for Policymakers (D8.1), which provides actionable, evidence-based recommendations on institutional reform, acquis compliance (especially Chapters 10, 23, 24, and 34), and communication strategies on enlargement. The toolbox synthesises insights from cross-cutting analyses in D4.1-D4.3 (security), D5.1-D5.4 (economic), and D6.1-D6.2 (societal impacts). Structured engagement takes place via the EU Enlargement Expert Hub (WP9/T9.2) and is supported by D9.2 (Recommendations Digest) and D9.3 (Digest of Public-Oriented Communications Products), ensuring sustained dialogue with key actors including DG ENEST, the European External Action Service (EEAS), and national ministries. The TEPSA network, comprising 49 members across 37 countries, facilitates wide dissemination of CitiSense outputs among policy makers and public administrations in each MS and CC and supports exchanges through events such as the TEPSA Pre-Presidency Conferences (e.g. in

Vilnius 2026). In addition, the Policy Paper on Alternative Future Scenarios (D7.2) and the Policy Paper on Differentiated (Dis)Integration (D7.1) help policymakers anticipate geopolitical developments and stress-test enlargement strategies, while policy papers on motivations for support (D1.3) and key chapter reform processes (D1.4) contribute specific, comparative insights on reform trajectories and motivation dynamics. Scenario exercises explicitly test how enlargement can remain adaptive across different country categories (MS, CCs), offering policymakers flexible pathways to manage uncertainty while retaining credibility and public trust. The project's Communications and Dissemination Plan (D9.1) ensures that outputs are shared strategically with EU institutions, MS, and relevant policy platforms.

2. Civil Society, Citizens, Teachers, Lecturers, Students, and Young Professionals. CitiSense prioritises inclusive, multigenerational engagement by involving educators, youth, and organised civil society both as knowledge contributors and dissemination multipliers. The project conducts 14 Youth Labs in MS and CCs (D8.3) and participatory pilots such as Democracy Hackathons and Citizen Assemblies (D3.1, D3.2) across four EU MS, generating bottom-up input for the research process and validation of the Toolbox for Education and Civil Society (D8.2). Targeted outreach includes a training seminar in Brussels for early-career diplomats, civil servants, and civil society actors, and the provision of accessible materials such as the *'30 FAQs on Enlargement'*, integrated into D8.2. The Policy Paper on Citizen Engagement Tools (D3.3) offers guidance on deploying these mechanisms beyond the project. Public engagement is further amplified through digital formats including Instagram Reels, podcasts, and an art exhibition (part of D9.3). The CitiSense Civil Society Network and partners like TEPSA, EPD and IDSCS ensure outreach to underrepresented communities in EU decision-making and democratic support organisations across Europe. Inclusivity is monitored throughout, in line with partners' Gender Equality Plans, and reinforced in all public-oriented deliverables.

3. Research Community. CitiSense contributes to cutting-edge research on democracy, EU governance, and enlargement through open access publications, cross-project integration, and the FAIR handling of data. Core outputs for this group include the Research Report on Conceptual and Methodological Framework (D1.1), the Comparative Dashboard of Drivers of Enlargement (D1.2), and the Synthesis of Key Findings (D1.5). The project aligns with and builds upon previous research conducted in Horizon Europe projects such as EMBRACE, InvigoratEU, and SHAPEDEM-EU. Scholarly outputs are disseminated via academic events in which the consortium partners are active and hold leadership roles (e.g. Council for European Studies [CES], European Union Studies Association [EUSA], European Consortium for Political Research [ECPR], the University Association for Contemporary European Studies [UACES]), TEPSA's research network, and the IDSCS THINK-BALKANS network. TEPSA also oversees targeted dissemination to academic stakeholders (T9.14). Scientific insights are consolidated in the Policy Papers and Research Reports across WPs 2-7, including D2.2 (Drivers and Obstacles of Support), D4.2 (Research Report: Security Lessons from Previous Enlargements), D5.3 (Socio-Economic Perceptions), and D6.1 (Societal Impacts). The project ensures transparency and traceability through a comprehensive Data Management Plan (D10.2) and reporting through D10.3 (Conference Reports).

2.1.3 Scale and Significance of Impact

Scale.
- **Policy Community Reach**: The project will engage at least 1,000 policymakers during implementation, with further diffusion via 21 policy papers, 4 workshops, and national-level dissemination partners through TEPSA's 49 member institutes in 37 countries, EPD's democracy network, and the IDSCS THINK-BALKANS network. This ensures that outputs are systematically communicated not only in Brussels but also directly to national administrations and policymakers in every MS and (potential) CCs, multiplying the project's reach and impact.
- **Civil Society Engagement**: The 14 Youth Labs (~300 participants), 2 Democracy Hackathons (~60 participants), and 2 Citizen Assemblies (~40 Participants) are expected to directly involve over 400 citizens, including at least 50% youth (under 30) and 50% women or non-binary participants. Dissemination through schools and universities can reach an additional 10,000 learners over five years. Structuring engagement across MS and (potential) CCs ensures that citizens in all three categories co-create knowledge and tools. To achieve impact at scale, CitiSense explicitly treats its participatory pilots as scalable prototypes. The most successful formats, e.g. Youth Labs, Hackathons, and educational toolboxes, are designed for future EU-level funding and expansion.

For example, findings can inform the design of high-school exchanges, cross-border civic initiatives, and EU-funded participatory programmes between MS and CCs. By piloting, testing, and evaluating these tools, CitiSense paves the way for their application on a significantly larger scale, with corresponding resources, thereby multiplying their long-term impact.

- **Digital & Media Impact**: With coordinated dissemination (including via the CitiSense dedicated website) through consortium partners' platforms (projected audience: >250,000 followers across social media), podcasts, and multilingual FAQs, the project aims to reach a cumulative audience of >1 million during and after implementation.
- **Scientific Reach**: Open-access publications, joint workshops, a dedicated ECPR 'The Loop' Enlargement Blog Series (already launched by the EUI CitiSense coordinator, with an audience of >1000 readers per post) and panels at ECPR, CES, EUSA, UACES, and other academic events will ensure integration into academic debates, with targeted outputs for high-impact journals and research infrastructure reuse. An in-principal agreement to publish 'Europe Next' has already been secured with 'Agenda Publishing', an award-winning publisher focused on making complex academic ideas accessible to a wider audience.

Significance.
- **Policy Impact**: Empirical insights from WPs 4-6 and WP7 will inform future EU-level decisions on staged accession, rule of law benchmarking, and strategic communication, potentially shaping up enlargement dossiers (Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Western Balkans).
- **Civic Impact**: Project interventions aim to increase civic understanding of enlargement by >30% in pre/post engagement assessments, and to foster youth participation in at least 10 follow-up initiatives beyond the project's lifetime, guaranteed by the continuous activity of consortium partners also selected for their long-lasting activities with citizen-facing projects.
- **Educational Legacy**: Learning materials developed for schools and universities are designed to remain in circulation beyond the project, with partners committing to maintain access to educational content for a minimum of 5 years post-project. The Edited Collection of Short Country Reports ('Europe Next'), involving College of Europe faculty (consortium contributors and work-package leads) and post-graduate students will serve to transfer and co-create CitiSense knowledge to at least 25 future EU leaders.

2.1.4 Requirements, External Risks, and Mitigation Strategies

Potential External Barriers: CitiSense may face external barriers linked to regulatory, institutional, and societal change. Shifts in enlargement policy at EU level, such as treaty reform or political crises, could affect the uptake of recommendations. To mitigate this risk, the project integrates foresight tools in WP7 and applies agile policy stress-testing to accommodate dynamic policy shifts. Another barrier lies in public opinion volatility, where rising national-populism or geopolitical shocks may reduce public receptivity to enlargement narratives. This is addressed through WP2's real-time opinion tracking and the adaptive messaging strategies developed in WP8, which together allow for responsive framing and tailored communication. Limited digital or media access for digitally excluded or marginalised groups also presents a challenge. To address this, the consortium partners with journalists through the CitiSense EU Enlargement Expert Hub and the Advisory Board, which includes a communication expert from the European Commission and a journalist from L1, a Dutch regional TV and radio channel. These partnerships ensure outreach in selected regional and local contexts. In addition, WP2 and WP5 specifically target subnational audiences in Eastern European member states and in Ukraine, while all consortium partners remain responsible for legacy media outreach in their respective national contexts (T9.10). Communication experts from governments also contribute specialised knowledge in devising government communication strategies that are accessible and actionable for local authorities and the broader public.

Dependencies and Assumptions: The project assumes a continued institutional and political commitment to enlargement within the EU and candidate countries. It also assumes sustained cooperation with EU institutions, notably DG ENEST, EEAS, and national governments. Finally, it relies on the establishment of baseline measures of civic trust, engagement, and enlargement support in WP2 (surveys and media analysis), with post-intervention benchmarks collected to assess delta effects.

Environmental Impact: CitiSense does not anticipate negative environmental effects. To minimise its environmental footprint, CitiSense will organise all consortium and Work Package coordination meetings online or in hybrid format. Where travel or printed material is required, such as the kick-off and final conferences, the project will adhere to green procurement and carbon offsetting guidelines in line with the best practices set forward by the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Green Charter.

2.2   Measures to maximise impact-dissemination, exploitation and communication #@COM-DIS-VIS-CDV@#

CitiSense adopts a comprehensive dissemination and communication strategy that targets policymakers, civil society, educators, the research community, and the general public across both EU MS and CCs. Communication efforts will begin from Month 1 with the creation of the website and its coordinated promotion across all partners and will continue throughout the lifespan of the project. These will highlight CitiSense's contributions to democratic resilience, policy reform, youth engagement, and strategic foresight. Key messages will emphasise the value of inclusive, transparent, and participatory enlargement processes and the tangible security, economic, and societal stakes involved. This section presents the first version of CitiSense's Dissemination and Exploitation Plan, outlining strategic measures to maximise scientific, societal, and policy impact during and beyond the project. A detailed version will be submitted as D9.1 within six months and updated regularly. The communication strategy is segmented by region (MS, CCs, potential CCs) and by target type (policymakers, administrations, CSOs, youth, media), ensuring tailored messages for each audience.

Policy-Oriented Outputs

- **Policy Papers:** CitiSense will produce 21 policy papers across WPs 1-9, synthesising key trends, challenges, and actionable policy options for EU enlargement and resilience. These papers will distil research findings into accessible, evidence-based recommendations for policymakers across the EU and CCs. (D1.2, D1.3, D1.4, D2.3, D3.3, D4.1, D4.3, D5.1, D5.2, D5.4, D6.2, D7.1, D7.2, D8.3, T9.5/D9.2)
- **Toolbox for Policymakers:** Includes foresight-based scenario modelling and institutional pathways developed through T7.3 and summarised in D7.2, and provides context-sensitive, co-created policy recommendations validated with stakeholders through the Expert Hub. Strategic recommendations and practical tools are compiled in D8.1.
- **Digital Guidebook '30 FAQs on Enlargement':** A user-friendly digital guide providing accessible, context-sensitive responses, co-created in WP8 and disseminated via D8.1.
- **Podcasts and Multimedia Dissemination:** A series of six podcasts featuring researchers and policymakers to communicate key insights to a broad audience. Produced and promoted under T9.9, with outputs included in D9.3.
- **Biannual Observatory on EU Enlargement:** A mailing list and observatory based on the EU Enlargement Expert Hub to distribute updates and outputs to the CitiSense Expert Hub and external stakeholders. Activities captured under T9.2.
- **Synthesis of Key Findings:** D1.5 brings together findings across work packages, providing recommendations for policymakers aligned with governance and communication strategies. Developed under T1.5.

Expert Forums and Strategic Engagement

- **EU Enlargement Expert Hub:** Facilitates continuous exchange between researchers and over 100 policy stakeholders from day one. Developed and managed under T9.2.
- **Strategic Foresight Workshops:** Multi-stakeholder exercises (T7.3) assessing future signals and trajectories. Contributions feed into D7.2.
- **Closed-Door Policy Meetings:** Six meetings hosted in Brussels, linking policymakers with researchers.
- **Training Seminar for Young Professionals:** One seminar in Brussels providing early-career participants with practical experience and policy training. Structured under T9.4.
- **High-Profile Conference Panels:** Panels organised at international academic and policy forums, including contributions to two TEPSA Pre-Presidency Conferences (e.g. in Vilnius 2026). Reported under T9.3.

- **National Policy Briefings:** Policy recommendations discussed in decentralised fashion in four MS. Covered under T9.6.
- **Public Panel Discussions:** Two cross-project events focused on democracy, rule of law, and governance. Coordinated under T9.3.
- **Democracy Dialogue:** Brussels-based workshop drawing lessons from WP3 on citizen engagement, contributing to D3.2 under T3.4.

Civil Society-Oriented Outputs

- **Education & Civil Society Toolbox:** This toolbox provides tailored resources for educators and civil society organisations, including digital learning modules, manuals on participatory tools and democratic mechanisms (e.g., Youth Labs, Hackathons), and youth-targeted educational materials. These co-created materials are validated by the CitiSense Civil Society Network and designed to make EU enlargement policies accessible and actionable for audiences with varying levels of digital literacy and policy familiarity (T8.2, T8.5, D8.2).
- **Citizen's Art Exhibition – 'Framing an EU with 30+ Members':** This participatory cultural initiative invites citizens across EU and CCs to submit artworks, including photography, poetry, audiovisual, and performance, reflecting on the future of an enlarged EU. The exhibition will take place at Maastricht town hall and includes a collective workshop and contest, with selected contributors invited to the final CitiSense conference. Outputs will be featured in digital formats and promoted via social media platforms such as Instagram Reels (T9.13).
- **Digital and Multimedia Outputs:** CitiSense will develop a suite of innovative materials to amplify public understanding of enlargement. These include infographics and animated videos presenting key messages, short participatory Instagram Reels enabling citizen-researcher interaction, and a targeted social media survey to crowdsource public sentiment on enlargement scenarios (T9.8, T9.11, T9.12).
- **Publication 'Europe Next':** This edited collection presents short, accessible country reports based on CitiSense data and insights. Written by College of Europe postgraduate students and designed for broad resonance – including with rural communities and older generations – this publication aims to bridge the gap between policy and research, as well as train future EU leaders on CitiSense generated knowledge (T8.4, D8.4).
- **Citizen Engagement Tools:** CitiSense tests and documents citizen engagement mechanisms through Hackathons and Citizen Assemblies. These activities are underpinned by the systematic use of emerging digital technologies, including online deliberation platforms, interactive polling tools, and virtual collaboration environments (e.g. Mentimeter/Kahoot!). In this way, CitiSense not only extends participation to geographically dispersed citizens but also pilots scalable digital methods that can be mainstreamed in future EU engagement practices. The resulting reports outline methods, lessons, and recommendations for civil society stakeholders to replicate or adapt in different contexts (T3.1, T3.2, D3.1, D3.3).
- **Participatory Scenario Testing Workshops:** Two strategic foresight workshops involve citizens and civil society actors in co-designing future scenarios for EU enlargement, contributing directly to the project's strategic analysis (T7.3, D7.2).

Forums for Exchange with Civil Society and the General Public

- **CitiSense Civil Society Network:** Ongoing engagement with civil society actors, ensuring feedback and dissemination of key outputs. Coordinated under T8.5.
- **Youth Labs:** 14 Labs across Europe engaging young people in interactive workshops, captured in D8.3 under T8.3. These include Youth Labs in: Bratislava (Slovakia), Brussels (Belgium), Budapest (Hungary), Chișinău (Moldova), Duisburg (Germany), Florence (Italy), Kyiv (Ukraine), Maastricht (Netherlands), Rome (Italy), Skopje (North Macedonia), Stockholm (Sweden), Tbilisi (Georgia), Tallinn (Estonia), and Warsaw (Poland).
- **Participatory Pilots:** Citizen Assemblies and Hackathons in four EU MS, delivering inclusive and deliberative engagement (D3.1, D3.3).
- **Practitioner Briefings:** WP3 briefings transferring citizen-led insights to national-level stakeholders in four EU countries: France, Germany, Belgium, and Czechia. Contribute to D3.2 under T3.3.
- **Strategic Foresight Cycles:** Participatory exercises in scenario creation and backcasting for enlargement futures. Linked to D7.2, T7.3.
- **Citizen-Facing Campaigns:** Dissemination of findings and engagement through op-eds, public events, and social media. Tracked in T9.3, T9.10, T9.11, T9.12, T9.13.

Scientific Outputs

- **Academic Publications:** CitiSense researchers will systematically transform project findings into academic articles, targeting prominent peer-reviewed journals in political science, European studies, law, and related disciplines. Each work package will contribute to this effort: WP1 will produce a conceptual framework paper (T1.1, D1.1); WP2 will generate a research report based on public opinion and survey experiment data (T2.5, D2.2); WP4 will produce research on the security implications of enlargement (T4.1-T4.3, D4.2); WP5 will deliver economic cost-benefit studies and analyses of regional inclusion and exclusion (T5.1-T5.4, D5.3); WP6 will focus on the societal impacts and social cohesion dimensions (T6.1-T6.2, D6.1); and WP7 will contribute foresight and scenario analysis papers on differentiated integration and future trajectories (T7.1-T7.3, D7.1). All outputs will be open access, in English, and made available through the CitiSense project website, enabling the tracking of citations and public downloads.
- **Methodological reflection paper on citizen participation tools**, based on pilots in WP3 (T3.3, D3.3*)*.
- **Scholarly contributions on differentiated integration and enlargement logics** drawn from WP1 *(*T1.2*, D1.3, D1.4, D1.5) and WP7's scenario analysis and stakeholder feedback (T7.1, T7.2, D7.1, D7.2).
- New Datasets: CitiSense will produce and publicly release several new datasets to maximise scientific impact and reusability. These will include:

  - **Public Opinion Survey Data** collected across selected EU MS (Estonia, Slovenia, the Netherlands, France, Spain) and CCs (Moldova, Ukraine, North Macedonia, Serbia), providing robust, comparative data on citizen attitudes towards enlargement and its impacts *(*T2.2*, T2.3, T2.4*, D2.1*)*.
  - **Survey experiment data** on communication strategies and attitudinal shifts in support for enlargement *(*T2.3, T2.5*, T2.6*, D2.1, D2.2*)*.
  - **Cost-Benefit Analysis Data** on security, economic, and societal dimensions of enlargement, derived from quantitative and qualitative analyses in WPs 4, 5, and 6 *(*T4.1*, T5.1*, T6.2*; D4.1, D5.1, D6.1*)*.
  - **Expert interview data** from WP1 and WP4, capturing strategic and institutional perspectives across countries *(*T1.3*, T4.1*)*.
  - **Participatory Engagement Data** from Youth Labs, Hackathons, and focus groups, capturing citizen input and deliberative outcomes *(*T3.1*, T3.2, T8.3*; D3.1, D3.3, D8.3*)*.
  - **Foresight and Scenario Data** from WP7, supporting future research on EU integration and enlargement *(*T7.2*, T7.3, D7.2*)*.

- **Toolboxes:** The project will develop and disseminate two multidimensional toolboxes, one for policymakers and one for civil society and educational stakeholders, documenting best practices, recommendations, and innovative engagement methods. These will be published as open-access resources and serve as reference materials for both academic and policy communities (T8.1*, T8.2, D8.1, D8.*2*)*.

Expert Forums for Scientific Exchange

- **CitiSense Mid-Term Conference:** A mid-term conference will be organised to foster collaboration among consortium members, present preliminary findings, and engage with relevant stakeholders. This event is part of the major project conferences outlined in T9.7 and reported in D10.3.
- **Brussels Final Conference:** The project will culminate in a high-profile final conference in Brussels, where CitiSense's conclusions, policy recommendations, and toolkits will be presented to policymakers, academics, and civil society representatives. The event will include panel discussions, workshops, and networking sessions to maximise the uptake and impact of project results. Also part of T9.7 and included in D10.3.
- **Regular Consortium and Advisory Board Meetings:** CitiSense will hold regular consortium meetings and engage with an Advisory Board composed of leading experts in EU studies, policy, and civil society. These are coordinated under T9.1 and contribute to strategic oversight reported in D10.3.
- **Engagement with the European Commission and Joint Research Centre (JRC):** The consortium will maintain regular exchanges with the European Commission's JRC and relevant DGs, particularly on strategic foresight, policy analysis, and data sharing. These interactions ensure alignment with EU policy debates and inform foresight outputs developed under T7.3 and coordination efforts under T9.1.

- **Participation in Academic Conferences and Workshops:** CitiSense researchers will actively participate in leading academic conferences (such as APSA, CES, ECPR, EISA, EUSA, ISA, and UACES), presenting project findings and co-organizing panels with other Horizon Europe consortia. These dissemination activities are embedded in T9.14 and reflected in D9.3.
- **Virtual Workshops and Cross-Work-Package Collaboration:** In addition to physical events, CitiSense will organise virtual workshops and cross-work-package working sessions (e.g. M18, M24, M30, M36) to foster methodological innovation and interdisciplinary synthesis. These collaborative forums are part of T1.5, T7.3, T9.1, and T10.3.

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2.3 Summary

Provide a summary of this section by presenting in the canvas below the key elements of your project impact pathway and of the measures to maximise its impact.

KEY ELEMENT OF THE IMPACT SECTION

SPECIFIC NEEDS	EXPECTED RESULTS	D & E & C MEASURES
What are the specific needs that triggered this project?	What do you expect to generate by the end of the project?	What dissemination, exploitation and communication measures will you apply to the results?
EU enlargement policy lacks **citizen-centred tools** to assess and communicate its economic, societal, and security impacts. Existing approaches rely heavily on elite-driven, technocratic models that fail to reflect **public concerns or account for geopolitical volatility, democratic backsliding, and rising Euroscepticism.** At the same time, there is no **integrated framework to engage citizens, educators, and civil society in shaping and validating enlargement strategies** – undermining both policy credibility and democratic resilience.	CitiSense will generate **multidimensional toolboxes** for policymakers, educators, and civil society, including: (1) evidence-based policy recommendations on EU enlargement's security, economic, and societal impacts; (2) tailored communication strategies to promote effective framing and enhance public trust; (3) participatory foresight scenarios for enlargement futures; (4) citizen engagement tools such as Youth Labs, Hackathons, and Citizen Assemblies; (5) open-access datasets on public opinion and cost-benefit analyses; (6) a suite of educational resources and multimedia outputs to strengthen democratic resilience and promote inclusive public debate on enlargement across the EU and CCs.	Exploitation: Use of the policy and education toolboxes by EU institutions, national policymakers, educators, and civil society. Uptake through university modules, youth training seminar, and democratic resilience programmes. Open-access datasets and foresight tools will support future research and policy design on EU enlargement. Dissemination: Academic publications, policy papers, and datasets shared via the project website, peer-reviewed journals, and major conferences (e.g. ECPR, TEPSA Pre-Presidency Conferences). Outputs will be circulated through the EU Enlargement Expert Hub and Civil Society Network, and featured in the 'Europe Next' country report collection, podcasts. Communication: Project website, social media channels, and a recognisable visual identity. Public engagement through Youth Labs, Hackathons, and a participatory art exhibition. Infographics, Instagram Reels, and podcasts will translate findings into accessible formats for citizens, especially youth and underrepresented groups.

TARGET GROUPS

Who will use or further up-take the results of the project? Who will benefit from the results of the project?

Policy community: Policymakers, advisors, and civil servants at EU, national, and regional levels (e.g. DG ENEST, EEAS, national ministries).

Civil society and educators: Organised civil society in EU MS and CCs, participants in the CitiSense Civil Society Network, schoolteachers, university lecturers, and civic educators.

Young professionals and students: Early-career diplomats, civil society actors, and university students engaged through Youth Labs and training seminar.

Citizens: Especially youth and digitally excluded communities reached via public campaigns, citizen assemblies, and participatory events.

Research community: Academics, think tanks, and data users in the fields of EU enlargement, democracy, governance, and strategic foresight.

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OUTCOMES

What change do you expect to see after successful dissemination and exploitation of project results to the target group(s)?

The uptake of the CitiSense toolboxes by EU institutions, national ministries, and educators will lead to **improved policy communication, better-informed enlargement strategies, and enhanced institutional preparedness for future accessions**. Policymakers will use scenario-tested recommendations and foresight tools to support decision-making under conditions of geopolitical uncertainty.

Activities targeting citizens, civil society, teachers, and young professionals will result in **greater public awareness of the security, economic, and social implications of enlargement**, and promote citizen engagement in democratic life across EU and CCs.

The project's **scientific outputs** – including open-access datasets, methodological frameworks, and scholarly publications – will be widely cited and reused in future academic research, policy analysis, and civic education initiatives, helping to shape debates on the EU's future and its role in supporting democratic resilience.

IMPACTS

What are the expected wider scientific, economic and societal effects of the project contributing to the expected impacts outlined in the respective destination in the work programme?

Scientific: CitiSense will advance the state of the art in research on EU enlargement, democratic resilience, and participatory governance by producing new comparative datasets, the *CitiSense* conceptual and analytical framework, and scenario-based foresight tools. It will stimulate future academic research in political science, European studies, sociology, and law, continue the work of previous Horizon projects and foster a lasting community of scholars focused on EU integration.

Societal: CitiSense will enhance citizens' understanding of the stakes of EU enlargement who will become more aware of cost of enlargement vs. non-enlargement. It will promote civic engagement – particularly among youth, educators, and civil society in both EU and CCs. It will foster a more inclusive and participatory political culture, with citizens better equipped to counter misunderstanding of enlargement.

Policy/Economic: CitiSense will contribute to citizen-informed enlargement strategies, supporting a resilient EU capable of managing future accessions in a contested environment. Policymakers will benefit from evidence-based tools and co-created recommendations, improving the legitimacy and responsiveness of EU communication on enlargement. This will strengthen institutional cohesion, reduce the risks of accession, and enhance the EU's capacity to integrate new members effectively.

3. Quality and efficiency of the implementation #@QUA-LIT-QL@# #@WRK-PLA-WP@#

3.1 Work plan and resources

The CitiSense project runs over three years (M1-M36) and is organised into ten interconnected work packages (WPs), ensuring a coherent, efficient, and synergistic approach to achieving its objectives. Implementation is structured into three overlapping phases, each with distinct activities and interlinked WPs designed to maximise cross-fertilisation. **Phase 1: Conceptual Foundation (M1-M12):** Led by WP1, this phase establishes the project's theoretical and analytical framework through systematic literature reviews and comparative historical analysis. It synthesises the historical drivers of EU enlargement and develops the CitiSense analytical framework, which informs all subsequent empirical research. Concurrently: **WP2** designs public opinion surveys and launches pilot data collection in selected EU MS and CCs. Survey instruments are explicitly shaped by WP1's framework to ensure alignment with the project's core research questions. **WP3** prepares protocols for participatory mechanisms (Hackathons, Youth Labs), applying WP1's insights to ensure citizen engagement is directly linked to the project's analytical priorities. **Phase 2: Empirical Research and Analysis (M3-M24):** From **M6**, WP2 **pilots** the survey instruments; **full-scale fieldwork runs M10–M16**, with preliminary pilot outputs at **M6** and main survey results at **M18** feeding the CBA in WPs 4–6. **WP3** implements participatory pilots in four EU states (M10-M28), using early findings from WPs 2, 4, 5, and 6 to tailor engagement activities to emerging citizen concerns. By **M18**, WP7 (Strategic Foresight) advances **scenario development**; **participatory testing workshops** occur in **M29–M36**. Iterative feedback is prioritised, with a mid-term conference in M18, and in M24 reviewing Phase 1 and Phase 2 findings and ensuring coherent alignment for Phase 3 activities. **Phase 3: Synthesis and Dissemination (M22-M36):** From M22, **WP3 synthesises pilot lessons into policy recommendations, and WP7** expands foresight activities, developing alternative futures scenarios through participatory workshops that synthesise finalised data from WPs 4-6 and insights from WPs 2 and 3. **WP1** concludes its work by integrating cross-WP findings into academic publications and the final project report, directly supporting **WP8** and **WP9**. **WP8** co-creates a multidimensional toolbox, translating empirical findings, foresight outputs, and participatory results from WPs 1-7 into policy manuals and educational resources for stakeholders. Throughout the project, methodologies, outputs, and recommendations are systematically validated through the CitiSense Civil Society Network and Expert Hub (from M1) and Youth Labs (from M12). **WP9** leads targeted dissemination, leveraging outputs from all WPs to maximise impact across policy, civil society, and research audiences.
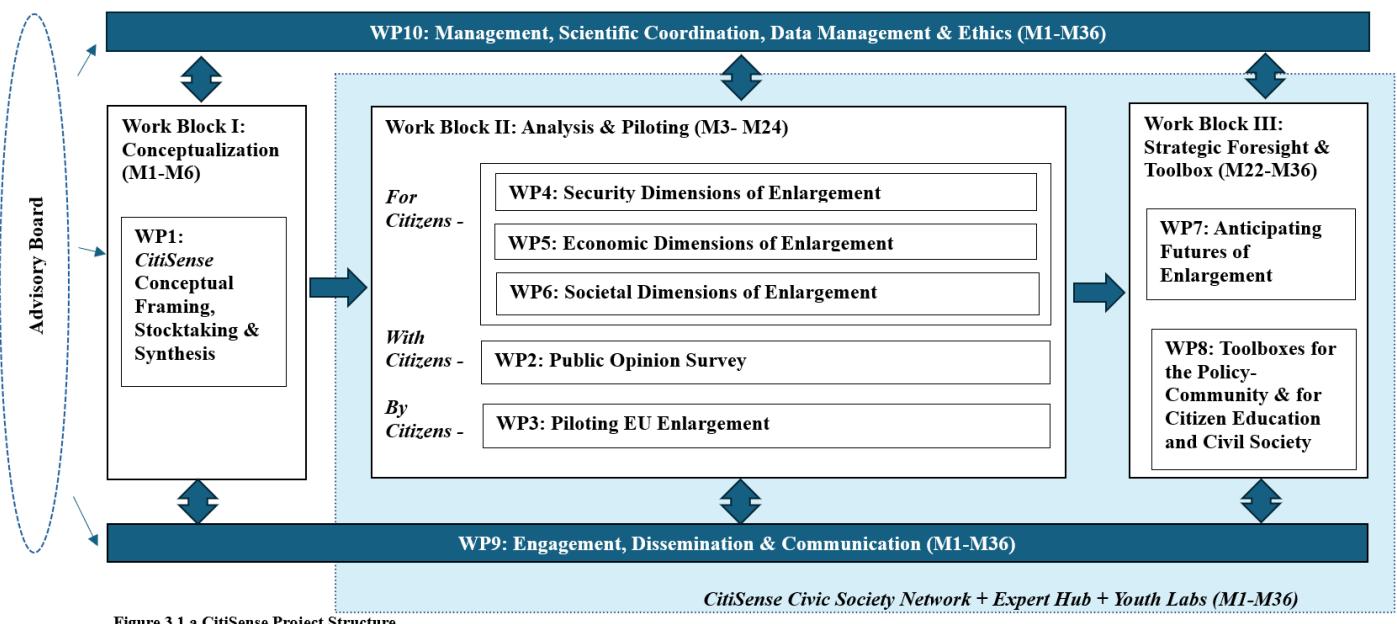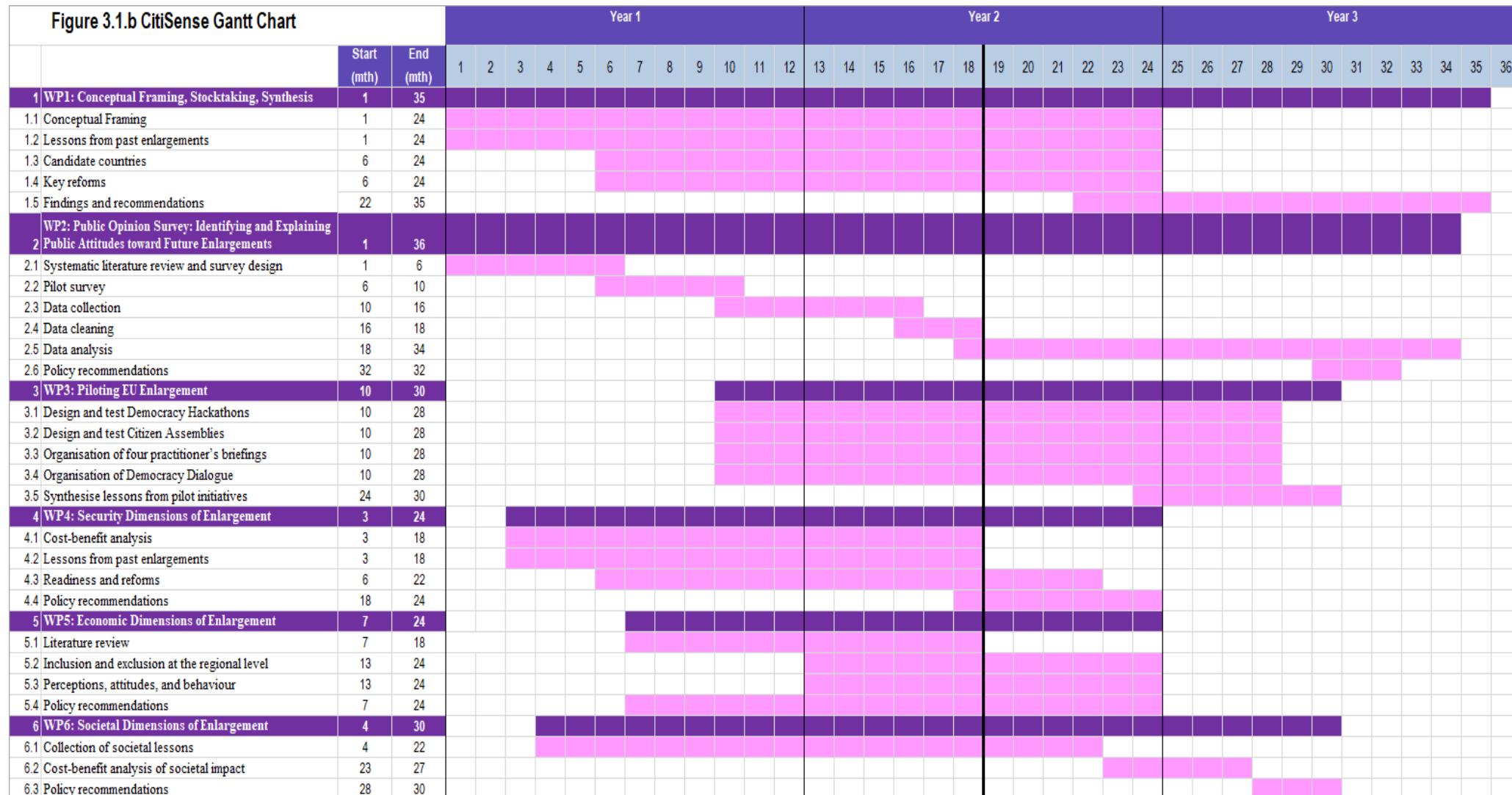
Figure 3.1.a CitiSense Project Structure

Figure 3.1.b CitiSense Gantt Chart

	Task	Start (mth)	End (mth)
1	WP1: Conceptual Framing, Stocktaking, Synthesis	1	35
1.1	Conceptual Framing	1	24
1.2	Lessons from past enlargements	1	24
1.3	Candidate countries	6	24
1.4	Key reforms	6	24
1.5	Findings and recommendations	22	35
2	WP2: Public Opinion Survey: Identifying and Explaining Public Attitudes toward Future Enlargements	1	36
2.1	Systematic literature review and survey design	1	6
2.2	Pilot survey	6	10
2.3	Data collection	10	16
2.4	Data cleaning	16	18
2.5	Data analysis	18	34
2.6	Policy recommendations	32	32
3	WP3: Piloting EU Enlargement	10	30
3.1	Design and test Democracy Hackathons	10	28
3.2	Design and test Citizen Assemblies	10	28
3.3	Organisation of four practitioner's briefings	10	28
3.4	Organisation of Democracy Dialogue	10	28
3.5	Synthesise lessons from pilot initiatives	24	30
4	WP4: Security Dimensions of Enlargement	3	24
4.1	Cost-benefit analysis	3	18
4.2	Lessons from past enlargements	3	18
4.3	Readiness and reforms	6	22
4.4	Policy recommendations	18	24
5	WP5: Economic Dimensions of Enlargement	7	24
5.1	Literature review	7	18
5.2	Inclusion and exclusion at the regional level	13	24
5.3	Perceptions, attitudes, and behaviour	13	24
5.4	Policy recommendations	7	24
6	WP6: Societal Dimensions of Enlargement	4	30
6.1	Collection of societal lessons	4	22
6.2	Cost-benefit analysis of societal impact	23	27
6.3	Policy recommendations	28	30

Columns are grouped as Year 1 (months 1–12), Year 2 (months 13–24), and Year 3 (months 25–36).

		Start (mth)	End (mth)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
7	**WP7: Anticipating Futures of Enlargement**	**1**	**36**																																				
7.1	Evaluate existing concepts of EU Enlargement	1	12																																				
7.2	Alternative futures scenarios	6	28																																				
7.3	Participatory testing of alternative futures	29	36																																				
8	**WP 8: Toolboxes for Policy-Community and Education**	**1**	**33**																																				
8.1	Toolbox for policymakers	22	32																																				
8.2	Toolbox for civil society and education	22	32																																				
8.3	Youth Labs	12	32																																				
8.4	National views	13	33																																				
8.5	Civil Society Network	1	32																																				
9	**WP9: Communication, Dissemination, and Exploitation**	**1**	**36**																																				
9.1	External communication	1	36																																				
9.2	EU Enlargement Expert Hub	1	36																																				
9.3	Public panel discussions	18	36																																				
9.4	Targeted training activities	18	36																																				
9.5	Policy briefs	1	36																																				
9.6	National briefings	1	36																																				
9.7	Major project conferences	16	36																																				
9.8	Infographics and animations	1	36																																				
9.9	Podcasts	1	18																																				
9.10	Traditional media	1	36																																				
9.11	Social media survey	1	4																																				
9.12	Video engagement	1	18																																				
9.13	Art exhibition	12	32																																				
9.14	Dissemination	1	36																																				
10	**WP 10: Management and Steering**	**1**	**36**																																				
10.1	Financial and administrative management	1	36																																				
10.2	Data management	1	36																																				
10.3	Coordination	1	36																																				
10.4	Scientific Lead	1	36																																				
10.5	Steering Committee	1	36																																				
10.6	Advisory Committee	1	36																																				

3.2   Capacity of participants and consortium as a whole

Strategic Fit and Excellence. CitiSense positions itself at the intersection of citizen-centred policy innovation, democratic resilience, and EU strategic foresight. At a time when EU enlargement has re-emerged as core EU policy, the CitiSense analytical framework addresses a critical knowledge and legitimacy gap: how to design an enlargement process that is socially embedded, democratically resilient, and strategically informed. To that end, CitiSense brings together a purpose-built consortium of leading academic institutions, policy think tanks, and civil society actors from across Europe and in advanced candidate states. The partners are united by their interdisciplinary expertise in European Union studies, enlargement, democracy and governance, foreign policy, strategic foresight, and public opinion analysis. In line with Horizon Europe objectives, the consortium integrates cutting-edge research in the social sciences and humanities with robust open science practices, inclusive co-creation methodologies, and policy-oriented dissemination. The consortium members share a commitment to strengthening public understanding, societal resilience, and institutional adaptation in the context of future EU enlargement. Together, and through the strength of the institutions they collaborate with, they guarantee the scientific excellence of CitiSense and the large-scale impact of the project.
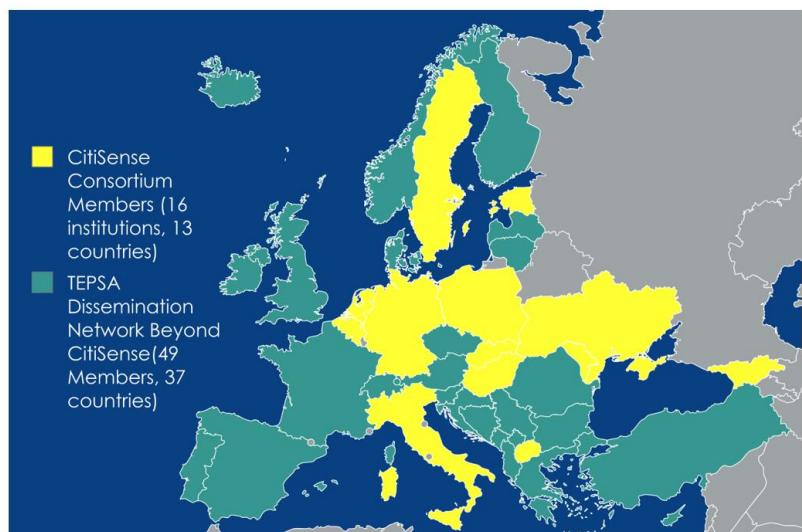

Figure 3.2: CitiSense Consortium Partners and Dissemination Capacity

Consortium Composition and Diversity. The CitiSense consortium includes 16 institutions from 13 countries, representing all regions of the EU (North, South, East, West), as well as CCs (Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, North Macedonia). The partner located in North Macedonia (IDSCS) comprises a network extending to all Western Balkan countries – THINK-BALKANS, while TEPSA is a trans-European think tank network present in all EU member-states, amplifying the impact of the CitiSense Consortium at the local level.

This purposeful geographic spread enables genuine pan-European and candidate-level insights into the impacts, real and perceived, of enlargement. The institutional mix includes world-class universities with a wide reach (e.g. EUI, Maastricht University, Stockholm University), high impact think tanks (e.g. IAI, IEP, ICDS), policy networks (e.g. TEPSA), and civil society partners with access to grassroots constituencies (e.g. EPD, WMD, IDSCS). This diverse composition ensures that CitiSense captures elite, expert, and citizen-level perspectives and translates them into tools for policy, education, and civic engagement. The consortium reflects gender, career-stage, and regional balance and includes researchers with experience in democratic resilience, public participation, minority rights, connectivity, and societal vulnerabilities.

Institutional leadership and capacity. CitiSense is anchored at the European University Institute's Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (EUI-RSC) and Maastricht University (UM). The project is coordinated at EUI-RSC by **Prof. Erik Jones**, Director of the Centre and a leading scholar of European political economy with extensive network leadership experience (formerly Professor and Director of European & Eurasian Studies at Johns Hopkins SAIS; Non-resident Scholar at Carnegie Europe). The Robert Schuman Centre hosts numerous **ERC and Horizon Europe projects** across social sciences, giving Jones direct oversight of Horizon-funded consortia and proven capacity to manage multi-partner projects. This ensures high-level strategic oversight, access to a panEuropean policy community, and the institutional resources to guarantee successful delivery. Jones' research expertise on European integration, economic governance, and crisis management directly underpins CitiSense's focus on the political economy of enlargement and its security–economic–societal impacts. **Dr. Veronica Anghel** (EUI co-coordinator) conducts research that spans EU integration, enlargement, security and democratisation. Anghel co-leads the **EU Enlargement Hub** at the EUI, a cooperative research and capacity-building initiative with the CEU Democracy Institute and the Kyiv School of Economics, directly aligned with CitiSense's aims and stakeholder map. In preparation for this project, Anghel also co-edited a 2025 *Journal of European Public Policy* Special Issue on EU reform and enlargement and launched the ECPR The Loop blog series on enlargement, shaping both scholarly and

public-facing agendas that underpin CitiSense's objectives. **Prof. Giselle Bosse** (UM) serves as Scientific Lead. She holds a Personal Chair in EU External Democracy Support and Jean Monnet Chair in EU International Relations. Bosse directed the Centre for European Research in Maastricht (CERiM) (2019–2025), served as Vice Dean of Education at Maastricht's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and co-coordinates the EmergEU Jean Monnet Centre. She has been co-applicant on Horizon projects (InvigoratEU, EMBRACE), and PI on major Dutch Research Council (NWO) grants (VENI, ASPASIA, Hestia), securing over €2,2 million in competitive funding. In all these projects, she has designed and led co-creation and participatory research, organised stakeholder engagement with local actors, civil society and policymakers, providing a solid foundation for implementing CitiSense's co-creation approach. Her publication record includes more than 50 peer-reviewed outputs (e.g. *Journal of Common Market Studies, Democratisation, Geopolitics*), alongside multiple edited volumes and special issues on EU democracy support and the Eastern Neighbourhood. She is Associate Fellow at **Carnegie Europe's European Democracy Hub** and the **Martens Centre** in Brussels, regular advisor to the European Parliament and Dutch government, and frequent commentator in European and international media on EU foreign policy, democracy, and enlargement. Together with Prof. Jones, Dr. Anghel and Prof. Frank Schimmelfennig (EUI & ETH Zurich), Bosse is leading WP1 on Conceptual Framing, Stocktaking, Synthesis.

The CitiSense consortium ensures that each Work Package is led by internationally recognised experts with the required methodological, thematic, and regional expertise. **WP2 (Public Opinion Survey)** is led by **Dr. Karina Shyrokykh, Associate Professor at Stockholm University**, a specialist in quantitative methods and statistical analysis, who builds on her Horizon EMBRACE experience to ensure continuity and robust methodology. She is joined by **Dr. Tatiana Cojocari, Senior Researcher atWMD**, one of the most experienced survey providers in Moldova and Eastern Europe, adding expertise in counter-disinformation. **WP3 (Piloting EU Enlargement)** is led by **Elene Panchulidze, Research Coordinator at the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD)**, with over a decade of experience on EU integration, civil society, and democratisation. EPD brings expertise from EU-funded initiatives such as YouthDecide2040, Nest4Dem, INSPIRED Moldova, and WYDE Civic Engagement. She is supported by **Prof. Richard Youngs, Senior Fellow at Carnegie Europe**, internationally recognised for his scholarship on EU foreign policy and democracy. **WP4 (Security Dimensions of Enlargement)** is co-led by **Dr. Kristi Raik, Director of ICDS**, an authority on European security and strategic competition, and **Prof. David Aprasidze, Board Member of GIP**, a specialist in security and enlargement who has directed EU-supported civil society initiatives in Georgia. **WP5 (Economic Dimensions of Enlargement)** is co-led by **Prof. László Bruszt, Director at the CEU Democracy Institute**, a leading scholar of economic integration and enlargement and contributor to the EUI Enlargement Hub, and **Prof. Ben Stanley of USWPS University**, a specialist in voting behaviour, political parties, and democratic backsliding who has coordinated major projects including *Measuring Populism* (2019–2020), *DIASPOlitic* (Norwegian Research Council), and *EUROPA/A2–Values Under Pressure* (2019–2020). **WP6 (Societal Dimensions of Enlargement)** is co-led by **Prof. Lucia Mokrá, Dean of the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences at Comenius University in Bratislava**, an expert on EU citizenship and fundamental rights, and **Dr. Nicoletta Pirozzi, Head of IAI's ''EU, Politics and Institutions'' Programme**, with expertise in EU governance and crisis management and contributions to InvigoratEU and RECLAIM. **WP7 (Anticipating Futures of Enlargement)** is co-led by **Prof. Funda Tekin, Director at IEP (Germany)**, with extensive experience on rule of law, enlargement, and foresight (RESILIO, InvigoratEU), and **Prof. Gaby Umbach, EUI**, an expert in EU integration and Europeanisation, founder of the Berlin Futures group, and experienced in applying foresight to EU policy. **WP8 (Toolboxes for the Policy-Community and for Citizen Education and Civil Society)** is co-led by **Prof. Michael Kaeding, University of Duisburg-Essen.** He has widely published on EU governance, compliance, and enlargement, and is an experienced coordinator of EU projects (ActEU, InvigoratEU) with strong civil society and education networks. He is joined by **Elena Ventura (**UM**)** with practical experience implementing youth labs and developing toolkits in InvigoratEU. UDE, UM, EUI and CUB provide structured training environments and curricula to embed outputs into higher education and professional development, while UM also embeds outputs into secondary education through its international teacher training academies, ensuring long-term educational impact at both higher and secondary levels. **WP9 (Communication and Dissemination)** is led by **TEPSA**, a network of 49 institutes in 37 countries with unparalleled reach to policymakers, CSOs, and citizens. Under the leadership of **Executive Director Mariam Khotenashvili**, TEPSA has advanced citizen participation in enlargement debates, youth engagement (#EngagEU, PADEMIA), and enlargement analysis (TEPSA Expert Briefs, Ukraine Update), and has repeatedly led communication WPs in Horizon projects (SEnECA, InDivEU, DiCE, FEUTURE, ActEU, InvigoratEU).

WP & Title	Core Team & Institution(s)	Key Expertise & Relevant Experience
WP1 – Conceptual Framing, Stocktaking, Synthesis	Prof. Frank Schimmelfennig (EUI); Prof Erik Jones (EUI); Prof Veronica Anghel (EUI); Prof. Dr. Giselle Bosse (UM)	Assessment of citizens participations; EU enlargement hub; continuity of InDivEU and DICE;
WP2 – Public Opinion Survey	Dr. Karina Shyrokykh (SU) Tatiana Cojocari (WMD)	Quantitative methods; continuity from EMBRACE project. Extensive survey expertise in Moldova & Eastern Europe; countering disinformation.
WP3 – Piloting EU Enlargement	Elene Panchulidze (EPD) Prof. Dr. Richard Youngs (Carnegie Europe)	EU integration, civil society (YouthDecide2040, INSPIRED Moldova). EU foreign policy & democracy, widely published (Macmillan 2021, CUP 2017).
WP4 – Security Dimensions of Enlargement	Dr. Kristi Raik (ICDS) Dr. David Aprasidze (GIP)	European security; Baltic & Finnish foreign policy. Security & enlargement; EU-supported initiatives on civil society in Georgia.
WP5 – Economic Dimensions of Enlargement	Prof. Dr. László Bruszt (CEU) Dr. Ben Stanley (USWPS)	Enlargement & economic integration of peripheries; Enlargement Hub contributor. Quantitative analysis of populism, parties, backsliding; PI of DIASPOlitic, Measuring Populism.
WP6 – Societal Dimensions of Enlargement	Prof. Dr. Lucia Mokrá (CUB) Dr. Nicoletta Pirozzi (IAI)	EU citizenship, fundamental rights, non-discrimination; TEPSA Board. EU governance, crisis management; InvigoratEU, RECLAIM.
WP7 – Anticipating Futures of Enlargement	Prof. Dr. Funda Tekin (IEP) Prof. Dr. Gaby Umbach (EUI)	Rule of law resilience (RESILIO); EU enlargement foresight (InvigoratEU). EU integration & Europeanisation; foresight (Berlin Futures group).
WP8 – Toolboxes for Policy & Civil Society	Prof. Dr. Michael Kaeding (UDE) Prof. Dr. Giselle Bosse (UM) Elena Ventura (UM)	EU governance, compliance, enlargement; PI of ActEU, InvigoratEU; ex-TEPSA Chair. EU politics & governance; toolkit & youth lab implementation in InvigoratEU.
WP9 – Communication & Dissemination	Mariam Khotenashvili (TEPSA)	Pan-European network (49 institutes, 37 countries); citizen participation (#EngagEU, PADEMIA). Strong track record in Horizon WP9 leadership (SEnECA, DiCE, ActEU, InvigoratEU).

Think tanks and universities from the EU candidate states, including Ilia State University (Georgia), Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (Ukraine), WatchDog.MD (Moldova), and IDSCS (North Macedonia), contribute context-sensitive expertise, local networks, and access to critical data. CitiSense ensures the continuity of the work of Ukrainian colleagues Roman Petrov and Oksana Holovko-Havrysheva in critical areas for Ukraine's EU path they have developed in EU funded projects such as Youth for Europe / YOUROPE, REUNIR, and SHAPEDEM-EU. Zoran Nechev (IDSCS) specialises in relations between the European Union and the Western Balkans and has ample experience in running research and policy networks, including in EU funded projects (e.g., THINK BALKANS, EU IDEA). This collective design ensures coherent coverage of all thematic areas: conceptual framing, citizen engagement, public attitudes, geopolitical and institutional risks, and policy toolkits.

Access to Infrastructure and Data. All partners have the institutional capacity and access to critical infrastructures needed to carry out the proposed research and engagement activities. This includes access to nationally representative survey panels (e.g. SU, USWPS), digital and foresight platforms (e.g. EUI, TEPSA), in-house policy labs (e.g. IAI, IEP), and established networks for citizen and youth engagement (e.g. EPD, IDSCS). CitiSense will also build on several partners' proprietary tools and data resources developed in prior Horizon projects such as the InvigoratEU Civic Society Network and Youth Labs. The EUI Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (RSCAS) and TEPSA provide technical and administrative support structures; the RSCAS offers top management and ethics oversight with continuous support provided by a professional project manager. CitiSense partners bring strong expertise in digital participation and communication: WMD provides advanced disinformation monitoring tools and

TEPSA and EPD run digital platforms for citizen and youth engagement, while the EUI and IEP provide digital foresight platforms. All CitiSense contributors are committed to Open Access and FAIR data principles which will guide the project's research workflows and outputs.

Track Record and Past Collaboration. The consortium draws on a rich history of collaboration across Horizon Europe, H2020, Erasmus+, and Jean Monnet projects. Partners have jointly participated in InvigoratEU, EMBRACE, RECLAIM, EU IDEA, InDivEU, JOINT, SHAPEDEM-EU, and DiCE, among others. CitiSense builds on their proven ability to co-produce high-quality research, manage large-scale projects, and translate findings into actionable policy and societal impact. Several key figures in the consortium – such as Giselle Bosse (MU), Lucia Mokrá (CUB), Funda Tekin (IEP), Michael Kaeding (UDE), Gaby Umbach (EUI), Frank Schimmelfennig (ETHZ and EUI), Laszlo Bruszt (CEU), Kristi Raik (ICDS), Mariam Khotenashvili (TEPSA), Nicoletta Pirozzi (IAI), Kristi Raik (ICDS) – have held coordination or work package leadership roles in high-profile Horizon Europe consortia. Others, like Richard Youngs (Carnegie Europe and UM), Karina Shyrokykh (SU), and Matteo Bonomi (IAI), are recognised contributors to democratic resilience research. The EUI project coordinators, Veronica Anghel and Erik Jones, have a proven track record of successful continuous collaboration. The repeated collaboration of CitiSense contributors across different project constellations ensures deep mutual understanding and operational synergy.

Commitment to Gender Equality, Open Science, and Inclusivity. CitiSense embeds gender equality, open science, and inclusivity across its design and delivery. The consortium comprises a strong representation of female researchers, including Work Package leads and coordinators (e.g. Anghel, Bosse, Tekin, Khotenashvili, Shyrokykh, Panchulidze, Raik, Mokrá, Umbach), and draws on partners with gender expertise in policy and societal transformation (e.g. EPD, CUB, IEP). Open science principles are built into the project's data management, publication, and co-creation strategies, including multilingual access and FAIR data practices. Participatory components explicitly target youth, underrepresented groups, and civil society in both MS and CCs, ensuring that the project is not only about citizens, but also with and by them.

Together, the CitiSense consortium and its already confirmed **Advisory Board** constitute a strategically assembled, interdisciplinary, and impact-oriented team, fully equipped to deliver on the project's ambitious objectives. It combines academic rigor with civic engagement, EU-wide reach with neighbourhood sensitivity, and deep research experience with an openness to innovation and co-creation.

Advisory Board Member	Benefits for CitiSense
Sara **Bartoli**	As a Young European ambassador highly involved in shaping European affairs, Bartoli provides a unique youth perspective and feedback to CitiSense, in line with the project emphasis on amplifying youth's involvement throughout the enlargement project. Her participation benefits particularly the development of WP8 toolkit on education as well as the implementation of youth labs.
Vahe **Gabrielya**	Former Ambassador of Armenia to the UK and former Director of the Diplomatic School of Armenia, Gabrielya provides in-depth knowledge and practical experience on the EU's Eastern Partnership policies and context.
Andrea **Gawrich**	Prof. Dr. Andreas Garwich is the Coordinator of the HE SHAPEDEM-EU consortium, call 'HORIZON-CL2-2021-DEMOCRACY-01-04: Democratic politics in the EU's neighbourhood', 10/2022- 09/2025. Her participation ensures sustainability of previous Horizon Europe project's results and provides the opportunity to identify opportunities for joint activities and cooperation.
Sonja **Grimm**	Prof. Dr. Sonja Grimm is the Scientific Lead and Co-Coordinator of the HE EMBRACE consortium, call 'HORIZON-CL2-2021-DEMOCRACY-01-04: Democratic politics in the EU's neighbourhood', 10/2022-09/2025. Her participation ensures sustainability of previous Horizon Europe project's results and provides the opportunity to identify opportunities for joint activities and cooperation.
Maurice **de Heus**	Maurice de Heus is a journalist at L1 (Dutch regional TV and radio channel) working extensively on the European Union and its enlargement strategies. His role on the board is key in contributing expertise on communication strategies and amplifying CitiSense's outputs to local communities.

Sónia **Pereira de Figueiredo**	Sónia Pereira de Figueiredo is a public information specialist at the European Commission advising on sensitive communication to EU citizens for crisis/policy matters, disinformation, and other foreign policy issues. Her skillset in citizens communication, specifically tailored to the European Commission, will support CitiSense in fostering public understanding of and support for enlargement.
Dirk **Schuebel**	Dirk Schuebel is the Head of Division for Relations with the Russian Federation at the European External Action Service. He previously served as Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Moldova (2009-2013) and Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Belarus (2019-2022). Schuebel's previous experience and expertise in Eastern Partnership countries will support WPs 4-6.
Virginijus **Sinkevicius**	Virginijus Sinkevicius is a Member of the European Parliament and former European Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries in the European Commission. Sinkevičius provides strategic insight from both the Commission and Parliament, enabling CitiSense to engage more effectively with key EU decision-makers.

Table 3.1a: List of work packages

WP No	Work Package Title	Lead Number	Lead Short Name	Person Months	Start Month	End Month
1	Conceptual Framing, Stocktaking, Synthesis	2	UM	36.9	1	35
2	Public Opinion Survey: Identifying and Explaining Public Attitudes toward Future Enlargements	9	SU	34	3	34
3	Piloting EU Enlargement: Driven by Citizens, Designed with and for Citizens	8	EPD	19.5	10	30
4	Security Dimensions of Enlargement	3	ICDS	30	3	24
5	Economic Dimensions of Enlargement	12	USWPS	30	7	24
6	Societal Dimensions of Enlargement	11	CUB	39.5	4	30
7	Anticipating Futures of Enlargement	1	EUI	31	1	36
8	Toolboxes for the Policy-Community and for Citizen Education and Civil Society	6	UDE	45.5	1	33
9	Communication, Dissemination, and Exploitation	10	TEPSA	47.5	1	36
10	Management and Steering	1	EUI	27	1	36

Table 3.1b: Work package description

Number	1
Title	**Conceptual Framing, Stocktaking, Synthesis**
Objectives	

O1.1 Develop the CitiSense analytical framework for a citizen-centred study of enlargement by, for, and with citizens.
O1.2. Compare previous EU enlargement waves to generate evidence-based insights for adaptive enlargement strategies and citizens' support.
O1.3 Compare existing and potential CCs using insights and leveraging lessons from past enlargements for the development of future EU policies.
O1.4 Synthesise consortium findings on enlargement 'by, for, and with' citizens and develop actionable policy recommendations.

Description of Work

T1.1 Conceptual framing (Lead: UM, EUI; partners: ISU, UKMA, WMD, IDSCS; M1-M24)
Design and elaborate the CitiSense analytical framework based on the logics of enlargement 'for, with and by' citizens, defining analytical categories and benchmarks to guide the project's research activities and ensure internal coherence across all WPs. Review pre-existing conceptual and methodological tools for assessing citizen

perceptions of the enlargement process and for measuring the societal costs and benefits of enlargement versus non-enlargement, as well as tools for citizen engagement developed in previous/ ongoing Horizon projects (e.g. EMBRACE, InvigoratEU, SHAPEDEM, EUIDEA, EU3D, InDivEU or DICE) to inform analytical frameworks of WPs 2-7. Validate actionable policy recommendations by actively involving the CitiSense Civil Society Network and EU Enlargement Expert Hub. Leads to D1.1.

T1.2 Lessons from past enlargements (Lead: EUI, UM; partners: ISU, UKMA, WMD, IDSCS; M1-M24)
Conduct comparative historical research on previous enlargement waves using EU and national archives, public opinion databases already in use, citizen-focused cost/benefit analysis (e.g. economic modelling of wage/employment trends pre/post-accession, social cohesion indicators) and motivation mapping comparing geopolitical, economic, and security drivers. Conceptualise and design new survey and survey experiments on current motivations of EU citizens and CCs members (with WP2 analyse and map different models of staged accession and flexible integration in past and ongoing enlargements (desk research). Leads to D1.2.

T1.3 Candidate countries (Lead: UM, EUI; partners: ISU, UKMA, WMD, IDSCS; M6-M24)
Conduct research with partners from Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, and the WB6 countries to prepare a comparative analysis on the history, political, social and economic situation in (potential) CCs, motivations of these countries to join the EU, costs and benefits of enlargement vs non-enlargement for these countries, obstacles/drivers of reforms (geopolitical & domestic factors, including enlargement fatigue and euroscepticism, role of the EU), views on differentiated enlargement, conditionality & transition periods (drawing on desk research, elite semi-structured interviews, survey data), prepare policy recommendations on how the EU can support the reform process in these countries and/or learn from their existing reforms, and how the EU can better communicate enlargement in (potential) CCs. Leads to D1.3.

T1.4. Key reforms (Lead: UM; partners: EUI: ISU; UKMA; WMD; IDSCS; M6-M24)
Conduct joint research with partners from Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, and the WB6 on a comparative analysis on how the EU can support the reform process of CCs and/or learn from their existing reforms regarding Chapter 10 (Information Society and Media), Chapter 23 (Judiciary and Fundamental Rights), Chapter 24 (Justice Freedom and Security) and Chapter 34 (Institutions) (drawing on desk research and semi-structured interviews), prepare policy recommendations for a flexible and adaptive approach to enlargement, taking into account geopolitical/ security challenges facing CCs. Leads to D1.4.

T1.5 Findings and recommendations (Lead: UM, EUI; M22-M35)
Integrate research findings from all WPs into a comprehensive synthesis report. This includes analyzing citizen-based challenges to democratisation, rule of law, and EU value alignment in CCs, and translating insights into actionable recommendations for EU and national public authorities. Validate actionable policy recommendations by actively involving the CitiSense Civil Society Network and EU Enlargement Expert Hub. Leads to D1.5.

Number	2
Title	**Public Opinion Survey: Identifying and Explaining Public Attitudes toward Future Enlargements**
Objectives	

O2.1 Generate theoretical expectations on the predictors of public support for enlargement.
O2.2 Collect data in select EU MS and neighbouring countries.
O2.3 Test theoretical expectations, generating scholarly insights and policy recommendations.

Description of Work

T2.1 Systematic literature review and survey design (Lead: SU, partners: EUI, WMD; M1-M6)
Theory development will be conducted in close collaboration with WP1, including a review of previous Horizon project findings, ensuring that survey questions help address key research areas of the project (cost-benefit analysis, as well as security, economic, societal, and the rule of law implications of enlargement). The theoretical framework will address how citizens' attitudes about past enlargement affect their opinion on future enlargement, as such, and in the case of individual MS and accession countries.

T2.2 Pilot survey (Lead: SU, partner: all; M6- M10)
Conduct a pilot survey in select countries to refine questions and translations to national languages and identify potential issues.

T2.3 Data collection (Lead: SU; M10- M16)
Collect individual-level data (a representative sample of the surveyed counties' populations) using survey and survey experiment methodology. The data collection process will be conducted by employing independent research organisations specializing in opinion polls to administer online surveys, which will be combined in some

countries with telephone interviews to improve the representability of the samples (especially, in Eastern Europe). Using sociological companies, we will administer surveys in multiple languages.

T2.4 Data cleaning (Lead: SU; M16- M18)

Perform data cleaning using statistical software (e.g., Stata, R) to prepare for analysis. Leads to D2.1.

T2.5 Data analysis (Lead: SU; partners: EUI, UM, WMD; M18- M34)

Using the data collected, conduct a statistical analysis identifying significant associations between individuals' beliefs and their support for enlargement and assessing how adoption of various communicative strategies affects individuals' support for enlargement. Leads to D2.2.

T2.6 Policy recommendations (Lead: SU, WMD; partner: UM, EUI; M28-M30)

Based on the data collected and statistical analysis, generate policy-relevant recommendations for practitioners on how to effectively communicate enlargement to diverse publics and engage citizens in the process. Validate actionable policy recommendations by actively involving the CitiSense Civil Society Network and Expert Hub. Leads to D2.3.

Number	3
Title	**Piloting EU Enlargement: Driven by Citizens, Designed with and for Citizens**
Objectives	

O3.1 Design and test innovative digital tools to foster broader citizen participation, especially among younger people, in the EU enlargement process, ensuring informed, transparent, and inclusive discussions.

O3.2 Increase awareness among citizens in EU MS and CCs about the social, economic, and political consequences of EU enlargement and non-enlargement, to foster citizens' acceptance and strengthen the credibility of the enlargement process.

O3.3 Demonstrate the use of innovative and digital tools among EU and MS authorities to promote educational opportunities on enlargement through targeted briefings, democracy dialogues, and manuals on interactive participation tools.

O3.4 Assess the effectiveness of innovative citizen participation tools and build synergies with other EU programs fostering people to people exchanges across the EU MS and CCs.

Description of Work

T3.1 Design and test Democracy Hackathons (Lead: EPD; M10-M28)

Organise 18 hours of fully online discussion in Belgium and France facilitated by a dedicated digital platform, where randomly selected citizens, especially youth are tasked with developing a solution to an identified key challenge identified by WP2 related to social, economic, and political consequence of EU enlargement. The hackathon will include a series of facilitated discussions and involve digital tools including Mentimeter and Kahoot! foster development of solution to the set problem. Both hackathons will be executed by M18, in line with Milestone 3. Leads to D3.1.

T3.2 Design and test Citizen Assemblies (Lead: EPD; M10-M28)

Design a structured democratic process involving 20 citizens in Germany and the Czech Republic selected through sortition to learn about, deliberate on, and make recommendations regarding specific challenges related to EU enlargement, including the use of digital tools (Mentimeter, Kahoot!). Each assembly will focus on one of the most pressing issues identified through public opinion surveys conducted by WP2. To ensure a strong educational component, the CitiSense consortium will engage with and invite representatives from Erasmus+, the European Solidarity Corps, Interreg, or the Civil Society Facility. Depending on the topic of discussion, these representatives, together with CitiSense experts, will provide a topic-specific presentation to kick-start the assembly to ensure informed and evidence-based deliberation. Both assemblies will be executed by M18, in line with Milestone 3. Leads to D3.1.

T3.3 Organisation of four practitioner's briefings (Lead: EPD; M10-M28)

To ensure that the authorities in EU and MS have better understanding of citizen participation tools, organise briefings with officials responsible for the enlargement portfolio in France, Germany, Belgium and Czechia to inform of the outcomes, lessons learned, and recommendations generated by citizens, as well as explain innovative approaches and methodologies for engaging with citizens. Validate actionable policy recommendations by actively involving the CitiSense Civil Society Network and EU Enlargement Expert Hub. Leads to D3.2.

T3.4 Organisation of Democracy Dialogue (Lead: EPD; M10-M28)

Organise an off-the-record discussion in Brussels, gathering 30 stakeholders, including a diverse mix of policymakers, civil society representatives, journalists, and researchers. CitiSense consortium members from Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, and the Western Balkans share insights on citizen participation tools used in CCs in

the context of EU enlargement. An EPD representative will share insights from the pilot to ensure mutual learning, experience-sharing and effective communication of recommendations to policymakers. Leads to D3.2.

T3.5 Synthesise lessons from CitiSense pilot initiatives (Lead: EPD; M24-M30)

Assess the effectiveness of various citizen participation tools used in France, Germany, Belgium, and Czechia, along with insights from CCs, focusing on key findings and challenges related to citizen participation in the EU enlargement process, to develop policy recommendations for public authorities. Leads to D3.3.

Number	4
Title	**Security Dimensions of Enlargement**
Objectives	

O4.1 Analyse the costs and benefits of enlargement vs non-enlargement with respect to the security dimension for the EU, MS, and CCs.

O4.2 Assess and draw thematic lessons from previous EU enlargements (with specific focus on the cases of Estonia and Slovakia), with implications for the security dimension.

O4.3 Evaluate the EU's institutional and policy readiness for further enlargement and its ability to address citizens' concerns related to the impact of enlargement on security.

O4.4 Synthesise findings into actionable, adaptive policy recommendations for a flexible and adaptive approach to enlargement, responsive to geopolitical dynamics and regional challenges, and responsive to regional and national differences.

Description of Work

T4.1 Cost-benefit analysis (Lead: ICDS; Partners: EUI, UM, IAI, ISU, UKMA, IDSCS; M3-M18)

Analyse security-related aspects of current enlargement and non-enlargement scenarios using a qualitative approach including recommendations on how to effectively communicate these costs and benefits (narratives), drawing on the case studies of Georgia, North Macedonia, Ukraine; and Estonia and France. Case selection is based on the following criteria: CCs facing hard security challenge (Ukraine), hybrid security challenge (Georgia), and no direct security challenge (North Macedonia); and EU MS – one representing a Western, older, and influential member (France), and one representing an Eastern, newer, and relatively small member (Estonia). This research involves reviewing policy reports and assessments, and conducting expert interviews, to identify security-related advantages/benefits and disadvantages/challenges. Compare these findings with public attitudes (see WP2) to inform recommendations on effective communication of security narratives in different national contexts, thereby supporting the 'for citizens' logic of CitiSense. Leads to D4.1.

T4.2 Lessons from past enlargements (Lead: ISU, Partners: ICDS, EUI, UM, IAI; M3-M18)

Analyse the security-related drivers of past enlargements and identify lessons learned, with a focus on citizens' security concerns, by conducting a comparative analysis of accession treaty terms and conditions (particularly those related to security), as well as security concerns of citizens in the context of enlargement, identifying relevant parallels with current CCs. This analysis highlights the cases of Estonia and Slovakia and includes a thorough literature review of academic publications and policy reports, and an investigation into the role of security in shaping public opinion on enlargement – examining how security concerns influenced citizen attitudes. The analysis also integrates insights from previous projects (e.g. EU JOINT, REDEMOS, REUNIR, EMBRACE, InvigoratEU). Leads to D4.2.

T4.3 Readiness and reforms (Lead: ISU, Partners: ICDS, UKMA, IDSCS, UM; M6-M22)

Analyse security-related reforms in light of differing threat perceptions, security guarantees, and overall EU security. Identify thematic lessons and patterns relevant to current CCs based on a comprehensive review of academic literature and policy assessments and examine how security-related reforms within the EU and the staged integration of CCs into EU security and defence policies can enhance the effectiveness of the enlargement process. This task includes a targeted analysis of the importance of improved institutional readiness to address citizens' security concerns about EU enlargement, thereby supporting the 'for citizens' logic of CitiSense. Leads to D4.3.

T4.4 Policy recommendations (Lead: ICDS; Partners: ISU, UKMA, IDSCS, UM; M18-M24)

Synthesise findings into actionable, adaptive policy recommendations for future enlargement, responsive to regional and national differences, validate actionable policy recommendations by actively involving the CitiSense Civil Society Network and Expert Hub. Leads to D4.3.

Number	5
Title	**Economic Dimensions of Enlargement**
Objectives	

O5.1 Conduct a comprehensive analysis of the economic costs and benefits of enlargement and non-enlargement for the EU, its MS, and CCs.

O5.2 Identify and apply political-economic lessons from previous EU enlargements as they might be relevant for existing CCs.

O5.3 Assess the long-term economic impact of EU enlargement and post-accession developments in their relationship with political attitudes and behaviour across MS.

O5.4 Examine variation in the governance of EU funds, with special attention to differences within and between MS and CCs at the level of subnational regional development.

O5.5 Synthesise findings to provide adaptive, flexible policy recommendations for future enlargement, ensuring responsiveness to regional, national, and EU-level economic challenges and opportunities.

Description of Work

T5.1 Literature review (Lead: CEU, partner: USWPS; M7-M18)

Systematic review of the literature review including a review of previous Horizon project findings, with a focus on (a) the limitations on the static quantitative assessments of the economic costs and benefits of enlargement for the EU, MS, and CCs, and (b) economic terms and conditions of accession treaties (e.g., transition periods, funding arrangements, freedom of movement of workers/persons, real-estate acquisition), and (c) comparison of the key elements of the integration strategies during the Southern enlargement, the previous wave of Eastern enlargement and the recent wave. The analysis also integrates insights from previous projects (e.g. REDEMOS, REUNIR, EMBRACE, InvigoratEU). . Leads to D5.1.

T5.2 Inclusion and exclusion at the regional level (Lead: CEU, partner: USWPS, ISU, UKMA; M13-M24)

Analyse regional and subnational variations in the governance of EU funding, with particular attention to Hungary and Poland. Explore patterns of citizen inclusion and exclusion in the EU accession process based on fieldwork (case studies) in two Ukraine regions. Leads to D5.2

T5.3 Perceptions, attitudes, and behaviour (Lead: USWPS, partner: CEU, ISU, UKMA, WMD; M13-M24)

Design a longitudinal and comparative analytical strategy to capture citizens' perceptions of the enlargement process and socio-economic developments in post-accession periods using absolute and relative indicators (growth, decline, stagnation). Analyse long-term post-accession socio-economic developments and their relationship to political attitudes and behaviour, with a focus on Hungary and Poland. Compare absolute and relative socio-economic changes (national/EU averages) and their impact on political divides and attitudes toward EU integration, further supporting the 'with citizens' logic of CitiSense. Leads to D5.3

T5.4 Policy recommendations (Lead: USWPS, partner: CEU, ISU, UKMA; M7-M24)

Synthesise findings into actionable, adaptive policy recommendations for future enlargement, responsive to regional and national differences, validate actionable policy recommendations by actively involving the CitiSense Civil Society Network and Expert Hub. Leads to D5.4.

Number	6
Title	**Societal Dimensions of Enlargement**
Objectives	

O6.1: Provide a historical and comparative analysis of the societal dimension of EU enlargement that can be applied to future enlargements to enhance inclusivity and effectiveness.

O6.2 Conduct Cost-Benefit Analysis of enlargement for society both in the EU and in CCs.

O6.3: Develop policy recommendations and communication strategies to address societal concerns and improve public understanding, raise societal awareness, and potentially strengthen the consensus on enlargement.

Description of Work

T6.1 Collection of societal lessons (lead: CUB; partners: IAI, CEU, ISU, UKMA, WMD, IDSCS; M4-M22)

Through a historical-comparative approach grounded in selected case studies from both current and past enlargement rounds, identify similarities and differences in how societies – both within the EU and in CCs – have experienced and responded to enlargement processes. The analysis will go beyond descriptive accounts to examine the underlying motivations, values, and narratives that shape public attitudes. Particular attention will be paid to how these attitudes intersect with issues such as social cohesion, democratic legitimacy, and institutional trust, and how they have shifted over time. By situating societal perspectives within broader historical and political developments, the research will assess how societal factors influence the EU's capacity to function effectively and uphold core values such as democracy and the rule of law. It will also examine how these factors relate to

challenges such as democratic backsliding, Euroscepticism, and enlargement fatigue. The analysis also integrates insights from previous projects (e.g. REDEMOS, REUNIR, EMBRACE, InvigoratEU). Leads to D6.1.

T6.2. Cost-benefit analysis of the societal impact of enlargement (Lead: CUB, partners: IAI, CEU; M23-M27) Conduct a cost-benefit analysis to assess the expected societal impact of enlargement or non-enlargement for the CCs and compare with ex-post cost-benefit analysis on selected EU states to verify the accuracy of the initial predictions and/or to monitor the effects and promote policy learning systematically evaluating outcomes of the accession, whether potentially positive, such as strengthening in institutional capacities, civic engagement and social trust against potential social costs, such as institutional strain, rise of disinformation and disruptions in social cohesion. Quantify all the impacts (direct and indirect) revolving around social aspects of enlargement (e.g., institutional capacities, civic engagement, social trust, disinformation) as costs and benefits during a specific timeframe of the accession process (for CCs) and after accession (for EU countries). Leads to D6.2.

T6.3 Policy recommendations (Lead: IAI; partners: CUB, ISU, UKMA, WMD, IDSCS; M28-M30) Undertake a comprehensive analysis of societal factors to formulate practical, evidence-based recommendations on enlargement to inform EU and national policymakers. Focus on designing flexible and adaptive approaches to enlargement that are responsive to societal expectations and concerns based on the case studies and evaluation of effectiveness of flexible approach to institutional integration and their impact on societal readiness. Propose effective communication strategies tailored to different national and regional contexts to raise awareness about the societal implications of enlargement, counter illiberal narratives and Euroscepticism, and strengthen public engagement with the enlargement process. Validate actionable policy recommendations by actively involving the CitiSense Civil Society Network and EU Enlargement Expert Hub. Leads to D6.2.

Number	7
Title	Anticipating Futures of Enlargement
Objectives	

O7.1 Assess existing ideas on EU enlargement and differentiated integration or disintegration as they relate to scenario building.

O7.2 Develop four alternative scenarios for the future of EU enlargement based on the analysis of global and European trends, strategic uncertainties, actors and systemic constellations, socio-cultural-historical framings and contexts as well as public opinion data (short-term horizons to 2030 and long-term horizons to 2060).

O7.3 Test alternative futures scenarios for EU enlargement through the active involvement of academic experts, practitioners, and citizens to assess their social, cultural, and political acceptability and feasibility.

Description of Work

T7.1 Evaluate existing concepts of EU Enlargement (lead: IEP; partner: EUI; M1-M12) Conduct an expert assessment exercise, based on a state-of-the-art literature review, to evaluate the feasibility and probability of existing concepts of EU enlargement to inform T7.2's alternative futures scenarios development. This task starts with a three dimensional mapping exercise: first it structures concepts of differentiation, flexibility and differentiated (dis)integration used in academic and political debates according to the effects that they have on European integration and the internal or external dimension they refer to; second, it assesses the different legal forms of differentiation and flexibility within EU law; third, it maps the state of differentiation already existent in European integration interrelating with WPs 4-5-6 to discuss the state of play in security, economy and society. Extending research from previous Horizon projects (e.g. EUIDEA, EU3D, InDivEU or DICE) on differentiated integration, T7.1 will conduct a series of stakeholder interviews to assess a) how the understanding of and perception on differentiated integration have evolved since the EU revitalised its enlargement policy and b) how understandings and perceptions differ between political parties, societal groups as well as MS and CCs. Leads to D7.1.

T7.2 Alternative futures scenarios (lead: EUI; partners: IEP, WMD; M6-M28) Identify global and European socio-cultural-historical, technological, environmental, economic and political factors (STEEP) to inform four alternative EU enlargement futures scenarios. These scenarios will tap into projected, plausible, probable, possible, preposterous and preferable spheres to outline future continuity, differentiation, disruption and transformation trajectories of EU enlargement and non-enlargement. Scenario descriptions will summarise different future trajectories for EU enlargement in ten-year intervals until 2060. Leads to D7.2 (Milestone 5).

T7.3 Participatory testing of alternative futures (lead: EUI, partner: IEP; M29-M36). In line with WP8's Task 8.1, open the research to public scenario testing. Assess the acceptability of the alternative futures scenarios developed in T7.2. First, test the scenarios in an internal workshop involving project partners to

gather academic expert feedback. Second, engage external academic experts, from the CitiSense Expert Hub and beyond, practitioners and citizens to foster ownership and involvement in long-term thinking about EU enlargement. For this, WP7 conducts two strategic foresight workshops (one in Berlin and one in Brussels) to test the socio-cultural-political acceptability of the alternative scenarios for future EU enlargements. In these co-creational sessions, diverse groups of actors engaged in EU enlargement-related societal activities and policymaking (i.e., politicians, public officials, civil society organisations & citizens from the IEP's local network, corporate actors) mobilise their expertise to contextualise and prioritise the scenarios based on their institutional practices. The results of this participatory engagement will inform the finalisation of the alternative futures scenarios. Leads to D7.2.

Number	8
Title	**Toolboxes for Policy-Community and for Citizen Education and Civil Society**

Objectives

O8.1 Create a toolbox for policymakers at the European, national, and – where applicable – regional level with context-sensitive policy recommendations that will serve as a practical resource for policymakers, providing them with evidence-based strategies, communication tools, and proposals for participatory mechanisms to enhance the effectiveness and public acceptance of the enlargement process.

O8.2 Create a toolbox for civil society and actors in the field of citizenship education (including schoolteachers) with a set of educational tools to learn about the lessons learnt, options, visions and scenarios in view of EU´s future enlargement and strengthening defensible young citizens who respect and protect the values of our EU treaty.

O8.3 Involve European youth and citizens to participate in discussions addressing the future of EU enlargement via Youth Labs.

O8.4 Involve pan-European post-graduate students specializing on the future of EU enlargement from the College of Europe.

O8.5 Cooperate with members of the Civil Society Network in co-developing the toolboxes for policymakers and for citizen education and civil society.

Description of Work

T8.1 Toolbox for policymakers (Lead: UM; partners: EUI, ICDS, IAI, CEU, UDE, EPD, SU, CUB, USWPS, ISU, UKMA, IDSCS; M22-M32)

Co-create tools for policy makers, public administration in MS, CCs and European institutional level to deepen our understanding of the political, social, security and economic consequences of enlargement versus non-enlargement. This toolbox will include a Digital Guidebook ('30 FAQs on Enlargement'). The toolbox will include communication strategies to help policymakers explain the benefits and challenges of enlargement and non-enlargement. It will incorporate insights from the public opinion surveys, as well as the economic, security, and societal analysis to provide policymakers with a nuanced understanding of citizens' perspectives, concerns, and expectations regarding enlargement. The toolbox will include participatory mechanisms and digital tools to offer policymakers innovative ways to involve citizens directly in the enlargement process. Leads to D8.1.

T8.2 Toolbox for civil society and citizenship education (Lead: UDE; partners: all; M22-32)

Co-create teaching resources for schoolteachers and other citizenship education actors to build concrete knowledge on future enlargement. Leads to D8.2.

T8.3 Youth Labs (Lead: UDE, partner: UM; M12- M32)

Organizing and consultation of Youth Labs targeting young European citizens to communicate and test CitiSense research results, as well as co-creating policy recommendations. They take place in cities of our consortium members, which include EU and non-EU capitals in the target regions, and medium-sized cities across Europe. Leads to D8.3.

T8.4. National views (Lead: UDE, UM, partners: EUI, ICDS, IAI, CEU, EPD, SU, CUB, USWPS, ISU, UKMA, IDSCS; M13-M33)

Recruit post-graduate students from the College of Europe to write short country reports ('Europe Next') on a variety of aspects offering national views from EU MS and CCs based on CitiSense newly generated data to understand commonalities and particular differences across Europe. Leads to D8.4.

T8.5 Civil Society Network (Lead: UDE; partners: UM, EUI; M1-M32)

Organise and consult members of the Civil Society Network in co-developing the toolkits for citizen education and civil society (e.g. CSO implementation kit) and schoolteachers (considering specific geographical regional, generational and gender-related features based on research outputs from other WPs). Leads to D8.1 and D8.2.

Number	9
Title	**Communication, Dissemination, and Exploitation**
Objectives	

O9.1. Developing and enhancing relationships with key stakeholders to learn from the varied experiences of MS, CCs, policymaking, and research from previous enlargement rounds, and in doing so foster the development of well-informed, effective, and innovative EU enlargement policymaking.

O9.2. Fostering broad societal awareness of EU enlargement, its process, consequences, and the costs of non-enlargement, by informing citizens specifically about the benefits of EU enlargement while addressing key concerns identified in public opinion research (WP2) and pilot studies (WP3) and involving them in transparent communicative processes. WP9 applies a segmented approach, tailoring communication to MS, CCs, and potential CCs, and differentiating between policymakers, administrations, CSOs, youth, and media audiences.

Description of Work

T9.1 External communication (Lead: TEPSA; partners: all; M1-M36)
Establish and maintain external and internal communication structures. The project's external communications, managed by the Steering Group, will operate via a website and on social media within a consistent visual identity. Project researchers will be trained in strategic communication, and innovative tools will be systematically integrated into the project's functioning. Leads to D9.1.

T9.2 EU Enlargement Expert Hub (Lead: TEPSA; partners: all; M1-M36)
Continue and widen TEPSA's active EU Enlargement Expert Hub. This already-existing core group of high-level policymakers will offer a forum for structured dialogue with researchers and be enriched with new members. A biannual EU Enlargement Observatory as well as a mailing list will act as forums for multi-directional exchanges on project results. Six closed-door meetings in Brussels will gather this group to discuss results under the Chatham House rule and build relationships.

T9.3 Public panel discussions (Lead: TEPSA; partners: all; M18-M36)
Organise two panel discussions at TEPSA Pre-Presidency Conferences ahead of new rotating presidencies of the Council of the EU. Three online public panel discussions gathering sister projects to develop mutual understandings, with a specific individual focus on democracy, rule of law, and governance.

T9.4 Targeted training activities. (Lead: TEPSA; M18-M36)
Organise a four-day seminar in Brussels gathering 15 early-career civil servants and researchers and 15 representatives of Local and Regional Authorities from EU and CCs. Social and intercultural learning practices will be foregrounded in the implementation of both trainings to ensure the sustainable creation of knowledge multipliers.

T9.5 Policy briefs (Lead: TEPSA; partners: all; M1-M36)
Assemble and publish a series of policy briefs building on the discussions taking place within each closed-door meeting. Leads to D9.2.

T9.6 National briefings (Lead: TEPSA; partners: all; M1-M36)
Coordinate decentralised briefings with national policymakers organised by each consortium partner in their national contexts to discuss policy recommendations.

T9.7 Major project conferences (Lead: TEPSA; M16-M36)
Organise a Mid-term conference (in Florence or Georgia) and a Final Conference in Brussels providing consortium members with platforms to discuss preliminary findings and final results with policymakers from EU and CCs, as well as with sister projects, in light of developments in EU enlargement.

T9.8 Infographics and animations (Lead: TEPSA; Infographics: M1-1M8; Animations: M19-M36)
Design a series of infographics communicating the benefits and costs of EU enlargement/non-enlargement for citizens and another showcasing the results of the public opinion survey. Publish six animated videos communicating project findings, via the TEPSA YouTube Channel and Instagram Reels. Leads to D9.3.

T9.9 Podcasts (Lead: TEPSA; M1-M18)
Publish six podcast discussions with researchers and policymakers on the security, societal, and economic implications of EU enlargement. Leads to D9.3.

T9.10 Traditional media (Lead: TEPSA; partners: all; M1-M36)
Coordinate outreach to traditional media, including the Publication of op-eds by project researchers in leading EU and/or national legacy media outlets. Leads to D9.3.

T9.11 Social media survey (Lead: TEPSA; M1-M4)

Launch a social media survey conducted online to critically engage a broad audience in questions of EU enlargement. This will provide policymakers with a digest of expert lessons learned from past enlargement rounds, as well as top priorities for future enlargement.

T9.12 Video engagement (Lead: TEPSA; partners: all; M1-M18)

Launch a series of short participatory videos giving citizens the opportunity to ask questions directly to project researchers. Leads to D9.3.

T9.13 Art exhibition (Lead UM; M12-M32)

Stage and curate a Citizens' Art Exhibition in Maastricht, inviting the general public to display their artworks on the theme of 'Framing an EU with 30+ Members', including an interactive workshop. Leads to D9.3.

T9.14 Dissemination (Lead: TEPSA; M1-M36)

Systematically disseminate project outputs to research institutes in all EU MS and CCs. Leads to D9.3.

Number	10
Title	**Management and Steering**
Objectives	

O10.1 Ensure the overall administrative, legal and financial management of the consortium's activities.

O10.2 Plan and run project governance meetings and conferences; record decisions and actions.

O10.3 Coordinate external advisory input to access project outputs and progress.

O10.4 Ensure scientific coordination, cross-WP consistency of concepts, methods and outputs, and overall scientific quality.

O10.5 Monitor ethics compliance and implement the Data Management Plan and open-science practices.

O10.6 Facilitate collaboration and knowledge exchange with sister projects funded under the same/related calls.

O10.7 Promote gender equality and diversity in governance, participation, research content and project monitoring, aligned with partners' Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) and Horizon Europe gender objectives.

Description of Work

T10.1 Manage financial and administrative activities (Lead: EUI, partners: all; M1-M36)

Manage the daily operations of the Consortium including planning and monitoring budget expenses; managing financial records; coordinating cost claim submissions; checking individual claims; preparing consolidated cost statements; monitoring and following up on payments; and preparing payment summaries and overviews. Manage contracts and legal issues, including IPR-related actions and contract amendments; oversee administrative and financial interactions with the European Commission. Deliver a comprehensive Consortium Project Plan (incl. Risk Assessment and Ethics) detailing roles, procedures, communication flows, quality assurance, and mitigation strategies. Align project-level practices with the Gender Equality Plans of consortium partners. Leads to D10.1.

T10.2 Data management and Ethics (Lead: EUI, partners: all; M1-M36)

Prepare the Data Management Plan (DMP) at start up, update it regularly and deliver as scheduled. Apply FAIR and Open Access principles while complying with GDPR and ethics requirements. Define for each dataset: purpose, ownership, consent, anonymisation/pseudonymisation, access level (public/restricted) and retention/archiving after the project. Prepare templates (consent, information sheets, data logs), maintain a data/ethics register, and obtain any required approvals. Provide guidance and reminders to WP leads; coordinate with T10.4 (consistency checks) and T10.3 (reporting). Leads to D10.2.

T10.3 Coordinate project governance and progress (Lead: EUI; partners: all; M1-36)

Lead overall project management, monitor progress, and reporting: Periodic & final technical reports (compilation, formatting, submission) and continuous reporting (deliverables, milestones, risks) in the Portal. Deliverable submissions and review management (agenda, evidence packs, responses to review comments). Amendments and ethics/data compliance in coordination with T10.2 and T10.4. Financial reporting coordination (partner inputs, validation, consolidation), timelines, and reminders. Monitor and report on gender balance in leadership, teams, workshops, and panels. Implement risk management and remedial measures. Liaise with the European Commission and establish formal links with sister projects. Organise the Kick-off conference, alongside all other internal meetings, including the cross-WP workshops (M18, M24, M36), report on all three conferences and internal meetings. Leads to D10.3.

T10.4 Ensure scientific quality and integration (Lead: UM; partners: all; M1-36)

Closely monitor the progress on research, milestones and deliverables for all WPs, ensuring quality control, and making sure that all Commission requirements are respected and implemented. Ensure that all work packages use consistent concepts, clear methods, and common terminology, and that outputs fit together. We will: Hold a coordination check-in with WP leads at the kick-off, mid-term and final conferences to check consistency of

concepts, clarity of methods, attention to gender/ethics, readability for non-experts, and correct use of agreed terms; track issues in a simple action log until they are resolved; work with T10.2 so that data, documents and materials are shared as promised in the DMP; bring key points to the Steering Committee and reflect Advisory Board comments where relevant; add a brief quality note to each submitted deliverable and include summaries in project reports (D10.3).

T10.5 Steering Committee (SC) and scientific leadership (Lead: UM, EUI; partners: all; M1-36)
Organise the SC (composed of the Coordinator, Scientific Lead and all Work Package Leads). Coordinate activities across WPs, set scientific priorities; validate milestones; track risks; provide inputs (text, figures, decisions) for reports in T10.3; and ensure timely contributions from WP leads.

T10.6 Guide Advisory Board (AB) and Civil Society Network (CSN) engagement (Lead: EUI, UM; M1-36)
Establish AB and CSN liaison (M1) with a short Terms of Reference (roles, confidentiality, conflict-of-interest). Hold three structured consultations (online) (M3, M18, M30) plus light quarterly updates. Circulate 2-page briefs two weeks in advance; collect written comments within two weeks; log actions and responses. The AB and CSN review key outputs, assess scientific quality (AB) and policy relevance, validate recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders (MS/CC/potential CC), and advise on translating research into practical toolboxes and messages.

Table 3.1c: List of Deliverables

#	Name	Short Description	WP	Lead	Type	Diss. Level	Month Due
D1.1	Research Report: Conceptual and Methodological Framework	Original work and review of existing methodologies to serve as basis for empirical analysis in WP2-7.	1	UM	R	PU	6
D1.2	Comparative Dashboard of Drivers of Enlargement	Map of security drivers, economic interdependencies, and public sentiment across CCs.	1	EUI	DATA	PU	24
D1.3	Policy Paper: Motivations, Challenges, EU Support	Analyses motivations, challenges, and role of EU support in candidates' path to membership.	1	UM	R	PU	24
D1.4	Policy Paper: Key Chapter Reform Process	Examines reform process in CCs regarding key acquis chapters and EU response.	1	UM	R	PU	24
D1.5	Research Report: Synthesis of Key Findings	Integrates findings from all WPs to make recommendations for policymakers at all levels.	1	UM	R	PU	35
D2.1	Survey and Survey Experiment Data	Data from select EU and CCs.	2	SU	DATA	PU	18
D2.2	Research Report: Drivers and Obstacles of Support	Examines drivers and obstacles to support to explore influence of different frames for communication.	2	SU	R	PU	34
D2.3	Two Policy Papers: Motivations and Framing Strategies	Develops strategies to deploy different communicative frames in different national contexts.	2	SU	R	PU	30
D3.1	Research Report: Solutions Produced by Hackathons and Assemblies	Highlights challenges and solutions identified through popular participatory co-creation.	3	EPD	R	PU	28
D3.2	Research Report: Feedback from experience sharing with democracy stakeholders	Reports lessons learned and recommendations from the Practitioner's Briefings and Democracy Dialogue.	3	EPD	R	PU	28
D3.3	Policy Paper: Citizen Engagement Tools	Identifies lessons and challenges from citizen pilots and makes policy recommendations.	3	EPD	R	PU	30
D4.1	Policy Paper: Security Costs and Benefits of Enlargement vs. Non-Enlargement	Provides empirical analysis to support tailored communication strategies on security issues based on analysis of five countries.	4	ICDS	R	PU	18
D4.2	Research Report: Security Lessons from Previous Enlargements	Draws upon previous enlargements to identify similarities and differences with current candidates.	4	ICDS	R	PU	22
D4.3	Policy Paper: Security-related Reforms	Focuses on role and prospect for institutional reform.	4	ICDS	R	PU	24
D5.1	Policy Paper: Ambiguities in Economic Cost-Benefit Analysis	Analyses how the governance of enlargement can alter costs and benefits to make recommendations.	5	CEU	R	PU	24
D5.2	Policy Paper: Patterns of Regional Exclusion and Inclusion	Compares current with previous enlargements to focus on regional economic impact.	5	USWPS	R	PU	24
D5.3	Research Report: Popular Perceptions of Socio-Economic Developments	Uses examples from Hungary and Poland to examine how attitudes relate to economic performance.	5	USWPS	R	PU	24

D5.4	Policy Paper: Adaptive Approaches to Economic Integration and Enlargement	Provides actionable economic recommendations for future enlargement responsive to regional and national differences.	5	CEU	R	PU	24
D6.1	Research Report: Societal Impact of Past Enlargements	Uses four case countries to analyse the social impact of enlargement under different national conditions.	6	CUB	R	PU	22
D6.2	Policy Paper: Enhancing Social Cohesion in Future Enlargements	Provides actionable recommendations for stakeholders at all levels to mitigate social impact.	6	IAI	R	PU	30
D7.1	Policy Paper: Differentiated (Dis)Integration and the Future of EU Enlargement	Analyses the evolution of proposals and support for differentiated integration providing a comprehensive assessment of prospects for the coming enlargement.	7	IEP	R	PU	12
D7.2	Policy Paper: Alternative Future Scenarios for EU Enlargement	Develops plausible future trajectories for enlargement for participatory testing and engagement.	7	EUI	R	PU	28
D8.1	Toolbox for Policymakers	Offers evidence-based, actionable policy recommendations, communication materials and strategies, including participatory mechanisms.	8	UM	DEM	PU	32
D8.2	Toolbox for Education and Civil Society	Teaching materials for schoolteachers and other actors in education to foster informed debate.	8	UDE	DEM	PU	32
D8.3	Policy Report: CitiSense Youth Labs	Synthesises recommendations from Youth Labs.	8	UDE	R	PU	32
D8.4	Edited Collection of Short Country Reports ('Europe Next')	Reports by post-graduate students from the College of Europe (et al.) reflecting national perspectives.	8	UDE	R	PU	33
D9.1	Communications, Dissemination, and Exploitation Plan	CDE plan including key performance indicators.	9	TEPSA	R	SEN	4
D9.2	Recommendations Digest	Brings together recommendations from all policy papers produced within the consortium.	9	TEPSA	R	PU	36
D9.3	Digest of Public-Oriented Communications Products	Surveys public-oriented communications products from CitiSense to compare with sister projects.	9	TEPSA	R	PU	36
D10.1	Consortium Project Plan (incl. Risk Assessment and Ethics)	Outlines procedures, structure, risk management, quality control, gender and ethics.	10	EUI	OTHER	PU	6
D10.2	Data Management Plan	Follows principles of Open Access; ensures protection of personal data and privacy issues.	10	EUI	DMP	PU	6
D10.3	Reports from Kick-off, Mid-term, and Final Conferences	Evaluate progress of WPs, scientific integration, gender, ethics, and output quality.	10	EUI	R	PU	36

Table 3.1d: **List of milestones**

Milestone number	Milestone name	Related work package(s)	Due date (in month)	Means of verification
MS1	CitiSense Website Online	WP1, WP9	1	Website is live with project information, partner details, and contact form.
MS2	Kick-off Conference (Florence)	WP10	3	Conference held; report published and shared with consortium and EC.
MS3	Completion of All Four Pilots (2xHackathons & 2xCitizen Assemblies)	WP3	18	Execution of all four pilots completed by M18.
MS4	Mid-term Conference (Florence or Tblisi)	WP9, WP10	18	Conference held; mid-term report and recommendations published.
MS5	Policy Paper: Alternative Future Scenarios for EU Enlargement	WP7	28	Policy Paper delivered (D7.2).
MS6	Final Conference (Brussels)	WP9, WP10	36	Conference held; final project results and toolkits presented; final report delivered to EC and stakeholders.

Table 3.1e: **Critical risks for implementation** #@RSK-MGT-RM@#

Description of risk	Likelihood	Severity	Work package(s) involved	Proposed risk-mitigation measures
State of war or escalation of conflict in territory of consortium members (e.g., Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine)	High	High	All	Integrate contingency planning and alternative data collection methods into the Data Management Plan; shift surveys online or replace with expert interviews if fieldwork is unsafe; conduct research only in areas designated as safe by national authorities.
Withdrawal or bankruptcy of a consortium partner	Low	High	All	Mitigate through provisions in the Consortium Agreement; prepare an exit strategy: seek a new partner, redistribute roles to remaining partners, or hire key personnel to maintain capacity.
Risks to safety of interview partners, local partners, and researchers in the field	Low	High	All	Develop a field manual with security protocols and scenario-specific mitigation measures; ensure anonymity and protection of interviewees; postpone or cancel high-risk activities; exclude sensitive data if necessary.
Lack of common objective among consortium partners	Low	Medium	All	Maintain shared goals through early consensus-building in the proposal phase; organise three cross-WP workshops (M18, M24, M36) and conferences; ensure all partners are actively involved across WPs.

Partner unable to deliver work on time	Medium	Medium	All	Monitor progress regularly through the Project Coordinator; take early remedial action by assigning additional staff, redistributing tasks, or amending the Grant Agreement to adjust responsibilities.
Inadequate resources to perform project activities	Low	High	All	Ensure careful budgeting from the outset; conduct periodic resource risk assessments; address gaps quickly through reallocation of funds or staff.
Low participation or engagement in participatory activities (Hackathons, Youth Labs, Civil Society Network)	Medium	Medium	WP3, WP8	Engage stakeholders early; offer incentives (visibility, certification); adapt formats for online/hybrid delivery; co-design activities to ensure relevance for participants.
Difficulty integrating findings across WPs leading to incoherent outputs	Low	High	WPs 1-8	Hold cross-WP workshops at key milestones (M18, M24, M36); appoint integration focal points in each WP; use the CitiSense analytical framework as a shared reference.
Ethics or data protection non-compliance	Low	High	WPs 2-7	Implement an Ethics Monitoring Protocol from M1; appoint a Data Protection Officer; ensure GDPR compliance in all data workflows; conduct regular ethics and data protection training.
Data not complying with GDPR or data protection standards	Low	Medium	All	Explicitly embed GDPR obligations in the Consortium Agreement; conduct compliance checks at all data collection and storage stages; ensure all personnel receive relevant training.
Conflict within the consortium	Low	Medium	All	Resolve disputes informally where possible; escalate to Project Coordinator for mediation; if unresolved, bring to the General Assembly for decision.
Insufficient dissemination or uptake of results	Low	Medium	WP9, WP8	Develop targeted dissemination plans for different audiences; involve stakeholders in co-creation; monitor engagement metrics and adapt strategies as needed. Consult Advisory Board for strategic guidance.

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Table 3.1f: **Summary of staff effort**

	WP1	WP2	WP3	WP4	WP5	WP6	WP7	WP8	WP9	WP10	Total PMs
1. EUI	17	1.5	0	4	0	0	16	2	4.5	12	57.00
2. UM	12.9	1	0	2	0	0	0	10	5	5	35.90
3. ICDS	0	1	0	13	0	0	0	1	0.5	0.5	16.00
4. IAI	0	1	0	2	0	15	0	1	0.5	0.5	20.00
5. CEU	0	0	0	0	12.5	1	0	0.5	0.5	0.5	15.00
6. UDE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	0.5	0.5	24.00
7. IEP	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	0	0.5	0.5	15.00

8. EPD	0	0	19.5	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5	0.5	21.00
9. SU	0	25.5	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5	0.5	27.00
10. TEPSA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	1	31.00
11. CUB	0	1	0	0	0	16	0	1	0.5	0.5	19.00
12. USWPS	0	1	0	0	10	0	0	1	0.5	0.5	13.00
13. ISU	3	0	0	3	3	2	0	1	1	2	15.00
14. UKMA	2	0	0	3	3	1	0	1	1	1	12.00
15. WMD	1	2	0	0	1.5	1.5	1	1	0.5	0.5	9.00
16. IDSCS	1	0	0	3	0	3	0	2	1	1	11.00
Total PMs	36.9	34	19.5	30	30	39.5	31	45.5	47.5	27	340.9

Table 3.1g: 'Subcontracting costs' items

1. EUI		
	Cost (€)	**Description of tasks and justification**
Subcontracting	€15,000	CitiSense will subcontract an external company to design the Comparative Dashboard of Drivers of Enlargement - map of security drivers, economic interdependencies, and public sentiment across CCs.

2. UM		
	Cost (€)	**Description of tasks and justification**
Subcontracting	€30,000	CitiSense will subcontract Richard Youngs, Senior Fellow at Carnegie Europe and Professor of International Relations at the University of Warwick, whose internationally recognised expertise on civic participation and global democratic trends is not otherwise represented in the consortium. He will contribute to **WP1, WP2, WP7, and WP8**. His unique profile at the intersection of scholarship, policy advice, and civil society engagement adds indispensable value and maximises the project's impact for policymakers, citizens, and educators.

9.SU		
	Cost (€)	**Description of tasks and justification**
Subcontracting	€100,000	Survey data collection. A sociological agency will be contracted to carry out this work in the selected countries, with offers already received from two companies. The contracted agency will be responsible for: • Coordinating data collection; • Conducting quality checks and testing the questionnaire; • Translating the questionnaire; • Programming the questionnaire; • Designing and preparing the survey invitation; • Selecting the sample; • Implementing control procedures; • Processing the data; • Delivering the final dataset in SPSS/STATA format.

The partners internal procurement rules will be followed as well as the principle of the best value for money.

Table 3.1h: 'Purchase costs' items (travel and subsistence, equipment and other goods, works and services)

1.EUI		
	Cost (€)	**Justification**
Travel and subsistence	€55,960	Organisation of the kick off meeting – travel for 18 European participants (€500 return flight), 4 International participants (€1700 return flight), 2 nights' accomm. (€180/night). This will not cover consortium members with travel/subsistence budget. Organisation of the mid-project conference– travel for 20 European participants (€500

		return flight), 5 external international participants (€1,700 return flight), 2 nights accomm. for 25 people (€180/night). Travel and subsistence for 4 people to attend the final conference in Brussels – European return flight €500; 3 nights accommodation (€180/night).
Equipment		
Other goods, works and services	€12,300	Catering costs for the kick off and mid-term meeting – 1 days for 3 people at €150/day including coffee breaks, water, snack, lunches, dinners. Open access for per article €3,000
Remaining purchase costs (<15% pers. Costs)	€62,525	
Total	**€130,785**	

2. UM		
	Cost (€)	**Justification**
Travel and subsistence		
Equipment		
Other goods, works and services	€21,059	Organisation of the Citizens' Art Exhibition (WP9, T9.13), covers essential external services: venue rental, insurance and logistics (€7,000); professional design and installation (€4,500); AV equipment and streaming for hybrid access (€3,000); outreach and promotional materials (€2,000); accessibility measures such as captioning, translation and mobility access (€1,500); transport and shipping of artworks and exhibition material (€1,500); professional documentation including photography and videography (€559); and part-time research assistant support for coordination, reporting and liaison (€1,000).
Remaining purchase costs (<15% pers. Costs)	€49,136	
Total	**€70,195**	

3. ICDS		
	Cost (€)	**Justification**
Travel and subsistence	€12,600	One return European trip from Tallinn to Brussels/Paris at €1,425, which includes: return flight €600; accomm. for 3 nights (€200 per night); daily subsistence for 3 days (€75 per day). In total, we have planned 8 trips, broken down as follows: Kick-off meeting: travel for 2 people; Final conference: travel for 2 people; Research trip to Brussels (for expert interviews): travel for 1 person; Task 4.3: travel for 2 people; Research trip to Paris (Task 4.1, for expert interviews) travel for 1 person. Workshop organisation – travel for participants at €600 for 2 people.
Equipment		
Other goods, works and services	€3,000	Stationery and supplies needed for the preparation of project deliverables or dissemination materials. (€3,000)
Remaining purchase costs (<15% pers. Costs)	€13,346	
Total	**€28,946**	

4. IAI		
	Cost (€)	**Justification**
Travel and subsistence	€2,500	Travel & subsistence: 2 people to attend a final conference in Brussels: return European travel (€600); 2 nights accommodation (€460); 2 days subsistence (€190).
Equipment		

Other goods, works and services		
Remaining purchase costs (<15% pers. Costs)	€13,000	
Total	**€15,500**	

7. IEP

	Cost (€)	Justification
Travel and subsistence	€8,400	Organisation of 2 workshops (Berlin and Brussels). The cost includes travel for 12 people (for each workshop 6 participants will be required to travel) at €500 each, and accommodation €200 each.
Equipment		
Other goods, works and services	€2,000	Each workshop requires venue costs of €2000.
Remaining purchase costs (<15% pers. Costs)	€16,600	
Total	**€27,000**	

8. EPD

	Cost (€)	Justification
Travel and subsistence	€38,500	Travel for 2 people for kick off meeting and final conference - each trip per person includes; return European travel (€600), 3 nights accomm. (€450), 3 days subsistence (€200). Citizen assembly's organisation – 2 events – each cover accomm. costs for 20 people (€14,000) and travel 3 people (€500 return). TOTAL €31,000
Equipment		
Other goods, works and services	€50,000	Democracy spotlight costs – editing (€3,000), formatting (€1,000), printing (€400). Democracy hackathons – design and implementation of the online tools (2 x €10,000), facilitation costs (6 x €1,000), translation costs (2 x €4,000). Citizen assembly's organisation - Lunch and dinner for 20 people (€4,400 for 2 events), Facilitators costs (€4,200 for 2 events), venue hire (€3,000 for 2 events).
Remaining purchase costs (<15% pers. Costs)	€20,470	
Total	**€108,970**	

10. TEPSA

	Cost (€)	Justification
Travel and subsistence	€27,325	Travel & accomm. of project staff to: Kick-off meeting (€500 per travel, 3 overnight stays €300, 2 persons); 1 Brussels 4-day seminar for enlargement professionals at the Foundation Universitaire; Travel (€500) and accomm. (3 nights for €300) for 1 trainer; Travel and accomm. (€750) for 15 participants per workshop; per diems (€15) for 3 days for 15 participants; 3 Expert Hubs meetings: Travel (€500) and 1 night accomm. (€300) for researchers (3 per meeting): €7,200; Final conference: Travel (€500) and 1 night accomm. (€300) for 3 external speakers; 2 PPC Panels: Travel (€500) and 1night accomm. (€300) for 1 researcher per panel.
Equipment		
Other goods, works and services	€16,140	Mid-term conference (1 half-day for consortium meeting + 1 full public day for 60 people; venue, catering, printing costs, and promotion), €13,740; Animated videos (software and communications recording tools), €2,400

	Cost (€)	Justification
Remaining purchase costs (<15% pers. Costs)	€36,132	
Total	**€79,597**	

11. CUB		
	Cost (€)	**Justification**
Travel and subsistence	€10,300	Travel for 2 people for kick off meeting and final conference - each trip per person includes return European travel €600, 3 nights accomm. (€450), 3 days subsistence (€200). (TOTAL - €5,000). Organisation of 1 workshop / panel on conferences, costs include travel for 2 people (€500), 2 nights accomm. (€300), 2 days subsistence (€100) (TOTAL €1800). Attendance to 2 conferences (€562,50 each: travel costs €200, 2 nights accomm. for €200, 2 days subsistence for €62,50). (Total €1,125). Fieldwork: (1) Moldova, costs include travel for 1 person (€250), 4 nights accomm. (€300), 5 days subsistence (€250). (2) North Macedonia, costs include travel for 1 person (€300), 4 nights accomm. (€500), 5 days subsistence (€200). (3) travel to Austria, costs include travel for 1 person (€50), 4 nights accomm. (€500), 5 days subsistence (€225). (Total €2,375).
Equipment		
Other goods, works and services		
Remaining purchase costs (<15% pers. Costs)	€9,700	
Total	**€20,000**	

14. UKMA		
	Cost (€)	**Justification**
Travel and subsistence	€4,500	Travel for 2 people for kick off meeting and 1 person for final conference - each trip per person includes return European travel (€750), 3 nights' accomm. (€450), 3 days subsistence (€300).
Equipment		
Other goods, works and services		
Remaining purchase costs (<15% pers. Costs)	€6,500	
Total	**€11,000**	

15. WMD		
	Cost (€)	**Justification**
Travel and subsistence	€6,600	1 person attending: the kick off meeting and the final conference, 2 closed-doors meeting in Brussels: travel €650, 3 nights' accomm. (€600); 3 days subsistence (€400).
Equipment		
Other goods, works and services		
Remaining purchase costs (<15% pers. Costs)	€5,400	
Total	**€12,000**	

The EUI receives an operating grant from the European Union. Following article 6.2 of the Model Grant Agreement, the indirect costs of the EUI are not eligible.

#§QUA-LIT-QL§# #§WRK-PLA-WP§#