



THE TOOLKIT FOR ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP AT ALL LEVELS, FROM LOCAL TO GLOBAL

Multilevel democracy – from local to global- cannot be considered utopia anymore, but the only reasonable endeavor to ensure well-being and lasting peace in the era of interdependence and interconnectedness. The Supranational Democracy Dialogue (SDD), since its [first edition](#), became a place where like-minded scholars, activists and international professionals exchange ideas and freely discuss proposals and possible solutions. After the adoption of a [Manifesto on Supranational Democracy](#), in the first edition, in 2018 and a [Declaration on Deliberative Democracy](#), published on May 9, 2023, the contributors to the V Edition (“Focus on tools”) shared their thoughts about several democratic instruments for collaboration across national borders which are collected together in the present toolkit. The toolkit may evolve over time just like the SDD network is growing, one edition after the other.

I. The building of a public sphere

- Communication
 - Visual communication as more immediate and effective
 - Balancing ethos logos and pathos
 - Accuracy as a remedy to manipulation (sharing sources and data)
 - Inclusiveness (overcoming obstacles like digital divide, finding a way to counter the scarce attention of the main mass media, like TV, to the non-national political dimension)

- Education and education to democracy
 - Exchange programs;
 - Cross-border collaboration;
 - Cultural rights:
 - Encouraging transnational conversation among civil society actors and among local authorities;
 - Enhancing the recognition of cross-border transnational shared heritage;

- Developing European and global communication tools.

II. Civic Participation

There are many different ways to participate in the public conversation in a public space (blogging, signing petitions, demonstrating, joining transnational movements and parties, interacting through public platforms, using litigation and claiming mechanisms, spreading information and countering fake news and hate speech, unmasking manipulation).

- Participatory democracy
 - EU Digital platforms
 - [Citizens initiative](#)
 - [Together.eu](#)
 - [Fit For Future](#)
 - [Have your Say](#)
 - [Conference on the Future of Europe](#)
 - Important tech device: multilingual instant translations
- Open consultations through assemblies at all levels
- Claiming at all levels to guarantee correct law enforcement and improve it

Following the EU model, UN and UN agencies could have digital platforms to collect opinions on policy papers, claims, suggestions.

- Anti-SLAPPs legislations (see EU action against strategic lawsuits against public participation).

III. Deliberative democracy

- Citizens assemblies – selected by type, are a scalable tool for bridging the gap between citizens and politicians, at all [institutional levels, from local to macroregional - see on that the \[Manifesto\]\(#\) and \[Blueprint for a European Citizens' Assembly\]\(#\) - towards the global one \(see for instance the experimental \[Global Assembly\]\(#\)\)](#)
- Need for
 - Fine tuning the tool
 - Making it the new normal(see the [Jean Monnet House Declaration](#))

IV. Digital democracy

Technology is instrumental for I and II as well as for deliberation and public consultations. It also allows to make sense of huge amount of collected contributions.

Artificial intelligence – as a tool to use with caution – to

- make sense of the large number of inputs collected through participatory and deliberative democracy channels;
- for [crowdlaw](#) (as a development of the previous point)
- to check fact (see [iVerify](#))

Main concerns: digital divide, security, privacy, intellectual property, manipulation, silly mistakes.

Need for balancing ethics and technological advancement.

Need for global supranational governance of the Internet and regulation about AI.

V. Litigation as tool allowing a public role for individuals

- Taking a stance for collective rights (exposing governance flaws or claiming old and new collective rights, e.g. climate litigation before domestic courts and international courts and tribunals).
- Addressing lack of implementation of existing rights (see referring to ECJ for preliminary ruling in EU case law).
- Acting as whistleblowers (need for effective protection of fundamental and labor rights through whistleblowers protection programs).
- Exposing corrupt politicians and powerful manipulators as journalists and as informed individuals on social media (need for adequate laws to counter SLAPPs, see the [EU Directive](#)).

VI. The evolution of multilateralism

- Collaborative approach: multinational, multicultural, multidisciplinary multistakeholder, multilayer
- Platforms of international actors (ex. Initiate) as key players from different backgrounds integrating different goals and perspectives;
- Horizontal, transnational grids - as network model;
- Participation of non-governmental, non-international actors in the partnership for SDGs – as individuals, civil society, local authorities

The involvement of civil society in international decision-making through protests, petitions, consultations, participatory and/or deliberative democracy mechanisms

inside international organizations and multistakeholder platforms would greatly enhance democracy.

VII. Balancing conflicting interests

Democracy is about managing complexity in

- Designing policies
- Adopting legislation
 - Interpreting legislation
 - Choosing the better enforcement tools
 - Managing conflicts

How?

- Mapping needs – needs based approach.
- Digitalizing
- Prioritizing - (example, the environment)
- Building partnerships (example, [UN Partner Portal](#))
- Finding synergies (example, among environmental policy, economic growth, human development)
- Building structured dialogue among stakeholders – example, [AI Alliance](#)
- Role-playing, playing, team-building.

Trade-offs are unavoidable, those too need to be managed with the tools listed above (particularly under paras II, III, IV)

VIII. Promoting a new economic model intended for well-being.

- Countering short-termism (for example, abolishing quarterly reports of companies) and reducing the impressive volume of finance compared to actual GDP through adequate regulation;
- Fostering codes of conduct and ensuring that business has a role to play in human rights and democracy instruments (for example, the [EU Action Plan on and Human Rights and Democracy](#));
- Making trade agreements work also for individuals, to protect social and environmental rights as well as consumers' rights (for example, [EU-Canada Trade Agreement or CETA](#));
- Spreading knowledge about rights, tools and enforcement mechanisms to the public at large;

- Taking care of global public goods at the global level, as the EU already does at the regional/continental level (back to multilateralism);
- Encouraging long term investments (for example, allowing the issuance of SDRs and its use through multilateral development banks);

IX. Developing the SDD network as an epistemic community, and a lab in itself, for multidisciplinary, multistakeholder, intergenerational conversation as well as a place for thinking out of the box, challenging the current narrative about global governance and democracy.