

Democracy 27 - Task Force members

The Democracy27 task force brings together people with first-hand experience across democratic life: public service, civil society, social movements, labour, business, media, technology, security, education, philanthropy and citizen participation. The diversity of the task force is central to the initiative because everyone experiences democracy differently.



Věra Jourová

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS, RULE OF LAW, PUBLIC TRUST, AI, CHILDREN'S ONLINE SAFETY AND TRUST IN INFORMATION

- *Chair of the task force; former European Commission Vice-President for Values and Transparency*

Věra Jourová is the former Vice President of the European Commission for Values and Transparency (2019-2024), dealing with democracy, rule of law, media pluralism and the fight against disinformation. Previously, she served as EU Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality. In 2019, Time magazine ranked Jourová in its list of 100 most influential people of the year, citing her role in the adoption of the General Data Protection Regulation and new privacy rights as European Commissioner.



Leo Varadkar

DEMOCRATIC INNOVATION, GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP, CITIZEN-INFORMED REFORM AND DEMOCRATIC DECISION-MAKING

- *Vice-Chair of the task force; former Taoiseach of Ireland*

Leo Varadkar has been a defining figure in modern Irish politics, serving twice as Taoiseach (Prime Minister). He championed the use of Citizens' Assemblies to inform major referenda, including the removal of the abortion ban and marriage equality. His government established an independent Electoral Commission and strengthened the regulation of political donations, including new restrictions on foreign funding of electoral campaigns.



Najat Vallaud-Belkacem

EDUCATION, INCLUSION, REPRESENTATION, CIVIC BELONGING AND SOCIAL COHESION

- *Vice-Chair of the task force; former French Minister of Education and Women's Rights*

Najat Vallaud-Belkacem is a former French minister, deeply committed to fundamental rights and freedoms. Now a senior civil servant, she chairs France Terre d'Asile, a leading association supporting asylum seekers. Previously, she

served as France's Minister of National Education, Higher Education and Research (2014-2017), and earlier as Minister of Women's Rights, where she worked to advance gender equality and social inclusion. She has also headed, for France, ONE Campaign, the international solidarity NGO dedicated to fighting extreme poverty and preventable diseases worldwide.



Oliver Röpke

LABOUR, SOCIAL DIALOGUE, ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY AND WORKPLACE PARTICIPATION

- member of the task force, union and economic democracy lead; director at the ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities and former President of the European Economic and Social Committee

Oliver Röpke is a former President of the European Economic and Social Committee and Director at the ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities. He brings experience in the labour movement, social dialogue and economic democracy to Democracy27, connecting democratic confidence to whether people feel voice, fairness and agency in their economic lives.



Emily O'Reilly

OPENNESS, FAIRNESS, ACCOUNTABILITY, OPEN GOVERNMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL TRUST

- member of the task force; former European Ombudsman and OGP Ambassador

Emily O'Reilly is the former European Ombudsman (since 2013-2025), responsible for investigating maladministration in EU institutions, promoting transparency and accountability. Previously, she served as Ireland's Ombudsman and Information Commissioner, focusing on access to information and public sector integrity. Since leaving office, she has remained active in international initiatives on open government and democratic standards. Currently she is an Ambassador for Open Government Partnership.



Arancha González Laya

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, DIPLOMACY, GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AND EUROPE'S DEMOCRATIC CREDIBILITY

- member of the task force; international cooperation lead; dean of the Paris School of International Affairs, Sciences Po; former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain

Arancha González Laya is a Spanish lawyer and diplomat, currently serving as Dean of the Paris School of International Affairs at Sciences Po - the first woman to lead the school. Previously, she served as Spain's Minister of Foreign Affairs, European

Union and Cooperation (2020–2021), and as Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of the International Trade Centre (2013–2020). She earlier spent eight years as Chief of Staff to the WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy, and began her career in senior roles at the European Commission covering international trade and development.



Michał Boni

TECHNOLOGY, DIGITAL GOVERNANCE, DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- *member of task force; technology and democracy lead; former Polish Minister of Digitisation and Member of the European Parliament*

Is a Polish politician, academic and digital governance pioneer. A Solidarity movement veteran and University of Warsaw PhD, he served as Poland's first Minister of Administration and Digitization (2011–2013) and as Head of Strategic Advisors to Prime Minister Donald Tusk, authoring the country's landmark Poland 2030 strategic document. From 2014 to 2019 he was a Member of the European Parliament, where he co-founded the Intergroup on the Digital Agenda for Europe, focusing on privacy, AI and digital rights.



Admiral (ret.) Rob Bauer

SECURITY, CIVIC RESILIENCE, PUBLIC CONSENT AND DEMOCRATIC PREPAREDNESS

- *member of task force; security lead; former Chair of the NATO Military Committee and former Chief of Defence of the Netherlands*

Admiral (ret.) Rob Bauer is a former Chair of the NATO Military Committee (2021–2025); NATO's highest military officer. Previously, he served as Chief of Defence of the Netherlands, where he oversaw the first period of investments after decades of cutbacks. Since 2025, he serves as an international advocate for a whole of society approach to resilience. He is the author of the book "If you want peace, prepare for war."



Luca Piwodda

YOUTH LEADERSHIP, LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND COMMUNITY-LEVEL PARTICIPATION

- *member of task force; young political leadership lead; Mayor of Gartz, Germany*

Luca Piwodda is a German politician. He became Mayor of Gartz, Oder in 2024, when he was 24 years old. He is also active in regional politics and civil society initiatives in the Uckermark, promoting youth participation and innovative forms of

community involvement. Previously, he founded the Partei des Fortschritts (PDF) and built early political experience through youth-led organising and local cultural initiatives in his hometown.



Ivan Krastev

EUROPEAN POLITICS, PUBLIC OPINION, DEMOCRATIC EXPECTATIONS AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

- member of task force; European politics and citizen participation lead; Chair of the Centre for Liberal Strategies in Sofia

Ivan Krastev is a Bulgarian political scientist and one of Europe's leading public intellectuals on democracy and liberal politics. He chairs the Centre for Liberal Strategies and is an Albert Hirschman Permanent Fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna. A founding board member of the European Council on Foreign Relations, his influential books — including *After Europe*, *The Light That Failed* (co-winner of the Lionel Gelber Prize), and *Is It Tomorrow Yet? How the Pandemic Changes Europe* — examine the crises of liberal democracy, populism, and trust in institutions. He is a contributing editor at the Financial Times.



Thomas Leysen

BUSINESS RESPONSIBILITY, MEDIA PLURALISM AND DEMOCRATIC INFRASTRUCTURE

- member of task force; business and media pluralism lead; entrepreneur and Chairman of Umicore, Mediahuis and Pluralis

Thomas Leysen is a Belgian businessman and Chairman of Umicore and the media group Mediahuis, which publishes newsbrands in The Netherlands, Belgium, Ireland, the UK, Luxemburg and Germany. He also chairs Pluralis, an impact investment fund to support media pluralism and safeguard editorial independence across Europe. Previously, he was CEO of Umicore and chair of the King Baudouin Foundation.



Madeleine De Cock Buning

DISINFORMATION, DIGITAL REGULATION, MEDIA LAW, INFORMATION INTEGRITY AND TRUSTWORTHY DIGITAL SPACES

- member of task force; disinformation and digital regulation lead; Professor of Digital Politics, Economy and Society at Utrecht University and the European University Institute; Chair of EDMO's Advisory Council; former Chair of the European Commission's High-Level Group on Fake News and Disinformation; former VP of Netflix

Madeleine De Cock Buning holds professorships at the European University Institute and Utrecht University and brings over two decades of leadership across public and private sectors at the intersection of technology, media and democracy. She has helped shape European policy on information integrity and European storytelling,

chair of the Advisory Council of EDMO and previously chaired ERGA and the European Commission's High Level Group on Disinformation, and former and was Vice President of Netflix.



David Van Reybrouck

DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY, CITIZENS' ASSEMBLIES, SORTITION AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

- member of task force; deliberation and sortition lead; Philosopher Laureate of the Low Countries, author of Against Elections and catalyst of the Democracy27 project

David Van Reybrouck is a Belgian author. His books include Revolusi, Congo and Against Elections. He is also Philosopher Laureate for the Netherlands and Flanders. He is a pioneering advocate of deliberative democracy and founded G1000. His work has led to trials in participatory democracy throughout Belgium, The Netherlands, and France.



Daniel Sachs

PHILANTHROPY, CIVIL SOCIETY SUPPORT AND DEMOCRATIC INFRASTRUCTURE

- member of task force; philanthropy and civil society infrastructure lead; Founder and CEO of P Capital Partners and Daniel Sachs Foundation; Vice Chair of the Open Society Foundations

Daniel Sachs is a Swedish business leader, investor and philanthropist working at the intersection of finance, democracy and inclusive growth. He is founder and CEO of P Capital Partners and is a prominent champion for democratic renewal in Europe. Through the Daniel Sachs Foundation, he works to strengthen democratic and institutional renewal and innovation, including through initiatives such as the Better Politics Foundation, Trustees, and F1RST.



Priscillia Ludosky

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, LOCAL VOICES, CITIZEN FRUSTRATION AND DEMOCRATIC VOICE

- member of task force; social movements lead; co-initiator of the Gilets Jaunes movement

Priscillia Ludosky is a French activist and co-initiator of the Yellow Vests (Gilets Jaunes) movement that emerged in 2018, she gained widespread recognition after launching a petition against rising fuel taxes that helped spark nationwide mobilization. She has since advocated for direct democracy, social justice, and fairer fiscal and environmental policies. As a member of the Citizen Vest Collective, she was among the initiators of the French Citizens' Convention on Climate (2019). She

is also involved in a researcher-led initiative to establish a Citizens' Assembly for Democracy, aimed at transforming France's democratic governance.



Mabel van Oranje

SOCIAL CHANGE, COALITION-BUILDING, RIGHTS ADVOCACY AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

- member of task force; social change entrepreneurship lead; founder and board chair emeritus of Girls Not Brides and Vow for Girls; advisor to The Elders

Mabel van Oranje is a Dutch advocate for equality, freedom and justice. She has (co)founded, led and advised numerous organisations and movements – including the European Council on Foreign Relations, Girls Not Brides: The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage, and The Elders. Mabel believes in the power of partnerships and collective action to drive change.