



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



with co-sponsor

newDEMOCRACY

Dear all,

As joint cohort sponsors, Ireland and the European Commission are officially launching the Cohort on Deliberative Democracy and Citizens' Assemblies as part of the Summit for Democracy year of action.

The weakening of democracy is a result of our fragmented and broken information system that leaves people less informed and more distrusting of elites, institutions and even their fellow citizens. The way to overcome this fear, distrust and

polarisation is to bring citizens into the policy- and decision-making processes of government.

In our representative democracy, the source of legitimacy is the people and for this democracy to remain strong and alive, it has become indispensable to integrate the people's voice in new and very transparent ways into the process of policy- and decision-making in between elections. Citizens' Assemblies provide an opportunity to create a diverse deliberative space with the objective of reaching collective recommendations from members of society whose paths rarely cross during their lifetimes. The collective character of the citizens' input is also important in an increasingly individualised society.

We have chosen to sponsor this cohort as we've both delivered major engagements in challenging policy areas using this method and found it to be transformational. We want to share this story.

We are looking to gather a group of like-minded countries that are interested in taking these conversations across borders and sharing leadership on developing a framework for future cooperation.

We are now asking for expressions of interest in joining our efforts to work together and finding practical and innovative approaches to:

- Building a general understanding of successful projects in this field, including at national level on highly contentious issues;
- Supporting national governments who are interested in the possibilities to take the first step; and
- Creating connections so there are paths to ongoing communities of discussion.

Attached please find a document with a high-level declaration for which we seek your support. The document also contains a range of model commitments on which Ireland, the European Commission and our specialist partners from across the world want to share with governments who are considering what commitments they make as part of the Summit as an infusion of new ideas which are simple to deliver and potentially significant in impact.

***We will formally launch our cohort with a virtual event on Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2023 – confirmation and further details will be issued in due course.***

If you are interest in joining our efforts, participating in any way or have any questions, please get in touch with [art.oleary@citizensassembly.ie](mailto:art.oleary@citizensassembly.ie) or [Gaetane.ricard-nihoul@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Gaetane.ricard-nihoul@ec.europa.eu) or [Iain.walker@newdemocracy.com.au](mailto:Iain.walker@newdemocracy.com.au)

We very much look forward to hearing from you.

*Signed*



**Dubravka Šuica**

European Commission Vice-President for Democracy and Demography



**Art O'Leary**

Secretary General, Electoral Commission of Ireland