



## RECONNECT: Reconciling Europe with its Citizens through Democracy and the Rule of Law

On 1 May 2018, the Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies (KU Leuven) and 17 partner institutions are launching RECONNECT, a four-year Horizon 2020 multidisciplinary research project on 'Reconciling Europe with its Citizens through Democracy and the Rule of Law'. With a focus on strengthening the EU's legitimacy through democracy and the rule of law, RECONNECT seeks to build a new narrative for Europe, enabling the EU to become more attuned to the expectations of its citizens.

RECONNECT's goals are more timely than ever. The EU is facing unprecedented challenges, with several recent crises revealing a disconnect between the concerns and expectations of European citizens and EU governance and policies. Distrust towards institutions has created a deepening divide between the Union and its citizens. Addressing this divide calls for a fundamental rethinking of the current democratic architecture of the EU and for a deeper commitment to the rule of law.

Firstly, RECONNECT will focus on the impact of potential inconsistencies arising between the EU Treaty principles of democracy and the rule of law, and the ways these are interpreted and applied across the EU. Secondly, RECONNECT aims to understand and explain citizens' perceptions of democracy and the rule of law, thereby assessing to which extent they align with or diverge from EU principles and practices. By placing citizens at the heart of its research and in order to address these mismatches, RECONNECT will formulate policy recommendations, develop communication strategies and propose Treaty changes, with the aim of enhancing the EU's legitimacy.

Professor Jan Wouters, coordinator of RECONNECT: *'The ultimate goal of RECONNECT is to create a new narrative for EU governance that is both a synthesis of the project's findings and an expression of a collective vision for the European Union's future, bridging the divide between the Union and its citizens. This narrative will seek to inspire and shape future debates, kindling a creative, innovative and inclusive process of reflection on the European project.'*

RECONNECT is led by the Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies at KU Leuven (<https://ghum.kuleuven.be/ggs>). It is joined by 17 academic partners from 14 countries: Åbo Akademi University (Turku), Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law (London), Lille Catholic University, Central European University (Budapest), Charles University (Prague), Institute of Public Goods and Policies (Spanish National Research Council, Madrid), LUISS Guido Carli (Rome), Middlesex University London, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (Trondheim), University of Cambridge, University of Gdańsk, University of Groningen, University of Helsinki, Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya, University of Münster, University of Vienna and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

The project will be officially launched on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018. For further information visit [www.reconnect-europe.eu](http://www.reconnect-europe.eu)

Should you have any further questions, please contact Prof. Dr. Jan Wouters, Jean Monnet Chair at KU Leuven and Coordinator of RECONNECT, at [jan.wouters@ggs.kuleuven.be](mailto:jan.wouters@ggs.kuleuven.be).