



TWIN4DEM

NEWSLETTER #1

JULY 2025

ABOUT TWIN4DEM

TWIN4DEM is a three-year HorizonEurope project coordinated by Erasmus University Rotterdam with a €3 million EU grant.

Primary objectives:

1. Identify the root causes of democratic backsliding with a focus on executive aggrandizement and threats to rule-of-law institutions.
2. Develop innovative tools and methodologies to enhance the transparency, effectiveness, and legitimacy of democratic processes.
3. Empower policymakers, civil society, and citizens with actionable insights and solutions to safeguard democracy.
4. Foster a sustainable open-source community to support long-term engagement and collaboration in democracy research.



FIRST PUBLIC EVENT

On January 29, 2025, TWIN4DEM's first public event in Rotterdam explored how digital twins can support democratic resilience, featuring expert talks, ethical debates, and interactive XR demos to reimagine civic engagement and policymaking.

ACHIVEMENTS OF THE FIRST 6 MONTHS

TWIN4DEM has kicked off key activities: launching its first stakeholder focus group, initiating multi-source data collection, developing advanced multilingual NLP tools to detect executive aggrandisement, and delivering an initial "toy" model of the Digital Twin to guide future simulations.

KICK-OFF MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Our journey began in the beautiful city of Rotterdam with a two-day in-person kick-off meeting in January 2025. Partners discussed the project's goals, structure, and expectations while setting the tone for collaborative, interdisciplinary, and impactful work.

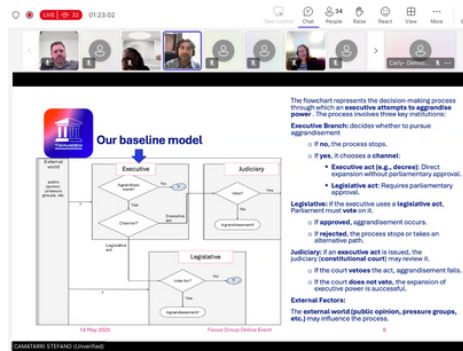
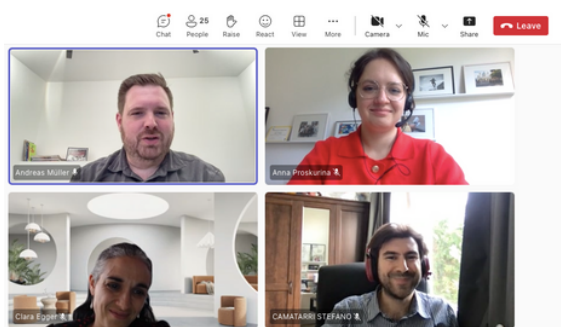
Work Packages were introduced, communication strategies were discussed, and the team explored opportunities for stakeholder engagement and knowledge exchange.

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FIRST FOCUS GROUP

On May 14, 2024, TWIN4DEM held its first transnational focus group, “Democracy in the Digital Age,” with 18 participants from partner countries. The session sparked rich discussions on executive aggrandisement, democratic accountability, and citizen engagement, revealing varied challenges across national contexts. Civil society was well represented, though engaging policymakers and journalists proved difficult—underscoring the democratic gaps the project seeks to address.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

- International Conference for Computational Social Science (IC2S2), 22-24 July 2025
- Public panel discussion on democratic innovations organised by Erasmus University Rotterdam, 25 September 2025
- Four onsite focus groups in case studies countries:
 - Lille/Paris, France, 23 September 2025
 - Rotterdam, the Netherlands, 25 September 2025
 - Prague, Czech Republic, 9 October 2025
 - Budapest, Hungary, 14 October
- Annual Conference of the Hungarian Sociological Association, “The Dismantling of Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe. Social Acceptance and Forms of Resistance”, 15-17 October 2025

CROSS-PROJECT COLLABORATION

TWIN4DEM is dedicated to enhancing its impact through collaboration and will actively engage with other projects and initiatives throughout its duration. The two sister projects of TWIN4DEM will strengthen our outreach through cross-dissemination, while also enabling structured knowledge exchange and benchmarking of results.



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