

NEWSLETTER #2

FEBRUARY 2026

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE FIRST YEAR

- Defined and operationalised executive aggrandisement, establishing the analytical **foundation of the Digital Twin** and ensuring realistic modelling of democratic power dynamics.
- Mapped **key political and institutional actors** across four case studies and identified structural and individual drivers shaping their behaviour.
- Validated and refined the model through country-level **focus groups**, integrating national expertise to ensure empirical grounding.
- Designed the Digital Twin architecture and modules and implemented an **initial integrated version** enabling dynamic actor interactions.
- Submitted **seven project deliverables**; all public deliverables are available on the project website.



2ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

On July 9, 2025, partners gathered online to review key milestones and next steps. The consortium was presented with the Data Management Plan and the Ethics Briefing Pack, followed by the Dissemination and Exploitation Plan.

JOIN NEXT ROUND OF FOCUS GROUPS

In March 2026, TWIN4DEM is hosting online focus groups in Czechia, France, the Netherlands, and Hungary. Participants will explore the latest updates to theoretical and computational models, test the project's interactive toy model, and provide feedback that directly informs its development.

We invite researchers, policymakers, civil society actors, and IT specialists to register and contribute to advancing digital twins for democratic governance.

[READ MORE](#) 

ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

The first Advisory Board meeting of the project was held online on 10 November 2025 and focused on the theme of detecting executive aggrandisement. Advisory Board members engaged in a structured discussion on the validity and completeness of the project's analytical framework, examining whether the identified motivations sufficiently capture the drivers of executive power expansion and highlighting additional factors such as informal networks, media influence, crisis dynamics, EU pressures and shifts in public opinion.

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ONSITE FOCUS GROUPS

The first round of in-person focus groups was conducted in Lille on 23 September 2025, Rotterdam on 25 September 2025, Prague on 9 October 2025 and Budapest on 14 October 2025. These sessions were designed to validate and refine policy scenarios related to executive aggrandisement, ensuring they reflect national political and institutional contexts. In each country, eight scenarios were discussed with participants, comprising four endogenous and four exogenous scenarios, allowing for a structured assessment of internal and external drivers of executive power expansion. The insights from the focus groups will be used to refine the project's analytical framework and country-specific indicators for detecting executive aggrandisement. They will also inform the development and validation of future scenarios, risk assessment tools, and policy-relevant recommendations in the next phases of the project.



EVENTS

- 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
- InnoComp2025, Research Projects Panel, 24 October 2025, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

POLICY ROUNDTABLE

TWIN4DEM project was invited by the EC to an online policy roundtable on 30 January 2026 titled *Exploring Horizons and Policy Implications in Computational Social Science*. The event brought together EU-funded research projects and European Commission representatives to discuss how computational social science can effectively inform EU policymaking.

WHAT'S NEXT

- Next online round of focus groups in March 2026
- 1st Policy Brief
- Next General Assembly in Prague, June 2026
- Development of application behind the conceptual model
- Participation in the Conference "Determinants of Non-Binding Judicial Review in the Dutch Council of State (2010–2025)"

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