

EU PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY FORUM

European Parliament | 29-30 September 2026

Draft Programme

DAY I

Pre-sessions (by invitation - for parliamentarians only)

09:00 – 10:30 | *Good practices and ongoing initiatives on electoral resilience and integrity (with the European Parliament's Special Committee on the European Democracy Shield)*

Members of EU National Parliaments, MEPs and national experts will discuss effective and innovative practices to enhance electoral integrity and democratic resilience. By showcasing national experiences and ongoing initiatives, the pre-session seeks to identify practical responses adapted to each country's electoral landscape and to foster mutual learning across the Union.

11:00 – 12:30 | *European Democracy Shield - Protecting the safety of political candidates and elected representatives (with the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, European Commission)*

Building on the discussions held during the 2025 EU Parliamentary Democracy Forum session on "Overcoming political polarisation", European and national parliamentarians will exchange views with the European Commission to inform the preparation of its forthcoming "Recommendation on safety in politics" and the dedicated "Guide of best practices", expected to be ready by the end of 2026.

13:00 – 14:00 | Welcome coffee

14:00 – 15:00 | Opening session

Opening addresses:

- ❖ **Roberta Metsola**, President of the European Parliament (TBC)
- ❖ **Verona Murphy**, TD, Ceann Comhairle, Houses of the Oireachtas (Speaker of the Lower House of the Irish Parliament)
- ❖ **VIP guest** (TBC)

15:00 – 16:30 | Session I: Mobilising a Whole-of-Society Approach to Safeguard Elections

This session will explore the main challenges facing elections across the EU and present the related proposals under the European Democracy Shield. It will examine how a whole-of-society approach to safeguarding elections can be put into practice. Participants will discuss the roles of parliaments, independent authorities, civil society and digital platforms in protecting electoral processes, as well as ways to strengthen citizens' engagement in elections.

16:30 – 17:00 | Coffee break

17:00 – 18:30 | Session II: EU strategy for civil society

The session will examine the EU Civil Society Strategy as a key instrument to reinforce democratic resilience across the Union. It will explore how stronger protection and support for civil society organisations can help safeguard civic space and will also focus on the political responsibilities of the European Parliament and national parliaments in this area. Finally, participants will consider how to embed meaningful and sustained participation of civil society in EU and national democratic decision-making, going beyond ad-hoc consultations.

18:30 – 20:00 | Networking dinner

DAY II

08:45 – 09:30 | Welcome coffee

09:30 – 09:40 | Video message by Professor Timothy Snyder, historian, author and Chair in Modern European History at the University of Toronto

09:40 – 11:10 | Session III: From legislation to implementation: strengthening parliamentary oversight at EU and national level

This session will examine parliamentary oversight as a key instrument to reinforce the role of parliaments vis-à-vis the executive in a challenging geopolitical context. It will explore how stronger oversight can enhance democratic accountability and increase citizens' trust. Participants will also discuss approaches to ensure the effective implementation of EU legislation, including improved coordination between the European Parliament, national parliaments and civil society actors.

11:10 – 11:45 | Coffee break

11:45 – 13:15 | Session IV: Defending democracy amid geopolitical disruption: towards a Team Europe parliamentary diplomacy approach

This session will provide an opportunity to exchange best practices in parliamentary diplomacy across the EU and to examine its role in countering democratic backsliding in a context of fragmentation and geopolitical instability. Participants will explore ways to strengthen cooperation between EU national parliaments and the European Parliament and discuss how to better coordinate parliamentary diplomacy tools under a Team Europe approach.

13:15 – 14:00 | Exchange of views with Michael McGrath, Commissioner for Democracy, Justice, the Rule of Law and Consumer Protection

14:00 – 14:15 | Closing remarks

Speakers:

- ❖ **Esteban González Pons**, Vice-President for Relations with National Parliaments, European Parliament
- ❖ **Katarina Barley**, Vice-President for Relations with National Parliaments, European Parliament

14:15 – 15:30 | Networking lunch
