

## The aim of We-ID is:

- to establish the links between identities, belonging, cohesion and democracy
- under the conditions of ongoing migration
- in order to develop a concept for resilient democratic communities (ReDeCos)
- culminating in recommendations for action
- to protect democracies, support social and territorial cohesion and **build a diverse Europe together.**



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Bocconi  
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for Research on Social Dynamics  
and Public Policy



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## Identities Migration Democracy

Cohesion through  
resilient democratic  
communities

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## Background and Ambition

European societies are undergoing a profound demographic transformation. At the same time, challenges such as climate change, the Covid-19 pandemic along with the associated economic crisis, the war in Ukraine and the crisis of the rule of law are putting pressure on Europe's integration processes. These crises are exacerbating lines of conflict that often run along issues of identity and democracy.

The European Union's promise of prosperity and security is based on the principle of „unity in diversity“ and the guarantee of fundamental freedoms, rights and democratic participation of its citizens. At the same time, democracies are in crisis. Populist parties are spreading the narrative that migration leads to a loss of identity. There is no doubt that migration raises the question of identity and belonging.



**How do we organize integration and participation in such a way that cohesion is created despite diverse identities?**

*»The cohesion of our society will depend crucially on how well we can utilise the potential of a diverse population while promoting stable, democratic structures locally. This is the only way to prevent these changes from becoming a threat to democracy in Europe.« Claudia Neu*

## The Project

A new EU joint research project led by the University of Göttingen is specifically designed to analyse the transformation of individual and collective identities, social cohesion and democracy in the midst of migration, demographic change and current crises in Europe.

**A key objective is to find out how resilient democratic structures can strengthen local communities.**

We-ID follows an innovative research path by



analysing the impact of migration on identities, belonging, cohesion and democracy, taking into account both the impact on host communities and the changes in the identities of migrants and their descendants, and



elaborating the interrelationship between identities, cohesion, resilience and democracy

The project takes an inter- and transdisciplinary approach, involving researchers from the fields of sociology, demography, psychology, geography and political science, as well as a range of practitioners from local government and civil society.

## Conceptual Framework

The research questions will be addressed using mixed methods. The project will build on European and regional datasets on population trends, the development of political processes, regional disparities and identities.

In addition to quantitative data analysis, the project will use qualitative methods at the local level to look for factors that strengthen resilient democratic communities.

By consistently pursuing a transdisciplinary approach within our Policy, Advocacy and Research Lab (We-PARL) throughout the project, it will create a platform for mutual learning between different stakeholders from the European to the local level, while at the same time contributing to evidence-based and thoroughly discussed policy recommendations. The We-PARL will be composed of academics, policy makers and civil society .

In addition, based on the findings, We-ID will develop a concept **for resilient democratic communities (ReDeCos)** and develop a Civic Competences Toolbox (CCT) to strengthen local actors (We-SCOUTS).

