

Research and Innovation for Horizon Europe Cluster 2 (2021-2025)

CULTURE, CREATIVITY AND AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

August 2026



Cluster 2 research and innovation help respond to global challenges affecting our lives

Geopolitical instability, economic transformation and climate change are some key drivers reshaping the way people live, work, and participate in society. Some **global societal challenges** caused by these transformations are visible in Europe, such as rising social and economic inequalities, demographic pressure, declining trust in democratic institutions, climate-related threats to cultural heritage or maintaining the competitiveness of cultural and creative industries (CCIs).

Cluster 2 of Horizon Europe supports **research and innovation** to strengthen democracy in Europe and beyond, promote inclusive and culturally rich societies, and help them adapt to the major social transformations of our time. Over the last five years, investment in these areas has led to an impressive **portfolio of EU-funded collaborative projects**, which are achieving results and have a potential for impact. This factsheet outlines the areas Cluster 2 invested in, the types of stakeholders generating knowledge and delivering solutions, and the size of the investment. The final two years of Horizon Europe will provide new opportunities for applicants to address unmet challenges.

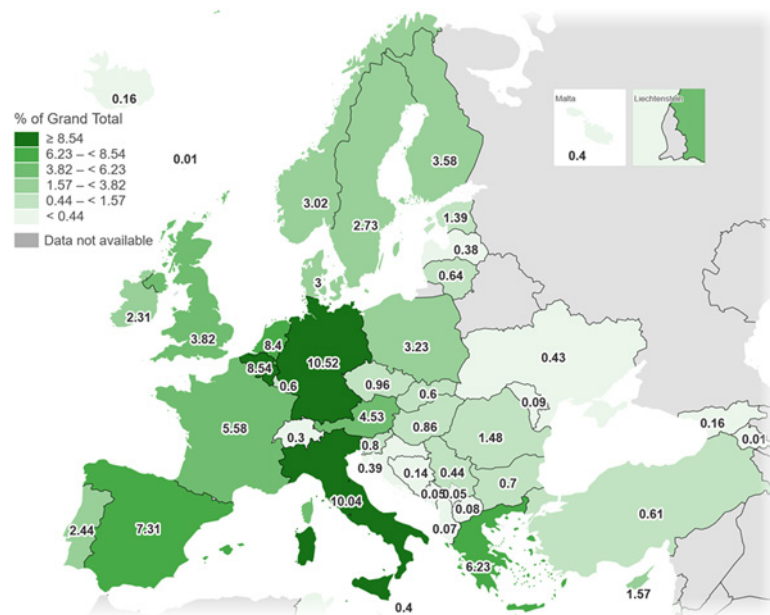
Since 2021, Cluster 2 has funded new knowledge & solutions for a budget exceeding € 1.3 billion:

	3.602 proposals submitted ¹ (2021-25)	407 projects funded	EU budget ²
Democracy & Governance	1,117	133	€ 400.87 mil.
Cultural Heritage & CCIs:	1,391	130	€ 538.99 mil.
Social & Economic Transformations	1,094	144	€ 434.66 mil.

¹ Source: CORDA – Figures remain provisional until all grant agreements for 2025 are concluded. Statistics and figures in this factsheet do not include call HORIZON-CL2-2025-02-TWO-STAGE.

² Requested EU contribution.

Share of Participant Requested EU contribution (2021-2025)



Note: i) While the Grant Agreements of the 2025 main call aren't signed, the figures remain provisional. ii) Data on 2025 excludes the two stage call. Source: CORDA

Administrative boundaries: © EuroGeographics © OpenStreetMap
Cartography: Eurostat – IMAGE, 03/2026
Kosovo* - This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Participants by country group

Participants' total EU budget:

€ 1,374,520,319.43

EU Member States:

89.22%

Associated Countries:

10.25%

Third Countries/Territories:

0.53%



Which areas are supported by Cluster 2 research?

Democracy & Governance: Tackling threats to democracy, supporting the resilience of democratic systems, rebuilding citizens' trust in institutions and promoting gender equality and political participation.

Cultural Heritage & the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs): Boosting sustainable growth and job creation through CCIs, digitizing our cultural heritage and promoting the role of culture and the arts for well-being, the social economy and society. The Cluster is building a **multi-country Partnership for a Resilient Cultural Heritage**.

Social and Economic Transformations: tackling social and economic inequalities (particularly in employment, education, mental health and well-being) and understanding how technological, climate, economic and demographic changes impact society. The Cluster is building a **multi-country Partnership on Social and Economic Transformations**.

Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH)³ research is essential for a sustainable future and to address complex global challenges:

- **It helps us understand each other** and our societies by bringing together experts and stakeholders from different parts of the world. It helps reduce bias, conflict and polarization.
- **It improves policy and innovation outcomes**, by making sure they are ethical, inclusive, and accepted by citizens. Technology and policies should work in real life.
- **It guides us in addressing complex societal challenges** which cannot be solved by technology alone. It mitigates the risk of leaving people or segments of the population behind.



³ Because of its importance, SSH is also integrated in other parts of Horizon Europe, primarily in other Clusters of Pillar II (for more info, visit the [webpage dedicated to SSH Integration](#)).

What are the unique features of research and innovation results funded by Cluster 2 projects?

- They **contribute to societal goals** such as reducing poverty, improving education, promoting equality, protecting cultural heritage, supporting CCIs and building strong democratic institutions.
- They use expertise from **Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH)** to better understand the impacts of transformations on people and society.
- They mobilise Civil Society Organisations, citizens and policymakers to support **evidence-based decisions** at the local, regional, national and EU levels.

Universities, businesses, public authorities, and citizens collaborate to increase acceptance and societal value of R&I (Participants per type of organisation 2021-25):

Type of organisation	Number of participations	Share of EU contribution (% of grand total)	Type of organisation (% of grand total)
Higher or Secondary Education	2,244	50.55%	70.02%
Research Organisation	885	20.73%	19.66%
Private for Profit	718	11.65%	7.37%
Public Body	319	4.90%	0.25%
Other	883	12.17%	2.70%

Types of organisations:

- **Higher or Secondary Education Establishments**
- **Research Organisation:** public research centres, private non-profit research centres, international research centres, Joint Research Centre
- **Private for Profit:** private for-profit entities, consultancy firms, private/commercial research centres, excluding higher or secondary education establishments
- **Public Body:** public bodies (excluding research organisations and secondary or higher education establishments)
- **Other:** e.g. not-for-profit organisations, trade associations, civil society organisations, non-research private non-profit, non-research international organisations, organisation type not defined, etc.



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