

# Doing Democracy – Connecting Academia and Civil Society Across Borders



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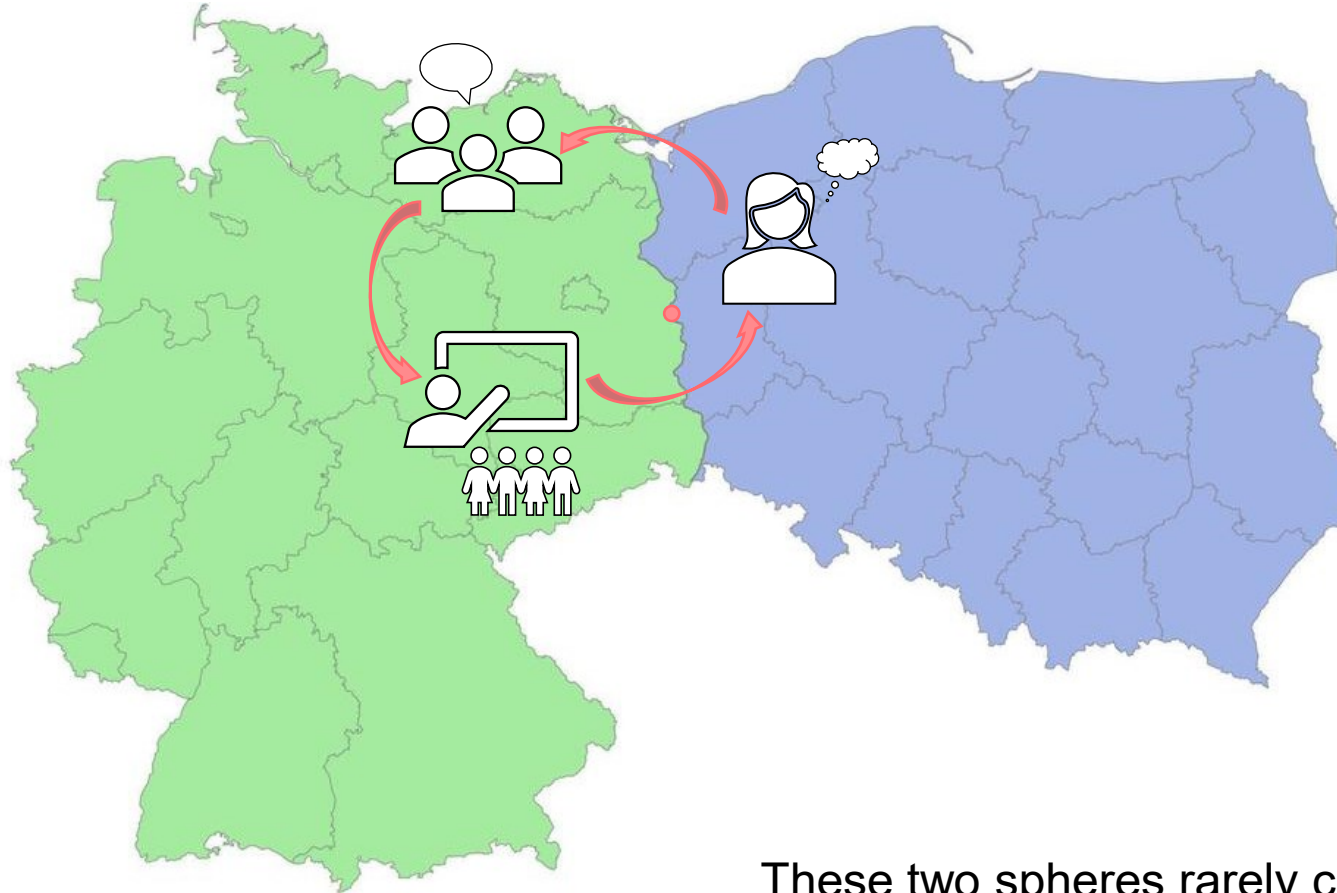
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# The Gap between Democracy Research and Practice

**Civil Society** organizations often serve as the first line of democratic resilience.

**Universities** produce valuable knowledge that could support this work.



These two spheres rarely cooperate in a structured or sustainable way.

# The Gap between Democracy Research and Practice

## Reasons for this gap

- Different languages and discourse cultures
- Different working routines and institutional habits
- Existing hierarchies between academia and practice

The Response: DOING DEMOCRACY responds to both an academic and a practical need

- Instead of focusing primarily on anti-democratic actors, the project shifts attention to:
  - actors supporting democracy
  - the tools and practices of democracy work
  - concrete measures that strengthen democratic culture

→ Create spaces of exchange where research and practice meet, learn from each other, and jointly develop approaches to democracy support.

# The Gap between Democracy Research and Practice

Polish–German relations:

- Strong infrastructure of cross-border civil society networks
- Polish–German youth exchange is particularly well established

However:

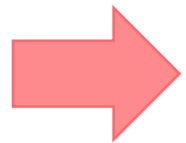
- Student mobility between Polish and German universities is less developed
- Joint academic conferences are relatively rare
- Researchers often meet only at general international conferences, not in structured bilateral formats.

# Doing Democracy – Connecting Academia and Civil Society Across Borders

Pioneering work in a complex cross-border environment:

Cooperation between **academia and civil society** and collaboration across **national borders** are still the **exception rather than the rule**.

By bringing these actors together, the initiative aims to build new connections, shared knowledge, and stronger democratic networks.



Strengthening democracy today requires not only analyzing its threats, but also connecting the people who actively defend and practice it — across disciplines, sectors, and borders.


SAVE THE DATE

# DOING DEMOCRACY:

Connecting Academia and Civil Society Across Borders

Two days full of impulses, dialogue, and networking – across the German-Polish border.

 23-24 April 2026

 Frankfurt (Oder) & Słubice



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VIADRINA  
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