



**Maastricht Centre  
for European Law**

## MCEL Master Thesis project 2025/2026 'The EU and Democracy in the Member States'

The MCEL Master Thesis project **'The EU and Democracy in the Member States'** brings together **highly motivated students** and **expert staff members** of the Maastricht Centre for European Law (MCEL), as well as other relevant staff of the Law Faculty and external speakers.

EU institutions are showing a growing interest in national democratic processes and more generally the state of democracy in EU Member States. The EU interest is not only driven by constitutional crises in certain Member States, but also by broader horizontal concerns with democratic threats arising from private actors, including tech giants, and foreign interference. These developments raise interesting and pressing legal questions. By focusing on 'The EU and Democracy in the Member States' this year's MCEL master thesis project provides you with the opportunity to engage with these important legal and societal developments. Within the project you can write a thesis on a wide variety of issues. For example, topics could cover, but are not limited to:

- The interplay between key EU constitutional principles and national democratic standards;
- Legislative and policy responses to democratic backsliding in Member States;
- Judicial protection of democracy in Member States;
- The protection and promotion of subnational democracy;
- Democratic legitimacy of the EU in substantive policy fields (e.g. migration, trade, fiscal and macroeconomic policy, environment, etc.);
- Digital democracy in the EU;
- Disinformation and other threats to media pluralism;
- The relationship between EU citizenship and democratic principles;
- EU protection of democratic principles and respect for national identity;
- National implementation of EU legislation aimed to protect democracy.

## Are you eager to write about EU and Democracy in the Member States? Then apply for the MCEL Master Thesis project!

### Your benefits:

By joining the MCEL Master Thesis project, you will write your own thesis but be part of an **inspiring research community** and work closely together with other participating students as well as **MCEL members**. You will meet and get the opportunity to discuss with both internal and external experts and access additional seminars to help you develop your project.

In particular, as a member of the Master Thesis project, you will benefit from the following:

- MCEL student membership, giving you access to MCEL's **monthly research seminars** with external speakers;
- Additional workshops during the year with other participating students to discuss your research and writing progress;
- A final certificate to enrich your CV;
- Selected theses will be published as part of the [MCEL Master Working Paper Series](#) to increase the scientific and social impact of your work.

### Application:

Participation in the project is limited to a select number of students and applications will be considered on a competitive basis. Applications must consist of all the following elements:

- Your personal information (name, student number, a mention of which Master programme you enrolled in, and a 150-word maximum bio note);
- A short motivation letter (max. 1 page);
- Your research proposal; and
- The name of your confirmed thesis supervisor.

Applications must be submitted by **28 November 2025** to [mcel@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:mcel@maastrichtuniversity.nl). Incomplete applications will not be considered. Please use the subject 'MCEL thesis project' for your email.

For further information, please contact Nora Vissers ([n.vissers@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:n.vissers@maastrichtuniversity.nl)) or Eleonora Di Franco ([e.difranco@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:e.difranco@maastrichtuniversity.nl)).