# Monitoring the Implementation of the Draghi Report on EU Competitiveness: Information on methods used

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# 1. Introduction

The Draghi Report Implementation Index developed by EPIC and Center for Liberal Studies (KEFIM) aims to systematically assess the adoption of the Draghi Report proposals, offering a robust theoretical and conceptual evaluation framework. The key concepts and methods of the project are based on the (adaptation of) pledge–enactment method, a widely used framework in academic research to identify the promise of policy linkage (Thomson, 2011; Naurin et al., 2018) merged with a panel of experts, which assesses the progress of the implementation of the suggested policies. This report aims to present how these concepts and methods, in which we base our methodology, are used internationally.

# 2. Conceptual and theoretical framework: the pledge enactment method to assess governments' policy implementation

## 2.1. The pledge enactment method in academia research and literature

The methodology we build on has its roots in a long tradition of research on the fulfillment of political pledges, which laid the groundwork for the Comparative Party Pledges Project (CPP),[1] a large-scale comparative research across more than a dozen democracies. The first major comparative synthesis (which was based on earlier publication on specific countries) appeared in Robert Thomson and colleagues' article The Fulfillment of Parties' Election Pledges: A Comparative Study on the Impact of Power Sharing (2017, American Journal of Political Science). This study drew on more than 20,000 pledges from 57 election campaigns across 12 countries and demonstrated that governing parties were far more likely to fulfill their commitments than parties excluded from executive office, and that power-sharing arrangements strongly shaped the probability of implementation.

Building on this work, Elin Naurin, Terry Royed, and Robert Thomson edited the volume Party Mandates and Democracy: Making, Breaking and Keeping Election Pledges in Twelve Countries (2019, University of Michigan Press). This book represents the most comprehensive cross-national comparison to date, covering cases as diverse as the United States, Canada, nine Western European countries, and Bulgaria.

Alongside these major comparative outputs, there is a flourishing set of country-specific

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[1]https://comparativepledges.net/publications/

projects. In Austria, Katrin Praprotnik and Laurenz Ennser-Jedenastik have compiled data on government and opposition parties from 1971 to 2015, showing how coalition bargaining and resource constraints affect pledge outcomes (e.g. Praprotnik 2017; Schermann & Ennser-Jedenastik 2014). In Sweden, Elin Naurin leads a long-running project covering all parliamentary parties' pledges since 1991, with detailed fulfillment analysis for governments since 1994. In the United States, researchers such as E.J. Fagan and Petia Kostadinova have created a new dataset spanning party pledges from 1948 to 2016, linking pledge-making to agenda-setting. In India, Robert Thomson and collaborators have extended pledge research to cover parliamentary elections between 1999 and 2019, producing some of the first systematic evidence on pledge fulfillment outside Western democracies (Adhikari, Mariam & Thomson 2022). Similar projects exist in Portugal (Belchior 2019, 2022; Borghetto & Belchior 2020), Germany and France (Deiss-Helbig, Guinaudeau & Matthieß), and Canada, where François Pétry and colleagues have built the Polimeter database to track government promises (Birch & Pétry 2019; Birch et al. 2022).

**Graph 1. Comparative Pledges Project (CPP)**



The Comparative Pledges Project (CPP) is an international network of researchers who study the promises that political parties make to citizens during election campaigns.

Campaign promises or election pledges are important to the functioning of representative democracy. By making pledges on the future direction of government policy during election campaigns, and fulfilling those pledges if elected to govern, parties link public opinion to public policies. Ensuring a strong connection between public opinion and government policies is a fundamental democratic ideal.

The Comparative Pledges Project (CPP) is an international network of researchers who study election pledges in a wide range of countries. CPP researchers coordinate their research practices, including how they identify and code pledges, to ensure that their findings are as comparable as possible across countries. The researchers identify election pledges based on a common definition of pledges that requires those commitments to be testable, and they assess whether those pledges are fulfilled or broken using similar standards of evidence.

Today, the CPP network connects more than 60 researchers who are studying election pledges in 16 countries around the world. The researchers have produced both detailed country studies and comparative studies that draw on the evidence from these individual studies. This website contains further information on relevant publications, ongoing projects and upcoming events.

Source: Comparative Pledges Project (CPP).

Table 1 presents an indicative, and not full, list of academic studies on election pledges fulfillment

**Table 1. Indicative list of academic studies on election pledges fulfillment**

| Country | Period | Studies |
|---|---|---|
| Spain | 2004–2008 | Artés (2011) |
| Ireland | 2007 | Costello & Thomson (2008) |
| Canada | 1988–2015 | Duval & Pétry (2019) |
| Bulgaria | 1997–2005 | Kostadinova (2013) |
| Portugal | 1995–2011 | Moury & Fernandes (2016) |
| | 2005–2011 | Serra-Silva & Belchior (2020) |
| Sweden | 1994–2006 | Naurin (2014) |
| | 1991–2006 | Thomson et al. (2017) |
| Turkey | 2002–2011 | Toros (2015) |
| USA | 1980s | Royed (1996) |
| | 1970s–2000s | Thomson et al. (2010) |
| United Kingdom | 1980s | Royed (1996) |
| | 1970s–2000s | Thomson et al. (2010) |
| Netherlands | 1970s–2000s | Thomson et al. (2010) |
| India | 2014–2019 | Adhikari et al. (2024) |
| | vs. Western | Adhikari et al. (2022) |
| Germany | 1980s–2010s | Thomson et al. (2017) |
| Austria | 1999–2008 | Thomson et al. (2017) |
| Luxembourg | Various | Thomson et al. (2017) |
| France | 1990s–2010s | Thomson et al. (2017) |
| Italy | 1990s–2010s | Thomson et al. (2017) |
| Denmark | 1990s–2010s | Thomson et al. (2017) |

*Source:* Author's elaboration.

## 2.2. The pledge enactment method in observatories for current governments

In recent years, the study of electoral pledges has evolved from academic datasets into the development of live, publicly accessible observatories that systematically monitor governments in real time. These initiatives combine scholarly methodology with journalistic and civic engagement, providing citizens, journalists, and policymakers with transparent information on government performance.

In Canada, pledge monitoring has been institutionalized through the Polimeter project, a joint initiative between the Center for Public Policy Analysis (CAPP) in the Université Laval and Vox Pop Labs.[2] The Polimeter covers both federal governments (e.g., Trudeau's Liberal governments since 2015) and provincial governments (including Quebec's CAQ and PLQ governments), and has produced systematic coding of hundreds of promises across multiple mandates. The project is anchored at Université Laval and Université

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[2]Polimeter: https://www.polimeter.org/en.

de Montréal and has generated a substantial scholarly output, including major edited volumes (Birch & Pétry 2019; Birch et al. 2022) and dozens of peer-reviewed articles. To date, more than one hundred academic publications have been linked to the Polimeter, making it the most prolific live observatory of pledges worldwide (Graph 2).[3]

**Graph 2. Polimeter website in Canada**
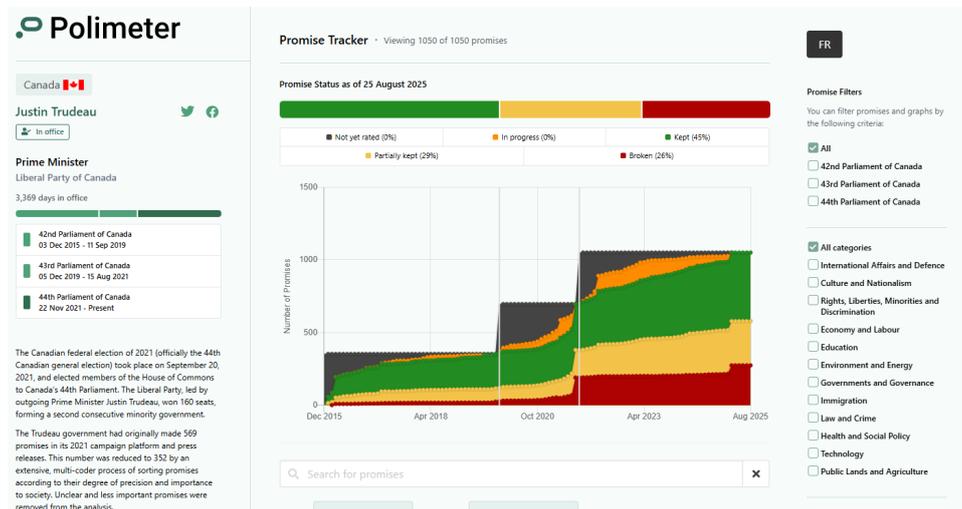


Source: Polimeter.

In the United States, a different model is exemplified by PolitiFact, a journalistic initiative launched in 2007 by the Tampa Bay Times and now operated by the Poynter Institute.[4] While not an academic project, PolitiFact's "Truth-O-Meter" has become a widely cited reference for fact-checking political statements, campaign promises, and government performance. Its categories ("Promise Kept," "Compromise," "Promise Broken," etc.) reflect the same logic as pledge-enactment methodology, applied in real time for a general audience (Graph 3).

In Australia, RMIT University created the Election Promise Tracker, which follows the progress of sixty-six key commitments made by the Australian Labor Party before the 2022 federal election.[5] Launched in 2023, the tracker is maintained by the RMIT Information Integrity Hub, with support from the Australian Research Council Discovery Project "Promissory Democratic Representation: Campaign Promises in Australia". It records promises as delivered, stalled, or abandoned, and provide a final accounting at the next federal election (Graph 4).

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[3]For a full publication list, see: https://www.poltext.org/en/publications-des-membres-de-lequipe.

[4]PolitiFact methodology: https://www.politifact.com/article/2018/feb/12/principles-truth-o-meter -politifacts-methodology-i/.

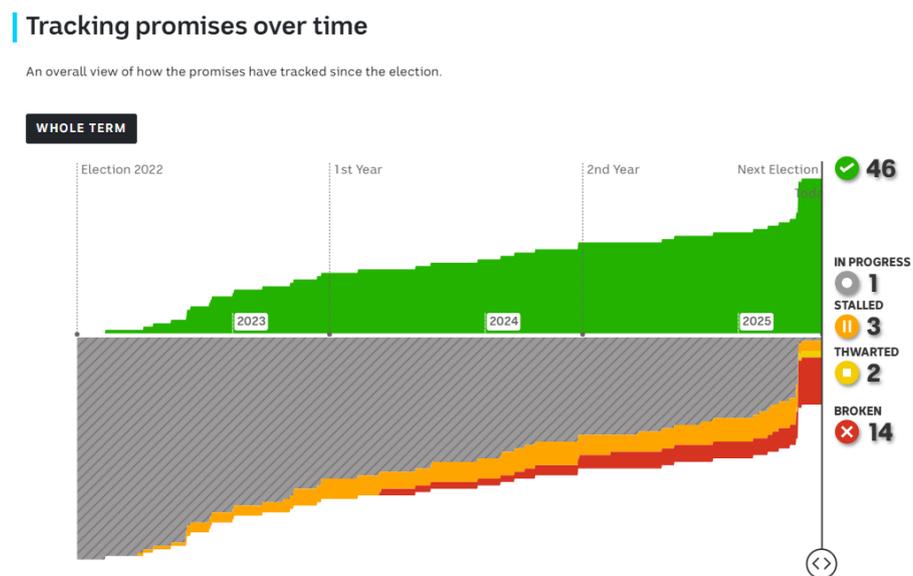[5]See RMIT ABC Fact Check's Election Promise Tracker: https://www.rmit.edu.au/news/promise-t racker.

**Graph 3. PolitiFact website in US**



Source: PolitiFact.

**Graph 4. Election Promise Tracker website in Australia**



Source: Election Promise Tracker.

# 3. The panel of experts' method of assessment

## 3.1. Panel of experts in academic literature

In the field of social sciences (and in particular the measurement of democracy), the *Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem)* Institute at the University of Gothenburg has pioneered perhaps the most sophisticated use of expert-coded data. V-Dem relies on over 4,000 country experts worldwide who provide judgments on more than 470 indicators of democracy, ranging from electoral integrity to civil liberties. These ratings are aggregated using a Bayesian item-response model that estimates both expert reliability and scale perception, thereby weighting contributions differentially to improve validity and comparability.[6] The model is strengthened by the use of anchoring vignettes and overlapping coding across countries and experts, allowing for robust correction of biases.

Building on V-Dem's infrastructure, the DEMED–V-Dem joint project has recently launched a large-scale effort to collect data on education policies in every country in the world.[7] Hundreds of education specialists are being recruited to assess indicators such as curriculum centralisation, political education in schools, teacher training, and monitoring practices. This collaboration extends the use of expert-coded surveys beyond democracy to the field of education policy, with the aim of constructing the world's most comprehensive database on primary and secondary education governance.

Another leading example is the *Chapel Hill Expert Survey* (CHES), coordinated by teams at the University of North Carolina and European partner institutions. Since 1999, CHES has surveyed hundreds of political scientists on the ideological and policy positions of political parties across Europe. The 2024 wave alone collected responses from 609 experts covering 279 parties in 31 countries, making CHES the longest-running expert survey of its kind. It provides comparative data on party positions regarding ideology, populism, democracy, European integration, and a wide range of EU policy issues.[8]

In economics, expert panel methods have also been institutionalized through the *US and European Economic Experts Panels* run by the Clark Center for Global Markets at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business. These panels regularly poll more than 80 leading economists on timely issues such as inflation, fiscal rules, or innovation policy. Respondents not only provide judgments on the expected effects of policies but can also add comments and links to resources. Results are communicated to the public

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[6]V-Dem methodology description: https://www.v-dem.net/about/v-dem-project/methodology/

[7]Call for Country Experts in Education: https://www.gla.ac.uk/research/az/democracyresearch/dataandmethods/v-indocdataset/callforexperts/.

[8]See CHES 2024 survey description: https://www.chesdata.eu/2024-chapel-hill-expert-survey-ches

in a concise, accessible format.[9]

In health and implementation science, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs funded the *Expert Recommendations for Implementing Change* (ERIC) project, which systematically engaged implementation scientists and clinical managers to generate recommendations for evidence-based practices across VA healthcare settings. ERIC combined web-based modified Delphi surveys, concept mapping, and structured consensus processes, demonstrating how expert panels can be mobilized to reduce uncertainty in implementation strategy selection.[10]

## 3.2. Panel of experts in the policy sector and NGOs

Expert panels have also become central to the production of global governance indicators by international NGOs and think tanks. The *World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index*, for instance, combines household surveys with inputs from more than 300 local experts per country, who provide assessments on 47 sub-factors ranging from corruption to access to justice. These judgments are aggregated, normalized, and cross-validated with external data to create annually comparable country scores[11].

Similarly, the *Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index* relies primarily on assessments by in-house country experts, supplemented by citizen survey data, to produce an annual five-dimensional measure of democratic quality. This index has become one of the most widely cited tools for tracking democratic backsliding worldwide[12].

The *Freedom in the World* report, coordinated by Freedom House since the 1970s, uses panels of regional experts and in-house analysts to evaluate political rights and civil liberties in more than 190 countries. Draft scores are reviewed in structured deliberations that involve both external specialists and Freedom House staff before being finalized into the annual ratings of "Free," "Partly Free," and "Not Free"[13].

Finally, the *World Press Freedom Index*, produced by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), relies on expert surveys of journalists, media professionals, and researchers to assess con-

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[9]Clark Center for Global Markets, Economic Experts Panel: https://kentclarkcenter.org/surveys/constraints-on-innovation-in-europe/.

[10]See Waltz, T. et al. (2015). Innovative methods for using expert panels in identifying implementation strategies and obtaining recommendations for their use. *Implementation Science*, 10(Suppl 1):A44. https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4551718/

[11]World Justice Project (2024), Rule of Law Index Methodology, https://worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index/downloads/Index-Methodology-2024.pdf.

[12]Economist Intelligence Unit, Democracy Index 2024, https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2024/.

[13]Freedom House, Freedom in the World Methodology, https://freedomhouse.org/reports/freedom-world/freedom-world-research-methodology.

ditions of press freedom in over 180 countries. Responses are aggregated into composite scores across political, legal, economic, social, and security indicators.[14]

Tables 2 and 3 present indicative lists of academic, research and NGOs / policy projects using expert panels.

**Table 2. Indicative list of academic and research projects using expert panels**

| Project | Institution | Expert panel use |
|---|---|---|
| Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) | University of Gothenburg | Over 4,000 country experts worldwide assess more than 470 democracy indicators. Uses anchoring vignettes and Bayesian models to adjust for bias and reliability. |
| DEMED–V-Dem Education Project | University of Gothenburg + DEMED (University of Glasgow) | Hundreds of education experts evaluate indicators on curriculum centralisation, political education, teacher training, and governance of schools. Aims to build the largest global education policy dataset. |
| Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) | University of North Carolina + European partners | Since 1999, surveys political scientists on party positions across Europe. The 2024 wave covered 609 experts and 279 parties in 31 countries. |
| Economic Experts Panels | Clark Center for Global Markets, University of Chicago Booth School | Polls 80+ leading economists in US and Europe on current policy issues (inflation, fiscal rules, innovation). |
| Expert Recommendations for Implementing Change (ERIC) | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs | Implementation scientists and clinical managers identify and prioritize healthcare reforms via Delphi surveys, concept mapping, and structured consensus. |

*Source:* Author's elaboration.

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[14]Reporters Without Borders, World Press Freedom Index 2025, https://rsf.org/en/rsf-world-press-freedom-index-2025-economic-fragility-leading-threat-press-freedom.

**Table 3. Indicative list of NGOs and policy-sector projects using expert panels**

| Project | Institution | Expert panel use |
|---|---|---|
| Rule of Law Index | World Justice Project | Combines household surveys with inputs from 300+ country experts per state on 47 sub-factors (e.g., corruption, access to justice). Data cross-validated and normalized. |
| Democracy Index | Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) | In-house country experts, supplemented by citizen surveys, evaluate democracy across five sub-indices (electoral, civil liberties, participation, deliberation, functioning). |
| Freedom in the World | Freedom House | Regional experts and in-house analysts evaluate political rights and civil liberties. Draft scores reviewed in structured deliberations before annual ratings ("Free," "Partly Free," "Not Free"). |
| World Press Freedom Index | Reporters Without Borders (RSF) | Surveys of journalists, media experts, and researchers. Aggregates expert ratings across political, legal, economic, social, and security conditions for press freedom. |

*Source:* Author's elaboration.