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From:	Presidency of the Council of the European Union
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Citizens' Consultations - Executive Summaries

At their informal meeting on 23 February 2018, the European Heads of State and Government agreed to launch a pan-European process of citizens' consultations, according to their national context and practices, with participation on a voluntary basis. The process is intended to promote engagement with citizens and contribute to the debate on the future of Europe. This is in line with the leaders' intention, stressed in the Bratislava declaration, to focus on citizens' expectations. The enclosed executive summaries reflect the consultations effort carried out in the different Member States.

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BELGIUM

Executive Summary

Belgium has a long standing tradition in conversing with its citizens about Europe. Europe in all its facets is part of the curriculum from primary schools to universities. Those European citizens consultations came on top of that, and have raised some expectations as to their follow-up.

The main conclusions that can be drawn are: membership of the European Union was never challenged. Participants were well aware that some issues could be solved only at the European level. They focused on the need to develop the social pillar of the European Union, and questioned the sustainability of our growth model. Fight against climate change is seen as the key issue to be addressed. Participants are aware of the necessity to think global and act local. The importance of defending our values and the rule of law was a recurrent issue. Finally, the need for a more transparent decision making process was often stressed.

Methodology of the consultations

The citizens consultations in Belgium were based on three pillars: first, building on the long standing tradition in conversing with the citizens about Europe, it was decided to gather as many actors as possible already active in the field. Second, specific roundtables were organized and third, participation in the online questionnaire from the Commission was encouraged. [1]

For the first strand the Belgian authorities centralized in close cooperation with the European Commission Representation in Belgium all content generated by events from civil organizations on their initiatives concerning the European citizens' consultations. A dedicated website was created. These debates took place in different locations and in different formats. The Belgian contact person for the citizens' consultations attended the events, in order to be able to assess the participation and the organization of the debates.

[1] Twenty one different events were organized since the summer. A more condensed effort was done in November with the organization of round tables in five cities (Brussels, Gent, Leuven, Namur and Liège) 1621 persons filled out a recruitment questionnaire in order to guaranty the widest range of different profiles reflecting the socio demographic situation of our country and a possibility of diversity of opinions regarding the EU. 233 people participated at this round tables. Belgian ranks third in per-million inhabitants contribution in the EU online questionnaire.

The six-monthly meeting of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with high schools in order to debate Europe was this year enriched by the participation of members of European Youth Parliament. Experts from the Foreign Office attended as well and provided the pupils with further explanation. All secondary education schools in Belgium were invited and 29 were selected (in November, a total of 694 pupils participated). The pupils could choose among topics such as the EU, enlargement of the EU, terrorism, climate and migration.

For the second strand the Belgian authorities organized round table debates about Europe. The idea was to provide the widest range of different profiles reflecting the socio-demographic situation of our country and a possibility of diversity of opinions regarding the EU. Based on online surveys people of all walks of life were invited to the round table conversations to help determine what the priorities should be for the coming years. The round tables were structured around seven issues: (1)"Feeling safe in Europe"; (2)"Europe in the world"; (3)"Sustainable development in Europe" ; (4)"Innovation in Europe"; (5)"Prosperity and stability in Europe"; (6)"What unites us Europeans?"; (7)" A democratic Europe". The process started with an online questionnaire with open and closed questions and an indication of gender, age, studies and work. They could indicate if they wanted to opt for further participation. A random selection of the opt-ins per city was invited to participate at an evening round table. We reached out to about 50 participants per evening; sometimes more sometimes fewer participated. Every round table followed the same flowchart. The starting point was getting acquainted with the topic and identifying the challenges and clustering them into priorities; the top 3 topics were further elaborated. Concrete proposals were formulated and fine-tuned with a possibility to contribute to the themes not discussed at the table where the person was initially sitting. This exercise of collective intelligence was positively received by the participants and there was demand for more as they were all keen to get a sense of what was talked about at the other tables and they were eager to get an insight on the next steps. The full report will be published online.

Third, Universities and University Colleges were contacted not only to draw their attention to the online consultation initiative of the EU but even more to engage in a meaningful conversation about how their students want to participate in shaping the future of Europe and how they see their place in Europe. It is however regrettable that the outcome of the online questionnaire of the Commission could not be integrated.

This reflection on Europe is not yet over as we continue our engagement with the citizens. Eighteen events have been already programmed for the coming months.

Main issues discussed and or raised by the citizens

Belgian membership of the Union was never challenged nor questioned.

Future of Europe

In general people are in favour of Europe and also of 'more Europe' and more unity in Europe.

The EU must speak with one voice, create a real European Union.

Europe needs to conceive a concrete vision for its future. European values such as peace and advancing together towards prosperity and the wellbeing of the citizens have to be at the center of its interests, this entails attention for sustainability and cultural diversity. The external policy of the EU should reflect these values and the EU needs to further develop mechanisms to act as a global power at the world scene. The EU should use its economic weight to make its voice heard.

We notice that citizens emphasize the role of Europe to protect the external borders in order to compensate for the free commute within the EU. A migration policy should be based on clear rules and responsibilities for the inviting countries. This is considered to be the best safeguard against currents of identity politics and populist voices, which put the EU construction under heavy strain. Generally, migration is a cause for concern. Some refer in this context to the risk of social dumping. The challenge of integrating migrants from non-EU Union countries, unaccustomed to EU norms and values is mentioned as well. Europe should develop its own defence capacity independent from other powers to emphasize its tenure as a world power. To enhance mutual understanding Europeans should learn a common second language.

Institutional Europe

Communication by the European institutions should not be limited to providing interested people with information, it should also encourage meaningful participation. The EU institutions need to be **more transparent in their decision making.** The structure of the institutions should be adapted in order to strengthen the European level giving less influence to member states. Decision making procedures should be adapted to majority voting and the EU competences should be further developed and venture into new areas. Belgians are aware that this would require treaty changes. The distrust concerning the influencing power of lobbyists is omnipresent. As concerns enlargement, new countries can only be members of the EU if the democratic basic values are consolidated and can be enforced by the EU. Priority is given to strengthening the EU before further enlargement and citizens should have a direct say in this.

Social Europe

The desire for a **more Social Europe is one of the most recurrent issues**. Harmonizing the social systems and creating a social protection that guarantees access to basic needs such as health care and pensions should be implemented. The same goes for the tax policy to avoid a race to the bottom that undermines the social system. Quality jobs were considered as a way out of poverty and are defined as offering decent living conditions. Social exclusion of those who have no possibility to connect to a more complex and digitalized world has to be tackled. Innovative ways of organizing societies need to be developed putting wellbeing at the center. The Universal Basic Income is seen by many of the participants as a way forward to create some social equality.

Economic Europe

The participants raised concerns in relation to the **sustainability of the economic growth** model and questioned the definition of growth. Measures such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) are inadequate to measure wellbeing; alternatives such as Gross European Wellbeing-index, poverty alarms with structural adjustment and prompt interventions should be put into place. Sustainability is most often mentioned and innovations should be checked for their long term value for the citizens. Just in time deliveries and platform economy should be regulated and also checked on environmental and social criteria. Local food production, circular economy and up-cycling need a European push. Research and development needs to be more nurtured and resources made available to avoid brain drain. **Climate change** is a subject where not only energy generation and transport is taken into consideration but also agriculture and eating habits came into play and certain habits such as using plastic bags and bottles.

Globalization and liberal free market policies were perceived as not benefiting equally all citizens and the liberal growth model should be under better scrutiny. Emphasis was also put on the benefits of an entrepreneurial spirit, full employment and the liberty to invest.

Main interrogations/concerns Expressed By the citizens

Several participants expressed worries about fiscal dumping (a race to the bottom), creating more social inequality in a country but also between countries - How can Europe intervene? Others had the feeling that the 'Big money' takes over and has powerful lobbies. How could you explain Europe saving banks but letting social facilities go bankrupt?

Sustainable economy includes climate and energy but also social elements, circular economy and local production. Those elements should be more supported by the Union.

Others expressed that people who want to live in Europe should cherish European values. They did not want a fortress-Europe but a well-managed migration policy. There is a real fear for populist movements that are fuelling the development of non-democratic regimes.

European decision making should be more transparent and citizens should be able to participate. The EU should be more involved in checking the implementation of the legislation in the member states and upholding the basic values and have an effective sanction regime.

Investing in research and development but with a citizens value check.
Cultural differences between countries in Europe seems to be under strain.

Recurrent and/or innovative citizens' proposals and/or representative verbatim

- More unity/Speak with one voice
- Social and company tax legislation should be construed at EU level to avoid a race to the bottom.
- Transparent interactions between companies and EU institutions, less power for lobbyists.
- Respect for citizens.
- More decisions on a European Level.
- The European Parliament should be a two chamber parliament. Transnational voting lists for the second chamber.
- The Commissioners should not be appointed by the countries.
- Europe needs to grow up. Europe should be self-reliant: one common defence policy under control of the European Parliament with military equipment that is interchangeable between countries in the EU.
- Migration policy with responsibilities for the implicated countries. More effective external border control by a European border patrol.
- Learning a common second language from early childhood.
- The European Solidarity corps should be more mainstreamed and service should be compulsory.
- A common second language for all EU citizens and EU wide newspaper, TV programme.

Other (Further comments on and /or evaluation of the experience, best practices on communication)

Belgian citizens value the opportunity to talk about the future of Europe and their future in Europe. European politics and the history and functioning of the European Union are also widely taught in schools and discussed at universities . As stated before, the Foreign Office also organized encounters with schools, and diplomats are sent to schools on Europe's day. Political debates on Belgian television and in Parliament very often have a European element.

But the notable difference with these citizens' consultations is the expectations from the participants. They want to have an insight on the next steps in this process. They are eager to know what the outcome will be and if the EU is going to act on the proposals of the citizens.

The report presented is only a snapshot of what has already been done and gives a summary of all these different types of consultations. The divergence in formats and public attending, with some participants being more knowledgeable about Europe than others, does not allow for straight forward conclusions. Nonetheless, some trends could be clearly observed throughout the debates.

BULGARIA

CITIZENS' CONSULTATIONS ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

Summary of the results in Bulgaria

The **main outcomes** of the consultations can be summarised as follows:

- The citizens' consultations confirmed that, for the Bulgarians, the EU continues to symbolize a *belonging,* a civilizational and strategic choice that confirms Bulgaria's place in the European family of shared values, principles and goals.

- The Bulgarian citizens remain pro-European and Euro-optimists (over 60% according to the October Eurobarometer), wishing for a stronger, more prosperous and a more united Europe, and calling for concrete and tangible solutions, which confirm that the EU can act effectively and decisively when faced with crises.

- As the consultative process covered also the period of preparing and holding the first Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU, the Bulgarian citizens also admitted that the successes achieved by Bulgaria in this role contributed to the higher self-confidence of citizens as well, predisposing their more active involvement in EU matters.

- The Bulgarian citizens clearly expressed their desire for *deeper and wider integration and a more united Union,* against ideas for a "multi-speed Europe" or division lines between East and West, North and South, large and small, or new and old EU Member States. Striving for the core of the European Union was defined as a key Bulgarian interest.

  In terms of depth of integration, the Bulgarian citizens wish for a full-fledged membership in the Schengen area and the Eurozone. They also supported future enlargements to the Western Balkans, as a direct contribution to the security, stability and prosperity of the EU itself.

- *EU competitiveness* and effective policies creating conditions for *more and better jobs* were also defined as priorities. For the Bulgarian citizens, these depended on the successful adaptation of EU businesses to digital transformation and globalisation. The innovation potential of small and medium-sized enterprises was particularly noted in this regard, together with smart education as a tool to better prepare the youth for the next generation of jobs.

Quality education, youth mobility and employment were all emphasised by the many active and motivated young people, who also highlighted the importance of programs such as "Erasmus +" and "Horizon 2020".

- The Bulgarian citizens pointed out to the *correlation between competitiveness and cohesion,* by comparing them to the "two sides of the same coin", as a deeper Single market with a strengthened Economic and Banking Union and more convergence in social – economic terms are instrumental to improve EU performance also globally. Better cohesion in the EU, be it territorial, economic, social or political, was outlined particularly as a priority for the socio-economic partners and regional and local authorities in Bulgaria. They also stressed the need to preserve the importance of Cohesion Policy in the next Union budget as a major investment instrument contributing to the overall competitiveness of the EU.

- With regard to cohesion and convergence, producers, including in bio-agriculture, put forward the need for further *equality and non-discrimination*, including in payments across the various regions in Europe in order for the EU economy to benefit from their potential to the fullest extent.

- Citizens and stakeholders also called for *more security,* in Europe and globally, in all aspects. In this regard they pointed the need for a comprehensive European solution to the challenges of illegal migration, including in all dimensions (internal security and control of the external borders, cooperation with countries of origin and transit, and effective resettlements and returns). More security for the Union means also more efficient fight against terrorism and organized crimes.

The **timeframe** of the citizens' consultations in Bulgaria encompassed the period from the autumn of 2016, when due to Brexit Bulgaria had to start preparing for its first rotational Presidency of the Council of the European Union by six months earlier, until November 2018.

The target groups of consultations were also very wide, covering professionals, academia and students, business representatives and trade unions, local authorities and institutions at central level.

More than 100 events were held in Sofia and other bigger cities, as well as in smaller towns like Velingrad and Smolyan, with the participation of ministers, EU commissioners (when visiting Bulgaria for the duration of the Presidency) and experts, involving more than three thousand citizens in a broad demographic range.

In terms of **methodology,** citizens had the chance to put forward their questions, opinions and recommendations as members of the public directly, or through social platforms, as many of the events were streamlined or broadcasted live on the Internet.

Since the summer of 2018, the citizens were asked particularly to give answers to the questions put forward by the European Commission in its survey on the future of Europe.

The responses were published both on the website of the European Commission and/or the special platform at the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria.

The citizens are given also the opportunity to fill in the questionnaire of the European Commission in hard copy, during the events.

In addition, several sociological agencies conducted opinion polls to reflect the views of Bulgarian citizens on the European Union, its institutions and policies during the Bulgarian presidency of the Council of the European Union. These results were also taken into account when summarizing the outcome.

A wide range of topics were raised and discussed by the Bulgarian citizens during the consultations – from the need to *continue and deepen Bulgaria's integration within the EU* which was identified as key topic by all, including professionals, business representatives and young people, to more security, more equality, including in terms of avoiding double standards in food, better protection of rights, better social protection and access to quality education, better protection of the environment.

The issue of *migration* was central in many discussions, as the issue was seen as a sign whether the Union would be able to act united, resolutely and with better results to future crises. The Bulgarian citizens approached the broad topic of migration from different angels advocating as a result a comprehensive approach on an EU level. Younger people noted in particular the serious limitations of individual countries to deal effectively with the problem, and called for enhanced cooperation on EU level.

Within this topic, they prioritised the reinforcement of controls at EU external borders to make sure that arriving migrants do not pose a threat to security. They also pointed out to the need to improve the situation in countries of origin through more effective cooperation to tackle root causes. Young professionals noted specifically the security impact of adequate programs on how to better integrate migrants in countries of destination.

Though united in their call for further integration within the EU, **the various demographic groups prioritized topics in a different way:**

- The *young people* were particularly concerned with ideas such as the 'two-speed Europe', with the access to equality education and security. They showed higher sensitivity to the protection of their rights, as well as to the issue of mobility and the double standards in food production applied by certain companies in Europe. The questions they raised were related to their direct involvement in defining the European youth policies and programmes.

- The full-fledged membership of Bulgaria in the Schengen area and the Eurozone was defined as key priority for the *business community,* which also prioritized the need for more security and equality in the EU. They were also interested in the incentives to boost competitiveness. In this regard, the issue of education was also highlighted, especially from the point of view of giving the right literacy to the young generation, building the right skills for the labour market of the future.

  In some debates, the business community showed particular sensitivity to double standards in goods production for older and newer Member States, as well as to inequalities of support for small and medium enterprises across the EU, including through the amount of direct payments to bio-producers.

  The discussions touched upon also on the situation of Bulgarian carriers in road transportation, in view of the proposed changes at the EU level. Significant concerns were expressed, with calls that the proposed amendments should take into account more closely the specificities of the branch in the geographical periphery of the Union, and to the impact on the predominant number of small enterprises in the sector which might face bankruptcy of a larger scale.

- *The social partners and professionals* called for more equality in the social sphere, assigning the same priority level to the issue of equal pay for equal work in the EU and to security. They also advocated the further coordination of social systems in the EU and introducing a guaranteed minimum of retirement benefits and a minimum level of guaranteed quality healthcare in the Union.

In this overall context, **the recurrent messages of the Bulgarian citizens** were related to:

- *The ways to deepen the integration.* They also perceived as unjust Bulgaria's and Romania's non-acceptance in the Schengen area, despite having fulfilled the technical criteria for accession

- *The unity of the Union.* All scenarios for a 'multi-speed Europe" and all divisions among Member States on difficult issues were pointed out both as contrary to the very essence of the European integration project and as a main obstacle before the Union for achieving more effectiveness in its performance.

- *Security in the Union needs to be raised* in all aspects, including in terms of a more effective, comprehensive approach to tackling illegal migration.

- *Equality among citizens and businesses as well as the level and rights' protection* should also be raised in many spheres, from the level of access to quality education, social services and protection, and healthcare, to guarantees for the equality of all EU citizens as consumers against double standards in food, or businesses and bio-producers as beneficiaries of EU funds and programmes.

- *Cohesion instruments* should be seen not only as limited to the Cohesion Policy of the Union but rather as *contributing directly to* raising *the competitiveness* of the Union, *the equality among all citizens* and *the level of security in EU border regions*.

The innovative proposals by the Bulgarian citizens include, *inter alia,* the following*:*

- *Encourage every EU citizen to contribute to the EU budget directly*, for example by paying € 1 per month. According to Bulgarian professionals and academia, this would give citizens a sense of personal contribution to the European project and motivate them to demand responsibility and accountability for the impact of European policies.

- *Open a branch of the College of Europe for the Balkans* in Sofia. The Bulgarian academia, university students and young professionals advocate this practice, already implemented for the Central and Eastern Europe in Natolin, Poland, as an effective way not only to train specialists but also to overcoming prejudices and stereotypes of the past as well as to building confidence in the EU and European values.

- *Develop further digital connectivity with the Western Balkans,* including through encouraging the adoption of EU roaming rules by the countries in the region*.* The idea was presented by the National Forum of NGOs for the Bulgarian Presidency, comprising of over 50 non-governmental organizations from across the country and was included in the Program of the Presidency, and was included in the Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans developed together with the Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society Mrs. Maria Gabriel.

Representative verbatims from the citizens' consultations in Bulgaria:

- "*Culture is the big absentee in the White Paper on the future of Europe*, *and this should be rectified, as culture is the foundation of European identity"*. In this regard, Jacques Delors was quoted as thinking of Europe not only in terms of territory but also of spirit (noted by a representative of the academia).

- "*The European project requires more imagination in order to respond to the dreams of people, not only to their concerns and fears. This is the only way to feed enthusiasm in the European unification again.* The time has come to not ask what will Europe give us, but rather what can we give back to Europe" (pointed out by a representative of the civil society).

- *"There cannot be an Economic and Monetary Union without a true Political Union"* (noted by a representative of the academic community).

- "European citizens must not leave the criticism of the European Union to the populists. We should have a critical, yet constructive view of the future of Europe. This is the only way not to allow for Europeanization of national problems and the nationalization of EU successes" (a thought by a political scientist).

- "There should be *more EU-related discussions in schools, including on EU values and their practical implementation in everyday life.* This will bring the Union and the policies on Eu level closer to citizens" (highlighted by young people).

Good practices to be shared by the citizens' consultations in Bulgaria:

- *Models to boost interactivity and direct participation* by audience, for example through the "microphone is yours" format, where the floor is given to citizens and stakeholders, whilst the panellists are in "listening mode", following the "Speak Less, Listen More" principle.

- *Use more social media and Internet to increase citizens' involvement in policy discussions,* including through live streaming and direct participation in debates.

- *Work closer with media to ensure coverage of events.*

- *Use graphic facilitations* in discussions, with the assistance of artists during events. The creation of the vision for the future of Europe is within the scope of the "Invisible art" that puts the white sheet in front of the observer and invites the mobilization of the imagination, whilst asking the observer to draw his own scenario and vision for the future of Europe.

Sofia, 19 November 2018.

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CZECH REPUBLIC

Office of the Government
Section for European Affairs

Summary of the Citizens' Consultations in the Czech Republic

Contents

Czech involvement in Citizens' Consultations

The Czech Republic has joined the pan-European initiative of citizens' consultations initiated by French President Emmanuel Macron. Series of Czech debates with citizens on specific aspects of European integration was launched on 10 May in Prague; this discussion was attended by the Prime Minister Andrej Babiš and French Minister for European Affairs Nathalie Loiseau.

The main part of the initiative was carried out in regions across the country; a total of ten debates took place. Citizens had the opportunity to express their views on the future direction of the EU. The discussions took place from May to October 2018 in Brno, Litomyšl, Olomouc, Jihlava, Kroměříž, Opava, České Budějovice, Plzeň, Ústí nad Labem and Liberec.

The results and outputs of these consultations were evaluated at the closing event in Prague in November. Discussions were complemented by additional lectures and seminars, both at the central and regional levels. Altogether, 22 events took place in the Czech Republic within the framework of citizens' consultations, attended by 2 128 citizens.

Involvement in the citizens' consultations has brought the Czech Republic valuable experience that can be used in planning and organizing events in the years to come. The discussion format used during the citizens' consultations might be used within operation of Integrated Information System and regional Eurocenters in years to come, when the communication activities related to 15th anniversary of the Czech membership in the EU, European elections, the Czech presidency within Visegrád Group and preparations of the Czech presidency in the Council will be carried out.

Public speakers

The individual debates were attended by more than 30 representatives of central government bodies and regions. Speakers included among others the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic Andrej Babiš, Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic Peter Pellegrini, State Secretary for European Affairs Aleš Chmelař, Mayor of Brno Petr Vokřál, Chairman of the Senate Committee on EU Affairs Václav Hampl, Lithuanian Ambassador Edvilas Raudonikis or Rector of Silesian University in Opava Pavel Tuleja.

Current and former Memebers of the European Parliament Martina Dlabajová, Pavel Svoboda and Zuzana Roithová also attended some of the consultations. Other personalities such as local entrepreneurs, academics, or local authorities took part as well. The involvement of nationally-renowned personalities has proven to be very appealing for citizens in Czech regions and attracted a number of participants.

Profile of participants and consultations atmosphere

Citizens' consultations were attended by varied audiences, with almost all population groups represented. Representation of men and women was balanced, and all age groups participated in the debates. This reflected the effort of the organizers to address all population groups in order to attract the widest spectrum of citizens.

At the opening debate in Prague, people of all ages, from secondary school students to the elderly, were represented in the audience. The category of middle-aged people (30-50 years) was the most represented.

In the regions, the representation of individual age groups was fairly balanced, thanks to the fact that the discussions were organized on different days, even during weekends. The majority of participants were secondary or college students and middle-aged people. People over the age of 50 and the elderly were slightly underrepresented compared to younger age groups. Discussions were attended by high school and university students, teachers, entrepreneurs and employees, representatives of non-profit organizations, officials and retired persons.

Questions came from all age and social groups, which contributed to the diversity of opinions. All opinion streams were represented in the audience, which resulted in alternating diverse opinions on different European policies. Exchange of views was conducted generally in a positive atmosphere.

Content of the consultations

The most frequently discussed topics

The debates covered a wide range of topics related to the European Union. Based on an analysis of the consultations, the 10 most discussed topics were: European structural and investment funds, environmental protection, social policy, the Single Market and its freedoms, adoption of the euro, media literacy and fake news, education, Common Agricultural Policy, migration and Common Trade Policy.

- Cohesion policy and the European Structural and Investment Funds were the most discussed topic in the regions and were mentioned in various connotations.
  The accessibility of European funds, the optimal setting of conditions for obtaining subsidies and related administrative burdens were discussed.

- A great interest in the environmental policy was expressed in most debates, with regard to the topicality of the issue and its occurrence in the media.

- Within social policy, the outflow of skilled workers, the social pillar, as well as the coordination of social security was discussed.

- Traditionally, attention was also paid to the Single Market and its four freedoms, in particular the free movement of goods and persons.

- Participants were also interested in the issue of monetary policy and the adoption of the euro in the Czech Republic.

- Fake news and the role of the media were frequently discussed, especially in the context of current situation at the international scene.

- The topics of cooperation in the field of education, the importance of language skills and media literacy were often addressed as well.

- In addition to discussion about cohesion policy, participants were also interested in the Common Agricultural Policy, regional self-sufficiency, food imports from abroad, and competition among producers from various countries within the Single Market.

- Migration issues, the specific situation in the Czech Republic compared to other countries and the issue of EU competences in migration policy were also raised.

- Trade policy and trade relations with the third countries belonged among frequently tackled issues as well.

Consensually and controversially perceived topics

The audience generally agreed on benefits of the Single Market. In this context, there was a consensus that mobility within the EU makes it easier to travel, work and study abroad. The participants agreed that in order for the EU project to function both on the cultural and economic level, it is crucial that the EU keeps supporting exchange programmes for students and educational workers. Participants also repeatedly mentioned the need for enhanced learning of foreign languages.

Participants agreed that thanks to the EU, peace is secured in Europe and wars are fought among the Member States no more. According to the participants, the EU membership has helped to improve the economic performance of the Czech Republic and has prompted its economic growth. They also stressed that there is a need to raise awareness about the EU functioning, to provide citizens with positive information and not only to focus on negative news coverage of EU affairs.

Fewer consensuses emerged as to the issue of European funds and subsidies. Participants of the debates, on the one hand, praised the projects carried out with the contribution of the European Structural and Investment Funds, on the other hand, some participants perceived them as causing some negative impacts, such as distorting the free market. Many discussions were frequently focused on migration and refugee quotas. In general, the issue of excessive bureaucracy was also addressed, for example in the context of the GDPR Regulation.

The participants also discussed the question of EU competences, the principle of subsidiarity, and areas in which the EU should act more and what policies should be rather carried out by the Member States. The audience had different opinions on media issues and their credibility, the issue of fake news and disinformation activities. Participants were also interested in free movement of workers, which, according to few of them, results in a number of skilled workers leaving the Czech Republic. There were also diverging views on whether the Czech Republic should adopt the euro or not. Some of the participants were in favour of the adoption of the common currency and suggested that there was a need to set a deadline, but the other part was fundamentally opposed.

Perception of various aspects of the Czech EU membership

During the regional debates, the participants' views of the positively and less favourably perceived aspects of the Czech membership in the EU were observed. The existence of the Single Market was positively evaluated; participants appreciated the practical benefits of traveling, working and studying abroad. Experience from abroad has been identified as extremely valuable for young people. Study and work mobility was also associated with a positively perceived issue of social security coordination. According to some members of the audience, the EU membership has a positive impact on the quality of education; in particular the possibility of sharing best practice with other countries was mentioned.

From a political point of view, the EU has been positively evaluated as a guarantor of peace in Europe. From an economic point of view, the projects funded or co-financed by the EU (e.g. reconstruction of schools or roads), the increase of the competitiveness of Czech enterprises and the development of the Czech economy were stressed by many participants of the debates.

Contrarily, the audience often had a reserved stance towards some aspects of the setting of European structural and investment funds, in particular related to their misuse and bureaucracy. It was pointed out that a certain dependence on subsidies in some sectors might have emergence and possible replacement of EU funding would be difficult. According to the participants, the bureaucracy related to European funds presents a burden especially for small businesses and smaller municipalities. Some participants were less favourable in connection with migration quotas and suggested that these should fall within the Member States' competences.

In the context of the Common Agricultural Policy, the reduced self-sufficiency of regional farmers due to the low prices of food imports was raised. Issue of medical staff leaving the country and the outflow of dividends was also debated.

Opinion on division of competences among the EU and the Member States

Restraining the role of the EU would be recommended by the participants in the issue of migration and migration quotas. The participants would prefer the competences to be vested with the Member States in this area. Some participants also recommended some adjustments to the setting of the EU funds.

The role of the EU should, on the other hand, be strengthened in the area of cooperation regarding the Single Market. Strengthening the role of the EU would be welcomed by participants in protecting the EU's external borders and also in the area of a common defence policy to ensure the security of EU citizens. Some participants would like to strengthen the role of the EU in the environmental policy.

Recommendations for the future

The recommendations from public were aimed both at the EU and at the national level. The EU, in their view, should generally focus on sticking to the principle of subsidiarity and act only where there is a genuine European added value. In addition, the EU should, according to some participants, focus on reforming the current setting of its functioning, which should reflect the current trends and opinions in all Member States. The EU and Member States' representatives should strive to find compromises suitable for everyone. Efforts to deepen the integration without relevant support of the Member States and in particular the EU citizens could prove counterproductive.

Relatively often, the need to raise citizens' awareness about the EU, both by increasing and intensifying communication from the part of the EU (informing citizens about what is happening in the EU) and by domestic politicians, was emphasized. According to many participants, it is important to improve communication of European common values, to explain legislation, the functioning of the EU and the role of individual institutions. This could help increase the voter turnout in the European Parliament elections.

The EU should counter the increasing scepticism towards the EU in number of European countries, in order to avoid another EU country exiting the block The quality and quantity of information flowing from the EU institutions should be increased, for instance by increasing Czech media presence in Brussels.. The supporters of the common currency euro recommended launching an information campaign about adopting the euro in order to explain its benefits. The EU should further promote language learning, which leads to a greater understanding and mutual

dialogue across Europe. Emphasis should also be placed on raising the media literacy so that the EU citizens are able to identify quality resources, and recognize misinterpreted information.

In general, it was recommended to reduce bureaucracy and simplify administration of the EU. Some of the discussants requested simplification of the Erasmus application process and its extension to the field of sport. The EU should focus on setting and controlling European structural and investment funds. It should also continue to increase its competitiveness on the global market. Emphasis was also put on environmental protection and sustainable development, not only in the EU but globally. The EU's global role should be strengthened in this area. The EU should also, in opinion of some participants of consultations, ensure the protection of the EU's external borders, but also its internal security and the screening of those arriving in Europe.

Other challenges that the EU should address were the possibility of further enlargement of the EU and finding a suitable compromise on future EU-United Kingdom relations after Brexit.

Accompanying events

The cycle of citizen consultations was complemented by events at both central and regional level. Discussions on various EU related issues were held at the Eurocentre Prague. Discussions with students of secondary schools and universities in regions across the Czech Republic also took place.

The discussions in Eurocentre Prague were attended by participants from the state, academic, professional and private spheres. The topics covered included the future multiannual financial framework for the years 2021-2021, the question of future of the European integration and the role of Germany and France as important European actors and the Common Agricultural Policy after 2020.

In the regions, discussions with students were focused on the current developments in the EU, its future direction and the position of the Czech Republic in today's EU. Among other discussants, the Secretary of State for European Affairs Aleš Chmelař explained European issues to students from the perspective of a high-ranking state official. These discussions took place in Liberec, Plzeň, Brno, Ostrava and Hradec Králové.

DENMARK

UDENRIGSMINISTERIET

The reinforced Danish EU debate about the future of the EU

Denmark has a strong tradition of debating EU questions. In 2018 the Danish Government decided to reinforce the debate on the EU in order to ensure the best possible foundation for representing the views of the Danish public when debating the future of the EU with other Member States.

The Government facilitated the reinforced EU debate in close cooperation with the Danish Parliament and civil society organisations. Throughout the year, the Danish Parliament held four dialogue meetings and one citizens' consultation concerning specific aspects of the EU and the future of the EU. The activities of the civil society organisations have been reinforced through a 1 mil. DKK extra grant for organising debates throughout the country.[1] The debates took place in all parts of Denmark. Interested citizens, politicians, ministers, and business leaders were represented.

Great efforts were put into ensuring that the EU debate would take place across the entire country, and that all Danish citizens were given the opportunity to take part in the debate. However, it should be underlined that the outcome of the debate, as summarised by this paper, does not provide an exact or representative overview of the public opinion among the Danish population as a whole.[2] Nevertheless, the debate has provided a useful impression of the different views that are put forward when Danes discuss EU matters.

The debate was characterized by a large diversity of opinions and views. Yet, the debates have shown that there were some general views that many Danes agreed on:

- Firstly, it is clear that the EU does not provide the answer to all questions. However, the EU does provide an answer to many questions. The EU should focus on the largest and most important issues where common solutions are most effective, and where the Member States could not have addressed the challenges as well or better themselves. In other words, Danes support EU solutions on substantial issues, where solutions can only be found by working together and where cooperating within the EU adds value, such as, climate change, migration, and terrorism.
- Secondly, differences and diversity amongst Member States must be taken into consideration. The EU can rightly be seen as one community. However, this community consists of 28 Member States with different traditions and histories. Generally, Danes recognise the need for EU cooperation in many areas; yet, the Danish way of doing things is also highly appreciated, particularly in areas with strong Danish cultural and political traditions such as the Danish Social Model.

[1] Further information about the five organizations and their activities, as a part of the reinforced EU debate, can be found here:
- Den Danske Europabevægelse: https://europabevaegelsen.dk/
- DEO-Oplysningsforbundet Demokrati i Europa: http://deo.dk/
- Europa NU: https://fuau.dk/om-folkeuniversitetet/foreningen-europa-nu/
- Fagbevægelsen mod Unionen FMU: https://eufagligt.dk/
- Nyt Europa. http://nyteuropa.dk/

[2] This report is based on more than 100 debates held in Denmark, such as: 1) debates that the five civil society organizations have held; 2) The Parliament has held citizens' dialogues or citizens' hearings; 3) Ministers have participated in debates; and 4) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has had the opportunity to observe debates.

- Thirdly, it is essential to make information regarding the EU available for the public. There is a general need for more knowledge about EU policies and enhanced insight into the practical functioning of the EU. In addition, sharing information on EU success stories is crucial. However, in areas where the EU is challenged, transparency is equally necessary.
- Fourthly, Brexit has very clearly influenced the Danish EU debate. In particular, Brexit has been a powerful reminder of the many advantages associated with the EU membership. Prior to Brexit, most Danes took for granted the advantages of EU membership. Brexit has underlined these advantages. Especially the advantages of the Single Market for Danish companies, and the numerous jobs in Denmark attached to the Single Market, are appreciated. The impression is that a large majority of the Danes are positive about the Danish EU membership. This conclusion is also supported by the latest surveys in Denmark.[3]

The Single Market
In 2018, the Single Market celebrated its 25th anniversary. During the debates, the Single Market was one of the main areas of interest. The British decision to leave the EU and the associated consequences for businesses' of inter alia, customs control, divergent standards and bigger bureaucratic burdens have increased the awareness of the benefits of the Single Market.

The free movement of labour has been debated extensively. Particularly, the right for Danish workers to move freely within the EU and the Danish companies' access to foreign labour stood out as clear advantages. Others focused on the challenges that free movement of labour causes for Danish workers. The issues of potential unfair competition regarding wages and working conditions were brought forward, with the transportation sector including foreign truck drivers were highlighted as an example.

Welfare benefits
Considerable scepticism as regards EU workers' rights (particularly the right to receive child benefit) has been expressed. Also, the level of EU legislation within the social policy area was up for discussion, including earmarking paternity leave for men. Many participants wanted the Danish welfare system and the Danish Social Model to be protected. Nevertheless, other participants argued in favour of only having one set of rules in the social area. The main argument amongst the latter was that common rules were a natural result of the Single Market, and that Member States must therefore accept common rules on issues such as paternity leave.

Free Trade Agreements
During the debates, Free Trade Agreements were often seen as a big asset for Denmark. However, participants requested answers regarding the EU's take on social questions, labour rights and environmental in connection with the Free Trade Agreements. Many participants also expressed a need for the EU to contribute to and invest in the construction and development of the African continent, especially through free trade. As such, the removal of trade barriers between the EU and Africa was seen as a way of reaching the aim of creating jobs and growth in Africa.

Migration
While migration policy was a heavily discussed topic during debates, the national political context significantly influenced the discussions on the EU migration agenda. Discussions focussed on whether Denmark for humanitarian reasons, should welcome migrants arriving to Denmark the possibilities for integration of refugees and migrants in Denmark, and whether Denmark could do more to prevent the flow of irregular migrants and refugees to the EU.

3 EUROBAROMETER 90.1 (http://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/da/be-heard/eurobarometer/parlemeter-2018-taking-up-the-challenge)

Many participants focussed on the causes of irregular migration. Strengthened EU-Africa cooperation and increased EU investments in Africa were highlighted as ways of addressing migratory flows to Europe. In addition to addressing root causes to migration, participants expressed the need for strengthening control of the EU's external borders. While some participants viewed the temporary Danish border control as a positive measure that had contributed to decreasing the number of migrants arriving to Denmark, others criticized the Danish national border control for creating the impression of an inward-facing country.

Climate change

Whereas opinions diverged amongst participants on most topics, almost unanimous views were found in the area of climate policy as the majority of participants saw a need for strong EU solutions to address climate change. Participants were in general positive about Denmark taking a leading role as regards climate policy. There was also a clear recognition that issues associated with climate change could not be solved at national level only. Therefore, the discussion centred upon whether EU solutions were sufficient or if global solutions were needed. Some suggested that high standards on climate actions were included as a condition in free trade agreements. Others suggested that similar pressure is put on Member States by making it possible for the EU to sanction countries financially in case of non-compliance with already agreed climate obligations.

Foreign, security and defence policy

Many participants expressed the need for the EU to speak with a stronger voice globally. Participants also recognised that an EU speaking with one voice might gain more influence in the global policy arena. The latest developments in relation to Russia and China as well as the developments in the transatlantic relationship clearly had an impact on the debates. Participants questioned whether the EU should replace the cooperation with the US or whether the EU should reinforce and supplement transatlantic cooperation. Many participants preferred continued cooperation with the US despite of the current administration's stance towards the EU..

Regarding defence policy, many of the same issues applied and there was a general discussion on whether the EU should become stronger or if the EU should continue to rely on NATO and thus the US. Many participants did not see a need for the EU to replace NATO. However, many wanted the EU to complement NATO when needed. Participants in general acknowledged the need for Member States to cooperate in the fight against terrorism and other security challenges. In this regard, the Danish defence opt-out was seen as a disadvantage for Denmark. However, some participants expressed a preference for security and defence policy to be based solely on NATO rather than for the EU dimension on defence to be strengthened.

The fundamental values of the EU

The situation concerning the fundamental values of the EU was discussed on a number of occasions. Participants in general viewed Member States' respect for fundamental values as essential for a well-functioning EU. Many expressed a general concern about some Member States' understanding of the rule of law and questioned why Member States, who were already part of the EU, did not comply with the fundamental values of the EU. Some participants however, argued that the EU should not interfere as the issue should be handled at national level. The focus in the debates was often on how and where the Member States' lack of compliance with the fundamental values could be resolved. Some participants expressed concern that Member States with problems of this kind could "cover" for each other during discussions in the European Council. Many participants requested alternative solutions for putting pressure on the concerned countries, for example by reducing their financial support from the EU budget.

Economic policy
Discussions regarding the economic area covered a host of issues and were at times rather technical and complicated. They also focussed on the question of the Banking Union, including possible Danish membership. Several participants considered Danish membership of the Banking Union beneficial and underlined a need for strengthened regulation of larger banks with activities across the EU, including in relation to the fight against anti money laundering. Others found that Denmark should not join the Banking Union because of substantial scepticism about contributing to the possibility of rescuing banks. Some participants were concerned as to whether the Banking Union would actually be capable of supervising large banks in a sufficiently independent way.

Regarding the EMU, the discussions focused primarily on the balance between the risk for marginalisation of Denmark and, on the other hand, the question of preserving Danish sovereignty. The question of digital taxation and the balance between taxation of digital companies versus the concern for unintended effects for Denmark and for Danish companies were also much debated.

EU's multinational financial framework
The debate on the EU budget were characterized by clear line of division. Some participants found it important to ensure an EU-budget that was large enough to have the capacity to handle the EU's current challenges such as migration and climate changes. Others preferred an EU budget that would not be disproportionately increased and which focused on areas with clear EU added value. Many participants believed that the Danish contribution to the EU budget was suitable at the current level and that it should not be increased. Many participants expressed support for decreasing the funding for the agricultural and cohesion policies.

The Danish opt-outs
During the debates, the Danish EU opt-outs were also an important topic. Some participants considered the Danish opt-outs an unwelcome limitation for the Danish EU membership. Others believed that the Danish opt-outs provided protection against an expansive EU and shielded formal Danish sovereignty. The Danish opt-out on defense and justice and home affairs were often mentioned as problematic, while the Euro opt-out was rarely a topic for discussion.

GERMANY

Germany:
Executive Summary

of the Report of the Federal Government regarding the Citizens's

Dialogue on the Future of Europe

I. Results of the Citizens' Dialogue on the Future of Europe

1. What matters to citizens

The participants in the 119 dialogue events discussed the great breadth of topics that they consider to be important for Europe. They talked about how they perceive Europe in their everyday lives, what role Europe plays for Germany and what Europe should look like in the future.

The expert analysis categorised the statements of the citizens according to different levels of detail. As a whole, a variety of **topics and facets** were addressed in the Citizens' Dialogue. Condensed at the level of an overarching analysis, the quantitative content analysis produced 14 policy areas, **five value dimensions and three areas regarding the institutional design of the European Union**.

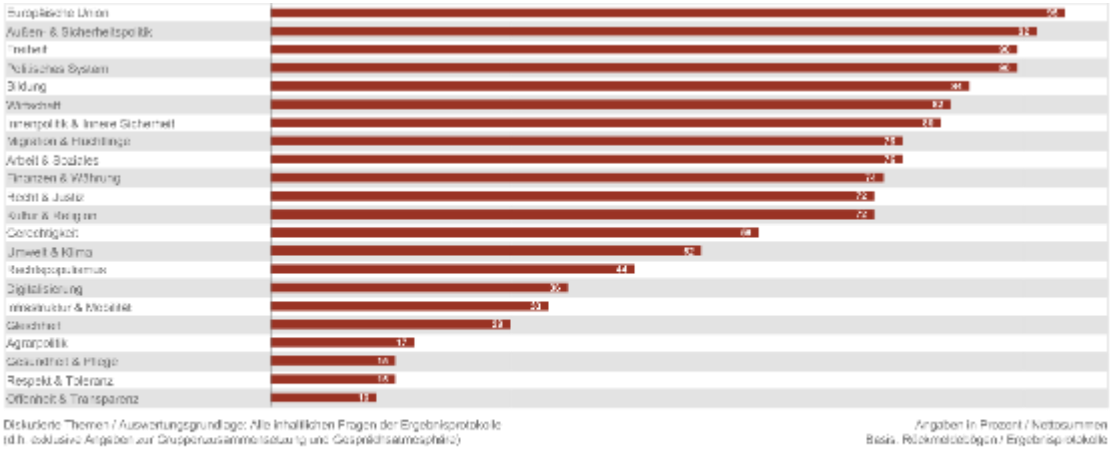
The 14 policy areas included the following: agricultural policy, labour and social affairs, foreign and security policy, education, the spread of digital technology, financial andmonetary issues, health and nursing care, domestic policy and security, culture and religion, migration and refugee policy, law and justice, environment and climate, Infrastructure and mobility, as well as the economy. The value dimensions discussed particularly frequently included the following: freedom, equality, openness and transparency, respect and tolerance, as well as justice. Other issues related to the European Union's political system and concerns regarding right-wing populism in the member states.

Citizens' conceptions regarding Europe in detail

The following topics were raised particularly frequently by the participants in the Citizens' Dialogue on the Future of Europe.[4]

4 For a detailed description of the results, see Kantar Public (2018). Analysis of the Federal Government's Citizens' Dialogue on the Future of Europe.

Figure 2: Issues discussed



Source: Kantar Public 2018.

2. Institutional design of the European Union

The European Union as an institution was the subject of discussions at nine out of ten events. The participants were largely in agreement on the **achievements of European integration**, which were **viewed positively**. In this topic, the citizens included fundamental freedoms (specifically, freedom of movement and the free movement of workers), peace and the single market, the single currency and the economic strength of the European Union. There was support for uniform norms and standards throughout Europe. Germany's membership of the European Union was explicitly seen as an added value.

Similarly, the participants identified aspects of the European Union where they see a **need for action**. They want more enthusiasm for the European Union, more European identity and a common vision, more transparency and closeness to the people, but also better communication of political knowledge regarding the European Union. Such aspects were mentioned by the citizens with particular frequency. They stated that an important prerequisite for the functioning of the European Union was strengthening integration and cooperation among the member states, in particular with regard to a Common Foreign, Security and Defence Policy, a uniform refugee policy and a fair distribution of refugees, as well as greater solidarity with weaker countries. There was isolated criticism of the fact that the European Union has insufficient resources to sanction member states when they breach common fundamental values. Moreover, the European Union was often criticised as being too bureaucratic, and political decision-making processes were often said to be too undemocratic.

> ***Quote**: "The most important thing for me is to make Europe palatable to citizens again, and to once more impart to them the significance and the reasons for a united Europe."* (From the Citizens' Dialogue in Garbsen on 4 May 2018)

Accordingly, citizens also desired changes in the European Union's **political system**. On several occasions, there were calls for the abolition of the unanimity principle in favour of majority voting. Citizens expressed a desire for stronger cooperation in individual policy areas, greater transparency and closeness to the people. The strengthening of the European Parliament was also mentioned.

3. Key policy areas

At more than nine out of ten dialogue events, **foreign and security policy** was discussed. A large majority of participants valued Europe as a unique peace project and praised the significance of the European Union in terms of foreign policy. In the common economic and monetary area and in the cultural exchanges among the member states, they saw important reasons for lasting peace and stability in the European Union. They stressed that peace in Europe is not a given. The citizens expressed their belief that the European Union has greater global political weight in foreign and security policy matters than the individual member states on their own, and expressed a clear desire for a strengthened Common Foreign and Security Policy, especially vis-à-vis the United States, Russia and China. In no other policy area was the desire for greater European integration clearer.

> ***Quote:*** *"All states should work together for security, for example by pooling military forces, economic interests and foreign policy goals, for example on the refugee issue.*" (From the Citizens' Dialogue in Osnabrück on 4 June 2018)

Providing better security at the EU's external borders, effective protection against crime and terrorism, pan-European efforts in migration policy or the creation of a single European army – citizens regarded these elements as linked to a strengthened foreign, security and defence policy on the part of the member states. Participants saw the need to restrict arms exports and to expand humanitarian aid in crisis areas.

Education policy was discussed at eight out of ten dialogue events. This topic area was mostly associated with positive aspects. Participants expressed their special appreciation for European Union funding programmes for learning and studying in other European countries, such as ERASMUS+. Equal access to various educational institutions in other European countries and the Europe-wide harmonisation of educational qualifications received explicit praise. In particular, the acquisition of foreign languages, intercultural exchange within the framework of European education programmes and the broadening of one's own horizons were regarded as very valuable.

> ***Quote:*** *"Political education for young people, in schools, etc. Making known the positive aspects of Europe."* (From the Citizens' Dialogue in Schlüchter on August 8, 2018)

Many participants saw considerable need for action to create uniform educational standards in the school, university and training sectors throughout Europe, as well as affordable access to education and training and the corresponding funding structures. Important demands included greater appreciation of educators, the expansion of political education in Europe along with greater investment in the education sector in Germany itself. The desire for greater pan-European integration in education policy was particularly strong.

At around eight out of ten Citizens' Dialogues, the economy was the subject of discussion, with mostly positive associations. The vast majority of participants saw the duty-free EU single market as, above all, a guarantor of prosperity and economic strength, and some particpants pointed out the advantages of having access to a wider range of goods. From the citizens' point of view, the single market also helps to ensure that the European Union can compete better than individual member states in the global competition among the major economic powers.

As a whole, citizens wanted further progress in European integration in the economic sphere. A need to address economic imbalances within the European Union was seen. The participants were in favour of greater support for economically weak member states, but also in favour of a better examination of the economic suitability of candidate countries. Citizens were critical of the lack of transparency in negotiating free trade agreements and subsidies at the expense of developing countries. In many cases, the desire for more sustainable economies taking into account environmental and social concerns was expressed.

> ***Quote:*** *"Europe should ultimately act as a homogeneous economic area in which the same conditions prevail in all member states.*" (From the Citizens' Dialogue in Troisdorf on 9 October 2018)

Domestic policy and internal security were the subject of discussion at nearly eight out of ten Citizens' Dialogues. On a positive note, the participants highlighted the freedom to travel brought about by abolishing internal borders in the Schengen area as a success of the European Union. Cross-border passenger and freight transport in everyday life was seen as an advantage of the European Union, particularly by citizens living close to a border. As a whole, the desire to maintain free border traffic prevailed. On the other hand, the change in the security situation due to international terrorism and the fear of attacks is a cause for concern among many citizens. Although people are largely positive about Europe's role in this sphere, they wanted Europe to take more action, in particular in terms of greater cooperation among the member states in the fight against crime and terrorism.

> ***Quote:*** *"Better cooperation and preventive measures to combat terrorism. Action is taken too late."* (From the Citizens' Dialogue in Berlin on 3 July 2018)

Participants were concerned about the rise of right-wing populism in Europe and expected the member states to take decisive action against such trends. Four out of ten Citizens' Dialogues raised the issue of **right-wing populism**. There was also criticism that populist governments are increasingly standing in the way of pan-European solutions. With relative frequency, the more generally formulated goal of combating racism and xenophobia was mentioned. The desire to stop right-wing populism in Europe was also expressed.

Quote: *"Europe cannot allow Euroscepticism and nationalism to take over the continent. The European Union should therefore enter into a direct dialogue with sceptical citizens. The European Union can change this trend."* (From the Citizens' Dialogue in Flensburg on 28 September 2018)

Migration and refugee policy was addressed at approximately seven out of 10 dialogue events. The issue was perceived as a major current challenge facing the European Union. Many citizens saw the necessity for change in the European Union's migration and refugee policies. They wanted the member states to cooperate better and agree on a common European refugee policy based on solidarity and a fair distribution of refugees. Occasionally, the fight against the root causes of migration was also mentioned. In this connection, a more humane approach to and better integration of refugees in the education system and the labour market were also called for. Opportunities for legal migration and the desire for an immigration law were occasionally raised in view of the shortage of skilled workers in Germany. Feelings of anxiety due to immigration or concerns stemming from the European Union's insufficiently protected external borders were mentioned in some cases.

Quote: "*Those who do not take in refugees must provide financial compensation."* (From the Citizens' Dialogue in Essen on 12 July 2018)

At approximately three quarters of the dialogue events, **labour and social policy** was discussed. The vast majority of citizens assessed as particularly positive the free movement of workers in the European single market and the opportunities offered by the European labour market for their own vocational and career opportunities. Without any specific reference to Europe, an appreciation of the quality of the dual training system in Germany and the associated opportunities for working abroad were mentioned many times.

The European Union was criticised for intra-European competition in the labour market and the resulting wealth gap. These were often seen as causes of corporate outsourcing and wage dumping. As a possible solution, the creation of uniform minimum standards for pay across Europe was discussed. Many participants were concerned about the high level of youth unemployment in some member states and wanted to see it combatted more effectively. The desire for uniform recognition of professional qualifications throughout Europe was also mentioned. Germany's material prosperity was attributed to both European integration and the German social security system. With regard to the intra-European wealth gap, citizens called for increased European action on the adaptation of social standards and working conditions, as well as action to combat poverty and safeguard social participation and fair pay.

Quote: *"Everyone should be allowed to work in every European country, but only if this does not undermine the wage structure in some countries."* (From the Citizens' Dialogue in Jena on August 14, 2018)

Seven out of ten dialogue events raised **financial and monetary issues**. There was a strong consensus on the euro. Almost all citizens viewed the single currency as positive. This also applied to a lesser extent to the SEPA procedure (IBAN), which regulates cashless payments throughout Europe, and the role of the European Central Bank.

> ***Quote:*** *"The standardisation of tax systems and the effective control of such systems."* (From the Citizens' Dialogue in Berlin on 25 August 2018)

The participants saw a need for action in the creation of a Europe-wide uniform tax system, particularly efforts to combat tax evasion and to align economic conditions in the member states. There was isolated criticism of failures in the introduction of the single currency and the handling of the European financial and banking crisis. In particular, greater solidarity in dealing with crisis countries was called for. In addition, citizens repeatedly spoke out in favour of greater regulation of financial markets.

The participants viewed the European Central Bank's zero interest rate policy as problematic and spoke of concerns regarding personal financial losses.

Around seven out of ten Citizens' Dialogues raised the area of **law and justice**. It materialised that many citizens value Europe as a guarantor of **the rule of law**. Adherence to the separation of powers and human rights, respect for the Basic Law, democratic rights and the freedom of expression and the freedom of the press were all linked to the European Union.

> ***Quote:*** *"I am delighted with the EU climate targets for German politicians. I also regard the ECJ as an asset and a unifying element "* (From the Citizens' Dialogue in Rheda-Wiedenbrück on 26 September 2018)

Ensuring the rule of law and upholding fundamental rights and civil liberties in the member states were viewed as important challenges facing the European Union and violations of them by individual member states were criticised. The Europe-wide alignment of existing regulations was endorsed, for example in migration and refugee policy, social standards, transport policy and environmental and climate protection.

The common European rules on consumer protection were viewed positively, whereas the General Data Protection Regulation was predominantly criticised for being too bureaucratic, and some called its effectiveness into question.

At seven out of ten dialogue events, **culture and religion** were discussed. Europe was perceived as a community of different cultures in which cultural and linguistic diversity is lived out. The common cultural heritage and Europe-wide values – these aspects were appreciated by many citizens. Important issues for people also included the options for cultural exchange across national borders, combined with the desire for exchange programmes to be open to them, also outside of school and university.

It was said that this cultural self-image is what makes Europe unique and enriches our coexistence, but that unfortunately it is once again being called into question. A need for action was seen on the question of more common European identity. The desire to strengthen a European identity, for example by means of a European public holiday, was counterbalanced by the fear that this could threaten cultural diversity in Europe.

Quote:* "I appreciate Europe mostly for the feeling of being European. For example, when you're abroad and you sit at a table with different nationalities and have the same international thoughts."* (From the Citizens' Dialogue in Garbsen on 4 May 2018)

Citizens endorsed religious diversity and a high degree of openness to all world religions, but also the strict separation of church and state.

Around half of the Citizens' Dialogue events raised the **issues of the environment and climate**. Common climate change targets and uniform environmental standards across Europe were seen by citizens as important, cross-border issues. They thus stressed the need for a greater – common and pan-European – commitment to climate protection, which should focus on reducing CO2 emissions. The need for action in the areas of mobility, energy generation and high-emission industries was emphasised. Greater animal welfare, less plastic and the abandonment of chemicals in agriculture were also urged.

Quote: *"Climate protection and environmental protection must be seen as the foundation of our economic system. Economic activity within the confines of our planet's resources.*" (From the Citizens' Dialogue in Bad Homburg on October 5, 2018)

One third of the dialogue events discussed **the spread of digital technology**. The benefits of toll-free roaming in the European Union were highlighted in a particularly positive manner. On the other hand, the greatest need for action was seen in the expansion of digital infrastructure. In specific terms, citizens mentioned an Internet connection covering the whole of Europe and greater harmonisation of mobile networks and charges. Digital technology in the world of work and the need for increased European cooperation in cybersecurity were discussed in isolated cases.

Quote: *"There is a lack of regard for what is essential, for example the spread of digital technology in the European Union and changes in the world of work*" (from the Citizens' Dialogue in Flensburg on 28 September 2018)

One third of the dialogue events addressed the issues **of infrastructure and mobility**. Cross-border infrastructure in the areas of electricity supply and (public) mobility, along with the supply of clean drinking water and safe food in the European Union, were positively highlighted. Increased cooperation and a common strategy for the mobility of the future were called for. The aspects mentioned ranged from alternatives to the internal combustion engine to the Europe-wide expansion of public transport and cross-border high-speed trains. In some cases, the desire for a pan-European strategy for the energy supply of the future was expressed.

Quote: *"Politicians must now initiate an energy revolution and shut down coal-fired power stations. The problems are urgent enough.*" (From the Citizens' Dialogue in Starnberg on August 20, 2018)

Compared to other issues, citizens rarely associated **health and nursing care** or **agricultural policy** with Europe and addressed them less frequently.

4. Values

The Citizens' Dialogue made it clear that citizens perceive the European Union not only as a political community, but also as a community of values. The following value dimensions were addressed with particular frequency.

Freedom occupied a central position for citizens in the Citizens' Dialogue and was an issue at nine out of ten dialogue events. The guarantee of individual civil liberties in the European Union was highlighted as being particularly positive. They mainly associated "freedom" with the freedom to travel in Europe, but also with the free movement of workers and the ability to work in neighbouring countries. Freedom of the press and freedom of expression were also mentioned in some cases.

> ***Quote: "****The ability to travel anywhere without being obliged to show my ID.*" (From the Citizens' Dialogue in Berlin on 15 May 2018)

With regard to developments in some Eastern European countries, there were explicit calls for greater enforcement of binding constitutional and democratic norms and for the defence of freedom of the press and freedom of expression.

The issue of **justice** was raised at more than half of the dialogue events and was often linked to European solidarity. The issue was a particular point of contention. A majority of participants wanted greater pan-European initiative: while the idea of solidarity among states was supported in principle, many participants criticised the great lack of solidarity within the European Union, and also with states outside Europe. The lack of fairness in the distribution of refugees among the member states was explicitly pointed out. Greater social justice was also called for, particularly with a view to social imbalances among the member states and equal opportunities in the field of education.

Equality was raised at around one quarter of the dialogue events. Citizens saw this as an alignment of living and working conditions, but also a harmonisation of rules and structures within the European Union. These were particularly endorsed when they facilitated cross-border living and working. The desire for greater harmonisation in various policy areas was counterbalanced by concerns about levelling down within Europe, as well as the loss of cultural, social, political and economic diversity.

The values of **respect and tolerance, openness and transparency** were also mentioned. Only a few individuals specifically stated that Europe needs more of these.

To sum up, the participants were largely positive about the European Union and were highly sensitive to current European issues. They expressed appreciation for the fruits of European integration, but also addressed critical issues. On the issue of refugees and migration in particular, citizens saw a great need for action and for a pan-European solution. Across all policy areas, it became apparent that participants generally want a European response to problems. The desire for more European solutions instead of national solutions was a prominent feature of the Citizens' Dialogue.

II. European policy findings

The Citizens' Dialogues made it clear that Europe is **firmly and mainly positively anchored** in everyday life, and thus also in the minds of people in Germany as well. The breadth of the topics and the intensity of the discussions also showed how **diverse people's wishes, concerns and expectations are vis-à-vis the European Union**. The vast majority of citizens explicitly paid tribute to Europe's achievements and accomplishments. Time and again, peace, stability, economic strength or fundamental freedoms were mentioned as Europe's particular **achievements**. **Criticism and suggestions** were not voiced as a fundamental faultfinding with Europe; rather, they concerned **certain specific aspects** – both regarding the institutional dimension and particular issues (foreign policy, migration, education, etc.).

These findings serve as both **a message and a mandate for the Federal Government** to continue to work vigorously for a solid, common European future and for the further development of Europe.

1. Institutional dimension and values

A Europe that is transparent and close to the people

The Federal Government will take up the views and ideas expressed at the Citizens' Dialogues. It will step up its efforts to better explain the work of the European Union and how it functions, as well as to ***highlight the benefits for citizens****. The Federal Government also sees the findings of the Citizens' Dialogues as an encouragement to continue its endeavours to further promote transparency, bureaucracy reduction, subsidiarity and closeness to the citizens of the European Union. In the further development of Europe, the Federal Government focuses primarily on options within the framework of the existing treaties, for example in the field of foreign policy. Here, it will work to increase the* ***European Union's capacity to act*** *and make* ***more rapid decisions*** *(including the scrapping of unanimous decisions, where provided for by the Treaty of Lisbon). The Federal Government is also keen to see* ***greater civic participation in Europe*** *(for example, by reforming the European Citizens' Initiative).*

Europe as a community of values

*The great importance that people in Germany attach to Europe' **fundamental values** shows that such values are the essence of **European identity**. The Federal Government will remain committed to preserving and enforcing these values, in particular the **rule of law**, throughout the European Union**.** We also need to further strengthen **cohesion in Europe** and the development of a European identity. The introduction of a European public holiday (Europe Day) would be one way to promote European identity.*

2. Topics

A Europe strong in the foreign policy sphere

*The Federal Government has always stressed the importance of **a strong European foreign, security and defence policy.** It will continue to engage in efforts to enable the European Union to operate more cohesively and with greater unity in foreign policy and, at the same time, to be able to act more quickly, more effectively and, therefore, more convincingly. The Federal Government will therefore work to strengthen the **majority principle** in the Common Foreign and Security Policy and to ensure that national civil and military instruments are better coordinated at the European level.*

Safe together – Europe's promises of protection

*Citizens want Europe to protect them. Therefore, the Federal Government will continue to support efforts to build the **Security Union** with all its strength. Only together will we in Europe be able to protect ourselves from dangers such as international terrorism and transnational organised crime.*

Prosperity thanks to the single market and the euro

*It is now a matter of course for citizens and businesses to be able to engage in trade across borders in the **European single market**, subject to common rules. The single market is an inextricable component of the European project. The Federal Government is working with its European partners to develop and complete the internal market. It is important to overcome the challenges posed by the spread of digital technology, to maintain an attractive competitive environment and to improve the enforcement of internal market rules.*

*In the view of the Federal Government, it is a good sign that, for most people, the single market is a central European achievement and the basis of our prosperity, and that the **euro** is viewed positively and broadly appreciated as a single currency. At the same time, there is a need for continued commitment to competitiveness, stability and convergence among the member states within the framework of economic and monetary union. In tax policy, the Federal Government has rigorously complied with the wishes of the citizens and has already declared a fight on tax evasion by adopting various measures.*

A Europe of opportunities foreveryone: Comparable living and working conditions

*The wishes expressed by the citizens are in line with the Federal Government's **convergence policy**. Making living conditions more equal for the people of Europe is a declared goal. Key tasks include better coordination of labour market policy, a European framework for basic national security systems and a strong cohesion policy.*

European response to the migration issue

*The Federal Government sees the opinions held by the majority of people as a clear signal of support for continuing work at the European level on the reform of the **Common European Asylum System**, including an effective and solidarity-based joint distribution of refugees within the European Union. The Federal Government will continue to work hard for a comprehensive European migration policy, which will also address the root causes of **migration**.*

Exchange and recognition of qualifications

*The exchange of students, trainees and pupils through the ERASMUS+ programme, which has been firmly established for decades, is perceived as a trademark of the European Union. The exchange of young people, but also adults, has become an important element of European identity. The Federal Government's central goals include its increased support and the improved **mutual recognition of qualifications**. In some cases, education systems in Europe are quite different from one another. Against this background, the introduction of **Europe-wide educational standards** does not appear to be a priority. The Federal Government considers it important to strengthen knowledge on Europe by including more **Europe in school curricula and promoting extracurricular educational opportunities**. This includes the acquisition of foreign languages.*

Strengthening European environmental and climate protection

*The Federal Government is committed to ensuring that ambitious environmental protection remains a core component of EU policy. Citizens' wishes for a European **energy, mobility and climate protection policy** are in line with the Federal Government's goals of agreeing on European solutions. Thus, the course has been set for the future direction of European and national climate and energy policies, combining climate protection with a clean, secure and affordable energy supply.*

Successfully mastering digital technology

*The Federal Government has taken up the demand of citizens for universal **broadband coverage**. It has set itself the goal of introducing gigabit networks by 2025. It is noteworthy that European **innovation projects** that have been announced or already discussed, for example in the field of artificial intelligence, were discussed at most on the margins of the Citizens' Dialogues. This underlines the need for improved communication on the spread of digital technology. This is particularly true of research and innovation issues, which are crucial for competitiveness and therefore for Europe's future prosperity.*

*The concern among citizens about **protecting their data** and defeating **cybercrime** is part of the European pledge of protection, which has the support of the Federal Government. In the digital single market in particular, there are many issues that require cross-border action and can create concrete benefits for the people of Europe.*

Promoting agriculture and rural areas

*The Federal Government will continue to pursue the further development and readjustment of the **Common European Agricultural Policy** agreed in the coalition agreement. The focus will continue to be on the protection of animals, nature and the climate, food quality, the maintenance of social standards along with the preservation of the cultural landscape and attractive rural areas.*

III. Summary and outlook

At 119 events between May and October 2018, citizens across Germany discussed the future of Europe. In the Citizens' Dialogues without any predetermined conclusions, organised by the Federal Government and civil society partners, the participants spoke of their experiences of Europe in everyday life, of Europe's role in Germany and of their ideas concerning Europe' future. Europe, it materalised, is mostly positively anchored in the minds of most people in Germany, although critical aspects were also addressed. The wide range of issues made it clear that, in many fields, citizens want more rather than less European integration. It also became clear that participants prioritise pan-European solutions over national responses in most policy areas.

This positive attitude is both an opportunity and an incentive for the Federal Government to continue to work hard to strengthen and develop the European Union. Solutions are always created together in Europe. That is why the member states of the European Union will discuss the results of the national Citizens' Dialogues together and draw their conclusions from them. In the Federal Government's view, a constructive pan-European debate on citizens' conceptions of the future of Europe is of great importance – for the success of the European Union as a guarantor of peace, democracy and prosperity.

ESTONIA

RIIGIKANTSELEI

REPORT ON CITIZENS' CONSULTATIONS ON FUTURE OF EUROPE IN ESTONIA

Government Office

Republic of Estonia

2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Citizen`s consultations on the future of Europe in Estonia were organised in cooperation with the European Commission (hereinafter referred to as the "EC") Representation in Estonia. Schedule for organising public events was set around the 9th of May, when the European Day is celebrated. As the EC Representation in Estonia is the head of the European Day celebrations, than this year`s celebrations were planned throughout Estonia including public discussions with citizens on the future of Europe. All-together nine events were organized between 1-16 May in different parts of Estonia. At the same time, the EC launched an online platform for EU citizens to express their views and wishes for the future of the EU. Government Office as the national coordinator of the EU future debates joined with the European Day series of events, taking stock of the opinions, concerns and ideas expressed during the discussions by the citizens.

The main discussion item during these events was the future of the EU, taking into account regional interests and areas of concern. Discussions were structured by three major thematic blocks:

- European fundamental values and openness – what do we have to win and what to lose?
- European cultural heritage - what kind of heritage we create today for future generations?
- European Parliament elections 2019

The core elements of the program were the same at each venue, varying in terms of specific performers and activities. The main focus was set on substantive debates and meetings with politicians. In addition, an interactive bicycle game on EU structural funds and EU information with interactive quiz took place. Also local musical performances, activities for children and local handicraft and product fair were organized aside. All events were in Estonian, with the exception of Narva event, which took place in bilingual form, given the importance of the Russian-speaking population in the region.

Total number of participants was around 2,200 people. All events were live streamed through Facebook and are still available for re-viewing. Also, the EC Representation in Estonia created a separate website http://www.euroopapaev.ee/, which is available in three languages (in Estonian, Russian, English) and Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/tuleeuroopapaevale/.

THE MAIN OUTCOMES

For the Estonians, the **EU stands for democracy, equality, solidarity, respect of human rights and peace**. EU has provided opportunities and resources that Estonia has developed to the current level where we can focus on debates on core values and do not have to deal with the first issues as they solve common problems. The importance of the EU has become so self-evident that it is difficult to look at Estonia separately.

During the citizens' consultations, the most passionate discussions were held on the core values of the EU. In particular, citizens highlighted **the freedom of movement and freedom of expression**, which mark the core values of the EU. For Estonians, it is important to have the freedom to travel, study, work and live in any member state without any borders. It is also of great importance to have a single market and opportunities that can help small local businesses to expand their market share and opportunities within the EU.

To have a better outlook for future, there are issues that need solutions. Namely, quite often were mentioned **the excessive bureaucracy at EU level** which could be reduced by using digital solutions. Mostly it concerns small non-profit organizations or businesses in rural areas, where financial support from different EU funds is used. It was also referred to **an aging agricultural policy**, which still faces inequalities between new and old member states. **Time-consuming road and air connections** were also identified, which hinder the development of tourism, the growth of trade flows and, thus, the development of the economy.

In terms of the innovative side of the future of Europe several new ideas and proposals were made. For example, Estonia could take the lead in EU in the process of **developing artificial intelligence** and its implementation in everyday life, in industry, in education system etc.

As Estonia is deeply environment-friendly country, it was also proposed to establish **a unified deposit-subjected packaging system in the EU to reduce the packaging waste**. Estonia already has a very well-functioning system, but the problem lies in the neighbouring member states and in close trade with them, which leaves lot of packages in Estonia and citizens aren't interested in collecting them as they won`t get any deposit for them back. An EU-wide deposit-subjected packaging system could be an excellent alternative to encourage recycling and reduce.

More attention should be paid to gender equality when applying for work in order **to tackle the pay gap between men and women**. There could be unified rules across the EU, so that employers can make a gender-neutral decision, taking into account the applicant's educational, personal and other characteristics that are important for applying for a job.

Regarding the **European Parliament elections**, that will take place in May 2019, the focus was rather on how to increase people's awareness of the election and give them an incentive to vote. Therefore, the citizens found, that it is necessary to better inform and explain what is the role of the European Parliament, how Parliament's activities affect the everyday life of every Estonian, and why it is important to go to vote.

It was also mentioned that **the role of the EU should be more forward looking** compared to local politicians who has only a four-year perspective on the horizon. More attention should be paid to young people and their opportunities to expand, to research and development, and to the environment.

IRELAND

REPORT ON CITIZENS' CONSULTATIONS ON EUROPE IN IRELAND

PART A: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Citizens' Dialogues on the future of Europe took place across Ireland between November 2017 and May 2018. The Taoiseach (Prime Minister), Leo Varadkar, T.D., was joined at the launch by the Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Simon Coveney, T.D., and the Minister of State for European Affairs, Helen McEntee, T.D. The regional sessions were arranged and hosted by the Minister of State for European Affairs with the assistance of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the European Movement Ireland. Nearly 1,000 people participated and the process culminated with a day-long National Citizens' Dialogue in Dublin in May 2018.

Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive with almost 90% expressing satisfaction with the process. Almost all of those involved were positively disposed towards the European Union with participants associating words such as "peace", "unity", "solidarity", "security" and "cooperation" with membership of the Union. A national opinion poll conducted towards the end of the process confirmed this trend, finding that support for membership of the European Union is as high as 92%.

Those involved were much more interested in focussing on the future, rather than raking over the past, and the abiding message was that the Irish people see Europe at the heart of their future and Ireland at the heart of Europe. The overarching desire was for fairness - fairness between Member States, fairness in educational and employment opportunities and fairness between generations.

It emerged, however, that more needs to be done in terms of explaining and communicating the Union's policies and achievements. Often, the distinction between Member State competence and European Union competence is not understood. As Minister of State McEntee put it: "The European Union has many achievements to its name. But it still needs to reaffirm its relevance in the daily lives of its citizens. We have learned from our citizens that this renewal needs to be constant and not just in times of crisis."

The main outcomes were:

- Participants said that they want to be part of a Union that lives up to its values and is ready to meet the new challenges that we face.

- They see real value in cooperating on challenges like climate change, migration, cybersecurity, terrorism and cross-border crime.

- The overarching desire is for fairness – fairness in the opportunities available to citizens, fairness between generations, fairness between Member States, fairness in Europe's dealings with the rest of the world and fairness towards the environment.

- Citizens want the EU to continue to do what it does well. They support investment in policies like the Common Agricultural Policy, regional development and Erasmus+. They want more investment in young people, in education, training and innovation.

- They want to tackle social exclusion and to see stronger interventions at a European level to combat discrimination, integrate migrants and improve access to services.

- Businesses and consumers want to see the completion of the Single Market, especially in services and the Digital Single Market. They want corporate tax to remain a national competence and they want more support for small to medium sized enterprises, particularly in their early years.

A prosperous and competitive Union
Participants said they wanted to see more investment in young people, in education, in training and in innovation, particularly through Horizon 2020 (soon to be Horizon Europe), in order to develop the skills needed for the labour market of the future and to prepare for growing competition from new global players. They also wanted to tackle youth unemployment and long-term unemployment.

Investment, they said, should be spread across all regions.

The business community and the NGO sector want funding processes to be simplified and there was interest in a banking union that could facilitate access to affordable and safe credit.

There were calls for the completion of the Single Market in services and the Digital Single Market and broad support for the Union's growing network of free trade agreements.

There was strong support for corporation tax policy remaining a national competence. There was also strong support for the Common Agricultural Policy and the fishing community asked for more investment in equipment and an easing of quotas.

A safe and secure Union
Speaking at the National Citizens' Dialogue in May 2018, the Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Simon Coveney, T.D., pointed out that "Europe has much to offer in terms of rights and advantages. But the Union's ability to deliver on its commitments is dependent on creating a safe and secure space for all its citizens."

There was strong attachment at the sessions to Irish neutrality but also broad recognition that security challenges such as terrorism, drug-trafficking and cross-border crime are best tackled in cooperation with others.

Participants tended to believe that enlargement would bring stability to Europe's neighbourhood and support for increasing the EU's development and humanitarian assistance was given voice.

Participants also felt that tackling social exclusion and focussing more attention on the integration of migrants would help make the Union a safer place.

Irish people are proud of the role Ireland and the EU play in peacekeeping missions and some want to see more public dialogue on new security initiatives such Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).

A sustainable Union
Participants want the European Union to be a global leader in tackling climate change. While there was broad support for tougher environmental legislation, there was a demand in some quarters for more engagement and debate on how the climate action agenda is impacting on peoples' day-to-day lives.

More incentives for the transition to renewable energies were sought and, while some concerns were voiced about the impact of modern farming on the environments, there were also calls for more protection for rural landscapes and a concerted effort to close the rural-urban divide.

As one participant put it: "A dead planet will not provide jobs or livelihoods."

A social Europe
Participants wanted to see stronger intervention at European level to combat all discrimination and improve access to services.

The voluntary sector asked for a greater role in the decision-making processes in Europe.

Concerns were raised about work-life balance and quality of life indicators, participants argued, should be factored in when measuring competitiveness.

The trade union movement said that full effect must be given to the European Pillar of Social Rights and called for stronger rights at EU and Member State level for the collective bargaining in the workplace.

Some aspects of the Posted Workers Directive were criticised as being unfair.

The European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) pointed in a written submission to the values enshrined in article 2 of the Treaty on European Union and said: "It is only if the EU can demonstrate that it is using its values to guide its decisions that it will have the confidence and support of its people."

Shaping globalisation
Concerns were expressed about job security in an increasingly competitive world with calls for more investment in lifelong learning, up-skilling and language training.

Education was seen as key, with demands made for more EU-funded universities, a greatly expanded Erasmus+ programme (involving more apprentices, teachers and people from all generations) and the mutual recognition of specialist qualifications across the EU.

It was felt that the EU has a moral imperative to do more for countries to the south and east and to promote education and empowerment in Africa.

Strong views were expressed that globalisation should not be allowed to proceed at the expense of human rights.

Conclusion

In an address to the European Parliament in January 2018, the Taoiseach (Prime Minister), Leo Varadkar, T.D., said that "the EU has always offered the promise of a better future. It is not a future that will be handed to us. We must work to create it." The Citizens' Dialogue process in Ireland has been of invaluable assistance in creating the vision of an attractive EU that citizens can trust and support. We are immensely grateful to all who responded to our call to "get involved" and we are confident that their participation will inform Ireland's contribution to the Strategic Agenda which EU Heads of State and Government will prepare in Sibiu, Romania, in May 2019.

GREECE

HELLENIC REPUBLIC
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Citizens' Consultations on the Future of Europe

NATIONAL REPORT- GREECE

November 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- ✓ **National consultation website: 30.000 visits**

More than 30.000 internet users in Greece visited the national consultation's website, www.oureurope.gov.gr , **while 1.542 Greek citizens** participated in the digital consultation that took place throughout the country

- ✓ **3rd highest participation in the EU**

Taking into account the participation of Greek citizens both in the national online consultation and in the digital consultation of the European Commission that was held over the same period, **Greece ranked 3rd in terms of participation**, behind France and Hungary

- ✓ **Seven consultation events**

From May until November 2018, **seven (7) different consultation events were held throughout Greece** (Nafplion, Athens, Crete, Rhodes, Kalamata, Agrinio), **in collaboration with the Representations of the European Commission and the European Parliament in Greece**

- ✓ **Faith in the future of Europe**

The vast majority of participants (65.5%) believe that the EU has a future. However, 49% of participants consider **unemployment as the most important challenge** for the future of Europe.

- ✓ **More social policy**

The **Greek public opinion underlines the need for the promotion of social policies**. 94.2% of participants believe that consolidation of public finances should be accompanied by policies against social challenges such as poverty and unemployment

- ✓ **Strengthening CFSP & CSDP**

61% of participants want to see the EU **strengthen cooperation in defense and security**.

Methodology

In April 2018, a "task force" was set up at the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs to coordinate activities and events in order to inform Greek citizens and motivate them to participate in the public consultation for the Future of Europe. The Greek Consultation was carried out on two levels:

I. Through a web-based questionnaire, as a **digital consultation** on issues related to the Future Europe.

II. By organizing **public consultation events throughout Greece**.

I. Digital Consultation

In June 2018, a website dedicated to the consultation on the Future of Europe was launched under the domain **www.oureurope.gov.gr**. The awareness raising campaign in order to encourage participation in the consultation was carried out **with the contribution and cooperation of the Delegation of the European Commission in Greece.**

More than 30.000 internet users visited the site, while **1.542 Greek citizens** participated in the digital consultation*.

* In proportion to Greece's population, a 0.015%, according to the Commission's Data -Directorate-General for Communication- until 29.10.18

II. Public Consultation Events

At the same time, from May until November 2018, **seven (7) public consultation events were organized** in Nafplion, Athens, Crete, Rhodes, Kalamata, Agrinio, in collaboration with the Hellenic Parliament and the Representations of the European Commission and the European Parliament in Greece.

The events took the form of an **open discussion with the audience**, bringing together representatives of academia, local governments and the civil society. The Greek Alternate Foreign Minister, responsible for European Affairs, was the keynote speaker in four of these events.

Key findings

The Future of Europe

- **The majority of respondents (65,5%) believe in the future of the EU**. However, 27% state their pessimism on the future of the EU.
- Concerning future challenges for the EU, **49% consider unemployment as the greatest challenge**, with the domination of extremist ideologies in second place, followed by global warming, the democratic deficit and ageing population.

Institutional Issues

- When asked about the future direction that the EU should take, **the Greek public opinion seems to want greater European integration** at a percentage of 81.3%. At the same time, 61.8% of participants are in favor of a revision of the Lisbon Treaty to **include a provision for a European Minister for Finance and Labor.**
- 50,2% of respondents would like to see **greater EU cooperation** in specific sectors and policies, 31% would like to see a transfer of power to European institutions, whilst only 6,6% would like the current balance to be maintained

Social Policies

- Participants **express a strong desire for the promotion of social policies**. More specifically, 94,2% want fiscal consolidation policies to be coupled with measures to tackle social issues such as unemployment and poverty. 52% believe that the EU has not done enough for social rights, whilst only 44% of respondents believe that EU action in this field is sufficient.
- Additionally, **49% of respondents want to see the funds of the European budget dedicated to tackling unemployment increase in the next MFF**, while 31% are in favor of increased funding for Research and Innovation.

CFSP & CDSP

- The desire to see a **strengthening of EU defense and security policies** is expressed by 61% of respondents.
- Concerning current foreign policy issues, 50,2% of respondents are in favor of the enlargement of the EU to the Western Balkans and other candidate countries, although a significant percentage (39,2%) are against.
- Concerning the budgetary shortfall that will result from **BREXIT**, the majority of Greeks (45,4%), believe it should be **covered by MS contributions proportionate to their GDP.**

Issues raised by the public

Five main issues raised concern among participants:

- **EU Social Dimension**: Participants underlined the need to strengthen the Social State, in order to tackle issues such as poverty, unemployment and social exclusion. Proposals were put forward for greater emphasis to be given to social policies which will mitigate the consequences of the free market and globalization on employment, while a significant share of participants pointed out the need for solidarity among MS.
- **Economic Future of the Union:** Participants comments focused on issues such as the improvement of living standards and Greece's exit from the economic crisis. Concerns were raised as to the extent to which austerity policies produced the desired effects in the building of a stronger Europe. Emphasis was given to the need to add a 'human dimension' to economic targets, which must serve social policies, such as public health, education and the tackling of unemployment.

- **Foreign Policy and Defense**: In the field of Foreign Policy and Defense, participants' views are in favor of a more integrated and common European policy. Greek public opinion places importance on the need for enhanced protection of the common external European borders and desires a greater involvement of European means in their protection. Furthermore, the issue of including the term "island insularity" in the terminology of EU decisions was raised.

- **Migration**: The need for solidarity among MS concerning immigration and refugee issues, so as for Greece not to become a repository of human beings, was raised. Great concern was expressed about extremist opinions within the EU, which have been amplified by the refugee crisis. Disappointment was expressed about the absence of a coordinated and forward looking policy to address this pressing issue.

- **Institutional Issues**: Questions were raised about the kind of Europe we want. More technocratic or more democratic? More transparent or more efficient? A wider or a deeper European Union? When faced with these dilemmas, participants indicated a possible third way, the way of 'acceleration', through the faster implementation of policies and measures which have been agreed upon, but have not been put in place yet. The public also expressed an interest in the possible opportunities which arise from the legal framework of the Treaty of Lisbon, such as the solidarity clause.

Lessons learnt

- In total, the dialogue raised significant interest among the Greek public and a high participation rate was recorded.

- It became obvious that the Greek citizens value consultation and dialogue when it comes to the future of Europe.

- There is an absence of institutionalized dialogue between the state and the citizens on European issues, resulting in the vast majority of participants not being aware of important decisions taken in Brussels.

- Participants expressed a strong concern about young people's lack of involvement in public consultation procedures. It was argued that, on the one hand, they were not given enough opportunity to participate, and on the other, young people are disappointed by existing forms of dialogue and deliberately chose to abstain.

***

SPAIN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SUMMARY

- ✓ **Pro-European sentiment among the Spanish population continues its strong upward trend.** According to the September 2018 Eurobarometer, 75% of Spaniards consider that **being part of the European Union has been positive for Spain**. The percentage of Spaniards who consider Spain's EU membership to be beneficial has risen by 15 points in just one year.

- ✓ **Spaniards want more Europe, and a better Europe.** All of the citizens' consultations held in Spain clearly show a strong desire for a more integrated, harmonized, active, and united Europe.

- ✓ Spain's participation rate for the online survey on the future of Europe was the fourth highest overall. The survey results show that the people of Spain support **strengthening the Social Pillar** and focusing the **EU's priorities on renewable energy, healthcare, fair and equitable access to education, and the creation of a real government for the entire EU.**

- ✓ **Spaniards underscore the Union's achievements**, and particularly the free movement of persons, the single currency, structural funds, international leadership in environmental protection, the Erasmus programme, and the perception of the EU as a seal of quality.

- ✓ Citizens are **aware of the limits of the European Union;** their key concerns therefore centre on the need to redesign migration policy at the European level, to consolidate the Economic and Monetary

Union, to improve the accountability of the EU institutions to citizens, to address Euroscepticism and populism, and to strengthen the EU's competences to make a more effective Union.

- ✓ Almost **100 citizens' dialogue events were held, in 48 cities**, spread over 14 of Spain's 17 self-governing regions, **to discuss the future of Europe.** The citizens' consultations were organized by participants from civil society, the Representation of the European Commission and the Office of the European Parliament in Spain, and institutions that joined the initiative voluntarily.
- ✓ **The conclusions reached by citizens** in each Member State appear in the European Council Conclusions of December 2018 and form the **basis of the public debate on the May 2019 European elections.**

INTRODUCTION

In December 2017, the European Council set out, as one of its priorities, to hear the opinions of the people of Europe about the principal challenges that the European Union must face in coming years. To that end, a citizens' consultation process was conducted in most of the Member States from May to October 2018. In Spain, the State Secretariat for the European Union (SEUE) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation was responsible for promoting the citizens' consultations known as *Hablamos de Europa* [Talking about Europe].

While these consultations were being held in each Member State, the European Commission launched an online survey called "Consultation on the Future of Europe", to identify Europeans' priorities and concerns. In this report, we are presenting the principal conclusions of both the online survey and of the different consultations conducted all over Spain. In the following section we will describe the methodology followed in the *Hablamos de Europa* consultations in Spain. We will then give an overview of the Europe that Spaniards want, on the basis of the online survey. Lastly, we will offer a more detailed view of the principal debates held during the *Hablamos de Europa* citizens' consultations in Spain.

Citizens' consultations: Methodology

From May to October 2018, nearly one hundred citizens' consultations were held in Spain. These consultations were carried out by 35 groups and institutions, classified into three groups named the steering group, the EU group and the volunteers' group. The steering group consisted of 22 groups selected through an open call to which 123 projects were submitted. These groups represented different associations, think tanks, foundations, universities, NGOs, and trade unions. Their areas of work were building Europe and European integration; analysis and study of social reality; higher education and training; information and communication; and, lastly, labour relations and working conditions. The EU group comprised the representations of European institutions in Spain, especially the Madrid and Barcelona

headquarters of the Office of the European Parliament and of the European Commission. The volunteers' group stemmed from the idea of enabling those groups and institutions that so requested to organize consultations. This group ultimately comprised universities, regional governments, municipal councils, and different associations.

The consultations were carried out in 48 cities (half of them with fewer than 60,000 inhabitants), in 14 of Spain's 17 Autonomous Communities. Approximately 6,000 people participated in the consultations. In two out of every three consultations, the number of participants varied from 15 to 60, with 35-40 being the most usual number. Some consultations were much more widely attended, with up to approximately 350 people.

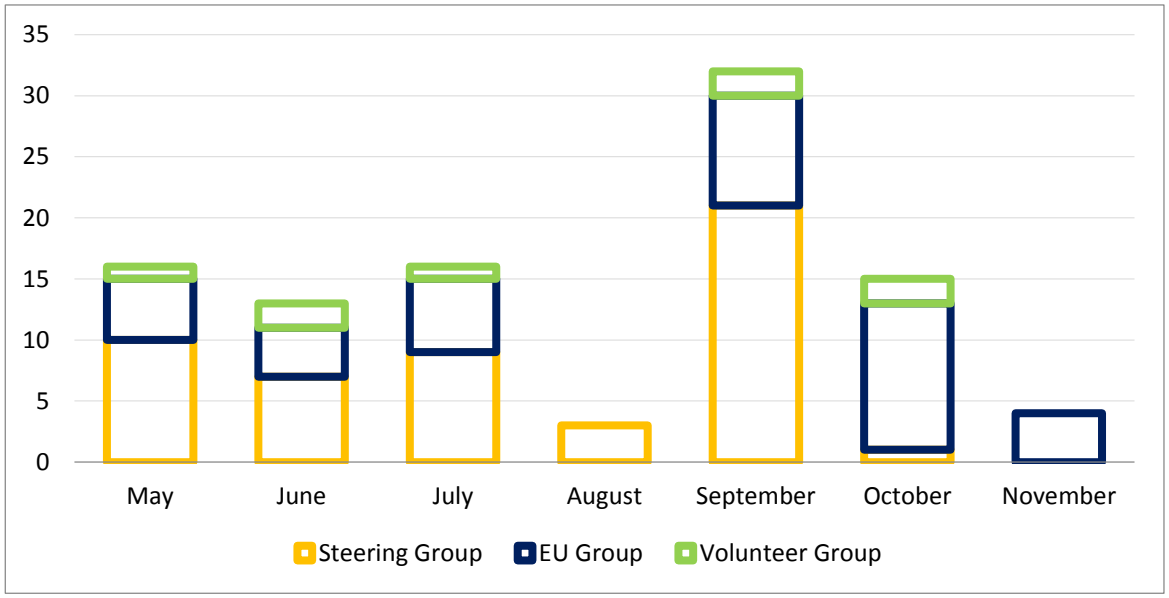


Chart 2: Evolution and distribution of the consultations, by group of organizers (n=100)

The variety of stakeholders represented in the consultations was broad and diverse. The most frequent, just to name a few, were members of the academic community; Europeanist civil society organizations; secondary school students; trade unions; and employers' organizations. Moreover, approximately 150 people from universities, political institutions and civil society participated in their capacity as experts or as members of the sectors concerned.

Lastly, as regards the formats of the consultations and the types of debate, efforts were made to prevent them from being predominantly informative, prioritizing the creation of spaces for citizens' concerns to be heard. Thus, the four most recurrent formats were: presentations followed by a Q&A session; presentations followed by horizontal dialogue; consultations using participatory techniques and dynamics; and, lastly, focus groups (Chart 3, left). 75% of the consultations had a maximum duration of three hours (Chart 3, middle), and there was a balance between the percentage of time dedicated to

presentation and information (by the keynote speakers) and the time dedicated to debate or Q&A (Chart 3, right).

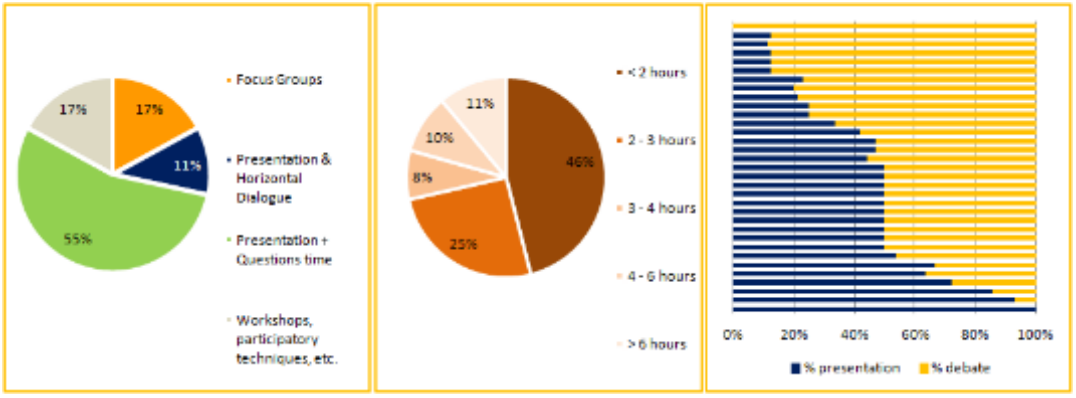


Chart 3: Format and type of debate in citizens' consultations

These 6,000 people are certainly not a representative sample of Spain's population (for example, it is very likely that among them, those whose voices are heard the most come from the best -educated sectors, are the most interested in collective affairs, and are the most pro-European), but the process has allowed debate about Europe to reach areas and people that do not usually participate in the habitual circles of public debate on such issues.

Online Consultation on the Future of Europe: A general assessment

In Spain, the online Consultation on the Future of Europe has recorded, as at 9 November, up to 4,829 responses, 34% of which are from women, and 66% from men. The average age of those surveyed is 45.

According to those surveyed, the EU's priorities should be: the use of renewable energy; healthcare; fair and equitable access to education; and the creation of a real government for the entire EU.

As regards the question on whether citizens would prefer to have more or less harmonization between the Member States, 8 out of 10 surveyed believe that harmonization should increase in all areas, and most especially in environmental standards and in minimum social benefits. Even though at the European level the percentage of those wanting less EU intervention than in 2016 has risen, Spaniards have increased their demand for more Europe, and they have done so more markedly than in the EU as a whole (European Parliament's Eurobarometer).

As regards specific actions in certain areas, more than 60% of those surveyed support the following measures: in immigration, improve the situation in the countries of origin; in public security, combat terrorism and radicalization; in health, increase the budget for healthcare and research; and, lastly, combat corruption. Likewise, more than 60% consider political extremism to be the principal threat facing the EU.

European Dialogues: Principal issues raised by citizens

Based on more than 40 debates carried out in approximately 20 municipalities with a population under 60,000, the main questions raised by the citizens involved economic and trade policy (consequences of Brexit, Common Agricultural Policy, and Spain's trade balance); political instability (advance of the extreme right and of Eurosceptic movements); migration and asylum policy (non-compliance by certain countries with the refugee quotas); the environment (depopulation); education (mobility programmes) and social inequalities and barriers (the digital divide in rural areas).

Focus groups: Principal issues discussed by citizens

To identify the major issues concerning Spaniards about the future of the EU, we conducted an in-depth analysis of 15 focus groups. Noteworthy among the issues were two specific topics (disinformation and migration), as well as a series of assessments of the achievements and limitations of the European project.

Disinformation:

Talking about the EU and giving their opinions about it is not easy for Spaniards. Many citizens recognize that disinformation about the EU makes them feel ignorant and incapable of talking about it, and this undermines their feeling of belonging. The sectors most critical of the EU think that this disinformation is deliberate and premeditated, and that its purpose is to hinder accountability.

Migration:

Migration and asylum policy (most do not seem to distinguish between the two) is the issue that has been spontaneously debated the most. Three types of discourse have been identified: one, in which it is treated as a humanitarian emergency; another, which emphasizes the existence of conflicting interests (competition for resources between the national and the migrant populations); and, lastly, a third discourse that considers migration to be a social threat. Most of the positions expressed in the focus groups fall between the first two types of discourse (humanitarian emergency and conflicting interests). Without relinquishing civic and humanitarian obligations, many participants recognize that there are conflicting interests, because Spain does not have sufficient capacity to respond to the total volume of migration and asylum, and, therefore, it is necessary to work with the countries of origin. This coincides with the results of the online Consultation on the Future of Europe, in which the priority action regarding migration should be, according to those surveyed, to improve the situation of the migrants' countries of origin.

Unanimously recognized achievements:

Spaniards clearly identify the EU's principal achievements since its inception: the free movement of persons, the single currency, the structural funds, the international leadership in environmental protection, the Erasmus programme, and the perception of "EU" as a seal of quality.

All of these milestones give Spaniards a clearly positive view of the balance of their EU membership, thus largely offsetting the uncertainties created by the economic crisis. However, younger Spaniards are finding it increasingly difficult to identify the impact of the EU's positive legacy. Therefore it is necessary to create new milestones for the new generations.

Improvable achievements:

For large sectors of the population, there are a number of areas which, although perceived as achievements, still require in-depth reformulation. Noteworthy among these are: the Common Agricultural Policy and its relation to rural depopulation; grants policies (and their monitoring mechanisms); the Bologna Process for universities (and the ensuing increase in paperwork); the management of the consequences of the 2008 crisis (and the evidence of a multi-speed Europe); and, lastly, the EU's enlargement processes (and the instrumental view of the EU held by many Member States).

Failures and weaknesses:

Most of the participants, especially the most pro-European, are aware of the EU's principal failures or weaknesses. On the one hand, they highlight the impossibility of achieving a European Constitution, and the current absence of political leadership, both inside and outside the EU. These two aspects, although perceived as failures, are signs of wanting more Europe. On the other, as weaknesses they highlight the perception of a lack of democratic transparency, and the image of the Members of the European Parliament as holding positions laden with privileges and solely responding to the interests of national political parties. Lastly, the perception is that the only political opposition in the EU is exercised by Eurosceptic parties, whereas traditional parties are on the defensive and not offering genuine alternatives.

**Final note: We want to thank the organizers of the consultations for their collaboration, and, most especially, all of the people who anonymously came forward to speak about an issue that affects all Europeans—the future of Europe.*

FRANCE


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
CITIZEN'S CONSULTATIONS ON EUROPE
QUELLE EST VOTRE EUROPE !

The initiative for Citizens' Consultations on Europe originated in a French **proposal made by the President of the Republic** in a speech at the Sorbonne on 26 September 2017.

The aim is to start reshaping the European project, drawing on an extensive public debate informed by contributions from a wide variety of citizens. It is to open up a time for open-minded and wide-ranging discussion and debate, accessible to all European Union citizens, in order to give them a fresh opportunity to express their views and their commitment, say what they think about today's Europe and sketch the outlines of the Europe of the future they wish and hope to see.

A EUROPEAN PROJECT

From the outset, the **Minister for European Affairs** and the General Secretariat for Citizens' Consultations on Europe (SGCCE) involved EU institutions (the Commission, Parliament, Economic and Social Committee and Committee of the Regions) and representatives of the 26 other Member States in Brussels, who quickly gave the project their backing and contributed to it, each at their own level and with their own resources.

The Member States agreed to widely consult their citizens according to a single timetable and a common methodology but above all with a unifying aim: **to convey people's expectations to the highest level, namely the European Council meeting in December 2018**.

The European Commission's organisation of a **Citizens' Panel** in Brussels on 4-6 May sent a strong message about this European dimension. After three days of intense discussion hosted by the Economic and Social Committee, 97 citizens from the 27 Member States reflecting the whole spectrum of European society drew up and adopted a 14-point questionnaire for all Europeans, available in all the official EU languages on a special platform on the Europa website.

TIMETABLE AND METHODOLOGY IN FRANCE

In France, **the Citizens' Consultations on Europe took place between 17 April and 31 October**. Mostly initiated by grassroots players all over the country, they were guided by the principles of pluralism, diversity (of audiences, opinions and proposals) and transparency (of organisation and the delivery of feedback). The primary aim was to lift discussions of Europe out of expert forums and encourage citizens from the most varied backgrounds to take an active part in them, within a rigorous yet accessible methodological framework. By allowing flexibility over Member States' methodologies, the Citizens' Consultations sought not to attain a theoretical ideal of participatory democracy but to renew and encourage in a very practical way grassroots mobilisation behind a wide-ranging debate on the future of the EU, canvassing all points of view.

A **General Secretariat for Citizens' Consultations on Europe** reporting to the Minister for European Affairs was created In order to achieve this aim. Two governance bodies were also established: an **Advisory Board** made up of suitably qualified experts on European affairs and a **Supervisory Board**, on which a representative from each political party in the National Assembly was invited to sit.

After extensive consultation with experts of all kinds in France and in other European countries in order to seek their opinion, test working hypotheses and gather feedback, the SGCCE constructed a strict methodology for citizens' consultations. Reversing the usual model for debates on Europe, the Citizens' Consultations on Europe were designed as a bottom-up exercise. The role of central government was merely to inform and encourage the organisers of the consultations, carried out in their preferred format and focusing on their chosen subjects. The SGCCE opted for a **"seal of approval" approach**, whereby individuals, groups or organisations could organise the consultation autonomously provided that they complied with the principles of the Charter. Each organiser undertook to send the SGCCE a feedback summary from its event, using a form predefined by the Secretariat.

The SGCCE team **provided project sponsors with support, assistance and resources throughout the process.** These included:

- a **dedicated website** where all the relevant information and all the results of the Citizens' Consultations on Europe were collated in real time;
- a **hotline** to promptly answer all questions on form or content asked by the organisers of consultations;
- **methodology packs** which, without imposing a specific format, were made available to those involved in consultations, giving them the necessary resources to organise discussion workshops or an interactive citizens' forum.

The feedback summaries were passed on to the **National Commission for Public Debate** (CNDP), an independent administrative authority and guarantor of the public's right to information and participation. The CNDP was given the task of processing the information derived from the consultations, which explains why this report has two signatories. The SGCCE is responsible for the first part describing the approach. The feedback was

designed and drafted by the CNDP, acting in an entirely independent and neutral manner.

The CNDP therefore had to deal with a considerable amount of qualitative information on a range of different subjects in a very short space of time. The goal it set itself was to produce feedback in a form that would not only do justice to the material gathered upstream during the consultations but could also be used by different players downstream. The CNDP did not process verbatim reports of what the participants actually said but the summaries of the consultations prepared by the organisers; it was therefore working with intermediated information.

The CNDP found that a number of proposals from the summaries mention existing measures. Following the principle of respecting the people's voice, it opted to treat them without distinction, on the grounds that unawareness of existing action is highly informative in itself. These proposals therefore feature in the body of this report. The CNDP endeavoured to ensure that no proposal was discarded.

MAIN RESULTS

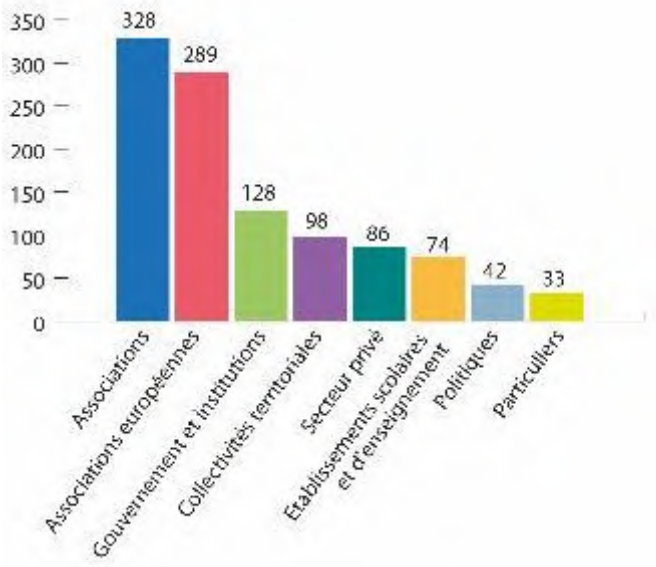
In France, **1,082 citizens' consultations** were held, attracting over 70,000 participants.

97 of France's 101 departments took part in the initiative. All the overseas departments and regions organised consultations. The largest number of consultations within a single region took place in the Île-de-France (greater Paris region), and the largest number within a single department in Paris. Nevertheless, three-quarters of Citizens' Consultations took place outside the Paris region, a distribution relatively faithful to that of the population of mainland France.

400 municipalities organised one consultation or more. Small urban communities (villages and small towns with 20,000 inhabitants or fewer according to INSEE criteria) accounted for 54% of the total, showing that **the exercise mobilised smaller communities first of all.**

The **diversity** of organisers, participants and discussion formats nationwide thus fully achieved the government's aim of generating a broad and reasoned vision, after wide-ranging and transparent debate, of what citizens really think about today's Europe and what they expect of Europe in the future.

The results bear the imprint of those who sponsored and took part in the consultations. The decision to hold open meetings helped to democratise access to the places where debates were held. Although the people who attend such events tend to have strong views, innovative initiatives managed to mobilise a variety of participants.



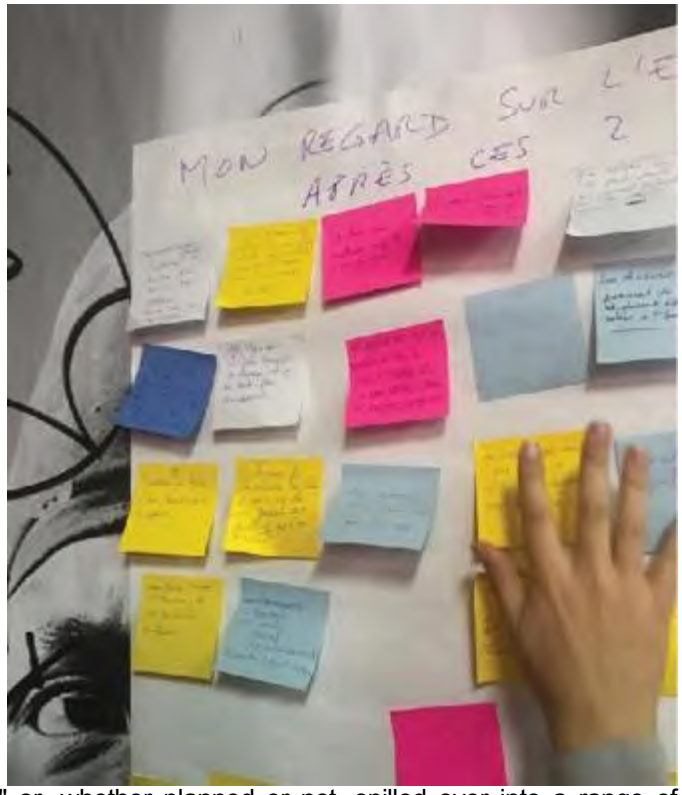
The CNDP did not rank arguments and proposals by frequency since equivalence is a fundamental principle of the feedback. However, "argument trees" chart the occurrences of each proposal.

MAIN THEMES

Deepening the European Union

The consultations focused on the institution which embodies the political project shared by Europeans, namely the European Union (EU). However, both official speeches and the many contributions by participants in the French consultations addressed Europe as a geographical and historical entity. The first finding is key: **people think EU but say Europe**.

The CNDP then classified all the contributions into "argument trees" which were used to identify the findings, arguments and proposals of each summary. The methodology brought to light **14 major themes** (14 argument trees), namely the environment, health, agriculture, the economy, social affairs, education, research, culture, citizenship, institutions, communication, defence and security, Europe in the world, and the future of the Union. Some subjects generated a very large number of proposals. They are presented in the body of the report in the form of a "proposals box" which lists them in a way that is easy to assimilate.



Although the argument-tree approach helped to reveal the wealth of people's proposals and arguments, the classification into themes doubtless does not do justice to the relatively uncompartmentalised way in which they expressed their views. While it is true that a significant number of consultations focused on specific themes, many also tackled wider issues like "the future of the EU" or, whether planned or not, spilled over into a range of subjects. During the consultations, **the themes that came up were often linked or joined up**, against the backdrop of a need to rediscover an overall vision for the EU that captures people's imagination.

The first point of interest is the issues or themes that do not feature in the debate: there is very little discussion of EU enlargement, either for or against, but rather a focus on **deepening the European project**. Likewise a number of issues, such as the euro and governance, are implicit without being either identified or named as such by participants.

Although some negative diagnoses were made, especially over the opacity of European institutions, **Europe is often perceived as the solution to national problems rather than their cause**. Although readers of the full report will sometimes find opinions unfavourable to European integration expressed during the consultations, most of the proposals put forward by participants suggest that the European scheme is and remains one of ambition, of the democratic and peace-loving ideal as a goal to work towards.

The new European dream is ecological

The treatment of the environment issue tellingly illustrates the ambition and relevance of the European scheme. From the contributors' point of view it embodies **the new European dream**, a self-evident imperative, one of the pillars for building **a sustainable Europe that has a particular responsibility towards the rest of the world**.

Ecology is perceived as the area in which European citizens are a step ahead, willing and daring to go further and "tie the European dream to the ecological dream". The proposals and contributions relating to lifestyles, energy generation, consumption of resources, recycling and climate change are both specific and ambitious.

This ecological dream crops up in many chapters with themes other than environment policy. It **features prominently in the chapters on health and agriculture**, in particular via the crucial issue of a sustainable and high-quality food supply. Discussion of the Common Agricultural Policy, still seen as important by participants even if some consider it rigid, focused in particular on the linkage of health and environmental issues. For participants, the aim is to **transform both production and consumption modes**. Saying that they are ready for such a change, the feelings they express on this subject are at odds with the views of politicians, seen as more willing to listen to industry lobbies than people's hopes.

European citizens as active participants in change

The vision of **Europe as a resource, a template against which others can compare and improve themselves**, a source of good practice, is particularly prevalent in contributions relating to **education and training**. Issues relating to education, which inform many proposals with a European dimension, are constantly intertwined with those relating to citizenship, the cornerstone of these consultations.

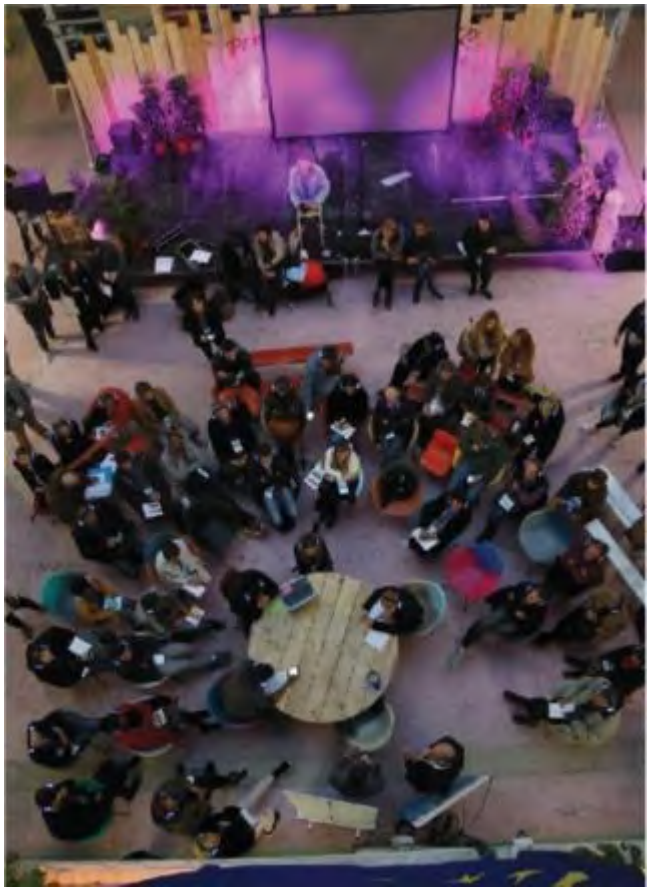
European citizenship is one of the most widely discussed subjects, raising questions such as how to foster a sense among Europeans of belonging to their geographical and political area, or how to develop a European identity. European cohesion, seen as essential, involves asserting the value of its culture, the differences between countries, its common values and symbols. The idea of a common identity has been a major argument for advocating European citizenship, but participants felt that a common identity should not dilute cultural differences. On the contrary, the value of such differences should be proclaimed because they are a "source of riches". On this basis there would be **no contradiction between a national identity, with its specific characteristics, and a shared European identity**. For some participants, greater familiarity with each other's culture could be a way of "learning how to work together"

European citizenship would also involve the **development of rights** to which it gives access and the promotion of possibilities for commitment. **Links between countries** should be strengthened. Several of these elements are found in the work to be done among young people in particular. The proposals focus extensively on the need to reduce inequality of access to mobility among the young, whether for study, work or travel. All should be able to live in another country for a few months, measure the common points and cultural differences between Member States and build up international work experience. Education is another focus for a number of ideas to **help young people towards a critical appropriation of the European project**, including greater emphasis on language-learning (not limited to English), a more European approach to the teaching of history and civics and the development of educational projects.

The consultations convey a rather unfavourable view of the **EU institutions**, seen as opaque, complex, rigid and above all undemocratic. For participants, their main flaw can be summarised in the great distantiation between the various political actors of the EU, between European institutions and citizens, between Member States and the EU and even between Member States themselves, reflected in splits between west and east, south and north. This distantiation shows up not only in **a lack of transparency and clarity** and a lack of democratic oversight but also in a sheer lack of knowledge and information. As a result, citizens feel shut out of their political Union and are losing trust in it, just as at a national level they are losing trust in their politicians, who themselves seem to have only limited trust in the EU.

Nevertheless, **all the proposals favour closer links between citizens and institutions** and more democracy, through measures such as grassroots involvement in decision-taking, reform of the justice system and institutional reform to give Parliament more say, ensure greater oversight of the Commission and rethink the role of the Council. **The aim is clearly to integrate citizens into a political whole through institutions that operate in a more democratic and participatory way**.

Because of the distance that exists between European institutions and citizens, participants regard **communication** as a **key issue**. More than a communication deficit on the part of the EU, it is a fundamental problem of dispossession, shutting citizens out of their Union. Participants indicated a need to **highlight both the progress made possible by the EU** and the workings of its institutions, by educating the public and making people aware of the advantages of being European. From this standpoint an integrated media policy would be a welcome step forward.



A Europe that stands up for itself and protects its citizens

Economic issues are some of the most important to arise from the European consultations, partly because they have underpinned the European project from the outset and partly because participants recognise that the EU has played a major part in the implementation – and success – of Member States' economic policies. However, they urge it to face up to the new challenges of globalisation with determination and to **rethink its approach**, deemed too liberal and centred on the financial markets. Furthermore, participants consider that the EU is suffering globalisation now and will do so even more in the future if it is not able to regulate it effectively. They therefore **call on the Member States to truly unite in order to protect their citizens and defend their interests**. Participants have great expectations of **digital technologies** and consider that the EU should encourage the emergence of European giants. The EU is also seen as being the right vehicle to support all its economic operators.

The approach should be based on providing advice, **support** and **protection**, not administrative oversight and an emphasis on performance. EU assistance should therefore be harmonised and made more accessible; its mechanisms should facilitate genuine integration of workers into the European market. The foundations on which Europe is built are seen as primarily economic and liberal, with insufficient attention being paid to the social dimension. In this context, many participants recommend **harmonising tax and social rules**, following the example of the best deal on offer, often with reference to the French model.

The ecological dream is also very much to the fore in all economic and social issues, with talk of short supply chains, the need to **reforge the links between Europe and its regions**, to build a Europe on a human scale that does not overlook rural areas or vulnerable people. On **social matters**, the **EU** seems to be perceived as a **potentially effective vehicle for combating poverty, insecurity and economic and gender inequality**. It is also seen as a way of advancing the treatment of social issues such as rights, legislation on drugs, euthanasia, etc. The proposals are generally “progressive”, referring to the republican values of liberty, equality and fraternity. As with economic issues, alignment with the best deal on offer and the use of shared tools, especially fiscal tools, frequently crop up. It is interesting to note here the distinctly national flavour of all these recommendations.

Europe as a force for ethical conduct

The analysis of **international relations** is broadly similar to that of the economy: **Europe should not be unpicked but strengthened, provided that it has a more socially-aware and ethical ambition**. Thus, the EU should claim its seat at the global table and stand up to the great powers such as the United States, Russia and China; it could even take inspiration from a very French type of diplomacy that defends its unique position in the international community. One particularly salient point to emerge from the consultations is the need for the EU to maintain a genuinely fair stance in its support for and relations with **Africa**, a continent to which all eyes seem to be currently turning.

In contrast to institutional and environmental aspects, where discussions tend to be rich and well-informed, participants in the consultations seem to have little knowledge of specific **defence and security** issues, despite showing genuine interest in the subject. Although the majority of contributions **generally favour European cooperation** in this area and its reorganisation, the debate remained inconclusive on how far integration should go and on specific aims. While some do not hesitate to propose new forms of integration, such as joint armed forces responsible for defending the EU and its interests in the world, others suggest increasing the number of bilateral agreements on strategic issues. This area is **still broadly unexplored**, though the spheres of practical cooperation are relatively well-defined: the defence industry and security.

On the subject of **migration**, several participants urged better treatment of migrants. It should be noted that the consultations reveal a certain lack of knowledge of the subject, for example confusing different types of status (migrant, asylum seeker, immigrant, refugee) and hence the issues associated with them. One option to explore mentioned by participants would be wider-reaching and more neutral communication in order to **inform European citizens** and mitigate fears and xenophobic reactions.

Nevertheless, **the EU is perceived as an appropriate vehicle for doing more to accept, help and integrate** migrants, in accordance with European humanist values. It is interesting to note that the feeling of belonging to Europe is very much present in response to non-EU otherness. Participants mention the possibility of working on a more global scale, for example by **treating conflicts in countries of origin**, but most often from the standpoint of channelling flows. Emphasis is also placed on the need to **lighten the burden on countries of entry** like Greece and Italy, and to give backing to an integrated asylum policy.

CONCLUSIONS

With 1,082 events and around 70,000 participants, the Citizens' Consultations on Europe organised in France were a first-of-a-kind experiment in participatory democracy, an opportunity for innovative debate and a human adventure. The participants clearly expressed their expectations for feedback on how their proposals will be followed up. They also emphasised the importance of **greater grassroots involvement in the EU's democratic life**, especially through an extension of this type of participatory exercise.

The citizens who came together for these consultations, although highly critical of the conduct of public policy, do not see the great challenges facing the world as being resolved outside the European framework. In all areas, they expect the European Union to be more effective and the workings of its institutions to be more transparent. They would be proud to belong to a Union whose political focus would be a greater capacity to **defend their shared values and interests,** with a **humanist social and environmental ambition**.

«In this citizen panel, we discussed for 4 half-days, to arrive at the proposals of this opinion. We have (very) different opinions. We experienced a way of talking about Europe between ourselves and confronting each other point of views, in which we recognised ourselves. We discovered in our exchanges things we did not know about Europe. Our perception of Europe has changed. We will talk about this rewarding experience. We recommend that such workshops be set up regularly. By inviting us, you have opened a path, this path is promising for us citizens and for you decision-makers.»

(Excerpt from the Citizen Opinion adopted by the citizen panel,
from October 25 to 27, 2018 in Paris)

CROATIA

REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs

KONZULTACIJE S GRAĐANIMA

REPORT ON CITIZENS' CONSULTATIONS ON EUROPE IN CROATIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenković in his letter of February 1, 2018 to the President of French Republic Emmanuel Macron endorsed the initiative *Citizens' Consultations* across the European Union, pointing out that *such a dialogue with citizens enables us to perceive with more clarity our Union and its achievements as well as its weaknesses in order to be able to strengthen it for the benefit of all*.

Over the past few years the Union has been faced with many challenges – from migrations, security and climate change to the withdrawal of one of its Member States, to mention but a few. Those challenges had a direct impact on the growth of populist and Eurosceptic parties, which marked a number of election processes in the whole of the European Union.

It is a warning which we have to take very seriously, in particular during the period leading to the European Parliament elections in May next year. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that the European project receives again a wide support of all our citizens.

The purpose of the initiative *Citizens' Consultations* is to collect opinions, approval or criticism from all citizens of the European Union, which would contribute towards creation of common policies in the future and in the new institutional term.

The Course of *Consultations*

Citizens' Consultations in Croatia took place from April to the end of October 2018, to be continued after this National Report has been handed in. During this period a number of consultations took place, with new consultations planned for the period leading up to the Sibiu summit in May next year, such as *Citizens' consultation* with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Marija Pejčinović Burić at Law Faculty in Zagreb late in November.

Citizens' Consultations were launched on April 6, on the occasion of the visit to Zagreb by the French Minister for European Affairs Nathalie Loiseau who, with the State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs Andreja Metelko-Zgombić held consultations with students of the Zagreb University on the topic: *The Europe of tomorrow: give your opinion on the policies that matter to you*.

High-level state officials took part in the *Consultations*, including the Prime Minister Andrej Plenković, who consulted with students at Law Faculty of the Split University about further improvements to the absorption of advantages of membership, even changing established procedures in order that benefits to citizens may increase, as well as representatives of business and social institutions and bodies in the Republic of Croatia. Civil society organizations were also involved in organizing and conducting *Consultations*.

In February the Prime Minister took part at the plenary session of the European Parliament within the framework of a series of debates organized by the Parliament with the heads of states or governments discussing the future of Europe.

On the occasion of her visit to Ireland, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister Pejčinović Burić delivered the lecture *The EU's way forward – a view from Croatia* at the Institute of International and European Affairs in Dublin.

Within the same timeframe, along with *Citizens' Consultations*, the European Commission's activity *Dialogue with Citizens* took place, with participation by commissioners and ministers in Croatian government in the discussions with interested public.

In addition, citizens could find information about *Citizens' Consultations* on the web page of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, in the rubric *Citizens' Consultations*, where there are available information on the process of consultations and link to on-line *Consultation on the Future of Europe* by European Commission.

The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs has been involved in the on-line consultation carried out by the National Foundation for Civil Society Development discussing with citizens / civil society organizations the question of the three main priorities for the European Union in the future / over the next five years.

The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs also published the tender for funding civil society organizations' projects within the *Citizens' Consultations* framework, with the budget 950 thousand kuna.

Content of the Consultations

Consultations were carried out throughout the country and included a wide range of topics of utmost interest to both citizens and the European Union. The aims were as much as possible raising awareness among the public about importance of EU membership and prompting citizens to consider what EU membership can bring to themselves as well as in which areas of their everyday lives they want to see more, or less, influence of the European Union. Citizens expressed their thoughts about following topics:

- Future of Europe
- Youth in EU
- Security
- Migrations
- Presidency of the Council of EU and protection of European values
- EU funds use
- Digital transformation of society
- Protection of personal data/implementation of General Data Protection Regulation
- Consumers' rights
- Future of agriculture
- Food safety
- Labour shortage
- Environmental Protection / Energy renewal of buildings
- Co-operation in event of natural catastrophe.

Consultations have been well-received by citizens/interested public, with an average participation of 50 – 250 citizens, with the exception of events taking place out in the open where several tens time as many citizens attended. Venues have been school and faculty buildings, sport venues, congress centres.

Using EU funds and the problem of emigration of the young from Croatia provoked most interest among the citizens, and in these areas their perception of Union's action is slightly negative, showing that further work in these areas is needed. It appears that citizens' opinions are often characterized by their attitude towards daily political events at local, or even national, level and that there is an insufficient understanding of EU processes and the possibility to influence the decision making in EU.

Taking into account specific features of this particular moment in Croatia, such as (only) the fifth anniversary of EU membership, preparations for the first Presidency of EU Council, immediate everyday challenges presented by migrations, and unfavourable demographic trends, it is hardly surprising that citizens' questions and comments partly concerned these areas, the announced topic of consultations notwithstanding.

Lessons learned

In Croatia, carrying out the initiative *Citizens' Consultations* showed the need for a wider communication with the public about policies and actions of the European Union which are perceived by citizens as something happening 'elsewhere' and bearing no connection to their everyday lives. Perhaps it is the lack of a clearer picture of which those areas are where Croatian citizens want 'more Europe' that can be pivotal for bringing forth new communication plans that would include an increase in informing about European Union. As a reminder, not so long ago, during accession negotiations and the campaign ahead of the EU membership referendum, a very successful communication campaign was carried out, with a considerable contribution by the present Prime Minister, Andrej Plenković, which resulted in the positive referendum outcome. Following accession to EU, that is after July 1, 2013, the intensity of communication campaign has been considerably reduced as focus shifted to membership itself. Therefore, timing and theme of the initiative *Citizens' Consultations* have been very well established, particularly concerning the period of intense reflection on the future of Europe as well as the forthcoming European elections and the new institutional term. Against the background of populist and Eurosceptic ideas and movements gaining momentum, it is the task of the forces based on European values to promote and live these values in everyday life of the Union.

Zagreb, November 19, 2018

ITALY

CITIZENS' CONSULTATIONS

FINAL REPORT SUMMARY

ITALY

The Italian Government deems that the initiative should be underpinned by an in-depth analysis of how widespread is the knowledge of EU mechanisms and their impact on citizens' everyday life. Preliminary to any government survey among citizens, should be the promotion, especially among young people, of the knowledge of the past and present participation in the EU building process; and an increased awareness of citizenship rights and duties in Europe.

The Government, therefore, rather opted for undertaking actions with the aim of improving the young Italians' education and training about Europe. In the long run, the goal should be at the European level, the development of a **common European education system** capable of creating a real common culture, while keeping alive the awareness of the cultural heritage of all Member States.

This goal should be seen in the context of the initiative described in the document " A Politèia for a different, stronger a fairer Europe", where the Government maintains that Europe should go beyond an often purely technical approach to its problems, and rather shape a shared, more political vision of the common good, proposing to set up a high-level working group to discuss such approach, in view of next year's European elections.

Such goals are being pursued in Italy through an **awareness-raising strategy dedicated to** students, implemented in both schools and universities. Among the initiatives:

- Increasing the use by teachers and students aged 6 to 18 of the educational platform **"Europa=Noi"** (Europe=Us) (http://www.educazionedigitale.it/europanoi/). In 2019, training webinars for teachers and updating of didactic materials are planned. Furthermore, in order to enhance knowledge of the Treaties among students, instructions for flipped classrooms will be provided.

- Disseminating the knowledge of the EU Treaties, through the website and the social media presence of the Department for European Policies. A dedicated area, containing the e-version of the EU Treaties and other materials, is available on the Department of EU Policies' website (www.politicheeuropee.gov.it), as well as on other institutional partners' websites.

- Creating or further developing several partnerships with the Ministry of Education, the Department of Territorial Cohesion, the representations of EU Institutions and the European University Institute of Florence (https://www.eui.eu/).

CYPRUS

REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

REPORT ON CITIZENS' CONSULTATIONS ON EUROPE IN THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cyprus had underlined from the outset of this exercise that consultations with the EU citizens were an essential part of the EU's work and responsibility. In fact Cyprus believes that this process is vital on a long-standing basis if the EU is to be able to address and directly respond to its citizens' needs and concerns. Such a listening process would be beneficial to the EU institutions, to the national authorities, as well as to the citizens themselaves.

At the same time, however, Cyprus had emphasized from the very beginning of the process that due to its extremely limited administrative capacity, limited human resources and lack of sufficient financial resources, it would not be able to cope with the administrative and financial burden of an exercise of such magnitude. It had, therefore, indicated that its own citizens' consultation process would have to be designed in such a way as to cope with its administrative and budgetary limitations and carried out within specific confines and parameters.

In this respect, the Cypriot national authorities are immensely grateful for the support of the EC Representation in Cyprus and of the Office of the European Parliament in Cyprus. The successful conclusion of the process, including its organizational and logistical elements, would not have been possible without their invaluable assistance.

In preparing for this process, Cyprus had also warned that, in its own particular case, the outcome of such a consultation process may be skewed, bearing in mind that a substantial percentage of Cyprus' population bears feelings of mistrust towards the EU because of existing perceptions regarding the role of the EU in the 2013 financial crisis, as well as of the way the EU has been developing its relations with Turkey over the years.

The process of citizens' consultations in Cyprus was designed to involve as large a number of citizens as possible and to include all stakeholders, in traditional face-to-face, active, lively and completely free-flowing debates, at which people were encouraged to express their views openly and frankly.

The purpose was to identify not only their main concerns, hopes and expectations and define the areas in which they expect and want more from Europe, but also to identify those areas where they feel Europe should be involved to a lesser degree or should not be involved at all.

Accordingly, a series of events was organized, kicking off with the formal launch of the process on Europe Day. The themes of the process ranged from environmental issues, to gender and equality issues, security and cyber-security concerns, consumer issues, regional policy, competition, investment and free trade, agriculture, the upcoming European elections and institutional matters.

The Press and Information Office (PIO), as the communications body of the Government of Cyprus, played a central role in the Citizens' Consultations, both as co-organiser of events but also in formulating the public relations campaign which has taken place in this respect. The aim was to create a distinct and unified public space and visual identity for the consultations so that citizens understood why their participation and opinions mattered. In this respect, all initiatives and actions (public events, online presence, social media campaigns etc) were placed under the umbrella of the logo "Ευρωπαϊκά Μιλώντας", which was created for this purpose.

The PIO also created a dedicated webpage which provided information on ongoing developments relating to the debate on the Future of Europe, as well as on the various citizens' consultations and related events which took place in Cyprus. It also provided the "national gateway" to the online consultation which was launched by the European Commission, giving the opportunity to Cypriot citizens to express their views on the White Paper on the Future of Europe and on what kind of Europe they would like.

An important tool in our communications campaign was the use of social media. For example, a paid campaign on Facebook, Instagram and Audience Network for the period 9-23 October to promote the dedicated webpage resulted, inter alia, in 2,159 clicks on the link leading to the dedicated webpage for the consultations and in more than 107,000 people viewing the paid post at least one time.

Social media was also central in ensuring that maximum exposure was given to the events organized so that the messages could have a wider outreach. For example, in the "Quo Vadis Europa?" event which took place in October, information about the event was widely circulated through Facebook and Twitter, as well as through the channels of the three co-organisers.

The Citizens' Dialogues process highlighted a plethora of interesting findings, including:

- The existence of a gap that needs to be bridged between EU interest and national interest so as to create a common interest.
- The lack of a "European identity" as such – only national identities exist.
- The EU is perceived as willing to sacrifice specific national interests, especially those of smaller Member States, at the expense of promoting EU policies, which may not even be relevant or applicable to some Member States.
- The EU is also perceived as giving secondary attention (if any) to the specific problems and particular issues of the smaller Member States, especially those in the periphery. In this respect, the perception in Cypriot citizens' minds is that the EU has done very little in practical terms to benefit Cyprus.
- The idea of creating a multi speed Europe will be detrimental to a small Member State like Cyprus. Larger Member States want full control of decision-making.
- The EU does not have the capacity or capability to tackle serious problems at their root cause and instead devises policies to circumvent or by-pass the actual issue, simply for the purpose of saying that it has achieved something (eg Migration).

- The EU lacks the ability to deal with serious political problems in third countries or which are created by third countries and therefore its external policies have always been perceived as weak and ineffective.
- Lack of trust in the EU from a Cypriot citizen's perspective because of the EU policy of "double standards" regarding Turkey's policy in Cyprus.
- Lack of trust from Cypriot citizens because the EU is blamed for the way it dealt with the financial crisis in Cyprus. Especially in young peoples' minds, the main result of these EU policies is that this has created severe difficulties for future employment prospects.
- There needs to be more promotion of the work and achievements of the EU success stories and it is vital to have more "EU education" at all levels, especially starting from a young age.
- More EU legislation on environmental protection, more EU intervention in overseeing Member States' implementation of related EU legislation and more EU environmental initiatives.
- Insufficient education on the EU's environmental policies and lack of practical incentives encourage people to "go green".
- Attention should be given to Cyprus' specificities arising from its insular character, accessibility to international markets and related connectivity issues, the small size of the farms, the effects of continuing drought, water scarcity, as well as the limited capacity of producers to absorb the increased cost of transport of agricultural goods.
- Concerns that there should be no budget cuts in the field of agriculture and cohesion policies in the new MFF.
- Concerns that the new rules on competition might harm small and medium sized businesses, which find it harder to adapt to new legislation.
- Concerns about tight credit conditions for SMEs.
- Productivity enhancement of the public sector and of the potential of important sectors such as agriculture.
- Problematic implementation capacity of small Member States of the EU rules on gender equality, bridging the gender pay-gap and fair gender competition in the labour market.
- Citizens demand more from the EU to guarantee their safety and address their security concerns, more on regulating cyber-security, data protection, and more on the full implementation of the EU's rule of law principles.
- Wide spectrum of structural reforms are needed, which are broadly aligned with the CSRs, including for local authorities, for the public administration domain, judicial reforms, reform of the educations and healthcare systems and of e-governance rule.
- Concerns that the EU's social policy does not effectively address serious existing social imbalances.
- ERASMUS and related student issues need to be effectively addressed in the post-BREXIT period.
- Citizens in the regions continue to feel marginalized.

Interestingly enough, these findings are also reflected in the September 2018 edition of the EP's PARLEMETER, where Cyprus falls far below the EU average on many of the issues raised above.

CONCLUSION:

As agreed in Bratislava, the aim of the Citizen's Consultations is to listen to and be guided by our citizens' expectations, concerns and aspirations about Europe, in order to help identify priorities for action for the future and to create conditions of trust towards the European construct.

In the case of Cyprus, there were a number of recurring themes which we came across in almost all the consultations, which should be highlighted:

Trust (especially lack of) and the EU was very predominant in the discussions we held whether this referred to the trust in values, in policies or simply trusting that the EU can understand and address the concerns of Cypriot citizens.

Citizens were very skeptical when it came to the notion that all member states are equal and felt very strongly that Cyprus' participation in the EU was hampered by its size. This was a dominant perception in the discussions relating to EU's policy towards Turkey or EU's policy during the economic crisis in Cyprus or even future policies and the ability of the EU to understand and listen to the concerns of Cyprus or address its specificities.

Despite these two negative perceptions, i.e. lack of trust and equality, citizens did not dismiss the European idea as a whole. On the contrary, they recognized the potential of the EU as a "force of good" when it came to the protection of our continent and its core values. While recognizing the positive ramifications of EU policies in the member states, they voiced their concern that not enough was done to reinforce our European identity. In this respect, they felt that more emphasis should be placed in promoting our shared common values and common perspectives, as means of bridging the gap between the EU and the member states.

The Cyprus Government is extremely grateful to all stakeholders and especially all the citizens who took an active part in this consultation process and for voicing their views and ideas so openly and sincerely in this debate. It vows to be fully guided by these ideas when related issues are discussed in the EU agenda. At the same time, the Cyprus Government aims to continue talking to our citizens and to widen the dialogue as much as possible, so that even the most remote and challenging voice on our island can be heard.

LATVIA

REPORT ON CITIZENS' CONSULTATIONS ON EUROPE IN LATVIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Citizens' consultations on Europe organized in Latvia indicate that citizens of Latvia highly appreciate the opportunities provided by the European Union and believe that freedoms currently enjoyed by the EU citizens need to be strengthened and deepened in the future.

The main concern expressed during the consultations is that of a disintegration of the European Union due to the rise of populism and/or public apathy. People perceive lack of fairness and equity in Europe as well as lack of security. Citizens expressed fear of losing the national identity. There are also concerns regarding whether the EU can find solutions to the present-day challenges of the contemporary world.

The citizens of Latvia would like the European Union to be able to adapt to all kinds of global transformation by investing in education, science and innovation, as well as provide security for Europeans. The citizens of Latvia would also like to see a more equitable European Union, especially regarding living standards both within individual Member States and across the Union. A deeper connection with citizens of other Member States is also desired.

More than 1500 citizens have been engaged in consultations that took place both in the regions of Latvia and online.

LITHUANIA

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

The Executive Summary of the Lithuanian citizen‘s dialogues initiative

In 2018, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania implemented a citizen’s consultations initiative „My Europe“, which was a part of a pan-European initiative aiming at bringing citizens together to discuss the future of the European Union. In the framework of this initiative, 24 citizens’ consultations took place across the country.

Citizens’ consultations were organized in a tight cooperation with a broad range of partners, such as various associations and universities, as well as local partners – municipalities, non-governmental organizations and the media. More than a 1000 people in 13 Lithuanian cities, representing diverse social backgrounds, took part in citizens’ consultations, more than 8000 people live-streamed the events. Citizens’ consultations were organized in three different formats: public debates, workshops and interactive lessons.

Main topics of public interest as identified during the consultations:

1) **The future of the European Union** (integration scenarios, Lithuanian role in shaping the future of the EU):
   - **Citizens are in favor of a further European integration,** however they wish for Lithuanian national identity to be preserved and national interests to be well represented in the EU.
   - **Europe still lacks solidarity.** Besides strong national identities, there should be a common, unifying EU vision.
   - **Lithuanians underline unequal distribution of economic well-being across the EU and are concerned with lowering EU’s financial support.** Citizens believe that bigger EU member states benefit from EU membership more than the smaller ones. They are concerned that lowering EU’s financial support, little attention to regions suffering from emigration and the effects of Brexit could negatively affect the economic well-being in the country. Citizens hope that after 2020 Lithuanian regions will continue receiving EU’s support, which will help to prevent social and economic exclusion.

2) Current challenges of the European Union (separate EU policy topics, Eastern partnership, security):

- **Citizens are worried about the emerging challenges in relation to the upcoming European Parliament elections.** A vast majority of citizens expressed their concerns regarding the growing Euroscepticism, the effects of Brexit on the European unity, the lack of attention to cybersecurity, as well as potential third party meddling into European Parliament elections.
- **Citizens are worried about migration challenges.** Citizens expressed their concerns regarding the protection of EU’s external borders and the growing immigration from non-EU countries.

3) Lithuania's EU membership (representation of Lithuania in the EU, the meaning, value and challenges of the EU membership, education and communication about the EU in Lithuania):

- **Citizens expect a more active role of Lithuania in the EU policymaking.** Lithuania has to play an active role as an influencer of EU policies, which is hard to achieve due to the country's low representation in the EU institutions.
- **Citizens expect better education and information about the Lithuanian EU membership.** It appeared in the discussions that citizens face a lack of education and information about the EU. They wish to see a better communication on EU matters from governmental institutions and would like to see the EU issues covered better in the local media.

Citizens' suggestions:

- **Citizens wish to see more direct democracy elements in the implementation of the EU policies.** Lithuanians think that EU should more actively encourage citizens' participation in decision-making process, strengthen directly elected institutions and more often consult citizens on various policy issues. Citizens believe that implementing these changes would help to better reflect their opinions and hopes in the EU's policymaking.
- **European Union needs a common vision.** Citizens believe that a common standpoint, a common vision of the EU would help to solve many pressing issues. The EU vision should be appealing to different society groups and should respect national differences and particularities of the Member States.
- **More power to the EU in problematic policy areas.** Citizens wish to see more EU powers in the areas, where Member States are struggling. To particular attention, they bring social inequality issues.
- **Better responsiveness of the EU to the emerging threats and challenges.** Citizens suggest that more attention should be given to cyber security issues and fighting disinformation. Member states should strengthen education about the EU, because poor knowledge increases societal vulnerability to disinformation.
- **Better advocacy of Lithuanian national priorities in the EU.** Lithuanian citizens hope to see Lithuania national priorities to be better reflected in EU policies. Those include support to Georgia and Ukraine in their efforts of European integration, stricter position towards Russia, stricter position regarding the Astravets nuclear plant, increased attention to the protection of EU's external borders and cyber security.

CONCLUSIONS

Lithuanian citizens put an emphasis on the importance of citizens' consultations and consider them to be a useful tool for a society to participate in shaping the future of the EU. People see deeper integration as the future of the EU, however still underlining the importance of the respect towards national particularities. Citizens believe that further European integration is only possible with a common vision of the EU that is appealing and understandable to all EU Member States. Among the most worrying EU-related issues, Lithuanian citizens mention unequal distribution of economic well-being, lowering EU's financial support, immigration and a protection of EU external borders. Citizens also underline challenges in the context of the upcoming European elections – Brexit, cybersecurity and the gap between the EU institutions and the citizens.
Citizens' consultations in Lithuania were launched in April 2018 and will run until mid-2019. The National Consultations' report will reflect opinions, suggestions and concerns expressed by the citizens in the course of consultations. The report will serve as a Lithuanian contribution to the debate on the future of the EU at the European Council.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania would like to express its gratitude to all partners, who contributed to the implementation of the consultations in Lithuania and to all citizens, who attended the consultations and expressed their opinions on the broad range of topics.

More information about Lithuanian citizen consultations can be found here: *https://www.urm.lt/default/en/foreign-policy/lithuania-in-the-region-and-the-world/lithuania-member-of-the-european-union/citizens-consultations-my-europe-20182019*

Please, contact the following email address shall you have any questions: manoeuropa@urm.lt

LUXEMBOURG

BIERGERFORUM
CONSULTATIONS CITOYENNES
BÜRGERFORUM
CITIZENS' CONSULTATIONS

REPORT ON CITIZENS' CONSULTATIONS ON EUROPE IN LUXEMBOURG

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Luxembourg, the citizens' consultations were formally launched in Luxembourg on **20th April and** closed on **12th September 2018,** in view of the legislative elections on 14th October 2018.

A **call for proposals** to organise a debate in the framework of the citizens' consultations on Europe was sent out in April to institutions, associations, organisations, schools and educational establishments, as well as trade unions. The government also created a special website, Facebook and Twitter pages for this purpose.

Nine events took place in Luxembourg, allowing **more than 3000 participants** to take part in the consultations, to ask questions and submit ideas. These debates were also streamed live on the internet.

The profile of citizens attending varied from event to event. It is nonetheless worth noting that young people - high school and university students - were particularly well represented at every event and that they seized the opportunity to voice their opinion. Participants showed varying degrees of prior knowledge of the European institutions; speakers attempted to answer well-informed and critical questions in a clear and easily comprehensible manner.

The debates took place in a constructive and respectful **atmosphere**. Citizens clearly expressed a desire for political dialogue, they were eager to learn more about the European Union and to move forward together. All these aspects contributed to success of this exercise in participatory democracy. Criticism voiced by participants was often an expression of disappointment with the degree of unity between Member States rather than an outright rejection of the European project itself.

With regard to the **working methods**, the goal was to give as much speaking time as possible to the participants and their questions. Speakers were therefore invited to keep their opening statements short.

While some events were dedicated to specific topics, such as health, migration or the challenges posed by digitalisation, **the range of topics raised spontaneously by the audience was broad**. Participants enquired about the functioning of the EU, the Union's relationship with its citizens, the respect for the rule of law, the rise of populist movements all across Europe, Brexit and its consequences, the fight against climate change, education, the EU' standing in the world and social policy. Attention was also drawn to practical problems that citizens living in border regions encountered on a daily basis.

The EU's functioning and its struggle to stay united were raised as a matter of concern by a predominantly Europhile audience, which is keen to **see the European Union better explained to its citizens.**

At several occasion, participants raised the question as **how to restore the EU's credibility and attractiveness so that citizens would feel reassured as to the future.**

Participants repeatedly highlighted the need for ministers to be open and honest when talking with their citizens. Participants also insisted that citizens should be educated about the European *acquis*. Some people even suggested **introducing a curriculum on citizenship in all educational systems across the European Union.**

Participants requested more **institutional transparency and participation**, and voiced the wish of **having the citizens' consultations as a permanent feature of the EU.**

Rule of law was a recurring topic raised at every debate.

"All over Europe we can observe **a surge of extremist right-wing groups and populist movements**", one participant pointed out, wondering what measures could be taken to counteract this development. This concern was repeatedly shared by citizens across all events.

Brexit and its consequences was another area of concern to participants.

The **migration issue** was also a topic of interest to citizens. Questions revealed the public's concern that **the EU was not up to the challenge.** Participants remained sceptical about the agreements reached. **The lack of solidarity shown towards countries of first arrival**, such as Italy, was also of concern. Some participants pointed out that migration could indeed have positive effects on the demographic and economic situation in Europe.

Participants made several proposals. With regard to solidarity between Member States, participants proposed a system of financial incentives "rewarding" states that choose solidarity. Welcoming refugees was considered a duty as well as a responsibility of all Member States. There were suggestions to organise courses on values for the migrants who have recently arrived in Europe.

On the topic of economic migrants, one participant suggested finding a solution via the EU's trade policy. Another argued that the Dublin regulation should allow migrants to choose freely their final destination in the EU for humanitarian reasons.

The **fight against climate change** was addressed several times by participants, especially by the youngest among them.

The challenge of **education**, at all ages and levels, was a topic raised almost systematically at all events.

The problems related to the recognition of diplomas and professional qualifications were raised, while the testimony of several students revealed that the mobility of students could be further improved.

The idea of **encouraging the learning of foreign languages** and of **promoting multilingualism from a young age** was among the most common suggestions, including spontaneous written proposals received by the organisers.

Participants also asked about the **EU's competitiveness** in relation to its partners in the world.

In terms of R&D, participants called for a **strong EU** capable to face the technological challenges of the future. **Artificial intelligence** and **space programmes** were explicitly mentioned in this context.

During the discussions, some participants expressed the wish to implement a **common social policy across the EU** in order to reduce the wide economic and social disparities between the Member States.

The concerns linked to daily life in border regions took a prominent place in the discussions. The testimonies of participants highlighted the need to devise a transnational policy and to remove administrative barriers in terms of transportation, health and taxation.

HUNGARY

Summary of the citizens' consultation

'Forum on the Future of Europe'

The Government has conducted a citizens' consultation on the future of Europe. In eleven Hungarian cities, thousands of people participated in forums which drew capacity audiences. The Government of Hungary considers regular dialogue with citizens to be extremely important, and therefore since entering into office in 2010 it has conducted consultations regularly. The consultations so far have focused on a number of issues related to the future of Europe, EU institutions and the competencies of Member States. Civic forums in recent weeks – as well as earlier consultations – have clearly shown that for Hungarians the most important consideration related to the future of Europe is security. It was also clearly revealed that Hungarians want to live in a Europe that is based on the cooperation among nations and not on a so called open society that ignores national self-determination, the diversity of nations and national borders. Furthermore, Hungarians do not want the most important decisions and powers to be taken out of their hands.

Background

At a meeting of the European Council on 23 February 2018, the French delegation tabled a proposal for 'citizens' consultations' on the future of the European Union to be conducted in the Member States. The Member States agreed that each of them would prepare a summary of the events organised by them. The results obtained from these summaries will be put on the agenda of the General Affairs Council on 11 December 2018, and on that of the heads of state or government on 13–14 December. Since directly seeking citizens' opinions is a long-standing practice of the Hungarian government, it supports dialogue on the future of the European Union and welcomes this initiative.

Conducting citizens' consultations in Hungary

In autumn 2018 the Hungarian government held a total of eleven forums on the future of Europe. Leading government politicians responded to citizens' questions in Budapest and ten other major cities around the country: Debrecen, Eger, Győr, Kecskemét, Miskolc, Nyíregyháza, Székesfehérvár, Szombathely, Tatabánya and Zalaegerszeg. Thousands of people attended the consultations which consisted of initial statements intended to stimulate debate, followed by questions from the audience which could be asked by anyone in attendance. These forums were promoted by the Government through communication channels which included paid advertising.

The most important messages expressed

Analysis of the views of citizens participating in the forums on the future of Europe made it clear that for Hungarians the most important consideration related to the future of Europe is security. It was also clearly revealed that Hungarians want to live in a Europe that is based on the cooperation among nations and not on a so called open society that ignores national self-determination, the diversity of nations and national borders. In addition, Hungarians do not want Hungary to be deprived of the right to decide on the most important questions.

1. Security

Analysing the questions raised in the eleven cities, it can be said that Hungarians consider security as the most important issue. This concern was principally raised in relation to migration – which is not surprising, given that there has been an unprecedented increase in the number of terrorist attacks committed in the European Union since the onset of the immigration crisis. Since 1 January 2015 more than 330 innocent people have been killed in terrorist attacks in Western Europe, with 1,700 being injured. In the forums it was also argued that illegal immigration presents a risk to pub- lic security. It is an alarming fact that since the beginning of the immigration crisis the number of sexual assaults against women and minors has increased dramatically. Citizens expressed concern about the uncontrolled entry to Hungary of illegal migrants already settled in Western Europe.

In addition to the security challenges facing Europe, citizens are concerned about the African pop- ulation explosion and whether it will be possible to permanently hold back the flow of economic migrants. Hungarian society supports the return of illegal migrants to their own country, urging for the provision of assistance aimed at increasing public security, improving living conditions and promoting prosperity in immigrants' native countries, thereby supporting their return to their homelands.

2. Europe of Nations

It has also been made clear that Hungarians want a Europe that is based on the cooperation of nations and not on a so called open society that ignores national self-determination, the diversity among nations and national borders. In the forums it was said that few people today dispute that Europe is in crisis: a lesser aspect of this was identified as being economic in nature, whereas the main areas of concern are our European identity, culture and capacity for self-determination.

Among the views expressed in the forums was one which identified two major opposing world- views in Europe today. According to this analysis, on one side there are those who continue to see Europe as being built on national foundations, and who espouse the principle of a Europe of na- tions. On the other side there are the advocates of 'open society', which would supersede existing structures: nation states, the classical family model and Europe's Christian democratic foundations. This debate – which the overwhelming majority of participants considered to be of crucial impor- tance – has been brought to the forefront by the migration crisis.

In the forums it was said that Europe's greatness derives from its cooperating nations, which have accorded respect to one another. This is the reason that Europe has become the best place in the world. On the other hand, problems have always arisen when Europe has become the scene of attempts at building empires which seek to supersede borders and the diversity of nations.

Hungarian citizens have voiced their concerns about the European Union's federal dominance, as they feel that the ability of Member States to assert their interests is being undermined. Citizens' questions challenged the primacy of federalism over national self-determination. Many questions focused on sovereignty, asking about the functioning of the European Union, European deci- sion-making and the principle of subsidiarity and its practical implementation.
Hungarians think that the EU should build a Europe of nation states and represent European people. The problem of democratic deficit was raised, along with the lack of approachability and transparency of EU institutions and their decision-making processes.

3. Debates on competencies

In the forums it was said that EU institutions regularly overstep the boundaries of their competencies as defined in the Treaties, and seek to appropriate Member States' competencies. Participants in the forums did not want EU institutions to acquire new powers at the expense of nation states and national parliaments. In their view the European Commission must remain in the role of 'guardian of the Treaties', rather than override the decisions of Member States. Participants unambiguously rejected the notion of a United States of Europe and the EU's stealth tactics in withdrawing powers from Member States.

In relation to disputes over power, economic issues were also discussed. One example of this was the question of determining energy prices. The issue of energy prices – which directly affects Hungarian citizens – emerged as a very sensitive one for audiences. Earlier the European Commission tabled a proposal for the Energy Union, which would deprive Member States of the right to determine electricity prices. Market liberalisation, however, would put an end to reductions in energy prices in Hungary.

Participants in the forums also strongly criticised the 'Sargentini Report', which was adopted by the European Parliament. In their view, while overstepping the boundaries defined in the Treaties, the Report's underlying purpose is to further deprive Hungary of competencies.

The opinions voiced in the forums were in line with the results of previous consultations

The October consultation on the future of Europe was not the first of its kind. Since it entered office in 2010, the Hungarian government has been regularly consulting with citizens: in that pe- riod it has asked voters for their opinions on eight separate occasions, through the mechanism of the National Consultation. In general this took the form of questionnaires sent by mail and also available online. Opinions in the recent citizens' forums were in line with the outcome of previous national consultations, several of which have dealt with issues related to national and EU competencies, security and immigration.

These national consultations included the followings

The economic consultation was initiated by the Government in 2012, and 674,000 Hungarian citizens responded, 90 per cent of whom stated that there was a need for a fair sharing of financial burdens between the state, large corporations, banks and the people – even if that proved to be contrary to the expectations of the EU. As a consequence of this, a new system of taxation for large multinational corporations was created, together with legislation imposing requirements on banks.

In 2015 the Government had launched a national consultation on immigration in which more than a million citizens participated. Most of those responding said that there was a link between the EU mishandling of immigration and the spread of terrorism. In their view, the EU's permissive policy needed to be replaced by more restrictive legislation on immigration. Hungarians stated that the best way to combat immigration is for EU countries to help in the development of the countries from which migrants come.

There was a dispute between Hungary and the EU related to VAT imposed on internet use. In 2016 the Government launched its national consultation on the future of the internet in Hungary, which could only be completed online. Respondents' general opinions were clear, with two thirds stating that tax cuts are needed in order to promote the use of the internet. Taking into account the results of the consultation, the Government decided to reduce VAT on internet use to 18 per cent from January 2017 and to 5 per cent from January 2018.

A consultation on national and EU competencies was initiated by the Government in 2017, with 1.7 million Hungarian citizens responding. There was an overwhelming demand for the right to determine energy prices remaining with the national government. Almost all of those participat- ing in the consultation wanted illegal immigrants to remain under supervision until the authorities arrive at a final decision in their case. In relation to job creation, people took the position that Hungarians should continue to decide on the future of the Hungarian economy. There was also an overwhelming majority in favour of Hungarians deciding on their taxation system, instead of EU.

The second consultation related to international plans on immigration was launched by the Government at the end of 2017, and 2,356,000 Hungarian citizens took part. Respondents clearly stated that the border protection fence should not be dismantled, that the mandatory distribution of immigrants as advocated by the European Commission should be rejected, and that the lan- guage and culture of European countries should not be compromised in order to accelerate the integration of immigrants.

The Government of Hungary is committed to continuing frank dialogue on the future of Europe and the self-determination of the Member States.

MALTA

CITIZENS' CONSULTATIONS ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MINISTRY FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS AND EQUALITY

mausac

Connecting citizens to the EU

INTRODUCTION

When the initiative for an EU-wide citizen's consultation stressing the importance of ongoing and meaningful engagement between the EU and its citizens was first mooted by French President Emmanuel Macron, Malta was fully in support.

As stated by Prime Minister Joseph Muscat during the 4th Summit for Southern EU Leaders held in Rome in January 2018, the European Union must include its citizens in any discussion on the future of the European bloc, and this exercise should involve a wide array of people, including those who disagree with how the EU is being led.

He underlined that it was crucial that the consultation exercise should go beyond established consultation parameters, and actively engage with and include citizens with different ideas, especially those who feel that the EU somehow excludes them, or does not take their needs and perspectives into account.

For this reason, Malta immediately supported the initiative in an active manner with a view to ensuring that it would be a genuine exercise in listening to people including those who would not normally speak out, or who feel excluded from the European project, are not enthusiastic about it or even against it.

In Malta, MEUSAC (the Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee), was entrusted with the task of organising and conducting the national citizens' consultations.

ORGANISATION

Seven consultations were organised in total across Malta and Gozo, with the main aim being that of better understanding citizens' concerns and thoughts on the future of the EU. Throughout all events, the focus was firmly on the citizens, the floor being open to them to come forward with comments, opinions and hopes for the future with regards to themes that were relevant to them.

Consultations were carried out between July and November 2018. Apart from holding two consultations (the opening and closing events) on general issues relating to the future of the EU, five thematic consultations were also held focusing on farming, innovative industries, social rights and migration.

Particular attention was devoted to the geographical sensitivities of the Maltese Islands; for instance, a second consultation session (focusing on farming) was organised in Malta's sister island Gozo, which has an economy that is heavily dependent on agriculture.

The format chosen for the organisation of the consultations was simple and informal to encourage and facilitate citizen participation. Each of the five thematic consultations were moderated by individuals chosen for public speaking and moderating abilities, as well as their respective knowledge of the subject discussed. Moderators were briefed to conduct the consultation sessions in a manner that places the focus on citizen contributions.

Only two events diverged from this formula: the Opening Event, which included a Q&A with a panel composed of a government minister, two MEPs and the European Commission Representative, and the Closing Event that consisted of a Citizens' Dialogue with the Prime Minister, Dr Joseph Muscat.

The major part of each of the thematic consultation events was allocated to direct interventions by citizens. The events were conducted mainly in Maltese with simultaneous translation from Maltese to English available during the opening and closing events.

Public awareness and participation were promoted among the general public through various channels, ranging from print advertising to online digital social media platforms. Citizens were

not only informed of the public consultations and encouraged to attend and participate, but also had the opportunity to follow online through live streaming.

Live-streaming provided citizens not only with the possibility to follow consultation events, but also with the opportunity to interact online with one another, while also making contributions to the conversation taking place in the public consultation itself.

THEMATIC ANALYSIS

The themes selected for the consultation events (Farming, Innovative Industries, Social Rights and Migration) were identified on the basis of what directly or indirectly interests and impacts a wide cross-section of citizens living in Malta.

A main source of insight for the selection of the themes was what would interest the public sphere in Malta, so as to maximise the potential active participation of citizens in this exercise of participatory democracy. Public opinion surveys were consulted in order to identify the issues that would be of greatest interest to EU citizens in Malta.

From this exercise, it emerged that Migration remains the top concern (from various perspectives). Social issues are also high on the list. It was also decided to hold a consultation on Innovative Industries in view of initiatives taken by the Government in terms of new sectors to be developed within the Maltese economy as well as the need for Malta to make further progress to reach some of its Europe 2020 targets such as that in relation to expenditure on R&D.

An *ad hoc* consultation was also carried out on the Commission's proposals to end the change in clocks twice a year. Besides the online consultations by government, MEUSAC organised a public consultation meeting where citizens were invited to express their views on the said proposal.

The organised consultations respected the values of transparency, fairness, political pluralism, and inclusivity to give a voice to all citizens coming from all sectors. As such, outreach initiatives observed these principles in order to maximise participation and ensure that the feedback received during the events was as varied and reflective of different social backgrounds as possible.

KEY FINDINGS

A. GENERAL ISSUES

The principal findings related to the discussions on the chosen themes are varied. The full report elaborates further on these points in Chapter 4.

As a general comment, citizens mentioned that they were currently displeased with the time-consuming and laborious EU decision-making process, which is further compounded by excessive bureaucracy in EU governance, including with the process to apply for and manage EU funds.

Furthermore, another recurrent message put forward was that the EU needs to communicate in a language the majority of the citizens can understand.

It was also evident that most participants also thought that the 'one-size-fits-all' approach associated with most EU policies often works to the disadvantage of small countries and more tailor-made arrangements need to be identified which take unique contexts and sensitivities into account.

It also emerged that in many instances, citizens find it difficult to distinguish between matters that fall under EU competence and those which are national Member State competence. This may tie in with the fact ordinary citizens are not experts in EU law familiar with what the treaties stipulate regarding EU competences. Furthermore, trends in public and political discourse at Member State level whereby domestic challenges or problems are attributed to the EU or the EU institutions - even where such matters do not fall under EU competence – may exacerbate this. Moreover, the more the EU becomes part of citizens' lives, the greater the tendency for citizens to no longer feel the need to distinguish between what is 'EU' and what is not. From a citizen's perspective, individual Member States are part of the EU and this means that somehow, whatever happens in their respective Member State, for better or for worse, is linked to the EU.

Another salient point emerged which suggests that citizens become disillusioned by the EU when faced by incongruencies between how the EU acts and how the EU communicates. Citizens pointed to recurring inconsistencies between the EU's rhetoric of being built upon values (such as solidarity), and failures by the EU as a whole to adhere to those values (such as the lack of solidarity in issues such as migration where the general feeling is that the EU is not doing enough to assist frontline Member States such as Malta). Citizens evidenced sentiments which indicated that they find it difficult to be enthusiastic about the EU when its fundamental values are then contradicted in practice in matters that are of direct concern to citizens.

The number of citizen participants, although not insignificant, also indicates that, in general, citizens are not forthcoming in actively seeking out opportunities to express their views on EU-related matters, and therefore greater, more creative, effort is needed to engage citizens and civil society in the national processes relating to EU affairs.

Consultations with specific categories such as farmers point towards the need to listen more to their concerns and to see how national authorities can take such concerns into consideration when participating in the EU decision-making fora. The Citizens' Consultations indicate that the structured consultation process may well need to be adapted to become more inclusive of sectors that have not, so far, been actively participating.

B. THEME - THE FUTURE OF FARMING

During both sessions related to the future of farming, it emerged that the post-2020 Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) should be reshaped in a workable manner which allows Maltese farmers to benefit more from the Policy itself.

Farmers were also vocal on standards related to the use of pesticides and the frequency and patterns with which these are tested. Farmers claimed that thorough checks on the use of pesticides and other chemicals in local produce are not carried out on imported products, thereby placing local products at a disadvantage.

Furthermore, farmers complained that due to EU rules in the sector, young persons are discouraged from pursuing such an occupation and are abandoning the fields in favour of other professions or occupations. EU funds geared towards youth participation in farming are not serving to encourage young persons to choose farming.

C. THEME - INNOVATIVE INDUSTRIES

In the realm of innovation, citizens called for the EU to take a more proactive role to steer and improve its policies in this sector in order to keep abreast with technological developments.

Another concern expressed (from the business sector perspective) was that when the EU seeks to communicate it does so in language which is too technical, thus making it difficult for the business sector to be able to follow the law itself and adhere to it as smoothly as possible.

Citizens also expressed concern regarding the current challenges that the EU is facing, such as the uncertainty that has arisen surrounding both the process and the outcome of the Brexit talks.

D. THEME - SOCIAL EUROPE

The lack of clarity between what falls under national Member State competence and what is within the remit of the EU was clearly evidenced during this consultation.

Having said that, issues raised by the citizens are cross-border and transversal, especially in relation to the southern Member States' rhetoric, where the social fabric suffers from an inadequate minimum wage, unpaid internships, and minimal protection of workers and workers' rights due to unprecedented technological advancements.

In this regard, citizens expressed concerns that employment laws across the EU must better reflect current developments and changes in technology which affect the employment landscape, as well as the changing relationship between employers and employees, the adequacy and updatedness of the minimum wage (and the quality of life it affords), and also the challenges still faced by women seeking to enter the job market.

E. THEME - MIGRATION

Citizens raised a wide range of issues, not least due to the vastness of the topic and its great impact on many aspects of Europeans' lives.

Issues raised were of both a national and a European nature. On the European level, citizens called for a comprehensive and predictable Common European Asylum Policy. Tying in with a finding a workable European solution, attendees highlighted the need to work with the EU's neighbours and beyond, via international and multilateral organisations, in order to achieve a tangible solution.

Citizens also queried the national strategy on migration and migrant integration and well-being. Participants gave importance to the humanitarian aspect of this international challenge yet noted that the arrival and assimilation of asylum seekers into the Maltese economy and society should not cause further burdens on citizens in Malta, especially with regards to ever-rising property prices.

CONCLUSION

Malta's experience in hosting its citizens' consultations confirms the need for the EU to consult regularly and meaningfully with the public sphere on European issues that impact the lives of citizens.

Based on the findings which emerged from Malta's citizen consultations, one solid conclusion that can be drawn is that considerably more must be done to engage citizens in order for them to play a more active role when it comes to sharing their opinions on salient matters which actually affect their daily lives.

In order to do so, there is a need to identify and explore the deployment of new engagement and consultation methods. In this regard, technological developments such as social media platform and online consultation and discussion platforms offer considerable advantages in terms of being able to reach out to citizens and draw them into the policy-making process in a way that places them at the centre.

The importance of communicating more effectively with citizens has never been more fundamental. At a time when the communication sphere (and, consequently, the sphere of public discourse) is coming under increasing disruptive effects both internally and externally, communication on EU issues - across the EU - needs to be more consistent and coherent. It is crucial that the EU develops a capacity to communicate with citizens in a manner that is accessible, understandable, and inspires trust and confidence in the EU's policy-making and democratic processes.

Furthermore, though generally speaking citizens in Malta regard EU membership as a good thing, this is also largely attributable to the fact that the country, particularly its economy, has flourished since accession. Despite citizens' in Malta holding EU membership in positive regard, very few could express a clear understanding or enthusiasm for the fundamental reasons which underpin the EU's *raison d'être*.

If the EU is to have a brighter future, it is vital that the EU project connects once more with citizens, both in matters that effect their daily lives but also with regard to the bigger picture – the common narrative that has led 27 sovereign countries to share their sovereignty in a number of areas in order to continue to guarantee peace and prosperity within the Union and beyond.

THE NETHERLANDS

REPORT ON CITIZENS' CONSULTATIONS REGARDING EUROPE IN THE NETHERLANDS

At the European Council of 23 February 2018 Member States agreed to organize citizens consultations regarding the future of the European Union, in light of the European elections. It was decided that the consultations had to be in line with the national context and traditions regarding the public debate. For the Netherlands it has been important that the organization of consultations is done in an open, transparent, inclusive and independent way. For that reason, the citizens' consultations in the Netherlands have been executed by two independent organisations, being *the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP)* and the *Verwey-Jonker Institute.* The executive summaries of the outcomes of both consultations are presented below (A. and B.).

A. The Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP): "What do the Dutch want from the European Union? An exploratory study using surveys, virtual dialogues and focus groups."

1. Timeline and consultation methodology

The Netherlands Institute for Social Research | SCP was requested by the Dutch government to carry out research into Dutch public opinion on the European Union (EU) and the EU agenda for the near term. The starting point for the study was what people want from 'Europe' in practical terms (addressing problems, policy issues), not their opinions on administrative aspects (a federation or not, etc.) – although some information about administrative preferences does emerge when people talk about practical matters.

A multi-mode survey model was used, consisting of four parts. *First*, existing population surveys (e.g. Eurobarometer, the European Social Survey, the Dutch Parliamentary Election Survey and the SCP Citizens' Outlooks Barometer (COB)) were used to obtain an impression of Dutch attitudes to the EU and what they want from 'Europe'. Using data for 2016-2018, the Netherlands was compared with other countries and differences were analysed. This phase also included a historical review. *Second*, in July 2018 a number of open-ended questions were put to a selection of 250 respondents from the COB, asking their views on what the EU should do more and what it should do less. *Third*, an interactive online dialogue (Synthetron) lasting more than an hour was conducted in August 2018 with a random sample of 234 Dutch citizens in order to elicit views about the EU and the EU agenda. *Fourth*, in September eight focus groups were organised to explore themes in more depth.

2. Summary of the main outcomes

Numerous studies have shown that there is broad support in the Netherlands for EU membership. Sentiment towards the EU in mid-2018 is more positive than during the recent (euro) crisis, but much less positive than in the early 1990s. Supporters of EU membership mainly cite economic motives (as a small trading country, the Netherlands is economically tightly interconnected with its neighbouring countries and dependent on the internal market) or argue that we are 'stronger together' on the world stage. Opponents mainly use cultural arguments (loss of identity, sovereignty) and point to the high costs of the EU. The average Dutch citizen sees the EU as something more or less unavoidable: they support membership because the Netherlands is a small country which cannot thrive on its own. A small (though electorally not negligible) group believe that the Netherlands would be better off outside the EU.

Opinions on the EU differ widely across the Dutch population, and especially between people with differing educational levels; people with a higher education level more often support the EU than lower-educated citizens. The gap between these two groups is also widening slightly. Young people are more often pro-European in their views than older people. Attitudes towards the EU are also more positive among people who are more self-assured, are less troubled by the multicultural society and globalisation and have more confidence that their opinions count politically. Electorally, the differences are considerable, with supporters of the populist right-wing PVV (Party for Freedom) and the Eurosceptic FvD (Forum for Democracy) parties being the most negative and those supporting the left-of-centre D66 (Democrats '66), GroenLinks (Green Left) and PvdA (Labour) the most positive.

Eurobarometer surveys and this new study have asked questions, in various ways, about themes of which respondents indicated that they should be high on the EU agenda. The choices made depend on the formulations used, but EU involvement in immigration/refugees, climate/environment and combating terrorism and crime consistently receive high levels of support. In this new study, countering wasting money in Brussels also emerges as a priority. Highly educated people and EU proponents more often want attention for climate issues, while lower-educated people and Eurosceptics more often demand attention for combating terrorism and countering waste. Controlling immigration from outside the EU (mainly refugees) has a high priority in all groups.

From the in-depth discussions on the themes citizens placed high on the EU agenda emerged the ideal image of the EU as a group of powerful Member States working together effectively towards common objectives and being able to address complex challenges. An important driver for those who support the EU is a desire for 'peace and calm', in other words safety and stability; there is a fear of unrest and uncertainty. This applies particularly to the issue of refugees/immigration; getting a grip on this problem is regarded as essential for the continued existence of the EU.

3. Main themes raised by citizens

When asked what they feel the priorities should be for the EU agenda, the Dutch respondents cite a number of topics:

1. Immigration from outside the EU/refugees.
2. Environment/climate.
3. Crime/safety/combating terrorism.
4. Reducing the costs of the EU and countering waste.

Themes where people would like to see little or no input from the EU are typically those relating to the welfare state (care, social security, pensions) and defence. People also believe that the EU should leave more scope for national identity and should focus on the main issues rather than dealing with side issues – there is an impression that the latter happens too frequently. The EU should also not consider further expansion; it should first ensure that it functions better.

4. Main interrogations/concerns expressed by citizens

What are the concerns relating to the key topics cited above:

- Immigration from outside the EU/refugees. People place the theme of immigration and refugees high on the EU agenda because it they see it as an urgent topic which affects them in their own lives. The refugee crisis has figured prominently in the news since 2015 and is seen as threatening. A large group of citizens feel that something important is at stake here: the arrival of large groups of refugees is undermining the well-being of people in the Netherlands. It is linked to pressure on the housing market, rising crime and lack of safety, and the arrival of Muslims in particular makes people worried about the preservation of the Dutch identity. People believe this should be high on the EU agenda because it is a transnational problem which individual countries cannot solve on their own. Many feel that the distribution of refugees across different countries is unfair. Reference is also made to the heavy burden being borne by Southern Member States and the of some countries to respect standing agreements, most notably Hungary and Poland. There is a sense that the Netherlands performs well, but then the Dutch believe this about many issues.
- Climate/environment. This is an international theme and one that is important for the future, and should therefore be high on the EU agenda. It is an issue that needs to be tackled globally, and the EU is in a better position to participate and can achieve more at this level than individual Member States.
- Crime/safety/combating terrorism. People think these issues should be tackled at European level because of their importance (it is important to feel safe), because it is a current problem (people also often think in terms of the refugee question here), because crime does not stop at national borders and because there are good opportunities for more efficient cooperation in tackling cross-border crime (this is already working well, but could be even better).
- Lower EU costs/less waste. The costs of the EU must be reduced. In particular, many object to the monthly meetings of the European Parliament in Strasbourg. Other points of concern are the high costs of the EU bureaucracy, the unfair Dutch position as net-payer and the unfair distribution of resources (with wealthy countries paying for poorer countries).
- No more EU enlargement. The EU is already too big to operate effectively; further expansion would put pressure on the stability of the EU and would disadvantage wealthy countries such as the Netherlands. The EU should absolutely not be enlarged to include countries where democracy is under pressure, such as Turkey.

5. Recurrent and/or innovative citizens' proposals

What people would like the EU to do on the themes that are important for them:

Immigration from outside the EU/refugees:

- A clear, shared vision and common policy, characterised among other things by common access criteria, harmonised reception facilities, uniform and rapid asylum procedures.
- A fair allocation formula and enforcement of agreements in this regard. People do not know precisely what a fair allocation formula would look like.

- Ensuring that refugees do not come to the EU, partly through preventive actions in the regions that people are fleeing, by providing support for people within the region, monitoring the EU borders more effectively (or even closing them), and screening refugees in their region of origin in order to prevent economic refugees coming to the EU. Respondents have high expectations of this measure, believing that if the EU ensures that problems are solved elsewhere, fewer refugees will come to Europe.

Climate/environment:

- A common vision based on joint agreements which will have a broader impact than the member states acting alone. That vision should focus among other things on encouraging alternative energy sources and countering pollution.
- Ensuring that all Member States stick to agreements made by rewarding desirable behaviour and discouraging/punishing undesirable behaviour.
- Support for the EU as more effective global player: stronger in negotiations, setting norms for more sustainable products etc.

Crime/safety/combating terrorism:

- Cooperation in the international fight against crime; international cooperation by the police; protection against cyberattacks; a joint approach to combat the threat of terrorism.

Lower EU costs/less waste:

- The system needs to be fairer (the Dutch feel that the Netherlands pays a disproportionately large contribution), more efficient/cheaper (managing the money of citizens and Member States more effectively) and more effective (spending money on the right things, not on meetings, bureaucracy, moving back and forth between Brussels and Strasbourg).

6. Innovative and/or representative quotes

Four single quotes and fragments from the focus groups are presented below. They are not representative for the discussions, but they illustrate some issues.

- How the EU is too remote to mention a single personal positive experience:

  "It's just like electricity: you plug it in, it works, but you don't know where it comes from. And you pay the bill."

- Sometimes bluntly expressed anger related to the immigration issue:

  "I think it's a total mess. I don't feel safe in my own country. 80% of the prison population are people with a different culture or coloured; it drives me mad. I don't think the Netherlands is the Netherlands any more. The Dutch are dying out. We're seeing a population shift. Everyone is moving further and further away from the centre of cities for a quieter life, including the traffic and so on. There are just too many people. The cultures that come here are dominant, or at least they think they are; they want to force their views on us, and I'm radically opposed to that. … Europe should close the borders, just like it used to be. There are lots of people who don't say it, but I couldn't care less about that. Call me antisocial, then."

- Why controlling immigration is such an important goal for the EU:

  Moderator: "If the EU could develop more joint policy [on immigration] and could act in unity on this issue, what would be the gains?"

A: "In relation to this? Calm and certainty."

B: "The credibility of the EU is at stake if it isn't able to deal with this."
C: "Europe is really just a massive peacekeeping project if they can't sort this out …."

- Why tackling climate change is another important EU goal:

D: "Much more needs to be done; a bigger approach is needed. The Netherlands acting alone can't achieve anything.
E: "Yes, the Netherlands is just a grain of sand. When you see how big Europe is …that wins.

F: "The EU should be setting an example in the world. If you start with a group of countries that have been associated with each other for years and do business with each other, and they can manage it, that could be the perfect example. …"

7. Comments on and/or evaluation of the experience

In our view, three basic needs emerge from respondents' answers to questions and discussions about the preferred EU agenda:

First, there is a need for fairness. There is a strong sense of unfairness: unfair distribution of refugees between countries; the Netherlands sticks to the rules while other countries do not; the Netherlands spends more on the climate; the Dutch contribution to the EU is disproportionately high; there is money for the EU and for refugees, but not to help the poor and elderly in the Netherlands. To increase the sense of fairness in Europe, it is important that (citizens see that) all countries are contributing to a solution, that this is done in a fair way and that agreements made are adhered to.

Second, there is a clear need for safety, calm and stability. People expect the EU to contribute to this by doing something about cross-border crime, ensuring that refugees do not end up in the criminal circuit, resolving the refugee question so that tensions relating to this issue are avoided, and preventing climate problems so that people in the Netherlands can continue to live in safety in the future. Immigration is seen as more urgent and a bigger threat than climate change. The need for safety and calm is very prominent in the discussions about refugees. However, it is also clear that the EU is not the only international source of international stability in the eyes of the citizens; it can also be other international for a such as Nato.

Third, and related to this, is a need for protection of important elements of life in Europe (culture, freedoms, prosperity).

In the focus group sessions we found a great deal of ambiguity and ambivalence. People talk about the EU both in terms of Brussels institutions and in terms of collaborating countries. People talk about 'more' and 'less' EU without making explicit what they mean by this. People want more European unity and strict rules which are enforced, but they also want a high degree of respect for individual national identity and autonomy. They want the EU to do more about big issues, but spend less. When talking about solutions to those big issues, people sometimes follow the arguments for 'more Europe', but it is likely that they are thinking more about the acceptance of hypothetical consequences for the duration of the dialogue, rather than expressing a genuine conviction. People sometimes also explicitly state that they do not believe that EU solutions will work. The preferences expressed in surveys and focus groups should therefore not be simply interpreted at face value as genuine (thought-through, experienced, robust) policy preferences.

8. Other (e.g. best practices on communication)

Three concluding remarks.

- To improve the quality of the debate about what people expect from the EU it is important that, rather than simply inviting them to complete wish-lists which carry no cost, they are encouraged to consider the pros and cons of national and European policy options and to think through the consequences. However, the vast majority of citizens have very limited interest in and opportunity to do this. There is little point in submitting more specific questions about EU issues to the general public; the Eurobarometer survey is already often too specific (as well as too pro-EU biased). It would be more fruitful to submit more generally formulated dilemmas to respondents so that they can weigh up the costs and benefits of the different options.
- The basic needs for fairness, safety and protection identified in our study could also provide a fruitful theme for further discussion about the EU agenda in the coming years. How can those basic needs be met more effectively by national and European policy? As far as Dutch citizens are concerned at this point in time, controlling immigration is the biggest test case for legitimacy.
- Knowledge about the EU by Dutch citizens is low, and there are many assumptions about the (excessively) large contribution that the Netherlands makes to the EU. It would be nice if people were better informed, including more testing of the assumptions and debate on these topics. Here again, however, the interest in this exercise will be very limited. There is a major challenge here, especially for the media. Impartiality, neutrality and diversity are of great importance here. The EU being the producer or funder of information probably makes that information suspect from the start.

B. Verwey-Jonker Institute; "What do Dutch citizens' think about the future of Europe?"

1. Introduction

In October this year, civic dialogues were held on Europe's future. These dialogues took place in five Dutch cities (Groningen, Leeuwarden, Amsterdam, Maastricht and Breda). During the informal European Council on 23 February 2018, the member states decided to implement the French initiative to organize citizen consultations on the future of the European Union. During the civic consultations in the Netherlands, citizens have been consulted extensively

about the topics they consider important and less important for the EU, their concerns and the challenges they perceive to exist for Europe in the present and the future. The results of these civic consultations will serve as input from European citizens for the European Council session on 13 December 2018, as well as one of the input sources for the discussion on Europe's future during the informal European Council session in Sibiu, in May 2019. In the fall of

2019, the European Commission will draw up its new policy agenda for the next five years and will include the outcomes of the civic consultations.

2. Methodology

In cooperation with the Democracy Network, the Verwey-Jonker Institute has managed to recruit a total of ninety citizens, who have taken part in the civic consultations in the five cities (regions). We have succeeded in this recruitment through the consultation of existing networks, local partners, cooperation partners, and active communication through our own websites, newsletters and social media. Despite the limited timeframe for recruiting local citizens, we have organized a total of five successful civic dialogues throughout the country.

The set-up of the dialogue meetings in the cities (regions) was the same everywhere. During the plenary part, the participants were informed about the goal and set-up of the evening. Each time there was an inspiring speaker, who briefly explained the European developments in the region, and the participants jointly answered a number of poll questions via their mobile phones. Based on the outcomes of these questions, the participants split up to talk further at tables of eight to ten people about chosen themes, under the guidance of a moderator.

3. Main outcomes

During the meetings in the five different regions, similar as well as different themes were chosen for further discussion. Citizens perceived the meetings as positive and expressed the desire to be consulted face-to-face more often, which would enable them to actively help figure out which topics the European Union should deal with. Citizens would consider it useful to receive feedback from the European Commission.

Collective identity and decisiveness

Generally, citizens saw that Europe manages to be decisive with regard to a number of aspects. They identified the shared currency, the free traffic of persons and the abolition of roaming costs within the EU. On the other hand, citizens were under the impression that a collective identity is lacking, which causes a less decisive performance regarding more complex themes such as sustainable development, immigration and a more democratic Europe. According to citizens, for these topics a uniform policy is lacking. At the same time, citizens

now are more concerned about Brexit and they question the communality within Europe. Citizens let on that they see solutions beyond the level of the nation state. They thought that the European Union should facilitate such a development by providing financial and legal support to new (and existing) initiatives on the regional and municipal/local levels.

Democratic representation

Citizens perceived a distance to what happens in Brussels, among other things caused by the high abstraction level of what is going on. Citizens indicated that they do not feel represented within Europe. The referendum as a means to reduce complex issues to yes-no answers generated a lot of discussion. Citizens thought it more advisable to look at new forms of participatory democracy.

The market and the European Union

Citizens expressed their concern about the decline of collective civic organizations and about the corporate lobby. Companies succeed in placing market-oriented interest in the foreground, while the voice of the citizen increasingly seems to disappear into the background. They also noted that industry and companies occupy a strong position within the Union. This is reflected in the prominent position of market-oriented and commercial interests. This is made visible by the interests at play with respect to the theme of sustainable development. It was suggested that, at the collective level, citizens should organize themselves more in order to strengthen support for the EU among citizens.

Connecting and knowledge sharing

It would be useful for the European Union to organize knowledge networks where knowledge is shared and developed, supplemented by independent research. By directly involving people, it will be possible to take more notice of regional differences of an ecological and cultural nature. Citizens thought this will improve the way in which policy is implemented in cooperation with those involved, from the bottom up. In other words, citizens expect the EU to play a more active role in this field.

4. Main thematics

During each of the civic dialogues in the five cities (regions), a number of topics were discussed at separate tables. The following themes were discussed in-depth: agriculture and biodiversity; sustainable development; a more democratic Europe; European cooperation; European welfare and stability; social protection and immigration. Citizens indicated why they considered a topic to be important and why they expected a greater effort from the EU. The themes can be summarized as follows:

- Agriculture and biodiversity: Citizens thought it is important that food is produced in a sustainable way, with an eye for nature and the environment. Citizens observed that agriculture is in need of a renewed approach, and that production needs to be slowed down for the benefit of biodiversity. These themes are linked to complex issues, which asks for a greater involvement from the EU than legislation and regulation alone.
- Sustainable development: Citizens looked upon the environment and climate as urgent topics. Regulations should be observed more strictly, for instance in relation to the reduction of waste and plastics. The EU should develop a long-term vision on existing environmental aspects and put problems on the agenda more efficiently, thus contributing to collective, transnational solutions.
- A more democratic Europe: Citizens would like to see still more stimulation of participatory democracy, since they see a growing gap between talking and acting when it comes to decision-making. Citizens have too little insight into the workings of European institutions. Some thought this asks for more transparency. In addition, the European Union should look for methods with which it can restore its citizens' trust in the decision-making processes.
- European cooperation: According to citizens, the EU is unaware of the fact that Europe constitutes an ever smaller part of the world population, which may have consequences the future. Citizens would like to see the EU making clearer geopolitical choices and conveying these choices as well. The importance of cooperation in the EU sometimes seems to disappear into the background, when politicians utter negative comments about other EU member states. This undermines the credibility of politicians, which is undesirable to citizens.
- European welfare and stability: Citizens considered this to be an important topic because they wonder how Europe relates to political decisions made internationally. Furthermore, citizens were of the opinion that the lack of unity and the rise of 'social media' influences stability both directly and indirectly. In their view, Europe should promote itself as an example to the rest of the world.
- Social protection: Citizens discussed various aspects related to this theme and the importance of keeping up the work on the level of welfare in all EU-member states, equalizing it. The EU should pay attention, for instance, to the situation of Polish workers who make use of the social safety net in the Netherlands.
- Immigration: Citizens missed a joint approach to deal with the big problems and lopsided situations caused by the choices the EU-made about immigration. They see asylum seekers/refugees who do not receive medical care, failing policy and agreements that are not upheld. Citizens were ashamed about the situation and considered it urgent that the EU develops a policy about migration in line with universal agreements regarding human rights. Now, too much depends on national policy, which results in inefficient action and generates a lot of inequality.

5. Main concerns

Based on the topics discussed, we have also asked citizens what really worries them. The main concerns expressed with respect to agriculture and biodiversity related to the manner of production. Citizens were worried because they see that too little attention is paid to the complete chain surrounding it. With regard to sustainable development, citizens were concerned about the rising water level, air quality and climate issues. Citizens had the idea that too much attention is paid to topics other than the climate, just when paying attention is needed. When citizens talked to each other, they showed concern about the credibility of some politicians and the conflict of interests with companies. The topics of European cooperation and social protection gave rise to concerns related to the possible eroding of the Dutch social safety net, because EU citizens from other member states make use of it. The topic of European welfare and stability brought to the surface concerns about global issues and international politics. Finally, citizens worried about the harrowing problems occurring in relation to the topic of immigration.

6. Evaluation of the experience

Looking back on the experiences of citizens during the five meetings for each city (region), we heard a number of critical comments and doubts regarding representativeness. The time to apply was indeed short, and the meetings mainly attracted already engaged citizens. The organizations put much effort into a wide recruitment and paid attention to differences regarding gender, age, education, ethnicity and labour participation. We can argue that the regional distribution has contributed to the participation of citizens with widely differing backgrounds.

The dialogues were constructive, and the participants took part in them with great interest and engagement. For citizens, these dialogues constitute a sound means to involve them more directly in Europe and its future.

AUSTRIA

Austrian Citizens' Consultations

Executive Summary

The Citizens' consultations are an important element in the ongoing reflection process on the future of Europe in view of the informal meeting of the European Council in Sibiu on 9 May 2019. The aim is to involve as many citizens as possible in order to identify their expectations and concerns regarding the future of the European Union, as well as political areas of importance to them.

In Austria, the citizens' consultations took place between June and November 2018 and combined several approaches for involving citizens and listening to their ideas and concerns. Citizens could engage in the debate by (i) responding to an online standardized questionnaire with four open questions, (ii) attending events in the framework of the consultations or (iii) voicing their thoughts and positions through a webpage on the citizens' consultations, via social media or e-mail.

As the first component, citizens were invited to contribute their suggestions and thoughts on the future of Europe by using a questionnaire which was online at the Austrian Federal Chancellery's website between 15 June and 5 November. About 4,000 people took part in this consultation process – via online participation or by using the print version. The results are therefore of limited statistical significance.

By answering four open questions, citizens could indicate (1) in which areas they wish for more or (2) less engagement of the EU, (3) which issues are of concern to them and (4) what kind of legislative initiatives they would like to see at European level. For analytical reasons, the answers were systematically allocated to different categories based on the chapters of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU).

The results of the survey are as follows:

- Participants seek for more involvement of the European Union in the areas of internal security and judicial cooperation, in particular border control, defence, asylum and migration policies (28% of responses), environmental issues (11% of responses) and other fields such as data protection, control of lobbyism and transparency.

- Less involvement by the EU is requested in the field of internal security and judicial cooperation (13% of responses) and agriculture and fisheries (9% of responses). However, 44% of replies are horizontal and cannot be attributed to specific policy areas, e.g. the demand for less regulation and – in general - no interference in the matters of national affairs.

- When it comes to issues which are of the highest concern for the respondents, most answers again can be attributed to the field of internal security and judicial cooperation (27% of responses). This is followed by other areas, such as concern about renationalization of the Member States or Brexit (26% of responses) and environmental issues (11% of responses).

- Regarding requests for legislative initiatives, participants mentioned most often asylum and migration policies (16%), institutional provisions (12%), taxation (8%) and social policy (8%).

Second and in addition to the survey, a series of events for dialogue and discussion took place, some of which were (co-)organized by the Federal Government, but also by stakeholders and various platforms engaged in EU communication.

Several events had already been planned in the context of the Austrian Council Presidency, offering citizens the opportunity to engage with members of government, representatives of the European institutions or civil servants. The very diverse events contributed to a lively and multi-layered debate on the future of Europe and underlined the great interest Austrians take in the European peace project and its future development.

The kick-off of the citizens' consultations took place at the European Forum Wachau on 15 June 2018 with the participation of Federal Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, the Federal Minister for EU, Arts, Culture and Media Gernot Blümel and the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs Karin Kneissl. A closing event with Chancellor Kurz at the margins of the Subsidiarity Conference in Bregenz on 15 November concluded the series of events.

In addition, numerous participatory meetings took place in various formats in which citizens debated with political representatives, such as e.g. a high profile conference in the presence of Federal Minister Gernot Blümel and his French colleague, Minister Nathalie Loiseau as well as events at the margins of the informal meeting of environment and transport ministers in Graz.

All these events showed a broad variety in terms of format, number of participants and thematic focus, reaching from formal conferences to information booths.

From the beginning, the citizens' consultations where highly encouraged by the Federal Government. Several members of the Federal Government participated in numerous consultations and joined a number of related side-events.

Migration and asylum policies were the most recurring topics in these discussions, often with a focus on border security, but also in the context of climate change, development aid and the EU's role in Africa and the Middle East. Issues of EMU, youth and education, EU foreign policy (including the European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement), a common defence policy, social policy and agricultural policy were also regularly raised in the debates.

Democracy and civic participation as well as dissatisfaction with the communication of European politics and opportunities for improvement in this respect were discussed extensively during the events.

As a third component, the process was complemented by social media activities, a webpage and an e-mail account open to citizens' questions and contributions.

The consultations followed the approach of the "Joint framework on Citizens' Consultations", which was agreed in April by the participating Member States and emphasised the aim of involving citizens through a mix of different formats, the added value of a flexible approach and the objective to take advantage of synergies with established action groups. Apart from the presented results in the section I to V, the Austrian national report gives a comprehensive overview of the various activities and illustrates the multifaceted nature of the citizens' consultations.

POLAND

Warsaw, November 2018

Rzeczpospolita Polska
Ministerstwo
Spraw Zagranicznych

Raport w sprawie przebiegu konsultacji obywatelskich ws. przyszłości Europy w Polsce

Report on Citizens' consultations on the Future of Europe in Poland

Executive summary

The responsibility for creating the concept and carrying out the process of citizens' consultations on the future of Europe in Poland lay on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the network of 15 Regional Centres for International Debate(RCIDs), which operate in major Polish cities.
RCIDs are institutions which cooperate with the MFA, in most cases being non-governmental entities or academic institutions which cooperate also with regional opinion-leaders. The main idea of the citizens' consultations on the Future of Europe was to combine presentation of a governmental stance on a given subject with voices of independent experts/co-panelists invited to share their views before opening the floor to the general public with any comment or question which it wished to raise. The events were open to anyone wishing to participate, regardless of their professional or political affiliation. The governmental stance was presented by high ranking officials of the MFA, including, on three occasions, by the Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz.

The Polish edition of the citizens consultations was launched on August 28, 2018 in Opole and reached its conclusion in Warsaw on October 29, 2018. All in all, 15 events were organised, with attendance of approximately 1500 participants of many walks of life- students, academics, journalists, entrepreneurs and others. In the selection of the themes expectations of the RCIDs were duly taken into account so as to ensure their ownership of the project. The central idea concerning selection of topics, however, was to maintain equilibrium between cross-cutting debates of more general and systemic nature, on one hand, and the more specific debates regarding issues of most direct interest to the citizens, on the other. There were 9 debates of more general nature (Opole, Lodz, Wroclaw, Cracow, Lublin, Torun, Poznan, Szczecin and the final one in Warsaw), although each of them presented a different angle of the debate on the future on the EU. For instance, the debate in Torun with participation of the Foreign Minister focussed on the importance of Christian roots and values in debate on the future of the EU, the one in Krakow also with participation of the Foreign Minister put emphasis on the role of Central Europe in debate about the EU's future, whereas the event in Wroclaw was mostly dedicated to the significance of the concept of national and European sovereignty. The 6 remaining debates were of more specific nature (Bialystok- the future of Three Seas Initiative, Sandomierz/Kielce-future of the Common Agricultural Policy, Gorzow Wielkopolski- migrations, Katowice-single market, Olsztyn- future of scientific cooperation in Europe and Gdańsk/Gdynia- future of the Eurozone).

Due to the dual thematic nature of the Polish edition of consultations, the resulting conclusions can also be divided into two main parts: the general and the specific. Main general conclusion is that the Polish citizens are very positive about the fact that Poland is a member of the European Union and express strong desire that it keeps contributing to shaping successful future of the project. On top of an overall positive assessment of the fact of belonging to the European community of nations, Poles greatly appreciate the consequences of the membership in the EU for their everyday life. The economic consequences (European

funds and opportunities linked with the functioning of the single market) were most often cited. That shows that focussing by the EU pragmatically on the issues which are closest to citizens has been the correct path. Another general conclusion is that notwithstanding their positive attitude towards the EU, certain amount of criticism was voiced concerning its current shape and prospects for the future. In the course of events it transpired that issues which might seem to have less direct impact on everyday life of the citizens (like debate on the division of competences between the national and EU level or sovereignty-related debate) were quite hotly debated. Often cited threads of criticism were linked to the perceived discrimination of the Polish workers on the labour markets of other Members, departure of the EU from its Christian roots, lack of genuine partnership between bigger and smaller members of the EU, or the concept of a two-speed Europe. In the course of the debates there appeared- although sporadically- radically critical voices concerning alleged assaults on the national sovereignty from the federal circles. Finally, the consultations proved that there is a widespread support for enhanced cooperation on the future of EU in the regional format of Central European states, although without designs to make it exclusive nor without detriment to the cooperation with all the remaining EU member states.

Out of the more specific conclusions four merit particular attention:

1) on the Eurozone, the introduction of the euro in Poland must be preceded by a thorough economic and political debate and is unlikely to be an issue, which is imminent on the agenda;

2) on the single market, although Polish companies appreciate the benefits of the single market they are wary of protectionism hampering their future growth;

3) on migrations, phenomenon is mostly seen through the prism of massive presence of Ukrainian citizens in Poland, their good integration into the Polish society and the necessities of the expanding economy of Poland. Potentially uncontrollable migratory waves form Middle East or Africa are, on the other hand, perceived as jeopardising the EU as a whole over the longer run. The shorter-term debates inevitably lead to focussing on the migrations from the East.

4) on scientific cooperation/Erasmus +. The benefits of internationalising Polish academia through the programs of EU are numerous (including the development of soft skills and ability to operate in a different cultural setting, both for students and academic staff), while on the negative side there is a risk of a “brain drain” in case of the scholarship holders preferring to stay abroad upon conclusion of their scholarship.

Apart from organising conferences, the MFA was actively promoting the cycle of debates on its website and other internet channels, like Facebook or twitter. It constantly encouraged Polish citizens not only to participate in the events but also to make their voices heard through filling in the European Commission’s questionnaire on the future of Europe. In the period of consultations Foreign Minister Czaputowicz authored two articles in “Rzeczpospolita” and “Nasz Dziennik” dailies, laying out Poland’s vision of the future of the EU against the background of the citizens’ consultations.

On November 7, 2018 Foreign Minister Czaputowicz presented information on the concept and the outcome of the citizens’ consultations to the members of the Committee on the European Union of the Sejm (Lower Chamber of the Parliament), with participation of members of the Senate.

By and large, the process of the citizens’ consultations on the future of Europe proved a useful exercise showing clearly that there is a public support for active and positive role of Poland in the overall debate on the future of the European integration.

PORTUGAL

CITIZENS' CONSULTATIONS IN PORTUGAL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WWW.ENCONTROSCIDADAOS.PT

GOALS

The Portuguese chapter of the Citizens' Consultations ("Encontros com os Cidadãos") was coordinated by the Secretary of State for European Affairs, in partnership with the Representation of the European Commission in Portugal (REP COMM), the Jacques Delors European Information Centre (CIEJD), among other institutions: the national parliament, local authorities, universities and other civil society organizations.

The initiative took place between April and December 2018 and it sought to hear citizens' views on the future of Europe through debates, replies to an online consultation and a national website launched in June.

MAIN GOALS

1. ENCOURAGE MAXIMUM INTERACTION BETWEEN SPEAKERS AND PARTICIPANTS
2. REACH THE ENTIRE NATIONAL TERRITORY
3. COVER ALL RELEVANT EU POLICY AREAS
4. GIVE THE PORTUGUESE CITIZENS THE OPPORTUNITY TO INTERACT WITH EUROPEAN LEADERS

METHODOLOGY

The initiative comprised three types of events: (1) the trademark 'Encontros com os Cidadãos,' which were organized by the office of the Secretary of State for European Affairs in cooperation with different partners; (2) the Associated Events ('Encontros Associados'), which were events on European themes organized by other institutions, where the online consultation on the future of Europe was promoted; (3) and the 'Europe in Schools' events ('A Europa nas escolas'), which were held by the CIEJD in basic and secondary schools throughout the country. **In total, there were 60 events, covering all 18 districts plus the two autonomous regions in Portugal.**

The events had the following standard format: (1) a welcome note by a speaker from the host institution (2-3 minutes); (2) interventions by the guest speakers (5-10 minutes each); (3) Q&A with citizens (circa 60 minutes). The sessions were designed to have a maximum length of 90 minutes. To maximize citizens' engagement in the sessions, we used the online audience interaction tool Sli.do - kindly shared with us by the REP COMM.

A calendar of the events is presented in the Annex to this report.

MAIN OUTCOMES

The Portuguese adhered enthusiastically to the initiative, participating in significant numbers in both the events and the online consultation on the Future of Europe. According to the latest DG COMM figures, shared on November 9, Portugal registered 1439 contributions to the online consultation. More than 2,500 people turned out for our largest event, which took place on June 8, at the World Olive Oil Summit 2018 in Santarém.

On July 27, the Portuguese Prime Minister, António Costa, and the President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron, held a citizen consultation at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon, which had 617 active viewers, 292 questions and 933 poll votes on Sli.do. This event was also part of the French initiative ("Quelle Est Votre Europe"). The Encontros com os Cidadãos' website registered over 8,000 page views.

MAIN THEMATICS

- BREXIT
- REFUGEES AND MIGRATION
- EU BUDGET
- ECONOMIC FUTURE OF THE UNION
- FUNCTIONING OF THE EU
- EU POLICIES (YOUTH; AGRICULTURE; COHESION)

ATMOSPHERE

The overall atmosphere of the events was positive, with a majority of the Portuguese citizens expressing a desire for more EU-integration in several domains, namely in the Economic and Monetary Union and European political institutions.

Given the vibrant youth participation in the initiative, the citizens also placed a strong emphasis on job opportunities and youth policies.

By and large, the citizens' interventions in the events (either through Sli.do or in traditional face-to-face interaction) reflected the main EU-related stories in the Portuguese media (i.e., Brexit; Refugees and Migration; Populism). The main criticisms of the EU concerned the perception of growing economic divergence among Member-States, the lack of solidarity, the need of greater EU support for economic growth in Portugal and the need for more transparency in politics.

PROPOSALS

- Introduction of a European civic education course in the school curriculum - "European Hours."
- More support for European youth associations.
- More direct support to farmers and rural development.
- More solidarity, convergence and cohesion between countries.
- Closer relationship between academia and policy-making bodies.
- More information about EU policies Introduction of a
- solidarity criteria for the attribution of European funds.

"Does the solution to the problems of the Euro involve a political union?"

QUESTIONS

- Is a multi-speed Europe the best solution for the future of Europe?
- What can I do to overcome this difficulty of dialogue with Eurosceptics and what can our governments do to help us overcome this challenge?
- How do you see the migration deal with Turkey?
- Do you think there is a need to renovate the European Parliament with younger people?
- How do you see Europe after Brexit?
- Do you think that Europe can transcend left- right political divisions (which seems far from the case now)?
- The Franco-German consensus was mainly responsible for the development of the European project. Why doesn't this engine work anymore?

CONCERNS

We examined the transcripts of the citizens' interventions in the events to identify the main concerns expressed by the Portuguese citizens in the course of these consultations. After removing generic words (ie., Europe, EU, European, and Politics), we found that the five most common words mentioned by the Portuguese were: *(1) Portugal, (2) Future, (3) Brexit, (4) Citizens and (5) Euro.* This suggests that not only do the citizens continue to look at European affairs through a national prism, but also that Brexit was at the heart of Portuguese concerns during the second half of 2018.The Portuguese seem to consider the impact of Brexit particularly critical in three main areas: the economy; student tuition; and the status of the Portuguese citizens living in the UK.

The economic future of the EU and the lingering consequences of the 2009 European debt crisis were also high-up on the list of concerns expressed by the Portuguese citizens. A recurrent question was the measures adopted by the EU to ensure the stability and strength of the Euro.

COMMENTS

Based on Sli.do polls, an overwhelming majority of the participants in the events declared they would vote in the 2019 European elections. This suggests that participation in the citizens' consultations in Portugal was composed primarily by those who are already committed to the European project. This is in line with the results of the last Eurobarometer survey for Portugal, which show that 56% of the population views the European Union in a positive way. On the positive side, the initiative could energize this "base" in the run-up to the 2019 elections.

On the other hand, it shows that the debate+survey format may not be the most effective tool to reach those citizens who are most disengaged or ill-informed about European politics. The online consultation on the future of Europe, in our view, was too long, and it required a degree of knowledge about policy subjects seldom found among the citizens. In the future, more emphasis should be placed on outreach activities and on more innovative formats that provide center stage to citizens, their views and concerns.

ROMANIA

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
MINISTER DELEGATE FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

CITIZENS' CONSULTATIONS ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE IN ROMANIA

Final Report

CONSULTĂRI CETĂȚENEȘTI
PENTRU VIITORUL UNIUNII EUROPENE

November 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through the Minister Delegate for European Affairs, and the European Institute of Romania have launched on 9 May 2018 the series of "Citizens' consultations on the future of the European Union". The cycle of national citizens' consultations, which concluded with a final conference on 8 October 2018, was aimed at debating the future strategic priorities of the European project ahead of a dedicated Summit in Sibiu, Romania, on the 9th of May 2019.

The Citizens' consultations initiative provided an excellent democratic framework to debate the most pressing issues at the European level (Brexit, priorities for the next Multiannual Financial Framework, internal and external security, internal market etc.), in a quest for greater legitimacy and in order to bring the Union closer to the European citizen. The debates focused on issues that are of interest for Romanian citizens, in the context of the general debate on the future of the European Union. These consultations followed one of the guiding principles of Romania's upcoming Presidency of the EU Council in the first semester of 2019, namely placing the *citizen* at the heart of the European agenda and priorities.

The aim of this series of consultations was to:

1. Generate public debates in order to identify the **main concerns, hopes and expectations of the Romanian citizens related to the future of the Union** and **their perceptions about the benefits of Romania's membership to the European Union**;

2. Highlight **the importance of holding public debates on the future of the European Union**. Point to the levers that citizens have at their disposal in order to influence the European decision-making process, including in relation to the objectives and priorities that Romania will promote during its incoming Presidency of the Council of the European Union;

3. **Provide a format in which Romanian citizens could express their vision on possible ways to continue the further development of the EU.**

Methodology

In terms of methodology, the concept of the consultations held in Romania was a dynamic one, different from the conventional conference or round table formats, and was based on an active interaction between representatives of central and local authorities, experts, the general public and the media. In total, there were 12 thematic events held between May-October this year in various cities and towns across the country: Bucharest, Arad, Constanța, Panciu, Fălticeni, Craiova, Negrești-Oaș, Târgoviște, Alba Iulia, Bacău and Bârlad. The selection of cities/towns and of the topics was made in order to cover as much geographical reach and thematic scope as possible.

Through the *sli.do* platform, moderators proposed several sets of questions, with either simple or multiple-choice answers, to which the public was able to respond in real time via mobile phones, with the final results for each question being displayed afterwards. At the same time, questions could be addressed by the public – either from the audience or via mobile phones from home (during events that were livestreamed). These questions and results were followed by answers and comments provided by the attending experts and officials.

The main conclusions of each debate were usually featured in local or national media. Participation from the local communities was diverse and active, aiming at ensuring gender equality and ranging from civil society, young people, including students and academics, to representatives from the local administration, business sector and NGOs.

Main Thematics Discussed

The main topics chosen for these events revolved around the agenda of the Romanian EU Council Presidency, which will focus on **promoting cohesion, as a common European value**, based on four pillars of action:

1. Ensuring **convergence as well as economic, social and territorial cohesion** for a sustainable and fair development for all citizens and Member States by promoting connectivity, digitalization, implementing regional cooperation projects, stimulating entrepreneurship and the overall competitiveness of the European industry;

2. Maintaining **a safe Europe** through an increased cohesion and solidarity between Member States against the new security challenges threatening the citizen's safety and by supporting cooperation initiatives in the areas of justice and security;

3. Consolidating **the global role of the European Union** through ensuring cohesion around the common commitments and through developing citizen-oriented actions in third countries;

4. Stimulating European cohesion through continued **dialogue about the common values** embraced by the European citizens.

In this context, Romanian citizens had the chance to debate various topics of interest: Cohesion, a common European value; Europe of Convergence; Employment and social rights; Europe of common values; European citizens at the core of EU reform; Innovation and digitalization; Connectivity, Competitiveness and Markets; Common Agricultural Policy and local development; EU as a global actor; Children's Europe.

The last theme, ***Children's Europe***, was discussed at a special event, organized in partnership with UNICEF Romania and held in the city of Bacău, where more than 300 children and young people made their voices heard in a unique citizen consultation. The event managed to generate many interesting ideas that could contribute to bringing EU policies closer to the young generations, for a better European future.

In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized the "Public consultation, communication and debate Forum on the preparation and exercise of Romania's EU Council Presidency *EU- RO2019*". The work of the Forum was structured on 17 thematic working groups corresponding to Council configurations. Over 500 representatives of civil society organizations, trade union, academics and experts from public institutions (ministries, government agencies, etc.) took part in this initiative that aimed to generate debates and proposals from the public that could feed into the agenda of Romania's EU Council Presidency, while increasing the participation and ownership of citizens in relation to the EU decision-making process.

Main concerns/expectations expressed by the citizens

- In the context of the various discussions about **European cohesion**, the **difference in terms of quality and double standards for products** available in Eastern Europe (as opposed to those available in Western Europe) was mentioned as a concern.

- The possible decrease of funds allocated to the **Common Agricultural Policy** and the **Cohesion Policy** in the context of negotiations surrounding the next Multiannual Financial Framework was considered a worrisome scenario.

- **The need to increase the absorption rate of EU funds in Romania** in order to develop and finance various national and local infrastructure, social and cultural projects.

- **The importance of preventing future economic crises** rather than simply addressing them; the growing importance of the Digital Agenda for Europe and of the Digital Single Market against the backdrop of the fourth industrial revolution, with both challenges and opportunities for the labour market.

- **The concern with regard to the growing spectre of populism and extremism** in Europe, in light of the upcoming European elections of 2019.

- **The challenge for the Romanian society to motivate its most valuable and talented youth to return to the country** after studying or working abroad; countering the "brain drain" phenomenon while, at the same time, trying to curb youth unemployment.

- The **increase of unconventional threats such as cyberattacks and disinformation**, which require common European actions in the fields of strategic communication and cybersecurity.

- During the discussions on the international role of the European Union, the **Enlargement Policy** featured as an important component of the EU action, including in defining the priorities of the future Romanian Presidency of the EU Council. It also indicated the support of the Romanian citizens for the European perspective of the Western Balkans.

- The discussions also reflected the support for the **European perspective of the Eastern partners**, with particular focus on the Republic of Moldova.

Recurrent or innovative citizens' proposals

- **Romanians support the concept of an 'ever closer Union'**, based on the common values, principles and norms enshrined in the treaties, as opposed to the concept of 'multi-speed' Europe. **One of the key demands of the participants in the consultations was to push for Romania's accession to the Schengen Area**, since the country already fulfils all the required technical criteria.

- The **Common Agricultural Policy** and the **Cohesion Policy** continue to be regarded as fundamental policies and are seen as paramount for Romania and for the future of the European Union as a whole. This should be reflected in the negotiations regarding the future Multiannual Financial Framework.

- **The Erasmus+ program**, which celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2017, is perceived as one of the most successful policies of the European Union and should be strengthened in the future; Nurturing multiculturalism remains essential in building the social fabric of the European project.

- **Quality and competence-based education** is considered key for the future development of Romania and the European Union, as well as for ensuring **social cohesion** on the long term. Participants also underlined **the growing importance of active citizenship and democratic accountability** in order to improve the general cohesion of the European project and the legitimacy of the decision-making process.

- In the context of a '**return of geopolitics**', the **EU should develop its military and civil capabilities in an integrated manner through initiatives such as PESCO**, which is a Treaty-based framework and process that seeks to deepen defence cooperation among EU Member States who are capable and willing to do so.

- **The digital revolution**, in the greater context of the fourth industrial revolution, **is inevitable and irreversible, but its unpredictable consequences could and should be better addressed by Romania and the European Union as a whole – focus on improving and harnessing the digital infrastructure and improving public sector services (E-government).**

- **More common initiatives at the European level in the field of tourism**, in general, and with regard to tour operators' mobility, in particular.

Concluding remarks and main takeaways

In a year in which Romania celebrates the 100 years anniversary of its Great Union and with only a couple of months before its first ever Presidency of the EU Council, the citizens consultations have highlighted the perception of a positive impact that Romania's accession to the European Union has had on the lives of citizens. It has also revealed their optimism and support for further consolidating the European project in post-Brexit context, based on common values and shared principles.

Among the main challenges and priorities identified for the future of the Union were aspects such as the need to efficiently mitigate internal and external security threats, ensuring an equitable and sustainable economic growth within the EU or measures to existing development gaps between Member States. The need to enhance EU's global role was also underlined as an important objective in the current changing and competitive international environment.

The aim of the national campaign of citizen consultations was to emphasize the idea that citizens are both the main source and the main beneficiary of EU's actions and policies. For this reason, the conclusions and findings of these consultations provide a valuable input to the general debate on the future of Europe, as well as for the discussions to be held at the informal Summit in Sibiu in view of defining the next strategic directions for the EU action/the future EU Strategic Agenda (2019-2024).

SLOVENIA

REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

REPORT ON CITIZENS' CONSULTATION ON EUROPE

IN SLOVENIA

SUMMARY FOR THE JOINT REPORT

In Slovenia, consultations on European affairs with the public have been a regular practice since the pre-accession times. During Slovenia's Presidency of the EU Council in 2008, the Government in partnership with NGOs established an on-line civil dialogue to enable citizens' participation. When the EU, after experiencing the economic and monetary crisis and in the run-up to the 2014 EP elections, launched discussions on the future of the EU, Slovenia joined the consultative process with two projects: 'EU is You' (2012-2013) and 'More Europe – More Slovenia' (2013-2014). Both projects were carried out by the Government in close cooperation with the Representations of both the European Commission and the European Parliament as well as with NGOs.

Following the announcement by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to withdraw from the EU and in the run-up to the 2019 European Parliament elections, Slovenia joined the renewed deliberations on the future of Europe by organising a series of public and internal expert debates "Slovenia for a Successful Europe of the Future" over the last two years.

Aware of the necessity to involve citizens in the dialogue on the future of the EU, the Slovenian Government responded to the initiative for EU-wide consultations with citizens (CCE) by joining the Joint Framework agreed upon by the Member States. Due to the election year in Slovenia, the time-frame at our disposal was very limited, nevertheless, we organised three additional events in the months between the parliamentary elections in June and the local elections in November.

Our national report, which follows the agreed template, includes the presentation of the national consultations carried out within our previous project "**Slovenia for a Successful Europe of the Future**"[5] and the presentation of **additional consultations with citizens in the local communities organised in the context of the CCE initiative**[6].

CALENDAR AND METHODOLOGY OF CONSULTATIONS

"SLOVENIA FOR A SUCCESSFUL EUROPE OF THE FUTURE"

Public debates, at the Congress Centre in Ljubljana and at Slovenia's Permanent Representation in Brussels:

On the Future of the EU, 7 October 2016	The Ministry of Foreign Affairs held **five public debates** on how the Union could become more efficient and more democratic and how it should contribute to improving the lives of its citizens in the future. They were attended by representatives of public administration and EU institutions, professional public, business and civil society, social partners and political decision-makers (between 100 and 150 participants at each event). The opening speaker was Minister of Foreign Affairs, while most of the discussions were moderated by EU experts. The panellists were prominent experts from relevant fields, journalists, lecturers, researchers. All public debates, except the one in Brussels, were recorded and can be viewed on the Ministry's website.
On Economic Growth, 17 November 2016	
On Security, 4 January 2017	
On Migration, 21 February 2017	
From the Brussels Perspective, 6 March 2017	

[5]http://www.mzz.gov.si/si/zunanja_politika_in_mednarodno_pravo/evropske_politike/slovenija_za_uspesno_evropo_prihodnosti/
[6]http://www.vlada.si/teme_in_projekti/prihodnost_evropske_unije_kaksno_je_vase_mnenje/

Internal expert discussions, at the premises of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Jable Castle:

European Security and Defence, 22 November 2017	With a view to further elaborating Slovenian positions on the future of the EU, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs organised **five expert discussions**. Other national authorities were invited to cooperate regarding their field of expertise. The debates were chaired by State Secretary of the Foreign Ministry, in charge of European affairs, and attended by representatives of public administration and EU institutions, academics, research institutions, business community, political decision-makers and representatives of civil society and the media. The debates were of an internal nature, in accordance with the *Chatham House* rules. They were not recorded, but reported by the media. Summaries from the discussions are available on the above-mentioned website.
European Social Dimension, 18 January 2018	
Democratic Legitimacy and Institutional Changes, 16 February 2018	
EU Migration Policy, 19 April 2018	
Economic and Monetary Union, 18 May 2018	

The discussions were based on the key agendas agreed by the EU heads of state or government, as well as relevant documents on the future of Europe provided by the EU institutions. In December 2017, the Slovenian Government adopted its fundamental positions on various key aspects of the future of the EU debate.

CITIZENS' CONSULTATIONS: "WHAT KIND OF EUROPEAN UNION DO WE WANT?"

At the end of April 2018, a **new Government website**[7] was set up in order to popularise the EU-wide consultation project for EU citizens in Slovenia and disseminate the link to the European Commission's digital consultation platform[8]. In addition, **consultations with citizens** were organised in three smaller Slovenian municipalities:

Idrija, 7 June 2018	The **methodology** of these consultations followed the **Joint Framework** agreed among Member States: common principles of transparency, political pluralism, fairness and openness to all citizens, with the aim of reaching out to the EU citizens who are Eurosceptic, critical or indifferent to the EU. Consultations were **co-organised by the Government Communication Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the municipalities.** Two thematic sets were selected according to priorities of the local communities, while one was common to all consultations: how we experience the EU in our daily life. Moderators were ideally from the local environment and the citizens had the main say. In attendance were also the invited guests from three administration levels — local, state (line ministries according to topics, Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and EU; they provided clarifications and positions when necessary. It was possible to watch the live streams of the events or follow them via social profiles of the Government; videos are available on the Government's website.
Kočevje, 13 September 2018	
Slovenj Gradec, 20 September 2018	

7 http://www.vlada.si/teme_in_projekti/prihodnost_evropske_unije_kaksno_je_vase_mnenje/

8 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/future-europe/consultation-future-europe_sl

MAIN OUTCOMES

Satisfaction with Slovenia's membership of the EU is still solid.
Next year we will celebrate the 15th anniversary of Slovenia's EU membership. The 2003 referendum was a success, as the large majority of Slovenia's population voted for accession to the EU. The enthusiasm over the EU was at its highest then and we witnessed an exceptional unity of political parties and citizens.

The support of Slovenian citizens for the European project is still strong, regardless of all crises experienced since our accession to the EU.
Despite being sometimes dissatisfied with the EU, the citizens are convinced that the **EU values** as its firm foundation are worth fighting for in the current global situation. There is no other place in the world, where social inclusion would be so high and the quality of life, water, food, nature etc. so good. The community of 28 states has essentially more global impact than individual states, particularly in economic terms, and is also a key player regarding development aid. Valuable specific features of the EU consist of the preservation of cultural identities and diversity as well as protection of human and minority rights, equality and the rule of law.

In their daily lives, citizens experience many pragmatic benefits: freedom of movement, mobility, abolition of roaming charges, monetary stability and the common currency. One of the major EU assets is the Erasmus+ programme, which enables young people and others to share experience and transfer knowledge.

Another feature which is strongly perceived in daily life relates to **numerous EU projects**. They are not only about financing, they offer opportunities to learn new work methods and collaboration between countries and citizens, resulting in many new connections extending well beyond the conclusion of projects.

Many critical views were heard as well, but they were largely constructive.
The fear was expressed that the EU is currently in an existential, systemic crisis, as well as in a crisis of trust and values. It is seen as divided into different interest groups, there are large structural differences between Member States, regionalisms and nationalisms are on the rise. Citizens feel that the countries are moving away from the EU core value paradigm because of their particular interests. It is felt as imperative to stop this polarisation.

The **main concerns heard in most of the discussions**: unequal treatment of Member States, including small countries such as Slovenia; citizens' feel that the EU institutions use double standards in the treatment of countries*, inter alia* in respect to the rule of law or measures to stabilise the economy (according to some opinions, heavier measures and restrictions were imposed on Slovenia than on some other members in a comparable situation); issues with leadership credibility; lack of solidarity among Member States; inefficiency in addressing the challenges, the EU's insufficient role as a global player and its dependence on the US; lack of influence on the part of national leaders in the EU; interests of multinational corporations put over the interests of its citizens; the EU seems not to know what it is or wants to be – a federation or a confederation.

One of the most frequent complaints was related to the attitude of the EU institutions regarding the implementation of the Arbitration Court's ruling on the border between Slovenia and Croatia, where more engagement had been expected, mostly on the part of the European Commission.

A crucial problem relating to the migration issues identified in the debates is the EU's inability to control and manage illegal migration flows. This raises the question of the concept of solidarity. The perception is that some countries refuse admission of migrants, which they perceive as an attempt at social engineering, with which they are not ready to experiment, while the opposite block is surprised at the lack of solidarity.

In addition, it was pointed out that one of the major problems was communication on migration. Xenophobia, hate speech and populism are intensifying, although in Slovenia this has not yet been detected to such an extent as in some other European countries. The simplified narrative focuses primarily on the security aspect and not on good practices and positive stories.

As to the process of improving the economic and monetary union**,** the remaining identified challenges include banks' exposure to the state, the inability to react to shocks and large accumulated debts. Another problem is the difference between the Eurozone economies. This gap should no longer be increased, otherwise the Eurozone will be fundamentally under threat, was heard. More work is needed on implementing structural reforms, tackling demographic challenges and preparing for the fourth industrial revolution, otherwise the EU will fail.

What do Slovenian citizens expect from the EU in the future, what should be taken into account in the strategic agenda to be adopted by EU leaders?
Presently, in the period of a more positive climate, it is the right time to ask ourselves what the EU's vital interests are. For a stable economic union, we would need a deeper monetary union and the latter depends on a banking and fiscal union. Moreover, these unions cannot be completed without a security union and a value union. A prerequisite for all of them is democratic legitimacy.

The EU seems to face certain existential issues, which in the long run may require its transformation, according to some views even a new constitutional and institutional structure. It is clear that at this point there is no great desire among Member States to tackle such changes; perhaps they even lack the courage and unity. Therefore, in the short term, it is important to focus on policies where consensus is possible, or where the main political players have enough political will to work together. In addition to strengthening institutions, European values and identity must be consolidated.

Citizens' trust depends on the integrity of the most prominent EU representatives. Elections should bring wise leaders.

Self-critical views could also be heard: that expectations of the EU are somewhat false, as if the EU will be doing everything for us. Lack of awareness about the possibilities to co-shape the EU and if we are not active, others will decide instead of us. The importance of the EU for peace should never be forgotten: in the past century, 80 million people died in wars in Europe.

Citizens suggested that, in the future, more resources need to be channelled into investment, in particular in education and science and the development of smart communities. More attention should also be paid to smaller towns as there are thousands of them in the EU, while funding for projects is often reserved for large cities.

Culture should be one of the priorities of the next multiannual financial framework. It is the soft power of the EU, important for preserving the diversity that forms the foundation of the European community.

More Europe: in some areas, including those presently under the competence of Member States, citizens would obviously want more systemic regulation at the EU level.
In discussions on all selected topics – security and defence, the role of the EU in peace-keeping, migration, economic and monetary union, social dimension, labour mobility, small towns, cultural heritage and tourism, education and civic education – it became evident that citizens really want more EU.

The reasoning was that in the domains where Member States retained their competences, large differences are possible between countries (e.g. social rights). Furthermore, a divided EU cannot be effective in addressing the greatest challenges of the changing global situation (economic crises, migration, war conflicts, natural disasters, etc.).

On the other hand, citizens would like to see that their country would have more influence within the EU framework.
Citizens have a feeling that they have no major impact on decision-making, the result of this being a low turnout at European elections. Participation in local elections is the highest, the turnout is lower at parliamentary elections and the lowest at the elections to the European Parliament.

A regular practice of active citizen participation is necessary for the democratisation of the EU.
The importance of grass-roots consultations was stressed. To talk and to listen, debates on European affairs should be held across the country, not only in larger cities. They should reach out to all the people. The media are often seen as not detecting and presenting important EU issues. Broadcasts on the functioning of the EU, values, etc. should be on TV more often.

On the other hand, it was heard in the debates that people were not interested in the EU because its functioning was very complex and not easy to understand. Moreover, its benefits are often taken for granted; citizens only become aware of them when they are losing them (as is the case with Brexit). They forget what is positive about the EU and blame Brussels for everything that goes wrong. One of the reasons for such attitude is that citizens feel their government representatives do not have sufficient influence in the EU. The priority must be to restore citizens' confidence in the EU. Efforts should be made to maintain dialogue with citizens and to increase their participation in shaping the future of the EU, also by increasing their participation in elections to the European Parliament.

Of utmost importance in this context is education about the EU, which needs to be improved in all Member States. An EU systemic approach will be necessary in this area, especially regarding the education of educators.

Greater unity of the EU requires the development of a European identity; in this context, the young generation is crucial.
Regarding the future of the EU and Slovenia's role, the citizens want Slovenia to be firmly anchored in the so-called European "core", while clearly protecting our national interests. We must continue to act proactively and pro-European – the EU is our economic and legal background, a guarantee of security and peace. In addition to our national identity, it is important to develop and strengthen our European identity. The young generations involved in Erasmus programmes have a real sense of the European community and first-hand daily experience of multiculturalism.

As the introduction of e-elections in some countries has shown positive effects for raising voter participation, a proposal was given to make better use of modern technology and to develop direct democracy.

COMMENT/EVALUATION

Democratisation and active citizenship are key for the future of the EU. However, active citizens need to be educated first, especially about the functioning of Member States within the European community. In an increasingly demanding global situation, it is necessary to strengthen the European identity, which will be a long-term basis for more unity in the EU action, both internally and globally.

Citizens' consultations should be a regular practice at all levels, local, national and EU. The good experience we gained in this project was cooperation with the municipalities in organising consultations. We intend to continue with this practice. Civil dialogue comes closest to citizens in local communities and it is important to discuss all decision-making levels that affect the life of an individual.

Ljubljana, 19 November 2018

Prepared by:

GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION OFFICE

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

SLOVAKIA

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Executive Summary

The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs recognises the need to include citizens and, particularly, young people in an open discussion about our relationship with the European Union and its future. Acknowledging the threat posed by disinformation and hostile narratives targeting *inter alia* our Membership in the European Union, we established in 2017 a mechanism of discussions with young people. This mechanism forms part of the National Convention on the European Union, a pre-accession instrument for discussions, position-forming and awareness raising of our public about the European Union. In 2018 this project was further elaborated with the #WEAREEU initiative.

The initiative kicked off with an inaugural discussion in Bratislava in February 2018 with participation of President Andrej Kiska, Speaker of the National Council Andrej Danko and Prime Minister Robert Fico. This was followed by discussions in six other Slovak cities:

1. Žilina in March
2. Zvolen in April
3. Martin in May
4. Banská Bystrica in October
5. Prešov in November
6. Lučenec in December

As part of the project, a public discussion with French President Emmanuel Macron took place during his visit in Bratislava in October.

The objective of the project is to take the discussion beyond Bratislava and provide citizens with the opportunity for a face-to-face contact with stakeholders and decision-makers. Additionally, our objective was to fill the information space with quality and constructive discussion to contain the spread of disinformation, fake EU stories and prophecies or hostile narratives towards the European Union.

To achieve this the #WEAREEU initiative was specifically designed in a whole-of-society approach, seeking to involve as many segments of our society as possible: young people, university and secondary school students, representatives of academia, politicians, diplomats, journalists, representatives of civil society and entrepreneurs. Discussion, on the one hand, provided a general outlook on the European Union, its values and future and, on the other, tackled with a different topic in each of the cities in order to cover all the important aspects of citizens´ lives.

Thus in Žilina we discussed transport, digitisation and the benefits of single digital market, while in Zvolen we talked about the need for a more effective protection of the environment and how best to face climate changes. In Martin – city with the great Faculty of Medicine, we debated the public health system and challenges in health on the EU level. Discussion then focused on human rights, European elections and the EU legislative process in Banská Bystrica, followed by the topic of social affairs, Erasmus and jobs creation at University of Prešov. Finally, the high-level discussion with President Macron in Bratislava enabled us to juxtapose our views on the future of the EU.

One of the most important results of the #WEAREEU project is that more than 2100 young people have actively participated, offering their thoughts and opinions on the European Union. There are three main conclusions so far. Firstly, students feel that their voice should be heard and taken into account. Secondly, the EU is perceived mostly as an economic (not a peace) project. Benefits, such as, Erasmus, the Euro, free trade, free movement of citizens and workers have been mentioned regularly. Finally, students agreed that despite its flaws, there is no better alternative for Slovakia than the Membership in the EU.

Moreover, along with face-to-face discussions, online communication activities formed an important part of the #WEAREEU events. Discussions held at the universities were streamed online enabling citizens from all over Slovakia to participate and engage in discussion via online application Sli.do – where we received in average more than 50 questions and comments per event. Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs created a specific Facebook page called “Foreign Policy Does Matter to Us” dedicated to communication with younger generation – for whom online media is the main source of information. Throughout the duration of the project, communication through Facebook supplemented live discussions with audiovisually appealing content under the hashtag #WEAREEU/#MYSMEEU to amplify the outreach.

FINLAND

REPORT ON CITIZENS' CONSULTATIONS ON EUROPE

FINLAND

This report gives an overview of citizens' consultations on Europe in Finland, including the calendar and methodology of the consultations, views and concerns expressed by the citizens, outcomes of the consultations as well as some complementary observations on the consultations.

Additional information on activities organized or supported by the Finnish Government is provided as an Annex to this report.

Calendar and methodology of the consultations

Finland has a long tradition of public debate and participation. The ongoing and lively civil dialogue on EU affairs is being conducted and encouraged by the Government, the Parliament, political parties, the European Commission Representation in Finland, the European Parliament's Office in Finland, local authorities, the business community, academia, labour market associations and other stakeholders as well as various non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The Government in office is committed to continuing, widening and deepening the public debate on EU affairs. In January 2018, the Cabinet Committee on EU Affairs outlined that ministers would take actively part in citizens' consultations.

The Government EU Affairs Department at the Prime Minister's Office is responsible for coordinating EU matters and ensuring the proper functioning of the national EU coordination system. The Prime Minister's Office coordinates also communication on EU affairs. Each ministry is responsible for communication and public consultations in their own sector.

The national EU coordination system ensures participation of stakeholders in preparing Finnish EU positions and initiatives already at the civil servant level. Moreover, the Parliament fully participates in the national preparation of EU matters. This has contributed to an active exchange of views on EU affairs and has increased the acceptability and ownership of national decisions on EU affairs.

A key actor in promoting public debate on EU affairs is the MFA's Europe Information. In addition to its own events and activities, Europe Information grants annually government funding for NGOs (370 000 euros in total in 2018). For 2018, the future of EU was one of the main themes in the call for proposals. Europe Information is also active in the social media (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook).

Altogether numerous EU discussion events and activities have been organized in 2018. They were conducted in accordance with the principles of transparency, political pluralism, fairness and openness.

Many of the events and activities outlined below were coordinated in an informal "EU communication network" which brings together EU communication experts from the Prime Minister's Office, the MFA's Europe Information, the Finnish Parliament, the European Commission Representation and the European Parliament's Office in Finland as well as the Finnish Institute of International Affairs.

Prime Minister's debate series

In February 2018, Prime Minister Sipilä launched a series of debates to listen to citizens' views on Finland's and EU's future. So far he has visited four cities: Oulu (sustainable and inclusive growth, research and innovation, digital literacy), Turku (future of work and technology, Europe's stability and security) Vaasa (future of work, platform economy, sustainable growth) and Kuopio (environmental change and sustainability of natural resources, life-long learning, demographic ageing and health).

In addition to the workshops organized at local universities (with the Prime Minister interviewing the workshop leaders at the end of the event), the tour has included EU discussion events with local authorities, entrepreneurs and civil society, such as "Prime Minister's open EU hearings". Themes raised include democracy, equality, peace and security, sustainable development and growth, protection of the environment, the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), brexit, Finland's role in the EU as well as the key role of NGOs in promoting public debate on EU issues.

On 31 August 2018, the Prime Minister participated in the Europe Forum Turku.[9] His speech and the following discussion focused on the future of EU and the forthcoming Finnish EU Presidency (fall 2019). Themes raised included common values, climate policy, migration, defence cooperation, the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), free trade, single market and research and innovation policy. The event was live streamed on Yle Areena (online service of Finland's national broadcasting company).

Participation of ministers

Ministers have actively participated in discussion events within their own sectors. Examples include Question Time of the Minister for European Affairs at the Europe Forum Turku; Citizens' Dialogue on EU Trade Policy with Commissioner Malmström and the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development; Civil Dialogues on Energy and Climate Policy and EU Plastics Strategy with the Minister of the Environment, Energy and Housing; Seminar on the Future of Common Agricultural Policy with the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry; Citizens' Dialogue on the New Deal for Consumers with the Minister of Justice and Minister of Employment; Discussion Event on Worker Mobility and the Future of Work with the Minister of Employment; Citizens' Dialogue on the European Education Area 2025 with the European Commission Vice-President Katainen and the Minister for Education; Seminar on Topical Fundamental Rights Issues in the EU with the Director of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency Michael O'Flaherty and the Minister of Justice; as well as participation of the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Family Affairs and Social Services in the debates at the Europe Forum Turku.

Events and activities organized or supported by the MFA's Europe Information

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Europe Information) started a discussion series on "Finland and the future of EU" in autumn 2017. The tour continued in 2018 across the country, including discussion events in Kuopio (EU and globalization), Hämeenlinna (Multiannual Financial Framework), Marienhamn (security policy, sustainable development), Helsinki (worker mobility and the future of work) and Turku (EU's role in the world).

The NGO activities supported by the MFA's Europe Information in 2018 have included a series of discussions on the Future of EU organized by the European Movement Finland (Eurooppalainen Suomi) and the Young European Federalists (JEF) Finland (Eurooppanuoret). The discussions have taken place across Finland, including the Helsinki region, Turku, Tampere, Hämeenlinna, Pori, Oulu, Rovaniemi, Vaasa, Seinäjoki and Jyväskylä. The tour has included one bigger

9 For more information on the Europe Forum Turku, please see "discussion events organized by local authorities".

discussion event in each city as well as smaller discussion events and visits to local vocational schools, high schools and universities.

Citizens' engagement via online platforms

At national level, various tools, including online platforms, have been developed to strengthen the means for citizens' participation and consultation. So far, these platforms have only rarely been used for consultations related to EU affairs. A recent exception was the online survey on ending the seasonal time changes. The survey was conducted on Otakantaa.fi service from 26 September to 12 October 2018. The service is part of the electronic democracy services maintained by the Ministry of Justice.

Finland has lobbied ending the seasonal time changes after more than 70 000 Finns signed a petition to this end. A Commission's proposal is currently under consideration within the Council. The aim of the online survey was to collect views and opinions on whether Finland should adopt wintertime or summertime on a permanent basis. The survey turned out to be extremely popular. In total, it attracted 677 000 responses and 359 000 open answers. However, a considerable number of automated responses was subsequently eliminated from the results. Of the respondents, 52 % favoured wintertime and 48 % summer time.

To complement the results of the online survey a Gallup poll was also carried out. It produced highly similar results: Nearly 87 % was in favour of ending the seasonal time changes and permanent wintertime was slightly more popular than permanent summertime.

The results of the online survey and the Gallup poll will be taken into consideration when preparing Finland's position on the Commission's proposal.

Contribution of the Advisory Board on Civil Society Policy

The Advisory Board on Civil Society Policy (KANE) functions under the Ministry of Justice. Its main purpose is to strengthen cooperation between the authorities and the civil society. The Government appoints the advisory board for a four-year term. The members consist of representatives of the civil society, academia, ministries and local authorities.

KANE exchanged views on the citizens' consultations in September-October 2018 and provided a written contribution at the end of October. It emphasized the need to strengthen the dialogue with NGOs at EU level, defend a free civil society, promote implementation and monitoring of fundamental rights in the EU, continue the debate on the development of the EU together with the civil society, promote the principles of open government and interaction with the civil society both at national and EU level, improve awareness and knowledge on the state and future of the civil society in Europe through means of research and pay attention to ensuring long-term and predictable funding for the civil society, including through EU financing instruments.

Activities of the Finnish Parliament

The Parliament's EU committee ("Grand Committee") organized two public hearings on the future of EU and the forthcoming Finnish EU Presidency. The hearing in Tampere in June 2018 focused on the role of cities in strengthening the EU's social dimension, globalization and development of the EMU. The hearing at the Europe Forum Turku in August 2018 concentrated on EU's trade and development policies. In addition, the Grand Committee organized in October 2018 an NGO hearing focusing on the forthcoming Finnish EU Presidency.

Events organized by the Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA)[10]

The French Minister for European Affairs, Nathalie Loiseau participated as a keynote speaker in a FIIA seminar on "Refounding the European Union: Next Steps Ahead" on 15 June 2018.

After the June 2018 European Council, FIIA organised a discussion event focusing on the results of the meeting. Thematics discussed included development of the EMU and migration.

Discussion events organized by local authorities

Local authorities, universities and businesses have also taken the initiative. The best example is the so-called Europe Forum Turku, which was organized from 30 August to 1 September 2018 by local authorities, universities and other key actors in Turku.[11]

Europe Forum Turku brought together people from different backgrounds: government ministers, MPs and MEPs from both governing parties and opposition, Finnish officials from government and the EU institutions, local authorities, the business community, academia, labour market organizations, NGOs[12] as well as ordinary citizens. Seminars, panel discussions, question times and civil dialogues provided a base for constructive dialogue on current and future EU affairs.

All activities took place in the Turku city centre. The venues included a theater, a hotel, a library and a brewery restaurant school. Part of the discussions as well a Citizens' Market were organized in a shopping centre. The aim was to make the event as easily accessible as possible. People were encouraged to participate in the debates. Those not present could follow the debates online and participate in discussions via social media or a free mobile application.

Participators included the Prime Minister, Minister for European Affairs, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development, Minister of Finance, Minister of Family Affairs and Social Services, Vice President of the European Commission, Vice-President of the European Investment Bank (EIB), Governor of the Bank of Finland, Finland's Permanent Representative to the EU, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, CEO of Finland Chamber of Commerce and Chairs of the Finnish Labour Market Organisations**.** Key actors from all parliamentary parties joined the debates, as well as almost all Finnish MEPs.

Altogether almost a hundred key actors and experts participated in the debates. Around 2000 other participants followed and joined the discussions. In addition, the programme at the Citizens' Market attracted thousands of citizens.

Themes disussed included the EU's common values, the Single Market and EU's trade policy, artificial intelligence and the future of work, development of the EMU, Commission's Country Specific Recommendations for Finland, migration and asylum policy, food security in Europe, development of European City Policy, European Educational Area, Finland's EU Presidency, the EU's global role (including security and defence policy and EU-Africa partnership), brexit, the

[10] Events organised by FIIA were by invitation only. However, the invitations were widely distributed via FIIA mailing lists, which include a large number of representatives of various interest groups and NGOs as well as individual citizens.

[11] The Europe Forum Turkun was organized by the City of Turku, the University of Turku, the Turku University Foundation, the Åbo Akademi University, Stiftelsen för Åbo Akademi, Regional Council of Southwest Finland, Turku Science Park, Turku Chamber of Commerce, Finnish Schuman Society and Ajatuspaja Toivo, a local think tank. The Finnish Parliament, the Prime Minister's Office, the MFA's Europe Information, the Ministery of the Interior, the European Commission Representation and the European Parliament's Office in Finland, the Bank of Finland, the Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK), the Finnish Labour Market Organisations (SAK, STTK and Akava), the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners (MTK) and European Movement Finland participated in the preparations and organized discussions during the event.

[12] NGOs represented in the Europe Forum Turku included European Movement Finland (Eurooppalainen Suomi ry), JEF Finland (Eurooppanuoret ry), Finnish Schuman Society (a co-organiser of the Europe Forum), European Youth Parliament Finland - EYP Finland ry, Centrum Balticum foundation, Finnish Red Cross and Finnish Neuromuscular Disorders Association.

future of EU finances, expectations of young people for Europe, opportunities for NGOs within the EU, the state of civil society in Europe and citizens' role in EU decision-making.

Views and concerns expressed by the citizens

The views and concerns expressed by the citizens reflected to a large extend the results of the latest Eurobarometer surveys by the European Commission and the European Parliament.

According to the European Commission's Spring 2018 Eurobarometer, the respondents in Finland saw as the most important issues facing the EU now immigration (40 %), terrorism (32 %), climate change (25 %) and the state of Member States' public finances (22 %).

Regarding the future of the EU, respondents in Finland thought the EU's main assets are the EU's respect for democracy, human rights and the rule of law (41 %), the good relationship between the EU's Member States (32 %) and the economic, industrial and trading power of the EU (31 %). Terrorism and security issues (40 %), unemployment (38 %), the ageing of the EU's population (33 %); social inequalities (31 %) and the public debt of EU Member States (30 %) were seen among the EU's main challenges.

At least seven out of ten respondents in Finland thought that there should be more European level decision-making about fighting terrorism (84 %), promoting democracy and peace (76 %) and protecting the environment (72 %). Health and social security were seen as the most important issue facing Finland at the national level. However, 63 % of the Finnish respondents thought that there should be less European level decision-making in this area.

Of the Finnish respondents, 83 % had a positive or neutral image of the EU. Moreover, 79 % said that they feel themselves as "a citizen of the EU". The Finnish respondents favored especially the free movement of EU citizens (86 %), the EMU with one single currency (76 %), the EU's common trade policy (68 %) and the Common Defence and Security Policy (65 %). The free movement of people, goods and services (65 %), peace among the Member States (63 %) and the euro (45 %) were seen as the most positive results of the EU.

In the European Parliament's Eurobarometer Survey of September 2018, 65 % of the Finnish respondents thought that Finland's EU membership is a good thing. This is the highest figure since 2007. Moreover, 64 % of the respondents thought that their voice counts in the EU. Combatting climate change and protecting the environment (62 %), promoting human rights and democracy (49 %), security and defence policy (48 %), fight against terrorism (48 %), immigration (45 %) and combating youth unemployment (45 %) were seen as issues that should be discussed as a matter of priority in the run-up to the European Parliament elections.

According to the survey commissioned by JEF Finland in spring 2018, the attitude of the Finnish youth towards the EU is even more positive. As many as 81 % of the respondents (1009 people aged 18–29) thought that the EU membership was beneficial for Finland. Nearly 90 % said that they identified also as an EU citizen and agreed with the statements "the EU promotes peace" and "the EU promotes welfare and equality". The respondents thought that EU cooperation should be enhanced especially in combating climate change (76 %).

Outcomes of the citizens' consultations

Taken into account the large diversity of the events and activities, their themes and the level and intensity of participation, it is difficult to draw any far-fetching conclusions of the exercise as a whole. Many of the events brought together people from different backgrounds, so it is natural that a variety of views were expressed. The outcomes listed below thus mainly focus on views and ideas raised with regard to citizens' participation and consultation.

- A common understanding existed on the need to better engage citizens and the civil society in the debate on Europe and its future. During the consultations, many participants emphasized that more needs to be done in this regard at both national and EU level.
- It was noted that while the Commission has invested in new tools to engage with citizens and stakeholders and inform them about its work, these tools, including the "contribute to law-making website", are not widely known in Finland. Creating a link between the Commission's website and the national online platform where citizens and interest groups can be invited to discuss ongoing projects (otakantaa.fi) was seen a way to improve the situation.
- Many of the participants welcomed the increased attention to the role of citizens and the civil society. At the same time, many expressed concerns about the state of the civil society and the rule of law in Europe. In this context, the need to ensure the implementation and monitoring of fundamental rights in Europe was underlined. As a concrete idea, it was suggested that the European Commission could conduct a Special Eurobarometer focusing on the state of civil society in the Member States. The need to improve awareness and knowledge on issues related to the civil society was emphasized. The need for the EU to promote the development and functioning of the civil society in Europe, including through long-term and predictable funding support, was stressed.
- The general attitude towards the EU membership and cooperation was to a large extend positive. However, many of the participants stressed the need for the EU to do more in addressing challenges such as migration, climate change, terrorism and hybrid threats. Some were concerned of the slow progress in completing the Single Market, others of the growing financial contributions after brexit.
- Frequent theme in the Finnish citizen discussions was also the respect for common rules, for example in matters related to migration, the EMU or the EU common values. Many saw this as a crucial issue for safeguarding the EU unity.
- In addition, the need to better communicate on EU affairs, and in particular matters related to citizens' consultation and participation, was raised.
- In general, "the future of EU" was perceived as quite a challenging and wide topic from the viewpoint of ordinary citizens. Some participants stressed that the focus should be more on encouraging action and debate on EU issues at the grassroots level. Local discussion events focusing on concrete subjects that affect citizens' everyday life were seen as important. Many stressed that local NGOs have an important role in promoting EU debate at the grassroots level.
- Finally, the forthcoming European Parliament elections and the Finnish EU Presidency were seen as opportunities to better inform and engage the citizens in the development of the EU. The Government has already decided to increase funding for NGO activities aimed at promoting EU debate in 2019. The next call for proposals will emphasise the communicational dimension of the projects, i.e. how well and to what extent the projects reach the citizens.

Complementary observations on the citizens' consultations.

In addition to the citizens' consultations at national level and the online survey of the European Commission, the joint framework also envisaged that the Commission would conduct a special Eurobarometer survey in autumn 2018. The results of the Eurobarometer will provide a useful input for the EU Leaders' consideration and discussion. They will help to get a clearer and more complete view on citizens' expectations and concerns across Europe.

The views and concerns expressed by European citizens should be heard and considered carefully in the future, including when preparing the Strategic Agenda for 2019-2024. It is crucial that the EU acts and makes decisions close to the citizens, transparently and according to the principles of good governance. Citizens and the civil society should be better engaged in the debate on Europe at both national and EU level.

SWEDEN

Government Offices of Sweden

19 November 2018

Prime Minister's Office

Report on Swedish efforts related to the initiative on citizens' consultations

Background

In early 2016, the inquiry report "The EU in Sweden" (Swedish Government Official Reports 2016:10) showed that individuals and organisations have poorer prospects of accessing and influencing political issues decided at the EU level compared to issues not connected to the EU. Furthermore, it showed that there is a widespread lack of knowledge in Sweden about the relationship between the national democratic system and the EU. As a response, the Swedish Government launched several initiatives to strengthen participation, knowledge and engagement in EU affairs.

Efforts

The Government's long-term goal is that citizens' ability to access and participate in decisions at the EU level should be as good as at the local, regional and national level. Efforts have therefore been widespread and aimed to meet the challenges pointed out in "The EU in Sweden".

Increased knowledge and better access to information

Strengthening knowledge about how the EU operates is an important part of the efforts to increase participation in issues decided at the EU level. The Government has thus initiated activities aimed at increasing knowledge about the EU among key actors.

EU courses are offered to teachers, whom can become EU school ambassadors, by the Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR) together with the Commission and European Parliament offices in Sweden. With increased means for this initiative, the number of EU school ambassadors educated each year can double. To increase participation among students, UHR also arranged a video contest, "the EU minute", in the spring of 2018. EU courses are offered to journalists by the Fojo Media Institute, and by the Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies (Sieps) to elected representatives and employees in municipalities and regions.

The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF) has also been tasked with increasing knowledge and participation in EU-related issues among youth and groups with limited resources.

To improve citizen's access to relevant information, the Government is working to improve EU-related information available on its official website and social media channels. Furthermore, Sieps has been tasked with making the results of its research more accessible.

Improved channels of influence

The Government is working to strengthen consultation procedures on issues decided at the EU level. To do this, a working method called EU thematic consultation forums has been introduced. By inviting civil society organisations and relevant actors to a dialogue, the Government can broaden and deepen the basis for its decision-making on a specific issue. The EU thematic consultation forums help provide structured feedback and increased transparency. So far, 20 forums have been held. Besides these, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven has also invited the social partners to EU consultations twice a year to discuss current EU issues. In February 2017 the Government decided to make EU thematic consultation forums a permanent part of the Government's methods to consult civil society and other relevant organisations on EU proposals.

Furthermore, the Government is conducting a dialogue with public authorities regarding their role in consultations and information on EU affairs. By improving National Government Agencies' EU-related information and encouraging structured dialogue with other stakeholders, agencies can help improve individual's and organised interests' possibilities to access and influence national experts as well as policies at the EU level.

Enhanced engagement

To engage a variety of actors in the work to strengthen EU participation and stimulate a debate about the EU, the Minister for EU Affairs and Trade Ann Linde has initiated so called 'EU handshakes'. In an EU handshake parties commit, on a voluntary basis, to do their part in strengthening EU knowledge and opportunities to influence decision-making. The commitments vary in ambition and focus depending on each actor's context and resources. However, an EU handshake always entails an increased level of ambition in the EU-related work of each actor.

In total 77 actors, representing thousands of people across the country, have entered an EU handshake. These include civil society organisations, social partners, universities, municipalities, regions, and other key actors at the local and regional level.

Most of the actors participating in the EU handshake have committed to increase knowledge about the EU inside and outside their own organisation. Many have committed to offer courses or seminars to elected representatives, employees or members. Several of the actors also work to increase participation in EU decisions and participate more actively in the formation of Swedish positions in EU negotiations. Additionally, more than half of the actors will work to increase voter turnout in the European Parliament elections in 2019.

On 8 May 2018, all actors that had entered an EU handshake were invited to an EU forum. At the forum, the actors were able to present their work, exchange experiences, discuss challenges as well as the future of Europe.

Inclusive debate on the future of Europe

The Government is working to stimulate a broad debate about EU related affairs among citizens and organised interests. One important part of this work is to encourage an inclusive debate on the future of Europe.

In 2017, the Government organised EU thematic consultation forums on all five reflection papers linked to the White Paper on the Future of Europe as well as a final forum in 2018. These forums have given civil society and other actors an opportunity to contribute with their views on the future development of the EU.

A Government assignment has been given to Sieps, to spread the discussion about the future of Europe. As a result, Sieps conducts a "tour" of discussion seminars to provide an overview of the challenges and possibilities the EU is facing. These seminars, which have been given to decision makers, representatives, and the public at the local and regional level, have so far been held in 15 places around Sweden, and will continue until the end of the year.

Main themes and concerns raised in discussions on the future of Europe

Overall, Swedes are positive about the EU being the main forum to deal with the challenges that Europe is facing. This has been clear in EU thematic consultation forums. Some have been concerned about increased protectionism in the world and the risks this might bring. There have also been mixed views on deepening the eurozone and to what degree social issues should be on the EU agenda.

Sieps has in its discussion tour so far found a large interest for the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), Brexit, regional policies, the rule of law and solidarity between Member States.

The Parlemeter[13] from October 2018, showed that 77% of Swedish respondents answered that Sweden's membership in the EU generally is a good thing, which is an increase from 68% in April. In addition, 90% of Swedish respondents answered that they think their voice counts in the EU. This is also an increase, from 80% in April. Sweden thus had the largest improvement in favourability towards the EU among all Member States.

Migration

A prominent theme is migration, which has been highlighted by participants in EU thematic consultation forums as an important issue for the EU member states to tackle together. Sieps has found that citizens' discussions about migration often are coupled with concerns about solidarity between Member States. The March 2018 Eurobarometer (Public Opinion in the European Union)[14] also shows that Swedes consider migration to be the biggest challenge facing the EU at the moment.

Climate change and the environment

In several EU thematic consultation forums, with varying themes, participants brought up climate change and/or the environment. Participants have thought that the sustainability goals for the new common agricultural policy (CAP) proposal are important, and others that a larger part of the next MFF should be dedicated to climate actions. At the final EU thematic consultation forum on the future of Europe, environment and climate were brought up as the most important issues for the EU, together with security, migration, equality, trade and the four freedoms.

Swedish citizens' concern for the climate and environment can also be seen in the March 2018 Eurobarometer (Public Opinion in the European Union), where Swedes were the most worried of all Member States' citizens. Climate change was also seen as the second biggest challenge facing the EU.

Subsidiarity and what the EU should do

Another reoccurring theme in EU thematic consultation forums are subsidiarity and what tasks the EU should carry out. Participants have been positive regarding increased subsidiarity and self-determination for Member States within the CAP. Subsidiarity was also raised by several participants in the final consultation forum on the future of Europe. Here, as well as in consultation forums regarding future EU finances and the MFF, the importance of the EU focusing on things creating added value was highlighted. Some areas where participants thought the EU should take charge were trade, the internal market, competition and growth.

[13] http://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/be-heard/eurobarometer/parlemeter-2018-taking-up-the-challenge

[14] https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/STANDARD/surveyKy/2180

The functioning of the EU

In Sieps' discussion seminars about the future of Europe, concerns and dissatisfaction about solidarity and fairness between the Member States have been expressed related to migration, but also related to the rule of law. Participants have also brought up concerns about unity within the union related to these ongoing issues.

At the final EU thematic consultation forum on the future of Europe, several participants pointed out the importance of the Commission being the guardian of the treaties and that there must be high standards when it comes to Member States' compliance to common commitments and rules. Some also saw a risk with a Commission that is too politicized. Several participants stated the importance of a continued push for improvements in human rights, the rule of law, as well as democratic and sustainable development.