Citizens’ Dialogues

Have your say on the Future of Europe

#EUdialogues
#FutureOfEurope
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Engaging with Citizens

"It is important that local politicians talk more about the impact of different EU policies on regions.
Participant in a Citizens’ Dialogue in Linköping, Sweden"

"Cross-border dialogues and exchanges of opinion are crucial for people before the European Parliament elections, so they can better understand the democratic functioning of the EU.
Participant in a Citizens’ Dialogue in Pärnu, Estonia"

"What can we do together in order to get more people to vote in European elections?
Participant in a Citizens’ Dialogue in Frankfurt (Oder), Germany"
The EU must focus more on informing and explaining to people what it does every day.
Participant in a Citizens’ Dialogue in Larnaca, Cyprus

We should encourage dialogue with the older generation, who may have thought the EU to be the solution to all problems.
Participant in a Citizens’ Dialogue in Dublin, Ireland

The EU should speak to the younger generation in an understandable way, including with digital tools.
Participant in a Citizens’ Dialogue in Bratislava, Slovakia
Since he took office in 2014, the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, has worked hard to make the EU more democratic. **The EU has made it a priority to engage with Europeans and discuss the issues that matter to them.**

President Juncker asked his team of European Commissioners ‘to be politically active in the Member States and in dialogue with citizens’. This engagement has now become a **widespread movement to listen to citizens and share their views with decision-makers all over Europe.** Commissioners and other EU staff have travelled far and wide across Europe to talk with people, who have expressed their opinions on a range of issues. From asking the EU to tackle unemployment, to fighting climate change, no issue is out of bounds.

It is not just the Commission that takes part in Citizens’ Dialogues, other EU institutions have joined in too. The European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions are now all engaging directly with Europeans.

Hundreds of thousands of people have participated in almost 1,000 Citizens’ Dialogues in town halls, local councils, schools, universities, trade fairs and many other locations across 27 Member States of the EU.
HAVING YOUR SAY

In March 2017, the Commission launched a public debate about the future of Europe by setting out the main challenges and opportunities for the coming decade in a document called the White Paper on the Future of Europe. Politicians at European, national, regional and local levels all share a responsibility to encourage an honest debate about Europe and its future. Europeans must be aware of the impact of EU policies on their day-to-day lives, and be able to tell EU representatives what they think about it. Therefore, the Commission invited European Leaders to engage more consistently with the public in every Member State.

A QUESTIONNAIRE BY CITIZENS FOR CITIZENS

Following initiatives by French President Macron and other Leaders, Member States agreed in April 2018 on a Joint Framework on Citizens’ Consultations. On 5-6 May 2018, the European Commission, in partnership with the European Economic and Social Committee, gathered a panel of 96 people. They discussed the Future of Europe and prepared a questionnaire to consult citizens online. The online questionnaire, open to all EU citizens, was published on the Europa website in all EU languages on 9 May. More than 40,000 contributions have already been posted.
The results from the first 40,000 respondents show that the key concerns of Europeans are:

- social equality and fairness
- environmental issues, particularly renewable energy production and consumption
- migration and security

Have your say online:
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/future-europe_en

MOST FREQUENTLY RAISED TOPICS
The last 12 months have seen the debate on the Future of Europe intensify across the EU. Europeans were keen to engage in discussions and did not shy away from telling European decision-makers what they would like. Live-streamed dialogues and Facebook live dialogues took the discussions into people’s homes and social media allowed a wide range of people to get involved.

Young Europeans in particular frequently welcomed the opportunity to be more closely involved in shaping the future of Europe and expressed their views and ideas on a wide variety of topics.

The quotes in this booklet come from participants in Citizens’ Dialogues all over the European Union. They demonstrate the variety of subjects discussed, which mirror the priorities of the Juncker Commission.
Jobs, Growth and Investment

Jobs and incomes remain a major concern for many people across the EU. They called for the EU to step up the fight against youth unemployment. Citizens also wanted the EU to address the challenges posed by new technologies, to help entrepreneurs and start-ups to find venture capital and to do more to help small and medium-sized businesses.

The Juncker Plan is converting investments into jobs and growth

- €335 billion as of July 2018
- €315 billion target by mid 2018
- €500 billion target by 2020

- 700,000 small and medium-sized companies have benefited from improved access to finance
- 750,000 jobs supported
- 1.4 million jobs by 2020

- Increased EU GDP by 0.6%
- Increase EU GDP by 1.3% by 2020

11 million jobs have been created in the EU since the start of the Juncker Commission.
The EU must tackle unemployment and especially the brain drain, so that young people have opportunities in Europe.  
(Athens, Greece)

What is the EU doing to address the threat to jobs posed by artificial intelligence?  
(Berlin, Germany)

Culture plays an important role in society. How could the EU help create more jobs in the creative and cultural sectors?  
(Bilbao, Spain)

The EU should ensure that entrepreneurs and start-ups in all countries and regions have access to the venture capital they need to bring their ideas to market.  
(Varna, Bulgaria)
Social Rights

Calls for stronger social rights echoed across the EU. Participants in Citizens’ Dialogues expected decision-makers to tackle the impact of globalisation and digitalisation by promoting good working conditions in an inclusive labour market, while taking care of the more vulnerable people in society.

In many Citizens’ Dialogues Europeans called for the EU to step up its efforts to close the gap between men’s and women’s pay, provide support for working parents and address the challenges of our ageing society.

Commission initiative on Work-Life Balance

- 10 days paternity leave(*)
- 4 months parental leave(*) non-transferable between parents
- 5 days carers’ leave(*) per year
- flexible working arrangements for all working parents and carers

(*) at least compensated at sick pay level
The EU needs a strong political will to tackle the differences in earnings between women and men.
(Nicosia, Cyprus)

What will the new European Pillar of Social Rights look like?
(St Vith, Belgium)

The European Social Fund provides opportunities for young people who dropped out of school. The EU should ensure that funds will also be available after 2020.
(Florence, Italy)

We need to show people the real benefits of the EU.
(Tallinn, Estonia)
Single Market

In discussions on the Single Market, participants urged the EU to continue removing obstacles, such as red tape, that prevent the Single Market from fully working. People also asked for an EU-wide, more transparent system of taxation that would make it easier for businesses of all sizes to sell goods and services across borders.
We can help keep innovators and start-ups in Europe and not lose them to Silicon Valley by creating a bigger market for them and by reducing bureaucracy.
(Copenhagen, Denmark)

We need EU financial instruments that young entrepreneurs can use to grow their businesses.
(Opole, Poland)

What kinds of jobs will be needed in the future?
(Zagreb, Croatia)

A stronger Single Market means more new jobs and more new technologies that cross borders.
(Valletta, Malta)

Delivering on the Single Market Strategy

- New Regulation to end unjustified geoblocking
- Regulation making parcel delivery more affordable in Europe
- Regulation to increase controls to keep unsafe products off the shelves
- Regulation to make it easier to sell a product in another Member State

- Regulation to improve consumer protection online
- Tax simplification measures, including a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base and a new EU VAT system
- Guidance on how existing EU law applies to the collaborative economy
Citizens were keen to discuss new trade opportunities in the light of today’s global challenges. They wanted to know how trade will contribute to prosperity and help create new jobs in their regions, and insisted that the EU should maintain its high standards for consumer protection, social rights and environmental rules.

Our economy depends on trade

- every €1 billion in exports supports 14,000 extra jobs in Europe

EU–Canada Agreement

- 865,000 jobs in the EU tied to exports to Canada
- €590 million in savings each year for EU businesses

EU–Japan Agreement

- 600,000 jobs in the EU tied to exports to Japan
- €1 billion a year to be saved on customs duties
Trade policy should promote European values such as human rights and environmental protection.
(Helsinki, Finland)

What are the key opportunities and challenges under the new EU–Mexico trade deal?
(Valencia, Spain)

The EU should prevent tariffs being placed on EU products — and ensure that we avoid a trade war with the United States.
(Novo Mesto, Slovenia)

It is a two-way street. The EU has to fight unfair competition, while also avoiding protectionism.
(Sofia, Bulgaria)
Europeans called on decision-makers to create the conditions that will allow them to benefit from digital technologies, while protecting citizens from potentially adverse consequences. The phenomenon of online disinformation was frequently mentioned as one such danger. People called on the EU to take a strong stance against it and to help citizens to identify trustworthy news sources, and wanted a strong stance against manipulation of information. Many people were also concerned about protecting their personal information and privacy online.

The digital revolution requires the strengthening of citizens’ rights and protection of their personal data online. That is why the EU is equipped with the new General Data Protection Regulation to give people more control over their personal data. The rules are designed to make sure that personal data is protected, no matter where the data is sent, processed or stored.
Can digital tools bring young people closer to politics?  
(Lisbon, Portugal)

Digital is not just for the young. The EU needs to develop the digital skills of older people, too.  
(Budapest, Hungary)

What arguments could I use in social media and online to discuss with someone who does not like the EU?  
(Ostrava, Czech Republic)

The truth is becoming relative and meanwhile fake news drives politics. What is the EU’s role in stopping fake news from spreading?  
(Amsterdam, the Netherlands)
Energy and Climate Change

As one of the biggest global challenges, a growing number of Europeans want the EU to address their sustainability and environmental concerns. Citizens’ Dialogues organised around energy, climate and other sustainability or environmental issues triggered passionate debates across the EU, with people calling on European and national politicians to actively protect the environment, fight climate change and use cleaner energy from our own sources.

The EU has been at the forefront of international efforts towards a global climate deal. It was Europe that built the coalition of ambition that made agreement in Paris possible, and the Commission has already brought forward the legislative proposals to deliver on the EU’s commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the European Union by at least 40% by 2030.

Clean energy is already today’s growth

- Annual turnover of €144 billion in 2014 in the EU’s renewable energy sector
- €18 billion of fossil fuel imports avoided in 2014 thanks to the renewable energy sector
- 2 million Europeans employed in sectors related to renewable energy or energy efficiency
- EU companies have a share of 30% of all patents for renewable technologies
The concept of sustainability seems to be part of an ‘elitist’ discussion. We should include all parts of society in the discussion.

(Vienna, Austria)

What is the EU doing to boost investment in solar energy and other renewable sources of energy?

(Riga, Latvia)

When will the EU ban plastic bags and act to reduce the use of plastic in general?

(Plungė, Lithuania)

How should we tackle emissions from residential buildings? What are good examples and experiences from other Member States?

(Bratislava, Slovakia)
Migration

People all over the EU took the opportunity in Citizens’ Dialogues to express their views about migration. They called for more solidarity between Member States and expected the EU to step up its efforts to secure the EU’s external borders and to provide help for migrants to integrate into the labour market.

Increased border guards
To ensure the effective protection of the EU’s external borders and the management of returns, the Commission stands ready to frontload the increase of the European Border and Coast Guard’s standing corps to 10,000 by 2020.

European Border and Coast Guard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>EU Border Guards currently deployed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>&lt;300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reserve pool: 1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By 2020</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The EU must address the challenges to social integration that can arise from migration.

(Gothenburg, Sweden)

Migration also has a very positive impact on countries’ economies. This should be taken into account.

(Rennes, France)

What should the EU’s policy on migration be?

(Cork, Ireland)

Could the Dublin Regulation be reformed so that refugees could choose which Member State they want to go to?

(Luxembourg-Ville, Luxembourg)
Many people said that they are counting on the EU to ensure security and stability and respond to global challenges, especially those closest to Europe. People also said that the EU should continue to contribute to peace and prosperity in the world.

The EU is a force for peace around the world

- **6 ongoing military Missions/Operations**
- **10 ongoing civilian Missions**
- More than **4,000 people** currently deployed

**Objectives:** keeping the peace, preventing conflicts, strengthening international security, supporting the rule of law, prevention of human trafficking and piracy

- **European Defence Fund** launched to finance joint research and development
- **Permanent Structured Cooperation** launched for 25 Member States for greater cooperation in defence and security
- **Unprecedented EU–NATO cooperation** with **74 concrete actions** under way
What is the EU doing to protect its citizens in terms of security and defence?
(Kaunas, Lithuania)

The EU should not compete with NATO in the area of defence policy.
(Lublin, Poland)

Will the EU strengthen its education, culture and youth policies and use its soft power to counter Russian influence?
(Cluj, Romania)

In order to save money and use it more efficiently, we need to have common technical standards in the defence industry.
(Facebook live Dialogue)
More Issues Debated in 2018

Citizens’ Dialogues are organised across the territory of the EU, in order to reach even the most remote corners of the Union. There have also been transnational Citizens’ Dialogues, taking place in locations close to the borders between Member States. The range of topics discussed during the Citizens’ Dialogues is extremely broad, sparking lively debates from villages to capitals.

- Erasmus+ is a great thing. There is a need for a much more flexible education system
- The migration crisis is an EU-wide challenge

Eisenstadt, Austria
- Expanding eco-tourism
- Start-up opportunities for women

Luxembourg-Ville, Luxembourg
- Security of personal data online
- Ending the brain drain of highly talented digital specialists to the United States

Toulouse, France
- Need to avoid social dumping
- Citizens are passionate about politics

Guimarães, Portugal
- Sustainable Development Goals for water and energy
- Energy efficiency
Kaunas, Lithuania
- Smart environmental technologies
- Waste prevention and management

Białystok, Poland
- Local and regional agricultural challenges
- Investments in the regional economy are crucial

Matera, Italy
- Local opportunities offered by the green economy
- Environmental sustainability and fighting the pollution of rivers, lakes and ground water

Sofia, Bulgaria
- Tackling double standards in the food industry
- Fighting unfair competition while avoiding protectionism

Nicosia, Cyprus
- Need for more women in decision-making posts
- Strong political will needed to close the gap between men’s and women’s pay
The Juncker Commission

Jean-Claude Juncker
President of the European Commission

Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President of the European Commission

Andrus Ansip
Vice-President of the European Commission

Federica Mogherini
High Representative/Vice-President of the European Commission

Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President of the European Commission
Valdis Dombrovskis
Vice-President of the European Commission

Jyrki Katainen
Vice-President of the European Commission

Günther H. Oettinger
Budget and Human Resources

Johannes Hahn
European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations

Cecilia Malmström
Trade

Neven Mimica
International Cooperation and Development

Miguel Arias Cañete
Climate Action and Energy

Karmenu Vella
Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
HAVE YOUR SAY
You can attend Citizens’ Dialogues or participate in the online consultation on the Future of Europe.
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/future-europe_en