



*European Commission contribution
to the European Council*

**Citizens' Dialogues
and Citizens' Consultations**
Progress report

11 December 2018

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Europeans expect

Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission

Europe is above all a Union of citizens. They are the heart, soul and driving force of our project. And they must be at the heart of the Union of tomorrow, having their say and deciding on the future of their Union. Europe must become stronger and more united, but this is only possible if it becomes more democratic.

When I came into office I vowed to put people first. To make sure that every voice matters, that every opinion is heard. Debate and dialogue has been part of this Commission's work from day one. We launched a permanent dialogue with citizens, with my whole team of Commissioners and senior Commission staff covering every part of our Union to hear hopes, fears, expectations and new ideas.

The feedback to our Citizens' dialogues shows how keen Europeans are to not only speak their mind but also to be involved in decision-making and to have an impact on how our Union moves forward. Heeding this call, the Commission presented the White Paper on the Future of Europe on 1 March 2017. The different possible scenarios for our common future kicked off a wide-ranging debate on how Europe should evolve. Leaders backed this up in Rome on 25 March 2017 during our 60th anniversary celebrations by pledging to listen and respond to citizens. Since then, the Commission promoted stronger citizens' participation on the debate on the future of Europe, developing new forms of dialogues, making the debate more flexible and interactive, bringing it online and reaching out to a wider and more diverse audience

As of today, 160,000 citizens of all nationalities, ages, races, religions and from across the political spectrum have now taken part in over 1,200 town-hall style debates in city halls, universities, factories and other places all across our Union.



Jean-Claude Juncker



1. An open, honest and Europe-wide debate

1.1 A permanent Citizens' Dialogue



‘This White Paper should open an honest and wide-ranging debate with citizens on how Europe should evolve in the years to come.
Every voice should be heard.’

White Paper on the Future of Europe, 1 March 2017

Citizens in Cadiz: How the Commission's dialogues started

The European Year of Citizens in 2013 was the launchpad for the European Commission to kick-off its Citizens' Dialogues. It came at a critical juncture for our Union, marking 20 years of EU Citizenship and the run up to the European Parliament elections the following year.

That year, to look at the role, influence and expectations of Europeans, the Commission published an EU Citizenship Report. This highlighted some of the obstacles to citizens exercising their full rights. It also revealed the need to bring Europe closer to its citizens and involve them more.

In this spirit, the European Commission launched its first ever Citizens' Dialogue to debate and exchange with citizens, as well as national and local politicians. On 27 September 2012 in the Spanish port city of Cadiz, the then Vice-President Viviane Reding met with the local community to discuss all things Europe, with people online joining in to answer the question #QuéEuropaQueremos?



Europe's future is in the hands of all Europeans. It cannot be imposed by Leaders or institutions. While it is clear that different political choices could see our Union evolve in a number of different ways, there is at least one certainty: Europe must listen to its citizens and it must act accordingly.

This approach has been enshrined in the work of this European Commission since before it took office – from President Juncker's programme based on 10 political priorities to the mission letter sent to all Commissioners at the start of the mandate explicitly calling on them to 'be politically active in the Member States and in dialogues with citizens, by presenting and communicating our common agenda, listening to ideas and engaging with stakeholders'.

FROM THE WHITE PAPER ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE TO SIBIU

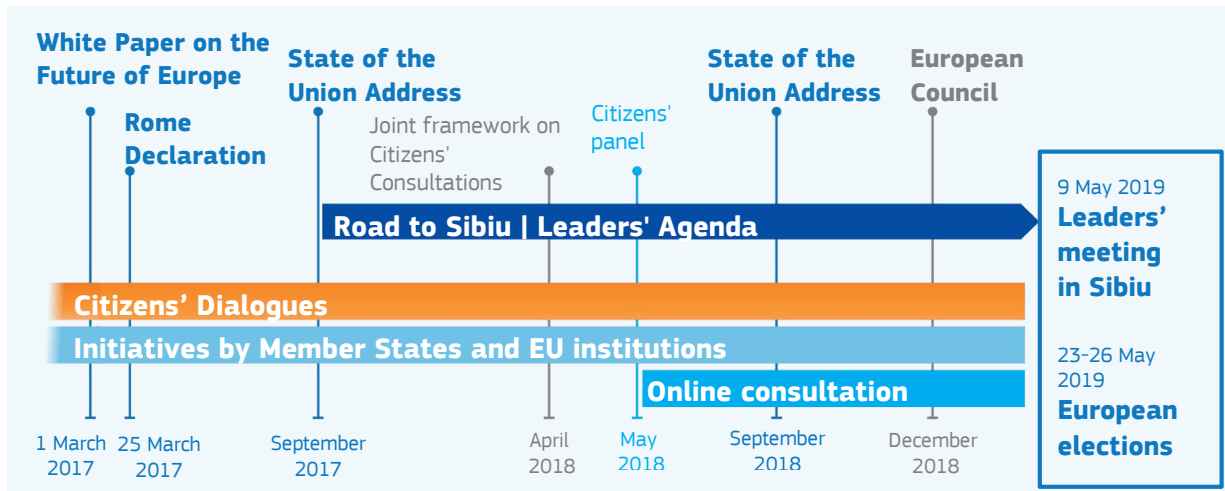
The European Commission has lived up to that promise. This is best encapsulated by the debate opened by the White Paper on the Future of Europe, presented by President Juncker on 1 March 2017. The White Paper presented five possible scenarios for the future of our Union of 27: Carrying On, Nothing but the Single Market, Those Who Want More do More, Doing Less More Efficiently, and Doing Much More Together. The scenarios were not prescriptive, exhaustive or mutually exclusive, allowing elements of each to be combined depending on the policy area in question. The scenarios were designed to feed a wide ranging debate on the future of our Union, allowing people to express their preferred option or their own vision. As President Juncker said, the White Paper laid out 'a new approach: debate, not dictate'. The debate served to focus the minds of European Leaders and institutions on the most important policies and priorities for our future.

On 25 March 2017, the Leaders of the European Union came together to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome, reflecting on past achievements and debating what our shared future could and should look like. They pledged to 'listen and respond to the concerns expressed by our citizens' and to engage with national parliaments. This was followed by the publication of a series of reflection papers on some of the most pressing and relevant themes for our future.



SCENARIOS					
					
WHAT DOES IT ENTAIL?	Carrying on	Nothing but the Single Market	Those who want more do more	Doing less more efficiently	Doing much more together
	EU27 implements and upgrades current reform agenda. Priorities are regularly updated, problems are tackled as they arise and new legislation rolled out accordingly	EU27 only deepens key aspects of the single market	EU27 allows willing Member States to do more together in specific policy areas. As a result, Member States agree to specific legal and budgetary arrangements to deepen their cooperation. Other Member States may join over time	Consensus on the need to better tackle certain priorities together makes EU27 focus attention and resources on delivering more and faster in selected policy areas, while in other areas it stops acting or does less	Member States share more power, resources and decision-making across all policy areas, the euro is strengthened, and decisions at EU level are rapidly enforced

At the same time, our future cannot remain a scenario or a set of ideas. It needs to be brought to life through political vision, choices and policies. This is why, during his 2017 State of the Union Address, President Juncker picked up on the debate, offering the first answers and proposals for our future and presenting his vision. Taking inspiration from the ideas of citizens he presented a Roadmap for a more united, stronger and democratic Union. He set out a number of steps to achieve it, culminating in a special Informal meeting of the Leaders of the European Union in Sibiu on 9 May 2019 to prepare the Strategic Agenda 2019-2024 offering a perspective for the future of the EU at 27.



‘We will jointly work to re-gain citizens’ trust in the European project.’

Jean-Claude Juncker, Political Guidelines, 2014

THE CITIZENS' DIALOGUES

Citizens' Dialogues are instrumental in bringing new voices and ideas into the debate on the future of Europe. These town-hall-type meetings, devised and organised by the European Commission, allow citizens from all backgrounds to debate, exchange and speak freely with those that serve them. Participants have included Commissioners, Members of the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee, as well as representatives of European, national, regional or local authorities.



The resounding message is that Europeans want to shape the future of their Union. They want to share their ideas and have their say on how to make Europe stronger. This momentum and appetite for debate is reflected in the figures.

The number of Citizens' Dialogues increased significantly following the White Paper on the Future of Europe, but we must keep up the momentum. This is why in February 2018 the European Commission announced its intention to reach a target of 1,000 Citizens' Dialogues. This has already been surpassed with well over 1,200 having now taken place, gathering around 160,000 participants. The impact can already be seen in the work of the Commission and other institutions. For instance, the Commission's proposals for a new long-term budget, and the subsequent discussions amongst the co-legislators, reflect the priorities and ambitions that citizens expressed during the White Paper debate.

For most of the Citizens' Dialogues, the European Commission shares the stage with a national, regional or local figure. In total, 102 Members of the European Parliament, 195 national politicians (including Presidents, Prime Ministers, Ministers and Members of national Parliaments) and 91 regional politicians have participated in such events. This reflects the joint commitment to Europe and the need to join forces when communicating about the benefits that Europe brings to everyone.



Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, Joseph Muscat, Prime Minister of Malta and Karmenu Vella, Commissioner in charge of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. Valletta, Malta, 29 March 2017



Margrethe Vestager, Commissioner in charge of Competition policy and Bruno Le Maire, French Economy and Finance Minister sharing the stage. Strasbourg, France, 23 October 2018

The European Commission is also developing new formats of Citizens' Dialogues, including multilingual cross-border events with citizens from two or three Member States and online Dialogues through Facebook live and other channels. New partnerships have been developed to make the most of these new debates, notably by co-hosting with Member States.



Cross-border German-Polish Citizens' Dialogue on 24 May 2018 in Frankfurt/Oder, Germany, with Frans Timmermans, First Vice-President of the European Commission, Elżbieta Polak, Marshal of the Voivodeship of Lubusz, and Stefan Ludwig, Minister of Justice, European Affairs and Consumer Protection of the State of Brandenburg



Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Vytenis Andriukaitis in Zagreb, Croatia, 17 May 2018. The impact of Citizens' Dialogues is amplified through Social Media.

CITIZENS' DIALOGUES ACROSS THE EU

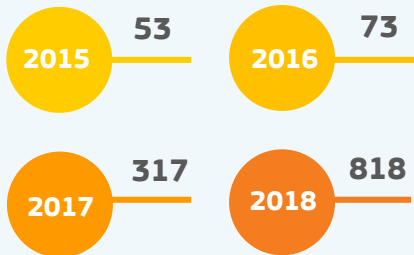


Citizens' Dialogues in numbers

(including 24 Facebook live
Citizens' Dialogues)



1,261 dialogues
in **405** towns

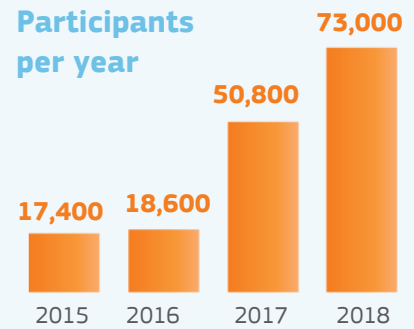


Total outreach since 2015



160,000
total participants

Participants per year



**more than
37.2 million**
social media
impressions



1.4 million
viewers
engaged via
web streaming



248 million
people in
potential media
outreach

Citizens' Dialogues since the beginning of the Juncker Commission



1.2 Into the heart of Europe



‘I also believe that, over the months to come, we should involve national Parliaments and civil society at national, regional and local level more in the work on the future of Europe.’

Jean-Claude Juncker, State of the Union Address 2017, 12 September 2017

The ultimate aim of the debate on the Future of Europe is to hear all views and ideas, from right across Europe – from East to West and from North to South. From those that know the vocabulary of Europe to the uninitiated. Every voice counts.

This is why the **European Commission** has focused on reaching out in different ways and partnering with all other institutions and Member States that want to take part.

The call has been answered by many. The **European Parliament** launched a series of high-profile debates on the future of Europe with Heads of State or Government.



President Juncker and President Macron encouraging the debate on the Future of Europe - © European Union



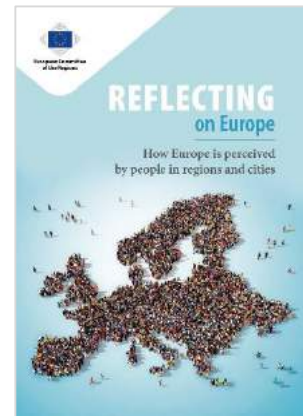
Taoiseach Leo Varadkar was the first national leader to debate on the future of Europe in the European Parliament © European Union

List of European Parliament high-profile debates



The **Committee of the Regions** took the debate to Europe's regions, cities and municipalities through the 'Reflecting on Europe' process. The Committee of the Regions and the **European Economic and Social Committee** have launched major initiatives to listen to citizens. Whether organised by the European Commission or other institutions, by national, regional and local authorities, or by civil society, these all have the same purpose and are fully complementary.

Several **European Leaders**, including President Macron, Chancellor Merkel, and many others, have taken new steps to strengthen the debate on the future of Europe.



Report by the European Committee of the Regions



*Chancellor Merkel is in favour of a permanent Citizens' Dialogue –
© Bundesregierung / Steins*



Chancellor Kurz. The Austrian Presidency of the European Council played a crucial role in coordinating efforts from the Member States – © BKA / Dragan Tatic

Following the Commission's approach which favours transparency, pluralism and openness, 27 Member States approved in March 2018 a Joint Framework on Citizens' Consultations. This was fully in line with the Commission's approach of transparency, pluralism and openness.

In order to support the process, the European Commission set up a unique initiative in participative democracy, with citizens themselves drafting questions for an online consultation on the Future of Europe. The Commission partnered with the European Economic and Social Committee to gather a **Citizens' Panel** of 96 people from all EU-27 Member States. They were selected by an independent polling agency to reflect the diversity of socio-demographic backgrounds and opinions towards the European Union. Over two days in May 2018 they discussed, debated, designed and approved the set of questions to put to Europeans.



The questionnaire designed by the Citizens' Panel was the basis for an **online consultation** that started on 9 May 2018 in all EU official languages.



**A pan-European
multilingual consultation**



**12 questions
(closed and open questions)**



**Supported by
social media activities**

More than 76,000 contributions have already been received. Most of these contain qualitative comments and ideas in addition to the 'closed' questions which focus on some of the key issues for our future.

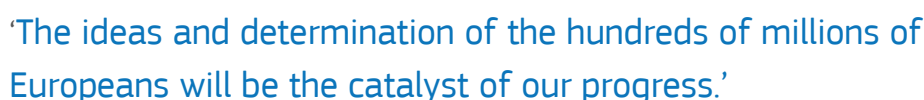
This was complemented by a Special Eurobarometer survey on the future of Europe conducted between 24 October and 7 November 2018 with a representative sample of 27,339 European Union citizens.

THE ONLINE CONSULTATION

		Number of contributions
France		22,869
Germany		10,021
Hungary		7,830
Spain		5,419
Poland		4,249
Belgium		4,187
Italy		4,089
Portugal		1,948
Romania		1,408
Netherlands		1,353
United Kingdom		1,347
Austria		1,149
Ireland		867
Greece		844
Slovakia		844
Czechia		718
Sweden		683
Bulgaria		672
Finland		421
Croatia		407
Luxembourg		319
Denmark		299
Slovenia		235
Cyprus		178
Malta		165
Lithuania		146
Latvia		109
Estonia		68
Non-EU countries		726
Not specified		2,572
Total		76,142
		(up to 7/12/2018)



2. High expectations



Despite the diversity of their formats and participants, the dialogues tend to converge around certain recurring topics.

On the whole, participants tend to perceive the European Union positively. They see Europe as the key to **solving problems**. There are also concerns and frustrations. The question of who should do what is often brought up. Citizens tend to think that key challenges can be tackled more efficiently by combined action at the European and national levels. They tend to be largely in favour of more harmonisation at the European level, for example for the environment and food safety. But most also expect and ask for **reforms to make the Union more efficient and more transparent**.

When asked ‘What decisions taken at the European level would make you prouder of belonging to the Union?’, many of the online participants mention **global challenges** such as external policy and defence, migration or the environment and climate change.

Economic and social issues are also commonly brought up. The need for a dynamic economy, focusing on digital, research and innovation, and a stable euro area is a prominent theme – as is the clear desire for a high level of fairness and protection.

Europe is also perceived as **a continent of values**, where the rule of law, the fight against corruption and non-discrimination must be protected.



'What decisions taken at European Union level would make you prouder of belonging to the Union?'
[Most frequent words from responses]

Some would like the European Union to focus on topics that are already at the heart of the European agenda, notably the ten political priorities of the Juncker Commission. Some are not aware of what is already being done in those areas and many would like Europe to be better communicated to them.

During the Citizens' Panel which gathered in May 2018, Brexit was not among the main issues that participants intended to discuss. Brexit is mentioned in Citizens' Dialogues, but often in terms of the impact it will have on the European budget and on the economy of other Member States.



2.1 A dynamic economy

The need to prioritise and incentive **research and innovation** is often brought up, along with how to improve access to **finance and investment**.

According a recent Eurobarometer survey conducted in November 2018, almost three quarters of the population of **the euro** area support the Economic and Monetary Union. However, while many participants in Citizens' Dialogues clearly see the benefits of the euro, they sometimes link it to price hikes or are worried about instability caused by rules not being followed.

Free movement within the European Union is very largely perceived as an asset for the economy and for citizens themselves, who can live, work, study and do business in another Member State.

The single market and international trade are largely seen as an opportunity for companies and consumers. Some participants would like to see more free-trade agreements, although a significant proportion fears unfair competition and the influence of international corporations.

The **digital economy is often mentioned**, with the European Union being expected to ensure the growth of the sector, to protect data privacy and to regulate the strong market position of giant players on the digital market.

“ 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.

Citizens' Dialogue in Varna, Bulgaria

We need EU financial instruments that young entrepreneurs can use to grow their businesses.

Citizens' Dialogue in Opole, Poland

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As Artificial Intelligence is getting more important, the EU should support this development.

Citizens' Dialogue in Strasbourg, France

Did you know that...

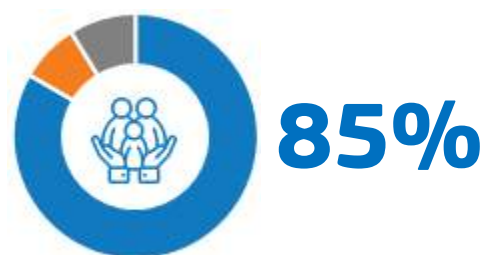
- ...the Juncker Plan, launched in November 2014, has triggered EUR 360 billion in additional investment across Europe, with 850,000 small- and medium-sized companies set to benefit from improved access to finance;
 -since the start of the Juncker Commission, more than 12 million jobs have been created in the European Union;
 - ...the Economic Partnership with Japan will save European Union companies close to EUR 1 billion in customs duties;
 - ...by 2020, more than 10 million Europeans will be employed in the EU data economy. The European Union is implementing a strategy in order to develop the digital economy and its positive impact on citizens' lives.
-



2.2 A Europe that protects

Citizens' Dialogues throughout Europe have sparked heated debates on social support. Participants often call for stronger **social rights** and raise questions about the gender pay gap, parental leave and other social issues.

No fewer than 85% of the Eurobarometer respondents consider that the **free-market economy** should go hand in hand with a high level of social protection.



consider that the free-market economy should go with a high level of social protection.

Eurobarometer, November 2018

Health is also a prominent feature. There are strong concerns about the future, with 72% of Eurobarometer respondents fearing that the lives of those who are children today will be more difficult than the lives of those from their own generation.

Consumer rights are an important part of this call for protection. Food safety and the quality of food products are regularly mentioned, often in the context of concerns about globalisation. Citizens expect trade agreements to respect high standards, including social and environmental ones.

But the need for a more protective Europe is primarily expressed in relation to **crime and security**. When asked what the European Union's priorities should be in making life safer for its citizens, Eurobarometer respondents chose '**Combating terrorism and radicalisation**' (66%), well ahead of a 'better control of external borders' (39%).

“ Equal pay for equal work across the European Union.
Online participant from Austria

How can trade policy enhance European values as environmental protection?
Citizens' Dialogue in Helsinki, Finland

”

“ The EU has forgotten about 'small (income) people'.
This is one of the reasons why populism has surged.
Citizens' Dialogue co-organised with the European Parliament in Bled, Slovenia

I think the EU should design policies that benefit the regions of the EU that most need to develop, and not policies that benefit the regions that are already rich.
Online participant from Bulgaria

”

“ Setting up the anti-corruption prosecutor at EU level.
Online participant from Sweden

Did you know that...

- ...the European Pillar of Social Rights was proclaimed in November 2017, opening the way to a more social Europe in the future;
 - ...in negotiating trade agreements with non-EU countries, the European Commission is protecting sensitive sectors and does not compromise on food safety standards. Values and principles are guiding the negotiations;
 - ...the European Union has one of the most advanced consumer-protection policies in the world. Passenger rights and the end of roaming charges are thanks to Europe;
 - ...the new rules for the posting of workers will ensure equal pay for equal work at the same place;
 - ...the creation of the European Labour Authority will facilitate the cooperation between national actors in the field of labour mobility and the fight against abuses;
 - ...the Schengen Information System contributed to almost 50,000 arrests and the tracking down of 200,000 criminals in 2017;
 - ...the General Data Protection Regulation, which entered into force in May 2018, makes Europe the most advanced region in the world in the protection of personal data, including in the digital field.
-



2.3 Addressing migration

Emotions run high when citizens across the continent discuss the **refugee crisis**, intra-EU migration, posted workers, border control and Schengen. During the Citizens' Panel in May 2018, there was no consensual view about the way to address these questions. Similarly, views expressed through the online consultation are clearly polarised, reflecting the diversity of views held by Europeans on migration and asylum issues. Some call for a more welcoming European Union, using words such as 'dignified reception' or 'decent migration policy'. Others call for action to stop the **loss of human lives** in the Mediterranean. Many also call for end to **irregular migration** or the return of migrants in irregular situations, whilst some would even like to see the return of all migrants irrespective of their status.

Migration in general, including the challenges faced by Mediterranean Member States in particular, remain topics of discussion in many Citizens' Dialogues across Europe. The **integration** of migrants and **cooperation** with non-EU countries, notably in Africa, are also discussed.

As part of the Eurobarometer on the Future of Europe, respondents were asked what the priorities should be in the field of migration in order to benefit Europeans in the coming 20 years. The most popular options were 'Improve the situation in the countries where migrants come from' (45%) and 'Fight illegal immigration' (44%).

“ We have a migration crisis. What do EU countries do? We all know that they do not agree. What is the solution?
Citizens' Dialogue in Copenhagen, Denmark

A concerted sea rescue operation in the Mediterranean Sea. Distribution of people looking for protection under asylum law by a fixed key to ALL Member States.
Online participant from Belgium

”

“

Stop irregular migration, return all irregular migrants to the country from which they crossed the EU.

Online participant from Slovakia

Block economic refugees from safe countries from ever setting foot in the EU mainland.

Online participant from the Netherlands

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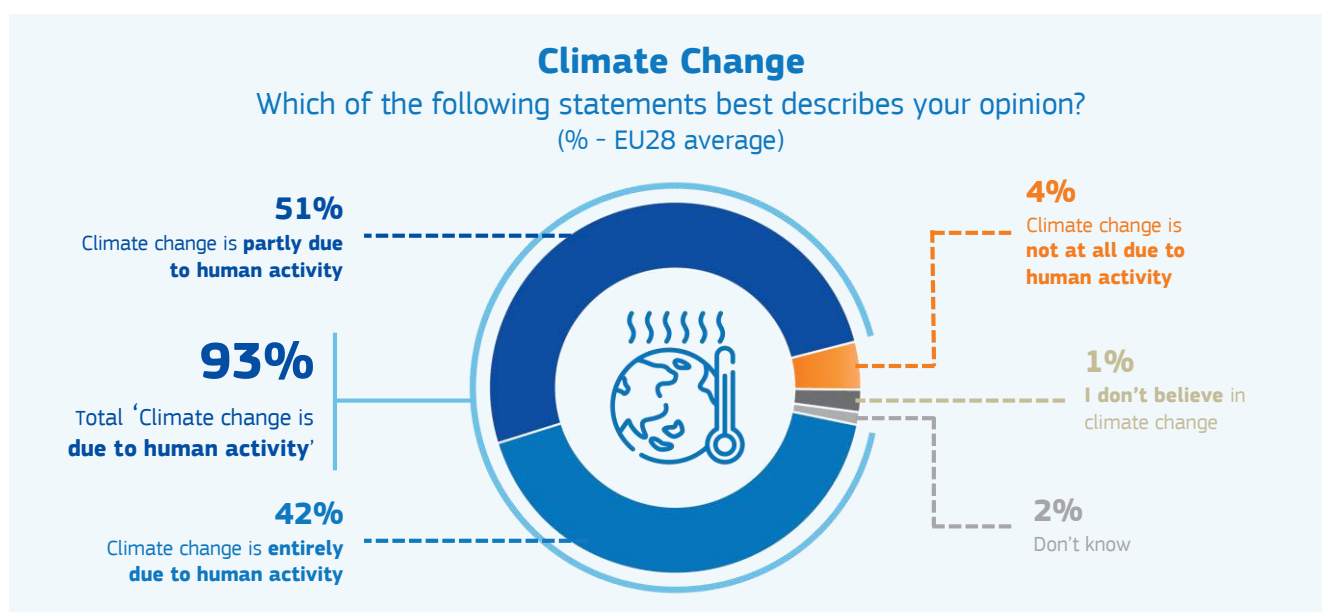
Did you know that...

- ...European Union operations have helped rescue over 690,000 people at sea since 2015;
 - ...arrivals of irregular migrants have been reduced: Along the Eastern Mediterranean Route, arrivals dropped by 97% after the European Union-Turkey Statement and today they remain 90% below their peak in 2015. Along the Central Mediterranean route, irregular flows have been reduced by 80%;
 - ...the European Commission is calling on the European Parliament and the Council to find agreements on the Commission proposals for an additional 10,000 Border and Coast Guards and a future-proof EU asylum system.
-



2.4 Fighting climate change, protecting the environment

Climate change is perceived as a key issue for many citizens. Participants in Citizens' Dialogues not only wanted to know more about the way the European Union is tackling this global challenge, but also about how they themselves could help. As a whole, Europeans have little or no doubt that climate change is at least partly due to **human activities**.



Eurobarometer, November 2018

The Paris Agreement and the plans to reduce **greenhouse gas emissions** are high on the citizens' agenda. Despite strong concerns related to the impact of climate change and pollution, hopeful comments were also made on the development of **renewable energy**, investment in the green economy and possible **innovation** to help preserve the environment.

During Citizens' Dialogues, many questions are raised on **waste** (especially **plastics**), biodiversity and animal welfare, including the impact of intensive farming, as well as animal cruelty and testing.

“

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

Citizens' Dialogue in Riga, Latvia

Will the EU invest in technology to clean the sea?

Citizens' Dialogue in Blankenberge, Belgium

”

“

Limit climate change, avoid plastic soup rivers.

Online participant from the Netherlands

Did you know that...

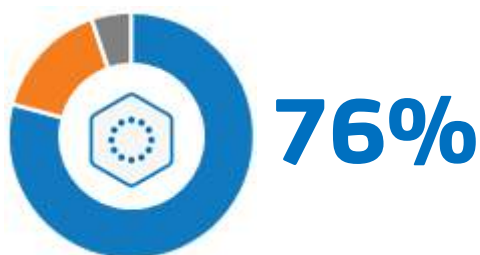
- Since 1990, greenhouse gas emissions in the European Union have been reduced by 22%;
 - The European Union is fully committed to the Paris Agreement on climate change. It has set binding objectives of at least 32% renewables in energy production and 32.5% of energy efficiency by 2030;
 - The European Commission called for action for Europe to become a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate-neutral economy by 2050;
 - The European Commission also presented the world's first comprehensive plastics strategy, as well as concrete proposals to replace single-use plastic products.
-



2.5 A stronger Europe in the world

Many citizens call for further coordination and consolidation of the European Union's external actions. They want to see both common **foreign policy** but also a common **defence policy**. While the role of the High Representative does not seem to be well known, a high number of contributors discuss the need for a common Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The European Union is often compared with the rest of the world and, generally speaking, participants praise the role of the Union on the international stage. For example, a majority of Eurobarometer respondents consider that **peace** is a value which is better represented by the European Union than by other countries in the world.



think that the European Union is a place of stability in a troubled world.

This represents a five point increase compared with 2017
and a ten point increase compared with 2016.

Eurobarometer, November 2018

Participants in the Dialogues often mention **other global powers** such as Russia, China and the United States. They clearly aspire for Europe to be an equally strong player in the global geopolitical arena. Several speak of the need for a '**common voice**', while others propose the 'unification' of foreign policies.

Some go further and call for an end to national veto powers in this area.

“ Standing up to other global powers such as Russia, China and the USA.
Online participant from Denmark

Speak with one voice on the international stage.
Online participant from Belgium

”

“ A common European army. Abolition of the veto by Member States on foreign policy and human rights. More assertive policies towards Russia and China.
Online participant from Czechia

Europe needs to be better represented on the international stage.
Online participant from France

”

In order to save money and use it more efficiently,
we need to have common technical standards in the defence industry.
Facebook Live Dialogue

Did you know that...

- ...the European Commission is proposing a EUR 13 billion European Defence Fund in the next long-term budget (2021-2027) in order to increase its strategic autonomy, in complementarity with NATO;
 - ...the European Union provides more than half of development cooperation in the world. Humanitarian assistance provided by the European Union reaches around 100 million people each year;
 - ...the European Commission has proposed a real partnership with Africa moving away from charity and towards investment and jobs.
-



2.6 A Europe of values

Europe is strongly associated with values. The European Union is largely perceived as a peace project and as an area of **freedom** where **fundamental rights** are respected. The European Union's respect for democracy, human rights and the rule of law is seen by Eurobarometer respondents as the greatest asset of the Union, slightly ahead of its economic, industrial and trading power.

The notion of **solidarity** is consistently very high on the agenda. **Gender equality and non-discrimination** are seen as major pillars of our society.

During many Citizens' Dialogues, participants expressed their concerns about the state of the **rule of law** in some Member States. People also called for Europe to continue the fight against **corruption** in Member States, which many link to the rule of law.

Many participants discussed the way that **European democracy** functions today. Only a small minority reject European integration as a concept. Participants sometimes perceive the European institutions as too **remote**, too **bureaucratic**, or too lenient with lobbies and large companies. While they want the European Union to take more action on major issues, they are also attached to the principle of **subsidiarity**.

In a context where many are worried about the political atmosphere in Europe and elsewhere, citizens expect European Leaders to develop a clear **vision** for the future of the continent. They ask for more **transparency** and would appreciate more information on the Union and its policies to help them better understand and **influence decisions**.

Some contributions call for action to be taken that would bring the European Union closer to its citizens through direct **experiences and symbols**. Ideas include cultural exchanges, learning other

languages and teaching about Europe at school. European symbols such as the flag and the anthem are also frequently mentioned.

A few months before the European elections, some participants are worried that **disinformation** and other forms of manipulation could undermine the democratic process.

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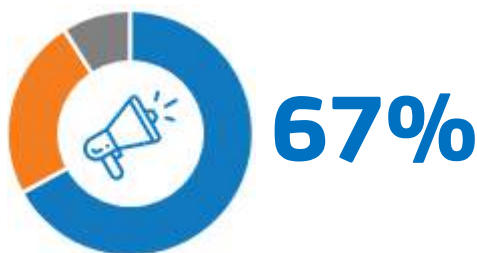
Equality of opportunity regardless of gender, colour, thought, religion or money.
Online participant from Romania

Scrutiny of lobbies and transparency in the workings of the European institutions.
Online participant from France

”

“

What does the European Union do to ensure that the big multinationals pay their taxes?
Citizens' Dialogue in Berlin, Germany



think that the rise of political parties protesting against the traditional political elites in various European countries is a matter of concern.

Eurobarometer, November 2018

“

Concerns about political radicalisation and the exponential increase in xenophobia and racism. Some movements are reminiscent of the Europe of the pre-war 1930s.
Online participant from Spain

How can you achieve a real diversity of information when social platforms use filters to adapt content to users?
Citizens' Dialogue in Budapest, Hungary

”

“

The Leaders must find a way to stimulate the interest of the European citizens to participate in political decisions that will later affect their lives.
Online consultation – Participant from Greece

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.
Citizens' Dialogue in Pärnu, Estonia

”

Did you know that...

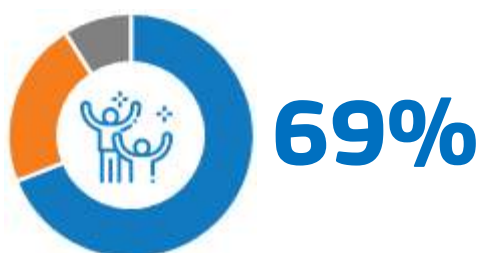
- ...the European Commission is taking action to make sure that big companies pay their fair share of tax where their profits are earned;
 - ...the European Commission applies strict rules for contacts with groups of interest. It has proposed an interinstitutional agreement in order to increase transparency;
 - ...while intensifying the Citizens' Dialogues, the European Commission has made proposals to reform the European Citizens' Initiative, so that citizens can more easily present political initiatives;
 -a series of concrete measures have been put forward to make sure that next year's European Parliament elections are organised in a free, fair and secure manner. This includes greater transparency in online political advertisements and possible sanctions for the illegal use of personal data.
-



2.7 A perspective for the younger generation

As a forward-looking project, the European Union is intrinsically linked to youth. Many contributors, from different age groups, try to imagine the future of the youngest generations.

Citizens link it with topics such as **mobility**, **education** and exchange programmes. **Erasmus** is consistently and explicitly mentioned as an example.



consider that the European Union project offers a future perspective for Europe's youth.

Eurobarometer, November 2018

In addition to suggestions for a common curricula or the recognition of diplomas, many see **schools** as a place where Europe should be taught and where the young generation can learn about our **common values**.

“ Investing more money in education and research.
Online participant from Sweden

The projects concerning youth, exchanges among students , pupils coming from European countries , first of all Erasmus , and whatever allows [us] to create a common culture, through different languages.
Online participant from Italy

”

“ The EU should speak to the younger generation in an understandable way, including with digital tools.
Citizens' Dialogue in Bratislava, Slovakia

The EU must tackle unemployment and especially the brain drain, so that young people have opportunities in Europe.
Citizens' Dialogue in Athens, Greece

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Did you know that...

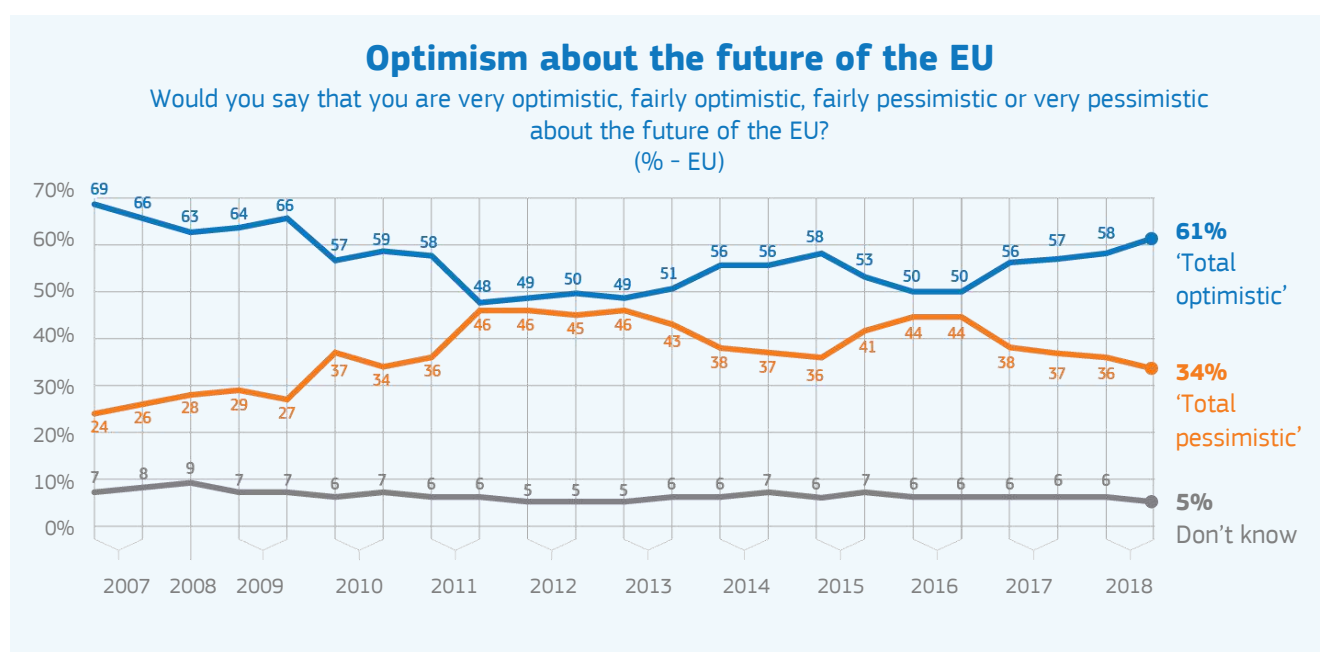
- ...for the future Erasmus+ programme, which will run from 2021 to 2027, the European Commission is proposing to double its budget to EUR 30 billion. More than 3.5 million young people are supported by the Youth Guarantee each year, receiving an offer of employment, continued education, traineeship or apprenticeship;
 - ...the European solidarity corps is about showing solidarity and helping the most vulnerable. By the end of 2020, 100,000 young people will have been able to participate in a Solidarity Corps activity;
 - ...the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition will train one million young unemployed people by 2020.
-

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Listening to citizens and addressing their concerns makes a difference.

European citizens who have participated in these Dialogues have shared their perceptions and vision for the future. They are not always satisfied with the way Europe works today. They invariably expect a lot but they tend to be optimistic about the future.

This is confirmed by the Eurobarometer conducted in November 2018 among the public at large: Three out of five Europeans declare that they are optimistic about the future of the European Union. This is the highest proportion since 2009.

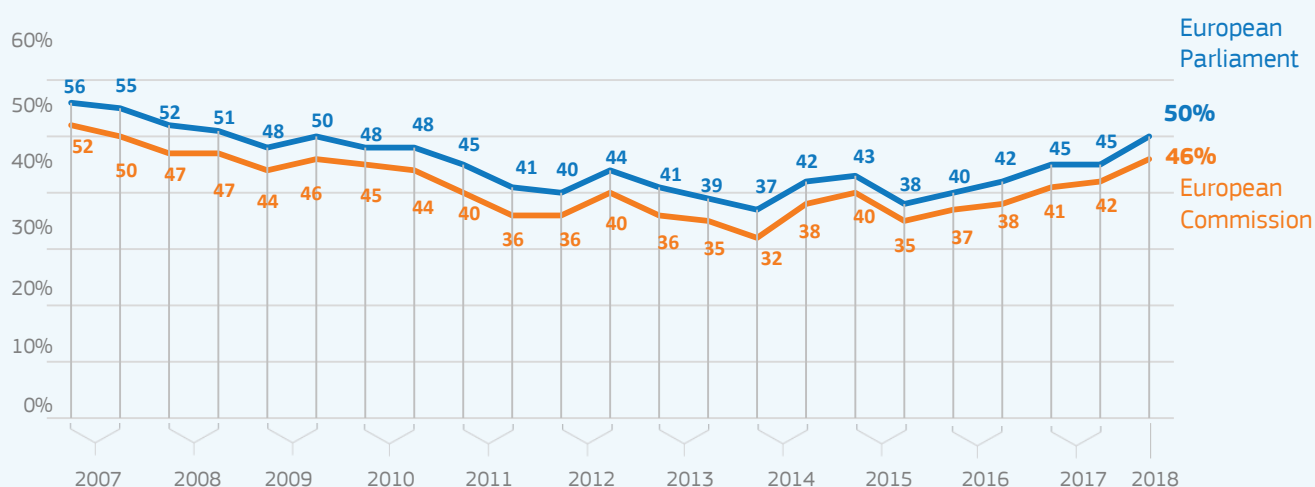


Eurobarometer, November 2018

The way European institutions are perceived is positively influenced by the act of permanently engaging with citizens and integrating their concerns and expectations into policy-making. The latest available Eurobarometer data show that in 2018, 50% of people in the European Union tend to trust the European Parliament and 46% the European Commission (values that are respectively 13 and 14 percentage points higher than in Spring 2014).

Trust in the European institutions

Tell me if you tend to trust or tend not to trust these European institutions.
(% - EU – Tend to trust)

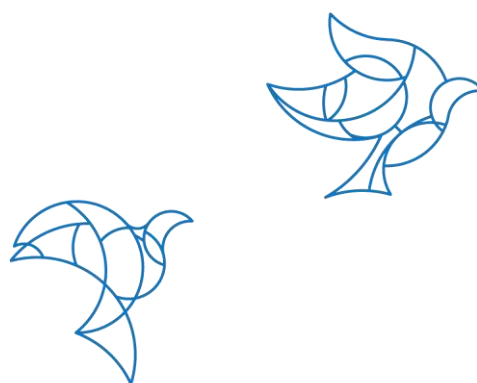


Eurobarometer, March 2018

It is incumbent on us all to make sure that the hope and optimism for our European future becomes a reality and that citizens get the chance to have their say.



The President mandated Members of the College to engage actively in the Member States in dialogues with citizens and stakeholders.



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

