

ANNEX 2: Content report of citizens' recommendations

TRANSNATIONAL EVENT

Transnational Citizens' Agora: EU foreign policy

Location: Online

Date: 27 April 2022

This reflects the outcome of the Transnational Meeting of the MEET Project. In this meeting, which took place last month, citizen ambassadors from eight member states gathered to voice their opinions and jointly decide on proposals for what the European Union (EU) should do in the field of foreign policy. The topic was decided by the citizen ambassadors in a poll carried out before the event. The starting basis for the discussion were the recommendations formulated by the Greek Local Citizens' Agora (LCA) in November 2021, one of the 16 LCAs conducted in the framework of the MEET project. The citizen ambassadors expanded on these proposals, reflecting also recent geopolitical developments linked to the war in Ukraine. Foreign policy experts were present at the meeting to help answer any citizens' questions in this area. The results are summarised below.

Recommendations:

- The EU should invest more in forging a common political identity for its citizens as a prerequisite for closer cooperation in foreign policy and real solidarity. To this end, better education of and communication with citizens are essential and can be improved for example by creating a joint European history book to be used in schools across all member states.
- In view of the war in Ukraine, the EU should work towards greater self-sufficiency and do more to protect its principles and values in its relations with third countries, even if this conflicts with a more pragmatic approach. Prioritising its European values and principles would help the EU stand on firmer ground when tackling issues related to global migration flows, global trade regime, energy policy, global environmental governance, etc.
- Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) should immediately be extended to the whole range of foreign and security issues.¹
- The EU should have a collective trade and investment policy with third countries, instead of conducting trade and investment on a bilateral basis. This would lead to more consistency and a greater impact. In this context, the EU should reinforce its efforts to develop a coherent and common trade and investment policy.
- The EU should find more ways to consult with citizens on the future of Europe, including on foreign policy matters, also after the Conference on the Future of Europe has ended.

¹ No consensus could be reached on the way of introducing QMV. Whereas the large majority supported the immediate extension of QMV to all areas of foreign policy, a minority of citizens supported the idea of gradually phasing it in over time.

LOCAL CITIZENS' AGORAS IN EIGHT MEMBER STATES

The proposals below represent a summary of the conclusions of the 16 Local Citizens' Agoras which took place between September 2021 and February 2022 as part of the MEET Project. In these LCAs, citizens from the eight member states gathered to voice their opinions and jointly decide on recommendations spanning a range of policy areas, including climate and environmental policy, EU democracy, digitalisation, health, youth policy, and foreign policy.

1. Belgium

Local Citizens' Agora I: Climate, environment & health

Location: Liège

Date: 6 November 2021

Recommendations:

Finance

- Tax financial speculation
- Review the OECD codes related to taxation.
- Discourage relocation by taxation. *
**Consider fair relocation policies, making use of development aid mechanisms.*
- Set up incentives for a more local and reasoned mode of consumption (e.g., customs duties). *
** But there must be a balance: the prices of essential products must remain affordable.*
- Increase the share of the European budget allocated to sustainable investments.
- Review free trade agreements by introducing a customs duty for imported products that do not meet European ecological standards (idea of a tax shield).
- Tax and/or sanction polluting companies.
- On the other hand, encourage and promote (via incentive bonuses and other advantages) sustainable and/or local businesses. *
** For example, through the establishment of supermarkets dedicated to local products and through the facilitation of access to supermarkets for local producers.*

Institutional component

- Force lobbies to be more transparent through a better framing.
- Establish common and binding European standards on health and environmental issues.
- Effectively oblige (through controls and sanctions) the application of European standards. *
** Establishment of sanctions for European decision-makers who do not take the necessary responsibilities and measures to implement political decisions.*
- Improve citizens' remedies at EU level. *
** Citizens must be able to control the action/inaction of political leaders.*
** Creation of a European Citizens' Platform.*
- Strengthening of the competences of the European Union. *
** EU measures must not remain mere recommendations and must be implemented in each member state. (There is a risk, however, that these sanctions will push states out of the EU.)*

Transport

- Tax short flights and promote alternatives (for private and commercial purposes).
- Develop a better intra-European public transport network. *
 - * Alternatives to road transport must be put forward. Ban short flights. Encourage fluvial, rail transport, and soft mobility.
 - * Creation of a European public transport company (for people and goods) to align prices.

Energy

- Establish a genuine European energy policy to reach energy autonomy.

Waste

- Ban the export of waste abroad.
- Introduce stricter measures against planned obsolescence.
- Develop better means of recycling and reducing household waste (multiplication of collection points, reduction of costs for the most precarious households).
- Move towards a global reduction of waste, in particular towards the prohibition of plastics (beyond the consumer, especially target and shift responsibility to companies).
- Creation of European recommendations for waste management at the local level.

Agriculture and food

- Reviewing the CAP: greener, longer term, more qualitative.
- Ensure access to healthy food for all (food diversity + accessibility).
 - * There is a need to diversify the offer, especially in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Fight against junk food.

Specific measures

- Set up an eco-score.
- Strive for more transparency on the origin/manufacturing of all products.
- Take climate refugees into account in the revision of the Dublin III Regulation.
- Better regulatory framework /control on online-sale (example: tax express deliveries).
- If the EU has the competence, facilitate construction on already urbanised land and limit it on non-urbanised land (implies managing competition issues between municipalities/local levels). *
 - * *The question of urban sprawl and the inclination to build despite the abandonment of old houses are exaggerated.*
 - * *Concretisation did not help with the floods.*
- Set up awareness/education campaigns (communication campaigns and classes) on the environment via a transversal European programme. *
 - * *We need to change the way we think and act.*
 - * *Think about a green recovery and about new professions. Encourage politicians and the EU to participate in the development of a common educational framework for schools and to educate citizens in the professions of the future.*
- Implement a more local and circular management of our natural resources (textiles, wood, etc.). Stop imported deforestation and put in place a more sustainable forest management policy.

Local Citizens' Agora II: Climate, environment & health

Location: Ghent

Date: 12 February 2022

Recommendations:

Information, communication, and citizen involvement

- Climate issues as part of the education curriculum.
- Not only communicating about the negative consequences of climate challenges, but also communicating achievements and (well-being) benefits of climate neutrality.
- The European Commission should make a SWOT analysis of the climate challenges per region.
- There should be a single point of contact for information on climate challenges (e.g., by strengthening the role of the European Environment Agency in Copenhagen in providing information to citizens).
- Given that there is a lot of information (and also fake news) on climate and the environment, the EU should help citizens by providing accurate and accessible information on this issue.
- In parallel with providing accessible information, the EU should also draw up a 'climate barometer' that provides detailed (technical) information on the state of play of climate objectives per member state (or even region).

Tax/financing/ETS

- The government must provide collective solutions and have the necessary resources at its disposal.
- The ETS is an interesting system for curbing emissions, but some recommendations aim to improve it. On the one hand, the ETS gives a right to emit for those who can afford it; on the other hand, it encourages companies to reduce emissions and trade, providing an incentive to invest in more efficient technology. Therefore:
 - o Reduce the number of emission allowances in circulation as the price is currently still too low.
 - o Fewer exemptions, for sectors such as aviation (outside the EU) and shipping.
 - o The proceeds of sale under ETS must have a remedial or impactful effect on the damage caused by emissions.
- The Commission should evaluate whether research resources (e.g., H2020) on climate challenges are well spent.
- The Commission needs to invest more in R&D on climate challenges and sustainability. The EU needs to work towards a targeted 'green' tax system that strengthens the 'polluter pays' principle and tackles tax avoidance by big polluters.
- The EU must pursue a coherent fiscal and subsidy policy in support of environmental and social policies.

Social/just transition/solidarity

- The EU can detect and remedy regulatory inconsistencies, e.g., rules that hinder energy 'sharing'. In addition, it can provide a reporting hub for citizens to report such bottlenecks.
- The EU should develop solidarity mechanisms to ensure that all member states, regions or households can contribute to the green transition.
- The EU must step up its efforts to strengthen the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Climate change and democracy

- European Citizens' Initiative should become more accessible and further stimulate citizen participation.
- Direct democratic initiatives as part of policy formulation to clarify impact and provide feedback on citizens' input.
- More right of initiative for the European Parliament.
- Trade agreements between the EU and third countries should pay due attention to climate objectives in order to ensure a level playing field.

Living/renovating/soil

- Provide (social) housing that meets stringent energy standards
- It is not always in the interest of the landlord to insulate because the cost of utilities usually lies with the tenant. Therefore, binding energy standards should be imposed on the landlord.
 - o In the event of inadequate insulation, the tenant is confronted with high energy prices, but better insulation can also lead to a higher rent. Therefore, the necessary renovation support must be provided so that the landlord is encouraged to carry out renovations without the tenant being the victim.

Public transport/mobility

- Public transport and sharing systems must become more attractive in order to relieve traffic and climate. Individual freedom and mobility must be reconciled with climate objectives.
- The European Parliament should be able to choose where it meets, with the aim of no longer having to undergo a monthly trip.
- Fairer taxes that make train travel more attractive compared to air travel (better accounting for environmental costs).
- Improving the interoperability of railways, better linking of train networks, partly organised at European level.
- The EU should promote a shorter supply chain in international trade (e.g., also by producing more locally) so that there are fewer transport-related emissions when making products.
- The EU should promote sustainable spatial planning of cities, for example the '5-minute city' (a city where all amenities - e.g., shops, school, work - are nearby and can be reached with active mobility - e.g., on foot or by bike). The EU should promote active/micro mobility (e.g., encourage bicycle use by building Cycling Infrastructure).
- The EU must work towards a (pan-)European train network.
- The EU should also pay attention to mobility poverty or to mobility challenges specific to people who do not live in urban areas.

Link between climate and demography/migration

- The EU must also dare to reflect on the link between demography (overpopulation in some areas of the regions) and climate change.

Energy supply/independence

- The EU must step up its commitment to energy independence.

Integrated approach to climate issues

- The EU should integrate tackling climate issues into all its policy areas (e.g., trade, energy, economy).
- Trade agreements between the EU and third countries should pay due attention to climate objectives in order to ensure a level playing field.

Sustainable circular economy

- The EU must promote a sustainable circular economy.

2. Denmark

Local Citizens' Agora I: European democracy

Location: Copenhagen

Date: 21 November 2021

Recommendations:

More knowledge is necessary about the EU and the decisions that are made - there is a need for greater transparency.

Citizens feel that there is a lack of knowledge about the power of the EU and its impact on our society - both in the local and European context. Insight and understanding are a prerequisite for the opportunity to participate much more actively in the democratic processes.

Therefore:

- There must be better and more accessible education about what is actually happening in the EU. This can be in the form of courses, presentations, part of our academic teaching, campaigns, media channels and news channels dedicated to EU information, etc.
- The EU must be involved as a topic in local and national political debates at a larger level and the media must commit to covering it.

A robust European democracy must be ensured! Polarisation worries us - the way forward is to work more with common values, consistent legal certainty and much stronger citizen participation and co-ownership.

Right now, there is too much top-down governance in the parties and mismatch between social strata that are helping create polarisation. We must listen to each other properly and the European Union must develop respect for the many different values we have - not just for one particular elite group.

Therefore:

- Ensure that the different perspectives and experiences that exist in the common European society are taken seriously and listened to.
- Make sure to hold the other member states accountable for their democratic development - make sure that the stability of our common EU democracy is the most important thing.
- Establish an EU foundation that respects and fights for everyone's legal security.
- Fight top-down management in the parties.

European cohesion must be strengthened - civil society with a focus on diversity, curiosity, respect, and compromise must be supported.

Cohesion is a prerequisite for the EU, and the role of civil society is crucial. A strong civil society supports diversity, curiosity, compromise, and respect. We find that Europe has a problem embracing differences. The EU must help disseminate knowledge and stimulate curiosity between member countries. The EU narrative is impersonal and too bureaucratic. It must be closer to us citizens and become a larger part of the daily (political) conversation. The EU must support a vibrant civil society that has access to the EU institutions and has the opportunity to exercise much more influence.

Therefore:

- The EU must increase access to the things that are already going on in the system. We believe that this will motivate us as citizens to participate in the EU dialogue and raise awareness of the EU's work.
- More support and encouragement for new EU initiatives and projects that support civil society initiatives.
- The EU must become part of the normal conversation. Conversation about culture and diversity is just as important as conversation about new laws and economics!

Continuous and systematic citizen involvement and representation across the EU must be ensured! Diversity and listening to differing perspectives are important.

Throughout the Citizens' Panel's dialogue, the need for more democratic citizen participation has been central. There is a curiosity and willingness among us citizens to become part of the EU dialogue. But we experience that the citizens of the EU are not being listened to. Initiatives such as the Citizens' Panel on the future of Europe are good proposals, but there is still a long way to go, and we are worried that it will not be used. It is difficult to find out where you can participate as a citizen - and gain knowledge of what really happens to the recommendations and dialogues from various citizen initiatives. We want to know more about what is happening in concrete terms and whether what citizens are saying is really being used to develop politically in the EU.

Therefore:

- Establish more direct advisory initiatives where citizens can participate. The different cultures and values that exist within the EU must be taken into account. It can be in the form of a permanent citizen panel or individual citizen panels, and everything in between.
- It must be made possible to get support from the EU for initiating citizen involvement initiatives and also for processes that we as citizens will initiate.
- There must be much more transparency on where citizens' recommendations have been listened to in EU decision-making processes. It will motivate more citizen involvement and in turn contribute to strengthening our common democracy.

Local Citizens' Agora II: Climate and the environment

Location: Aarhus

Date: 22 January 2022

Recommendations:

The EU must spread, develop, and govern with a circular economy as a point of reference.

There is too much waste and the lifespan of products is too short. Circular economy must be the starting point for all consumption and production in our everyday lives. Products should last longer, with a better and more environmentally friendly design that makes it easier to repair, reuse and reproduce old products. There must be much less waste and the handling of all this waste must be better. Additionally, there is a need for new business models based on leasing, sharing, repairing, and recycling.

It must be unassuming and very expensive to own the latest things. But right now, in our society, it is difficult to establish a circular economy because there exists a glorification of owning the popular and latest things - this mindset needs to be altered.

All these things must be guaranteed by the EU - across all EU countries. Therefore:

- Spread a cradle-to- grave mentality, where we do not focus so much on the expiration date of the products, but we repair and recycle.
- Frameworks and requirements must be set for the pricing of goods that are dependent on climate/environmental costs, both at the production and the distribution level.
- EU support for local industry and production.
- Reduced working hours would free up time for ourselves, where there is the possibility for repair, green cultivation and greener lifestyles.

Climate must be a common project for the whole of the EU - we must be able to find common solutions to the great problems - to protect our democracy and future in Europe.

The EU is simply what we can agree on. The solutions that the EU approves are not always the best solutions but those that can be agreed upon. But it must be ensured that the solutions the EU approves are based on a dialogue and listening to the values and opinions of us citizens.

EU regulation must make it easier for everyone to make greener, ecologically friendly choices. It proves difficult to regulate countries that are different in their industrial development, but we must find common solutions to the high-stakes problems that secure Europe's future and our common democracy. Political regulation must make it easier for the individual to make the "correct" green choice. Those who are in power must take the overall responsibility for green development and involve us as citizens in their regulations and goals. The EU must be the role model that shows the way forward, but every individual citizen must have the opportunity to find his or her own way of living with it.

Therefore:

- Our collective climate awareness must be global! Information about the possibilities for change must be easily accessible to everyone around the world.
- The EU and us citizens must work together to ensure that the dialogue on the climate is based on facts and knowledge, both to ensure good solutions and to counter polarisation and misinformation in the climate field.
- A permanent EU climate citizenship would ensure citizens' influence and that the citizens' voices are heard.

Political regulation of common environmental impact taxes is necessary and a transparent labelling system across all EU countries.

Price regulation of goods is not an easy solution for dealing with climate change. Different countries have different options in relation to their national economy. The rich countries can often afford to choose whether they want to change their behaviour, while the poor countries cannot afford to change their behaviour at all. A solution must be found that takes into account everyone, and especially the economic opportunities of member states.

Transparency is important when considering questions of climate policy. Which path is the best? Climate duties and taxes? Some form of climate tax? What is a CO2 quota system? We found that our understanding of the various initiatives the EU has implemented in recent years in connection with environmental taxes and climate is limited. We agreed that it is important and exciting and that it is an area where we want to know much more. We want much more openness and dialogue about the different ways of regulating and managing climate policy.

Therefore:

- It must be much easier to understand and access information on taxes, regulation, and quota systems in connection with climate change.
- We want environmental taxes that affect the biggest polluters, the sectors and industries that damage the climate and green development.
- Transparency for the consumer must be ensured e.g., in the form of a labelling system across EU countries that is easy to understand and act on. i.e., a system where the consumer can easily see the product's climate and pollution footprints.
- Transparency and available information on EU policy decisions in the climate field.

3. France

Local Citizens' Agora I: European democracy

Location: Online/Angers

Date: 20 February 2022

Recommendations:

Civic education on Europe for all

- We recommend that, in national education programmes from secondary school onwards, hours of teaching and discussion on European competencies and democracy, as well as on European projects and opportunities (e.g., Erasmus+) be included. A visit to a European institution (or a branch/representation of the EU in the territory) should be included in this programme. Within the framework of this course, a European day will be organised, in a playful format, to introduce the cultural and linguistic wealth of the EU. For students who have completed this course, an official European certificate will be issued to attest their knowledge.
- To open the debate to all, and encourage intergenerational exchanges, we recommend that local authorities be active and committed to this programme, and, within the framework of dedicated days, open this teaching to all, eventually mobilising the Houses of Europe and European funding, as training centres in addition to communication, to offer to all.

Reinforce the values of the EU

- We recommend strengthening the communication and implementation of Article 2 of the Lisbon Treaty. We propose to amend this Treaty, to make respect for these values binding and a condition for EU membership and access to EU funds. Reopening discussions on this article would increase its visibility and possibly modernize it.

Local Citizens' Agora II: European youth policy

Location: Online/Angers

Date: 20 February 2022

Recommendations:

Information campaign on European Voluntary Services

- We recommend the implementation of an information campaign on the European Voluntary Services via social networks as well as through the ministries of labour and education, but also in companies and universities. We believe that this campaign would allow to make these European services more attractive to all publics by underlining the linguistic, human, and cultural skills and the European social inclusion that they bring.

Revitalisation of European communication

- We recommend a revitalisation of European communication on social networks which takes into better account the characteristics of the networks to use them wisely. The use of influencers, public figures and politicians would allow to reach a larger audience.
- We believe that the use of social networks would allow to approach young people and render them knowledgeable of the EU and its programmes.

4. Germany

Local Citizens' Agora I: European democracy

Location: Online/Osnabrück

Date: 20 February 2022

Recommendations:

- We recommend that a European Education Council be established. Its tasks would be:
 - o To produce a common European history book.
 - o To provide a basis for teaching in schools in Europe.
 - o To intensify educational exchanges, especially with the help of new digital media (example "I am Sophie Scholl" project).
 - o To promote media literacy and critical use of digital media among the population.
 - o To foster the harmonisation of education and training standards at EU level.

We find this desirable because it would strengthen a common culture of memory and common democratic values and complement the national perspective.

- We recommend the expansion of opportunities for historical "memory trips" (visits to places of history) in Europe for young people, but also for other target groups. We find this desirable because it would strengthen a common culture of memory and common democratic values.
- We recommend that the EU introduce a uniform energy policy. Renewable energies should play a central role in this policy. We find this desirable because it will enable the achievement of climate targets.
- We recommend strengthening the participation in the development of renewable energies and the promotion of municipal energy projects.
- We recommend that companies be involved in the fight against climate change through greater democratic control.
- We recommend that the negotiation of the climate and energy package be transparent about which interests are involved. In addition, the package should have social justice as a priority (especially considering urban centres and rural areas). This could be achieved through an expansion of the climate social fund. We find it desirable because it makes comprehensible for the citizens which positions and arguments stand behind the proposals.

Local Citizens' Agora II: European youth policy

Location: Online/Osnabrück

Date: 20 February 2022

Recommendations:

- We recommend that the EU strengthen its visibility in the school context (e.g., addressing the European Union in the school context from SEK I onwards). The EU should use local Junior Ambassadors – inspired by the example of the French-German Youth Office - to represent the EU on the ground (e.g., classrooms) and to inform pupils about existing EU programmes and policies at EU level and in other member states. In addition, they should bring youth concerns to the EU institutions regardless of their social and cultural context in order to ensure youth participation and involvement in the EU institutions.

We find this desirable because the EU should become closer, more tangible, and more multicultural for young people - regardless of their social background. The EU should be lived on the ground and youth should be better represented in the institutions in their diversity.

- We recommend that the EU increase its support for youth exchange programmes with a particular focus on reducing barriers to participation (e.g., compliance with a diversity quota). We strive to strengthen cooperation with eastern EU member states and third countries. Thematically, the exchange should be oriented towards important topics (e.g., digitalisation and sustainability). An EU-wide digital platform for the provision of thematic resources simplifies and standardises the thematic cooperation framework.

We find this desirable because, especially in the context of the COVID 19 pandemic, a new generation should also have access to exchange programmes in face-to-face form to experience European exchange at an early stage. We are convinced that cooperation and collaboration lead to more openness and understanding of the cultures in all EU member states.

5. Greece

Local Citizens' Agora I: EU environmental policy & European Green Deal

Location: Online

Date: 22 September 2021

Recommendations:

- There should be an attempt to control consumerism and change our everyday life.
- There should be more investment in the awakening or cultivation of environmental consciousness; here, emphasis is laid on the educational system.
- There should be more investment in eco-friendly infrastructure.
- There should be more economic incentivisation for adopting cleaner technologies, targeted to lower income citizens.
- There should be more sub-national (local and regional) mobilisation, galvanised by citizens' pressure, with more opportunities for local governments to have access to European funds related to the environment.
- There should be more concrete and constraining delineation of environmental policies and their objectives (at both the EU and state level of policymaking) with fully articulated and operational oversight mechanisms.

Local Citizens' Agora II: EU foreign policy

Location: Online

Date: 9 November 2021

Recommendations:

- The EU should invest more in forging of a common political identity for its citizens as a prerequisite of closer cooperation in foreign policy and real solidarity.
- More pragmatism is required in EU's relations with third countries. This does not imply the abandoning of EU values and principles, but rather their conceptual clarification, reframing, and delimitation in view of current developments. This will help the EU stand on firmer ground when tackling issues related to global migration flows, global trade regime, global environmental governance, etc.
- Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) should not be extended to the whole range of foreign and security issues at once; there should be a gradual expansion to enable governments and citizens to become acquainted and familiar with a decision-making process with potentially immense repercussions on a member-state's sovereignty. The outcome of this incremental process will create the necessary impetus for further cooperation or lead to its abandonment. In other words, the EU should move on a 'trial and error' base and be ready to revert to unanimity should the system fail to operate satisfactorily.
- One specific proposal (that would complicate the process even more though) was to accompany the shift to QMV with a greater participation of the European Parliament; the citizen expressed her view that Council decisions taken by QMV should be discussed and reflected upon by the EP as a further control mechanism. This would increase the complexity and decrease the responsiveness of the system but would arguably counter legitimacy concerns.

6. Ireland

Local Citizens' Agora I: The environment and digital transformation

Location: Online

Date: 9 & 16 December 2021

Recommendations:

- The EU should have greater resources and abilities to carry out comprehensive impact assessments on the spending of EU funding before, during and after a project, scheme, construction work, etc. to ensure EU funding is used effectively and not counterproductively.
- As people and societies transition away from fossil fuels towards renewables, the Just Transition Fund should be focused on directing its funding to ensure that no one is left behind in the green transition.
- The EU should increase its efforts to communicate its current capabilities in the EU Space Programme and associated areas, harness external expertise, and promote public awareness of this increasingly important issue.
- The EU should expand and deepen its focus on providing funding and support to eco-industries and move away from such support for industries that are damaging the environment.
- The EU should provide Ireland with additional environmental financial support in order to make up any shortfall in such funding due to the departure of the UK from the EU.
- The EU needs to focus on the environmental and climate impact of the digital transformation and allocate more resources towards tackling the increasing greenhouse gas emissions from our growing digital carbon footprint, while also maintaining a prioritisation of existing measures, such as the circular economy.
- The EU should support member states in prioritising access to good quality broadband including the utilisation of fibre, wireless, and 5G, paying attention to any potential negative impact on the environment.
- The EU should enhance its autonomy in the digital field and preserve its digital sovereignty. This is particularly important for Ireland as we host many multinational digital companies and data centres.
- The EU should consider breaking up technology companies that are monopolising the global industry in order to promote competitive markets and digital innovation.
- The EU should support the creation of a forum comprising of relevant stakeholders i.e., civil society organisations, academics, private enterprises etc., to come together and negotiate a joint agreement on how to tackle disinformation.

Local Citizens' Agora II: Health in the EU

Location: Online

Date: 27 January & 3 February 2022

Recommendations:

- The EU should ensure that citizens are reimbursed for all aspects of health care when abroad by their home country, including adequate mental health and therapeutic services.
- The EU should consider including creative arts therapies and well-being practices into future EU proposals on healthcare policy. This should include the use of social prescribing and funding to train people of a high level to increase accessibility.
- The EU should continue to work and strengthen its role in facilitating coordination, disseminating, and exchanging information, data, analysis and best practices with and between EU Member States, health authorities and experts, in as wide range of areas in public health policy, for the greater benefit of people in the EU.
- Families should have the right to equitable access to appropriate and well-organised new-born screening to diagnose rare diseases within the first few days of a child's life.
- EU health policies should include a patient centred approach, taking into consideration the views and experiences of relevant patients and carers, the healthcare workforce and EU policy makers.
- The EU should enhance cross-border cooperation and collaboration between member states, health authorities and health policy experts, in particular when it comes to the Northern Ireland border.
- The EU should place a greater focus on prevention when it comes to important public health and well-being issues.
- The EU should facilitate equal access to health care and social care services for persons with disabilities, where the services provided are based on need, rather than on the ability to access them privately.
- The EU should support the local production of high-quality PPE and antigen tests in member states in order to reduce reliance on outsourcing the manufacturing to other nations such as China.

7. Portugal

Local Citizens' Agora I: European democracy

Location: Online

Date: 19 February 2022

Recommendations:

- More transparency on the way European funds are being used (fight against corruption).
- European institutions should communicate with citizens using less technocratic, simpler and more friendly vocabulary.
- Support young people trying to find their first job and help foster job stability.
- Create a European TV channel like the Portuguese parliament channel.
- Better interaction with MEPs using new technologies.
- Create a MyEUApp to allow citizens to ask questions about the EU, communicate with MEPs, and find more about European funds and how they are being granted.
- Bigger budget for the EU.
- Fight tax heavens and work towards European tax harmonisation.
- More funds to health and education and less to roads and other infrastructure projects.
- Education and training should be a European priority.
- Fight against fake news and disinformation.

Local Citizens' Agora II: Environment & climate

Location: Online

Date: 19 February 2022

Recommendations:

- The EU should act decisively. Studies and research are unequivocal: what we need are political will and determination.
- To reduce greenhouse gas emissions, we need better and more modern public transport networks powered by green energy.
- Members of the government should set the example and use public transports.
- Environmental education should be reinforced in school. Young people are key to changing the way society looks at these problems.
- TV is also important and the new social networks. The main environmental and climate problems and their consequences should be communicated in a more effective way.
- Selective waste collection should be encouraged. Municipal governments that try to find European funds to help them modernize their systems should find incentives to use new technologies in waste management.
- The EU should have strong policies on oceans and help clean them and fight against plastic waste and microplastics.
- The EU should help member states combat desertification.
- The EU should prevent bureaucracy and make access to information simpler for citizens. There are a lot of programmes, but they are not friendly and sometimes nobody knows they exist.
- School meals should prevent food waste and help promote healthier eating habits.
- Reinforce circular economy and recycling.

8. Romania

Local Citizens' Agora I: Green economy

Location: Online

Date: 21 January 2022

Recommendations:

Public policies, legislation, national strategy

- Implement a country-level strategy that includes both the individual and the collective level.
- Inform and encourage citizens to apply for European funds to bring about change at the local level.
- Establish a Court of Ecological Justice for consultation and feedback.

Lack of environmental education in schools

- Involvement of the media in educating citizens.
- Practical extracurricular activities for environmental protection.
- Teachers trained in environmental issues and resource allocation.

Low degree of "green culture"

- Increase the culture of volunteering and the desire to involve citizens.
- Active involvement of citizens in monitoring and implementing environmental actions at the local level.
- Introduce environmental topics into the media.

Local Citizens' Agora II: Digital transformation

Location: Online

Date: 18 February 2022

Recommendations:

Education - lack of digital skills, lack of special digital platforms for the educational system in order to make it as friendly as possible

- Facilitate public-private strategic partnership with companies and digital mentoring.
- Ensure digital education for all ages (from children to retirees) with the help of civil society.
- Develop teacher training (IT administrators + teachers in general).

Lack of a framework and resources, as well as the political will in Romania to achieve a digitalization or green transition at national level

- Sharing success stories for everyone (building on the power of personal examples) and awareness campaigns of the consequences of lack of digitalisation.
- Increasing the level of civic and political education of citizens by informing the population.
- Organising a forum which brings together representatives from the political and private spheres as well as teachers and students to discuss how they can collaborate more effectively.

Lack of digitalisation in public institutions

- Changing the legislative and administrative framework, implicitly reforming it.
- Promoting the benefits of digitalisation - awareness that you will not lose your job if you go digital.
- Training and digital specialisation for staff.

Disclaimer: This document was proofread to correct spelling and grammatical errors, but changes were kept to an absolute minimum to ensure citizens' words are conveyed in the truest sense possible. The EPC is not responsible for the content of the recommendations.