

EUROPEAN PUBLIC SPHERE

UKRAINIAN VIBES TOUR 2021 - CATALOGUE OF IDEAS



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And last but not least a huge thank you to all our participants for bringing your perspective, your thoughts, and your visions for the future of Europe to our events and thus made this catalogue of ideas possible.

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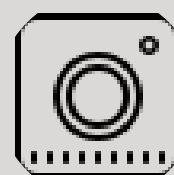


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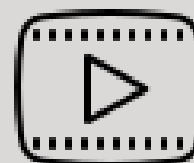
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ABOUT US

The European Public Sphere

Long before the EU launched the Conference on the Future of Europe and thus the citizens' debate on Europe's challenges and priorities, there was already this feeling, that such a debate is deeply needed. This feeling was triggered by the observation that the EU, despite all its successes so far, is in a crisis and needs new and fresh ideas. Ideas that reflect the perspective and the diversity of Europe's citizens.

That's why in 2017 Democracy International, together with IG Eurovision founded the European Public Sphere. Since then we bring the discussion about Europe back into the public space: Does the EU need a democratic relaunch? How can we equip European democracy to better meet the challenges of the 21st century? What could a European economy and financial system look like? What do we need for a concerted European approach to climate issues? These questions and many more form the basis of our discussions.

Usually, the conversations take place in a geometric dome, the Europe Dome. It serves as the traveling venue for our dialogues on the future of Europe. Under its roof, people who want to throw something into the scale pan for Europe come together. It must not be a gathering of organizations and institutions, but a gathering of people with thoughts and ideas! Since its start, the European Public Sphere has traveled to Austria, Bulgaria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Poland, Rumania, Spain (Basque Country), and The Netherlands. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted the traveling for a while but we were quickly looking for alternative traveling modes and construction possibilities for the Europe dome. We found them in the digital space, the virtual public sphere. It's this space we used for the Ukrainian Vibes Tour 2021.

The Ukrainian Vibes Tour

The Ukrainian Vibes Tour took place from April until October 2021 and was organized by four German and Ukrainian young professionals participating in the ASA volunteer program and working for the German-based NGO Democracy International e.V. and the Ukrainian-based NGOs National Ecological Center of Ukraine and Change Communication.

Even though we of course missed the real travelling, our online gatherings were an opportunity to make our talks more creative and diverse than ever and to construct the Europe dome in different, flexible, interactive, and also inclusive ways. In total, we implemented **7 digital stops with more than 172 participants joining from over 36 countries.**



The two phases of the Ukrainian Vibes Tour:

The first leg of the tour took place in **June 2021** in the format of a four-part online **workshop program for young Europeans aged 14-21**. For this, we officially partnered up with the **Kyiv Junior Academy of Science**. The workshops were aimed to give young European voices a stage and to empower them to participate in civil society. Together we discussed topics related to democracy, sustainability, and European integration with a special focus on our host country Ukraine. Supported by the knowledge of experts from the respective field of each online event, participants strengthened their ideas for the future of Europe and presented them in the last workshop session.

After the summer break, the tour continued. We organized **three webinars** on the topics of Democracy, Sustainability, and European Integration in **September 2021**. This time the event's structure shifted from an educational focus to open dialogue between European citizens. Each webinar covered several subtopics and participants discussed their favourite one under the guidance of invited speakers. The speakers provided us with a short introduction to the topic and presented an innovative idea that could tackle the respective issue. To have the perspective of Ukrainians integrated into our conversations, this part of the tour was held bilingual in Ukrainian and English language.

Infobox ASA-Program

Funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, ASA is one of the most renowned volunteer programs in Germany. The program encourages young people from the whole world to understand global contexts and engage for sustainable development and a just world.



Partners of the Tour



Democracy International is a non-profit association founded in Cologne in 2011. DI emerged from a network of democracy activists around the founding of the European Citizens' Initiative. The association aims to strengthen citizen participation, direct democracy at all political levels and is strongly committed to an active civil society.



Since its establishment after independence in 1991, the **National Ecological Centre of Ukraine (NECU)** has united individuals in joint actions to protect the environment. As Ukraine's oldest and largest environmental organisation, NECU has branches in a dozen Ukrainian cities. NECU works for the conservation of biodiversity, and a healthy environment. It wants to create an ecologically conscious civil society and promotes European integration of Ukraine in the field of environmental protection.



Change Communication is active in the field of public communication. The association supports independent organisations, governmental organisations and international institutions in carrying out their communication projects and campaigns at a high professional level.

The Idea Catalogue

The European Public Sphere is designed as a place where everyone's ideas are valued and welcomed and in our workshops and webinars, lots of ideas were present. With this catalogue, we seek to provide you with all the recommendations, visions, and solutions for Europe's future that circulated during the Ukrainian Vibes Tour. We invite you to trace their origin, to develop them further, and to put as many as possible of them into concrete action.

Before you start reading which Europe our 172 participants are dreaming of and how they are already working on its realisation, here are a few comments on how this idea catalogue came about and how it is structured:

After consent was given each online event was recorded. Thereupon, we analyzed the video material and noted down the quotes we found interesting, indispensable, and inspiring. Next, we classified the statements into different categories: First of all we marked if the respective quote describes the status quo, an opportunity, or an idea for the future of Europe. Second, we identified the topic and the subtopic of the quote. In a very similar way, we dealt with the material that was available to us in written form - chat records and the answers to a form we sent to the participants after the webinars.

The idea catalogue is based on this analysis. The chapter structure follows the main stops of the Ukrainian Vibes tour: Democracy, Sustainability, and European Integration (In the end, we visited the stops twice, once during the workshop and once during the webinar phase). For the ideas not fitting into these categories, there is an additional chapter called "Further Ideas". The inner chapter structure follows the list of subtopics we discussed during each webinar. Here, to contextualise the visions and solutions, we describe in the beginning the status quo, meaning why Europe has to change in that field.

Of course, this catalogue of ideas is an excerpt. It cannot display the complete richness of ideas for Europe. We had to limit the number of stops of the Ukrainian Vibes tour and each collection of things implies that you have to make choices about what you pick and what you do not pick. Nevertheless, as it is one of our core beliefs that every voice counts in a democracy, we tried our very best to include as many perspectives as possible.

This core belief made us not only write the catalogue but also bring all ideas, visions, and solutions directly to the digital citizens' platform of the Conference on the Future of Europe. But as this platform is limited in space and format, it is with the idea catalogue you can come much closer to the actual discussion and its participants. If you want to come even closer, you can of course also rewatch the webinars on Youtube.

Have a wonderful time reading the catalogue,

Best wishes,



Josephine Schnee
Ukrainian Vibes Team 2021



Kateryna Dobrovol'ska
Ukrainian Vibes Team 2021



Regine Alber
Ukrainian Vibes Team 2021



Yuliia Khrystynchenko
Ukrainian Vibes Team 2021



IDEAS FOR A MORE DEMOCRATIC EUROPE

What became very clear during our workshops and webinars is that for the further development of Europe we are highly dependent on the functioning of Europe's hallmark: liberal democracy. Whichever topic we first started with, the conversation always came back to democracy, and very often it was stated that European democracy needs to be improved.

The suggestions and demands that already emerged during the workshops went in two directions: On the one hand, it was repeatedly pointed out that the EU must overcome its internal democratic deficit and use its position to enforce democratic values in its member states.

On the other hand, an overwhelming majority of the participants under the digital Europe dome called for making Europe's democracy more inclusive and participatory, they called for a Europe in which its citizens have a greater say. It was criticised that the liberal democracies in Europe do not meet the promise of giving all citizens equal access to participation due to patterns of exclusion and imbalanced power structures, resulting in some people not being able to realise their full potential. For example, young people and economically disadvantaged people were mentioned as groups whose participation opportunities should be increased. Also, better tools for participation (e.g. citizen assemblies, referendums, "rotation democracy", lower voting age, participatory budgeting, deliberative "mini"-publics) were discussed as means to strengthen our democracy.

Following the claim for more inclusiveness and participation, and in order to develop more concrete ideas, we decided to make this demand the topic of our webinar on democracy. Of course, one webinar is not enough to discuss this topic in its entirety, and we had to decide which aspects we want to concentrate on during the discussions. It was a hard choice but in the end, we went for "Gender iNequality in Ukraine", "The Political Participation of People with Disabilities, and "Digital Tools for Political Participation".

The results of the discussions are listed below. What unites them - and what perhaps also applies to the topics we were unable to include - is the observation that in a democracy we are always stronger together than alone. This is how separated individuals become a strong civil society. And a strong civil society can make policy change more likely. And a civil society that cooperates across borders can help to make a real European Public Sphere come true.

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We deserve to experience what a true democracy feels like!

Nevena Todorović

Youth Initiative for Human Rights
Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo

I want the European Union to democratised through citizen participation in general and through deliberative mini-publics in particular.

Participant from Belgium

We need real citizens' participation - maybe through the so-called "Rotation Democracy", our Bulgarian innovation.

Participant from Bulgaria



Let's stop fighting people with money, and focus on creating opportunities for those people without money.

Dane Waters,

Political Strategist and Advisor, Board Member of Democracy International e.V.

“



We cannot remain silent about the main problem in Ukraine - gender discrimination!

Tatiana Isaeva,
Gender Culture Center Ukraine

I have been a teacher and researcher for more than 20 years. But as my first education - I am a doctor. We were taught that the first rule is not to hurt. I think students also use this rule and therefore do not complain about gender issues within the university. They can very easily be expelled from the the university, which may lead to a life tragedy.

Participant from Ukraine



It is necessary to constantly maintain the presence of the problem in the information field, then changes will be easier.

You want something around you to change - do it, take a risk, think of your plan B!

Olena Lobova,
Change Communication



Gender Inequality in Ukraine

In addition to the precondition of participatory rights, full participation in democracies requires - above all - sufficient personal resources of the individual. Inequalities caused by discrimination prevent the equal participation of women in our democracies today. Even though this group focused in its discussion on Ukraine, a majority of their results can be also applied to other European countries

The Status Quo:

- Even though some progress was made in the last years in Ukraine, gender discrimination remains a major problem
- Women are more affected by poverty than men (feminization of poverty)
- Women bear the main responsibility for the family
- "Housekeeper" image of a woman is preserved in all spheres of life, even the office
- Women have internalised that not hurting anyone is part of being a woman, leading to a culture in which women do not complain, even when they are victims of discrimination and violence; breaking this rule can have tragic consequences
- Women become victims of sexism also in the public space (e.g. universities)

Solutions

Visions, ideas, and solutions for more gender equality:

- Even though it requires lots of effort and resources, we must communicate constantly about gender (in)equality (especially with those who are outside of our bubble), and maintain the presence of the topic in the information field to raise a critical mass of people
- Education about gender inequality should be improved; students must learn what gender discrimination is and understand the inadmissibility of discrimination and sexism in education
- The government should:
 - imply special instructions about gender equality in universities (especially to professors and people in charge)
 - establish policies and control systems that will detect and work on gender offences
 - consider reserving by law a certain percentage of seats in its institutions for women and other underrepresented groups
- Everyone can start act responsibly and try to change things on the local level (e.g. contact the dean's office in university)
- We must continue to research on the topic
- We must ensure equal working conditions for women and men
- We must reduce not only the discrimination of women but also of homosexual and transgender persons



Countries of origin of participants

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There are so many civic-type projects and platforms but underrepresented people are still not getting active, so there is still a missing point.

Susanna Maier
Founder and CEO of Voterookie



The success of an political participatory event really relies on the form of execution of the event and the deliberation process. I think you can do digital participation as good as offline participation but I also think that there is a problem with group identification, that you only see people through the screen and you do not feel the connection to each other.

Participant from Germany



The business model of social media is what incentive us to communicate in a more harsh tone and if we find a different way of funding these kinds of technologies then there is no reason that they have to produce such unhealthy dynamics in deliberation.

Rikki J. Dean
Democratic Innovations Research Unit
- Goethe University Frankfurt

Digital Platforms to Improve Political Participation

We all experience daily how the influx of digital technologies influences our democracies in multiple ways, also in terms of political participation. In the discussion, we not only focused on the often stated negative impacts of technology but tried to also figure out which chances might lie in digital platforms for political participation.

The Status Quo

- The number of digital platforms for political participation increased over the last few years
- The Covid-19 effect further pushed the development of digital platforms
- Digital platforms bear many chances:
 - lower (participation) costs
 - more flexibility
 - you can really make an individual contribution to a collective project
- But also some risks or obstacles:
 - under-represented groups are also under-represented on digital platforms
 - digital platforms are not automatically democratic; For example social media:
 - the finance model “attention economy” hinders a productive democratic discussion; it rather makes us communicate in a harsh tone
 - the behaviour of users is largely unregulated; e.g. politicians could block those users, they don’t want to listen to
 - the algorithms define what we see or don’t see
 - quality of online deliberation can suffer from technical issues and difficulties and from a lack of group identification

Solutions

Ideas, visions, and solutions to use the potential of digital platforms for political participation:

- Digitalisation should be pushed especially in schools, so young people learn how to use the platforms and feel more included in politics
- Online political participatory events must be executed in a way that guarantees the possibility for a good deliberation process
- There’s a need to change the way, social media works:
 - social media campaigns shouldn’t be based on filters of political views
 - we need to find another way of funding social media in order to overcome the “attention economy”; e.g. state funding; subscription fees
 - we should be careful letting private companies, this means the owners of the social media, regulate the discourse on the platforms



Political Participation of Persons with Disabilities

Many Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) face barriers that hinder full political participation from the communal to the European level. Legal and administrative obstacles regarding the right to vote as well as a public space that lacks accessibility for political action of PWDs are the most obvious examples. In the webinar, we looked at these barriers and

The Status Quo

- Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) are denied the opportunity of being active citizens and exercising their fundamental rights
- PWDs face statutory barriers (e.g. guardianship laws, electoral regulations that disenfranchise PWDs), procedural barriers (e.g. inaccessible polling stations) and other barriers (e.g. lack of training of poll workers, informal barriers)
- Most forms of discrimination are based on paternalistic and protective approaches
- PWDs are not encouraged to participate
- Discriminatory law mostly affects persons with intellectual and mental disabilities
- PWDs trying to actively participate must fear being incarcerated and institutionalized
- The political culture is highly based on ableism what makes it difficult for PWDs to participate

“



The key message here is that the inclusion of persons with disabilities is fundamental to a true democracy.

Most forms of exclusion are embedded in a paternalistic and protective approach towards persons with disabilities. And this is discriminatory and violates the requirement of equality, which is expressed in general international human rights law instruments.

Adriana Caballero-Pérez
Faculty of Law at Maastricht University;
Member of DARE



We lack the awareness of decision-makers and duty bearers that they conduct very serious human rights violations by non implementing the laws in this area.

Participant from Montenegro



I'm autistic and I have several mental illnesses and my permanent fear is being incarcerated at some point and being institutionalized, because that is a tool that can be used. I've just started advocacy some years ago [...] and I just dream of being radical someday and dream of organizing stuff, but I'm really scared. I have to say it because [...] for people like me, for people with mental disabilities and and neurodivergent people there's always a danger of losing many forms of freedom when you become inconvenient

Participant from Germany

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We are trying to work on the ground of understanding each other and support, rather than to be aggressive in our demands.

Gordana Rajkov

Center for Independent Living of PWDs
Serbia



What I was thinking earlier is that the fundamental democratic culture, or let's call it political culture, is quite ableist in itself. [...] And that is something that is not accessible for many disabled people and especially for people with mental disabilities or neurodivergent people. And it's hard to change that when you won't be noticed if you don't shout the loudest.

Participant from Germany



I feel the right to peaceful assembly is underused not only in Serbia but more widely in Europe as movements get co-opted sometimes by the government

Participant from Serbia/ Great Britain

Voting:

- Inaccessible polling places
- Inaccessible voting materials (e.g. ballot papers are not readable)
- No access to electoral assistive devices
- Poorly trained poll workers
- Lack of political education for PWDs
 - Lack of political communication directed to voters with disabilities
 - Each new election period requires finding new partners who are committed to promote and support voting of PWDs:
- Disturbing decision of the European Court of Human Rights (Case of Strøbye and Rosenlind v. Denmark) that implies that it is lawful for countries to exclude people from voting who don't have "the required level of mental skills":
 - decision is highly dangerous as it can be abused by political regimes to exclude people from voting
 - ECHR departs with that decision from international human rights law on disability and from the existing case-law of the court itself

Legal Situation and the Freedom of Association:

- The most important framework for creating legislation and policies to guarantee the political participation of PWDs is the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD)
- Even though more than 160 states have ratified the CRPD it is not implemented and incorporated well in national law in many countries
- Existing institutions, obliged to enforce the CRPD, do not initiate proceedings
- Lack of awareness of decision-makers that they thereby conduct serious human rights violations
- PWDs are not encouraged to initiate proceedings in case their country does not implement the CRPD or in case their fundamental rights are violated
- The right to peacefully assemble is underused widely in Europe
- Article 29 of the CRPD focuses more on voting than on other means of political participation, e.g. freedom of association

Infobox CRPD

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was adopted 2006 and follows decades of work by the United Nations and civil society activists to change attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities.

Solutions

Visions, ideas, and solutions for more political participation of PWDs:

- There's a need for more exchange between different countries and to learn from the experiences of others
- We need to change altogether the rules of the "political game" to allow a true democratic representation of citizens' voices in politics
- PWDs must be empowered to participate
- We should engage in public advocacy and raise awareness (e.g. through campaigning)

Visions, ideas, and solutions to make voting more accessible for PWDs:

- Polling stations must be monitored regarding their accessibility; they must be accessible in all Europe
- Local election boards must be trained on how to assist PWDs who come voting in the polling station
- As the case of Serbia showed, it can be successful to create disability-inclusive consultation groups between key stakeholders of the election process (PWDs, representatives of the election commission, lawyers, political scientists)
- There's a potential lying in alternative voting procedures (e.g. voting remotely), but they should be available on an equal basis to all voters
- Voting material and information material about elections must be accessible by language and format

Visions, ideas, and solutions to enforce the laws that guarantee the political participation of PWDs:

- We must focus on how the laws linked to the CRPD can be implemented in practice; Therefore we need indicators and standards that are benchmarks to measure if change has taken place
- The executive branch of the government (ombudsman, persecutors, inspectors etc.) has to investigate if the laws linked to the CRPD are violated and whenever this is the case, they must initiate the proceedings
- If the institutions that are obliged to protect the rights of PWDs fail, they should be sanctioned
- We need projects or researchers monitoring, reporting, and conducting advocacy regarding the management of protests, including examining the level of use of force in human rights violations conducted by states

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What I always emphasize is that there are institutions who are obliged to actually use those mechanisms of protection of human rights of persons with disabilities and that they should do that. And if they don't do that, they have to be sanctioned.

Participant from Montenegro

We need to: 1) Empower and support persons with disabilities to take over official posts in political functions. 2) make elections inclusive! 3) persons with disabilities as everyone else should not be afraid to take part in demonstrations and direct actions.

Participant from Germany



Alternative voting procedures are welcome always, but only if those are made available on an equal basis to everyone.

Adriana Caballero-Pérez

Faculty of Law at Maastricht University;
Member of DARE

Our session let me realize how in theory neurological and physical diversity might be welcomed in our current political systems and processes, while practically speaking they prove highly inaccessible for a number of reasons. For instance not every person is mentally or emotionally capable of bearing, following or participating in the "political game" with its own rules, language and rhetorical styles. This must change and be worked on together with people of all neurological and physical abilities to allow for true democratic representation of citizens voices in politics!

Participant from Germany



IDEAS FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE EUROPE

Thinking about how we will shape our personal or societal future generally implies the assumption that we, or at least our species, are still alive. However, our increasing awareness of the climate crisis, environmental degradation, and the finiteness of our resources is challenging this assumption, leading in the worst case to an existential crisis and a dominant feeling of powerlessness. But the European Public Sphere would not be the European Public Sphere if it gave in to this feeling. And so, as part of the Ukrainian Vibes tour, we also set out to find visions and solutions for a more sustainable Europe.

Fortunately, we met many people on the tour (speakers and participants) who are already working towards a more sustainable Europe. This gives hope. And these people pointed out two things in particular: On the one hand, we need structural changes that are difficult to achieve as an individual (e.g. an economy that balances the interests of companies, the community, and the environment; a value change in society towards post-growth/ green-growth attitudes) Here we rely - not only but heavily - on states and companies. EU policies such as the Green Deal show that something is happening. Nevertheless, the current efforts are not sufficient, we need for example more climate change commitments and regulatory controls for CO2 emissions.

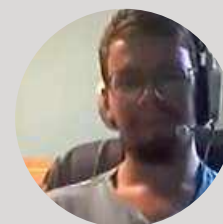
On the other hand, there are many ways how we as individuals can contribute to a more sustainable Europe. It begins with educating yourself and leads to practices such as waste management, conscious consumption (e.g. veganism), use of low-carbon transport, addressing the government for change, and trying to convince others of sustainable ideas, which might also contribute to the value change.

For our webinar, we have tried to choose topics that illustrate that these two aspects do not necessarily have to be understood as opposites, but can be reconciled. In other words, areas in which the government, companies, civil society and the individual are already working together to find a solution - sometimes better, sometimes worse. We thought that this might be the case with "Green Tourism, Sustainable Tourism Practices" and "Smart Cities and Integrated City Development". It turned out that we were right: Based on the experience of our panellists, we can say that if you achieve to involve all relevant actors in a project and integrate the perspective of the community, there's a high chance for success.



The environmental crisis can only be resolved in conjunction with states and large corporations. The modern economy is built on a constant increase in production and consumption. We treat nature as a resource that we use and at the expense of which we increase GDP. However, nature is not limitless, and now we have reached the stage where we need to change consumer attitudes in a resource-constrained environment. And that's why systemic changes at the management level are needed here.

Participant from Ukraine



The most important thing is to educate yourself and to really care about. And if you do this - you will find a way!

Inokentii Horobtsov,
National Ecological Center of Ukraine



I think, addressing the government is really important. There are many different ways how to do that: protests, demonstrations, blocking big companies, taking part in public discussions or school activities [...]. So my advice is to address the local or national government in the way that is right for you with the support of other people.

Jason Michalek
Fridays for Future



Green Tourism, Sustainable Tourism Practices

Mentimeter

On the question: "Which benefits to you associate with sustainable development?" (2nd Workshop)



Mentimeter

On the question: "Where do you come from?" (2nd Webinar)



The dynamic development of world tourism largely affects the planet we live on. Integrating tourism into nature- and people-friendly practices is already underway. Sustainable tourism aims to increase the benefits and to reduce the negative impacts caused by tourism. In this discussion, we explored the trend of green tourism, learned about eco-friendly practices, and debated about how to become sustainable travellers ourselves.

The Status Quo

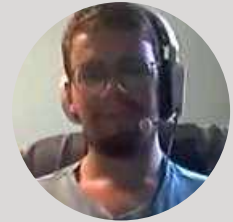
- Mass tourism in the past has contributed to the environmental crisis (loss of biodiversity, global warming, destruction of natural habitats, etc.)
- Many travellers do not acknowledge the value of the nature and landscapes they are visiting and forget about the needs of future generations
- Since 1992 we can observe that the discussion on sustainability is becoming more and more developed and that the demand for sustainable travel options (and the supply) is increasing
- But some offers for sustainable tourism are not as sustainable as they look at the first glance (→ greenwashing)
- Sometimes it's difficult to travel sustainably even if you want to
- The conversation today about sustainable tourism mostly develops around the preservation of biodiversity, socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, and tourism activities after COVID-19

Solutions

Visions, ideas, and solutions to travel more sustainably in the future:

- There is a demand for mechanisms and solutions that help in prospering green tourism practices and initiatives worldwide; they should be developed with the support and understanding of those who are involved in tourism as an industry
- Sustainable tourism is based on behaviour and practice, so everyone can contribute (e.g. use low carbon transport; conscious consumption; local guides)
- The easier it becomes to travel sustainably the more people will do it
- Tourism is also a big industry (providing many jobs) that needs to:
 - make optimal use of environmental resources (maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity; better energy solutions)
 - ensure viable, long-term economic operations (--> "circular economy" as a business model)
 - develop a better system of waste management and reduce the amount of plastic
- By developing the industry we shouldn't forget about the communities living in the tourism area, we should:
 - care about their well-being
 - respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities and preserve cultural heritage
 - act responsibly towards their natural heritage
 - support the local economy (local products, services and initiatives)
- Community-based tourism has the potential to support and strengthen local communities and bring positive effects to rural areas (especially in depressed areas)
- Sustainable tourism (in its community-driven shape) bears the chance to contribute to a value change towards more sustainability and to realize that we are one community
- But we still need to:
 - advocate for it and to educate more about it
 - think more about how sustainable tourism can contribute to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- We should invest more in low-carbon travelling options (e.g. a better railway system in Europe)
- We need a higher percentage of protected natural areas (reserves, natural parks etc.)
- Research on sustainable tourism must focus on developing practical, innovative and tailored solutions that can be applied to the specific needs of a country and/ or a destination

“



Nowadays, one of my biggest concerns is that popular touristic destinations really have to take more precautionary measures in protecting their natural environment. I wish for the Future of Europe a higher percentage of protected natural areas.

Inokentii Horobtsov

National Ecological Center of Ukraine



I wish for the Future of Europe to experience more of the community-based tourism and initiatives and possibilities to support local communities through responsible tourism practices.

Viktoriia Kiptenko

Associate Professor at National Taras Shevchenko University



So that's I think also a kind of very specific aspect of responsibility - realizing we all are one community. No one can truly flourish unless everyone is flourishing.

Rebecca Rothney

Founder and Executive Director of Pack for a Purpose



Smart Cities & Integrated City Development

Smart cities can be described as the interaction (sort of symbiosis) between the city and its inhabitants based on the most modern technologies. Their development is based on four important pillars of infrastructure: human capital, energy resources, ICT & IoT, and technology. A large part of the discussion revolved around sustainable energy and zero-carbon communities, as this was the main field of expertise of our speakers. Nevertheless, other aspects were also addressed.

Task

participants had to solve during the workshop



Structure

of the discussions in the breakout rooms



The Status Quo

- It's very important to combine smart cities with sustainable development: because sometimes cities are working on being smart from the digital aspect, which does not always mean sustainable
- Sustainable urban development originated in the 1970s and is today one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, goal 11), but the SDG indicators are not implementable on the local level
- The fact that more than half of the world population lives in constantly growing cities and megacities, underlines the potential of cities in fighting global warming and the environmental crisis
- People working on making cities more sustainable encounter several barriers:
 - lack of cooperation between the necessary actors (municipality, private and corporate actors, civil society)
 - not all people benefit from already developed solutions in an equal way, especially not in the digital sphere (e.g. digital participatory inequality)
 - the national laws for sustainable energy solutions in many countries prevent people from installing and using them because it's not economically viable (e.g. wind turbines; solar panels)
 - lack of awareness of parts of the population and local businesses for the need for sustainable urban development
 - Risks that are connected with smart cities are:
 - a lack of data security
 - an unregulated, too powerful cyberspace
- Cities didn't achieve energy neutrality/positiveness yet

Solutions

Visions, ideas, and solutions for sustainable urban development:

- Sustainable urban development can not be achieved without a significant transformation of the way we build and manage cities
- Good cooperation with financial institutions can help to get the necessary investments for sustainable urban development projects
- The city of the future must be greener and provide good air quality; it must be liveable, human-friendly, a place where you want to return to, safe, and offer affordable housing
- To move towards energy positive and zero-carbon communities we can or should (as the city Lviv did):
 - create positive energy districts
 - increase the share of renewable energy solutions
 - improve energy efficiency (change and modernize the districts' heating infrastructure; modernize wastewater infrastructure; automatic energy monitoring in public buildings)
 - increase the uptake of e-mobility solutions
 - extension and optimisation of the public transport network
 - give incentives to local businesses to integrate renewable energy solutions (e.g. by a voucher system)
 - use smart metering and data sharing solutions
 - change the laws on renewable energies to enable citizens to build their own renewable energy solutions (e.g. solar panels)
- Cities, in case they don't do it yet, should start to assess how they are achieving the SDGs:
 - new indicators measuring the results of sustainable progress at the local level must be developed
 - those cities that already do the measurement should share their approach
- Sustainable urban development should be also understood as participatory urban development:
 - we should create awareness that citizens are crucial for city development because solutions are going to be more creative and technology without their engagement won't work
 - new, digital tools can be used to involve citizens in city planning
 - we must develop cities in a way that their inhabitants can identify with them

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It's important to support cities in transition towards climate neutrality, becoming zero carbon communities, and also using the positive energy district concept. I wish more climate neutral and energy independent cities in Europe!

Maksym Terletsy
Lviv City Institute

So, the (smartest) cities only work, when people can identify with them. My hope for the Future of Europe is that cities will not be developed only by the governments. Cities should be grown through creativity and participation of their citizens.

Participant from Germany



I see the future of Europe in human-friendly cities with strong identities and individual faces; cities where you can live comfortably and where you want to return; cities, the development of which is balanced both in terms of functions and in the spatial dimension.

Oleksii Gnatiuk
Research Fellow at National Taras Shevchenko University Kyiv



IDEAS FOR AN INTEGRATED EUROPE

Bringing the European Public Sphere for the first time to the EU border country Ukraine gave us the chance to integrate and to learn from the perspective of people who live on the European continent but not in the Union. It has been stated more than once that this perspective can be described as a feeling of living between two worlds - EU and Russia - and that it has been shaped by the painful but sometimes also empowering path of Ukraine towards EU integration.

Of course, we took the opportunity to discuss this topic of EU integration during our tour. In our workshop, we focused more on the formalities linked to the integration process, and in our webinar on "Europe & Ukraine" we had a closer look at Ukraine's path to the EU and the citizens' perspective on it. And by reflecting more on the Ukrainian case we realized that those questions that go hand in hand with the Ukrainian integration affect not only Ukrainians but all Europeans: It's questions of identity - do we consider ourselves being European? - and it's questions of how we perceive and treat the other one, our neighbour.

For the discussions, we were supported by great speakers who spent many years in their lives thinking about these questions and trying to solve them.

Where does Europe begin and where does it end? - This was the question asked at the beginning of the project. What we can draw as a core message from the discussions is that for any further development of Europe we need to communicate properly with each other, we need to know each other('s differences), try to understand each other, and cooperate. This also seems to be the beginning of Europe, because communication is the foundation for the ideas on which our future is built. In all this Europe should not forget about the potential of Europe's rural areas. Further, it was mentioned that the EU Eastern Partnership program needs to be revised to bring the positive effects associated with it. We should work on finding common unifying roots for European identity and need more consciousness for the fact that Europe does not end at the borders of the EU.

For our common future of Europe, we need to continue the pan-European dialogue and as citizens, we should use our power to spread the idea of an integrated, strong, just, peaceful, tolerant, stable Europe - a Europe united in diversity.



The future of Europe depends on us and if we will do something Europe will change.

Participant from Ukraine

I would like peace in Europe, tolerance, economic stability, mutual assistance between countries.

Participant from Ukraine



I want a European generation - open-minded, active, tolerant, creative, and competitive..

Participant from Czech Republic

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For Ukraine, European integration is the best way not to be like the Russian Federation.

Mikhailo Pashkov
Razumkov Center

Ukraine has long had clear tools for European integration: the civil society platform is one tool, the association agreement is also a tool, but unfortunately, it is unclear and not communicated to society properly and completely unrealized.

Participant from Ukraine



European integration is a very difficult topic, very politicized. In our country [=Ukraine], only 9% of the people are interested in politics, for others, it is out of interest. Many achievements in the field of the agreement are incomprehensible to people. In general, the attitude to EI is positive but meaningless. Some topics are not a priority for citizens - for example, the Green Deal - a cross-cutting theme of European integration.

Ivetta Delikatna
Association4U

Ukraine's integration into the EU

Ukraine follows an already long-lasting path towards EU accession, without knowing when and how it will end. The signing of the Association Agreement in 2014 was a major step forward in this process but for sure not the last one. The discussion focused on how EU integration is perceived by Ukrainians and how we can tighten the relationship between the EU and Ukraine.

The Status Quo:

- Ukraine follows already a long path towards EU integration with some achievements already made (e.g. EU is Ukraine's main trading partner; Ukraine joined 90% of EU's external statements)
- The EU integration process bares a lot of chances for Ukraine (reforms; spread of fundamental rights, etc.)
- The tense geopolitical situation and the bad relationship between the EU and Russia leads to the fact that the EU is not ready to provide Ukraine with a roadmap for integration

Public Opinion:

- More and more Ukrainians feel like Europeans, involved in the history of the EU
- According to recent surveys, 51% of Ukrainians have a positive attitude towards the EU, and 66% trust the EU; 54% of Ukrainians support joining the EU
- In recent years, the positioning of citizens on the priority of domestic areas has changed positively, now the EU is in the first place
- In 2014 there has been an increase in European sympathies; the dynamics of support after the Maidan revolution are stable but not growing
- The EU is mainly associated in Ukraine with economic development and well-being
- Ukrainians see the responsibility for the integration mainly lying in the hands of the government; the potential of civil society remains underused
- 30 % consider the EU integration process to be successful
- It's difficult to communicate the EU integration processes well; many achievements in the field of the Association Agreement are incomprehensible for a large part of the society
- European integration is a very politicised topic in Ukraine, but uninteresting for the mass population
- There is a big imbalance in understanding the processes of European integration between age and geographical regions in Ukraine; The difference between East and West Ukraine supporting joining EU is very large: 72% in the West, 29% in the East



Speakers for European Integration during the Workshops



Solutions

Visions, ideas, and solutions for Ukraine to become a full member of the EU:

- The Association Agreement needs to be reviewed and updated; breakthrough areas that would highly influence Ukraine's relationship with the EU must be singled out
- EU directives must be implemented into Ukrainian legislation
- The EU must renew its European Neighborhood Policy and bring its cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries (Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia) to a new level; a possible area for intensified cooperation is the regulation of border crossings
- The EU needs a new clear joint strategy in the Russian direction
- The EU must strengthen its strategic autonomy and pursue more vigorously the idea of creating a European army

Visions, ideas, and solutions to strengthen the support of Ukrainians for the integration process:

- Perception of the European integration in Ukraine is facilitated not only by internal factors but also by political statements of EU politicians and EU projects that people see in Ukraine:
 - communication about the Association Agreement must be improved to make it more accessible for a wider audience
 - we need to communicate more about European values and European institutions
- Better cooperation between the public and the governmental sector
- Civil society should be involved more in monitoring the integration progress

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54% of Ukrainians support joining the EU, but the difference between East and West in the West is very large 72% in the East 29%. The dynamics of support is stable after Maidan but is not growing.

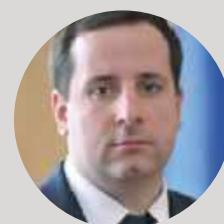
Ivetta Delikatna
Association4U

[I want] more border crossings with Ukraine, rapid border crossings, openness and cooperation in the public and governmental sector, joint activities to study the mentality and better understanding of each other.

Participant from Ukraine

I would like Ukraine to become a full member of the European community, and the next generation to live in a democratic and uncorrupted country. Therefore, more attention needs to be paid to European values and European institutions. Thank you for the interesting topics.

Participant from Ukraine



If we are talking about the future of Europe, how I see, I guess that Europe should be more united and forceful in solving different global problems.

Oleksandr Saienko
Former minister of Ukraine

“



We have the European anthem, the currency Euro, in our passports we can read European citizen, we even have a European drivers license, but nobody knows what the day of Europe is for example - we can see that all this presents mostly the bureaucracy from Brussels, remaining a distant concept.

Nicolas de Santis,
Founder and director of BRAND EU

I am from Ukraine and feel myself as European, but as I see in Ukraine, it is important for the people not to leave Ukrainian identity too. We have to find the right way to combine it, national and international.

Participant from Ukraine



There are bottom-up initiatives, and this is what youth can do and in general people who are interested in building Europe - the European civil society.

Prof. Dr. Michael J. Wintle
Emeritus Chair of Modern European History, University Amsterdam

European Identity

Ukraine follows an already long-lasting path towards EU accession, without knowing when and how it will end. The signing of the Association Agreement in 2014 was a major step forward in this process but for sure not the last one. The discussion focused on how EU integration is perceived by Ukrainians and how we can tighten the relationship between the EU and Ukraine

The Status Quo:

- The project of Europe is in a constant identity crisis (but it's not entirely comprehensible what European identity is and there is no such thing as a single European culture)
- The Brexit may negatively affect European identity
- Antiliberal and eurosceptic forces (e.g. in Hungary, Poland) challenge European identity
- EU symbolism is too distant and institutional
- Although EU citizens could draw on identity-forming elements (e.g. anthem), Brussels is still mainly associated with bureaucracy
- Nevertheless, the EU has made a great contribution in keeping a part of the continent together and can do that in the future

Solutions

Visions, ideas, and solutions to strengthen European identity:

- In the long term, the support for the European project may increase again - it has been like that in the past
- We should find common unifying roots for European identity across varying European countries and cultures, and work on cultivating and promoting it, without making the mistake to think that we could base this identity on a single common culture
- We should use the potential of citizens, bottom-up initiatives, and grass-roots efforts to contribute to a feeling of mutual benefit
- The EU must change to a more integrated union with decentralized powers
- The EU should establish common social basics (e.g. Euro-Dividend)
- We need to appreciate the fact that identities can be built out of many different parts and find ways to combine them



European Citizens from East and West

Even though the fall of the iron curtain in 1989 released tensions in the relationship between Eastern and Western Europe and removed physical barriers to exchange and cooperation, we still have the feeling that prejudices and sometimes ignorance remain driving factors of how we perceive our fellow European countries. Panellists of the discussion tried to trace this feeling and developed ideas on how to improve the relationship between "Eastern" & "Western" Europe.

The Status Quo

- There's a long history of the "East-West-divide" (enlightenment; cold war)
- But actually, it's not entirely clear, where "Eastern" & "Western" Europe is, and those categories should be used carefully
- These categories influence the way we perceive ourselves (and the other) and leave us with the feeling that there might be differences & a division between "Eastern" and "Western" Europe
- But it's more a mental picture that we have and maybe we are also more similar than we are different
- "Observable" differences/ barriers in the (imagined) reality are:
 - prejudices, stereotypes and a lack of knowledge
 - political discourse in the "West" in which the term "East" has negative connotations
 - political discourse in the "East" in which the term "West" was for a long time seen as ideal; more recently "West" perceived as morally degraded and decadent
 - level of economic growth & affluence (West>East)
 - party system stability (West>East)
 - strong family norms (West<East)
 - acceptance of liberal values (West>East)
 - level of depression of elderly people (West<East)
- The language barrier hinders cooperation, and even though sometimes "we say the same words, we mean different things"
- "Eastern" European countries suffer from brain drain and weak institutions
- The potential of rural areas and the countryside remains underused when it comes to the improvement of the relationship
- "Eastern" European countries that are not part of the EU are not considered as equal partners in terms of geopolitical negotiations

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There are other reasons to say that there might be some kind of an East- West division of the continent that still remains, though one should be careful of not just saying East and West, because that should be important qualifications. It's not clear where East and West is, even though we might find differences.

Rune Holmgaard Andersen

Editor of the North East Forum, University Roskilde



The big difference between East and West from my perspective is that we say the same words, but we mean different things.

Participant from Romania



Maybe we are just more similar than we are different. I mean, first of all, aren't we humans? Every one of us and we have some needs: We need safety, we need certainty we need to belong to some groups we need to feel valued. We need to grow [...] and we need some variety in our life, and we need to contribute.

Participant from Switzerland

“



Looking into differences between East and West, well, it's probably essential if we want to understand any kind of barriers between Eastern and Western European relationships.

Rune Holmgaard Andersen,
Editor of North East Forum, Roskilde University

I want a Europe that is more inclusive regarding eastern & south eastern European countries.

Participant from Germany



That's why we are called "Multicultural Ukraine" because we strongly believe that there is a tremendous multicultural potential, which is not properly used by the stakeholders in rural areas and the countryside.

Martin Reuther
Head of NGO Multicultural Ukraine



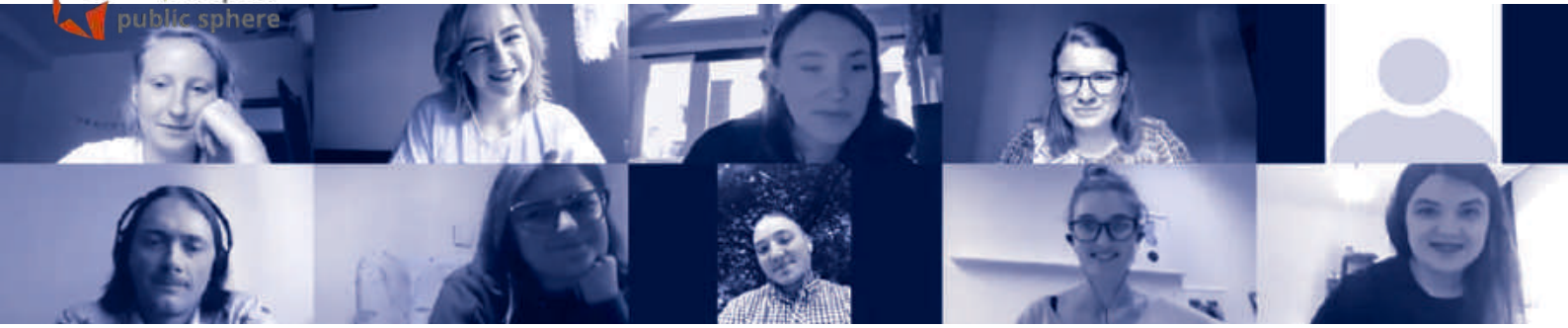
Intervention needs to be local and connecting with local communities. It's the key to better understanding and bridging the differences.

Participant from Romania

Solutions

Visions, ideas, and solutions to improve the relationship of "Eastern" and "Western" Europe:

- The basis for peaceful coexistence is that we know about each other('s) differences
- Therefore we need to:
 - be willing to leave our bubbles, to learn about each other, and to see our surroundings
 - foster exchange
 - communicate
- We need the local communities to bridge the differences; intervention must be local, focus on what people actually need and take their concerns seriously; piloting communities have the potential to bring change to regions and maybe even to the national level
- Interventions in the local community can not only rely on short-term projects but must be sustainable: you can build stronger communities by building strong and good (local) institutions (here the EU should help) and those institutions (e.g. public libraries) could play a role in educating about Europe
- Rural areas and the countryside have to play bigger roles in bridging differences
- To fight brain drain, it would be good to establish immigration agencies in the countries of origin that promote the country abroad, help to attract people from abroad to come moving and gain back the highly qualified people who left the country; The EU should consider this in its projects, programs, grants and communication strategies
- The EU should work more with NGOs and private independent structures, because too much money that goes to the government, does not get to where it should go
- The civil society sector in itself could cooperate more and use the potential of networks (e.g. <https://blackseango.org/>)
- Cooperation between "Eastern" and "Western" Europe must be based on equal footing with benefits for everyone
- The "East" should maybe think more about convincing the "West" to cooperate, not because the "East" needs cooperation, but because the "West" should be able to learn and gain something from cooperation
- We must acknowledge non-EU European countries to be European countries and strengthen the feeling that we are all part of the same continent (→ European identity)



FURTHER IDEAS

The participants and speakers of the Ukrainian Vibes tour were so creative and inventive that there were also some ideas brought to the table that did not fit within the categories “Democracy/ Sustainability/ European Integration”.

An idea for a better transplantation system in Europe and protection from medical negligence:

- Transplantation is a way to save human lives
- The EU should create a European Unified Transplantation Coordination System to boost the level of transplantation (take system of the USA as an example)
- This system should combine all data from EU- and non-EU-countries
- More investments are needed for Biotechnology Research Centers
- The EU must improve the legislation regarding medical negligence and ensure the success of reforms in this area

Ideas for a better education system in Europe:

- We could have a much better future if education was better. A good education system helps people become better citizens, get a better-paid job, helps us grow and develop
- The EU should invest more in programs that focus on building the required skills of young people to launch their own projects and initiatives and should invest in trainings for social cohesion
- We must educate more about democracy and sustainability
- Educational institutions must adopt new (IT-)technologies if they want to remain competitive and invest more in digitalisation; Here EU investments are also needed
- Educational institutions must develop standards based on guiding principles of openness, balance, consensus
- Education in primary school must already help children to work on understanding who he/she is, including the understanding of the own personality, personal values, needs, and emotions (e.g. as a starting point: sharing life stories and what the individual learnt from it)

An idea for a universal basic income in Europe and a digital Euro:

- Wealth is distributed highly unequally in Europe and the World
- Europeans should be guaranteed a basic income or social dividend
- Funding opportunities: Direct investment of the ECB in the form of a digital Euro; Dividends of a European wealth fund; Proceeds of digital transaction licence for large companies
- Chances of the basic income: better health; focus more on the important things in life;
- For the future of Europe, we need a sovereign digital Euro

PROPOSALS FOR THE CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

As this very much corresponds with the ideas of the European Public Sphere we used the unique and timely opportunity to bring the results of the Ukrainian Vibes tour not only to you but also directly to the digital citizens' platform of the Conference on the Future of Europe. In total we published 36 proposals on the platform, reflecting the demands, visions and solutions of our participants and speakers. We encourage you to have a look at them, to endorse them or to comment on them.

Proposals, that were developed by our participants of the workshops:

Improve the Legal Regulation on Transplantation and create a European Unified Transplantation Coordination System
<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/Health/f/3/proposals/55344>

Preserve Cultural Heritage
<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/Education/f/36/proposals/54256>

Strengthen civil societies in post-communist countries
<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/Education/f/36/proposals/54255>

Support and Ensure Quality Education
<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/Education/f/36/proposals/54253>

More direct financial support for seminars and projects for youth
<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/Education/f/36/proposals/54221>

Monitor the implementation of the decisions of the ECHR and impose sanctions for non-implementation
<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/ValuesRights/f/12/proposals/54220>

More power for the EU to fight corruption and to enforce and support European values
<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/ValuesRights/f/12/proposals/54188>

Protect EU citizens from medical negligence
<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/Health/f/3/proposals/54187>

Strengthen regulatory controls for CO2 for different countries
<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/GreenDeal/f/1/proposals/54154>

New climate change commitments
<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/GreenDeal/f/1/proposals/54121>

Proposals, that reflect the discussions of the webinar on “The Inclusiveness of Democracy and Participatory Innovations”:

Make Voting Accessible for Everyone
<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/Democracy/f/6/proposals/109764>

Empower Persons with Disabilities to participate in politics
<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/Democracy/f/6/proposals/109763>

Sanction institutions for disregarding the CRPD
<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/Democracy/f/6/proposals/109762>

Digitalization as opportunity
<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/Digital/f/15/proposals/109761>

Political social media campaigns
<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/Democracy/f/6/proposals/109760>

Strengthen direct democracy - citizen participation
<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/Democracy/f/6/proposals/109759>

More equitable/democratic financial system
<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/Economy/f/10/proposals/109726>

Infobox CoFuE

The Conference on the Future of Europe was launched in 2021 and is chaired by the European Parliament, the European Council and the European Commission. Together with Europe's citizens and civil society the conference aims to generate ideas for how the EU should develop in the future.

Proposals, that reflect the discussions of our webinar on “Smart Citizens, Wise Decisions - Sustainability”:

Zero carbon communities & Positive energy district concepts

<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/GreenDeal/f/1/proposals/109627>

Cities’ development should be shaped by their citizens

<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/OtherIdeas/f/8/proposals/109660>

Digital Equality in Smart Cities

<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/Digital/f/15/proposals/109661>

Local indicators for sustainable development

<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/EUInTheWorld/f/16/proposals/109662>

Sustainable cities

<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/GreenDeal/f/1/proposals/109663>

The spread of sustainable values

<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/Education/f/36/proposals/109664>

Green tourism development

<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/GreenDeal/f/1/proposals/109665>

Support to community-based rural tourism

<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/GreenDeal/f/1/proposals/109666>

Preservation of nature in popular touristic destinations

<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/GreenDeal/f/1/proposals/109667>

Proposals, that reflect the discussions of our webinar on “Europe and Ukraine”:

Expanding the exchange between Eastern and Western Europe

<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/EUInTheWorld/f/16/proposals/107120>

More cooperation of EU with NGOs to improve Eastern Partnership

<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/EUInTheWorld/f/16/proposals/107121>

Improving the relationship of Eastern and Western Europe through community-driven approaches and under consideration of rural areas

<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/EUInTheWorld/f/16/proposals/107123>

Make Eastern Partnership (EaP) an equal partnership

<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/EUInTheWorld/f/16/proposals/107124>

Using the potential of institutions to improve the relationship between Eastern and Western Europe

<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/EUInTheWorld/f/16/proposals/107125>

Deepening Ukraine’s EU integration through intensified cooperation and a renewal of the ENP

<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/EUInTheWorld/f/16/proposals/107126>

Fostering EU’s strategic autonomy

<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/EUInTheWorld/f/16/proposals/107127>

Recognizing the role of civil society and public opinion for Ukraine's EU integration

<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/EUInTheWorld/f/16/proposals/107128>

Fighting Brain Drain in Eastern- and Southeastern European Countries

<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/Migration/f/34/proposals/107152>

Strengthening European Identity through integration and Euro-Dividend

<https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/OtherIdeas/f/8/proposals/107153>

