

National Citizens' Panel on the future of Europe in Berlin

- Citizens' recommendations -

Germany held its National Citizens' Panel on the Future of Europe on 5, 8, 15 and 16 January. The process of selecting citizens followed the stratified random selection of participants for the European Citizens' Panels. 12,000 citizens in Germany were invited to participate; out of the respondents, approximately 100 were selected, taking into account the current census data of the Federal Republic of Germany to reflect the diversity of German society and the population as a whole. During the National Citizens' Panel, the participants discussed five topics: The Role of the EU in the world, A Stronger Economy, Climate and Environment, Social Justice, European Values and the Rule of Law. They then developed concrete recommendations under these headlines that were adopted in the final plenary session on 16 January: www.youtube.com/watch?v=cefqmarZXzY

Table 1:

Linking foreign trade interests with climate policy measures

We recommend that the EU (particularly the EU Commission) launch an investment package for climate-friendly technologies and innovations, including funding programmes. This package should be financed through climate-related import tariffs which would be earmarked and passed on as monetary compensation for the climate damage caused. In this context, a points-based system to rate sustainability would be introduced for certain products. A clear EU position and a strong and innovative Europe would be helpful in reaching global climate targets. This would help consolidate the role of the European Union as a responsible, global pioneer and model which secures wealth and can bring about sustainable global changes. Those goals are important to us because the EU is making an enduring contribution in the fight against climate change which in the long term could make an important contribution to consolidating world peace.

Table 2:

Creating incentives for production to be based in the EU, especially the production of basic supplies

In order to facilitate the production of basic supplies in the EU, we recommend accelerating and standardising approval procedures, reducing bureaucracy and offering subsidies to companies that relocate to the EU and/or develop production sites in the EU. The EU should promote renewable energy on a massive scale in order to reduce energy costs.

Through these measures, we want to shorten supply chains and make them more climate friendly, help strengthen the EU and create jobs in which human rights are respected.

Those goals are important to us because relocating production to the EU would make the EU internationally more autonomous and politically less vulnerable.

Table 1:

Digi-Score – points for a strong EU-wide digital economy

We propose introducing a publicly accessible digital score board, Digi-Score, run by the European Commission (DG Connect). This is a detailed ranking system that indicates and compares the current level of digitisation of EU businesses. With this proposal, we aim to create an incentive to increase digitisation across Europe. Businesses with a low digital score would be entitled to receive targeted support to help them catch up.

This goal is important to us because it would help pave the way for increasing productivity, efficiency and sales and thereby strengthen Europe as a manufacturing base.

Table 2:

Information platform for an EU-wide exchange of knowledge and experiences

We recommend that the EU set up an information platform serving as an EU-wide exchange of knowledge and experiences. Our goal is to pool information on transnational education and training courses in the EU, showcase best practice examples and offer citizens the opportunity to present new ideas for cross-border exchange. In addition, further information could be provided on the technical expert fora available (e.g. on energy, environment, digitisation).

We deem this important because citizens need transparency about the cross-border training and education courses that are available. They should receive better guidance at EU level on what fora and platforms exist.

Table 1:

Regulation on guaranteed product life

We recommend that the EU introduce legislation to ensure a product-specific, extended, guaranteed lifetime for products manufactured and sold in the EU and make it transparent for consumers.

Resources are finite and could be saved through this measure, as well as waste be avoided, which would benefit the environment, the climate and consumers.

In this way, we want to encourage manufacturers to bring products on to the market that are more durable and repairable.

Table 2:

Long-term EU campaign for sustainable consumption and lifestyle

We recommend that a European body, including branches in EU countries, be provided with its own resources and lead the campaign.

We aim to ensure that all people in the EU have a common identity, become more mindful of the need for sustainable consumption and lifestyle and adopt this way of life.

These goals are important to us because we want to generate an intrinsic motivation for sustainable living.

Table 1:

Creating more exchange opportunities for students in Europe

We recommend that the European Union adopt - in addition to the existing ERASMUS programme - a regulation on an exchange programme for students between the ages of 14 and 25 - irrespective of background, gender and level of education. This exchange programme should be systematically established and communicated by local schools. Every student should have the possibility to make use of the exchange programme at any time during his or her school career. To this end, the European Commission should submit a proposal to the European Parliament and the European Council

Our aim is for students, irrespective of school performance and financial support by their parents, to have the possibility to take part in exchange programmes throughout Europe. A culture of European exchange should be fostered from school age. Above all, it is important that exchange programmes are low-threshold and free of red tape. Through the exchange programme, we want to establish European solidarity and reduce language barriers. This should take place with educational justice and educational participation in mind in order to enhance intercultural and communicative competences.

These goals are important to us since they can help promote European cohesion, strengthen respect and cooperation and impart European values from a young age, so that Europe's diversity can be perceived as a chance.

Table 2:

Introducing a basic job-specific salary

We recommend that the EU Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights submit to the European Parliament a proposal for the introduction of a basic job-specific salary in all Member States. This basic salary should be composed of a minimum wage sufficient to secure a livelihood, and a job-specific supplement.

Our aim is for working performances and wages to be comparable within the EU in order to strengthen social justice. This goal is important to us to ensure that the basic principle of the EU is reflected in the labour market: comparable living and working conditions, irrespective of one's place of residence and profession.

Table 1:

Embodying European values and communicating them emotionally

We recommend that European values be made more tangible and communicated in a more emotional way. We could achieve this, for example, through an "onboarding" package, comprising media, interactive elements and greater involvement of citizens.

Our goal is for every single person living in the EU to know about the common values and identify with them.

This goal is important to us because it forms the basis of our co-existence in our community of values. There is far too little awareness of these values because the personal connection is missing. We need to establish this connection.

Table 2:

"EU Life"

We recommend that the EU establish its own educational and informative television programme in order to strengthen awareness among all EU citizens of our common values and ensure that there is easy, barrier-free access for all. These goals are important to us because we wish to gain an insight into public opinion in all EU countries. In this way, we want to strengthen common ground and help bring people together in order to promote more solidarity and train people in the rule of law in order to safeguard democracy.
