

WE ARE EUROPE

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Conference on the Future of Europe

Summary of the Government's
"Eurooppa olemme me" events in Finland



FINNISH
GOVERNMENT



Conference
on the **Future**
of Europe

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8 February 2022

Summary

The Conference on the Future of Europe started in May 2021. Its primary added value is making citizens the focus of discussions about the EU's future. The Member States have organised a plethora of national citizens' panels in addition to the European Citizens' Panels. The panels have varied according to national requirements. The thoughts and proposals of citizens have also been collected on the [Conference's shared online platform](#). Finland has considered it to be important to ensure that the conference's results are representative and include a wide variety of views from different EU citizens.

Finland sees the Conference as one way to promote the participation of citizens in discussions about the EU. As part of the Conference, 19 discussion events have been organised around Finland by February 2022 as part of the Government's "Eurooppa olemme me" tour. Each event has included the participation of a minister. The events have been organised in cooperation with towns, educational institutions, the Timeout Foundation, the European Parliament Liaison Office in Finland, and the Finnish Parliament. The aim has been for the participants to be as diverse and representative as possible, genuinely listening to them, and spreading awareness of the Conference on the Future of Europe. Young people have been a special focus.

The events of the tour have been open to all citizens, and they have been marketed through partners and in traditional and social media. The aim has been to focus the events on the citizens and their views. At some events, the "timeout method" has been employed to encourage civic debate. Certain events had a central theme, but the option to raise other topics was always available to citizens. Some events were bilingual (in Finnish and Swedish). The northernmost event in the EU was held in Utsjoki in Finnish and Sami. Sign language interpretation was also available at some of the tour's events. The majority of the events were streamed live. The COVID-19 pandemic posed challenges for planning and execution. Some events had to be completely virtual.

Finland benefits from a comprehensive EU affairs coordinating system with extended sub-committees that include representatives from interest groups and stakeholders. A "Futures Day" for the sub-committees was organised as part of the tour, and more than 250 representatives from interest groups and stakeholders participated, in addition to public officials. Members of the Advisory Board on Civil Society Policy also participated.

A summary of all the tour's events has been published on the Conference's shared online platform and the tour's website (eurooppaolemmeme.fi). This memorandum presents a compact summary of the tour.

General

EU membership is widely supported in Finland. The European Union is largely seen as an economic entity, but also a community of values and security. The unity and stability of the Union are considered important. The discussions had a positive atmosphere. Many felt the opportunity to participate in a discussion about the EU's future was very welcome, although there were difficulties at times in reaching citizens and motivating them to participate in EU-themed events.

Most discussed topics

Different opinions and perspectives are part of civic debate. Because the nature and themes of the events were different and the number and activity of their participants varied, far-reaching conclusions should not be drawn. Even so, the following themes were predominant:

Climate change was the theme raised most in the discussions. The need for a consistent and ambitious climate policy that covers all sectors of policy, both in the EU and on the global level, was emphasised. It was suggested that the EU should act as a global leader in climate matters. The anxiety caused by climate change, especially among young people, came up in several discussions. Also the the security implications of climate change was brought up during the discussions. The discussions also included the hope that cooperation and ambitious policy can mitigate global warming.

Economic and industrial policy were often linked to the topic of climate change. There was desire to turn climate change mitigation into an opportunity by directing EU funding towards research, new technology, and innovations. Investment in human capital and comprehensive welfare policy was also seen as important. On the other hand, the need to consider the effects of climate measures on local industries was stressed in many discussions. The use of forests was particularly prominent. Consideration for different regional starting points was on the wish list. For example, reducing car use is more difficult in sparsely populated areas compared to cities.

Fins want more **Security and crisis preparedness** from EU. A common thread in the thematic discussions of the EU sub-committees' Futures Day was how to comprehensively reinforce the **EU's crisis preparedness and resilience**. The importance of resilience has been highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic. **EU's Common Security and Defence Policy** also became a central theme, especially in the tour's preliminary survey. The discussions emphasised a comprehensive concept of security, including hybrid and

cyber threats. The tense geopolitical situation was also seen to highlight the importance of traditional “hard” security and Defence Policy.

Shared EU values – democracy, the rule of law, fundamental human rights, equality, minority rights, etc. – featured prominently at many panels. The discussions emphasised that the EU is a community based on shared values, and it must actively promote and defend its values within the Union and in foreign relations. Solutions should be sought for current challenges (climate change, digitalisation, migration, and security, for example) in line with the EU’s values. The position of minorities must be improved, and their voices must be heard in EU matters. Examples of minorities included sexual minorities and the Sami people.

The need for a common EU **immigration and asylum policy** was raised in several discussions. The importance of legal migration for the EU’s competitiveness and for mitigating the lack of labour and skills was also brought up.

Finns considered it important that **citizens’ are offered a broad opportunity to be heard in EU** in EU affairs, and that citizens have a wide range of channels that help them to express their thoughts, opinions and ideas. Awareness of participation and advocacy tools must be improved and the barrier for entry must be lowered. In particular, the youth expressed that new tools, channels and possibilities are needed so they could engage more also via channels that they use in every day life. Understanding of the EU and its decision-making should be improved by increasing transparency and communicating more clearly especially regarding the work of EU institutions. The importance of democracy education was also discussed.

The opportunities presented by the EU for **young people** to study and work in Member States were seen to be especially important. The new ALMA scheme targeting disadvantaged youth was seen to improve equality in exploiting all these opportunities. Young people raised the topic of mental health and requested improvements to access to mental health services, also because of the increased anxiety brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences.

The participants also asked for more consideration on what matters should be decided on the national level (e.g. forest policy) and what would make more sense on the EU level. For example, in the healthcare sector, EU measures cannot replace national preparedness, but they can support it. Attention was also called to the equality of Member States in EU decision-making. It was pointed out that integration and its direction should be discussed more openly and strategically.

The prominent themes in the surveys carried out during the tour and at the events largely reflect the latest results of the Eurobarometer surveys. Although economic themes were not predominant on this tour, it should be noted that very lively and critical civic debate was had in Finland in 2020 and 2021 over the EU's recovery package and the related borrowing. In the Eurobarometer surveys, Finns have been more worried than other Europeans about the public debt of the Member States, and Finns consider it important for every Member State to take responsibility for its finances and debt. Finns have also found it important that EU funds are used transparently and monitored effectively, and that Member States receiving EU funding respect the rule of law, fundamental rights, human rights, and democracy.

Institutional questions garnered no particular interest during the tour. According to the spring 2021 Eurobarometer survey, 57 per cent of Finns do not support the idea of supra-national candidate lists in European Parliament elections.

Conclusion

The tour was seen to be useful, and it also increased awareness of the Conference on the Future of Europe and its online platform. Although not all regions were included, the tour achieved good geographical coverage: from southern Helsinki to Finland's northernmost municipality Utsjoki, also including Vaasa in the west and Joensuu in the east. Regional discussions helped bring the Conference closer to the citizens and offered local perspectives on current EU matters. The discussions also resulted in valuable feedback for policy makers about what Finns consider to be worth advocating at the Conference.

The Futures Day of the EU sub-committees was also a success. The discussions supported the development of new and broader perspectives, as well as synergies between different actors and sectors. The event produced results for further development of the sub-committees with an emphasis on pre-emptive influencing and comprehensive systems.

Finland has a long tradition of fostering open and inclusive democracy. Citizen discussions about EU matters will continue in different forms after the Conference has ended. The development of existing and new forms of interaction and engagement must be continued on the EU level, including digital solutions.



"We are Europe" event locations.

Appendix: List of events and the central topics discussed in the events

16 September 2021, Launch, Helsinki

Minister for European Affairs and Ownership Steering **Tytti Tuppurainen**

Full report: <https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/Democracy/f/5/meetings/45013>

Central topics discussed:

- EU values and the progress of rule of law
 - The EU must not hesitate to defend the shared values laid out in its founding agreements both within the union and without. It must be able to intervene in abuse.
- Immigration and asylum policy
 - The topic of immigration includes many aspects such as labour immigration and helping those in need of international protection. The EU needs a uniform asylum system.
- Climate change mitigation
 - The common efforts of the EU to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 were seen to be important.

20 September 2021, Vantaa

Minister of Employment **Tuula Haatainen**

Full report: <https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/Economy/f/13/meetings/46929>

Central topics discussed:

- Young people's opportunities to study and work in the EU
 - Equal opportunities and mutual recognition of competence were underscored in the discussion.
- Future of work
 - Young people considered pay, success, and a good work-life balance as the most important.

- ALMA scheme for disadvantaged youths
 - It was considered to be important that people from all backgrounds be able to exploit the opportunities presented by the EU.

2 October 2021, Lappeenranta

Minister for European Affairs and Ownership Steering **Tytti Tuppurainen**

Full report: <https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/ValuesRights/f/11/meetings/54254>

Central topics discussed:

- EU funding and its distribution
 - The distribution of EU funding in Finland was seen as unfair. The point was raised that a region's funding should be allocated to future investments such as research and development activities that support local residents and businesses, including tourism.
- Climate change and climate policy
 - Concerns were raised about young people's stress over climate change and whether Finland's rural areas have been considered enough in EU decision-making. On the other hand, it was discussed whether climate measures could create opportunities for business in South Karelia. Investments in accessibility and public transport were considered to be necessary.
- Immigration and asylum policy
 - The participants felt that immigration policy was only made on the EU level when problems manifested. Concerns were raised that the Member States act without mutual coordination (e.g. by erecting physical barriers). The importance of labour- and studies-based immigration was emphasised.
- Proximity of the EU's external border (with Russia)
 - The EU's unified Russian policy was seen as a benefit to Finland. Natural and mutually beneficial interaction with Russia was desired in the border regions. The EU-Russia Common Spaces programme was praised because it has enabled relations and dialogue in different projects.

6 October 2021, Webinar

Minister for Nordic Cooperation and Equality **Thomas Blomqvist**

Full report: <https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/ValuesRights/f/11/meetings/49601>

Central topics discussed:

- The EU must continue determined efforts to promote the rights of LGBTIQ people, gender equality, and human rights, as well as support the organisations that defend these values
- The EU's gender equality strategy and LGBTIQ strategy must be implemented effectively. The related legislation and the EU's joining of the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention must proceed.

- Activities opposing equality and LGBTIQ rights must be identified
- Awareness and training must be increased and harassment and hate speech must be curbed.

- Extensive collaboration between human rights actors and organisations
- For example, the cooperation of women's organisations and rainbow organisations were seen as important.

18 October 2021, Kokkola

Minister of Economic Affairs and Employment **Mika Lintilä**

Full report: <https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/Economy/f/13/meetings/54320>

Central topics discussed:

- The EU recovery package should accelerate the transformation of companies
 - In Finland, there is a special need for measures to accelerate company transformation, and the EU recovery package plays a major role here.

- Company growth is hindered by a lack of skilled workers
 - The greatest problem for company growth is the lack of skilled workers. The regional availability of education and training is a factor. One important solution for the availability of skilled workers is labour immigration.

- Rising energy prices in Europe
 - Although Finland's situation is relatively safe, impacts are felt locally as well. In business, rising energy prices mean higher costs for industry and agriculture alike, for example. The security of domestic generation must be ensured.

- Finnish battery expertise has great potential for the EU
- The region has strong expertise in this sector of industry. A world-leading sustainable value chain for batteries is being built in Finland as part of the European market.

18 October 2021, Turku

Minister of Education **Li Andersson**

Full report: <https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/Education/f/37/meetings/63427>

Central topics discussed:

- Removing obstacles from European education
 - The aim is for every European citizen to be able to seek education in any other Member State by 2025 without obstruction. The objectives of equality and inclusivity are highlighted in this. The digital transformation requires improved cooperation in education. The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown into relief the challenges that still exist with the basic issues of digitalisation.

- Continuous learning and adult education
 - European higher education institutions and other operators could create more study paths based on cooperation. The cooperation of industry, higher education institutions, and other educational institutions could be increased in organising postgraduate education and further training. A significant problem in Finland is reaching underrepresented groups and engaging them.

- Education system development/future and equality
 - Finland's system is considered to be equal in the global context and teaching is respected as a profession. The retiring of teachers is a problem all across Europe. Attention is needed on the effects of growing disparity in education: the socio-economic background of students is increasingly affecting their learning outcomes.

25 October 202, Joensuu

Minister of the Environment **Krista Mikkonen**

Full report: <https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/GreenDeal/f/2/meetings/75440>

Central topics discussed:

- Climate change mitigation and loss of biodiversity must be tackled together
 - The climate crisis and biodiversity loss are intertwined. It must be ensured that solutions for one problem do not exacerbate the other. Some of the solutions are energy efficiency, energy savings, the circular economy, and adjusting consumption. Local nature, its protection, and the protection of old forests were considered to be important.

- Regional differences must be taken into account on the EU level as well
 - Region-oriented discussion is important for solving problems.

- The transition to climate sustainability is essential and must be implemented fairly
 - Fairness is a global issue and cannot be viewed purely on the regional or EU level. The EU's actions must be responsible globally. For example, the climate and equity impacts of energy, raw materials, the forest sector, and food must be viewed globally and over the whole life cycle. Genuine dialogue and hearings are one key solution.

- Young people must have their voices heard in climate policy
 - Young people are already engaged in and seek to influence the climate debate. Their messages should be heard and included more in decision-making. The ideas presented for increasing youth engagement included organising regular events and surveys and using participatory budgeting.

25 October 2021, Vaasa

Minister of Justice **Anna-Maja Henriksson**

Full report: <https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/Democracy/f/5/meetings/85009>

Central topics discussed:

- Open governance, trust, and the importance of dialogue between different groups
 - A good life requires personal control. It must be ensured that everyone can exercise their rights, including inclusivity.

- The importance of democracy education and supporting the participation of citizens, young people in particular

- Arenas for building trust must be provided. For example, interaction and increased understanding between population groups must be supported. The old methods must be supplemented with new innovative ways of supporting democratic participation.
- Cooperation and transparency in the activities of municipalities, regions, countries, and the EU
 - Administrations must communicate by using plain language and act openly and interactively. The point was raised that the slowness of democracy is a problem in an increasingly fast-paced society. What can be done to improve understanding of the democratic processes that are inevitably time-consuming?

31 October 2021, Helsinki Book Fair Survey with over 700 respondents: What do you want from the EU and for Europe's future?

Minister for European Affairs and Ownership Steering **Tytti Tuppurainen**

Full report: <https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/Democracy/f/5/meetings/53527>

Central topics discussed:

- The continuity, unity, and stability of the EU
 - About one in three responses was related to the continuity, unity, and stability of the EU. The responses underlined the need to strengthen cooperation between Member States and European democracy. Some responses expressed concern over the EU's weakening or even its dissolution.
- Reinforcement and protection of the EU's values, respecting the rule of law
 - The responses placed great emphasis on reinforcing and protecting the EU's values. The responses mentioned, for example, the principle of the rule of law, equality, human rights, tolerance, and freedom of movement as important European values. Concerns were also raised over the situations of Hungary and Poland.
- Climate and environmental matters
 - Global warming and biodiversity loss were seen as serious problems. Active commitment to climate measures was desired from the EU. The protection of the seas was also mentioned.

1 November 2021, Kuopio

Minister of Social Affairs and Health **Hanna Sarkkinen**

Full report: <https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/Economy/f/13/meetings/75473>

Central topics discussed:

- Mental health, inclusion, and the supporting of comprehensive welfare during the COVID-19 pandemic
 - The discussion underlined the need to support the mental health of students in the high-pressure world of education. The loneliness of students and themes related to inclusion were also causes for concern.

- Non-discrimination and equality
 - Students were worried about problems in adherence to the EU's values and feared that the EU would become divided on them. Young people emphasised the need to accept diversity and maintain intergenerational connections.

- EU opportunities for students and young people
 - The maintaining and promotion of mental health was brought up, by using programmes like the Mieliteko project funded by the European Social Fund, for example.

2 November 2021, Utsjoki – the EU's northernmost future conference event

Minister for European Affairs and Ownership Steering **Tytti Tuppurainen**

Full report: <https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/GreenDeal/f/2/meetings/70361>

Central topics discussed:

- Impacts of climate change on the livelihoods of people living in the Arctic
 - In addition to climate change mitigation, more thought should be spared to how we will adapt to the change. Climate change will greatly impact the trades of the Arctic region, including traditional reindeer husbandry and tourism. Research will be key. A separate relief fund should be established for reindeer husbandry.

- The EU's external border and the importance of cross-border cooperation in the region
 - The national border is practically non-existent for the Sami people because their native region reaches beyond the border. Cross-border cooperation significantly affects both livelihoods and culture. The COVID-19 pandemic has had an enormous impact on cross-border cooperation. This cooperation must be improved, especially preparedness for exceptional situations.

- Hearing the Sami and other minorities in decision-making
 - Finland should do its part to have the Sami heard in EU decision-making. The Sami have a recognised status in the EU's founding agreements, but further measures are required for their opinions to be heard in different EU policy measures. A summit for the Sami will be organised during Finland's chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council in 2023 in Brussels.

8 November 2021, Rovaniemi

Minister of Education **Li Andersson**

Full report: <https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/Education/f/37/meetings/80818>

Central topics discussed:

- Sustainable development in education
 - Discussions were had about the Kestävä Koulu project and including climate and sustainability education in the curriculum. The EU's green transition must be included in vocational and adult education in future.
- Equality of education
 - Discussions were had about what equality of education and "Europe leading the world" mean for education.
- Multilingualism and the situation of Finnish schools
 - Concerns were expressed about the narrowing of Finns' language skills and the selection of languages taught in school. Finland has a large number of multilingual residents whose skills are not recognised or valued. The challenges of organising Sami language education in Rovaniemi were also discussed.

9 November 2021, Helsinki

Minister for Foreign Affairs **Pekka Haavisto**

Full report: <https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/EUInTheWorld/f/17/meetings/75505>

Central topics discussed:

- Global challenges and the EU's role in their resolution
 - The EU drives global climate change mitigation, leading other countries by example to adopt stricter emissions targets. The EU is also a global trailblazer in developing regulation, competition policy, environmental standards, and data protection. On the other hand, the requirement of unanimity in foreign and security policy is not always conducive to quick and effective action from the EU in the face of threats and crises.

- Including the voice of young people in EU decision-making
 - The young people should be heard in decision-making, as the future concerns them the most. Opportunities for participation and influence must be communicated more clearly to young people, and they must be heard more actively in decision-making processes.
- Commitment to climate change mitigation measures in the EU and globally
 - The discussion emphasised the existence of several measures to make countries commit to climate mitigation measures. In the case of developing countries, it was mentioned that technological assistance could be provided as part of development cooperation.

10 November 2021, Helsinki

Minister of Science and Culture **Antti Kurvinen**

Full report: <https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/Education/f/37/meetings/80653>

Central topics discussed:

- The importance of EU cooperation, programmes, and networks for education
 - The EU's cooperation instruments (the European Research Council, the European Universities Initiative, Erasmus+ funding, and Horizon funding) were seen to be essential for advancing education and research in the EU and in Finland. The active promotion of cooperation is in Finland's best interest.
- RDI funding and entrepreneur communities – turning research into results
 - Business and higher education must be brought closer through business incubators and spin-off companies, for example. Research innovations should be utilised more in business. RDI funding should also be directed to service development. The potential of higher education institutions to participate and influence is created nationally by providing predictable, long-term funding.
- Digitalisation is important (in education as well)
 - The digital transformation presents an opportunity for significantly increasing university network collaboration (e.g. virtual exchanges). It also presents new opportunities for designing more individual education packages.

16 November 2021, Lahti

Minister for Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade **Ville Skinnari**

Full report: <https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/Economy/f/13/meetings/80720>

Central topics discussed:

- A stronger future EU and the EU's competitive advantages in world trade
 - The EU must act as one and leverage its advantage globally. This is particularly important when tensions in power politics cause problems and transatlantic cooperation loses steam. The EU must invest in its own capacity to act.

- EU decision-making
 - It is important to carefully consider how authority is distributed: what the EU should decide and what the Member States should decide. Integration and its direction should be discussed more openly and strategically. It must be considered whether unanimous decisions could be abandoned in certain policy sectors, such as foreign and security policy. The voice of young people must be heard more in EU decision-making. Young people need to vote and advocate for their priorities.

- Climate and forest policy
 - The EU's ambitious climate packages are headed in the right direction. It needs to be considered whether operators should be rewarded for investments (made extensively in Finland and Lahti), instead of innovation funding only favouring countries with poor climate commitment performances, for example. In some matters, discretionary power should be left with the Member State – in forest policy in the case of Finland, for example.

30 November 2021, Oulu

Minister for European Affairs and Ownership Steering **Tytti Tuppurainen**

Full report: <https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/Education/f/37/meetings/85999>

Central topics discussed:

- Young people must be heard and activated in political debate
 - New ways must be found to activate young people to participate in political debate. Investments must be directed to sparsely populated areas in particular. All existing networks (Erasmus+, Youth Parliaments, international networks, etc.) should be utilised and young people should be encouraged to participate. One suggestion was to assign a dedicated employee at schools who would organise talks with young people and encourage them to express their opinions. Mental health is a hot topic for young people, and it needs more investment.

- Action must be taken now to mitigate climate change
 - The EU must act together to mitigate climate change. More information and research is needed to mitigate and predict the change. Climate change is particularly worrisome for young people. On the other hand, they are also more aware, and can make changes even on the individual level. Action cannot wait, however.

- The EU is a community of values first, and it must defend its values
 - Many participants were concerned by the progress of rule of law and the situation of minorities, for example. The EU should make more of an effort to commit to its shared values and protect minorities and respect their rights.

- Investments are needed in the viability of sparsely populated areas and the Arctic
 - Education creates opportunities for young people, including sparsely populated areas and the Arctic. One example given was Arctic research. Investments should be made in flexible forms of education. The benefits of digitalisation should be seized in full. Public transport must be kept operational in the Arctic region.

11 December 2021, Tampere

Prime Minister **Sanna Marin**

Full report: <https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/GreenDeal/f/2/meetings/101146>

Central topics discussed:

- Concerns over insufficient climate action
 - It is vital to inform people of the necessity of climate measures. This will also expedite their implementation. Action is required on the local, national, and EU levels.

- The EU needs to play a bigger role globally as well
 - The EU can regulate its own emissions, but it is expected to go above and beyond globally. The European Single Market is a major global market. By setting rules and targets for its own market, the EU will promote a global market transition to environmentally-friendly operations.

- Climate decisions must acknowledge the different starting points of various regions.
 - Climate measures must be implemented comprehensively. It must also be considered that, for example, it is more difficult in sparsely populated areas to give up cars than it is in cities. Regardless, every individual can take action and demand change by reducing their consumption, for example.

18 January 2022, Jyväskylä

Minister of the Interior **Krista Mikkonen**

Full report: <https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/OtherIdeas/f/7/meetings/110320>

Central topics discussed:

- Practical climate efforts and everyday climate action must be communicated more boldly and openly
- More positive communication, based on actual improvements, must be furthered on all levels. Communication must be accessible and comprehensible.

- Different population groups must be included in decision-making
- Different parties, including young people and students, must be included extensively in climate discussions to make sure no one is left behind in the transition. Schools must invest in climate education, and local communication must be stepped up. Disparity must be prevented with socio-political measures.

- Deeper analysis of decisions' security impacts
- Climate change, for instance, affects security in many ways. Some effects will be environmental (e.g. forest fires) and some will affect the people's experience and sense of security. The risks posed by climate change must be predicted and preparations must be made while addressing the people's sense of insecurity.

Futures Day of 22 November 2021 for the extended EU sub-committees

Minister for European Affairs and Ownership Steering **Tytti Tuppurainen**

Full Report: <https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/OtherIdeas/f/7/meetings/86032>

Democracy, rule of law, equality and fundamental rights – the basis for resilience

The realisation of values has a bearing on the strength of the EU. Three highlights:

1. **Inclusion, participation and dialogue.** It is crucial to make different, even quiet, voices heard. The timeliness of consultations is also important: they must be timed so as to have a real impact on EU decision-making. Even those with quiet voices must be able to shift from being an object to a subject in decision-making at the EU (and national) level. While existing means of engagement must be used, new ones must also be considered. The debate atmosphere must be healthy for people to have the courage to take part.

2. **Trust.** The EU should also act on its values in practical terms. The extent to which citizens can get involved in decision-making has an impact on their sense of belonging in the EU. This in turn has an impact on whether there is trust in the EU. The integrity of the Union and of its support in the Member States has a global impact on its credibility.
3. **Shift of EU policy impacts towards broad areas/policy themes.** There are major political processes underway (action against climate change, migration, sense of security), which pose substantial challenges for the EU. Answers to these should be sought in line with EU values.

Strengthening EU resilience and crisis preparedness

Three highlights:

1. **Interdependence.** The theme was raised in both good and bad sense. It is absolutely necessary to identify and prune interdependencies. We must know the things on which different sectors are dependent. We must also focus on managing different dependencies. We must be better prepared to respond to various crises. Cooperation must be emphasised among both public authorities and other parties (including business and industry). The concept of comprehensive security is front and centre; different actors must be involved in strengthening crisis resilience.
2. **Situational awareness.** Proactive preparatory work needs to be in place to allow preparation for various crises. There must be up-to-date situational awareness, which is genuinely understood. There needs to be constant readiness to detect and measure various signals for crises. Furthermore, we must be able to learn from previous crises.
3. **Framework.** Legislation and various processes must be in place and the competences must already be clear and effective in normal circumstances. Another aspect that was raised was citizens' resilience. If society is not functional in normal circumstances, it will not have any resilience in exceptional circumstances either. There must also be readiness for the right kind of crisis communications.

Climate change, the environment, biodiversity and food

Three highlights:

1. **A long-term view and anticipation in legislation.** The relevant sectors are governed by a large body of existing legislation. The EU should concentrate on the big picture and better regulation. The principle of subsidiarity should be respected. This is, above all, related to large legislative packages, which are currently giving a slight impression of rush and congestion. It is important to focus on a long-term view and anticipation.

2. **More effective implementation of existing legislation.** Climate change and biodiversity loss must be taken broadly into account in sectoral policies. Funding for research, development and innovation should be effectively ensured to enable real action.
3. **Young people's strong wish: engagement.** The youth delegate emphasised that young people should be engaged and consulted in a more effective and targeted manner as part of climate policy preparations. They must be reached through the channels that they feel comfortable using.

What kind of health policy does Europe need?

Three highlights:

1. **Consequences of and reactions to the COVID-19 crisis:** From the perspective of general crisis resilience, measures must be examined with a view to recognising sustainable development and the reciprocity of wellbeing, the environment and the economy. While EU measures cannot replace national preparedness in the health sector, they can support the national level. As part of the health and social services reform, Finland needs to consider the role and preparedness of wellbeing services counties. While it is crucial to get experts into EU-level bodies, it is also important to organise debates at the national level.
2. **Citizen perspective:** Citizens are interested in health and its dimensions (medicines, digitalisation, and use and possible sharing of personal health data). The EU is preparing data ecosystems (data spaces). Finland is well advanced in these areas and has good opportunities to influence them. It is crucial to participate in processes while also getting prepared for the implementation stage.
3. **The EU4Health Programme** is useful. It promotes Finland's long-term objectives, such as mental health and the wellbeing economy. It is now crucial to think ahead: what is relevant over the next 10 years? Better use must be made of funding instruments outside the typical funding of the health programme. We need stronger national coordination between ministries and stakeholders to exert influence within the EU.

The EU and changing security threats

Three highlights:

1. **Threat and its nature and how this is changing.** The threats currently faced by Finland and the EU cover all policy sectors. It is important not to focus only on the 'first-order' effects but also to monitor what the secondary and tertiary levels will involve. Hard and soft security are blending. The role of both governmental and non-governmental actors should be noted. The key aspect in future threats is that the military element will also make a comeback to centre stage after 30 years.

2. **From sticking plaster to deterrence?** This means that we cannot simply resign ourselves to face threats and deal with the consequences; instead, we must also consider how to create crisis resilience and deterrence (also against hybrid operations) – these measures must be used to increase the ‘price tag’ of influence operations.
3. **Digitalisation as a cross-cutting issue – threat or opportunity?** A notable feature of digitalisation is the speed at which it affects us all and progresses. It increases interdependencies, including in the civil and defence sectors. We must be prepared both in civil society and in military terms. It is necessary to take action both nationally and internationally. The EU is the right level to promote these things together.

Migration: future needs and opportunities for the EU

Rapporteur: Tuomo Kurri, Director of Migration Policy, Ministry of the Interior

The debate was conducted through the following two themes: 1) Europe as the destination of talent; and 2) The future of international protection in Europe. Three highlights:

1. **The EU is not an isolated island** in migration affairs; instead, it is essential to operate in concert with key transit and partner countries. The EU must be able to be an equitable partner in all directions. Pressures on forced migration will increase in the future. We must be able to find sustainable solutions. The situation in the world is changing constantly, as exemplified by Ethiopia, which has quite rapidly spiralled into a situation where it already hosts a large number of refugees, the effects of climate change are visible and it is now facing an internal conflict. Cooperation is needed in many different sectors. Worldwide strategic cooperation requires diverse networking.
2. **Adding legal routes for immigration into EU Member States.** To what extent are there channels for people to enter the Union without having to resort to illegal methods used by human traffickers? The EU system should be more credible and equitable in every respect. There should be a flexible range of instruments for every situation. There must also be a good route for talent.
3. **The EU must hold on to its strengths** and communicate them around the world. A good and correct picture of the level of higher education and family life must be conveyed for talent, for example. It is equally essential to rely on the common EU values in the area of international protection.
4. Integration into society was also mentioned. Alongside immigration and migration policies, integration also plays a vital role when building a socially sustainable immigration policy.

Conditions for sustainable growth

Three substantive highlights:

1. As technologies advance and the world changes, **resilience and capacity for renewal** are essential. This challenges us to take completely new action at all levels.
2. **Human capital and its demand.** We will not have R&D activities nor sufficient investment without sufficiently strong and continuously strengthening human capital.
3. At present, we need **horizontal wellbeing policy**. If analysed as a policy area, instead of being soft, it should be the hardest possible policy in touch with the times.

Role issues considered:

1. The EU must be able to bring everyone together and boost sustainable growth.
2. The EU can sometimes assume the role of a driver, sometimes that of a co-driver or passenger, somewhat depending on the subject. The EU is not such an all-powerful force in all situations that it would not need help from others. It is important for Finland to act as a navigator when the EU is playing its own roles.
3. Finland must punch above its weight within the EU. Does this require us to build up more muscle, or how can we go about this? A shared vision starts from agility and cooperation with other like-minded countries and stakeholders. The EU sub-committees are one way of increasing and strengthening this.

Human-centric digitalisation

The debate was conducted through the following two themes: 1) Humans as economic actors and responsible consumers; 2) Humans as citizens and builders of trust. Three highlights:

1. If we say that we are Europe, then who are we really? We need much more granular data by age group and socio-economic background, for example, to target measures and identify skills shortages. Everyone will need digital support, at least later on. There is a forceful drive for change. We must get away from idealisation of 'digital natives' and from the condition of 'digital naivety'. Individuals are strongly dependent on what they are offered.
2. How do we create opportunities to influence matters where processes and issues are difficult? There is also a need for transparency and genuine influence from the perspective of lazy consumers. Services and items must be easy enough to use.

3. The role of the public sector. The public sector cannot choose its customers; everyone must be kept on board. The aim is competence and an inclusive society, including incorporation of media literacy into basic structures.

The EU economy in transformation

The situational picture, giving the context of where we are: High levels of public debt, not only due to the pandemic but also as a general result of previous crises. Now that restrictions are being eased and demand has started to rebound, this has revealed economic bottlenecks. At the same time, energy prices have started to rise for many reasons. Inflation is rearing its head. The world has changed: Before the financial market crisis, globalisation was the talk of the town; now geopolitics and geoeconomics are changing the operating environment. This increases the level of challenge.

At the same time, there is an ongoing 'twin transition' of climate change and digitalisation. Demand for investments is dizzying.

Three highlights:

1. **The role of the regulatory framework.** The fiscal policy rules, the European Semester process, the ways in which limits are set, what the green transition includes... The framework is significant and currently challenging. Its simplification is justified – but how? This is still unclear at this stage, as negotiations are only just starting. Broad consensus: We must aim for a regulatory framework that encourages us to build up buffers during good times, which can then be released during downturns and also used in a crisis.
2. **Debate on the new own resources:** The thematic group's debate demonstrated the problematic nature of the subject. The debate clearly showed how the subject draws plenty of interest. Consensus: The new own resources should, as a general rule, be specifically used to repay Recovery and Resilience Facility loans. However, we can see that the Commission has other ideas. When scarcity is being distributed, where will the money come from? It's an interesting question. If taxation of adverse effects succeeds, this means that the revenue base will shrink.
3. **What will the public and private sectors do?** Nothing will erase the fact that we still need strong economic growth to meet the needs created in the economy – both domestically and within the EU.

A strong and responsible EU in the world – how to move towards this goal

Three highlights:

1. There is a need for global governance that looks characteristic of the EU. The EU should be able to promote its own values and interests in a challenging global terrain. There are currently actors in the world that are either a) actively opposed to EU action or b) at the least, attempting to create a vacuum of values through various operations. For an unwieldy actor, however, the EU has been surprisingly successful in getting a grip on global change, external relations and creation of partnerships. Global governance has become a major priority. It is a head-of-state level issue, which permeates all policy sectors.
2. The EU's development policy has changed enormously. The EU has moved in a more strategic direction, aiming to respond to China's actions (where Africa is being taken over by straightforward means) while maintaining its own values. Trade policy is going through a strong transformation. As a result of major goals (climate change, migration, human rights, etc.), trade policy is also becoming politicised in the spirit of a geopolitical Commission. It is clear that trade policy is by now a part of an extensive arsenal of external policy instruments.
3. Finland's role in a shifting terrain: External relations is a sector where Finland has much to gain. Finland has a strong profile and we are involved in many areas (actively promoting more effective decision-making, women's rights and sexual equality, and actively developing the European Defence Union). Fostering external relations requires much more effort today. It is necessary to have wide discussions with different administrative sectors.
4. It is difficult for the EU to manage its external relations if its internal situation is unstable. Inclusion of the principle of unanimity in foreign policy means that an individual actor may do a lot of harm. It is important that the EU is strong and is widely producing strong regulation in the digital or climate sector, for example, to enable us to create worldwide standards for global governance. This requires unity and clever enough people within the EU.

Summary of event participation

Events

16 September **Helsinki**, tour launch event, 40 present, 150 online

20 September **Vantaa**, about 100 students online (the pandemic called for all-virtual participation), 40 responded online to the preliminary survey

2 October **Lappeenranta**, 30 participants in moderated preliminary discussions, 25 present and 20 online at the event

6 October **Webinar**, about 70 online

18 October **Kokkola**, about 40 present, about 60 online

18 October **Turku**, about 20 total

25 October **Joensuu**, about 30 present, about 25 online

25 October **Vaasa**, about 90 total

31 October **Helsinki** Book Fair, an estimated 400 people spectated the discussion and nearly 700 responded to the survey at the fair

1 November **Kuopio** about 30 present, about 20 online

2 November **Utsjoki – the EU’s northernmost conference event**, about 60 present, about 80 online

8 November **Rovaniemi**, about 70 present, about 50 online

9 November **Helsinki**, about 40 present, about 30 online

10 November **Helsinki**, about 20 present, about 80 online

16 November **Lahti**, 55 present, 24 online

22 November **EU sub-committee Futures Day**, about 150 present, about 220 online; 1/3 public officials and 2/3 stakeholder and interest group representatives

30 November **Oulu**, about 100 total, about 20 online

11 December **Tampere**, about 70 present, 105 online

18 January 2022 **Jyväskylä**, about 100 online (the pandemic called for all-virtual participation)

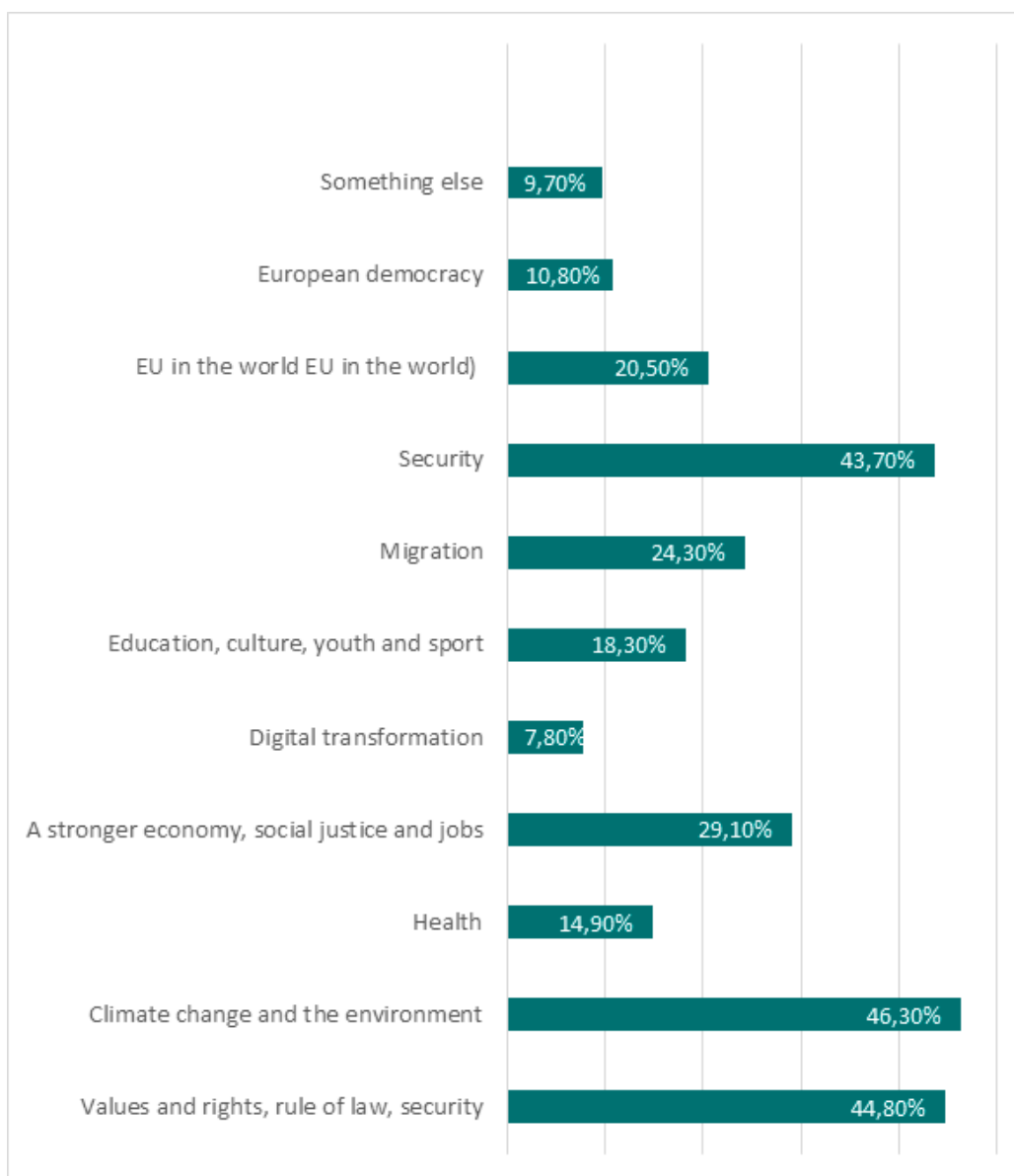
Surveys

Europe Information survey at the Helsinki Book Fair, nearly 700 responses

The principal themes for the Book Fair survey were as follows: 1) the continuity, unity, and stability of the EU, 2) the reinforcement and protection of the EU's values, especially the rule of law, and 3) climate and environmental matters.

Europe Information online survey in September 2021, 268 responses

In your opinion, what were the most important topics in the discussion about the EU's future? You can select up to three themes.



Preliminary survey for the event on 20 September in Vantaa, 40 young people



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