Multilingual Digital Platform of the Conference on the Future of Europe

Third Interim Report
November 2021
Disclaimer: this report is the sole responsibility of the authors and does not reflect the views of the EU Institutions or the Conference on the Future of Europe.

Analysis carried out by Kantar Public.
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With the Conference on the Future of Europe, the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission have created an opportunity for European citizens from all 27 Member States to engage in a debate on challenges and priorities to address in order to create together a Europe fit for the future. As part of the Conference process, a Multilingual Digital Platform (referred to in the following as ‘the platform’) was launched on 19 April 2021 (future.europa.eu) and will remain live throughout the work of the Conference.

The platform is a key component of the Conference; it gives every EU citizen the chance to participate in any of the 24 official EU languages. Citizens can put forward their ideas, endorse other people’s ideas and comment on them. The platform is also the place where everyone can share information on Conference events and report on their outcomes.

All contributions on the platform are then collected and analysed and serve as input into the work of the European Citizens’ Panels, the Conference Plenary.

Two interim reports have been published to date, covering contributions on the platform until 7 September 2021.

The aim of this third interim report is to cover in addition contributions up to 3 November 2021. It also provides more insights on events. More detailed information on contributions per Member State on the platform is provided in a supplementary report made available simultaneously on the platform. A further report and overview of contributions, including per Member State, will be made.
available early next year to cover new contributions added to the platform.

The findings in this report is in no way to be taken as predictive of the outcome of the discussions of the Conference on the Future of Europe process. When reading this report it is also important to bear in mind that the contributions on the platform represent the views of the respective contributors and should not be regarded as representing the views of European citizens as a whole. They will be subject to further discussion and assessment during the European Citizens’ Panels and the Conference Plenary.

The analytical results are presented in the report according to the topics defined on the platform:

- Climate change and the environment
- Health
- A stronger economy, social justice and jobs
- EU in the world
- Values and rights, rule of law, security
- Digital transformation
- European Democracy
- Migration
- Education, Culture, Youth and Sport

Ideas mentioned on the platform under ‘Other ideas’ have been placed under one of the nine abovementioned topics, or several topics in case of cross-cutting issues. For each topic, an overview of the thematic clustering of the ideas and events is provided. A mind map for each topic provides a visual representation of the content analysis by themes and sub-themes.

Note on methodology

The main focus of this report is on a qualitative analysis of the contributions on the platform. This is carried out on the basis of the ideas and comments submitted by contributors to deliver a broad overview of the content of the platform. In practice, within each topic a manual textual analysis and clustering of the proposed ideas and closed events with event reports has been performed by a research team, aided by a computer assisted clustering tool. Subsequently, a summary of the common themes and possible sub-themes has been prepared. The cluster analysis into themes and sub-themes is carried out within the pre-defined topics. This means that ideas cutting across topics or ideas submitted by contributors under multiple topics or under ‘Other ideas’ may appear multiple times in this report under the relevant topics. This approach has been chosen so as to give a holistic perspective on each of the conference topics.

Issues which are raised by a small number of contributors also figure in this analysis if they provide a new perspective compared to that of other contributors. The aim is to provide a general overview of the breadth and diversity of ideas proposed on the platform currently, rather than focusing on the relative support of the ideas or the size of identified themes and sub-themes.

Quantitative elements (number of ideas, comments, endorsements, events) are nevertheless mentioned in order to reflect the current state of discussions on the platform, including a high level of interest in or debate on some ideas (see Annex I).

Please also note that in the analysis provided in this report, the term ‘contributions’ refers to a combination of ideas, comments and events.

Further details on the methodological approach are provided in Annex II.
This report summarises the activity on the Multilingual Digital Platform for the Conference on the Future of Europe from its launch up to 3 November 2021.

In this period 29,012 contributions were recorded on the platform, with 9,337 ideas, 16,017 comments and 3,658 events covering all 10 topics.

The topics of European Democracy and Climate change and the environment have attracted by far the highest volume of contributions so far, followed by the open topic of Other ideas.

All EU countries have generated activity. Germany has the largest number of contributions in total numbers since the launch of the platform, but in proportion to their population smaller countries register more contributions, with Malta being the most active. In the recent period since 8 September, Hungary has generated the most contributions in proportion to its population. There are also some contributions from third countries.

Approximately 57% of contributors have identified themselves as men and 15% as women. However, more than a quarter of contributors have not provided information on their gender. In this regard, it should be highlighted that organisations can also contribute to the platform.

As regards the profile of participants, the representation of age groups is quite diversified, with 55-69 year-olds being the most active age group, closely followed by 25-39 year-olds.
Climate change
and the environment

Contributors are concerned by climate change and its effects as well as numerous other environmental challenges. They call for concrete measures such as environmental subsidisation and taxation, as well as education and communication at EU level initiatives to address them. Some contributors raise the issue of social justice in the context of climate policy. The ideas can be thematically grouped as follows:

– Pollution is defined as a major source of pressure on the environment: water pollution, but also deforestation and the polluting use of plastic, as well as light pollution;

– Contributors discuss a green transition and suggest measures to tackle global carbon emissions. Some refer to the EU Green Deal, with calls for a more socially inclusive approach;

– Under the theme of energy, contributors, strongly favour increasing the use of renewable energy and enhancing energy diversity through research and innovation of alternative energy sources. However, some draw attention to the issue of acceptance by the population;

– The halting of environmentally unfriendly subsidies and the proposal of a sustainability tax;

– Under the theme of consumption, contributors call for stronger measures to address waste, food waste and to promote recycling, targeting both manufacturers and consumers. Additionally, they call for measures to promote more sustainable consumption in sectors ranging from tourism, fashion to electronic appliances;

– Participants want measures to encourage the development and use of alternative, eco-friendly means of transport. They make various suggestions to encourage the use of public transport;

– Under the theme of agriculture a strong sub-theme involves a call to eliminate the use of pesticides and in general to adopt more environmentally friendly agricultural practices. Other measures in relation to the environment include the promotion of local farming, biodiversity, vegetarian or vegan diets and fair prices for farmers;

– Promotion of biodiversity with calls for reforestation, the halting of deforestation and increased research facilities;

– Contributors equally call for increased efforts in change of behaviour and attitudes through awareness raising, education and communication efforts;

– A specific theme is dedicated to landscapes and construction, with ideas concerning sustainable housing, eco-friendly building materials and the ‘New European Bauhaus’;

– Contributors have discussed the interaction between digitisation and climate change under the topic “digital transformation”.

Health

The topic of health covers a wide variety of themes. Contributors call for equal access to health care across the EU with ideas for more cooperation between Member States, greater harmonisation and integration, also influenced by the experience of COVID-19 and its impact. Contributors call for increased research and investment in the field of medicine and suggest various ideas to improve public health in general. The main themes are the following:

– Measures to ensure affordable healthcare access for everyone, with for example suggestions for a European medical insurance scheme;

– More cooperation and integration, a strengthened EU healthcare system or even increased competence for the EU in public health matters;

– Resources and measures to promote health literacy, healthy lifestyles and diets, including the integration of natural remedies into medicine as well as a more preventative public health approach;
The need for EU coordinated innovation and investment in health research, particularly in relation to the EU’s ageing demographic profile;

An assessment of the impact of COVID-19, including evaluating responses such as the digital corona certificate, and lessons to be learned to prepare for fighting future pandemics.

Within this topic contributors make various suggestions to drive economic growth in the EU, such as innovation, further strengthening the Single European Market, and various measures to support SMEs and strategic industries. Contributors equally stress the importance of Europe becoming more inclusive and socially just, especially in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the contributors believe that the well-being of various groups of people, especially the most disadvantaged ones, is pivotal to the EU’s successful functioning and further growth. The most prominent themes debated under this topic are:

- Various taxation formats for a fair and inclusive economy, such as tax measures to ensure fair competition between companies, environmental taxes and a minimum EU-wide tax to counter tax havens;
- Contributors consider that social security measures are important to achieve social justice. The Unconditional Basic Income is the most frequently discussed idea;
- Suggestions to build a more inclusive, socially just Europe, in accordance with the European Pillar of Social Rights, such as social protection measures, eliminating the gender pay gap, gender equality, rights of persons with disabilities, LGBTIQ rights and representation;
- Economic recovery, including concerns about rising public debt in the EU, discussions about the role of the European Central Bank, calls for a review of the Stability and Growth Pact and for an expansion of the Recovery Fund, as well as support for local production and local consumption to boost the EU economy;
- Boosting job growth by investing in innovation, education, digitalisation, R&D, but also by establishing a Green Economy;
- Suggestions to improve working conditions and specific measures to further facilitate labour mobility within the EU;
- A common tax policy with European fiscal reform for a more united European future, including more EU own resources or a budget independent from the Member States. Suggestions to further strengthen the European Single Market.

Overall, contributors call for a stronger EU presence in the global political arena in line with its core values, including its environmental concerns. Contributors to the platform raise the issue of strategic autonomy and often feel that the EU should be bolder in its exercise of both soft and hard power, although some express doubts. Ideas include:

- Contributors discussing the overall objectives of EU foreign policies, with calls for a common EU foreign policy defending human rights and democratic values worldwide;
- Developing various means and mechanisms in order to enhance the EU’s image and for it to be taken seriously on the global political stage, with considerable discussion about a common defence policy to be able to intervene, but also to play a dissuasive role and represent geopolitical power vis-à-vis other global powers;
- The creation of an EU army;
- Actions to make the EU more visible, with Member States ceasing internal competition between each other, or ideas concerning an EU diplomatic representation;
Taking a more assertive stance towards China, especially by adopting a European Union’s Foreign Investment Strategy;

A rethinking of the unanimity rule in the foreign policy decision making, and increased powers for the European Parliament;

Further enlargement, especially to Western Balkans countries;

Exerting soft power as an advocate of multilateralism by strengthening trade policies.

Values and rights, rule of law and security

Contributors discuss the notion of European values as a guiding principle and advance ideas on equality and a variety of rights and freedoms. A substantial proportion of interactions under this topic discuss what is described as the “dangers of the rise of illiberal democracies” within the EU, which do not respect EU values and tend towards autocratic regimes. The main themes and ideas are the following:

A group of contributors focus on what constitutes EU values, such as human rights, freedom, equality democracy, rule of law, pluralism, solidarity, gender equality, which should guide EU policies and its interactions on globally, according to contributors;

Discussions also cover the role of Christian values and some calls for not dismissing more conservative voices and approaches within the EU;

A number of concrete suggestions concern ways of improving the protection of EU values and the rule of law in the EU, as well as human rights more generally, with calls for a tougher stance to defend the EU’s values;

Some citizens call for a more equal and inclusive society for people with disabilities, gender equality, better protection of LGBTIQ;

There are discussions about ensuring rights and freedoms, covering freedom of movement, protection of privacy, animal rights, hate speech, press and media freedom;

Under the security theme a number of participants discuss the idea of an EU army and the need for closer cooperation between European countries on internal security matters;

Calls are made to enhance regulation and transparency of lobbying and tackling corruption.

Digital transformation

In general contributors stress the importance of facilitating and investing in a digital transformation across a wide range of areas, from the economy to health. However, they also highlight several challenges related to digital transformation, such as ethical considerations, GDPR shortcomings and cyber threats. The main themes are the following:

Means and measures to support digital innovation, such as artificial intelligence and boosting digital sovereignty. This covers a wide range of sub-themes: sustainable manufacturing, social media and platforms that comply with EU standards in terms of privacy, and more broadly building a European digital ecosystem that is competitive and open to the world, but that is also safe and respects privacy;

Several tools for digital citizenship and digital unification of the EU with suggestions for digital portals, European-wide identification via a digital e-ID or a European-wide authentication method for accessing personal data or for public services;

Working towards digital inclusion with measures to guarantee affordable and inclusive access to the digital space and fostering digital skills across a range of population profiles;

Durable digital transition measures, with digitalisation leading to a reduction in pollution and calls for durable, repairable digital equipment amongst others;

The theme of digital data and data privacy is increasingly developed with ideas touching on the
centralized storage of sensitive personal data, protecting public networks with open-source software or blockchain and protecting children in the digital environment;

- Digitalisation of the economy with measures relating to cryptocurrency, and a call for a digital euro;
- Investing in digital education and digital health in order to promote healthy and conscious use of technology.

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**European Democracy**

Ideas under this topic cover a wide range of issues. A number of contributors call for a restructuring of European institutions or even a federalisation of the European Union. Various suggestions call for increased citizen participation. The most prominent themes are:

- The topic of the federalisation of the EU is frequently raised. Some participants argue however rather for decentralisation with greater power for Member States;
- Institutional reforms are suggested, with the aim of making the EU institutions more efficient and transparent and bringing them closer to citizens. Contributions most frequently suggest qualified majority voting rather than unanimity in the Council, especially in relation to the protection of EU values, and a greater role for the European Parliament;
- In terms of representation, changes to the way European Parliament elections are held as a means of enhancing citizen participation in EU democratic processes, with proposals on transnational electoral lists or transnational campaigns; directly electing an EU President is also proposed;
- Measures are suggested to make citizen consultations and participation a structural part of EU governance;
- Mechanisms and means to better engage EU citizens and ensure that they are more connected and better informed about the EU and its decisions. Suggestions regarding better communication, common EU media platforms and fostering a European spirit also figure in the topic of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport;
- Mechanisms and means to protect democratic values with regard to lobbying, corruption and measures against governments violating democratic principles.

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**Migration**

Interactions under this topic are polarised. It is the most polarising of all the topics with strong voices against any migration considering it a threat while others advocate for more human rights centric migration policies. The ideas can be summarized as follows:

- Calls for a common migration policy, such as an EU labour migration policy, an EU selective migration policy or a point-based system;
- More organized and coordinated efforts when it comes to border control: increased support to Frontex and with greater solidarity among Member States;
- Calls for a migration policy respecting human rights, establishing reception infrastructure and safer migration routes;
- The need to tackle the root causes of migration in countries of origin, for example with increased development policies. Ways to counter climate migration are also discussed here;
- Specific measures and means to decrease migration or various forms of controlled migration, with stricter border control and stricter repatriation;
- Objecting to migration in any form, linking it with terrorism, threat to EU cultural identity or migration being used as a political weapon;
– Means and measures to facilitate integration and support the rights of migrants and permanent residents in the EU.

**Education, culture, youth and sport**

Content under this topic is for the moment very fragmented, including many diverse ideas with the strongest focus on education and culture. The themes under this topic are cross-cutting and also appear elsewhere on the platform.

– Means and measures to foster the development of a European identity and European citizenship; with a key role for media and European journalism, as well as European productions disseminating European values and culture;

– Increased foreign language education or mandatory courses in schools on the EU institutions and European history are also seen as a means of fostering recognition and a common EU identity. There are widespread suggestions for a unifying, common language across the platform under various topics;

– Several ideas raise the need to future-proof education with calls for digitalisation, promotion of soft-skills next to STEM skills, or cross-cultural skills in general;

– Various suggestions to foster intra-EU mobility;

– In addition, ideas discussing specific actions relating to youth and youth unemployment are present in this topic;

– The need to support and protect the cultural and creative industry with a legal framework.
1. Overview of contributions on the platform

Overview of activity
Since the launch of the Multilingual Digital Platform on 19 April up to 3 November 2021, in total 29,012 contributions were collected on the platform, representing ideas, comments and events. The activity can be broken down as follows:

- Ideas: 9,337
- Comments: 16,017
- Events: 3,658

Looking at the trendline (see Figure 1), two peaks in contributions can be observed. The first peak coincides with the launch of the platform and a second peak occurred around the inauguration of the Conference on the Future of Europe on the Europe Day (9 May).

1 With more than 150,000 event participants so far
Figure 1 – Timeline indicating daily contributions (19/04/2021 – 03/11/2021)
Prior to engaging on the platform contributors are asked to provide information on their country of residence, educational background, age, gender and employment status. The data are processed anonymously. As this information is shared voluntarily, there are limitations on the insight that can be provided on this basis and that are presented below. For example, 25% of the contributions are from participants who did not disclose their country of residence.

All EU countries have generated activity, as can be noted from Figure 2, which presents the total number of contributions per country. In addition, 209 contributions from third countries outside the EU were recorded, compared to 32 in the second interim report.

In order to paint a more detailed picture of the volume of contributions in proportion to the population, the figure below gives an overview of the number of contributions from each country per one million inhabitants.

Figure 3 – Volume of contributions per country, proportional reflection per 1M inhabitants (19/04/2021 – 03/11/2021)
Overview of events

As the Conference progresses an increasing number of events are being organised. They provide an opportunity for more people to become involved in this bottom-up democratic exercise. From the launch of the digital platform until 3 November 2021, in total 3,658 events have been registered on the platform. In line with the Conference Charter (accessible here), events must put citizens in the centre, be inclusive and accessible and encourage diversity of debate. Toolkits are in place to help event organisers (accessible here). In order for events to effectively contribute to the Conference, event reports detailing the conclusions and concrete ideas emerging from them must be uploaded to the digital platform (see guidelines). These event reports, together with the event description and linked ideas are taken into account in the overall analysis of the contributions on the platform.

Events related to the Conference are organised in a variety of formats, as regards the type of event, their scale, the profile of the audience or of the organisers, as well as their thematic scope. This section aims to provide an insight in the diversity of event types, while their contribution in terms of substance is addressed under the relevant platform topics.

Events take place online, in person or hybrid. They are often organised as debates or workshops, such as a series of dialogues on the future organised in Spain with, amongst others, a citizen workshop on basic income (see event) or a citizen workshop on sustainable city practices that was held in a small Flemish town (event). Some events are organised in more classical formats, involving for example a keynote presentation followed by questions and answers sessions, while other events are organised in more deliberative formats. Some events registered on the platform are part of longer-running deliberative consultation projects, such as the Decide Europe project, a simulation of legislative deliberations at the EU level for secondary school students in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (see event). There are also innovative formats such as a workshop where participants could provide recommendations while moving through a role-playing game (see event), a hackathon organised in Latvia, where participants competed against each other in teams to create innovative and sustainable solutions (see event) or a ‘walking and talking about climate change’ event in Spain (see event).

As regards participation, some events are aimed to include the contribution of specific categories of participants, such as women (see example of an event), or young people (see example of an event).

In terms of topics, some events address the Conference process or the future of Europe more broadly, such as an event in Germany providing a general introduction to the Conference (event) or an event combining a conversation with seniors on topical issues related to the EU with a lesson on digital skills in Latvia (event). Others focus on specific topics, such as for example on cities fostering democracy (see event) or an event held by the Copenhagen University on migration (see event).

Events are organised by a variety of organisers: alongside EU citizens, academia, civil society organisations, also national, regional and local authorities and EU institutions have contributed to the Conference on the Future of Europe by organising events. Some Member States organise national citizens’ panels, others carry out or support various other types of consultations. Events are also organised by the European Commission Representations in the Member States, the European Parliament Liaison Offices, the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee.
Who engages in the debate?

When assessing the profile of contributors who provided information on their country of residence, including those from third countries, the following observations can be made.

More than half of contributors identified themselves as men (56.7%) and 15% as women. However, more than a quarter (27.8%) did not provide information on their gender and 0.4% identified as non-binary, so these figures only give a limited view.

The representation of age groups is currently fairly diversified, with 55-69 year-olds being the most active age group recently in terms of contributions (21.2%), followed by 25-39 year-olds (19.1%).

In terms of occupation, professional workers (15.4%) and managers (11.9%) are still the most active on the platform. Retired people are also fairly active (12.6%), while student activity has decreased compared with the previous period (9.5%). Manual workers (6.9%), self-employed (9.1%) and unemployed people (2.6%) have been relatively less active on the platform to date.

When it comes to education, people with higher levels of education have been very active (47%) so far.

It should be noted that the socio-demographic data presented here provide only a limited view since organisations also create a profile on the platform to contribute, whether in the form of ideas or events. Also, participants in events have not necessarily registered on the platform and may not be covered by the statistics.
Trending topics in terms of contributions

Since the early months of the Conference the topic of European Democracy has recorded the highest level of contributions (ideas, comments and events) (5,104), followed by Climate change and environment (4,854). Contributions under Other ideas are in third place, followed by A stronger economy, social justice and jobs (4th) and Values and rights, rule of law and security (5th), overtaking the topic of EU in the world (see Figure 5). As stated earlier, the contributions made under Other ideas have been distributed across the other topics during the analysis.

Some topics generate more comments, ideas, or events than others, for example, the topic of Climate change and the environment has the highest number of ideas (1,717) and events (681), while European democracy has collected 3,122 comments.

Figure 5 - Contributions per topics on the platform (19/04 – 03/11/2021)
Recent developments

From 8 September 2021 up to 3 November 2021, activity on the platform totalled 4,454 contributions, composed of:

- 1,176 ideas
- 1,887 comments
- 1,391 events

The weekly average level of contributions over the past period has increased, reaching 70 contributions a day in the second week of September (13-19 September) and 77 contributions at the end of September and beginning of October. Generally speaking, the weekly averages were higher in October, with a peak of 90 contributions a day in the week of 18-24 October. The analysis of contributions at country level shows that Germany remains the top country in terms of volume of contributions (848), while France (425) and Belgium (365) have generated less activity on the platform compared with the previous period, ranking 3rd and 5th respectively. Simultaneously, contributions from Hungary and Italy have increased, with 512 and 396 contributions respectively.

These numbers are consistent with the level of contributions in proportion to population: Hungary recorded the highest level of activity in the past period, with 52 contributions per 1 million inhabitants. In addition, high levels of contributions per one million inhabitants were noted for Slovenia, Belgium and Lithuania.
Trending topics 8
September up to 3 November 2021

Reflecting the trends in the overall period, the topics of European Democracy, with 1,083 contributions and Climate change and the environment, with 1,065 contributions top the list of most engaged topics.

Differing from the trend in the overall period, the topic of Education, culture, youth and sport is the third most productive topic with 788 contributions in the last period, while the fourth topic is A stronger economy, social justice and jobs with 761 contributions in the last period.

Figure 8 – comparison of overview of contributions per topic past period and total

Overview of contributions per topic
2. Climate change and the environment

The topic of ‘Climate change and the environment’ has generated a total of 4,956 comments, ideas and events since the inception of the platform (1,758 ideas, 2,487 comments and 711 events). In their various contributions participants frequently express their concerns about global warming and its consequences, urging governments to take immediate concrete action. The ideas within this topic are diverse and can be grouped into the following themes:

- Pollution
- The ‘Green Deal’
- Energy
- Subsidisation, taxation
- Consumption
- Transport
- Agriculture
- Promote biodiversity
- Creating change in attitudes and behaviour
- Landscapes and construction
Events

Since the beginning of the conference, 691 events organised all over Europe have included debates on Climate change and the environment. The most frequently discussed subject at these events is the ‘European Green Deal’, namely the plan to make Europe the world’s first climate-neutral block by 2050, with all of its implications for various sectors. Other frequently discussed issues include sustainable city practices, the circular economy, and the consequences of climate change, followed by sustainable agriculture, emissions reduction, energy transition, reforestation, and soft mobility. While less frequently the centre of discussions, waste management, biodiversity, education on sustainability, food rescue and other issues are nevertheless important elements as part of the whole picture.

An example of a participatory event is the citizen forum by Greek citizens discussing the environmental crisis (see event). Equally, a citizen workshop focused on sustainable city practices, resulting in a series of ideas posted on the platform (see event).

A few events had a critical stance, linking climate policy to social justice and attention to the most vulnerable groups (see example of an event).

Pollution

Pollution is identified as a major source of pressure on the global environment by contributors. A green transition is discussed with a variety of solutions proposed to decrease pollution (see event). For instance, one of the most endorsed ideas on the platform wants the EU to provide a strong and inclusive governance approach, where both workers and trade unions are involved in the design and implementation of adaptation policies at all levels. It is stressed that the EU strategy to deal with climate change should include concrete policy measures that maintain jobs and protect the health and safety of workers, as well as active labour market policies and reskilling and training to prevent job losses (see idea).

Several areas of pollution are discussed, with the following sub-themes: emissions, water pollution, plastic pollution and light pollution.

With regard to emissions, one of the most discussed issues concerns taxing emissions, more specifically, to encourage businesses to lower their greenhouse gas emissions by opting for cheaper renewable energy sources, leading, in turn, to customers making more sustainable choices (see example of idea). One participant expressed concern about crypto mining, where the equipment leads to massive electricity consumption. In that participant’s view, the more crypto mining becomes a global issue, the more limits and regulations will be required (see idea).

On the sub-theme of water pollution, there is a strong emphasis on the need to ensure the future security of drinking water resources and clean ecosystems. Moreover, there are concrete proposals for combatting ocean and river pollution (see example of event), for example the idea to neutralise the acidification of the oceans with a specific bacteria (see idea).

The contributions that address the issue of the pollution caused by plastic materials account for a significant proportion of the total contributions, reflecting increasing public concerns about excessive plastic waste. Alongside the call to enforce and extend the ban on single use plastics (see example of event), participants propose limiting the types of plastic used for packaging to those that can be recycled together without having to separate components (see example of an idea). Additionally, one idea put forward is to create facilities for recycling plastics removed from rivers and oceans (see idea).

Lastly, some ideas on the platform propose limiting light pollution (see example of idea).

The ‘Green Deal’

Participants frequently express their concerns about climate change and its consequences, urging governments and the EU to take immediate action and putting in place a stronger European Environmental Policy to combat climate change (see example of idea). In that respect, several contributions discuss the ‘Green Deal’, a strategy of the EU aiming to set Europe on the path of transformation to a climate-neutral, fair and prosperous society, with for example calls for a more socially inclusive approach and a call for a balanced strategy whose economic, social and environmental
dimensions need to be assessed and implemented jointly and strategically, referencing the soaring energy prices across Europe (see idea). Other contributions discuss ways to accelerate implementation of the Green Deal at local and regional levels (see example of idea).

On a more general level, it is proposed to create a scoreboard to monitor the impact of measures and provide evidence of the progress of the implementation of the Green Deal at regional level (see idea).

**Energy**

Contributors on the platform suggest boosting both the small-scale and large-scale use of renewable energy, as well as limiting the use of nuclear energy, or, alternatively, developing safe nuclear energy and using it in the countries and places where it is not possible to use renewable energy sources (see example of idea).

Furthermore, the second most endorsed idea since launch under the topic of climate change calls for a halt to all fossil fuel subsidies (see example of idea).

Simultaneously, there is a call to investigate alternative sources of energy (see example of event), such as thermonuclear fusion, geothermal energy or hydrogen that would contribute considerably to energy diversity (see example of idea). However, contributors emphasise that even alternative sources, such as wind energy, need to be accepted by local populations and that it is necessary to ensure that they have a positive impact on biodiversity, human beings and landscapes (see example of idea).

Under the sub-theme of energy efficient and environmentally friendly heating, examples include an idea advocating the use of multi fuel stoves (see idea) or a district heating network capitalising on unused heat sources, such as deep geothermal energy (see idea).

**Consumption**

Within the theme of consumption, there is a general call to change the current system of the mass consumption of goods and services (see example of idea). Some contributors go even further by proposing to have quotas for maximum consumption and production (see example of idea).

Related to food waste specifically, one participant highlights that 40% of all food produced worldwide never reaches our tables and that this causes 10% of all global greenhouse gas emissions, and proposes measures to stop food waste, such as supporting food donations (see idea).

A number of contributors on the platform point to the considerable volume of waste produced and propose several measures to avoid and combat such waste, such as recycling (see example of idea), opting for zero or low waste product packaging in order to decrease the negative impact on the environment (see example of idea). One participant points to the need for more information on recycling to encourage this practice from an early age (see idea). Another proposes the introduction of a European integrated system to return bottles, based on the German model (see idea). The relevance of the theme of recycling is equally reflected in events organised, such as an event with senior citizens to discuss various recycling methods (see event).

Within the sub-theme of the environmental impact of consumption, the issue of the compliance of imported goods with EU standards good has been raised. For example, one contributor suggests prohibiting the import of beef from fishing subsidies (see idea) or fossil fuel subsidies (see idea). Similarly, suggestions advocate increasing subsidies for biodiversity and climate change projects that would lead to a long-term positive outlook.

Contributors also propose introducing a sustainability tax (see example of idea) that would make unsustainable products more expensive, thus making such products less attractive for both consumers and producers. Moreover, this would also provide the EU with additional revenue, or “climate income” to invest in sustainability measures, such as the purchase of electric cars and the installation of solar panels on private homes (see idea).

**Subsidisation, taxation**

Within this theme contributors call for a halt to environmentally unfriendly subsidies, such as harmful
Brazil that does not have the same level of traceability as EU beef (see idea).

A second strand of ideas advocates a more advanced product labelling system (see example of idea) that would detail the environmental impact of production or indicate whether the products contain microplastics and thus have a negative long-term effect on the health of consumers (see example of idea).

A third strand revolves around the fast fashion and textile industry, with the aim of making it more eco-friendly; contributors highlight the huge quantity of resources used in the production of clothing and the fact that clothes are often unsuitable for recycling (see example of idea).

Additionally, participants highlight the need to promote green and sustainable tourism instead of mass tourism, since the latter is considered to have a considerable impact on natural and cultural resources (see example of event).

A last group of comments and ideas under this theme reflects concerns about the waste generated by new electronic appliances, and calls inter alia for an increased mandatory warranty for them and the need to ensure reparability (see example of idea). In addition, there is a proposal to develop a pilot programme to replace the electrical appliances of 35 million EU families with A+++ items within the EU’s objective of a green transition (see idea). Some participants also want energy consumption to be limited - especially since electricity is largely produced with fossil fuels - by imposing a monthly quota of electricity for consumption, with the surplus being taxed (see example of idea).

Agriculture

Under the theme of agriculture, the concept of ecological farming and more small farms (see example of idea) is fairly frequently advocated by contributors, with calls for the use of pesticides and intensive farming to be banned (see example of idea). Some contributors go even further, suggesting that the pesticides ban should be extended to private use (see example of idea).

One idea related to this same sub-theme addresses the need to find an adequate way of disposing of plastic film used for

Transport

Numerous ideas under the theme of transport focus on the relationship between transport and pollution. Some of the suggestions listed below concern changing transport systems in order to reduce pollution.

Ideas submitted on the platform to change transport systems call first and foremost for a ban on short-distance flights in the EU in order to reduce pollution (see example of idea). Contributors highlight that the pandemic has already led to a shrinking aviation industry.

In general, there is strong support for public transport systems in Europe to be improved (see example of idea) as more environmentally friendly alternatives to short-distance flights. Specifically, a common European railway network is widely discussed (see example of idea). One contributor proposes the Euro Trainscanner search engine to make travelling by rail more attractive (see idea) and another suggests introducing an integrated EU ticket and making it free of charge in cities (see idea). There are recurring proposals to expand fast train networks (see example of idea).

Other ideas concern a common cycling network, proposing, for instance, an extension of cycling routes or the creation of a Europe-wide cycling junction network (see example of idea).

Another pool of ideas focuses on innovation and the development of electric vehicles, such as cars and bicycles, and their integration into the current environment, for example by providing a charging station network (see example of idea). Nevertheless, one participant argues that electric cars have detrimental environmental and humanitarian costs and suggests instead that vehicle weight and speed should be limited to reduce CO2 emissions (see idea).

On the question of the decarbonisation of transport and more environmentally friendly transport, participants also emphasise the importance of cross-border projects to foster shipping and rail transport (see example of idea). There is also a call to develop programmes to encourage R&D and innovation, in order to produce means of transport - both public and private, individual and collective - that are non-polluting and 100% energy self-sufficient (see example of idea).
mulching, greenhouses, and tunnel farming (see idea). Moreover, one participant advocates a transition from intensive agriculture to agro-ecology (see idea). Another participant proposes vertical farms to drastically reduce water consumption in agriculture (see idea).

Other ideas suggest that the EU should do more to promote a plant-based diet on the grounds of climate protection and the preservation of the environment. Some contributors add ethical concerns as grounds for such action (see example of idea). This is also addressed under the Health topic.

The need to ensure food sovereignty and security by promoting local farming is also strongly emphasised by contributors. Local farming could be promoted, for example, by creating food belts around cities, requiring fruit trees to be planted in urban areas, supporting the acquisition of land by producers and farmers by limiting the price of such land, requiring part of the rooftop space of public buildings to be used for urban agriculture, limiting housing pressure on agricultural land (see idea).

Under the theme of agriculture, the issue of how agriculture should cope with climate fluctuations is raised. One idea specifies that multifunctional, multi-diverse agroforestry systems can enhance the formation of humus, water holding capacity and CO2 binding, thereby significantly increasing the stability and productivity of agriculture (see idea).

Lastly, there is a discussion about the income of farmers, with some contributors calling for farmers to receive a guaranteed income through fair prices instead of subsidies (see example of idea).

A sub-theme of ideas concerns deforestation with calls to invest in the reforestation of Europe (see example of idea) or globally to save the lungs of the planet, namely, the Amazon rainforest and other world rainforests, in order not only to slow down global carbon pollution and save species, but also to reduce migratory pressures on Europe (see example of idea).

**Creating change in attitudes and behaviours**

Another focus is on education and raising awareness among Europeans of all generations (see event). While most of the ideas address the education of young people (see example of idea), even from a very early age, through educational gardens (see idea), there is also a call to engage older Europeans with climate change initiatives, especially because of the increasing population ageing in Europe (see example of idea). Additionally, some contributors stress the need to promote eco-responsible communication by the European institutions. For instance, they propose developing communication kits on "how to be an eco-responsible European" and strengthening environmental education in order to create neighbourhoods responsible for the environment (see idea).

**Landscapes and construction**

An additional theme concerns landscapes and construction with a sub-theme grouping together a number of ideas and events discussing the New European Bauhaus (see event), with the aim of combining innovative, aesthetic design with concrete actions tackling climate change, and making our future living spaces more sustainable, affordable and accessible. Another idea calls for awareness-raising campaigns on green, sustainable construction with the use of low-carbon building materials (see idea).

Similarly a dialogue organised in Sweden focuses on ways of developing and promoting sustainable housing in rural
areas in order to make rural living more attractive (see event).

One proposal involves introducing a European restoration land-trust to restore abandoned lands and buildings to a more natural state for the benefit of biodiversity and urban dwellers (see idea).
Figure 9 – Mind map ‘Climate change and the environment’ topic

- **Green deal**
  - Put in place a stronger European Environmental Policy to battle climate change
  - Expand the green deal in a socially inclusive manner
  - Encourage implementation on local and regional levels
  - Monitor impact of measures and implementation

- **Consumption**
  - Reduce all types of waste, including food and water waste
  - Introduce product labels detailing environmental impact
  - Encourage slow fashion & eco-friendly textile industry
  - Promote green and eco-friendly tourism
  - Introduce an increased mandatory warranty on new appliances
  - Encourage circular economy
  - Interrogate mass consumption
  - Promote energy efficient electronic appliances

- **Subsidisation, taxation**
  - Halt environmentally unfriendly subsidies
  - Subsidise biodiversity & climate change projects
  - Tax unsustainable products

- **Create change in attitudes and behaviours**
  - Raise awareness among all generations
  - Invest in environmental education and communication
  - Provide more information on recycling

- **Pollution**
  - Facilitate a Green Transition with concrete policy measures
  - Battle plastic pollution, extend the ban on single-use plastic
  - Tax emissions
  - Expand the EU Emissions Trading System
  - Ensure future security of water resources, neutralize acidification of oceans
  - Limit light pollution

- **Sustainability in agriculture**
  - Ban pesticides and promote more ecological farming
  - Promote plant-based diet
  - Promote local farming to ensure food security
  - Investigate more sustainable forms of agriculture: vertical farming, agro-ecology, agro-forestry,...
  - Enforce fair prices and guaranteed income for farmers
  - Investigate ways to transform agriculture to cope with effects of climate change

- **Transport**
  - Ban short distance flights
  - Improve and expand public transport and its infrastructure
  - Expand fast train networks
  - Discus electric cars’ environmental benefits and drawbacks
  - Invest in research and development of environmentally friendly transport
  - Limit CO2 emission of transport by tightening speed limits

- **Energy**
  - Abandon or limit non-renewable energy sources
  - Promote and investigate alternative sources of energy
  - Investigate energy efficient and environmentally friendly heating

- **Landscapes and construction**
  - Promote the New European Bauhaus
  - Encourage use of low carbon building materials
  - Introduce a European Restoration land-trust to revalue abandoned lands and buildings
3. Health

Under the topic of health contributors address a wide variety of themes. They suggest greater harmonisation and integration at European level; this is also influenced by the experience of COVID-19 and its impact. Other ideas cover a wide variety of themes, from calls to invest more in health research, with a particular focus on the ageing populations, calls for an array of preventative measures, including promoting healthy living and tackling those elements that are known to be causes of health issues such as air pollution. This topic has generated 1,413 contributions: 583 ideas, 722 comments and 115 events. The main themes explored under this topic are:

- Healthcare access for everyone
- Integrating EU healthcare systems
- Healthy lifestyles
- Prevention, rather than intervention
- Health research
- Approaches to medicine
- Healthy ageing
- Health in a digitalised era
- Responses to COVID-19
- Sexual and reproductive health

Events

Since the beginning of the conference, 115 events have been organised in EU Member States with relation to health, making it one of the topics with the fewest related events. Some events have targeted a specialised audience for specific technical subjects, whereas others have been accessible to a wider public.

Some of the events addressing the question of the future of health in Europe in broad terms were organised not
only for the medical community (see example of an event), but also in the form of participative workshops with a wider section of citizens (see example of an event).

One frequently explored theme is the creation of a European Health Union, highlighting the need for more efficient cooperation between Member States and institutions at the EU level. For instance, the advantages of integration, such as providing a solution to the uneven distribution of the health workforce, were discussed between professionals and the public during a debate held in Poland (see event).

In many cases, debates on the future of health were linked to the need to re-discuss the system in relation to the ongoing pandemic. Events were often based on responses to COVID-19, as well as the need to reflect on local and European vaccination strategies (see example of an event). Linked to this, some events have specifically addressed the question of adapting to the circumstances imposed by the pandemic (see example of an event). Such circumstances, in turn, have imposed further reflection on the impact that digitalisation could have on the future of health in the EU (see example of an event).

Other themes explored include the fight against cancer, discussing a European Plan Against Cancer (see event).

Healthcare access for everyone

A recurring theme is the call for equal access to affordable and high-quality health care. Ideas put forward regarding healthcare access support the introduction of a European medical insurance scheme (see example of idea and idea). The idea of de-privatising the healthcare industry is also put forward as a way of making healthcare affordable for all (see idea) and abolishing the double track of public versus private health access within the EU (see idea). On a different note, a further idea to make healthcare practically more accessible to everyone is that of expanding the mobile health system, in the form of health buses which would facilitate high-speed and low-barrier access to medical systems (see idea). Another idea also raises the issue of introducing a cap on the cost of medicines to make them affordable for everyone (see idea).

Integrating EU healthcare systems

Participants on the platform advocate closer cooperation among Member States to strengthen European healthcare systems in various ways (see event). Ideas include pooling knowledge and capacities by, for example, allowing intensivists to move freely and take care of critically ill patients across the EU (see idea), standardising pre-hospital emergency care (see example of an idea), recognising carer qualifications across the EU, setting up a European hospital for rare diseases (see idea) and improving legal regulations on transplantation to create a unified transplantation coordination system (see idea). On the same note, one contributor suggests recognising diseases across the EU to create a database with treatment methods and evaluations to produce an EU-wide disease regime (see idea).

Accordingly, discussions underline the need to increase the EU competences in public health matters (see example of an idea and an event), with many suggesting a revision of the Treaty of Lisbon (see example of an idea). These suggestions are most often put forward in connection with how Member States have dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic and the related shortages of medical equipment, the challenges of vaccine development and joint vaccine purchases. Accordingly, contributors highlight the need to increase or relocate production capacity of medicines and medical devices within the EU (see example of an idea).

Healthy lifestyles

Several ideas underline the importance of healthy diets, with many citizens suggesting that the EU should promote vegetarian diets (see idea) because of their health and environmental benefits. In this context, one idea is to increase taxes on meat while reducing VAT on healthy foods (see idea). Another idea proposes to tackle
inflammatory diseases associated with poor diets and obesity (see example of an idea). One idea raises the issue of increased food quality controls (see idea). Further contributions call for an investigation into the effects of emulsifiers (see idea), a ban on artificial transfats (see idea) and the regulation of agricultural techniques impacting nutrition and health, such as antibiotics in intensive farming (see example of an idea). Similar ideas are also raised under the topic of Climate change and the environment.

Support for promoting health literacy (see idea) and instilling health-related practices from an early age, as a key factor to a healthy lifestyle, are also proposed on the platform (see idea). Several citizens point to the need to discourage tobacco consumption at European level, by increasing the price and reducing selling points to pharmacies (see example of an idea), while others advocate a more sustained fight against drugs at EU level (see idea).

Prevention, rather than intervention

Several ideas put forward by citizens concern raising awareness about mental health and its consequences, such as burnout, stress, depression and anxiety, and call for a European Plan to tackle this issue (see idea), especially in view of the impact of COVID-19 (see idea). Moreover, one citizen highlights how cognitive neurology and behaviour can prevent the aggravation of certain comorbidities typical of neurological disorders and pathologies (see idea).

The influence of air pollution on citizens’ health is also raised as a pressing issue (see idea), as is the need to tackle noise pollution by defining strict levels on permitted noise emissions for car tires (see idea). In addition, there is a call to lower exposure to substances of very high concern, including PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) (see idea).

Related to cancer, one idea suggests banning sunbeds to prevent the risk of developing skin cancer (see idea).

In line with prevention, one idea presents the advantages of epigenetic technologies to promote a new ecological humanism by enhancing the role of the environment and food to protect the health of individuals and the community (see idea).

Health research

A number of contributors propose varying ideas to develop a thriving health ecosystem in Europe promoting and supporting health innovation and health research. Suggestions take varying forms such as the highly endorsed proposal to encourage research on the pathomechanisms of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis within Horizon Europe (see idea). Others propose a transparent intellectual property incentive system (see idea), or the creation of a centralised European Health Research Institute to coordinate health research across national institutes and invest in pharmaceutical research (see idea). Other ideas include the creation of a European laboratory for infectious diseases (see idea). One citizen underlines the necessity for the purchase, production and supply of protective clothing and medicines to become more Europe-based (see idea). The need for Europe to join forces with universities on research to develop a new antibiotic against super resistant bacteria is also put forward (see example of an idea). Some citizens also call for a law to be introduced making it obligatory for pharmaceutical companies which are distributing vaccines to publish full data from the clinical trials for those vaccines to facilitate evaluations of their safety and effectiveness (see idea).

Approaches to medicine

The idea of integrating natural remedies in medicine, advocating natural medicines, such as phytotherapy, homeopathy, etc. to complement allopathic medicine is widely discussed on the platform (see example of an idea). Moreover, the need to adopt more holistic approaches to medicine is another idea (see idea). In this regard, contributors also suggest that non-medicinal interventions
can demonstrably benefit the health and autonomy of patients (see example of an idea).

Several citizens also call for cannabis to be decriminalised for medicinal and therapeutic purposes (see idea and idea).

An idea sheds focus on the importance of practising evidence-based medicine (see idea).

Healthy ageing and anti-ageing

In light of the ageing populations in Europe, citizens highlight the importance of good health during the “silver age”. For this, the need for quality care services for the elderly is highlighted (see idea). One highly endorsed and commented idea promotes science-intensive healthy longevity research and technologies (see idea), such as rejuvenation therapies and clinical trials in this field and implementing effective legal, budgetary, regulatory and institutional commitments, with the objective of increasing healthy life expectancy in the European Union. Taking the idea even further, one citizen advances cryonics as an opportunity to delay care until a cure is found, by freezing terminally ill people (see idea).

Anti-ageing is also advocated with a view to boosting economic growth, vis-à-vis the decrease in working population (see idea).

One citizen raises the potential of rural areas as hubs of innovation for healthy ageing strategies, as these “struggling areas” are generally more densely populated by elderly citizens and the quality of healthcare is not as high as in urban areas, therefore requiring innovative solutions (see idea). A set of ideas addresses the theme of end-of-life care, advocating a unified European strategy for end-of-life treatments (see idea), while others focus on improving palliative treatments for cancer patients (see idea).

Health in a digitalised era

A group of citizens discusses the opportunities and threats relating to increased digitalisation in recent decades. Several ideas see digitalisation, compatibility and integration of European eHealth systems as a way of providing citizens with interoperable health records across the EU (see example of an idea). However, some contributors are cautious and emphasise the vulnerability of such sensitive data and the need to limit both nationally and Europe-wide the size of the healthcare data sets, e.g. for research purposes, to a fixed number of given records or patients (see idea). One citizen calls for the prohibition of national genome databases which are used for medical research purposes, but may be accessed by other entities, such as government services, for other purposes, thereby violating privacy rights (see idea).

Another idea suggests prioritising funding for research into exercise and in relation to eHealth points to digital solutions that help citizens to remain physically active, thereby combating a diverse range of chronic conditions that are due to inactivity (see idea).

On a different note, digital addiction is discussed and an EU action plan against digital addiction is suggested (see idea), with some contributors suggesting that training should be introduced in schools, as well as information campaigns for adults to limit digital interaction.

Responses to COVID-19

The effects of COVID-19 are widely discussed by participants who, overall, feel that there is a need to restore rational and scientific credibility and confidence in medicine and politics vis-à-vis the widespread diffusion of misconceptions and fake news during the pandemic. When discussing COVID-19 related measures, citizens on the platform agree that any COVID-19 measures in the EU should be implemented in an evidence-based manner, in order to achieve a cost-benefit analysis that is as realistic as possible (see idea). In particular, one participant warns
against neglecting or delaying the care of patients with other illnesses and diseases, vis-à-vis the restructuring of medical facilities to take account of Covid patients (see idea). In line with this, citizens advocate increasing medical staff capacities (see example of an idea).

Further ideas highlight the need to develop inclusive strategies to deal with future pandemics at EU level, protecting the rights of people with a disability (see idea). One suggestion put forward is to carry out research on the impact of COVID-19 measures on residents and staff of homes for the elderly in the different EU countries, in order to have first-hand accounts of the experiences of elderly people with COVID-19 measures (see idea). Furthermore, one citizen calls for an investigation into the collateral and hidden effects of the pandemic (see idea).

Several participants call for enhanced mental health support to deal with the social and economic consequences of the pandemic, especially among young people (see example of an idea). A number of events have also revolved around this theme, such as the question of the future of European public health after the corona crisis (see event).

Debates on the vaccination programme reveal conflicting views, ranging from the idea that vaccination should be mandatory for everyone (see idea), to suggesting that citizens should be free to choose (see idea). Another contributor argues that vaccines should not be mandatory for young people and that the EU should not “blackmail” them by enabling “facilitated” transnational travel in exchange for vaccination and that if PCR tests are required they should be provided for free (see idea). It is also proposed that EU Member States should agree to recognise the relevant WHO standards and national documents certifying the level of antibodies (or vaccine/refreshment) (see idea). The green pass certificate is also widely discussed, pitching those who fear the rise of two classes of citizens (see idea) and suggest that Europeans should defend the right to choose not to be vaccinated (see idea) against those who support such a health pass and obligatory vaccination as part of a collective effort to defeat the virus and ensure the viability of healthcare systems (see example of an idea). One contribution addresses the procedures relating to vaccine purchases at EU level, calling for greater disclosure and transparency with respect to the contracts with the pharmaceutical companies (see idea).

Several citizens call for greater solidarity and the establishment of a global partnership and funding to fight and eradicate diseases globally and suggest that Europe can be the world leader in fighting and overcoming pandemics, cancer and heart disease (see idea). One citizen suggests that the European Commission, in cooperation with World Health Organisation, should promote an international agreement to enable the worldwide production and distribution of medicines in the context of pandemics (see idea) and another contribution underlines the need to vaccinate the world to prevent the rise of new strains (see idea). At the same time, contributors propose that measures should be taken to safeguard the patents of the companies and suggest that the European Commission could play a significant role as mediator and ambassador (see idea).

### Sexual and Reproductive Health

Some ideas propose that free menstrual items should be made available in public spaces to combat so-called ‘period poverty’ (see example of an idea). Other proposals suggest the reduction or abolishment of taxes on female health products such as sanitary pads (see idea). In addition, the need for more research into female reproductive health and the development of less invasive female and male contraceptives is raised (see idea), as well as making the morning-after pill available in every country without prescription. There are also calls on the platform to ban male genital mutilation without consent and before the age of majority (see idea). One proposal suggests instituting EU sponsored and promoted sexual health clinics (see idea).
Figure 10 – Mind map ‘Health’ topic

Integrating EU health care systems
- Increase competence for the EU in public health matters
- Pool medical knowledge and capacities
- Equip the EU with more emergency competences and powers for public health
- Recognise diseases across the EU to come to an EU wide uniform disease approach
- Implement an overarching European medical insurance scheme
- Deprive healthcare industry
- Mobile Health System (health busses)
- Ensure access to affordable and high quality healthcare

Healthcare access for everyone
- Promote innovations for healthy ageing
- Research on anti-ageing and longevity
- Unified European strategy for end-of-life care treatments
- Restore scientific credibility in medicine and politics
- Introduce Covid-19 related measures in an evidence-based manner
- Develop inclusive strategies to protect rights of persons with a disability to face future pandemics
- Impact study gathering accounts on the experiences of elderly people living through Covid-19
- Solidarity call for global partnership and funding to fight and end diseases
- Address modalities of vaccine purchases and administration at the EU level
- Restructure medical facilities to prevent patients affected by other illnesses than Covid-19 from not being cared for.

Ageing populations

Responses to Covid-19

Healthy lifestyles
- Encourage vegetarian diets
- Ban artificial trans fats and use of antibiotics in intensive farming
- Instil health literacy from an early age
- Lead a sustained fight against hard drugs
- Discourage tobacco consumption

Digitalisation and health
- Implement European eHealth systems
- Promote eHealth instruments to encourage physical activity
- Ensure privacy of DNA databases
- Combat digital addiction

Health research
- Invest and support health research and innovation
- Research on Myalgic Encephalomyelitis
- Develop a new antibiotic against super resistant bacteria
- Commit to transparency in clinical trials and studies for vaccines, making data available to the public
- Coordinate health research with an institute a European laboratory for infectious diseases or a centralised European Health Research Institute

Sexual and reproductive health
- Combat period poverty
- Reimburse female contraceptives
- Increase research into female reproductive health and less invasive female and male contraceptives
- Ban male genital mutilation
- Institute a European sexual health clinic
- Provide the day after pill without prescription
- Advocate evidence based medicine
- Advocate a holistic approach of medicine
- Decriminalise cannabis for medicinal purposes
- Recognise natural medicines

Approaches to medicine

Prevention rather than intervention
- Increase mental health awareness
- Limit air and noise pollution and exposure from substances of high concerns
- Ban or limit practices that are known to be detrimental to health, such as sunbeds

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4. A stronger economy, social justice and jobs

The topic of ‘A stronger economy, social justice and jobs’ has received a total of 1,062 ideas, 1,566 comments and 351 events up to 3 November 2021. Contributors make various suggestions to drive economic growth in the EU by introducing economic policies, further strengthening the Single European Market, focusing on innovation and promoting and supporting SMEs and strategic industries. Additionally, they stress the importance of the EU becoming more inclusive and socially fair, especially in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and point to several perceived related challenges, such as a lack of support for young Europeans and lack of collaboration among the Member States. The most frequently suggested mechanism to make Europe more inclusive and socially fair is guaranteeing an Unconditional Basic Income throughout the EU. Additionally, contributors believe that the well-being of various groups of people, especially the most disadvantaged ones, is pivotal to the EU’s successful functioning and further growth. The various ideas can be grouped according to the following themes:

- Taxation for an inclusive and fair economy
- Social protection and social security
- Economic recovery
- More inclusive, socially just Europe
- Boost jobs
- Innovation – boosting growth
- Further strengthening the European Single Market
- Challenging the current economic model

**Events**

A wide range of events has been organised under this topic. For example, a participatory workshop in Poland has explored the issues of social security coordination in the EU, in connection with occupational mobility (see idea), as well as the well-being of workers in the light of demographic change and ageing populations (see idea and event). Another event approached the economic and industrial aspects of the European integration process, with a focus on social issues, working conditions and employment (see event). In Germany an online event brought women entrepreneurs together who called for a strong European Union and a strengthening of the single market, stressing the need to reduce bureaucracy given that it is seen as a significant constraint on the competitiveness of companies (in particular small and medium sized ones), (see event).

Several participatory events have been organised to enable citizens to express their opinions on the EU and their concerns for the future, for example a series of COFE discussions in Estonia (see event). Furthermore, panel events have been held to discuss the EU’s Economic Recovery and Resilience plan, as part of the NextGenerationEU (see example of an event).

Moreover, events have also engaged with citizens to identify challenges for companies in contributing to the green transformation (see event).

An event aimed at engaging the “three-seas engine”, i.e. the twelve countries close to the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea and the Adriatic Sea was held, addressing opportunities for growth in the region (see event).

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**Taxation for an inclusive and fair economy**

A significant theme involves addressing social, economic and environmental problems through fiscal rules.

A large pool of ideas advocates greater tax justice, fair taxation and combating tax fraud. Suggestions include introducing measures to tackle tax avoidance, introducing a financial transaction tax (see idea), as well as avoiding ‘social dumping’ by harmonising fiscal rules and minimum wages across the Member States (see example of idea). One highly commented and endorsed ideas concerns the introduction of a global or EU minimum tax to address tax havens (see idea). The question of how to tax the digital giants was, for example, debated during an open forum (see event).

Furthermore, a variety of possible taxation measures for an inclusive and fair economy are highlighted on the digital platform. The taxation subjects are currently as follows. First, tax measures to promote fair competition between companies, such as either a common Value Added Tax (VAT) system for e-commerce or requiring companies to only pay VAT in their home countries (see idea) and a VAT related to the source of goods to promote local consumption and thus support the local economy (see example of idea). Secondly, taxation related to the environment and climate change, with amongst others calls for an EU carbon or a sustainability tax (see example of idea). Thirdly, a call for consumer goods to be taxed based on the conditions of production (labour, raw materials, wages) to promote fair trade rather than free trade (see example of an idea). The last group of taxation measures falls under miscellaneous, including taxation to promote gender equality, with a call to allow the application of the zero or reduced VAT rate for female sanitary products (see idea).

In line with cross-cutting calls for federalisation under other topics, a substantial strand of ideas within the topic of ‘A stronger economy, social justice and jobs’ revolves around a Fiscal Union. Some contributors express the opinion that more EU own resources or a budget independent from the Member States is the way forward for a more united European future (see example of idea).
Social protection and social security

Ideas under this theme generally promote a unified EU approach to social security, or, in other words, minimum European standards ranging from parenting and the family to the right to accessible housing and pension policies.

The most recurring sub-theme, with several ideas being highly endorsed and commented on, concerns the unconditional basic income to ensure the ability of each person to participate in society (see example of idea). Similarly, related to this sub-theme is the group of ideas discussing income gaps in the EU, suggesting a limited salary difference within the same company (see example of idea), or monitoring the income of politicians (see example of idea), and a general call for more measures to create a more humane Europe (see example of idea).

One contributor advocates a democratic digital euro and a Universal Basic Dividend, which could be funded by the yields the ECB earns on bonds and stocks acquired through its open-market operations, via digital licensing, or direct investment (see idea).

Next to an unconditional basic income, there is a recurring call for measures to address (youth) unemployment (see example of event). For the ageing population, contributors discuss the need for coordinated retirement policies and pensions across EU Member States (see example of idea), with suggestions to set up a unified pension system for mobile citizens (see example of an idea).

The right to accessible, affordable housing is another sub-theme related to social security discussed by contributors (see example of idea).

Lastly, there is a group of more administrative ideas, for instance, the introduction of a digitised (common EU) social security card and transferable social rights for mobile Europeans, as also discussed in other topics on the platform (see example of idea).

More inclusive, socially just Europe

A number of highly endorsed ideas discuss the need to further implement the European Pillar of Social Rights in order to establish the social dimension of the EU (see example of idea).

When it comes to a more inclusive Europe contributors discuss the need to facilitate the inclusion of people with disabilities, for example by extending the validity of national disability cards across the EU (see idea). Furthermore, one idea suggests making public spaces favourable to intergenerational exchanges, through parks, cultural centres etc (see idea). Related to this, a Spanish event encouraged citizens to share their views on how they would improve their city if they were the mayor (see event). Support for people living below the poverty threshold and similar is recorded (see example of idea and event). A couple of ideas also highlight the need for greater efforts to tackle homelessness (see example of an idea) and develop integration strategies for Roma minorities (see event).

With ideas concerning LGBTIQ rights and representation (see idea), the gender pay gap, and gender quota, several contributors on the platform call for a more socially just Europe that could be achieved by, for example, developing a social equality measurement index (see example of idea). Further ideas include, for example, a call to enforce gender equality in the fields of architecture and civil engineering (see idea). One idea recorded on the platform advocates the adoption of the Equal Treatment Directive to ensure equal treatment in all spheres of life (see idea). Related ideas concern measures against sexual assault and domestic violence, with calls, in particular, for initiatives to support victims (see idea).

Economic recovery

A pool of comments and ideas on the platform expresses concern about rising public debt in the EU (see example of an idea and event): discussing the role of the European Central Bank (ECB), calling for a review of the Stability and Growth Pact rules (see idea), legislation on current account imbalances amongst others (see example of idea),
and more generally, for the ECB mandate to be extended (see idea).

Ideas revolving around the promotion of local consumption and production, with SMEs as the growth engine, are seen as pivotal to the EU’s economic recovery. For this reason, citizens highlight the need to eliminate bureaucratic obstacles to business support and development (see example of an idea and event). This issue is also raised with regard to the European funds for recovery, with a special focus on small and medium-sized enterprises (see example of an idea). Investing in future generations is also presented as a strategy to relaunch the economy, following the COVID-19 crisis (see idea).

In connection with recovery strategies, cohesion is highlighted as an essential value, in conjunction with online social rights and addressing youth employment needs (see event).

In the same vein, with regard to the COVID-19, contributors discuss the need for financing future possible pandemic preparedness measures (see example of idea). In line with this, one idea addresses the understaffing of healthcare professionals in Europe (see idea). Additionally, contributors stress the importance of working together globally on economic recovery (see example of event), as well as allocating public funds to support small producers and traders to compensate them for all the losses due to closures during the pandemic (see idea). There are calls for increased solidarity among Member States with, for example, an expansion of the Recovery Fund (see idea).

First of all, contributors emphasise the need to simplify tax and labour policies in the EU in order to avoid fiscal and social dumping (see example of idea).

Secondly, there is a call to foster better working conditions across the continent, for instance, by boosting telework and “flexible working”, to reduce commuting travel time for employees and office infrastructure fixed costs for employers (see idea), to reconcile family time, to reduce rural depopulation (see idea) and to cut harmful emissions through reduced traffic (see idea). Further examples suggest introducing a shorter working week (see example of idea), banning unpaid internships, mandatory overtime and precarious working contracts (see example of idea), or investing in childcare infrastructures to reconcile private and professional life.

Thirdly, there is an emphasis on the development of careers, with calls for programmes and measures to facilitate access to the EU job market, with internships across Member States and an online job-platform (see example of idea), as a way to counter youth unemployment (see example of an idea) and adapting academic qualifications to the labour market, which in turn, would also increase the employability of students (see idea). Increasing the mobility of workers in the EU is also seen as economically beneficial (see idea).

Contributors highlight the importance of supporting young people, in particular, when it comes to access to the job market (see example of event). Moreover, one participant calls for the promotion of craft jobs as a means for young generations to rediscover fundamental values, rather than solely promoting jobs in the IT sector (see idea). Similarly, another contributor underlines the need to provide more professional development opportunities in technical fields, where more practical skills are required (see idea). In fact several participants stress the lack of vocational training and post-secondary learning (see idea).

Another group of ideas, related to the theme of innovation, calls for the creation of jobs in line with the green and digital transitions (see example of idea).

Lastly, the idea of eliminating daylight saving time has been expanded with contributors discussing the economic and social benefits of eliminating the “Daylight saving time” (DST) (see example of an idea).
Innovation – boosting growth

Contributors suggest boosting growth via investments in high-tech research, skills, knowledge and expertise (artificial intelligence, blockchain, nanotechnology, energy storage, lab-grown meat, etc.). Additionally, several ideas identify the need for technological independence, for example, by developing the EU’s hardware manufacturing capacity.

Investments in research and education are seen as critically important (see idea and event), with support for knowledge sharing via an open network of laboratories or a European Infrastructure Agency (see idea). Another suggestion discusses a kind of Spotify for science, an accessible knowledge bank containing 3D printing models (see idea), e-learning materials and educational programmes collecting international good practices (see idea). In connection with research, one of the suggestions is to facilitate patents via a patent fund (see idea).

Secondly, the digital economy is seen as a prerequisite to innovation and growth, with discussions on cryptocurrency and local digital currencies that would be parallel to the euro (see example of idea). When it comes to cryptocurrency, contributors feel that regulation is needed to protect citizens (see example of idea).

Environment and climate change are also discussed in relation to innovation, with ideas around climate neutrality goals and the leading role that the EU could play in establishing and investing in a (global) Green Economy (see example of idea). Several ideas discuss a practical implementation of the Green Economy with, for example, investing in organic farming and farm-to-fork initiatives (see idea). Nonetheless, one citizen explains that implementation of the Green Deal should ensure that EU citizens are not adversely affected by the new measures (see idea). Several related ideas discuss measures to encourage and support businesses in achieving a green transition, for example by setting clear and binding objectives for specific sectors (see idea). Lastly, the funding of start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is generally perceived as an innovation driver (see example of idea). Contributors propose to support SMEs via, for example, an EU fund providing starter capital for SMEs (see idea), or an online commerce platform dedicated to European SMEs (see idea). Another participant points to the case of China’s development through capillary hubs of innovation and growth, combined with favourable administrative and fiscal regulations, which encouraged investment and the rise of start-ups. The participant calls for a rethink of European policies in light of such examples (see idea).

Further strengthening the European Single Market

An increased number of contributions relates to the need to further strengthen the European Single Market, putting the focus on economic policies, considering that the Commission’s focus has increasingly shifted towards other policy areas (see example of an idea). Overall, ideas reiterate that Member States should improve the enforcement of existing acquis in the economic realm (see example of an idea) to make the single market more attractive and competitive (see idea). One citizen suggests developing an economic policy to attract global companies to the EU as part of a European Enterprise policy, with homogenous taxation across the EU (see idea).

Common taxes, such as carbon footprint taxation, and currency, are seen as a way of bridging inequalities among EU countries and improving the functioning of the single market (see idea). In this regard, an event in which the need for a reform of the EU budgetary rules applicable in the Member States in order to ensure a sustainable post-Covid recovery and to secure the public investments required for the green and digital transition was held (see event).

Challenging the current economic model

The second most endorsed idea under this topic since the launch of the platform proposes an updated model that
would introduce a new EU economic model and governance based on going ‘beyond GDP’ and building an inclusive and fair ‘European well-being’ and reform the EU’s economic governance, the European Semester, the mandate of the ECB, EU’s own-resources and strengthen the Economic and Monetary Union (see idea). This particular idea resonates with other calls on the platform for reform of the EU economic model to achieve an inclusive and equitable European welfare (see event and event). Similarly, one citizen argues that the regulatory framework of the single market should introduce greater incentives for companies to engage with society and the environment (see idea and event).

Within this theme, the current European economic system is discussed from a more ideological perspective. Participants highlight the perceived shortcomings of the current economic model. More specifically, contributors proposes building on capitalism and the free market, with more internal competition, reduced regulatory burden, or even a business management approach (see example of idea). Others promote a more social or human-centred market economy (see example of idea). Within this discussion, one idea sheds light on the theory of degrowth, as a way to re-establish a new balance between human beings and nature vis-à-vis uncontrolled growth (see idea). Another participant proposes to take as reference the doughnut economic model (see idea). Public discussions have also discussed indicators to measure growth beyond GDP (see event).
Figure 11 – Mind map ‘A stronger economy, social justice and jobs’ topic

- **Taxation for an inclusive and fair economy**
  - Combat tax fraud
  - Unify European tax regulations to avoid social dumping
  - Introduce a common tax policy
  - Fight tax havens with a minimum tax across the EU
  - Promote EU consumption via taxation
  - Taxation to tackle climate change
  - Introduce a fiscal union
  - Fair taxation to foster fair trade

- **Social protection and social security**
  - Introduce an EU-wide unconditional basic income
  - Introduce a digital common social security card
  - Combat income gaps in EU
  - Battle (youth) unemployment
  - Establish minimum EU standards for social security and protection
  - Make social rights within EU transferable to facilitate occupational mobility
  - Coordinate retirement policies & pensions in the EU
  - Ensure access to affordable housing

- **Stronger economy, social justice & jobs**
  - Invest in job creation in line with green and digital transitions
  - Introduce “flex working” (working part from the office part remotely)
  - Simplify tax & labour policies in the EU
  - Improve working conditions
  - Facilitate path to jobs in the EU
  - Encourage young people to pursue artisan jobs
  - Address understaffing of healthcare professionals

- **Boost jobs**
  - Support and grow SME’s; pivotal in EU’s recovery
  - Promote and invest in local consumption and production
  - Introduce tax breaks for strategic industries
  - Finance future pandemic preparedness measures
  - Introduce measures to counter rising public debt in the EU
  - Invest in tackling global economic recovery
  - Strengthen and expand the ECB’s mandate
  - Disincentivise the takeover of European companies by companies headquartered outside of Europe

- **Economic recovery**
  - Invest in education, research and development
  - Establish the digital economy
  - Strive towards a Green Economy
  - Fund start-ups & SME’s as innovation drivers
  - Encourage and support businesses to achieve a green transition

- **More inclusive, socially just Europe**
  - Defend LGBTQ+ rights & representation
  - Reduce the gender pay gap and introduce gender quota
  - Establish social dimension of Europe with the European Pillar of Social Rights
  - Foster solidarity among Member States
  - Enforce gender equality across industries
  - Targeted efforts towards integrating identified vulnerable populations into society

- **Innovation – boosting growth**
  - Interrogate shortcomings of current economic model
  - Reform EU economic governance model to achieve an inclusive and equitable European welfare

- **Challenging the current economic model**
  - Pursue the development of EU economic policies
  - Establish strategic autonomy in key industries
  - Establish transport and energy networks across the EU
  - Introduce common taxes to bridge inequalities within the EU
5. EU in the world

Ideas posted under the topic of ‘EU in the world’ cover a variety of themes related to foreign policy, ranging from trade, to the use of soft power and defence. Overall, contributors call for a stronger presence of the EU in the global political arena: in its neighbourhood policy as well as in relations with, for instance, African and Latin American countries. Contributors to the platform feel that the EU should be bolder in its exercise of both soft and hard power. Since the inception of the platform, this topic has generated an overall number of 2,439 contributions, i.e. 776 ideas, 1,410 comments and 253 events. The various ideas can be grouped according to the following themes:

- Overall objectives of EU foreign policy
- Defence
- Neighbourhood policy and relations with others
- Decision making

### Events

The future of the EU has been the general subject of discussion of many events organised under the banner of the Conference on the Future of Europe. For example, on 28 July a big event took place in El Escorial, near Madrid, to discuss how to strengthen the EU’s international role (see event). Multiple events have discussed the future enlargement of the European Union. However, whether the EU should pursue future enlargement remains a topic of debate.

Some recent geopolitical developments have generated significant public attention, and events discussing those
Overall objectives of EU foreign policy

Contributors express the opinion that the EU’s role is changing amidst rising concerns over the climate emergency, a shifting economic and geopolitical power balance, major challenges to multilateralism and the global battle against COVID-19 (see example of event, see example of idea). Hence several contributors express the opinion that the EU should be bolder in its exercise of both soft and hard power (see example of idea and idea). In this respect, the issue of developing the strategic autonomy of the EU is often raised.

When it comes to EU foreign policy, many ideas refer to the role the EU should play concerning human rights and democratic values worldwide. One of the most endorsed ideas within this topic proposes the need for a common foreign and security policy to ensure the safety of Europeans, while promoting democracy, human rights, the rule of law and environmental protection in its neighbourhood and globally (see idea). Thus, contributors call for greater cooperation between Member States. They highlight, in order to maintain credibility, the need to cease competition between the Member States at international level.

Defence

When it comes to strengthening the EU’s hard power - also seen as being of the utmost importance (see example of event) - contributors advocate the creation of a common European army (see example of idea). This is one of the

Contributors call for a tougher stance and a call for action against those countries that repeatedly violate international human rights conventions and/or treaties (see example of idea). For instance, the EU is encouraged to play a leading role in the peace-building process between Israel and Palestine (see example of idea). Related is a call for a common European arms export system with strict rules to ensure that weapons “made in EU” are not fuelling conflicts around the world and leading to violations of human rights (see idea).

While most ideas call for a more united and integrated EU, thereby reinforcing the EU’s role as a global power of law and justice open to interaction with various multilateral institutions, both at a global and regional level (see example of idea and idea), others want the EU to focus on its role as an economic actor, as initially envisaged. In this regard, they consider that the EU should not assume the role of a geopolitical actor but should rather maintain its primordial function of a common economic market. Participants consider that since the EU is not a sovereign state it cannot exercise a political role as a global actor (see example of idea).

Discussions about the EU’s role in the world have been especially marked by the Afghan crisis. Contributors have highlighted the importance of the geopolitical change provoked by the increasing withdrawal of the United States from foreign affairs and conflicts. Many contributors see the return to power of the Taliban as a failure for the West, and as a sign that it is time for the EU to assume its own role in foreign policy matters, independently of its strategic alliance with the US (see example of idea). This recurring call for a united approach on foreign policy has been the subject of several events (see example of event).
most endorsed ideas under the topic. Contributors also suggest the creation of more specialised forces or institutions at EU level, such as for example a European Military Academy (see example of an idea). Regarding military education, one participant also proposes the establishment of basic military training for European youth (see idea).

For some contributors, the perceived decline of the EU-US alliance also entails increased cooperation and coordination in foreign policy between EU Member States (see example of idea). Both of these themes were identified earlier under the theme of overall objectives of EU foreign policy. Contributors equally call to build a European Intelligence Service (see example of idea).

Neighbourhood policy and relations with others

The prospect of the EU membership of Associated Countries such as Georgia, Ukraine, and Turkey has also been a matter of discussion. A sub-theme of ideas concerns the diplomatic representation of the EU with, in broad terms, contributors calling for the EU institutions to represent and defend their interests in the world more visibly (see example of idea). In this context, they suggest that the embassies of the EU Member States should be replaced by a single EU embassy that would represent and unite all EU Member States. This could also mean a single EU membership for any international institutions, such as the NATO (see example of idea), or one single and permanent representation in the UN Security Council (see idea). Other ideas include the creation of a common EU passport for all European citizens (see example of idea) and the systematic use of the European flag and the European anthem in the international context (see example of idea).

Contributions under this theme refer particularly to the EU’s political relations with Russia and China (see example of event). Contributors advance the need to fundamentally rethink and reconsider and move further in reforming the EU’s foreign policy approach with the implementation of a bolder approach in line with what was discussed in earlier themes. Contributors on the platform discuss the opinion that, when it comes to China, the EU should not only develop a more unified and tougher stance in its diplomatic relations given the highly divergent systems of values, but should also develop a European Union’s Foreign Investment Strategy to counter China’s influence globally and in particular in developing countries (see idea).

Concerning the relationship with Russia and the Eastern European countries, some participants in an event debating the relations between Germany and the Baltic countries, called inter alia for the EU to support the opposition in Belarus (see event). As regards the EU’s relations with African countries, contributors express the opinion that there should be an enhanced partnership and reworked trade relations (see example of event). Most contributors call for a stronger partnership between the EU and the African Union to strengthen regional multilateralism (see example of idea). Other citizens call for stronger bilateral partnerships between individual Member States and African countries, in order to address migration and other security threats to the European Union. However, this can only work if relations move away from maintaining the economic and political heritage of former colonial systems (see idea).

The same applies to relations with Latin America (see example of idea and event).

Decision making

Contributors consider that it is pivotal for the EU to act as one solid and united entity in the international political arena, in order to maintain and further strengthen its role. Several contributions discuss the need for a common foreign policy. The call to strengthen the EU’s ability to play a role in foreign and security policy was also discussed in the Finnish public consultation Europe Forum, discussing Finland’s current and future roles in Europe and the EU (see event).

Many contributions call for the rethinking of the unanimity rule. One strand of ideas expresses the view that the current situation based on the unanimity rule allows a single
Member State to block common foreign policy (see example of idea and event). This is considered problematic as it prevents the EU from having a credible, stable and strong voice in the world. Therefore, according to the idea expressed, the EU should move towards a system of an “absolute” majority voting. One of the most endorsed ideas under this theme gives a detailed description of an absolute majority voting system for Member States, supported by a simple majority of Members of the European Parliament, for the EU to be able to take executive action and generate a real, credible foreign policy (see idea). Similar to the discussions within the topic of European Democracy, qualified majority voting is also presented as an alternative to the current unanimity rule (see example of idea).

A last sub-theme discusses the competences of the European Parliament. Contributors feel that, although the European Parliament has supported the concept of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) from its inception and has sought to extend its scope, it still only has a peripheral role in EU foreign policy making. Therefore, contributors believe that it is crucial to allocate more foreign policy competences to the European Parliament (see example of idea).

Enlargement

A group of contributions discuss the need for enlargement and integration of Eastern neighbouring countries as way of protecting democracy in these countries (see example of idea), but also in order for economic stability within the EU (see example of idea). These ideas are equally expressed in one of the most endorsed ideas within this topic, which calls for a continued enlargement of the EU with the integration of the Western Balkan countries to ensure peace and stability in the region (see idea). Various events discussing issues related to EU enlargement and the Western Balkans have been organised (see example of event). Related there is a call to fully recognise Kosovo (see example of idea).

Trade policies

A group of contributions within the topic EU in the world wants to enhance trade policies and reform trade agreements in line with EU values, whether with regard to respecting human rights or environmental standards (see example of idea). A widely endorsed idea calls for a reform of EU trade and investment policy and a relaunch of global multilateralism, with at its core the creation of decent jobs and the protection of fundamental and human rights, including workers and trade union rights (see example of idea).

For some contributors, the health and the climate crises have highlighted the limits of a highly globalised and interdependent European economy. The shortage of masks during the health crisis, the issues with global supply chains following the pandemic, and the impact of global trade on the environment, have given rise to calls for re-industrialisation and increased local production (see idea).
Figure 12 – Mind map ‘EU in the world’ topic

**Overall objective of EU foreign policy**
- Promote democratic values and human rights
- Assume a leading role in peacebuilding between Israel and Palestine
- Take action against states violating international treaties
- Foster strategic autonomy of the EU
- Increase the focus on the primordial common economic market function of the EU
- Strengthen a common foreign policy

**Enhance trade policies**
- Promote trade agreements in line with EU values
- Promote economic cooperation and growth, both within and outside the EU
- Invest in local production and increased industrial autonomy

**Continue enlargement**
- Integrate Eastern Europe in the EU
- Continue enlargement towards the Western Balkans
- Recognise Kosovo

**Decision making**
- Enhance visibility and influence of the EU as a global power
- Foster greater cooperation between Member States
- Rethink unanimity rule to absolute or qualified majority voting
- Allocate more foreign policy competences to the European Parliament

**EU in the world**

**Neighbourhood policy and external relations**
- Introduce a single EU embassy to represent Member States
- Adopt an assertive stance toward Russia and China
- Develop a EU Foreign Investment Strategy to counter China’s influence globally
- Develop a stronger partnership between the EU and the African Union
- Encourage stronger bilateral partnerships between Member States and developing countries
- Develop a European channel to promote European cultural content
- Advance EU membership of Associated countries, such as Georgia, Ukraine, Turkey
- Single representation of the EU in international institutions such as NATO or a single and permanent representation in the UN Security Council

**Defence**
- Create a European army
- Create more specialized forces or defence institutions at EU level, such as an Intelligence Service
The topic ‘Values and rights, rule of law, security’ has generated a total of 2,590 contributions (861 ideas, 1,420 comments and 309 events). Contributors discuss the notion of European values as a guiding principle and advance ideas on equality and a variety of rights and freedoms. As part of a diversity of opinions on the platform, other contributors call for the respect of more conservative views. A substantial proportion of interactions under this topic discuss what is described as the “dangers of the rise of illiberal democracies” within the EU, which do not respect EU values and tend towards autocratic regimes. These are seen as a threat. Contributors call for action to ensure respect for the rule of law. The contributions can be grouped into the following themes:

- EU values
- Rule of law and human rights
- Inclusive society
- Rights and freedoms
- Security
- Lobbying and corruption
Events

Various events discussing the topics of values, rights, rule of law and security have been held as part of the Conference. Examples include a panel discussion on gender equality advancing a number of ideas concerning equality in education and employment (see event), a German-Hungarian dialogue on the value of tolerance and the importance for young people to learn from the Holocaust (see event), and a citizen dialogue on the vision of young German and Czech participants as regards the future of Europe (see event).

A participatory workshop by citizens on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights challenged participants to develop new fundamental rights fit for the future. Participants raised ideas on rights concerning artificial intelligence, digital self-determination and the right to live in a healthy and protected environment, amongst others, to account for recent societal transformations and developments (see event).

A panel discussion as part of a series “Europe Uncensored” engaged with Brussels politics with a critical view, with the panellists taking the view that there was a lack of openness towards more conservative ideas within EU political debates (see event).

In other events under the topic of ‘Values and rights, rule of law, security’ held across Europe citizens have discussed the challenges related to the protection of EU values and the rule of law (see example of an event). Some events have also had a wide scope, such as a participatory debate where young citizens especially could share their vision of the future of the EU and its guiding values, resulting in proposals for reduced bureaucracy, evaluating changes implemented during the pandemic, more human-centred urban development and localised development, rather than dominantly EU-centric policies (see event).

EU values

A group of ideas on the platform discusses what it means to be European and the values that the EU should embody and promote (for example, see idea and event). In particular, several citizens mention the principles of human dignity, freedom, equality, democracy, rule of law, human rights, pluralism, justice, solidarity and gender parity among others, as constituting the European Union’s value system, and believe that these should guide its policies.

Some contributors also discuss the need for a European Constitution to clearly define a set of fundamental European values that need to be respected in the EU (see example of an idea). One citizen also suggests implementing an EU civil society strategy for civil society organisations to operate freely and contribute towards upholding European values (see idea).

A strand of discussions focuses on the place of religion and religious values in Europe with discussions on the role of Christian values and the need to protect them (see idea and event). Other contributors comment on the need for open and free debates around this theme (see idea). With reference to Christianity, an event explored how Eastern European countries reconcile public religious displays with tolerance towards other religions and beliefs (see event).

Rule of law and human rights

A large group of participants expresses concerns about the state of democracy and human rights in the world. Citizens who contribute to this theme call for a tougher stance to defend the EU’s values vis-a-vis countries such as Russia and China. Regarding the situation inside the EU, a large group of participants call for respect of the rule of law and the protection of fundamental values in the EU (see idea and see idea). Some citizens have discussed the importance of ensuring judicial independence within the Member States and are also worried that women, LGBTQI+ minorities and human rights are under attack (see example of an idea and idea). Some contributors express concerns regarding the respect of EU values and rule of law in Hungary (see example of an idea, and idea) and Poland (see example of
idea and idea). Contrasting voices ask for respecting these countries’ national affairs (see example of idea) mentioning for example the democratic right of Hungary to defend its borders, and preserve its Christian religion, culture and homogeneous society (see idea). Another idea calls for informed EU policy making in this regard (see idea).

In order to ensure that the rule of law is upheld, some participants suggest reducing grants to the countries that breach it, taking away their voting rights in the Council (see example of idea), or even ending their EU membership (see example of such an idea). There are calls for using the budgetary protection mechanism linked to the rule of law (see idea), as well as suggestions that the Article 7 procedure under the treaties should be reviewed to make it easier to sanction governments that breach EU values (see idea and idea). One participant has suggested that the European Union Court of Justice should become the watchdog to protect democracy and the rule of law in the EU (see idea). A number of contributors have endorsed a proposal to introduce a Review Mechanism on Democracy, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in the EU (see idea). There is also a call on the platform to eliminate the unanimity rule to ensure that Member States that do not respect the rule of law cannot block decision-making in the EU (see idea).

In contrast, for some citizens, the EU is seen to be encroaching on the constitutions of Member States in an authoritarian manner (see example of idea). Some contributors also consider that the competences the Court Justice of the European Union should be revisited to prevent conflicts with national constitutional jurisdictions (see example of idea and event).

With regard to the protection of human rights in general, one much endorsed idea suggests strengthening the enforceability of various human rights instruments in the EU legal system (see idea). Several ideas indicate the need to increase child protection in legislation and policies (see example of an idea).

Inclusive society

As equality is regarded as a core EU value by a group of contributors, several ideas call for greater efforts to be made to create an inclusive society. One highly endorsed idea in this respect calls for greater gender equality (see example of an idea and event), as well as female empowerment (see event). Related suggestions include increasing the number of women among political and economic decision-makers (see example of an idea). Moreover, several participants discuss sexual and reproductive rights, including the right to abort (see example of an idea), and on countering revenge porn and harassment online (see event).

Numerous ideas call for increased support for people with disabilities in the form of: (i) the removal of barriers for persons with disabilities, by making products and services more accessible (see idea and event), (ii) adequate protection of their human rights (see idea), and (iii) countering discrimination against people with mental disabilities (see idea). Another highly commented event similarly calls for the inclusion of people with Down syndrome and legislative initiatives in their support (see event).

In view of ageing societies, calls to counter ageism are recorded on the platform (see idea). An event was also held to investigate the consequences that the demographic changes have on society’s structural foundations (see event).

Numerous participants call for LGBTIQ people to be protected and same-sex marriages to be recognised across the EU Member States (see example of an idea). A workshop event tackled the integration of LGBTIQ rights across various topics (see event).

A couple of events also draw attention to the issue of the rights of national and ethnic minorities (see event), including the Roma community (see example of an event).
Rights and freedoms

A diverse range of contributions focus on issues related to the rights and freedoms in the context of the digital transformation. The EU’s General Data Protection Regulation is seen as key to prevent companies from selling personal information (see idea). There are calls for limitations on the use of biometric data for surveillance (see idea) and on the collection and sharing of personal data more generally (see example of an idea). Various citizens suggest that cash payment options should be recognised as a democratic right (see example of an idea). The need for better legislation and tools to address privacy concerns related to the internet and social media, as well as all new technology, has also been raised (see idea).

Another group of contributions underlines the need to lift Covid-19 measures once the effects of the pandemic allow, in order to ensure a return to normality and restore citizens’ freedoms (see idea). In this regard, there is also a call to prevent discrimination against citizens who have chosen not to be vaccinated or undergo regular tests to gain access to basic facilities (see example of an idea). Issues related to Covid-19 vaccination are addressed in more detail under the Health topic.

A much discussed and endorsed idea is the call for the EU to take the lead in protecting animal rights (see idea), for example by introducing an “animal licence” (see idea). Contributors consider that although the EU treaties recognise animals as sentient beings, abusive and cruel treatments still exist in the farming and meat industries (see example of an idea).

An event was held to discuss to what extent online content should be regulated and how this impacts free speech, with some citizens supporting the creation of a unified European digital framework (see event). Fake news, for example is perceived to constitute a threat towards fundamental democratic values (see event). The theme of hate speech points to the need to tackle this issue and increase protection for the victims of hate speech (example of an idea and event) and hate crimes (see event).

Press and media freedom were discussed in a participatory workshop, and the need to increase transparency for mediatic pluralism and ensure greater protection of journalists were key takeaways (see event).

Some participants support the right to self-medicate with cannabis (see example of an idea) and discuss the decriminalisation and legalisation of drugs more broadly (see example of an idea). This issue is also addressed under the Health topic.

Some contributors specifically focus on judicial matters and the implications of intra-EU mobility, discussing the need to facilitate the processes, for example in relation with the handling of successions (see idea), death (see idea) and suggesting to interconnect Member States’ registers of matrimonial property regimes and registered partnerships (see idea). At an open forum webinar, participants discussed the procedural rights in criminal proceedings across the EU (see event).

Lastly, one idea refers to the rights of detainees, with a call for the EU to adopt a joint political and investment programme for the management of the prison system and prison population to prevent situations of overcrowding (see idea).

Security

A widely endorsed and commented idea currently on the platform is a proposal to create an EU army, to better protect member states against hostile foreign actors in the context of uncertainties regarding the US position (see idea). However, several participants have questioned this proposal, commenting mostly on the political implications and the relationship between EU defence and national defence. This idea is also discussed under the topic ‘EU in the world’. Contributors also discuss the future of foreign policy and how it can be changed to ensure that Europe plays an international role (see event), with calls also for the EU to rethink what it will prioritise in terms of its security goals, against the background of issues ranging from the migrant crisis to Afghanistan, to the threat of China in the Asia-Pacific (see idea).

As regards internal security, there are calls on the platform to facilitate law enforcement across national borders (see idea). The strengthening of Europol, the already existing European agency to fight international crime and terrorism, is also envisaged by some participants (see idea). Given the freedom of movement within the EU, some citizens endorse...
the establishment of a European agency to strengthen collaboration across Member States in the fight against terrorism and organised crime (see idea). One idea argues that police forces should be coordinated at the EU level to ensure equality and uniform working across Member States (see idea).

Lobbying and corruption

As in the case of the topic ‘European Democracy’, some contributors focus on issues related to lobbying and corruption. There are calls for the EU to act against tax avoidance and corruption in Member States (see example of an idea), as well as suggestions to enhance the regulation and transparency of lobbying by private interests and limit its influence on EU policy (see example of an idea), as well as in decision-making processes (see event). Other participants discuss how to tackle corruption within EU institutions, the use of EU funds and the protection of whistle-blowers (see example of an idea). One participant suggests introducing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to handle alleged violations of EU Treaties by EU officials (see idea).

In addition to tackling corruption at the level of EU institutions, there are some calls for the EU to check on the impartiality of national public administrations to counter favouritism and arbitrariness (see idea and event) or battle judicial corruption (see idea).
Figure 13 – Mind map topic Values and rights, rule of law, security

**Rights and freedoms**
- Protect privacy and personal data
- Facilitate recognition across the EU of civil status certificates
- Protect animal rights and abolish abusive and cruel practices in intensive animal farming
- In light of COVID-19 measures ensure right to freedom of movement and prevent discrimination
- Standardise electoral rights across Member States
- Legalise cannabis
- Sustain freedom of conscience and freedom of speech
- Tackle hate speech and hate crime
- Ensure press and media freedom
- Adopt a joint prison management to ensure rights of detainees are respected

**Rule of law and human rights**
- Strengthen the enforceability of human rights instruments in the EU legal order
- Abolish unanimity requisite for more democratic decision-making
- Ensure that the democratic rule of law is upheld by Member States and take punitive actions when democratic principles are breached
- Appoint the European Court of Justice as watchdog for democracy and rule of law
- Defend EU values in face of opposition by Russia and China
- EU-sceptics call for the abolishment of European law and of the EU apparatus
- Take legislative action to increase child rights protection

**Lobbying and corruption**
- Tackle corruption on national and EU levels and enhance regulations for lobbying activities
- Render EU decision-making process more transparent and accountable
- Act against tax avoidance in Member States
- Counter favouritism and arbitrariness in national public administrations

**Inclusive society**
- Implement gender equality and strengthen women representation
- Counter ageism
- Increase inclusion of persons with disabilities by removing barriers and countering discrimination
- Champion LGBTQ rights and recognize same-sex marriages across Member States
- Advance strategies for inclusion of minorities, such as Roma populations
- Strengthen sexual and reproductive rights

**Security**
- Establish a European anti-mafia and counter-terrorism agency
- Establish European defence army
- Establish European Police force

**EU values**
- Need for a debate about the place of religion in European societies
- Ground European values to be respected in a European Constitution
- Let the European Union value system guide policies: human rights, freedom, equality, democracy, etc.
The topic of ‘Digital transformation’ has generated 552 ideas, 976 comments and 217 events, making a total of 1,745 contributions. Ideas range from more abstract suggestions on themes such as sustainability and durability to more specific suggestions concerning digital education, digital health and digital voting. The contributors on this topic stress the need for digital transformation with regard to the future economy, collaboration, health and other areas of life. However, they also highlight several challenges related to digital transformation, such as ethical considerations, GDPR shortcomings, and cyber threats. The various ideas can be grouped according to the following themes:

- Digital innovation
- Digital sovereignty and ethics
- European digital tools
- Digital rights and inclusion
- Pollution, sustainability and durability
- Digital data
- Digital economy
- Cyber threats
- Digital voting
- Digital health
- Education and training
**Events**

Several events have been organised around the topic of digital transformation. A series of online citizens workshops has been organised in Spain, giving participants the opportunity to contribute to the Conference with several proposals: among them, public administration training business teams, higher investments in workers’ digital skills and the use of EU funds to promote a strategy of digitalisation and collaboration among SMEs (see the event).

A debate with young Spanish citizens has highlighted the need for the EU to invest in digital development, amongst others (see event).

Another category of events revolves around debates about the issue of censorship and the spread of hate speech and fake news on digital platforms and social media. Several exchanges among contributors have highlighted the need to strengthen freedom of expression and protect consumers rights (see the event).

A number of workshops and online debates have taken place on the subjects of fair digitalisation, the improvement of the level of connectivity and access to health and social services, with a specific focus on the digital inequality between urban and rural areas (see event).

As part of the core themes of the digital transformation, a forum was held in March-June 2021 on the impact of digital transition and global competitiveness within the higher education sector. Another discussion theme is the possibility of strengthening the connectivity and reliability of research and education by operationalising online platforms and digital tools (see event).

**Digital innovation**

The ideas submitted on the platform concerning digital growth advocate first and foremost increasing the EU’s role in further developing artificial intelligence (AI) tools. One of the ideas calls for increased planning and regulation with regard to current AI possibilities in order to make them safer and more accessible (see example of idea). Nonetheless, the use and development of AI are the subject of discussion among contributors, some highlighting the future risk of creating AI more capable than the human brain (see example of idea). Next to exclusion of less digitally aware people, the other disadvantages of increased digitalisation discussed include dehumanisation, robotisation, and increased monitoring and surveillance of individuals (see idea).

**Digital sovereignty and ethics**

The ideas submitted on the platform to boost digital sovereignty focus on Europe’s strategic independence in terms of hardware, software and social media platforms, with several calls to enforce software resilience and reliability (see idea). Another sub-group of ideas involves advancing the EU’s digital development and production, taking action with regard to web industry monopolies (see example of idea) vis-à-vis other actors such as the US or China. For instance, one of the ideas suggests developing and promoting Europe’s own chip production (see idea) or investing in European open source software (see example of idea). The call for strategic autonomy for the European Union in the digital field and a European model for digitalisation is one of the ideas put forward by a civil participation programme and forum organised by the Germany-Italy-Europe Observatory (see event).

A similar strand of ideas places a strong emphasis on the ethical aspect. Specifically, contributors want to boost the EU’s digital sovereignty to be fully in line with European values, standards, transparency and ethics (see example of idea). Additionally, a highly endorsed idea calls for fair digitalisation based on human rights, including labour and trade union rights (see idea), as well as a call to safeguard
freedom of expression with actions against forms of hate speech and the spread of fake news (see event).

European digital tools

Within this theme the ideas submitted propose a range of specific technological and digital tools for European citizens. A large pool of ideas discusses creating digital citizenship with ideas for a Europe-wide identification via a digital ID (see idea). Similarly, contributors suggest a European digital wallet with all paper documents replaced by digital documents (see idea). Another category of contributions focuses on European e-services: with, for example, a European Single Sign-on Identity Provider for providing access to public services (see idea), the need to harmonise standards and create a single authentication account at European level (see idea). Likewise, it is proposed to introduce a “Digital EU Cross-border Service Card” to simplify access to public and emergency services for citizens living in cross-border regions (see idea). The development of digital tools and services such as a Digital Identity for the EU, the creation of a European App or the introduction of a Digital European passport was equally discussed in events (see example of event).

The sub-theme of digital unification of the EU is widely discussed (see idea) with a call for greater harmonisation at European level through the adoption of common digital tools: for example, a dedicated European Social Network for the expression of public opinion (see idea), for example, by creating a framework which helps all EU countries to work together on IT projects. This idea is developed further with several suggestions for all encompassing digital portals for citizen engagement and daily life identification needs (see idea).

Additionally, there is a call for stronger consumer protection in an online environment (see example of idea), for instance, by making it easier in the future for consumers to change their mind with regard to purchases. Another highly endorsed idea discusses the need to ensure that major crowdfunding platforms can be accessed from all Member States (see idea).

Digital rights and inclusion

There are several challenges identified with an increased digital society according to contributors. One concern emerging from the contributions is the digital divide affecting vulnerable groups. An online discussion, for example, discussed the increased digitalisation of our society and, as a corollary, the increasing exclusion of a certain population groups, the ‘digitalisation losers’ (see event).

Contributors therefore stress the need to guarantee free and inclusive access to digital space and contents, for example with calls for accessible and affordable digital services and appliances (see example of idea). Several ideas suggest enhancing the level of digital literacy and education for young and elderly population groups in order to promote digital cohesion (see idea). Additionally, several discussions involve the topic of increase female entrepreneurship and the aim of fostering digital skills among women (see the event).

One contributor proposes the introduction of a monitoring mechanism to ensure fair and equal digitalisation and the acquisition of digital skills (see idea).

Another strand of ideas stresses more specifically the digital inequality between urban and rural areas: improving connectivity and access to essential public and private services and transport are some of the most discussed proposals within this theme (see event).

Pollution, sustainability and durability

In several cases, contributors link digitalisation to climate change, stressing, for example, that increased digitalisation efforts would help reduce pollution. For instance, there is a call to introduce a digital product passport accessible via QR codes providing information on product origin, composition, environmental impact, recycling and final handling (see idea).
Another strand of ideas revolves around digital waste, calling, for instance, for new products to be produced with recycled electronic waste (see idea).

Additionally, there is an emphasis on durable, repairable and fairly and ethically produced digital equipment, which could be promoted, for instance, with lower taxes (see idea). Among the most recent ideas, many focus on extending sustainability and accessibility not only to digital devices but also to digital infrastructures, and the development of smart cities (see example of idea). Another category of ideas in this respect proposes fostering the development of accessible and sustainable technologies by investing in Low Tech (see idea).

Lastly, some contributors point out that satellite deployment contributes to space pollution and call for this issue to be tackled (see example of idea).

Digital data

When it comes to the digital data theme, contributors emphasise the progress made so far, mentioning that the EU is a leader in protecting individuals in the digital world. Nevertheless, there is a call for further improvement in this area (see example of event). For example, suggestions focus on modifying GDPR laws to make it easier to refuse the online collection of personal data (see idea). Simultaneously, there is a call for more comprehensible legislation without burdening users with constant requests for consent (see example of idea).

Several contributors call for geo-blocking to be restricted or banned (see example of idea), the harmonisation of data protection systems across the EU and the introduction a personal cloud for EU citizens (see idea). Lastly, there is a call for highly secure identification systems, for instance based on the use of fingerprints code (see example of idea).

Cyber threats

As regards the cyber threats theme, the ideas revolve around Internet safety and security. For instance, participants stress that the EU should be able to defend itself in case of online threats and digital warfare; some go even further by suggesting the creation of a European cyber army, which could also provide support for digitalisation in the EU countries that are lagging behind (see example of idea). Additionally, several ideas advocate the introduction of EU-wide legislation to safeguard citizens’ privacy (see idea) and to strengthen protection against cybercrime by increasing the security, the transparency and the accountability of data systems (see example of idea).

Digital economy

In line with a theme also developed under the topic Stronger economy, social justice and jobs, a large number of ideas call for the digital economy to be embraced. One idea, for example, discusses the implementation of an EU block chain platform (see idea). Other contributors also discuss cryptocurrencies with requests for governments to adopt cryptocurrencies to benefit and develop a digital and economically active society (see example of idea), or rather discuss the need for cryptocurrencies to be regulated or banned (see example of idea).

In addition, several ideas advocate the introduction of a digital euro as a secure and convenient payment method (see example of idea).

Another group of ideas encourages investment and boosting the competitiveness of the European digital market, by promoting a strategy of digitalisation for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) (see example of idea) and improving market conditions for the development of start-ups within the framework of European digital infrastructures (see idea).

Digital voting

Within the digital voting theme, a number of contributors on the platform point out the advantages of electronic voting as well as of electronic signatures (see idea), in particular in the context of the pandemic (see example of idea). This
theme, which has received a significant number of comments under the topic of ‘Digital transformation’ since the launch of the Conference, has been explored from the point of efficiency, safety and innovation, not from the perspective of enhancing democracy. There are however some opposing views in the comments which point out a number of disadvantages of electronic voting. Contributors suggest applying blockchain technology or setting up Europe’s own highly encrypted mailing system, as possible means of ensuring the security of digital voting in the EU.

Digital health

Within the theme of digital health, a number of ideas on the platform propose concrete measures to improve the health of citizens in the digital world, such as employee rights to disconnect from work (see idea), introducing a social media day off (see idea), or fostering youth digital training to promote healthy and conscious use of technology.

Simultaneously, there is a call for digital health integration within the EU (see example of idea), for instance, by creating a single platform for electronic health management – which would be particularly interesting for the many Europeans using cross-border mobility possibilities – and by introducing a (European) digital health ID-card (see example of idea) that contains information on vaccinations and health insurance. The latter idea has been expanded to the creation of EU electronic certificates (see example of idea). However, there are privacy and data protection concerns. These themes are equally addressed under the Health topic.

Education and training

Within the theme of education and training, a number of ideas on the platform advocate comprehensive EU-wide awareness-raising efforts at all levels, starting at primary school level and continuing along the education pathway (see example of idea and event), stressing that the development and promotion of digital skills is a top priority for the economy (see example of idea). More recent ideas suggest a further promotion of scientific careers (see example of idea and event) and the development of scientific research programmes for young students, investing in the field of digital and innovation (see idea).

One sub-theme calls for investment and efforts to boost the digitalisation of education (see example of idea). In this connection, contributors discuss the need to boost digital literacy in all EU countries, for instance, by launching an advertising campaign in the media to give more visibility to digital transformation (see idea).

Additionally, in the context of the health crisis, e-learning has become one of the most discussed topics among contributors: for example, the proposal for creating a single European remote learning platform (see idea) or a common web portal for online digital certificates (see example of idea).
Figure 14 – Mind map ‘Digital transformation’ topic

**Digital data**
- More assertive stance from EU in regulating online platforms
- Improve data security
- Provide comprehensive legislation on personal data
- Further ensure data privacy with a modification of GDPR
- Ensure safety of children online
- Adopt independent and safer public networks

**Digital sovereignty and ethics**
- Invest in innovation, development and production of hardware and software in the EU
- Develop ethical social media platforms in line with European values & standards
- Increased EU independence in digital matters with binding standards to break digital monopolies

**Digital innovation**
- Ensure accessible and affordable digital services and appliances across the EU
- Develop and invest in research of AI
- Investigate negative consequences of digitalisation of our society

**Cyber threats**
- Ensure data protection by employing blockchain technology for networks in EU
- Invest in Internet safety and security
- Create a European Cyber Army

**Digital economy**
- Implement an EU block chain platform
- Regulate or adopt cryptocurrencies
- Promote a strategy of digitalisation for SME’s
- Introduce a Digital Euro

**Digital voting**
- Promote environmentally friendly and ethically produced digital equipment
- Reduce digital waste
- Encourage digitalisation to reduce pollution

**Pollution, sustainability and durability**
- Ensure the right to disconnect
- Introduce the concept of a social media day off
- Integrate health digitally in the EU with e.g. a digital health ID

**Digital health**
- Address the digital divide and inequality
- Guarantee free and inclusive access to digital space and contents
- Invest in digital literacy and education across the population

**European digital tools**
- Build out digital citizenship with digital innovation in the EU
- Create digital portals for citizen participation
- Introduce a single crowdfunding platform for EU citizens and companies
- Harmonise standards and e-services with the adoption of common digital tools such as a European Single Sign on Identity provider
- Create a Digital Identity for the EU

**Education & training**
- Develop digital skills along the education pathway
- Invest in digitalisation of education system
- Boost digital literacy in the EU
- Facilitate e-learning with a European remote learning platform
8. European democracy

By 3 November 2021, the topic of ‘European Democracy’ had a total of 1,390 ideas, 3,122 comments and 592 events submitted on the digital platform. Several contributors call for a restructuring of European institutions or even a federalisation of the European Union. Various suggestions also call for increased citizen participation. Overall interactions under this topic are constructive and forward-looking, even if some interactions express a fear of the EU being at risk of implosion due to tensions, populism, and nationalism. The contributions cover a large variety of themes:

- Federalisation of the European Union
- Institutional reforms
- European Parliament elections
- Citizen participation and consultations
- Media
- Fostering a common European identity
- Protecting and strengthening democracy

Events

A common objective of the many events organised under the “European democracy” topic is that of collecting ideas that can nourish the discussion within the Conference on the Future of Europe. This democratic exercise is at the core of events such as the online event cycle “Ideas on the Future of Europe” organised in Rome (see this example of event on mobility and education). Similar events, organised virtually everywhere around the Union, have discussed issues such as European federalism (see event), the EU common language (see event).
Other events have debated the merits of the Conference itself, as for example a virtual debate (see event) where experts discussed whether and how the Conference can reinforce democratic values against the spread of authoritarian ideas around the EU.

Different, and sometimes opposing ideas, have been behind the organisation of events discussing the nature of democracy within the EU. An event which took place in Budapest between experts, for example, proposed to draw a parallel between the EU’s principle of subsidiarity and some key principles of the US Constitution, in order to mark a separation between the EU’s competencies and those of its Member States.

In an event organised by the London School of Economics and Political Science under the title “The Rise of Insurgent Europeanism” participants discussed a study on how the Eurozone and migration crises, Brexit and the pandemic have changed the fabric of civil society in Europe and its attitudes towards the European project.

As an example, a highly endorsed and debated idea advocates a constituent Assembly to develop a European Constitution defining the key elements and principles of a democratic European Federation (see idea). The discussion also includes more specific calls for a common fiscal and economic policy, including an idea of a “European Union of taxpayers” (see idea), one European army and the federalisation of foreign policy, alongside a redesign of the EU institutions along federalist principles.

Nevertheless, some contributors are sceptical about federalisation. Some participants are worried that this may lead to an excessive centralisation of power or create imbalances between Member States. Others consider that there are many problems to be overcome for such an idea to be able to become a reality. Some participants favour decentralisation with greater power for Member States instead of federalisation (see example an idea), with more freedom and respect for the identity of Member States and free cooperation in areas where it is useful (see example of an idea).

Considering the distinct national contexts and level of readiness of Member States to become part of a federal union, some participants advance the idea of a step-by-step federalisation, with a system of “transition zones” (see idea).

Federalisation of the European Union

A large number of contributors under the topic of European Democracy call for a federalisation of the European Union, with different understandings of this notion. This is a recurring subject of events linked to this topic (see example of event).

‘Federalisation’ has also generated some of the most endorsed ideas on the platform (see idea and idea), as well as different comments from participants.

Some contributors see federalisation as the best way forward for the EU to reach its full potential (see example of idea and event), but also as a means of giving the EU more credibility and influence in the global political arena and the power to deal with the transnational problems we are facing today, such as climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic (see idea). In addition, it is seen as a way of overcoming Euroscepticism and nationalist sentiments according to the participants who support the idea.

Institutional reforms

A substantial volume of ideas also discusses reforms of European Institutions more specifically, with the aim of making them more efficient and transparent, and bringing them closer to citizens. These ideas include proposals for a wider overhaul of the institutional set-up (see example of an idea).

Regarding the European Parliament, contributors most often call for it to be granted real powers of legislative initiative (see example of idea). There are also calls for it to be granted fiscal powers (see idea). The seat of the European Parliament is discussed as well, with contributors calling for a choice between Strasbourg and Brussels (see example of an idea).

Discussing the European Council and the Council of the European Union, a recurring idea on the platform and within
the topic of European Democracy is a move to qualified majority voting to end the national veto power (see example of an idea).

There are also discussions about the role of the Council in the EU institutional set-up (see example of idea) and suggestions to deepen the bicameral legislature in the EU (see example of an idea).

When it comes to the European Commission, a group of contributions discusses the election of the Commission President and appointment of commissioners, including the Spitzenkandidaten system (see example of an idea), and direct election of the Commission President by citizens (see example of an idea). Participants also raise the issue of the number of commissioners (see example of an idea).

Additionally, reforms of the Committee of Regions and the Economic and Social Committee are mentioned, for example to make them function more efficiently. The suggestions include reforming the Committee of Regions to encompass adequate channels of dialogue for regions as well as cities and municipalities (see idea), or giving it an enhanced role (see idea).

One much discussed idea is to have a directly elected EU President, for instance by merging the roles of the President of the European Commission and the European Council (see example of an idea). There are also calls to have a single contact point for the EU to speak with one voice in external relations (see example of an idea).

One participant suggests establishing a gender parity list for such elections (see idea).

European Parliament elections

A group of ideas related to institutional reforms calls for changes to the way European Parliament elections are held as a means of enhancing citizen engagement in EU democratic processes. One of the more frequently discussed proposals, and a widely endorsed idea, concerns the creation of EU-wide transnational electoral lists (see idea), or the creation of a new electoral constituency for Europeans living in another Member State to encourage candidates to focus on European, rather than domestic issues (see idea). Other ideas include promoting pan-European debate, as well as bringing European Parliament members closer to citizens (see example of idea). However, one new idea advocates that Members of the European Parliament should rather be nominated by national legislatures, instead of being directly elected (see idea).

Some of the proposals address more specifically ways of increasing voter turnout at the European elections. There are calls for the introduction of mandatory voting (see idea), as well as suggestions to facilitate participation, for instance by allowing postal ballots and same-day voter registration, or making the voting day a public holiday (see idea). Some contributors also discuss digital voting, including an idea to create a pool of pan-European digital voters (see idea). The issue of digital voting is also covered under the topic ‘Digital transformation’.

Many suggestions stress the importance for young people to be included in political decision-making to a larger degree, to ensure that decisions are made with long-sighted considerations (see idea). In the same line, there are suggestions to harmonise the minimum age to be eligible to vote at European Parliament elections (see example of an idea) and to preferably set it at 16 years of age (see idea). These ideas, among others, are aimed at encouraging young people to vote, an issue which is often considered key by participants. A workshop in Vienna discussed, among the other things, ways of increasing young citizens’ participation in the European elections (see event). The proposals advanced during the workshop stress the need to increase the number of young Members of the European Parliament, allowing candidates as young as 16 years of age to run. The young participants in the workshop also stressed the need to create a European media platform, which could help European citizens, and young people, to be better informed about the EU’s current events.

One participant suggests establishing a gender parity list for such elections (see idea).

Citizen participation and consultations

Contributions to the platform include a number of suggestions to strengthen citizen participation and a sense of ownership as regards EU decision-making.

A group of ideas and events discusses developing more permanent mechanisms based on participatory democracy and interaction among citizens to strengthen and
complement representative democracy, including by building on the experience of the Conference on the Future of Europe. Participants propose, for instance, a more systematic use of citizens’ assemblies and panels to prepare the most important and difficult political decisions in the EU (see example of an idea). Other contributors propose an online digital forum where EU citizens could discuss EU legislation, using a social media-derived system of upvotes and comments (see idea). A related idea involves a citizen lobbying platform as an alternative way for ordinary EU citizens and smaller companies to channel their expertise and views on legislation in the EU decision-making process (see idea).

The contributions also include a proposal to devise an online one-stop-shop platform centralising all public input, be they European Citizens’ Initiatives, complaints or petitions, into the EU institutional participatory architecture (see idea).

Some contributors propose a ‘Citizen Parliament’, an ‘Assembly dedicated to civil society organisations’ (see idea) or a ‘Constituent Assembly’ (see idea) to advise the European Parliament. Participants also discuss the idea of EU wide referenda as an alternative to national referenda on EU institutional and policy topics (see example of idea).

Once again, when it comes to citizens’ participation, young people’s contribution to EU democratic consultations is seen as key. Participants in an event organised in Malta discussed the outcomes of the Eurovoters project, an initiative aimed at training young voters in Malta. Multiple suggestions were put forward during this event, including the need to move away from considering “youth” as a single group, which risks discounting specific needs within specific communities. There are several other calls on the platform to have a particular generational focus, including suggestions to have a European commissioner dedicated to the elderly (see idea) and giving young people opportunities to regularly present their views in the European Parliament (see idea). A related contribution suggests establishing a quota for Members of the European Parliament who are under 35 years old (see idea).

Another idea calls for the EU to push for the establishment of a UN Parliament to allow citizens to express their will directly, independent of their respective national governments, in decisions on a global level (see idea).

An event organised in the Italian town of Brindisi advanced a wide range of ideas to improve direct democratic mechanisms at EU level, including boosting public knowledge of some already-existing instruments, such as EU petitions, temporary committees, European mediators, and the Solvit platform.

One more widely supported and discussed idea suggests having a European citizenship which is not linked to citizenship of an EU Member State (see idea).

**Media**

A number of contributions under the topic of European Democracy focus on the media. This theme is also discussed by contributors under the topic of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport.

One recurring suggestion is to have pan-European media outlets or networks (see example of idea) or the creation of a single public EU broadcaster (see example of idea). This is mainly proposed to increase knowledge on EU issues among citizens, with for example live streaming of discussions and events, but also to foster a common EU spirit celebrating European values and European cultures, with documentaries on EU countries. Some contributors also call for an EU TV and radio channel to project its values beyond the EU’s borders (see example of idea).

Other participants suggest training journalists on EU reporting or imposing an obligation for public broadcasters to dedicate a percentage of broadcasting time to EU matters.

**Fostering a common European identity**

Within this theme contributors discuss a common European identity, on the basis of common European values of democracy (see event), as discussed in other topics, but also practical ideas to foster such a common European identity.

A large number of contributors discuss the idea of choosing a common language for better communication and understanding among citizens across the EU, also in the most commented idea within this topic (see idea), including the recurring and widely endorsed proposal to have Esperanto as a unifying language (see example of idea). Both suggestions give rise to strong opinions for and against in the comment sections. Some participants also call for the
principle of multilingualism to be better respected (see example of an idea).

Additionally there are ideas for establishing an EU sports team (see example of idea), having 9 May as a public holiday in all Member States (see idea), or creating an EU Passport (see idea) to foster a European spirit.

One participant also proposes establishing twinning programmes between employees to allow non school-age Europeans to discover the culture of another EU country, for example by attending a training course abroad (see idea).

An event organised in Brussels highlighted the key role of cities and local communities in strengthening democracy and pioneering social progress. In a time of strong disconnection between the institutional centre and the peripheries, the role of cities and municipalities might be key in building citizens’ confidence in democratic institutions.

Protecting and strengthening democracy

A number of ideas under this theme relate to the protection of democracy in the EU, with calls for strong action against governments that violate democratic principles, with reference in particular to Hungary and Poland (see example of an idea). This issue is covered in more detail under the topic of ‘Values and rights, rule of law, security’.

Contributors also acknowledge the danger that disinformation and fake news can pose to democracies. There are calls for a stronger approach to counter the spread of misleading information, including proposals to create a mobile fact-checking app (see idea) or an independent EU Media Fact-Check Institute (see idea).

A number of ideas and comments discuss the need to regulate lobbying, with calls for a code of conduct for politicians or the establishment of an independent European body with the means to fight against corruption and the undesired influence of lobbies (see example of idea).

In this regard there are also calls for general measures to be taken to fight corruption, for example in the granting of tenders at a local level. One participant proposes the introduction of a single database combining the current multiple EU reporting systems (see idea). Another suggests that European politicians and civil servants who hold important positions – such as Members of the European Parliament or Commissioners – should be banned from owning stocks (see idea).
Figure 15 – Mind map ‘European democracy’ topic

Federalisation of the European Union
- Transitional approach of federalisation
- Working towards a common fiscal and economic policy
- Creation of a European army
- Creation of a common foreign policy
- Develop a European Constitution
- Voices against federalisation: calls for greater power and freedom of cooperation only in areas where it is useful for Member States

Institutional reforms
- Reform decision making (unanimity to majority rules)
- Review the role of the European Council
- Review the role of the European Parliament to grant it more legislative and fiscal power
- Move towards fiscal reform to achieve democracy
- Reform election procedure of Commission President and Commissioners
- Reassess the roles of the Committee of the Regions and The Economic and Social Committee
- Reduce the number of Commissioners and limit the political mandates
- Reform to directly elect a European President as head of a Federal European Union

Protecting and strengthening democracy
- Combine all EU funding reporting mechanisms in a single database to increase transparency
- Fight disinformation
- Regulate lobbying
- Fight corruption
- Create a code of conduct for politicians
- Take strong action against governments that violate democratic principles

European Parliament elections
- Create transnational lists for European Parliament elections
- Reform EU electoral system
- Lower and/or unify the voting age
- Facilitate digital voting
- Allow voting for mobile Europeans and non-EU citizens in EU elections

European Democracy

Citizen participation and consultations
- Organise more mandatory EU wide referenda
- Educate & inform on the EU and EU institutions
- Invest in youth engagement & interactions
- Use participatory policy making
- Organise longitudinal consultations
- Ensure citizen representatives in policy making via a citizen parliament or an assembly
- Focus on generations: youth and aging populations

Media
- Establish EU media portals dedicated to EU topics
- Establish a single public EU broadcaster to promote citizen engagement with the EU
- Ensure national public broadcaster dedicate time to EU reporting

Fostering a common European identity
- Having a common EU language
- Establish EU sports teams
- Establish a EU national holiday
- Create a EU Passport
- Establish twinning and exchange programs for employees
Since the launch of the platform, the migration topic has generated a total of 1,623 contributions, including 451 ideas, 1,086 comments and 86 events. The contributions under this topic reveal three general trends. On one hand, one group of interactions wants more action to control and reduce migration, while on the other hand, other contributions call for greater solidarity and better integration procedures. Taking an intermediate position, a group of participants would like to foster international mobility, but only between economically developed democracies. The following themes are analysed accordingly:

- Legal migration
- Humanistic stance on migration
- Border control
- Addressing root causes of migration
- Unregulated non-EU migration as a threat
- Integration

Events

A relatively small number of events (87) have discussed the issue of migration. However, it is interesting to note that, when they have done so, this topic has been analysed from several different perspectives, sometimes attracting numerous participants.

A meet-up event organised in Maastricht on 24 September assessed the experience of migrant women, considering their gender-specific challenges and how local communities can provide support to them. Another event on 22 May focused instead on the phenomenon of displaced minors, an issue which concerns primarily young immigrants without legal status. A conference in Budapest considered the role of migration among the
solutions to the wider problem of Europe’s slow demographic growth (see event).

Security and border-control concerns have dominated some of the migration related events, for example a conference organised in Hungary, near the country’s Southern border (see event). Among other issues, this event discussed the role of the Civil Guards in patrolling the Hungarian frontier. The choice to be made between an open-border policy and a more anti-migratory one at the EU level characterised another online event in Germany.

This debate has also marked some of the many citizens’ consultations organised within the Conference on the Future of Europe, for example in the case of a virtual meeting in Ireland (see event), or two conferences organised respectively in Denmark (see event) and Spain (see event).

Legal migration

Under the theme of legal migration, those advocating stricter migration policies call for a common EU policy of selective migration, with quotas, stricter selection and acceptance procedures (see example of idea). Alternative approaches to legal migration are suggested such as a European points-based immigration system which is sometimes seen as necessary to regulate migration flows more efficiently (see idea).

Contributions that are more open to migration, similarly call for a unified and more efficient approach, more in line however with human rights and (social) European values. For example, contributions specifically discuss a single and efficient EU asylum procedure (see idea), also pointing to the need to reform the Dublin Convention to prevent the unequal distribution of asylum seekers and migrants (see example of idea). The most endorsed idea in the topic of Migration equally calls for a more concrete and fairer European policy on economic migration with legal channels for entry and an integration policy based on equal treatment and respect for rights (see idea).

An EU labour migration policy or EU recruitment strategies for students and qualified employees coming from third-world countries are also advocated by citizens. In this regard, one contributor highlights the need for increased competences on migration for the EU so that it can manage migration in accordance with the principles and values of the Union (see idea).

A group of contributors advances the idea of fostering a selective type of immigration. Such participants usually see migration in a positive light because of the economic advantages it creates. They propose targeting specific countries to attract their talents (see idea), or easing the mobility criteria between economically advanced democracies, in the West and in Asia alike, in particular in the context of Free Trade Agreements (see idea).

Some contributions also address issues of inequality affecting the existing asylum-seeking process. For example, they highlight the fact that the share of male asylum seekers is significantly higher than that of female asylum seekers or families (see idea). Others report the difficulties faced by LGBTIQ asylum seekers, calling for greater protection and better translation support for this group (see idea).

Humanistic stance on migration

Contributors call for the respecting of human rights with solutions to counter unregulated migration and an EU immigration policy with easier and more accessible asylum procedures in countries of origin, legal and safe migratory routes and a crackdown on human trafficking in order to avoid the deaths of refugees on the EU’s borders (see example of idea). Some contributors propose a legal framework to halt the deportation of integrated persons and families to unsafe countries of origin (see idea). Contributors adhering to this more humanistic view of migration, generally advocate a change of narrative regarding migrants, especially in the light of their contributions as health care workers during the pandemic (see event).
Border control

In general there is support for more organised and coordinated efforts when it comes to border control, with calls for more comprehensive border controls, including push-back authority (see example of idea), greater support for Frontex, with a better definition of its functions (see idea), and a legally binding approach to Search and Rescue (SAR) efforts in the Mediterranean (see idea).

Other contributions call for more solidarity and respect for human rights. The ideas discussed here are, for example, a centralised EU distribution system based on solidarity, funding to improve border reception infrastructures (housing and food) or a supranational agency managing European refugee camps, co-managed by different countries and funded by EU resources (see example of idea).

The recent debate about the extension of EU financing to fund the construction of national barriers against migrants is partially reflected in some contributions demanding increased financial support from the EU to its Member States to reinforce physical border protections (see idea). However, when participants call for increased financial support from the EU to tackle migration at the borders, they do not always advocate the construction of new barriers. Some of them recognise the key role of local and regional authorities operating on the national borders, and they want increased financing for projects related to the reception and integration of migrants (see example of idea).

Addressing root causes of migration

Thinking about the Future of Europe, contributors highlight the need to address the root causes of migration to tackle the migration issues the EU is currently facing.

Suggestions in this regard range from establishing equal trade relations, investing in more development aid plans and academic training, and the professional development of people living in third-world countries (see idea).

A particular group of contributions takes the EU to task on the basis that it has played a part in regional destabilisation through, for example, European military involvement or by destabilising subsidised agricultural exports to developing countries (see idea).

Also in order to address this type of economic inequalities, some participants advocate the promotion of sustainable, climate change-proof agriculture in third world countries (see idea). This would also help counter ‘climate migration’ (see example of idea and event).

Unregulated non-EU migration as a threat

Commentators are outspoken in their ideas and contributions on the topic of migration. One theme observed is the feeling that migration from non-EU countries is a threat to EU civilisation, identity, values and culture (see example of idea). Contributions express opinions and views that non-EU migration contributes to terrorism and the creation of ghettos and no-go zones in the EU (see idea). These contributors call for measures to restrict non-EU migration, a stricter repatriation policy, and strategies hindering migrant mobility, such as tougher border controls (see example of idea). One participant warns against the potential use of illegal migration as a (political) weapon, referring in particular to the large influx of migrants from Belarus to the Lithuanian borders (see idea). Contributors equally explore a model that allows to move refugees to asylum centres in a partner country for case reviews (see event).

Integration

Another theme under the migration topic concerns ideas discussing integration, with calls for a monitored follow-up pathway for migrants in order to ensure full integration in the EU Member State. One idea sees great potential in recognising and further activating migrants and members of receiving communities as changemakers (see idea). Education is felt to be key to integration, with language and
European values playing a central role. In this connection, contributors feel that there is a need for sufficiently funded programmes to support the inclusion of school-age migrant children in the public education system (see idea). Other ideas focus on tertiary education as a key lever for greater integration. In this sense, one participant advocates improved access for young refugees to university programmes (see idea).

Contributors express the opinion that a geographical distribution of migrants is key in order to achieve integration (see example of idea) and avoid the formation of ghettos (see idea). There are calls for information campaigns and programmes to sensitize EU citizens to counter racism in order to move towards a truly inclusive society. In connection with the opinions regarding racism and labour market exclusion, there are calls for equal and fair treatment of legally residing third-country nationals (see idea). Concerning labour market discrimination, one participant points to the necessity of (census) data on the ethnic background of migrants to efficiently inform policy making (see idea).

Some participants lament the lack of rights of permanent residents in the EU. They observe that the Union does not grant the right to vote to its permanent residents who have been living in the EU for a long time, or other advantages which could make it more attractive for them to apply for EU citizenship (see idea).

This issue is considered by some contributors to be particularly pressing when it comes to UK citizens who had been living in the EU before Brexit. One idea giving rise to controversial debate is the introduction of a fast-track procedure to get EU-wide rights for British citizens who had been living in the EU before Brexit (see idea).
Figure 16 – Mind map 'Migration' topic

Unregulated non-EU migration as a threat

EU to develop more defensive stance against use of illegal migration as political weapon
Actions to immediately expel unauthorized migrants
Restrict non-EU migration
Take measures to regulate non-EU migration

Address root causes of migration

Battle climate change in countries of origin to counter climate migration
Establish equal trade relations
Invest in more development aid plans
Cease European military involvement in developing countries and halt destabilizing practices such as subsidized agricultural export
More EU investment for the academic training and professional development of people living in third world countries

Humanistic stance on migration

Call for easier and more accessible asylum procedures in countries of origin
Counter illegal migration, crack down on human trafficking and smugglers
Create legal and safe migratory routes and channels to avoid deaths
Establish a legal framework to halt the deportation of integrated persons to unsafe countries of origin

Border control

Prioritize respect of human rights in managing migration flows
More comprehensive border controls, granting push back authority
Funding for border reception infrastructure (housing and food)
Coordinate search and rescue (SAR) efforts in the Mediterranean
Establish a supranational agency managing European refugee camps
Safeguard a centralised EU distribution system of asylum seekers based on solidarity
Increased financial support for Member States to reinforce physical border protection or finance border reception projects

Legal migration

Establish a single EU policy of selective migration: quotas and stricter selection procedures
Reform Dublin Convention for a more equal distribution of asylum seekers and migrants
Call for a migration system respecting human rights, in line with EU values
Increased competences for the EU on migration
Develop EU labour migration policy
Call for stricter acceptance procedures for legal migration
Establish a common EU immigration policy with a centralized application body and procedure

Integration

Sensitization of EU citizens: invest in inclusion-related education
Establish a follow up trajectory for migrants and asylum seekers
Establish an education system to support inclusion of school-age migrant children and prioritize education of language and values
Counter discrimination and treat migrants and legally residing third-country nationals in an equal and fair manner, for example in the labour market
Support British citizens residing in the EU long before Brexit to obtain EU wide rights through a fast-track procedure
Grant right to vote to permanent residents in the EU
Ideas posted under the topic of ‘Education, Culture, Youth and Sport’ cover a variety of themes, given its multi-thematic nature. As elsewhere on the platform, the call to foster a common EU identity is a recurrent underlying sentiment for themes identified in this topic with contributions related to, amongst others; exchange, exposure, and mobility. This topic has generated an overall volume of 2,617 contributions, consisting of 863 ideas, 1,185 comments and 569 events. The various ideas can be grouped according to the categories as presented on the multilingual digital platform:

- Foster common EU identity
- Future-proof education
- Intra-EU mobility
- Youth unemployment
- European heritage
- Creative professionals
Events

The diverse nature of the events that address the issues associated with “Education, Culture, Youth and Sport” reflects the diversity of the sub-topics that are included under the umbrella of this topic. Since the beginning of the Conference on the Future of Europe, hundreds of events have been organised in various EU countries.

A campaign to amplify the voices of under-represented communities, particularly around the theme of culture (see event) was launched. The “Amplify” campaign was launched simultaneously in 12 European countries with the participation of numerous creative professionals who organised separate sessions to identify key issues and draft recommendations (see example of an event). The importance of EU support and international cooperation was highlighted by the many events and discussions of this kind organised in rural and marginal areas (see example of an event).

Education has generated the highest number of events in the last few months, with events diverse in nature. Often they were designed to make young students the main protagonists of the debate, both in capital cities (see example of an event), and in more peripheral environments, with students expressing their own views and reflections on the future of education (see example of an event).

Occasionally, students had the opportunity to engage in discussions outside the context of school, for example in the case of a consultation campaign organised within the frame of a trade fair for education and training (see event).

A few events were organised also with the purpose of encouraging teachers to share their ideas and reflections on education and present them to the conference (see example of an event).

Online discussions on the future of education were, in some cases, generic and all-encompassing, while in other cases they focused on very specific issues and methods, as in the case of one event launched in Malta, which mostly covered lifelong learning and STEM skills (see event).

Remarkably, one event was organised as a competition between students who submitted their contribution to the conference in the form of papers. In total, 65 papers from all over Croatia were collected for this event and three of them received awards (see event).

Foster common EU identity

Several ideas relate to establishing more EU media portals (TV, radio and social media) to better engage European citizens when it comes to EU matters and issues, with the ultimate goal of strengthening the European identity and core values (see example of idea). Favouring the circulation of European media productions, for example by establishing a common EU media market, is also advanced as an idea by numerous participants (see example of idea). One idea is the creation of a specific EU media platform tailored to language learning (see idea).

The notion of language education to foster intercultural exchange and how it contributes to a common EU identity was further developed in the recent period, with several contributions stressing the need to overcome monolingual schooling, and calling for the recognition of the heterogeneous and multilingual nature of Europe as a resource (see example of an idea). Similarly, a panel discussion in Berlin explored Europe’s multilingualism and ways to recognise and encourage multi-language diversity (see event).

The establishment of one common European language is also seen as something which could foster European integration according to many participants (see example of idea). This is also widely discussed under the topic of Other ideas (see example of idea). The discussion deals with the various advantages and disadvantages of such a common European language and the various possible languages, including Esperanto (see example of an idea or see idea), Latin (see example of idea), or English (see example of idea). A conversation about Esperanto has sparked a certain interest online, mirroring the vibrancy of the debate around the one neutral language for all EU countries (see event).

A sub-theme of ideas relates to education where contributors suggest the introduction of a mandatory course about the history and institutions of the EU in all European secondary schools as a tool for younger generations to build interest and a sense of ownership with regard to the EU,
thereby enhancing the EU identity building process (see example of idea). Other ideas related to education as a means of fostering a common EU identity suggest various forms of exchange or twinning between schools in different Member States to foster friendship across Member State borders (see idea).

The sub-theme of sport in relation to fostering a common EU identity discusses the organisation of more transnational, inter-European sports events (see example of an idea) and the possibility of creating a European sports team which could compete in international events (see example of idea). Moreover, the importance of common EU symbols was raised in relation to creating a common EU identity with, amongst others, an idea to incorporate EU flags on the sports equipment and uniforms of athletes from EU Member States (see idea).

Another idea, which is also widely mentioned in other priorities, advocates the establishment of a European public holiday on 9 May to foster European community building initiatives all across the continent (see example of idea).

**Future-proof education**

Many ideas express the need to rethink education in the current digitalised era, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic altered teaching practices in schools and universities. According to many contributors, rethinking education in the digital age is a prerequisite for Europe’s future global competitiveness and modernisation (see example of idea). In order to facilitate access to courses, digital credentials and research materials, as well as to create a single repository of all academic resources, the creation of a single European digital platform open to all accredited EU higher education institutions is proposed (see idea). This call goes hand-in-hand with the need to promote ICT in schools and universities, also by subsidising schools to buy hardware (see example of idea).

In connection with the issue of adequate equipment and spaces for education, a proposal which has been highly endorsed by the platform’s users is that of a European Plan for Education. That would be “a European strategy focused on supporting direct investments in educational infrastructure and improving the accessibility, connectivity and quality of education and lifelong learning” (see idea).

The promotion of soft skills, and specifically artistic activities is often seen by respondents as another key step in developing EU students’ critical thinking and reinforcing their global values, especially at a young age (see example of idea). The implementation of inclusive educational methods, and more generally the promotion of diversity in education, is regarded as an important objective for the future of education in the EU (see idea).

A sub-theme of ideas addresses the need to reform educational practices to produce adults who are able to be active citizens of the EU. Next to exchanges and education on the EU, as discussed above, this sub-theme includes ideas discussing the need to encourage the active social participation of young students in schools (see idea) or instil cross-cultural skills with, for example, more foreign language learning practices (see idea). A related idea, namely the diversity of languages and the role that their media exposure can have in facilitating learning and the creation of a common European identity, was explored during a number of events (see example of an event).

A group of contributors draw attention to the need to rethink the current educational system in order to prepare young people for the future. Contributors call for education on climate change (see example of idea) and mechanisms to improve the STEM skills of young people, e.g. via an EU wide STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) basic skills programme (see idea). Additionally, as raised in the topic of digital transformation, contributors call for young people to be trained in digital well-being (see example of an idea).

A strand of ideas also discusses the alignment of (vocational) education with the working world (see example of idea), and the need to encourage entrepreneurial skills in education (see idea). In this regard another proposal involves introducing a mandatory professional orientation to assess the talents and interests of pupils early in their school cursus (see idea).
Intra-EU Mobility

Some participants propose the creation of an EU-led online portal for applying for higher education courses in the EU. This portal could also allow students to simultaneously apply to different programmes within the European Union (see example of idea).

Another sub-theme raised by several contributors concerns the expansion of Erasmus scholarships to include young people not in university, for instance by extending it to high school students, including those in vocational education. This would give those who have not gone into higher education the opportunity to live abroad, exchange good practices, learn new languages and cultures, and expand their skillsets in general (see example of idea).

Moreover, participants have stressed the need to make the Erasmus programme more inclusive for low-income students. One idea is to improve the adjustment of Erasmus scholarships to the cost of living in each country (see idea). In this sense, one participant proposes entrusting the university in the country of destination with the task of allocating Erasmus scholarships, so that applicants can apply directly to their preferred destination university, rather than to their home university (see idea).

The desire to improve the current form of the programme highlights the awareness of the importance of educational mobility programmes. This is also demonstrated by the existence of various events related to this subject and linked to the two ideas discussed above (see event).

In general, ideas concerning the accessibility and inclusivity of Erasmus scholarships re-emerge frequently. As an example, the latest contributions suggest extending the Erasmus programme to other categories of training, such as agriculture and other crafts (see idea).

Another area of focus is the ‘DiscoverEU’ initiative. Some participants propose extending the DiscoverEU initiative to every young European aged 18 years old (see example of idea).

Finally, an idea on academic mobility concerns the ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Convention Treaty in order to facilitate professional and academic mobility in Greece (see idea).

A unique idea concerning mobility, potentially from non-EU countries, concerns the creation of a European ‘Student At Risk’ scholarship scheme for students being prosecuted in their own country in order to protect academic freedom (see idea).

Youth unemployment

The second most endorsed idea under the topic of education, culture, youth and sport concerns the growing “not in employment, education or training” (NEET) proportion of young people in Europe. In particular, participants highlight that NEETs are one of the most vulnerable groups in today’s European society and express strong concerns that NEETs will be the next victims of the COVID-19 economic fallout. For this reason, contributors feel that it is crucial for the EU to take immediate and concrete action, not only to counter the NEETs’ phenomenon but also to ensure better working conditions in youth-dominated sectors (see example of idea).

Some ideas added on the platform in this regard focus on training for project writing and entrepreneurship, and on the need for a better recognition of informal learning (see example of an idea).

European heritage

Under this theme contributors call for the protection and celebration of European culture and heritage, for example by way of introducing an EU culture commissioner (see idea) and in general more investment in the preservation of common EU cultural memory. Recently, there has been an increase in calls for the preservation of the traditions expressed by minority groups in particular (see event).

On a more general level, the creation of a virtual library, associated with the libraries of different EU Member States, has been suggested with the aim of making rare books and artworks more widely available to all EU citizens (see idea).
Creative professionals

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the working conditions of cultural practitioners, as well as creative communities, has given rise to a serious reflection on their status and the role of EU institutions in providing a legal framework that would improve the sector’s precarity (see example of an idea).

The professionalisation of cultural workers was a crucial topic of discussion during several events that were organised across Europe around culture (see example of an event).

Other recommendations with regard to the creative sphere concern both support for organisations that operate at the local level and the establishment of an integrated system of national and regional co-financing that would facilitate more international cultural cooperation (see example of an idea).
Figure 17 – Mind map ‘Education, culture, youth and sport’ topic

Future-proof education

- Implement inclusive educational methods and promote diversity in education
- Better align (vocational) education with working world
- Invest in education and educational infrastructure with a European Investment Strategy for education
- Increase digitalisation of education
- Integrate soft-skills learning
- Integrate development of STEM skills in the educational system
- Integrate climate change in the educational system
- Instil cross-cultural skills and encourage active social participation

Intra EU mobility

- Recognize academic qualifications across EU countries
- Promote and improve inter-European educational mobility
- Facilitate inter-European educational mobility through an EU-led online portal collecting higher education courses
- Make the Erasmus scholarship more inclusive and accessible
- Ratify the Lisbon Recognition Convention Treaty to facilitate professional and academic mobility in Greece

European heritage

- Celebrate, protect and value European culture and heritage
- Introduce a EU culture commissioner
- Preservation of traditions, particularly of minority groups

Creative industry

- Provide a legal framework to reduce precarity in the cultural and creative sector
- Professionalize cultural workers
- Enhance cross-border and international cultural cooperation

Education, Culture, Youth and Sport

Foster common EU identity

- Establish more EU media portals
- Introduce course about EU history and institutions in secondary school
- Adopt a common neutral language (Esperanto/Latin/English)
- Institute a European public holiday on the 9th of May
- Grant Discover EU free internall pass to all 18 year olds in EU
- Organise more cross-country, inter-European sports events

Youth unemployment

- Recognize informal learning
- Immediate and concrete actions to battle youth unemployment
- Ensure better working conditions for youth in the EU

Foster friendships across Member State borders via exchange or twinning of schools
ANNEX I: List of currently most endorsed and commented ideas per topic
This Annex presents the most endorsed and commented ideas under each topic as of 3 November 2021, including suggestions made by individuals, as well as ideas promoted by organisations. It also includes the ideas registered under the topic ‘Other ideas’; in the rest of the report ideas under that topic have been placed under one of the nine thematic topics, or several topics in case of cross-cutting issues. The aim of this Annex is to reflect a high level of interest in or debate on some ideas on the platform.

Note that endorsements are similar to a ‘like/up-vote’ in social media. They indicate participants’ interest in and general favourability towards an idea, whilst not giving indications about any opposition to it. Therefore, the number of endorsements is not an indicator of overall support for the idea, but just one of the many aspects to be taken into consideration in the analysis of platform contributions. Comments can cover a range of feedback, from neutral to agreeing or strongly disagreeing. For more background on the analysis of contributions on the platform, see Annex II.

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Climate change and the environment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Idea: Promotion of nuclear energy where renewable energy cannot be used (translated)</strong> (see idea)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Idea: Just transition (see idea)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Idea: Stop all fossil fuel subsidies (translated) (see idea)</td>
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<td>Endorsements: 295</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments: 28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Idea: Euro Trainscanner (translated) (see idea)</td>
<td>Idea: Improve protection of nature, environment, biodiversity and people when developing industrial wind power plants in Europe (see idea)</td>
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<td>Idea: Reduce Environment Pollution by Immigration Policy (see idea)</td>
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<td>Idea: Reforesting Europe  (see idea)</td>
<td>Idea: Encourage people into eating less meat (see idea)</td>
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<td>Idea: Stop daylight saving time change: Adopting astronomically correct time and optionally mandate moving opening hours to 1 hour earlier (see idea)</td>
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<td>Idea: Equal access to affordable and high-quality public services, including health (see idea)</td>
<td>Idea: Science-intensive healthy longevity technologies: development and access (see idea)</td>
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<th>Idea: Say NO to digital (green) vaccine passports, certificates and possible chip implants, as it would create two classes of citizens based on vaccination (see idea)</th>
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| **Stronger economy, social justice and jobs** | **Idea: European Pillar of Social Rights for a social market economy** (see idea)  
Endorsements: 365  
Comments: 24 | **Idea: Unconditional Basic Incomes (UBI) throughout the EU which ensure every person’s material existence and opportunity to participate in society** (see idea)  
Endorsements: 274  
Comments: 88 |
| **Idea: New EU economic model and governance** (see idea)  
Endorsements: 354  
Comments: 23 | | **Idea: Unconditional Basic Income (translated)** (see idea)  
Endorsements: 76  
Comments: 83 |
| **Idea: A renewed Social Contract for Europe for a fair recovery** (see idea)  
Endorsements: 338  
Comments: 24 | | **Idea: A social protocol in the Treaties to stop dumping of wages and conditions** (see idea)  
Endorsements: 310  
Comments: 63 |
| **Idea: A social protocol in the Treaties to stop dumping of wages and conditions** (see idea)  
Endorsements: 310  
Comments: 63 | | **Idea: How much money would Esperanto save the European Union?** (see idea)  
Endorsements: 66  
Comments: 51 |
| **Idea: Unconditional Basic Incomes (UBI) throughout the EU which ensure every person’s material existence and opportunity to participate in society** (see idea)  
Endorsements: 274  
Comments: 88 | | **Idea: Start fighting tax havens inside & outside the EU** (see idea)  
Endorsements: 229  
Comments: 49 |

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Comments: 201 | **Idea: The creation of the European Army** (see idea)  
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| **Idea: ETUC calls for a reform of EU trade and investment policy and a relaunch of global multilateralism** (see idea)  
Endorsements: 350  
Comments: 9 | | **Idea: Uniting Europe: Continue the EU enlargement** (see idea)  
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Endorsements: 234
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### Idea: Acting as one: EU as a global actor (see idea)
Endorsements: 230
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### Idea: Strategic Autonomy (see idea)
Endorsements: 196
Comments: 27

### Idea: Integration of the Armed Forces of the Member States at European level (see idea)
Endorsements: 15
Comments: 33

### Idea: Strengthen the enforceability of Human Rights Instruments (see idea)
Endorsements: 344
Comments: 9

### Idea: Gender equality (see idea)
Endorsements: 343
Comments: 13

### Idea: The EU should enforce the obligation to respect the Rule of Law within its borders (see idea)
Endorsements: 199
Comments: 22

### Idea: Protecting our fundamental values: Mechanism on Democracy, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights (see idea)
Endorsements: 194
Comments: 15

### Idea: For objective, evidence-based information about Esperanto! Equal rights for Esperanto speakers! (see idea)
Endorsements: 150
Comments: 39

### Values and rights, rule of law, security

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<td>A lesson about Esperanto for the schoolchildren of the European Union (see idea)</td>
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<td>The European plan for Education: invest in high quality education and lifelong learning for all at the EU level (see idea)</td>
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<td>Esperanto — International auxiliary language (see idea)</td>
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**Most endorsed**

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The metrics used for the analysis in this report come from a live platform where data is updated on an ongoing basis, even throughout the period of the research team’s data analysis.

The main metrics used for the quantitative analysis are the following:

- **Numeric data on ideas uploaded by contributors, be it as individuals or as representatives of an organisation.** Numeric data consist of number of ideas – overall and within the various topics.

- **Numeric data on endorsements:** endorsements are similar to a ‘like/up-vote’ in social media. They help indicate participants’ interest in and general favourability towards an idea, whilst not giving indications about any opposition to it. Therefore, the number of endorsements is not per se an indicator of overall support for the idea, but just one of the many aspects that is taken into consideration in the analysis of contributions on the platform. Numeric data consist of the number of endorsements – overall, within the various topics and linked to a particular idea (used also for the listing of ideas by the number of endorsements).

- **Numeric data on comments by participants:** the analysis also covers the amount of participants’ comments on each other’s ideas, as they indicate the level of active engagement on an idea. In terms
of substance, comments can cover a range of feedback, from neutral to agreeing or strongly disagreeing. This is reflected in the qualitative analysis (see below). Numeric data consist of the number of comments – overall, within the various topics and linked to a particular idea (used also for the listing of ideas by the number of comments).

- Numeric data on events: contributors can create events on the platform and upload event reports. Numeric data covers number of events – overall and within the various topics.

- Socio-demographic data (anonymised): Prior to engaging with the platform contributors are asked to provide information on their country of residence, educational background, age, gender and employment status. The data are processed anonymously. As this information is shared voluntarily (currently around 75% of participants provide it), there are limitations on the insight that can be provided into the profiles of participants. Respondents are particularly unlikely to provide information on their occupation, education and country of residence. For organisations, only the country of residence can be provided.

The main focus of the report is on the qualitative analysis on the basis of ideas, including those discussed at events, and comments, to deliver an overview of the content of the platform. Themes and in some cases sub-themes are identified within the pre-defined topics.

In practice, within each topic a manual textual analysis and clustering of all the proposed ideas and closed events with event reports has been performed by a research team. To support this work the content available via the platform has been processed by an automated system for Text Analysis, which has been used to help analysts understand large volumes of text input. It enables the grouping (clustering) of contributions across languages, and allows to search for similar contents across the platform and across languages. Analysts use the Text Analysis system to facilitate multi-lingual content analysis, and to identify more conveniently the multiple occurrences of a similar idea in various contributions. This aids to assess the level of occurrence of an identified theme or sub-theme. The Text Analysis system only evaluates the content submitted via the platform. This includes pseudonymised answers to the sociodemographic questionnaire, which is used to compile the socio-demographic data, and the other content (ideas, comments and endorsements) submitted on the platform (including associated metadata such as the time the input was made). Subsequently, the research team has read through the ideas and comments within the identified cluster as well as the event descriptions and their event reports to provide a summary of the common themes and possible sub-themes, also noting variations and potential points of disagreement in the comment sections.

The ultimate goal of this qualitative approach is not only to record the themes or ideas which attract the most attention on the platform, but to also record the breadth and diversity of ideas falling within one topic. In case several ideas submitted on the platform are in practice expressions of the same idea or sub-theme, qualitative indications to this are provided in the summary, by referring to a ‘recurrent’ or ‘prominent’ idea or sub-theme.

The summaries also include links to illustrative ideas or events, which describe a concrete proposal or provide a good summary of the general argument of the identified theme or sub-theme.

In analysing events the research team focuses on closed events with an event report. Particular attention is paid to the more participatory and deliberative consultative events, to include the voices and opinions of those citizens who might otherwise not find their way to the digital platform.

The breakdown of a topic into themes and sub-themes or ideas is visually represented in the relevant mind map.