



Workshop session I
Atrium 5 – (09:30 – 11:15)

EUtopia – A thought experiment of an ideal vision of the EU project

Prof. Dr. Quentin MICHEL, Professor in European Studies, University of Liège

Overview of the topic

More and more citizens are not satisfied with the decision-making at the EU level. The EU is increasingly seen as a distant and monolithic entity, far removed from the real and everyday experiences of citizens. People do not feel well represented regarding a vast range of topics from immigration to hobby fishing. Many people feel that they are losing control over local policy and, as a consequence, they see their own identity is being profoundly threatened. The EU indeed, has chosen to reflect on the white paper on the Future of the Europe, could only have a limited scope, concerning itself with limited policy areas and levels of governance. These choices can be criticized but they can also be an opportunity to spur the debate in the field and arenas left untouched by the White Paper.

Objectives

This workshop aims to provide a space for utopic brainstorming on the vision for an ideal European Union which can consider the role of the EU regions. Participants are asked to discuss how the

regional level and regional political identities can have a better say and be better considered in the EU decision-making process.

The outcome of this workshop will be concrete ideas and recommendations on how regions can be better considered in the framework and decision-making in the EU in the future.

Concluding question

How to increase the role of Local and Regional Authorities in the EU decision making process?

Content of the workshop (1h45min)

- Introduction speech by expert (25 min)
- Group discussions (60 min)
- Presentation of results (5 min per group)
- Feedback (5 min)

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Workshop session II Atrium 5 – (11:45 - 13:30)

How to use the potential of insular regions to boost their economies?

Speakers

Maria Toptsidou, junior consultant at Spatial Foresight GmbH
Francesco Cappello, Enterprise Europe Network and Consorzio Arca Advisor

Overview of the topic

Insular areas have to tackle a number of specific **economic challenges connected to their geographical characteristics**. Low population density, high transport costs, small size and fragmentation of markets depending on a few economic sectors and niches as well as the dominance of small firms make these economies even more dependent on entrepreneurial initiatives than other regions.

About 17.7 million Europeans live on the EU's 362 lowly populated islands with a GDP that is less than 80% of the EU's average. However, **young people tend to abandon insular regions** due to poor economic conditions, cultural isolation and lack of social perspectives.

Nonetheless, local culture and insular specific context can effectively enable **sustainable development** in these regions.

Cultural heritage, creative industries, sustainable tourism, regional funds and specialization strategies can serve as strategic tools for revenue generation, particularly in economically depressed regions such as islands.

Objectives

The workshop's purpose is to provide an overview on how insular regions can successfully **use their potential to sustain economic development**. Participants are going to discuss how challenges connected to islands' geographical characteristics can be addressed through different tools and policies.

The workshop will encourage contacts and exchanges between students, young policy makers, stakeholders and politicians who represent insular regions. Moreover, it will give the participants an overview on how the EU institutions including the CoR are tackling regional economic depression.

Content of the workshop (1h45min)

- Introduction (10 min)
- 1st presentation Mr Cappello (15-20 min)
- 2nd presentation Ms Toptsidou (15-20 min)
- Team work (30 min)
- Draw Recommendations (20 min)

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Workshop session I Atrium 5 – (9:30-11:15)

Good practices for the integration of national minorities

Speakers

Ms Colette Mart, deputy Minister for Education, Luxembourg

Ms Marianna Makarova, Head of Research Development in the Integration Foundation, Estonia

Overview of the topic:

The respect for the rights of persons belonging to minorities **is one of the values of the EU**. This value is explicitly mentioned in *the Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union*. Although the Member States retain general powers to take decision about minorities, they still must use all legal instruments **to guarantee that fundamental rights are effectively protected** in accordance with their constitutional order and obligations under international law.

Fifty million people belong to a national minority or language group and live in one of the European regions, which they call homeland, as they express a strong regional identity. Regional policy offers one of the most effective frameworks of cooperation in Europe, which created effective solutions and common projects aiming economic, social and cultural development. Minorities contribute to the economic and cultural development of their homeland regions, they are bridge-builders in interregional cooperation, yet their contribution is not always recognized.

Objectives

The workshop's purpose is to **provide examples of good practices for the integration of national minorities**, in the education and cultural sector. By using examples from Luxembourg and Estonia, the participants will come up with **concrete ideas and tools** that would help local and regional authorities in dealing with challenges of integration. These ideas will later on be used to feed into the opinions of the European Committee of the Regions.

Content of the workshop (1h45min)

1. Introduction – 5 minutes

2. Experts presentation – 40 minutes

The experts from Estonia and Luxembourg will share good practices on integrating minorities from educational and cultural point of view.

3. Group work – 30 minutes

Participants will be divided in two groups, depending on the topic of culture or education. They will come up with at least four policy recommendations for their policy makers at home.

4. Presentation of the final outcomes – 15 minutes

Each group will have a leader who will then present these policy recommendations to all participants.

5. Short conclusions of the workshop by the moderator – 5 minutes



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Workshop session II
Atrium 5 – (11:45 - 13:30)

Regional identity in Border Regions

Problems and solutions do not stop at borders: learning from border regions.

Speakers

Mr. David Laven, Professor, University of Manchester

Mr. Tomaso Antonacci, Director general of the Township of Aubange (Belgium)

Mr. Jean Peyrony, Director general of the Transfrontier Operational Mission (MOT)

Overview of the topic:

One of the more visible effects of the European project is undoubtedly the disappearance of the physical borders. Since then, new forms of neighborhood relations and cooperation appeared between local authorities and citizens within those areas. This cooperation shows that the regional borders became step by step a place made of common projects in many topics such as healthcare, employment, education and so on. It is also a brainstorming exercise to think about new type of governance which involved citizens, private organizations, public authorities and NGOs.

Objectives of the workshop:

Border regions have traditionally been marginalized regions, because they are often far from places with great decision-making power, such as capitals, but they have enormous potential for various objectives of the European project. Therefore, the workshop's purpose is to a platform for participants to discuss the importance of, and the obstacles regarding the formation of cross-border regional identities for successful cross-border cooperation. In this discussion there will be a focus on how border regions can become focal points of reference in EU policies such as Cohesion Policy.

Content of the workshop (1h45min)

1. Introduction – 10 minutes

2. Experts presentation – 20 minutes

We will present the experts and the content of the workshop to the participants.

3. Group work – 55 minutes

Participants will be divided in three groups, depending on the experts. They will come up with policy recommendations according to the topic chosen and discussed within the groups.

4. Presentation of the final outcomes – 20 minutes

Each group will present their own policy recommendations to all participants.

Provisional leading questions:

- Is there a Regional cross-border identity and how can it be seen within the European project?
- How do the inhabitants of those border regions perceive regional development and the relationship with their neighbours?
- How can local authorities and associations work together to give a better lives to their inhabitants?

Concluding question: What can we learn from border regions when drafting policies?