



European Committee
of the Regions



EU Citizens' Consultations: What's next?

Grassroots examples - European prospects

European Committee of the Regions

April – May 2019

More info: www.cor.europa.eu/future.eu

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Lunchtime seminar # 1

4 April 2019, JDE 70

12:00 – 13:30

Since March 2016, the European Committee of the Regions has been active in the "Reflecting on Europe/Future of Europe" campaign, providing a platform for regions, cities and their citizens to engage in the debate on the future of Europe. In December 2018, a new concept of permanent structured dialogue mechanism was proposed for discussion by the presidents of the CoR and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). The call for a reinforced link between the EU and its citizens was reaffirmed by the Declaration of the 8th European Summit of Regions and Cities in March this year. The CoR is thus in the process of designing its "European Citizens' Consultations" model; a more permanent and structured format, combined with a feedback mechanism aiming to better include the local level in the EU decision-making process. In order to prepare for this new model, a **series of lunchtime seminars** are held in the European Committee of the Regions with local experts, aiming at collecting insights on citizen engagement from the local/regional point of view.

Speakers:

Marcin Gerwin, PhD, specialist in deliberative democracy, Poland

Urmo Kübar, civil society adviser to the President of Estonia

Vanessa Cotterell, policy manager, European Movement International (EMI), Belgium

Christian Matheis, official representative of the Government of Baden-Württemberg, Germany

Moderator:

Andrea Bodova, Acting Head of Unit, Unit Events, European Committee of the Regions

The following questions will be addressed to speakers:

Who? How are citizens selected for structured consultations/citizen assemblies and how could citizens be selected for an EU Citizens' Consultation?

What? Should the consultations cover one topic for all or should the European citizen assemblies select from a list of topics determined at EU level? Is there a meaningful way to choose your own topic?

So what? How should the results of EU Citizens' Consultation feed into the European decision-making process?

Citizens' assemblies for sustainable cities and regions



Marcin Gerwin, PhD, is a specialist in sustainable development and deliberative democracy and a coordinator of citizens' assemblies.

A political science graduate, he wrote his doctoral dissertation on sustainable development in the context of global challenges. He is a co-founder of Sopot Development Initiative (Sopot Development Initiative), which for many years has been engaged in the promotion of effective democracy in Poland. Mr Gerwin is the author of "Food and Democracy" and "Climate-friendly Food". Mr Gerwin will present citizens' assemblies for sustainable cities and regions and the example of the City of Gdansk.

How to create a stimulating environment for encouraging public participation?



Urmo Kübar has been involved in Estonian civil society development since he was an undergraduate of journalism and political science at the end of the 1990s. While working for

the Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations from 2005 to 2014 (including seven years as its CEO), he was responsible for designing and implementing a number of initiatives to encourage public participation. Mr Kübar will present the experience of Rahvakogu (People's Assembly), a deliberative democracy initiative that sought solutions to a number of pressing issues in politics and governance.

A civil society perspective: Making the consultations an effective tool to enhance democratic participation in Europe



Vanessa Cotterell is the Policy Manager at the European Movement International (EMI), a network of pro-European organisations present in 34 countries. In her current role, she coordinates EMI's policy output and advocacy

planning, is involved in the organisation's partnership building and has been leading projects such as the Women of Europe Awards and the European Democracy Group. Through its network, the European Movement has played an active role in the organisation of the European Citizens' Consultations and offers recommendations on how to make them more effective, transparent and inclusive. Ms Cotterell will share these findings.

The government's Guiding Principles on Europe – the region's new "mission statement for Europe"



Christian Matheis graduated in political sciences and has been working in international and European affairs for ten years – formerly at Baden-Württemberg's Ministry for

Sciences, Research and Arts and currently at its State Ministry. Since 2017, the departments for Europe, civic involvement and civil society at the State Ministry and the Ministry of Justice and European Affairs have been organising a "Dialogue for Europe". Drawing on the opinions of randomly selected citizens and experts, the state government has drawn up its "Guiding Principles on Europe". This mission statement was seen as the region's contribution to the debate on the future of Europe at EU level. Mr Matheis will share the experience of this unique innovation among Germany's "Länder".