



Citizen Z

Shaping the future of Europe - Deliberating with young people in the run-up to the European elections

Date and Venue: European Parliament, Info Hub, Esplanade Solidarność 1980, B-1050 Brussels, Belgium; May 6-7, 2024

The Intercultural Dialogue Platform, in collaboration with Citizen Z project partners, Stand Up for Europe and in partnership with the European Parliament, is organizing a two-day event aimed at strengthening young people's participation in democratic life through deliberative practices. The event is designed to emphasize the crucial role of the upcoming European elections in shaping the democratic landscape, while acknowledging the achievements and persistent challenges that Europe faces today.

The event aims to achieve two primary objectives: firstly, to analyse and deliberate upon the preliminary findings resulting from the second rounds of deliberative practices within the EU-funded Citizen Z project, encompassing Croatia, Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Secondly, it strives to foster an inclusive dialogue among young individuals, activists, policy experts and fact-checkers, addressing prevalent challenges to European democracies while also exploring actionable solutions to shape the future of Europe in the run-up to the European elections.

The comprehensive two-day program will feature a diverse range of activities, including panel discussions, presentations, workshops, and networking opportunities. This event is tailored for civil society organisations, practitioners, researchers, journalists, fact-checkers, academics engaged in democratic innovations, young individuals, youth associations and representatives, youth workers, policy experts, policymakers, and public authorities representatives.

The event is part of the two-year EU-funded project entitled *Citizen Z: Strengthening the Participation of Young Citizens in Democratic and Civic Life*, where deliberative methods are applied to stimulate young people's interest in civic and political affairs, actively involving them in the decision-making process.



Day 1: Navigating Democracy: Citizen Participation, Fake News, and Resilience in Times of Conflict

Monday, May 6 | European Parliament, InfoHub, Brussels

13:00 – 13:30 Arrivals and registration | Get your badge

Welcoming and registration of the attendees.

13:30 – 13:45 Opening Speech, EP, Partnership Teams, Civil Society Outreach Unit | Use your vote

Albrecht John, Engaging with multipliers at Civil Society Outreach Unit, EP

Presentation of the EU Elections 2024 Campaign Video

13:45 – 15:00 Panel discussion | Navigating Democracy in times of War and Peace

In light of the numerous conflicts erupting worldwide in recent years, democracy faces unprecedented threats. In this panel discussion, our objective is to delve into tangible examples illustrating how democracy is impacted during times of war, and explore the various forms of civic participation available during periods of peace. We will examine the early indicators of democratic backsliding and identify strategies for defending and strengthening democracy and its institutions amidst the ongoing war in the European vicinity.

Moderator: Ludmila Malai, EU Project Manager at IDP and Coordinator of the *Citizen Z Project*

Speakers:

Luca Tomini, Research Associate Professor of political science, ULB,

Early signs of backsliding democracy

Suzan Gibril, Post-Doctoral Fellow at CEVIPOL, ULB

Exploring the constraints on citizen participation in autocratic regimes: A case study Analysis

Martin Deleixhe, Professor at ULB and Associate Researcher at CReSPo

Reassessing European Citizenship Amidst Evolving Geopolitical Realities in Europe

15:00 – 15:30 Coffee Break | Refresh and Network

Enjoy your coffee and meet new people!

15:30 – 16:45 Panel discussion and Interactive Workshop | Building Resilience: AI, Disinformation, Fake News, and Election Integrity

This panel and workshop format combines group activities and interactive discussions to provide participants with a comprehensive and practical understanding of the issue. It encourages collaboration and aims to equip participants with actionable insights for tackling the challenges posed by AI and fake news in the context of the upcoming European elections.

Moderator: Olivia Gheyselinck, EU Project and Event Manager at the Intercultural Dialogue Platform

Speakers:

Ahmed Kaya, Researcher and Social Media Expert; Project Manager at Platform INS, Owner of the Meer Meer Meer company (the Netherlands)

Navigating Fact-Checking: Processes, Methods, and Real-Life Examples

Michele Calamaio, Journalist at MAREA Media (Italy) and **Lorenzo Di Stasi**, Freelance Journalist (Italy)

The role of independent media in combating misinformation and understanding fake news during investigations

Alessia Melchiorre, Journalist at MAREA Media (Italy)

Tangible Threats: The Impact of Fake News and Misinformation on the Upcoming European Elections

16:45– 17:45 Follow up on the Youth Campaign | Youth vote

Building on the insights gained from the third edition of the Deliberative Democracy Days, held on March 4 and 5, 2024, this workshop will enable young people to refine their concepts for running a peer-to-peer campaign aimed at motivating youth participation in upcoming elections and encouraging active engagement in civic and democratic life. A promotional spot will be launched following the event and strategically disseminated on social media platforms, with the aim of sparking a viral online momentum specifically designed to resonate with young people.

Facilitated by Silvestar Petrov, Youth Worker and President at Udruga Prizma

Day 2: Democracy in Action: Youth Engaging and Participating in EU Policymaking

Tuesday, May 7 | European Parliament, InfoHub, Brussels

9:00 – 9:30 Arrivals | Welcome

Welcoming and registration of the attendees

09:30 – 11:00 Workshop | European Citizens Initiative

Throughout this workshop, leveraging the insights from the proposals generated during the third edition of the Deliberative Democracy Days on March 4-5, 2024, young participants will refine a purposeful European Citizens Initiative, preparing it for potential submission. Of the four proposals unveiled in March, the one that generated the most interest will be further refined and meticulously developed.

Facilitated by Sebastian Berchesan, Executive Secretary at Stand Up for Europe

11:00 – 11:30 Coffee break | Refresh and Network

Enjoy your coffee!

11:30 – 12:30 Panel discussion | Deliberative practices with youth – preliminary findings

This panel discussion will examine the initial conclusions and recommendations from the second round of local deliberations in Croatia, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands. The focus will be on synthesizing and elucidating common concerns that have emerged as key for young people in these different EU countries (e.g. environmental sustainability, climate action, public transport, educational programs, social justice and the fight against gender-based violence). In addition, the discussion will extend to exploring the relevance of the identified issues at the EU level, striving to contribute to a nuanced understanding of the interconnected concerns that unite young people across borders, and thus lay the foundations for informed and collaborative efforts at both local and European scales.

Moderator: Ludmila Malai, EU Project Manager at IDP and Coordinator of the *Citizen Z Project*

Speakers:

Kamila Boukfouz, Project Manager at Platform INS (the Netherlands)

Silvestar Petrov, Youth Worker and President at Udruga Prizma (Croatia)

Fatih Cengiz, Project Manager at Fedactio (Belgium)

12:30 – 13:15 Harmony Across Borders for Europe Day: Let's celebrate Europe!

The session will kick off with an exciting short video. Following that, all attendees will be invited to dive into an engaging European Quiz, covering a wide range of topics including general knowledge, geography, history, music, literature, movies and TV shows, food, sports, travel, and famous landmarks. Participants with the highest number of correct answers stand a chance to win a fantastic gift. Let's test your knowledge and have some fun!

Moderators: Nisa Yildirim and Esra Tekinkaya, Members of the Youth Advocacy Team for the *Citizen Z project*



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