EU politics: Participation is trending

The King Baudouin Foundation, the Open Society Foundations and the Bertelsmann Stiftung issued a joint invitation to a DINNER DIALOGUE under the heading “Tomorrow's EU Democracy – Giving citizens a say” in Brussels on 18 September 2019. 40 decision-makers and “participation pioneers” from various EU institutions, think-tanks and scientific bodies met at the Representation of the Federal State of Baden-Württemberg to discuss how to give European citizens a greater say in European policymaking.
The European Commission’s new President, Ursula von der Leyen, stressed the importance of guaranteeing citizens better, easier and more intensive participation in European policymaking. No fewer than three Vice-Presidents are responsible for the major topic of democracy in the new Commission. The “Democracy and Participation in Europe” project brought decision-makers and think-tank members together in a participative DINNER format. Experts from Ireland, France and Scotland reported on successful examples in their own countries and discussed how they could be applied on a European level.

**Using the Momentum: New Impetus for Democracy in Europe**

Gisela Erler, State Councilor for Civil Society and Citizen Participation, has initiated a culture change in Baden-Württemberg. Introduced by Dominik Hierlemann as “the godmother of citizen participation in Germany”, she described how citizen participation has been institutionally embedded in the policy process. Pia Ahrenkilde-Hansen, Director-General of the European Commission’s General Directorate for Communication, presented the potential benefits of Ursula von der Leyen’s idea for a Conference on the Future of Europe, of which citizen participation would be an integral part.

Successful approaches from Member States and the EU were presented, followed by intensive discussions at five topic tables: Gaëtane Ricard-Nihoul from the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs gave an account of her experiences in the Grand Débat in France; David Farrell, University College Dublin, reported on the Citizens’ Assembly in Ireland; Doreen Grove, Head of the Scottish Government’s Open Government Partnership presented an overview of the situation in Scotland; Corina Stratulat from the European think-tank EPC analyzed the European Citizens’ Consultations; and our colleague Anna Renkamp reported on the knowledge gained from the cross-border EU Citizens’ Dialogues, which were conducted by the Democracy and Participation in Europe project and the European Commission.

**Promoting New Formats: Bringing Experts and Decision-Makers Together, Developing New Ideas**

The democracy program brings participation pioneers in the EU together and develops new citizen participation formats. The King Baudouin Foundation, the Open Society Foundations and the Bertelsmann Stiftung foundation form an alliance that is dedicated to integrating new participation formats into the EU’s political system.
Tomorrow's EU Democracy - Giving citizens a say

Projects

Democracy and Participation in Europe

Websites

- Democracy and Participation in Europe
- Among Friends and Critics of the EU on the German-Polish Border