



PAST2FUTURE PROJECT – CITIZENS' PAPER

Citizens' Recommendations for the Future of Europe

Developed through dialogue with citizens and stakeholders from 16 European Union Member States through two online and seven in-situ transnational events, implemented within the Past2Future Project (CERV Programme).

Europe from Past to Future: Citizens' Voices for Tomorrow

1. Introduction

The **Past2Future project** was created to strengthen citizens' understanding of the European integration process by connecting historical milestones with present-day challenges and future perspectives.

Through **2 online and 7 in-situ transnational events**, citizens, civil society organisations, academics, public authorities, youth representatives, policy stakeholders and local communities reflected on the historical milestones that have shaped today's European Union and discussed future priorities for European democracy and active citizenship:

- Schuman Declaration and Founding European Values
- Rome Treaty (1957)
- Unification of Western and Eastern Europe (1990)
- Maastricht Treaty (1992)
- Entering the European Family (2004 Enlargement)
- Lisbon Treaty (2009)
- Last Decade of EU Challenges and Achievements (2013–2023)
- EU Charter of Fundamental Rights
- Citizens' Debate on the Future of Europe

The discussions transformed individual experiences and perspectives into shared reflections and recommendations for the future of Europe.

This Citizens' Paper represents the collective voice expressed throughout the project and aims to contribute to future European strategies, policies and decision-making processes.

The recommendations contained in this document were presented, discussed and endorsed during the final Citizens' Debate on the Future of Europe, held online on 8 June 2026, which brought together 217 participants from 16 European Union Member States. The event provided an opportunity to validate the conclusions emerging from all previous project activities and to formulate a common European vision for the future of the Union.

2. What Citizens Value Most About Europe

Participants consistently highlighted the following values and achievements:



- ✓ Peace and stability
- ✓ Freedom of movement
- ✓ Democracy and human rights
- ✓ Cultural diversity and inclusion
- ✓ Solidarity among Member States
- ✓ European citizenship
- ✓ Education and mobility opportunities
- ✓ Equality and respect for fundamental rights

3. Citizens' Main Concerns

Throughout the discussions, several recurring concerns emerged:

- Reduced trust in institutions and political processes
- Limited awareness of EU opportunities and policies
- Insufficient citizen involvement in decision-making
- Increasing disinformation and social polarisation
- Youth disengagement from democratic participation
- Regional inequalities and social exclusion
- Challenges linked to digital transformation
- Security and resilience concerns
- Difficulties in communicating European values to citizens

4. Citizens' Recommendations to EU Institutions

A. Strengthening Democracy and Participation

1. Strengthen citizen participation mechanisms

- Expand participatory platforms and consultations
- Increase opportunities for citizens to contribute to policy discussions
- Encourage local and regional participation initiatives
- Ensure stronger bottom-up approaches

2. Improve transparency and communication

- Use clearer and more accessible language
- Increase visibility of EU initiatives at local level
- Improve communication between institutions and citizens
- Bring European policies closer to everyday realities

B. Youth, Education and Active Citizenship

3. Strengthen European civic education

- Greater awareness of EU history and values
- More civic education activities in schools and communities
- Increased support for non-formal education approaches
- Promotion of active citizenship from an early age



4. Expand mobility opportunities

- Strengthen Erasmus+ and similar programmes
- Increase accessibility for disadvantaged groups
- Promote intercultural dialogue and learning mobility

C. Inclusion and Social Cohesion

5. Ensure equal opportunities for all citizens

- Reduction of inequalities between regions
- Stronger support for vulnerable and disadvantaged communities
- Inclusive policies ensuring equal access to opportunities and services
- Reinforcement of social cohesion and solidarity

D. Digital Europe and Innovation

6. Promote an inclusive digital transformation

- Increasing digital literacy initiatives
- Supporting ethical and responsible use of Artificial Intelligence
- Strengthening measures against disinformation
- Developing digital participation tools for citizens

E. Resilience, Cooperation and Future Challenges

7. Build a stronger and more resilient Europe

- Reinforce solidarity among Member States
- Invest in innovation and future skills
- Strengthen sustainability and resilience policies
- Continue protecting democratic values and freedoms

F. Future Governance of Europe

8. Reflecting on the future structure of the European Union

During discussions across several project events, participants raised reflections regarding the future evolution of the European project and the original vision of European integration promoted by some of its founding figures. Participants proposed further reflection on:

- More efficient and coordinated EU decision-making mechanisms
- Stronger cooperation in strategic areas of common interest
- Reinforcement of shared European identity and values
- Greater citizen involvement in discussions on the future governance of Europe

Participants agreed that discussions on the future governance of Europe should continue through structured citizen dialogues and participatory democratic processes involving citizens from all Member States.



5. Final Citizens' Message

“Europe was built through cooperation, solidarity and shared values. Its future should continue to be shaped with citizens, for citizens.”

Citizens participating in the Past2Future project believe that the future of Europe depends on stronger dialogue between institutions and society, ensuring that all citizens feel represented, heard and empowered to actively participate in democratic life.

The European Union should continue evolving while preserving the values that inspired its creation: peace, democracy, solidarity, inclusion and cooperation.

Methodology

This Citizens' Paper was developed through keynote speeches, expert panels, participatory workshops, citizens' debates, questionnaires, video testimonies and interactive discussions organised during the Past2Future project. The final recommendations represent the consensus emerging from all project in-situ events and were validated during the final online Citizens' Debate on the Future of Europe.

This Citizens' Paper is respectfully submitted to European institutions as a contribution from citizens to the ongoing development of a stronger, more democratic, more united and more resilient European Union.