

The future is in your hands
Make your voice heard

Multilingual Digital Platform of the Conference on the Future of Europe

Report
February 2022



Disclaimer: this report is the sole responsibility of the authors and does not reflect the views of the EU Institutions or the Conference on the Future of Europe.

Analysis carried out by Kantar Public.



Contents

CONTENTS	3
INTRODUCTION	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
1. OVERVIEW OF CONTRIBUTIONS ON THE PLATFORM	14
2. CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ENVIRONMENT	22
3. HEALTH	32
4. A STRONGER ECONOMY, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND JOBS	43
5. EU IN THE WORLD	54
6. VALUES AND RIGHTS, RULE OF LAW, SECURITY	62
7. DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION	72
8. EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY	82
9. MIGRATION	91
10. EDUCATION, CULTURE, YOUTH AND SPORT	99
ANNEX I: LIST OF CURRENTLY MOST ENDORSED AND COMMENTED IDEAS PER TOPIC	108
ANNEX II: METHODOLOGY	120



Introduction

With the Conference on the Future of Europe, the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission have created an opportunity for European citizens from all 27 Member States to engage in a debate on challenges and priorities to address in order to create together a Europe fit for the future. As part of the Conference process, a Multilingual Digital Platform (referred to in the following as 'the platform') was launched on 19 April 2021 (futureu.europa.eu) and will remain live throughout the work of the Conference.

The platform is a key component of the Conference; it gives every EU citizen the chance to participate in any of the 24 official EU languages. Citizens can put forward their ideas, endorse other people's ideas and comment on them. The platform is also the place

where everyone can share information on Conference events and report on their outcomes.

All contributions on the platform are then collected and analysed and serve as input into the work of the [European Citizens' Panels](#), the [Conference Plenary](#).

Three [interim reports](#) have been published to date, covering contributions on the platform until 3 November 2021.

The aim of this report is to cover in addition contributions up to 20 February 2022. More detailed information on contributions per Member State on the platform is provided in a supplementary report made available simultaneously on the platform.

When reading this report it is important to bear in mind that the contributions on the platform represent the



views of the respective contributors and should not be regarded as representing the views of European citizens as a whole. The findings in this report are in no way to be taken as predictive of the outcome of the discussions of the Conference on the Future of Europe process. They will be subject to further discussion and assessment by the Conference Plenary, taking also into account the work of the European Citizens' Panels.

The analytical results are presented in the report according to the topics defined on the platform:

- Climate change and the environment
- Health
- A stronger economy, social justice and jobs
- EU in the world
- Values and rights, rule of law, security
- Digital transformation
- European Democracy
- Migration
- Education, Culture, Youth and Sport

Ideas mentioned on the platform under 'Other ideas' have been placed under one of the nine above-mentioned topics, or several topics in case of cross-cutting issues.

For each topic, an overview of the thematic clustering of the ideas and events with event reports is provided, aided by a Text Analysis system that identifies the multiple occurrences of a similar idea, in any language. These identified themes and sub-themes are presented in the order of level of occurrence as assessed by the analyst with the help of the Text Analysis system. A text box at the beginning of each topic provides some examples of events held on that topic, focussing on new events added since the last report. A mind map for each topic provides a visual representation of the content analysis by themes and sub-themes.

Note on methodology

The main focus of this report is on a **qualitative analysis** of the contributions on the platform. This is carried out on the basis of the ideas, event reports and comments submitted by contributors to deliver a broad overview of the content of the platform. In practice, within each topic a manual textual analysis and clustering of the proposed ideas and closed events with event reports has been performed by a research team, aided by a computer assisted clustering tool. Subsequently, a summary of the common themes and possible sub-themes has been prepared. The cluster analysis into themes and sub-themes is carried out within the pre-defined topics. This means that ideas cutting across topics or ideas submitted by contributors under multiple topics or under 'Other ideas' may appear multiple times in this report under the relevant topics. This approach has been chosen so as to give a holistic perspective on each of the conference topics.

Issues which are raised by a small number of contributors also figure in this analysis if they provide a new perspective compared to that of other contributors. The aim is to provide a general overview of the breadth and diversity of ideas proposed on the platform currently, rather than focusing on quantitative elements. Nevertheless, themes, sub-themes or ideas that are recurring often or have a high number of endorsements or comments are indicated in the text, to reflect the current state of discussions on the platform, including a high level of interest in or debate on some issues. These elements are also used to guide the order of presentation of themes in this report.

Quantitative elements (number of ideas, comments, endorsements and events) are also used in the overview of contributions and in the list of currently most endorsed and commented ideas per topic presented in **Annex I**.

Please also note that in the analysis provided in this report, the term '**contributions**' refers to a combination of ideas, comments and event reports.

Further details on the methodological approach are provided in **Annex II**.



Executive summary

This report summarises the activity on the Multilingual Digital Platform for the Conference on the Future of Europe from its launch up to 20 February 2022.

In this period 43,734 contributions were recorded on the platform, with 16,274 ideas, 21,264 comments and 6,196 events covering all 10 topics.

While there is a substantial amount of new contributions in the past period, the majority consolidates existing themes and sub-themes leading to a slight altering in some topics of the order of the themes according to overall occurrence.

In a few cases new themes have been identified. For instance, new themes have been registered under the

topic of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, where over the past period new contributions have fortified and expanded previously registered sub-themes into stand-alone themes. These are work precariousness and youth unemployment, creative and academic professionals, access to tertiary education and culture and inclusivity in sport. Similar processes were at play in the topic of Health where the sub-themes on cancer care and healthcare workers grew in size to stand-alone themes.



Climate change and the environment

Contributors are concerned about climate change and its effects as well as numerous other environmental challenges. The most frequent themes deal with emissions as well as renewable energy. Contributors in general want an accelerated green transition with immediate and concrete measures from the EU and governments, with a range of proposals, such as fostering greener energy production and transport, altering consumption patterns, more sustainable agriculture, promoting biodiversity and the halting of pollution. Contributions emphasise the need for education and communication at EU level, with initiatives to address these issues. Some contributors have raised the issue of social justice in the context of climate policy. The ideas can be thematically grouped as follows:

- An overarching call is the one urging governments and the EU to take immediate action with a stronger European environmental policy to combat climate change. Contributors raise several suggestions to tackle emissions and discuss best practices and ways to accelerate a green transition and the implementation of the Green Deal at local and regional levels;
- Under the theme of energy, contributors, strongly favour increasing the use of renewable energy and enhancing energy diversity through research and innovating with alternative energy sources, both for households and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). However, some contributors have drawn attention to the issue of acceptance by the population and some divisive debate takes place on nuclear energy;
- Participants want measures to encourage the development and use of alternative, eco-friendly means of transport, with various suggestions to encourage the use of public transport and calls for increased research and investment in alternative transport solutions;

- Under the theme of consumption, contributors call for stronger measures to address waste, food waste and to promote recycling and a circular economy, targeting both manufacturers and consumers. Additionally, they call for measures to promote more sustainable consumption in sectors ranging from tourism, fashion to electronic appliances. Contributors equally express concern on the environmental pressures linked to digital transformation, such as the development of cryptocurrencies;
- Promotion of biodiversity and animal welfare with calls for reforestation, the halting of deforestation, protecting of endangered species and increased research facilities related to biodiversity;
- Under the theme of agriculture a strong sub-theme is the call to eliminate the use of pesticides and in general to adopt more environmentally friendly agricultural practices. Other measures in relation to the environment include the promotion of local farming, biodiversity, vegetarian or vegan diets and fair prices for farmers;
- Means and measures to combat pollution as it is viewed as a source of pressure on the environment. Solutions are formulated to battle water pollution, the polluting use of plastic with calls to ban single-plastic use, as well as light pollution;
- The halting of environmentally unfriendly subsidies such as fossil fuel or harmful fishing subsidies, as well as various proposals for taxation measures to drive behavioural change and promote sustainable consumption, for example by way of a sustainability tax;
- Contributors want increased efforts to change behaviour and attitudes through enhanced awareness-raising, education and communication;
- A specific theme is dedicated to housing and construction, with ideas concerning sustainable housing, eco-friendly building materials and the ‘New European Bauhaus’;

- Contributors have discussed the interaction between digitisation and climate change under the topic of ‘digital transformation’.



Health

The topic of health covers a wide variety of themes. Most occurring, and influenced by the experience of COVID-19 and its impact, contributors call for equal access to quality healthcare across the EU with ideas for more cooperation between Member States, greater harmonisation and integration, through for example EU wide quality standards of care. Contributors call for increased research and investment in the field of medicine and suggest various ideas to improve public health in general. The main themes are the following:

- Measures to ensure access to affordable, high-quality healthcare, with access for everyone. Ensuring access to mental healthcare is specifically mentioned. The suggestions include, amongst others, a European medical insurance scheme to ensure affordability;
- More cooperation and integration, a strengthened EU healthcare system or even increased competence for the EU in public health matters;
- Integrated strategies towards common EU health challenges, such as cancer, mental health, suicide prevention, rare diseases, etc.;
- Resources and measures to promote health literacy, healthy lifestyles and diets, including on mental health and various means to discourage consumption of unhealthy products such as tobacco. Participants call for the EU to invest more in a series of preventative health-related measures;
- The need for EU coordinated innovation and investment in health research, particularly in relation to the EU’s ageing demographic profile;

- Under the theme of approaches to medicine, the ideas discussed include palliative and end-of-life care, the integration of natural remedies or more holistic approaches to medicine;
- The opportunities and health threats relating to increased digitalisation in recent decades with amongst the opportunities discussing an integration of European e-Health systems and amongst the threats the dangers of digital addiction;
- An assessment of the impact of COVID-19, including evaluating responses such as the digital corona certificate, the need to revalue healthcare workers and the lessons to be learned to prepare for and combat future pandemics;
- Less prominent themes concern sexual and reproductive health related measures such as combating period poverty, sexual education and the right to abortion as well as cancer care, particularly discussed in relation to prevention, early diagnostics and pooling of resources EU wide.



Stronger economy, social justice and jobs

A theme that is frequently raised in this topic is the importance of Europe becoming more inclusive and socially just, especially in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Contributions under this topic also include various suggestions to drive economic growth in the EU, such as research and innovation, further strengthening the single market, and various measures to support small and medium-sized enterprises and strategic industries. Additionally, contributors believe that the well-being of various groups of people, especially the most disadvantaged ones, is pivotal to the EU’s successful functioning and

further growth. The most prominent themes debated under this topic are:

- Suggestions to build a more inclusive, socially just Europe, in accordance with the European Pillar of Social Rights, such as social protection measures, eliminating the gender pay gap, poverty reduction measures, gender equality, ensuring rights of persons with disabilities, LGBTIQ rights and representation. Amongst various concrete ideas, contributors discuss a unified EU approach to social security, introducing gender quotas at board levels and a social equality measurement index;
- Economic recovery, including concerns about rising public debt in the EU, discussions about the role of the European Central Bank, calls for a review of the Stability and Growth Pact and for an expansion of the Recovery and Resilience Facility, as well as various suggestions to support local production and local consumption to boost the internal market and the EU economy;
- Boosting job growth by investing in innovation, education, digitalisation, research and development, but also by establishing a Green Economy. Particular attention goes to the support of small and medium-sized enterprises as they are considered innovation drivers;
- Contributors consider that social security measures are important to achieve social justice. The Unconditional Basic Income is the most frequently raised idea. Coordinated retirement policies and pensions across EU Member States and other interventions to curb poverty in the EU are equally raised. There is a call to more generally take account of the demographic transformation in the EU. Also raised elsewhere, calls for a digitised common EU social security card and transferable social rights for mobile Europeans are present;
- Various taxation formats for a fair and inclusive economy, such as tax measures to ensure fair competition between companies,

environmental taxes and a minimum EU-wide tax to counter tax havens;

- Contributors equally consider a common tax policy with European fiscal reform for a more united European future, including more EU own resources or a budget independent from the Member States, as well as suggestions to further strengthen the single market;
- Suggestions to improve working conditions, such as flexible working and the right to disconnect, and specific measures to further facilitate labour mobility within the EU. Youth unemployment is particularly discussed, with several suggestions to support youth in entering the job-market;
- Some ideas challenge the current economic model in order to move towards an inclusive and equitable European welfare, for example by considering an economic model that looks beyond the GDP.



EU in the world

A variety of themes related to foreign policy have been raised under this topic. Overall, the most recurrent themes are those calling for a stronger EU presence in the global political arena in line with its core values. Contributors to the platform raise the issue of strategic autonomy and often feel that the EU should be bolder in its exercise of both soft and hard power, although some contributors have expressed doubts in this regard. The main themes include:

- Contributions discussing the overall objectives of EU foreign policy, with calls for a common EU foreign policy defending human rights and democratic values worldwide;
- Developing various means and mechanisms in order to enhance the EU's image and ensure that it is taken seriously on the global political stage, with considerable discussion about a common defence policy to be able to intervene, but also to play a dissuasive role

and represent geopolitical power vis-à-vis other global powers;

- The creation of an EU army and related centralised defensive or military institutions;
- Rethinking the unanimity rule in foreign policy decision-making, and giving increased powers to the European Parliament;
- Actions to make the EU more visible and ideas concerning an EU diplomatic representation for example with a single seat on the United Nations Security Council;
- Exerting soft power as an advocate of multilateralism by strengthening trade policies;
- Further enlargement, especially to Western Balkans countries;
- Fostering the strategic autonomy of the EU and increasing the focus on the primordial common economic market function of the EU;
- Taking a more assertive stance towards China, especially by adopting a European Union Foreign Investment Strategy;



Values and rights, rule of law and security

Contributors advance ideas on equality and a variety of rights and freedoms and discuss the notion of European values as a guiding principle for EU policy making. As equality is considered a core EU value, there is strong support for enhanced efforts to create an inclusive society, with contributors calling in particular for greater gender equality, recognizing LGBTIQ rights, and inclusion of ethnic minorities and persons with a disability. Another recurring idea under this topic addresses the need to uphold and defend the rule of law. The main themes and ideas are the following:

- The discussions include ensuring human rights in general and ways to make them enforceable, as well as a variety of rights and

freedoms. Civil and political rights are highly present within this topic on the platform, with the right to privacy and freedom of expression, as well as their limits (disinformation, hate speech) being most present among the contributions. Economic and social rights are also raised, as in the topic on Stronger economy;

- Combatting discrimination and means and measures to achieve a more equal and inclusive society are raised, in particular for people with disabilities, older people, national and ethnic minorities. A large number of ideas relate to achieving gender equality, such as ensuring equal pay, and improving the protection of LGBTIQ rights and freedoms;
- A number of concrete suggestions concern ways of improving the protection the rule of law in the EU, such as a review mechanism or introducing punitive strategies for those countries that infringe on the rule of law such as reducing grants or taking away their voting rights in the Council. Some contributors however are critical about what they consider as the EU interfering in internal matters of Member States;
- A group of contributions focuses on what constitutes EU values, such as human rights, freedom, equality, democracy, rule of law, pluralism, solidarity, gender equality, which should guide the EU's policies and its interactions globally, or even be set in the EU constitution, according to contributors;
- Discussions also cover the role of Christian values, with some contributors making the point that more conservative voices and approaches within the EU should not be dismissed;
- As in the EU in the world topic, under the security theme a number of participants have discussed the idea of an EU army and the need for closer cooperation between European countries on internal security matters;



- There are calls for enhanced regulation to make lobbying more transparent and tackle corruption.

Digital transformation

In general contributors stress the importance of facilitating and investing in a digital transformation across a wide range of areas, including governance, the economy and health. However, they also highlight several challenges related to digital transformation, such as ethical considerations, the growing digital divide, General Data Protection Regulation shortcomings and cyber threats. Overall the most occurring themes concern the need to invest in digital education and foster digital skills, as well as investing in digital innovation and moving towards a digitally sovereign Europe. The main themes are the following:

- Ensuring that EU citizens possess the necessary digital skills to succeed in an increasingly digital world, and digitalising the education system;
- Means and measures to support digital innovation, such as artificial intelligence and boosting digital sovereignty. This covers a wide range of sub-themes: encouraging the use of open-source software, sustainable manufacturing, social media and platforms that comply with EU standards in terms of privacy, and more broadly building a European digital ecosystem that is competitive and open to the world, but that is also safe and respects privacy;
- Several tools for digital citizenship and digital unification of the EU with suggestions for digital portals, European-wide identification via a digital e-ID or a European-wide authentication method for accessing personal data or for public services;
- The theme of data privacy and security concerns participants with ideas touching on the centralised storage of sensitive personal data, ensuring secure public networks with

open-source software or block chain, legislative action to safeguard data privacy and a centralised approach to defend the EU from cyber terrorism;

- Working towards digital inclusion with measures to guarantee affordable and inclusive access to the digital space and fostering digital skills across a range of population profiles, as well as ensuring digital accessibility geographically, including in rural areas;
- Durable digital transition measures, with digitalisation leading to a reduction in pollution and calls for durable, repairable digital equipment amongst others;
- Digitalisation of the economy with measures relating to cryptocurrency, and a call for a digital euro;
- Investing in digital education and digital health in order to promote healthy and conscious use of technology.



European Democracy

Ideas under this topic cover a wide range of issues. The most recurring themes relate to European Parliament elections, future-proofing European institutions by means of restructuring and the question of "federalisation". The need to increase citizen participation to help shape policy making is widely discussed. Contributors deem it crucial to increase knowledge about EU matters and to foster a common European identity. As across other topics, contributors often stress the need to protect democracy and uphold the rule of law in the EU. The most prominent themes are:

- In terms of representation, changes to the way the European Parliament elections are held as a means of enhancing citizen participation in EU democratic processes, with proposals for transnational electoral lists and transnational

campaigns; directly electing an EU President is also proposed;

- The idea of federalisation is prominent. Contributions range from calls to take steps towards a federal union in specific areas to establishing a European Constitution. On the other hand, some participants are sceptical or call rather for decentralisation, with greater powers for Member States;
- Suggestions include measures to make citizen consultations and participation a structural part of EU governance in order to create a sense of ownership among citizens as regards to EU decision-making. There are proposals to institutionalise citizen assemblies, create online platforms or organise EU wide referenda;
- Institutional reforms are suggested, with the aim of making the EU institutions more efficient and transparent and bringing them closer to citizens. The most frequent suggestions include qualified majority voting rather than unanimity in the Council, especially in relation to the protection of EU values, and a greater role for the European Parliament in general;
- Mechanisms and means to better engage EU citizens and ensure that they are more connected and better informed about the EU, EU institutions and its decisions. Suggestions concern better communication, reducing the distance between Members of the European Parliament and their constituencies, common EU media platforms and fostering a European spirit; the latter suggestion also figures in the topic of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport;
- Mechanisms and means to protect democratic values with regard to lobbying, corruption, and measures against governments violating democratic principles. The fight against disinformation, also raised in other topics, is also covered.



Migration

While contributions under this topic consistently call for an EU common approach on migration, they reveal more than under any other topic vastly different opinions. On one hand, one group of interactions call for greater solidarity and better integration procedures, while on the other hand, other contributions want more action to control and reduce migration. Taking an intermediate position, a group of participants would like to foster international mobility, but only between economically developed democracies. The most recurrent themes include a common EU policy on migration, respecting human rights in the area of migration, supporting the integration of migrants in various ways, but also ideas calling for stricter border controls and migration management. The ideas can be summarised as follows:

- Calls for a common migration policy, such as an EU labour migration policy, an EU selective migration policy or a points-based system;
- Calls for a migration policy respecting human rights, with better reception infrastructures, safer migration routes; and more humane asylum and return procedures;
- Specific measures and means to decrease migration or various forms of controlled migration, with stricter border controls and stricter repatriation;
- Means and measures to facilitate and support the integration of migrants and permanent residents in the EU. The proposed measures include language education and volunteering programmes for migrants, and information campaigns to sensitise EU citizens to counter racism;
- Opposition to migration in any form, linking it with terrorism, a threat to EU cultural identity or migration being used as a political weapon;
- Better organised and coordinated efforts when it comes to border control: increased support to Frontex and greater solidarity among Member States;
- The need to tackle the root causes of migration in countries of origin, for example

with increased development policies and equal trade relations. Discussions also address ways to counter climate migration.



Education, culture, youth and sport

Given its multi-thematic nature, content under this topic covers a variety of themes. While youth is a current in many ideas across the platform, the strongest focus in this topic is on education and culture. As elsewhere on the platform, the call to foster a common EU identity is a recurrent underlying sentiment for themes identified under this topic with contributions related to, amongst others, exchange, exposure, and mobility. Many of the themes under this topic are cross-cutting and also appear elsewhere on the platform:

- Means and measures to foster the development of a European identity and European citizenship; with a key role for the media and European journalism, as well as European productions disseminating European values and culture;
- Increased foreign language education or mandatory courses in schools on the EU institutions and European history are also seen as a means of fostering recognition and a common EU identity. There are numerous suggestions for a unifying, common language on the platform under various topics; suggestions range from Esperanto to English as a common language. The call to recognize Esperanto in particular is widely occurring across the various topics, including Other ideas;
- Various suggestions to foster intra-EU mobility, particularly with regard to education, with an expansion of Erasmus scholarships amongst others;
- Several ideas raise the need to future-proof education with calls for digitalisation, the promotion of soft skills next to STEM skills, or cross-cultural skills in general;
- In addition, the ideas submitted under this topic discuss specific actions relating to youth and youth unemployment, work precariousness, education and training needs, or specific employment support for young people;
- Ensuring equal access to education, specifically tertiary education, particularly supporting rural inhabitants, former inmates, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities to enable them to access tertiary studies;
- The need to support and protect the cultural and creative industry with a legal framework;
- Means and measures to support academic professionals and researchers;
- A smaller proportion of ideas discuss sport in the EU and ways to improve inclusivity in sport.



1. Overview of contributions on the platform



Overview of activity

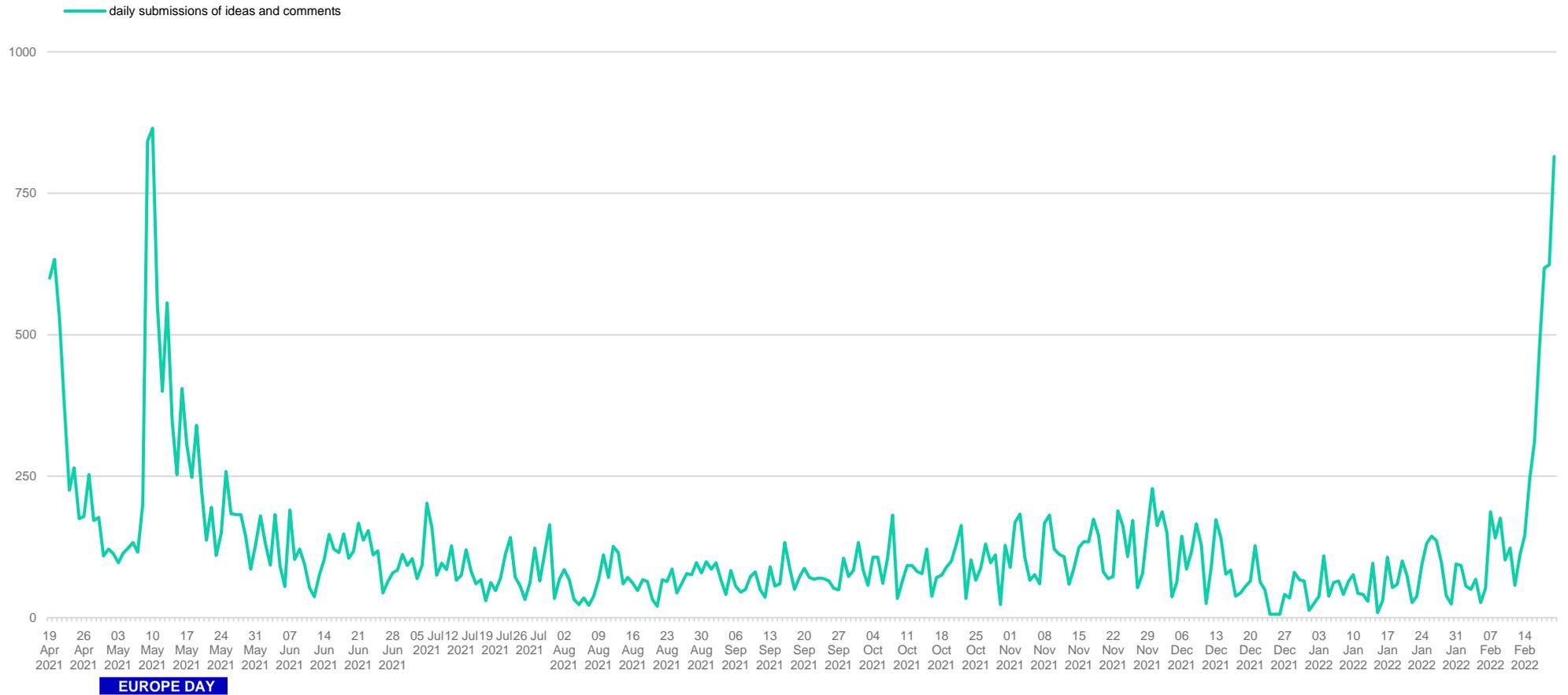
Since the launch of the Multilingual Digital Platform on 19 April up to 20 February 2022, in total 43,734 contributions were collected on the platform, representing ideas, comments and events. The activity can be broken down as follows:

- Ideas: 16,274
- Comments: 21,264

- Events: 6,196 (with 550,061 event participants)

Looking at the trendline (see Figure 1), three peaks in submissions of ideas and comments can be observed. The first peak coincides with the launch of the platform, the second peak occurred around the inauguration of the Conference on the Future of Europe on 9 May, while the third peak occurs in the last week before the 20 February deadline for contributions to be taken into account in this report.

Figure 1 – Timeline indicating daily submissions of ideas and comments (19/04/2021 – 20/02/2022)

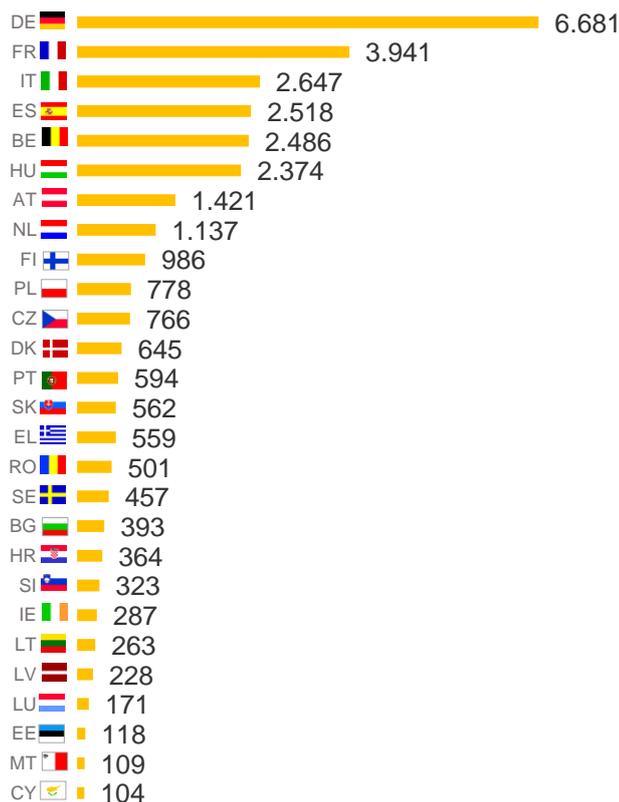




Prior to engaging on the platform contributors are asked to provide information on their country of residence, educational background, age, gender and employment status. The data are processed anonymously. As this information is shared voluntarily, there are limitations on the insight that can be provided on this basis and that are presented below. For example, 26.9% of the contributions are from participants who did not disclose their country of residence.

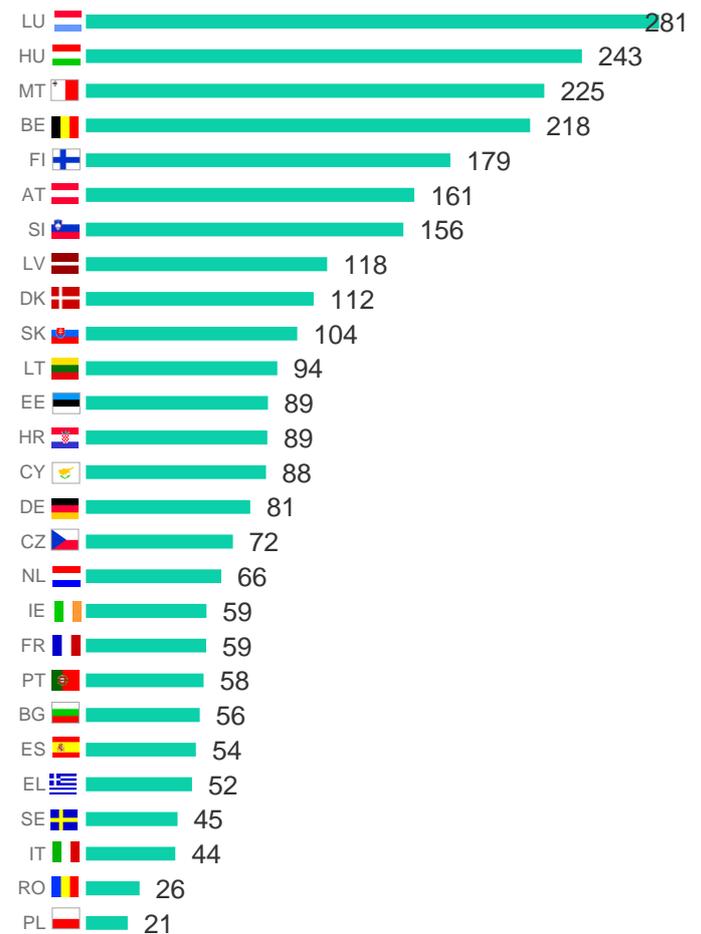
All EU countries have generated activity, as can be noted from Figure 2, which presents the total number of contributions per country. In addition, 1.2% contributions from third countries outside the EU were recorded.

Figure 2 – Volume of contributions per country (19/04/2021 – 20/02/2022)



In order to paint a more detailed picture of the volume of contributions in proportion to the population, the figure below gives an overview of the number of contributions from each country per one million inhabitants.

Figure 3 – Volume of contributions per country, proportional reflection per 1M inhabitants (19/04/2021 – 20/02/2022)





Overview of events

As the Conference has progressed an increasing number of events have been organised. They provide an opportunity for more people to become involved in this bottom-up democratic exercise. From the launch of the digital platform up to 20 February 2022, in total 6,196 events have been registered on the platform. In line with the Conference Charter (accessible [here](#)), citizens must be at the heart of events, which must be inclusive and accessible and encourage diversity of debate. Toolkits are in place to help event organisers (accessible [here](#)). In order for events to effectively contribute to the Conference, event reports detailing the conclusions and concrete ideas emerging from them must be uploaded to the digital platform (see [guidelines](#)). These event reports, together with the event description and linked ideas are taken into account in the overall analysis of the contributions on the platform.

Events related to the Conference are organised in a variety of formats, as regards the type of event, their scale, the profile of the audience or of the organisers, as well as their thematic scope. This section aims to provide an insight into the diversity of types of events, while their contribution in terms of substance is addressed under the relevant platform topics.

Events take place online, in person or hybrid. They are often organised as debates or workshops, such as a series of dialogues on the future organised in Spain with, amongst others, a citizen workshop on basic income (see [event](#)) or a citizen workshop on sustainable city practices that was held in a small Flemish town (see [event](#)). Some events are organised in more classical formats, involving for example a keynote presentation followed by questions and answers sessions, while other events are organised in more deliberative formats. Some events registered on the platform are part of longer-running deliberative consultation projects, such as the Decide Europe project, a simulation of legislative deliberations at EU level for secondary school students in Czechia and Slovakia (see [event](#)). There are also innovative formats such as a workshop where participants could provide recommendations while moving through a role-playing game (see [event](#)), a hackathon organised in Latvia, where participants competed against each

other in teams to create innovative and sustainable solutions (see [event](#)) or a 'walking and talking about climate change' event in Spain (see [event](#)).

As regards participation, some events are organised with the aim of including the contribution of specific categories of participants, such as women (see example of an [event](#)), young people (see example of an [event](#)), or people living with a disability (see [event](#)). A number of events are organised on community level, for example a participatory event with inhabitants of a certain city or region such as the Jönköping County (see [event](#)) or with inhabitants of a cross-border region discussing a common challenge such as adaptation to climate change impacting the Spanish-Portuguese border (see [event](#)).

In terms of topics, some events address the Conference process or the future of Europe more broadly, such as an event in Germany providing a general introduction to the Conference ([event](#)) or an event combining a conversation with seniors on topical issues related to the EU with a lesson on digital skills in Latvia ([event](#)). Others focus on specific topics, such as for example on cities fostering democracy (see [event](#)) or an event held by the Copenhagen University on migration (see [event](#)).

Events are organised by a variety of organisers: alongside EU citizens, academia, civil society organisations, also national, regional and local authorities and EU institutions have contributed to the Conference on the Future of Europe by organising events. Some Member States organise national citizens' panels, others carry out or support various other types of consultations. Events are also organised by the European Commission Representations in the Member States, the European Parliament Liaison Offices, the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee.



Who engages in the debate?

When assessing the profile of contributors who provided information on their country of residence (73%), including those from third countries, the following observations can be made.

Around half of contributors identified themselves as men (49.1%) and 16.1% as women. However, more than a quarter (33.9%) did not provide information on their gender and 0.9 % identified as non-binary, so these figures only give a limited view.

The representation of age groups is fairly diversified, with 55-69 year-olds being the most active age group in terms of contributions (18.3%), followed by 25-39 year-olds (17.1%) and the 40-54 age group with 15.3%.

In terms of occupation, professional workers (14.8%) and retired people (11.2%) have been the active on the platform. Managers (10.8%) and students (8.3%) were also fairly active. Self-employed (8%), manual workers (5.3%), and unemployed people (2.7%) have been relatively less active on the platform. 38.2% of contributors did not declare their occupation.

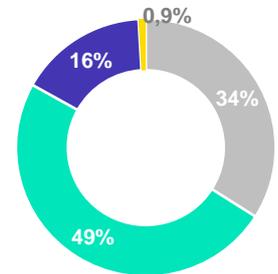
When it comes to education, people with higher levels of education have been most active (43.2%). The socio-demographic data of education is least provided (39.6%)

It should be noted that the socio-demographic data presented here provide only a limited view since organisations also create a profile on the platform to contribute, whether in the form of ideas or events. Also, participants in events have not necessarily registered on the platform and may not be covered by the statistics.

Figure 4 – Age, gender, education and occupation of participants (19/04/2021 – 20/02/2022)

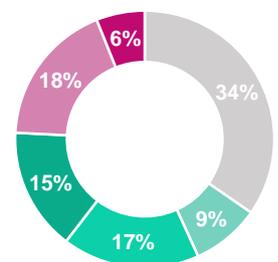
Gender of participants

- no answer
- man
- woman
- non binary



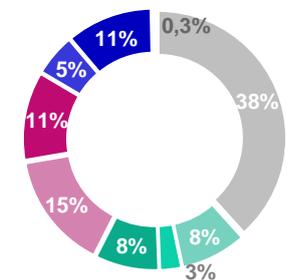
Age of participants

- no answer
- 15-24 y.o.
- 25-39 y.o.
- 40-54 y.o.
- 55-69 y.o.
- 70+ y.o.



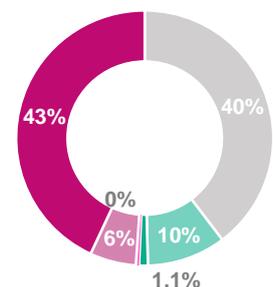
Occupation of participants

- no answer
- student
- unemployed
- self-employed
- professional worker
- retired
- manual worker
- manager
- house worker



Education of participants

- no answer
- still studying
- no full time education
- under 15
- under 20 - basic or upper secondary education
- 20 plus - tertiary education



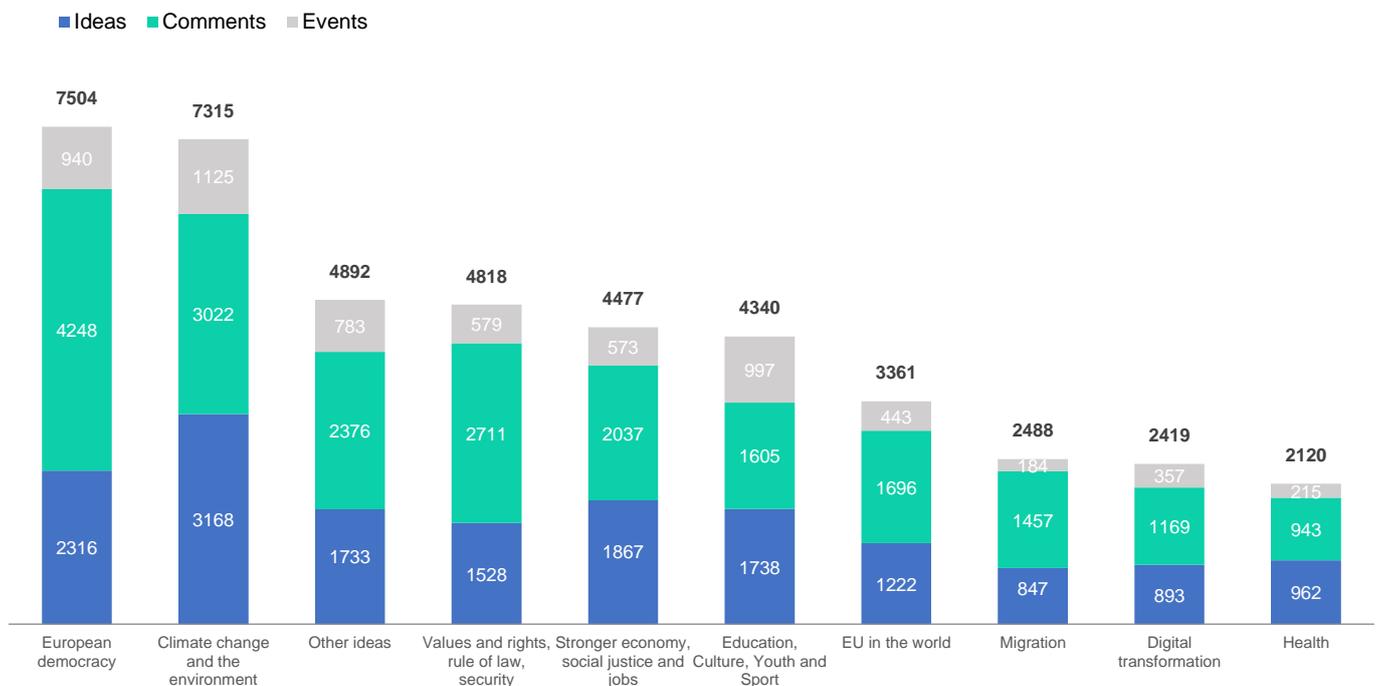


Trending topics in terms of contributions

From the launch of the platform until 20 February, the topic of European democracy has recorded the highest level of contributions (ideas, comments and events) (7,504). Climate change and the environment ranks second with 7,315 contributions. Contributions under Other ideas are in third place, followed by Values and rights, rule of law, security (4th) and A stronger economy, social justice and jobs (5th) (see Figure 5).

Some topics generate more comments, ideas or events than others, for example, European democracy has the highest number of comments (4,248). Climate change and the environment noted the most ideas (3,168) and events (1,125). With 997 events, the topic of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport has the second highest number of events.

Figure 5 – Contributions per topics on the platform (19/04/2022 –20/02/2022)





Recent developments

From 4 November 2021 up to 20 February 2022, activity on the platform totalled 14,772 contributions, composed of:

- 6,977 ideas
- 5,226 comments
- 2,569 events

The analysis of contributions at country level shows that Germany remains the top country in terms of volume of contributions (1,290), while Hungary (1,244) remains 2nd. Spain (1,119) ranks 3rd. Italy (4th) and France (5th) remain highly contributing countries, with 1,036 and 1,012 contributions respectively.

When it comes to the level of contributions in proportion to population, Luxembourg recorded the highest level of activity in the past period, with a notably high level of activity of 143.1 contributions per 1 million inhabitants. Hungary ranks 2nd with 127.3 contributions per 1 million inhabitants. In addition, high levels of contributions per one million inhabitants were noted for Estonia, Belgium and Slovenia.

Figure 5 – Volume of contributions per country (04/11/2021 – 20/02/2022)

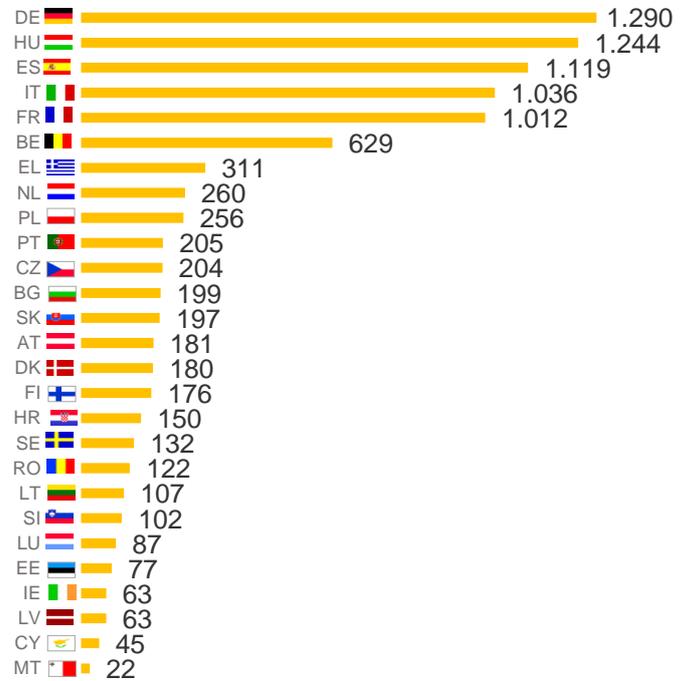
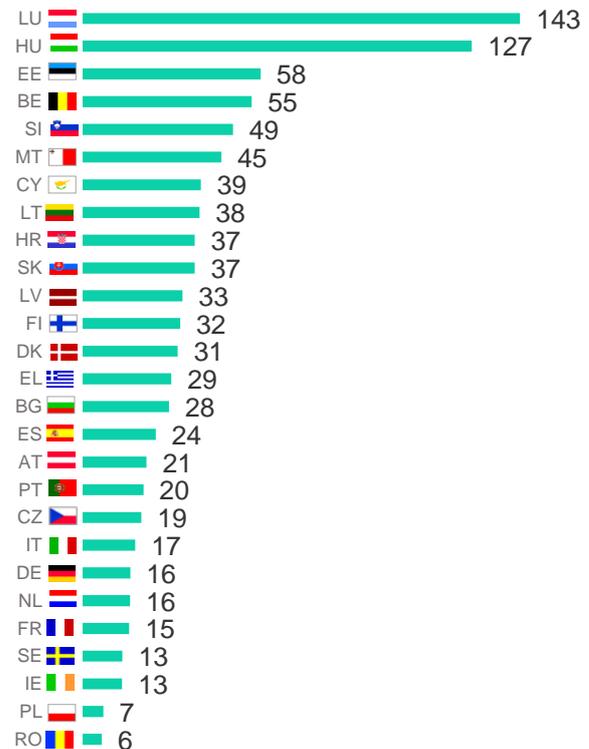


Figure 6 - Volume of contributions per country per 1M inhabitants (04/11/2021 – 20/02/2022)





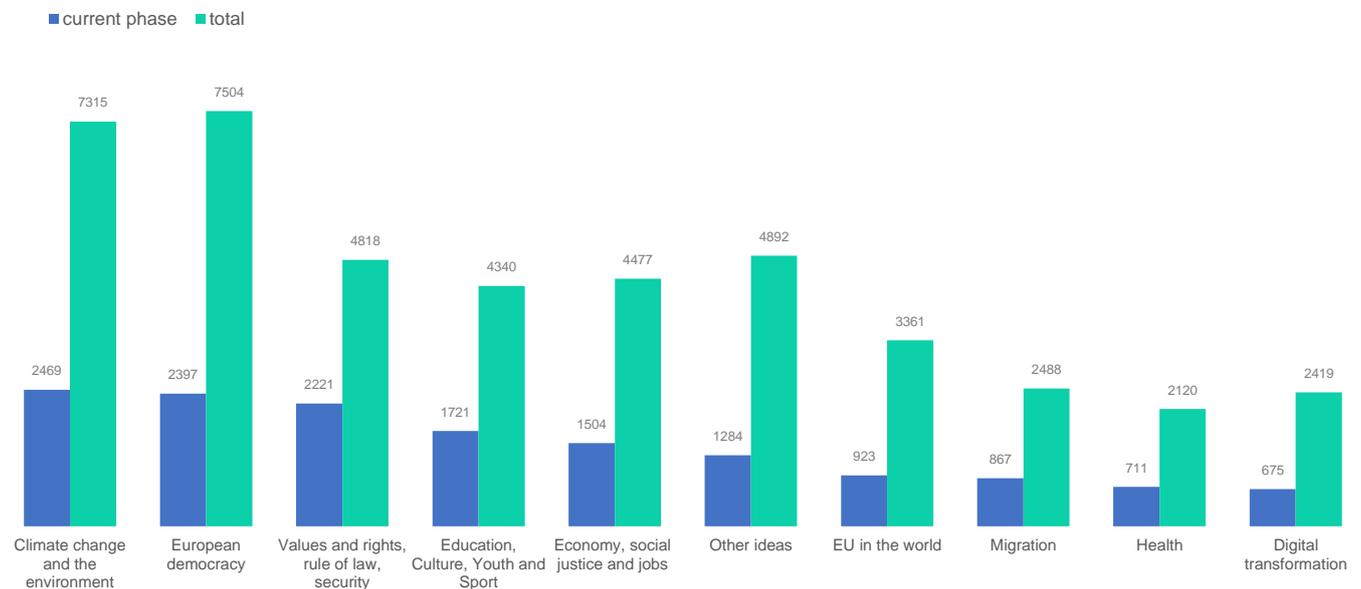
Trending topics 4 November up to 20 February 2022

Both the topics of European democracy and Climate change and the environment continued to be the most popular topics with the highest contributions, 2,397 and 2,469 respectively.

Contrary to the overall trends, in the past period Values and rights, rule of law, and security has gone from 4th to 3rd most popular topic with 2,221 contributions and Other ideas has dropped from 3rd to 6th with only 1,284 contributions. Other popular topics continue to be Education, Culture, Youth and Sport and Economy, social justice and jobs which were the 4th and 5th most popular topics in the past period with 1,721 and 1,504 contributions, respectively.

Figure 7 – Comparison of overview of contributions per topic past period and total

Overview of contributions per topic





2. Climate change and the environment

The topic of Climate change and the environment has generated a total of 7,315 comments, ideas and events since the inception of the platform (3,168 ideas, 3,022 comments and 1,125 events). In their various contributions participants generally express their concerns about global warming and its consequences, urging governments to take immediate concrete action to tackle climate change. Amongst suggestions made reducing emissions is often identified as the main driver, next to facilitating a green transition, achieving climate neutrality and promoting renewable energy, in particular solar panels. Sustainable transport solutions, mainly centred on rail systems, and consumption related suggestions to battle climate change, such as recycling, packaging and plastics, are

also widely occurring. Citizens call for engagement across all segments of society: depending on the specific content of each proposal, the responsibility is assigned to individuals, to the commercial sector, or to governments and policy makers.

The various ideas can be grouped according to the following themes:

- **Tackling climate change and ‘Green Deal’**
- **Energy**
- **Transport**
- **Consumption**
- **Biodiversity and animal welfare**



- **Agriculture**
- **Pollution**
- **Subsidisation, taxation**
- **Creating change in attitudes and behaviour**
- **Housing and construction**

Events

Since the beginning of the conference, 1,125 events organised all over Europe have included debates on Climate change and the environment. The most frequently discussed subject at these events is the 'European Green Deal', namely the plan to make Europe the world's first climate-neutral block by 2050, with all of its implications for various sectors. Other frequently discussed issues include sustainable city practices, the circular economy, and the consequences of climate change, followed by sustainable agriculture, emissions reduction, energy transition, reforestation, and soft mobility. While less frequently the centre of discussions, waste management, biodiversity, education on sustainability, food rescue and other issues are nevertheless important elements as part of the whole picture.

Examples of participatory events are a citizen dialogue on sustainable consumption (see [event](#)) and a discussion centred on energy reduction programmes organised by a citizens' association in a Hungarian small town of Eger (see [event](#)). A cross-border working group that saw the participation of German and French citizens based in two neighbouring regions discussed a wide range of themes, from small-scale farming to circular economy (see [event](#)). Moreover, citizen workshops focused on sustainable city practices and city adaptation to climate goals have resulted in a series of ideas posted on the platform (see example of an [event](#)).

Some events were linked with broader initiatives, such as the World Clean-up Day or the European Week of Waste Reduction (see example of an [event](#)) and generated several proposals in relation to the specific theme that they addressed. A citizens' workshop in France focusing on the question of the reforestation of Europe included planting trees as a collective action as well (see [event](#)).

A few events discussed the environmental transition with attention to social justice and to the most vulnerable groups, emphasising the redistributive dimension that climate policies should have (see example of an [event](#)). An interactive workshop was held in Dublin with the aim of discussing the commitments made at COP26. Participants overall agreed that the goals set at COP26 were not ambitious enough and considered that the EU should have done more to foster an agreement between countries with different agendas (see [event](#)).

Finally, events also occasionally discussed climate change and the environment in relation to broader issues such as the question of building resilient and inclusive communities. (see [event](#)).



Tackling Climate Change and 'Green Deal'

Participants frequently express their concerns about climate change and its consequences, urging governments and the EU to take immediate action and putting in place a stronger European environmental policy to combat climate change (see example of [idea](#), example of [event](#)). Suggestions are related to reducing emissions, achieving climate neutrality, combatting pollution, a green transition, also covered under the various themes below.

With regard to emissions, one of the most frequently discussed issues concerns taxing emissions, more specifically, to encourage businesses to lower their greenhouse gas emissions by opting for cheaper renewable energy sources, leading, in turn, to customers making more sustainable choices (see example of a much endorsed [idea](#)). Another proposal is to lower the maximum permitted rate of greenhouse gas emissions. This currently allows high-efficiency coal and gas plants to fall below the threshold; however, they still contribute to pollution (see [idea](#)). The need for a Carbon Border Tax and related measures is also raised (see example of an [event](#)).



Contributors have mentioned the Fossil Fuels Non-Proliferation Treaty, a civil society initiative aimed to ensure the downscaling of the use of fossil fuels. They recommend that the EU should join the treaty in parallel to the Paris Agreement (see [idea](#)).

One participant calls for more investment in the development of technologies for the capture and storage of carbon dioxide (CCS technology) (see [idea](#)).

Debates on the 'Green Deal' and green transition more generally have been organised across Europe with the aim of discussing key priorities, best practices, implementation at local and regional level, as well as alternative business models (see examples of [event](#) and [event](#)).

Several contributions focus on the social and economic effects of the implementation of the 'Green Deal' as an EU strategy aiming to set Europe on the path of transformation to a climate-neutral, fair and prosperous society. There are, for example, calls for a more socially inclusive approach and a call for a balanced strategy whose economic, social and environmental dimensions need to be assessed and implemented jointly and strategically, referencing the soaring energy prices across Europe (see [idea](#)). A highly endorsed idea on the platform wants the EU to provide a strong and inclusive governance approach, where both workers and trade unions are involved in the design and implementation of adaptation policies at all levels. It is stressed that the EU's strategy to deal with climate change should include concrete policy measures that maintain jobs and protect the health and safety of workers, as well as active labour market policies and reskilling and training to prevent job losses (see [idea](#)).

On a more general level, it is proposed to create a scoreboard to monitor the impact of measures and provide evidence of the progress of the implementation of the Green Deal at regional level (see [idea](#)).

Energy



Another theme which attracts more engagement is energy, which is often raised with regard to the topic of climate change. Contributors on the platform suggest boosting both the small-scale and large-scale use of renewable energy, for example through European energy cooperation (see [event](#)). Next to renewable energy, nuclear energy is a topic of discussion, with ideas calling for the use of nuclear energy to be limited, or, alternatively, developing safe nuclear energy and using it in the countries and places where it is not possible to use renewable energy sources (see example of [idea](#)). Moreover, the European Commission's recent plans to classify nuclear power and natural gas as green investments have sparked criticism on the Conference platform (see example of an [idea](#)). On the other hand, most contributions on this issue take the opposite view, stating that nuclear power is the best way to achieve de-carbonisation (see example of an [idea](#)).

Simultaneously, there is a call to investigate alternative sources of energy (see example of [event](#)), such as thermonuclear fusion, geothermal energy or hydrogen that would contribute considerably to energy diversity (see example of [idea](#)). However, contributors emphasise that even alternative sources, such as wind energy, need to be accepted by local populations and that it is necessary to ensure that they have a positive impact on biodiversity, human beings and landscapes (see example of [idea](#)).

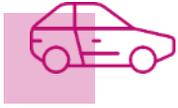
Under the sub-theme of energy efficient and environmentally friendly heating, examples include an idea advocating the use of multi-fuel stoves (see [idea](#)) or a district heating network capitalising on unused heat sources, such as deep geothermal energy (see [idea](#)).

People in general call for more accountability and engagement from companies and commercial enterprises, for instance reducing artificial lighting when it is not needed, for example shop windows in malls after closing time (see [idea](#)).

For energy efficiency goals at residential level contributors advocate a transition to individual energy consumption in condominiums (see [idea](#)). Another



idea mooted is micro co-generation of energy in housing (see [idea](#)).



Transport

Another frequently occurring pool of ideas relates to transport, often discussed in relation to pollution. Some of the suggestions listed below concern changing transport systems in order to reduce pollution.

Ideas submitted on the platform to change transport systems call first and foremost for a ban on short-distance flights in the EU in order to reduce pollution (see example of [idea](#)). Contributors highlight that the pandemic has already led to a shrinking aviation industry.

In general, there is strong support for public transport systems in Europe to be improved (see example of [idea](#)) as more environmentally friendly alternatives to short-distance flights. Specifically, a common European railway network is widely discussed (see example of [idea](#) and [event](#)). One contributor proposes the Euro Trainscanner search engine to make travelling by rail more attractive (see [idea](#)) and another suggests introducing an integrated EU ticket and making it free of charge in cities (see [idea](#)). Proposals to expand fast train networks and create cross-border railway connections were generated in one of the several events organised for the European Year of Rail (see [event](#)).

Other ideas concern a common cycling network, proposing, for instance, an extension of cycling routes or the creation of a Europe-wide cycling junction network (see example of [idea](#)). Moreover it was proposed to make it mandatory for municipalities to set up cycle paths as an integral part of the road, as it is already the case for side walks for pedestrians (see [idea](#)).

Another pool of ideas focuses on innovation and the development of electric vehicles, such as cars and bicycles, and their integration into the current environment, for example by providing a charging station network (see [idea](#) and [idea](#)). Nevertheless, one

participant argues that electric cars have detrimental environmental and humanitarian costs and suggests instead that vehicle weight and speed should be limited to reduce CO2 emissions (see [idea](#)).

On the question of the decarbonisation of transport and more environmentally friendly transport, participants also emphasise the importance of cross-border projects to foster shipping and rail transport (see example of [idea](#)). There is also a call to develop programmes to encourage R&D and innovation, in order to produce means of transport - both public and private, individual and collective - that are non-polluting and 100% energy self-sufficient (see example of [idea](#)).



Consumption

'Consumption' covers a wide range of sub-themes, with ideas focusing on the most varied types of material waste, identifying the sustainable practices to address and reduce such waste. Contributors massively call for a change to the current system of the mass consumption of goods and services. A highly endorsed idea, presenting a recurrent sentiment, calls for the promotion of the circular economy in this respect (see [idea](#)). The right to repair is seen as a crucial element in altering consumption patterns and promoting a circular economy. Participants call for repair friendly product design, and the introduction of a repair index and an EU wide repair label (see [idea](#)). The impact of the pandemic has also caused people to rethink global supply chains and advocate the shortening of those (see [idea](#)). Some contributors go even further by proposing to have quotas for maximum consumption and production (see example of [idea](#)).

Related to food waste specifically, one participant highlights that 40% of all food produced worldwide never reaches our tables and that this causes 10% of all global greenhouse gas emissions, and proposes measures to stop food waste, such as supporting food donations (see [idea](#)).

A number of contributors on the platform point to the considerable volume of waste produced and propose several measures to avoid and combat such waste,

such as recycling (see example of [idea](#)), opting for zero or low waste product packaging in order to decrease the negative impact on the environment (see example of [idea](#)). A highly endorsed idea promotes the idea of an EU led programme for returnable food packaging made from recyclable materials (see [idea](#)). One participant points to the need for more information on recycling to encourage this practice from an early age (see [idea](#)). Another proposes the introduction of a European integrated system to return bottles, based on the German model (see [idea](#)). The ban on the outsourcing of waste from the EU is also noted under the sub-theme of waste (see [idea](#)).

Within the sub-theme of the environmental impact of consumption, the issue of the compliance of imported goods with EU standards has been raised. For example, one contributor suggests prohibiting the import of beef from Brazil that does not have the same level of traceability as EU beef (see [idea](#)).

Another recurring idea advocates a more advanced product labelling system (see example of [idea](#)) that would detail the environmental impact of production or indicate whether the products contain microplastics and thus have a negative long-term effect on the health of consumers (see example of [idea](#)). A highly endorsed idea proposes a 'climate score' for products, calculating the impact of a product on the climate in terms of production, transport, company profile, etc. (see [idea](#)).

A last strand revolves around the fast fashion and textile industry, with the aim of making it more eco-friendly; contributors highlight the huge quantity of resources used in the production of clothing and the fact that clothes are often unsuitable for recycling (see example of [idea](#)).

In a citizens' workshop held in Spain, several ideas were generated relating to water consumption. Contributors stress the need to improve distribution and water harvesting systems to avoid water waste (see [event](#)).

Additionally, participants highlight the need to promote green and sustainable tourism instead of mass tourism, since the latter is considered to have a considerable impact on natural and cultural resources (see example of [event](#)).

A last group of comments and ideas under this theme reflects concerns about the waste generated by new electronic appliances, and calls for an increased mandatory warranty for such appliances and the need to ensure reparability (see example of [idea](#)), and for the creation of a collaborative networking platform to ensure re-circulation of e-waste (see [idea](#)). Another proposal involves developing a pilot programme to replace the electrical appliances of 35 million EU families with A+++ items in line with the EU's objective of a green transition (see [idea](#)).

Some participants also want energy consumption to be limited - especially since electricity is largely produced with fossil fuels - by imposing a monthly quota of electricity for consumption, with the surplus being taxed (see example of [idea](#)). A few participants have expressed concerns about the development of cryptocurrencies, where the equipment leads to massive electricity consumption. In their view, the more crypto mining becomes a global issue, the more limits and regulations will be required (see example of an [idea](#)).



Biodiversity and animal welfare

The preservation of biodiversity and the protection of animals have become increasingly recurring themes during the course of the conference, with several contributions.

The main sub-theme of ideas concerns deforestation. One of the more endorsed ideas calls to invest in the reforestation of Europe to avoid desertification (see [idea](#)) or globally to save the lungs of the planet, namely, the Amazon rainforest and other world rainforests, in order not only to slow down global carbon pollution and save species, but also to reduce migratory pressures on Europe (see example of [idea](#)). Policy suggestions include a ban on the import of products derived from deforestation (see [idea](#)).

Fauna protection is equally regarded as an important component for this theme. One participant proposed the adoption of a common policy for the protection of



endangered European species (see [idea](#)). A number of participants have endorsed the ideas of stopping the trade of exotic animals as pets (see [idea](#)), as well as ideas related to the protection of aquatic animals including the implementation of a legislation on aquatic animal welfare (see example of an [idea](#)).

Among other contributions that are associated with the theme of biodiversity, are the suggestion to plant trees in all the 'forgotten' places, such as motorways, road interchanges, etc, as a way to capture CO₂, enhance evapotranspiration, improve biodiversity and regulate water flows stands out (see [idea](#)). The call to leave more space to nature was also discussed in some events (see [event](#)). A further suggestion involves establishing a European Mobile Marine Research Station to gain essential knowledge about marine biodiversity (see [idea](#)).



Agriculture

Another theme that has attracted a considerable number of contributions, as well as a fair amount of endorsements as regards the related ideas, is agriculture. Under this theme, the concept of ecological farming and more small farms (see example of [idea](#)) is fairly frequently advocated by contributors, with calls for the use of pesticides and intensive farming to be banned (see example of [idea](#)). Some contributors go even further, suggesting that the pesticides ban should be extended to private use (see example of [idea](#)). The support for small and organic farming, as well as for the future of EU agricultural policy in general, is also demonstrated by the participation in round tables organised to discuss these specific themes (see example of an [event](#)).

A strand of ideas raises several examples to make agriculture less polluting and more sustainable, with discussions addressing aspects such as plastic use in agricultural films (see [idea](#)) and ways to reduce water consumption in agriculture (see [idea](#)).

Other ideas suggest that the EU should do more to promote a plant-based diet on the grounds of climate protection and the preservation of the environment. Some contributors add ethical concerns as grounds

for such action (see example of [idea](#)). This is also addressed under the Health topic.

The need to ensure food sovereignty and security by promoting local farming is also strongly emphasised by contributors. The discussions have addressed food belts around cities, planting fruit trees in urban areas, support for the acquisition of land by producers and farmers by limiting the price of such land and other measures (see [idea](#)). Moreover, proposals include establishing purchase quotas of local products for large international supermarkets (see [idea](#)).

Under the theme of agriculture, the issue of how agriculture should cope with, and prepare for, climate fluctuations is raised. In this regard, multifunctional, multi-diverse agroforestry systems can enhance the formation of humus, water holding capacity and CO₂ binding, thereby significantly increasing the stability and productivity of agriculture (see [idea](#)). Moreover, one participant advocates a transition from intensive agriculture to agro-ecology (see [idea](#)).

Lastly, the income of farmers is discussed, with some contributors calling for farmers to receive a guaranteed income through fair prices instead of subsidies (see example of [idea](#)).



Pollution

Pollution is identified as a source of pressure on the global environment. Several areas of pollution are discussed, with the following sub-themes: water pollution, plastic pollution and light pollution.

On the sub-theme of water pollution, there is a strong emphasis on the need to ensure the future security of drinking water resources and clean ecosystems. Moreover, there are concrete proposals for combatting ocean and river pollution (see example of [event](#)), for example the idea to neutralise the acidification of the oceans with a specific bacteria (see [idea](#)).

The contributions that address the issue of the pollution caused by plastic materials account for a significant proportion of the total contributions,



reflecting increasing public concerns about excessive plastic waste. Alongside the call to enforce and extend the ban on single use plastics (see example of [event](#)), participants propose limiting the types of plastic used for packaging to those that can be recycled together without having to separate components (see example of an [idea](#)). Additionally, one idea put forward is to create facilities for recycling plastics removed from rivers and oceans (see [idea](#)).

Lastly, some ideas on the platform propose limiting light pollution (see example of [idea](#)).

Another focus is on education and raising awareness among Europeans of all generations (see [event](#)). While most of the ideas address the education of young people (see example of [idea](#)), even from a very early age, through educational gardens (see [idea](#)), there is also a call to engage older Europeans with climate change initiatives, especially because of the increasing population ageing in Europe (see example of [idea](#)). Additionally, some contributors stress the need to promote eco-responsible communication by the European institutions. For instance, they propose developing communication kits on 'how to be an eco-responsible European' and strengthening environmental education in order to create neighbourhoods responsible for the environment (see [idea](#)).

While being conscious of the role of individuals in reducing climate change, some participants insist on the responsibilities of companies and urge people to hold accountable those enterprises that claim to be carbon neutral but still rely on unsustainable business models (see [idea](#)).



Subsidisation, taxation

In addition to various ideas related to taxing emissions, which are discussed under the theme of tackling climate change, within this theme several suggestions are made to halt to environmentally unfriendly subsidies, such as a highly endorsed idea to stop all fossil fuel subsidies (see [idea](#)). In a similar vein, another idea calls for a halt to harmful fishing subsidies (see [idea](#)). On the other hand, suggestions advocate increasing subsidies for biodiversity and climate change projects, or EU provided funds to renew house insulation (see example of an [idea](#)).

Contributors also propose introducing a sustainability tax (see example of [idea](#)) that would make unsustainable products more expensive, thus making such products less attractive for both consumers and producers. Moreover, this would also provide the EU with additional revenue, or 'climate income' to invest in sustainability measures, such as the purchase of electric cars and the installation of solar panels on private homes (see [idea](#)).



Housing and construction

An additional theme concerns housing and construction with a sub-theme grouping together a number of ideas and events discussing the New European Bauhaus (see [event](#)), with the aim of combining innovative, aesthetic design with concrete actions tackling climate change, and making our future living spaces more sustainable, affordable and accessible. Another idea calls for awareness-raising campaigns on green, sustainable construction with the use of low-carbon building materials (see [idea](#)).

Similarly a dialogue organised in Sweden focuses on ways of developing and promoting sustainable housing in rural areas in order to make rural living more attractive (see [event](#)).

One proposal involves introducing a European restoration land-trust to restore abandoned lands and buildings to a more natural state for the benefit of biodiversity and urban dwellers (see [idea](#)).



Creating change in attitudes and behaviours



Lastly, the idea of re-circulating second-hand elements and materials in the construction industry was also explored (see [idea](#)).



Figure 8 – Mind map ‘Climate change and the environment’ topic part 1

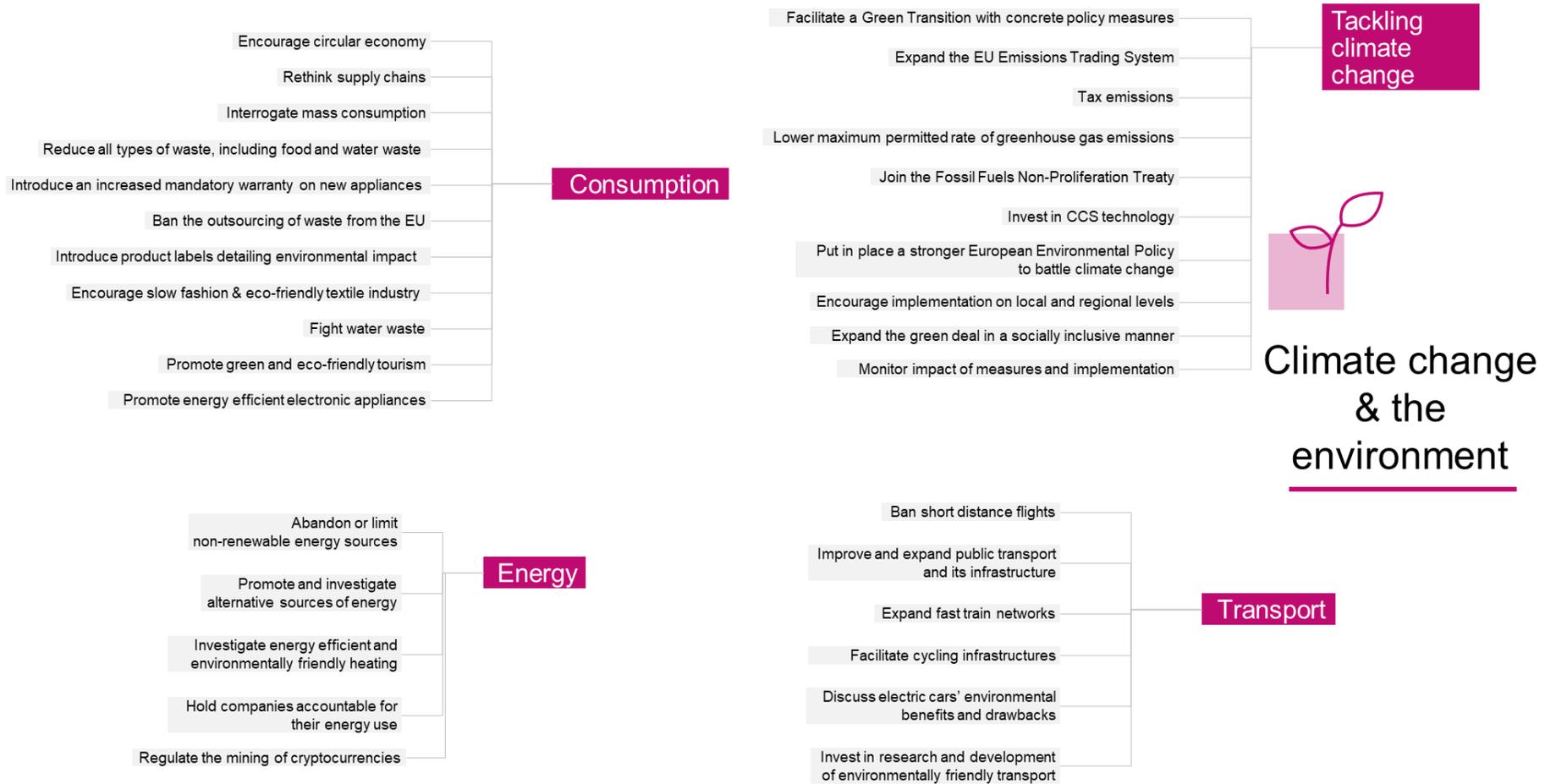
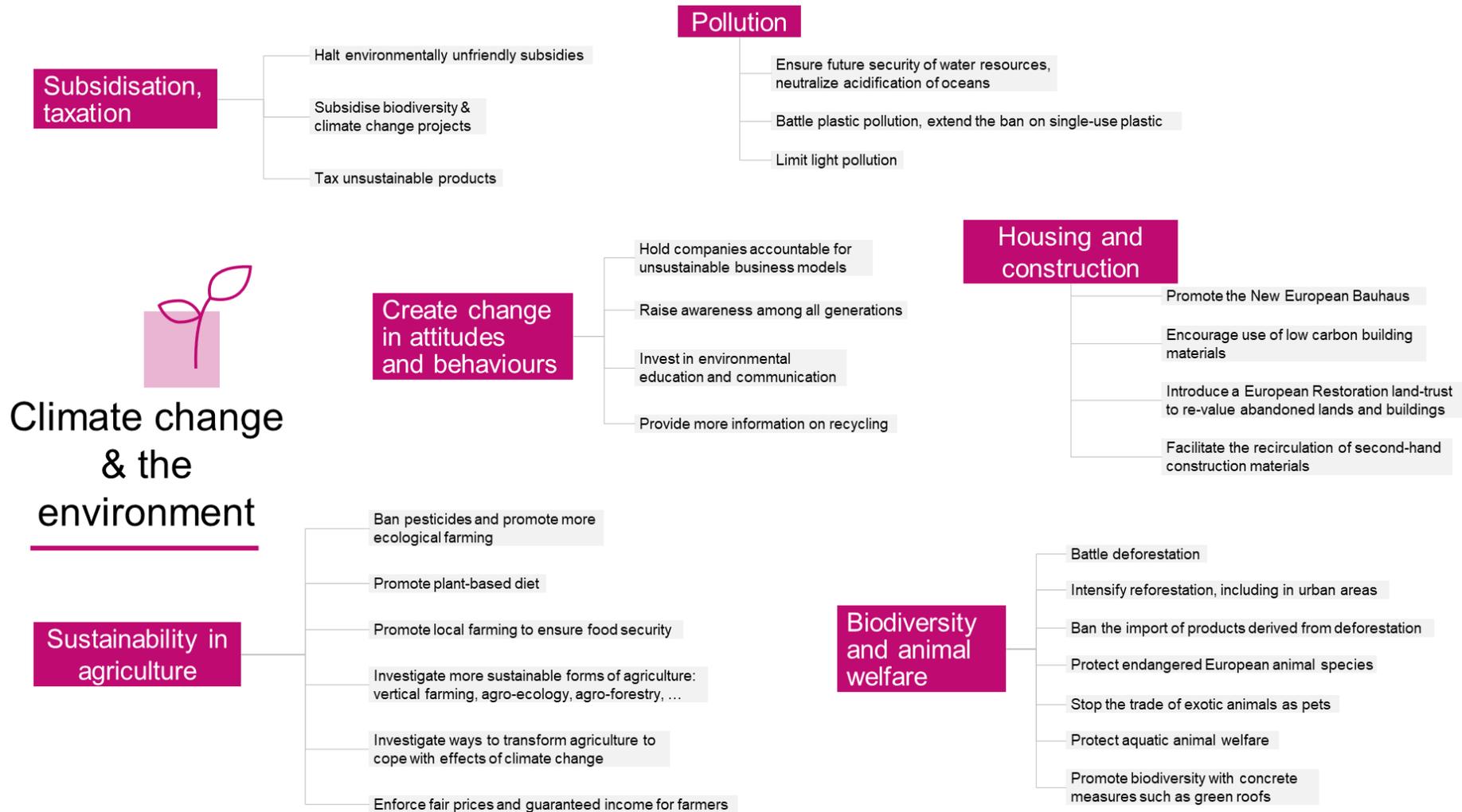




Figure 9 - Mind map 'Climate change and the environment' topic part 2





3. Health

Under the topic of Health contributors address a wide variety of themes. The most recurring themes advance the need to ensure equal access to high-quality healthcare and suggest greater harmonisation and integration at European level; this is also influenced by the experience of COVID-19 and its impact. Other ideas range from calls to invest more in mental health, health research to battle current health challenges, with a particular focus on the ageing populations, to calls for investing in preventative measures, including promoting healthy living and tackling those elements that are known to be causes of health issues such as air pollution. This topic has generated 2,120 contributions: 962 ideas, 943 comments and 215 events. The themes identified are listed according to level of occurrence. The main themes covered under this topic are:

- **Healthcare access for everyone**
- **Integrating EU healthcare systems**
- **Healthy lifestyles**
- **Health research**
- **Prevention, rather than intervention**
- **Healthy ageing and anti-ageing**
- **Approaches to medicine**
- **Responses to COVID-19**
- **Health in a digitalised era**
- **Cancer care**
- **Healthcare workers**
- **Sexual and reproductive health**



Events

Since the beginning of the conference, 215 events have been organised in EU Member States with regard to health, making it one of the topics with the fewest related events. Some events have targeted a specialised audience for specific technical subjects, whereas others have been accessible to a wider public.

Some of the events addressed the question of the future of health in Europe in broad terms, and were organised with the participation of the medical community (see example of an [event](#)). This was also the case for an event in Oviedo, Spain, which discussed ways of improving local health services, in this case with the attendance of a European Commissioner (see [event](#)).

One frequently explored theme is the creation of a European Health Union, highlighting the need for more efficient cooperation between Member States and institutions at the EU level. In a related event in Romania, participants highlighted the importance of solidarity and resilience of communication and information systems at the EU level (see [event](#)).

In many cases, debates on the future of health were linked to the ongoing pandemic. A subject which has often been linked to the pandemic is that of mental health. This was the topic of multiple events organised in Hungary (see example of [event](#)).

An Irish Roundtable equally discussed various health issues the EU is facing and proposed a number of ideas such as including creative arts therapies and well-being practices into future EU proposals on healthcare policy, fostering overall greater cross-border collaboration and allowing patients' ownership and control over their own health data, amongst others (see [event](#)).

An event on sexual and reproductive health took place in Poland (see example of [event](#)). In this event, participants discussed the need to assure access to contraception, and the right to interrupt pregnancy. They also supported the idea of a European-wide campaign on sexual health.

Other themes explored include the fight against cancer, with multiple initiatives to raise awareness about different types of cancers, and one event proposing to reinforce cross-country cooperation on

clinical trials regarding oncological pathologies (see [event](#)).



Healthcare access for everyone

One of the most recurring themes under this topic is the call for equal access to affordable and high-quality healthcare (see example of a highly endorsed [idea](#)).

Ideas put forward also support the introduction of a European medical insurance scheme (see example of [idea](#)). One highly endorsed idea in this topic equally calls on the EU to ensure for all EU residents to have equal access to affordable and high-quality health and social care services, delivered by resilient, well-staffed and well-equipped public systems with universal coverage (see [idea](#)). The idea of de-privatising the healthcare industry is also put forward as a way of making healthcare affordable for all (see example [idea](#)) and abolishing the double track of public versus private health access within the EU (see [idea](#)). Other ideas raise the issue of the cost of medicines and suggest ways to make them affordable for everyone by monitoring the pharmaceutical industry more (see example of [idea](#)).

When it comes to accessibility, a group of ideas proposes several solutions to make healthcare practically more accessible for patients with reduced mobility or located in remote areas (see example of [idea](#)). Development of remote health care takes the form of high-speed and low-barrier access to medical systems with health buses (see [idea](#)).

A last sub-theme relates to the equality aspect of access to healthcare. Contributors point out that certain patient groups often face specific societal obstacles. Some participants highlight the need to focus on paediatric care in particular for cancer patients (see example of [idea](#)), another idea is to increase targeted benefits for the disabled (see [idea](#)). One participant calls for greater access to dedicated healthcare services for transgender people (see [idea](#)).



In light of the current COVID-19 context and growing waiting lists for mental health services, a number of ideas evolve around the need for the EU to allocate funds to ensure access to mental health care for all, irrespective of income and age (see example of [idea](#)).

A German event titled 'Health without borders in an ageing population' discussed current and future challenges for the European health systems in the face of the two megatrends characterising health in our age: population ageing and the technological revolution. Part of the scope of this event was also to understand how to capitalise on technology to ensure comprehensive health coverage despite population ageing (see [event](#)). Participants identified three areas of action: the establishment of international training programmes, the overcoming of geographical boundaries in health research and care, and the improvement of working models (working time and content), and particularly workers' appreciation mechanisms.



Integrating EU healthcare systems

Among the themes of ideas proposed in connection with Health, that of integrating the EU's healthcare systems with increased cooperation among Member States is, overall, one of the most frequently mentioned themes (see example of [idea](#)). Participants on the platform advocate closer cooperation among Member States to strengthen European healthcare systems (see example of [event](#)) and ensure quality healthcare across the EU. Ideas include setting EU wide standards of care (see example of [idea](#) and [idea](#)), to pooling medical knowledge and capacities in a network (see example of [idea](#)) or by, for example, allowing intensivists to move freely and care for critically ill patients across the EU (see example of [idea](#)). There are also proposals on recognising carer qualifications across the EU, setting up a European hospital for rare diseases (see [idea](#)), improving legal regulations on transplantation to create a unified transplantation and organ donation system (see [idea](#)), and creating a European agency for the accreditation

of healthcare institutions (see [idea](#)). On the same note, contributors suggest recognising diseases across the EU to create a database with treatment methods and evaluations to produce an EU-wide disease regime (see example of [idea](#)). Another idea concerns the creation of health corridors between bordering countries (see example of [idea](#)). This would allow workers, patients and other health professionals to travel across national borders during future lockdowns, and thus ensuring access to healthcare.

Accordingly, discussions underline the need to increase the EU competences in public health matters (see example of an [idea](#) and an [event](#)), with many suggesting and endorsing the idea of a revision of the Treaty of Lisbon (see example of an [idea](#)). Others propose to create a European Health Authority (see [idea](#)), or to upgrade the role of the EMA, the European Medicines Agency (see [idea](#)). One contributor suggests creating a European healthcare ministry (see [idea](#)) or a real authority coordinating all EU health agencies to oversee the supply of medicines, from development to manufacturing (see [idea](#)). These suggestions are most often put forward in connection with the way in which Member States have dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic and the related shortages of medical equipment, the challenges of vaccine development and joint vaccine purchases. Accordingly, contributors highlight the need to increase or relocate production capacity of medicines and medical devices within the EU (see example of [idea](#)).

Some contributors call for an integrated strategy towards common EU health challenges, such as a European Strategy for mental health (see example of [idea](#)) and the prevention of suicide (see example of [idea](#)), or a common approach for rare diseases (see example of [idea](#)). Relatedly, in a national debate on health organised in Poland, participants proposed to change the Treaty on European Union so that mental health issues are regulated on the Union level (see [event](#)). Others, in the context of fighting and preventing cancer, do not consider it appropriate to extend the Union's competence in health as Member States are more in tune with the local situations (see [idea](#)). A set of ideas addresses the theme of end-of life care, advocating a unified European strategy for end-of-life treatments (see [idea](#)), while others focus on

improving palliative treatments for cancer patients (see [idea](#)).



Healthy lifestyles

Another often occurring theme is that of promoting healthy lifestyles. Many participants on the platform see the EU as an actor well qualified to promote a healthy lifestyle among Europeans. Several contributors consider important to promote vegan or vegetarian diets because of their health and environmental benefits (see example of [idea](#)). In this context, some suggest to increase taxes on meat and reduce VAT on healthy foods (see [idea](#)) while others strive for a taxation of unhealthy food products in general (see example of [idea](#)). One participant suggests subsidising healthy and organic food so that low-income people can also afford to buy it (see [idea](#)). Thinking forward about the consequences of a poor diet, another participant proposes to tackle inflammatory diseases associated with poor diets and obesity (see [idea](#)).

Support for promoting health literacy and education (see example of [idea](#) and [idea](#)) and instilling health-related practices from an early age, as a key factor to a healthy lifestyle, are also proposed on the platform (see [idea](#)). In this regard, the parameters used in the Nutri-score system were criticised by one participant (see [idea](#)). Next to education on healthy diets, education on mental health is particularly deemed important by contributors (see example of [idea](#)).

The correlation between food and health is further explored in multiple ideas raise the issue of increased food quality controls (see example of [idea](#)), or a ban of specific products such as artificial trans fats (see [idea](#)). The regulation of agricultural techniques impacting nutrition and health, such as antibiotics in intensive farming (see [idea](#)) are also mentioned. A specific event in Lithuania was dedicated to the development of a sustainable EU food policy and was attended by 280 participants (see [event](#)). These expressed the need for the EU to invest more in organic agriculture through specific supports for farmers. In general, participants underline the necessity to adopt a bottom-up approach to implement a sustainable agricultural

policy. Similar ideas are also raised under the topic of Climate change and the environment.

Several citizens point to the need to discourage tobacco consumption at European level, by increasing the price and reducing selling points to pharmacies (see example of an [idea](#)), while others advocate a more sustained fight against drugs at EU level (see [idea](#)). Alcohol is also mentioned among the addictions which the EU should be fighting (see example of [idea](#)), with one participant proposing to limit sales of both alcohol and tobacco to specialised shops (see [idea](#)).

A few contributors suggest the abolishing of seasonal time changes, which in their view would improve general health and safety (see example of [idea](#)).



Health research

Health research is a cross-cutting theme that attracts more engagement and touches upon multiple subjects. Regardless of the specific issue, contributors are generally highly supportive of increased investment in research, especially when it comes to investigating innovative biomedical technologies.

A number of contributors propose various ideas to develop a thriving health ecosystem in Europe, promoting and supporting health innovation and health research (see example of [idea](#)). Suggestions take various forms, such as the highly endorsed proposal to encourage research on the pathomechanisms of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis within Horizon Europe (see [idea](#)), or the call to support research on neurodegenerative diseases (see [idea](#)).

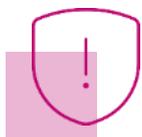
Regarding the institutional organisation of research at EU level, some contributors propose a transparent intellectual property incentive system (see [idea](#)), or the creation of a centralised European Health Research Institute to coordinate health research across national institutes and invest in pharmaceutical research (see [idea](#)). Other ideas include the creation of a European laboratory for infectious diseases (see [idea](#)). One citizen underlines the necessity for national research institutes to connect and also for the purchase,



production and supply of protective clothing and medicines to become more Europe-based (see [idea](#)). Another suggestion is the need for Europe to join forces with universities on research to develop a new antibiotic against super resistant bacteria (see example of an [idea](#)). Greater awareness on antibiotics usage and misuse is also advocated (see [idea](#)). Some citizens also call for a law to be introduced making it obligatory for pharmaceutical companies which are distributing vaccines to publish full data from the clinical trials for those vaccines to facilitate evaluations of their safety and effectiveness (see [idea](#)).

Gender biases are mentioned among the problems which hinder research from effectively studying illnesses which are more prevalent among women. One participant urges the EU to find a remedy to the lack of women-related data in research (see [idea](#)).

Some contributors, amongst which a highly endorsed idea in the topic of Other ideas, call for an action plan to transition to animal-free science (see [idea](#)).



Prevention, rather than intervention

As for the healthy lifestyle category, that of prevention is seen as an area where the EU can and should effectively act.

Several ideas put forward by citizens concern raising awareness about mental health and its consequences, such as burnout, stress, depression and anxiety, and call for a European Plan to tackle this issue (see example of [idea](#)), especially in view of the impact of COVID-19 (see example of [idea](#)). This issue is seen as particularly pressing among young people, leading to calls for a European Youth Platform for mental health (see [idea](#)), and greater investment in research (see [idea](#)) and in media campaigns on mental health awareness (see [idea](#)).

The influence of air pollution on citizens' health is also raised as a pressing issue (see [idea](#)), as is the need to tackle noise pollution by defining strict levels on

permitted noise emissions for car tires (see [idea](#)). In addition, there is a call to lower exposure to substances of very high concern, including PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) (see [idea](#)).

In line with prevention, one idea presents the advantages of epigenetic technologies to promote a new ecological humanism by enhancing the role of the environment and food to protect the health of individuals and the community (see [idea](#)).

The importance of prevention and health screening was also underlined in events (see [event](#)).

One participant stresses the need to set up a European action plan also around cardiovascular diseases (see [idea](#)).



Healthy ageing and anti-ageing

Some participants discuss ideas related to healthy ageing and anti-ageing from multiple perspectives.

In light of Europe's ageing populations, citizens highlight the importance of good health during the 'silver age'. To that end, the need for quality care services for the elderly is highlighted (see [idea](#)). One highly endorsed and commented idea promotes science-intensive healthy longevity research and technologies such as rejuvenation therapies and clinical trials. Implementing effective legal, budgetary, regulatory and institutional commitments, with the objective of increasing healthy life expectancy in the EU, is also judged key (see [idea](#)). Taking the idea even further, one citizen advances cryonics as an opportunity to delay care until a cure is found, by freezing terminally ill people (see [idea](#)).

Anti-ageing is also advocated with a view to boosting economic growth, vis-à-vis the decrease in the working population (see [idea](#)).

One citizen raises the potential of rural areas as hubs of innovation for healthy ageing strategies, as these 'struggling areas' are generally more densely populated by elderly citizens and the quality of



healthcare is not as high as in urban areas, therefore requiring innovative solutions (see [idea](#)). A solution proposed by another contributor is the concept of assisted, multi-generational living (see [idea](#)).

An event in Lithuania adopted an interesting age-related perspective, trying to understand young and older people different perceptions and attitudes towards health issues (see [event](#)). The two main takeaways from the event were, on one side, the importance of informational campaigns and lifelong learning about health matters, and, on the other, the key role of families and mutual support in facing health issues.

Approaches to medicine



Participants on the platforms sometimes differ in their views on the best approach to medicine. Although the discussion about medical approaches is usually confined to a few participants, some issues tend to reach a wider audience. That is the case for end-of-life treatments. A contributor calls for greater data collection on end-of-life choices and for the recognition of the living will in the whole of the European Union (see [idea](#)).

One of the ideas addressing the theme of end-of life care focuses on the improvement of palliative treatment for cancer patients (see [idea](#)).

Beyond support for end-of-life legislation, another commonly discussed subject is that of the decriminalisation of light drugs for medical scopes. In particular, several citizens call for cannabis to be decriminalised for medicinal and therapeutic purposes (see [idea](#) and [idea](#)).

The idea of integrating natural remedies in medicine, such as phytotherapy, homeopathy, etc. to complement allopathic medicine is widely discussed on the platform (see example of an [idea](#)). Moreover, the need to adopt more holistic approaches to medicine is equally expressed (see example of [idea](#)). In this regard, contributors also suggest that non-

medicinal interventions can demonstrably benefit the health and autonomy of patients (see example of an [idea](#)).

Other participants stress the importance of practising evidence-based medicine and ensuring access to scientific information to fight fake news in health (see example of [idea](#)).



Responses to COVID-19

The pandemic has certainly prompted interest and concerns about health. This subject is mentioned in many of the ideas published on the platform. The lack of healthcare resources, whether human resources in hospitals, masks, or vaccines, has generated a public debate about the necessity for the EU to be strategically autonomous in the area of healthcare. One more endorsed idea relates to autonomy in the production of essential medicines (see [idea](#)).

The effects of COVID-19 are widely discussed by participants who, overall, feel that there is a need to restore rational and scientific credibility and confidence in medicine and politics vis-à-vis the widespread dissemination of misconceptions and fake news during the pandemic. When discussing COVID-19 related measures, citizens on the platform agree that any COVID-19 measures in the EU should be implemented in an evidence-based manner, in order to achieve a cost-benefit analysis that is as realistic as possible (see [idea](#)). In particular, one participant warns against neglecting or delaying the care of patients with other illnesses and diseases, vis-à-vis the restructuring of medical facilities to take account of Covid patients (see [idea](#)). In line with this, citizens advocate increasing medical staff capacities (see example of an [idea](#)).

Further ideas highlight the need to develop inclusive strategies to deal with future pandemics at EU level, protecting the rights of people with a disability (see [idea](#)). One suggestion put forward is to carry out research on the impact of COVID-19 measures on residents and staff of homes for the elderly in the different EU countries, in order to have first-hand



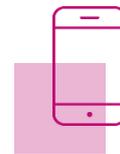
accounts of the experiences of elderly people with COVID-19 measures (see [idea](#)). Furthermore, one citizen calls for an investigation into the collateral damage and hidden effects of the pandemic (see [idea](#)).

Several participants call for enhanced mental health support to deal with the social and economic consequences of the pandemic, especially among young people (see example of an [idea](#) and [idea](#)). A number of events have also revolved around this theme, such as the question of the future of European public health after the corona crisis (see [event](#)).

Debates on the vaccination programme reveal conflicting views, ranging from the idea that vaccination should be mandatory for everyone (see example of [idea](#)), to suggesting that citizens should be free to choose (see example of [idea](#)). Another contributor argues that vaccines should not be mandatory for young people and that the EU should not 'blackmail' them by enabling 'facilitated' transnational travel in exchange for vaccination, and that if PCR tests are required they should be provided for free (see [idea](#)). It is also proposed that EU Member States should agree to recognise the relevant WHO standards and national documents certifying the level of antibodies (or vaccine/refreshment) (see [idea](#)). The green pass certificate is also widely discussed, pitching those who call for its abolition (see example of [idea](#)), fearing the rise of two classes of citizens (see [idea](#)) and suggesting that Europeans should defend the right to choose not to be vaccinated (see [idea](#)) against those who support such a health pass and obligatory vaccination as part of a collective effort to defeat the virus and ensure the viability of healthcare systems (see example of an [idea](#)). One contribution addresses the procedures relating to vaccine purchases at EU level, calling for greater disclosure and transparency with respect to the contracts with the pharmaceutical companies (see [idea](#)).

Several citizens call for greater solidarity and the establishment of a global partnership and funding to fight and eradicate diseases globally and suggest that Europe can be the world leader in fighting and overcoming pandemics, cancer and heart disease (see [idea](#)). One citizen suggests that the European Commission, in cooperation with World Health Organisation, should promote an international

agreement to enable the worldwide production and distribution of medicines in the context of pandemics (see [idea](#)) and another contribution underlines the need to vaccinate the world to prevent the rise of new strains (see [idea](#)). At the same time, contributors propose that measures should be taken to safeguard the patents of companies and suggest that the European Commission could play a significant role as mediator and ambassador (see [idea](#)).



Health in a digitalised era

The contribution of technologies to healthcare is extensively discussed by contributors on the platform, including the negative impacts of digitalisation on human health which represent for many the dark side of the digital revolution.

A group of citizens has discussed the opportunities and health threats relating to increased digitalisation in recent decades. Several ideas see digitalisation, compatibility and integration of European eHealth systems as a way of providing citizens with interoperable health records across the EU (see example of an [idea](#)). The use of Artificial Intelligence and the key role of data are generally underlined by participants (see example of [idea](#)). However, some contributors are cautious and emphasise the vulnerability of such sensitive data and the need to limit both nationally and Europe-wide the size of the healthcare data sets (see [idea](#)). As an example, one citizen calls for the prohibition of national genome databases because of the high risk of violating privacy rights (see [idea](#)).

On a different note, digital addiction is more discussed and an EU action plan against digital addiction is suggested (see [idea](#)), with some contributors suggesting that training should be introduced in schools, as well as information campaigns for adults to limit digital interaction. The issue of digital addiction, and addiction to videogames specifically was also identified (see [event](#)), with ideas such as online self-help interfaces put forward. Another idea suggests prioritising funding for research into exercise and in



relation to eHealth points to digital solutions that help citizens to remain physically active, thereby combatting a diverse range of chronic conditions that are due to inactivity (see [idea](#)).



Cancer care

A subject that is frequently mentioned on the platform, especially in relation to prevention, but also to its social and psychological consequences, is that of cancer (see example of [idea](#)). Here too, participants suggest a pooling of resources to fight cancer across the EU (see example of [idea](#)).

Contributors raise the need for concerted efforts for early diagnostics, such as screening, which the EU is requested to support (see example of [idea](#) and [idea](#)).

Related to cancer prevention, one idea suggests banning sunbeds to prevent the risk of developing skin cancer (see [idea](#)), while another contributor highlights the importance of cancer prevention in rural areas, often barely reached by cancer prevention campaigns (see [idea](#)). Some participants underline the obstacle of gender stereotypes and stigma in promoting a healthy lifestyle and prevention practices among men. They want the EU to develop targeted awareness campaigns, particularly on prostate cancer prevention (see [idea](#)).



Healthcare workers

The topic of working conditions in the healthcare sector has been raised by participants in relation not only to health but also to migration and gender (see, for example, the Migration chapter). Participants have underlined the contribution of women working in the healthcare sector and the need to support them by investing in leadership and upscaling programs (see [idea](#)).

Ideas concerning healthcare workers highlight the negative working conditions affecting this sector (see example of [idea](#)), generally demanding an improvement of salaries and working conditions (see [idea](#)).

The pandemic also contributed to highlighting healthcare workers' key societal contribution, sometimes generating wider debates about the nature of current healthcare systems, and the role of private actors in this sector, including the impact of privatizations on working conditions (see [idea](#)).

According to one idea, a European Year of Volunteers would be a fitting tribute to the efforts and impact of volunteers during the COVID-19 pandemic (see [idea](#)).



Sexual and reproductive health

The call to ensure access to affordable and accessible contraception for all women is discussed in ideas and events (see [event](#)). Some ideas propose that free menstrual items should be made available in public spaces to combat so-called 'period poverty' (see example of an [idea](#)). Other proposals suggest the reduction or abolishment of taxes on female health products such as sanitary pads (see [idea](#)). In addition, the need for more research into female reproductive health and the development of less invasive female and male contraceptives is raised (see [idea](#)), as well as making the morning-after pill available in every country without prescription. Views against a right to abortion are equally recorded on the platform (see [idea](#)).

Contributions discuss the need for promoting sexual education either by means of a pan-European approach, sexual health campaigns or by supporting non-governmental institutions who are active in this regard (see example of [idea](#)).

An event in Berlin discussed the future perspectives, but especially the ethical issues related to in-vitro fertilisation (see [event](#)). One proposal suggests instituting EU sponsored and promoted sexual health



clinics (see [idea](#)), while another emphasises the importance of the fight against HIV (see [idea](#)).



Figure 10 – Mind map ‘Health’ topic part 1

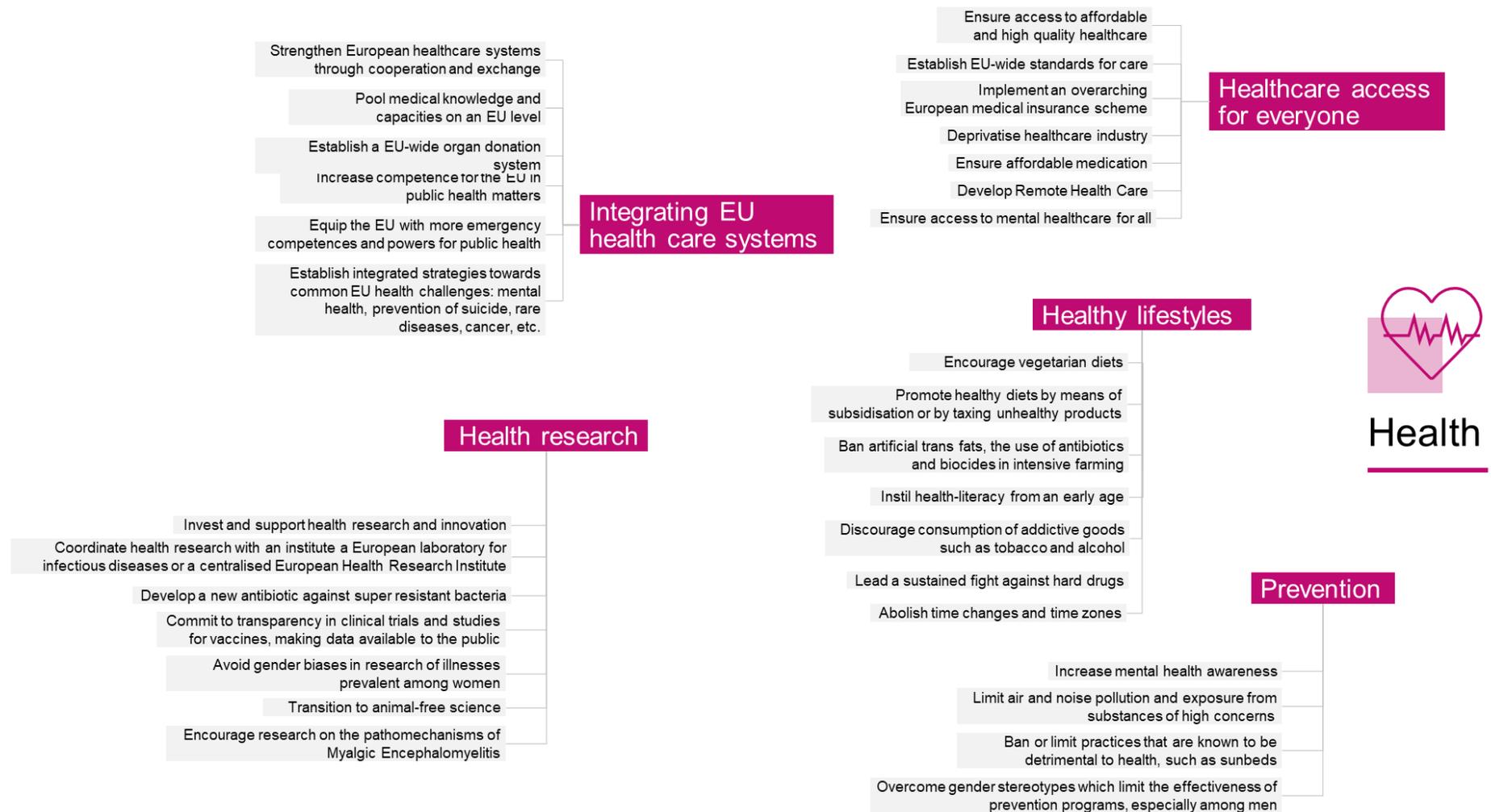
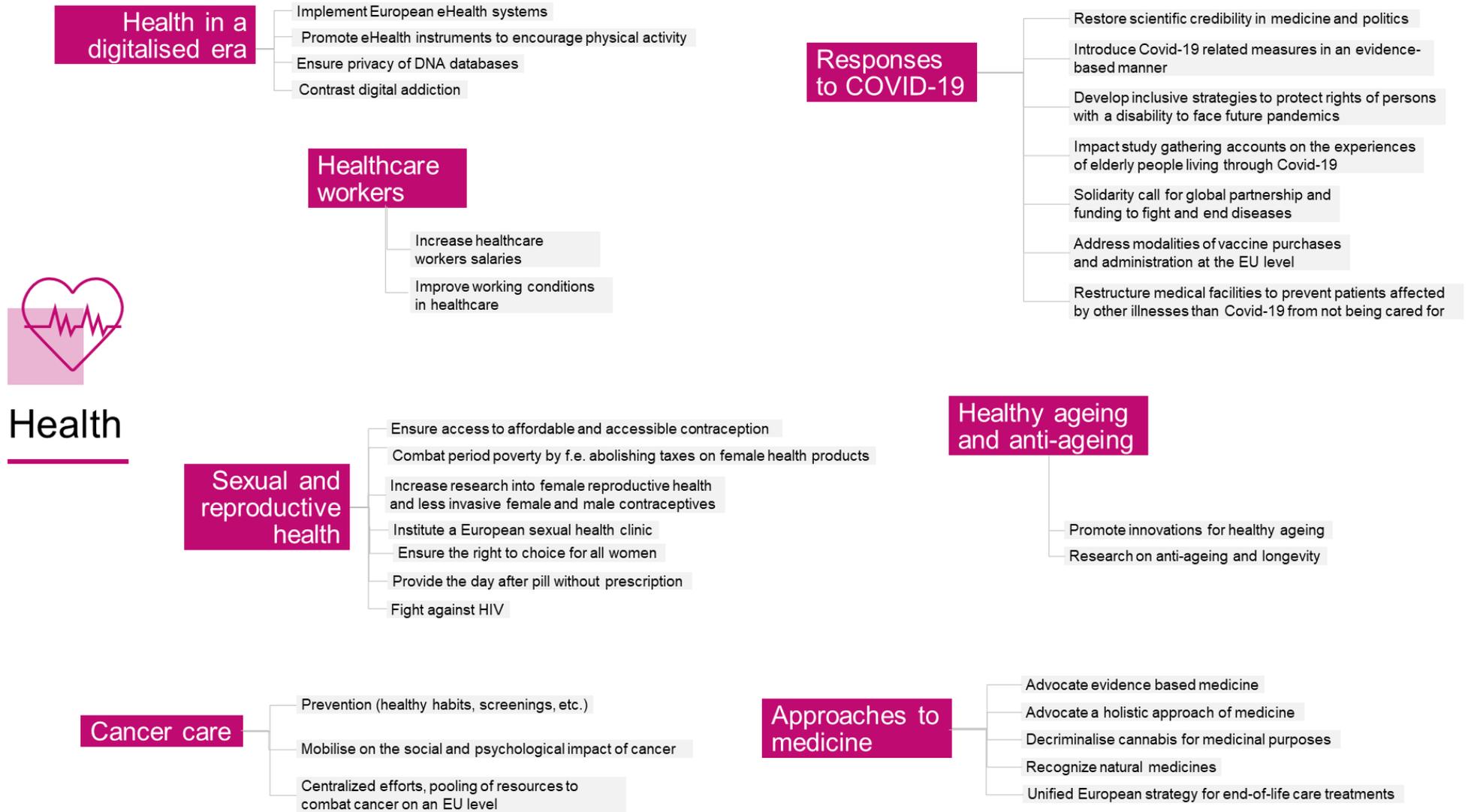




Figure 11 – Mind map ‘Health’ topic part 2





4. A stronger economy, social justice and jobs

The topic of A stronger economy, social justice and jobs has received a total of 1,867 ideas, 2,037 comments and 573 events up to 20 February 2022. Contributors stress the importance of the EU becoming more inclusive and socially fair, especially in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and point to several perceived related challenges, such as a lack of support for young Europeans and lack of collaboration among the Member States. One of the most frequently suggested mechanisms to make Europe more inclusive and socially fair is guaranteeing an Unconditional Basic Income throughout the EU. Additionally, contributors make various suggestions to

drive economic growth in the EU by introducing economic policies, further deepening the Single European Market, focusing on innovation and promoting and supporting SMEs and strategic industries. Additionally, contributors believe that the green and digital transitions offer opportunities to upskill European workers and adapt to the changing labour market, for the European economy to be competitive and more self-reliant. The various ideas can be grouped according to the following themes:

- **More inclusive, socially just Europe**
- **Economic recovery**



- **Innovation – boosting growth**
- **Social protection and social security**
- **Taxation for a fair economy**
- **Further strengthening the European Single Market**
- **Boost jobs**
- **Challenging the current economic model**
- **Consumer rights and protection**

A cross-border hackathon on job mobility, cross-border cooperation, cohesion and resilience took place, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic (see [event](#)). Another hackathon was organised in Luxembourg with young entrepreneurs discussing their vision for the future, with some of the key messages being to invest in digitalisation and digital skills, women's entrepreneurship and promote a sustainable development and support companies which positively impact our societies (see [event](#)).

Events

Several participatory events have been organised to enable citizens to express their opinions on the EU and their concerns for the future. For example, in Italy a youth workshop on the future of Europe gathered a number of ideas and proposals related to ensuring adequate working conditions, to create quality jobs, and proposals to combat all forms of discrimination, poverty and social exclusion (see [event](#)). Similarly, a national event of the CoFE in Portugal debated on how to create a more cohesive and social Europe through “deep changes” (see [event](#)). The conference “Bulgarian Voices for Europe” explored issues the tourism industry faces, both nationally and on European level (see [event](#)). Several events, such as a participatory workshop, were held on sustainable tourism and preservation and valorisation of local cultural heritage (see example of an [event](#)).

A group of civil society professionals were involved in a discussion on economic cooperation and prospects for clusters to shorten the journey between global value chains, production and use (see [event](#)).

The European Anti-Poverty Network organized an event to discuss their position paper outlining seven key priorities to ensure that the EU plays a strong role in tackling the root causes of poverty and inequality, with amongst others a call to put the creation of a more social Europe at the heart of all EU policy and ensuring greater protection of human rights and equality (see [event](#)).

A student workshop in Poland discussed the feasibility of a minimum wage at EU level. The students formulated a number of suggestions ranging from provision of high-quality healthcare EU-wide to cross-border cooperation next to the introduction of a minimum wage in certain professions (see [event](#)). An event in Denmark also discussed whether the EU should set a minimum wage (see [event](#)).



More inclusive, socially just Europe

The quest to build an inclusive and socially just economy in Europe has recorded the most ideas under this topic. This theme tackles the objective of strengthening social cohesion, as a means of achieving a strong economy (see [idea](#)). A large strand of ideas under this theme generally call for an expansion of the European Pillar of Social Rights (see example of a highly endorsed [idea](#)) and for a unified EU approach to social security, ranging from parenting and the family to the right to accessible housing and pension policies (see example of [event](#)). Other contributors discuss the European Pillar of Social Rights as a compass to achieve a social Europe and call for establishing a minimum target in the areas of employment, poverty reduction and education and skills (see [idea](#)). On the other hand, some contributors maintain that labour law, social welfare and pension systems should remain under each Member State's competence (see [idea](#)).

Several contributors on the platform call for a more socially just Europe that could be achieved, for example, by developing a social equality measurement index (see example of [idea](#)).

One of the more discussed sub-themes under this theme is the need to develop policies at an institutional level to achieve gender equality, as well as on a cultural and educational level (see example of an [idea](#)). One suggestion is to establish gender quotas for executive positions in firms (see [idea](#)). Specifically, there are ideas proposing policies for equality concern decisions for parental leave (see [idea](#)) and equal



employment opportunities (see [idea](#)). In line with this, a panel discussion tackled the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in the business environment, wage inequalities, funding opportunities and highlighted examples of good practices at local and national level (see [event](#) and [event](#)). Considerations of women's employment precariousness during COVID-19 were also raised (see [idea](#) and [idea](#)).

Further ideas include, for example, a call to enforce gender equality in the fields of architecture and civil engineering (see [idea](#)). One idea recorded on the platform advocates the adoption of the Equal Treatment Directive to ensure equal treatment in all spheres of life (see [idea](#)). Related ideas concern measures against sexual assault and domestic violence, with calls, in particular, for initiatives to support victims, for instance through an app (see [idea](#)).

Another sub-theme which saw promoting a more inclusive Europe, with a high number of contributors, discusses the need to facilitate the inclusion of people with disabilities, for example by extending the validity of national disability cards across the EU (see [idea](#)) and through improved accessibility of touristic areas (see [idea](#) and [event](#)). There is also support for the creation of a social network for people with disabilities (see [idea](#)). Furthermore, some ideas focus on town planning, suggesting to make public spaces conducive to intergenerational exchanges, through parks, cultural centres, etc (see example of an [idea](#)). This was also one of several ideas put forward in a Spanish event which encouraged citizens to share their views on how they would improve their city if they were the mayor (see [event](#)).

Similarly, an idea advocates sustainable urbanist principles to put cities with a good quality of life at the heart of a resilient and socially just European economy, including promoting local businesses and local economies, access to public transport, good air quality, etc (see [idea](#) and [idea](#)).

There is support for the need to help people living below the poverty threshold and the need to reduce inequalities (see example of [idea](#)). A couple of ideas also highlight the need for greater effort to tackle homelessness (see example of an [idea](#)) and develop integration strategies for Roma minorities (see [event](#)

and [event](#)), with also some more sceptical views expressed (see [idea](#)).

Several ideas discuss the need to institute the right to disconnect (see examples of [idea](#) and [idea](#)).

A further idea advocates increasing the validity of blue cards for third country nationals after their initial employment has been terminated (see [idea](#)).



Economic recovery

Economic recovery is one of the themes which has recorded the most engagement. Participants on the platform shared their views on the need to boost the internal market to increase its competitiveness and incentivise innovation, as a path to recovery (see [idea](#)). In tandem with this, a number of participants support the idea of a renewed social contract for Europe for a fair recovery (see [idea](#)). Moreover, to achieve a European social market economy, a citizen encourages strengthening social dialogue and collective bargaining (see [idea](#)).

A pool of comments and ideas on the platform expresses concern about rising public debt in the EU (see example of an [idea](#) and [event](#)): discussing the role of the European Central Bank (ECB), calling for a review of the Stability and Growth Pact rules (see [idea](#)), legislation on current account imbalances amongst others (see example of [idea](#)), and more generally, for the ECB mandate to be extended and strengthened (see [idea](#) and [idea](#)).

A main focus of discussion revolved around the EU Recovery Plan, where contributors highlighted the solidarity challenge that is shared among EU countries and discussed the challenges to activate funds (see example of an [idea](#) and [event](#)). At the same time, contributors underline the need for rigorousness, efficiency and transparency in the implementation of recovery plans (see example of an [idea](#)).

Ideas revolving around the promotion of local consumption and production, with SMEs as the growth engine, are frequently put forward by contributors and are viewed as pivotal to the EU's economic recovery. For this reason, citizens highlight the need to eliminate



bureaucratic obstacles for businesses (see example of an [idea](#) and [event](#)) and simplify bureaucratic procedures for foreign start-ups (see [idea](#)). Participants also suggest that EU Funds should also be targeted to SMEs (see example of an [idea](#)). In line with the broad trend within this theme, there are many calls to increase production of goods within the EU, rather than importing (see [idea](#) and [idea](#)). A contributor suggests to indicate the origin of products sold online to promote more local consumption (see [idea](#)).

In connection with recovery strategies, cohesion is highlighted as an essential value, in conjunction with online social rights and addressing youth employment needs (see [event](#)). For instance, investing in future generations is also presented as a strategy to relaunch the economy, following the COVID-19 crisis (see [idea](#)).

In the same vein, with regard to COVID-19, contributors discuss the need for financing future possible pandemic preparedness measures (see example of [idea](#)). In line with this, one idea addresses the understaffing of healthcare professionals in Europe (see [idea](#)). Additionally, contributors stress the importance of allocating public funds to support small producers and traders to compensate them for all the losses due to closures during the pandemic (see [idea](#)).



Innovation – boosting growth

A large number of entries under this topic pointed to innovation as a fundamental asset for the European economy. Contributors suggest boosting growth via investments in high-tech research, skills, knowledge and expertise (artificial intelligence, blockchain, nanotechnology, energy storage, lab-grown meat, etc.). Some ideas discuss a shift in competition from minimising costs to maximising knowledge, opening opportunities for the European knowledge economy to establish itself (see [idea](#) and [idea](#)). Additionally, several ideas identify the need for technological independence, for example, by developing the EU's hardware manufacturing capacity and reducing its industrial and commercial dependency on external countries (see example of an [idea](#)).

The most recurrent ideas within this theme address the need to support small and medium-sized enterprises (see example of an [idea](#)) and to stimulate entrepreneurship (see [idea](#)). In fact, funding start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is generally perceived as an important innovation driver (see example of [idea](#)). In practice, contributors propose to support SMEs via, for example, an EU fund providing starter capital for SMEs (see [idea](#)), or an online commerce platform dedicated to European SMEs (see [idea](#)). Another participant points to the case of China's development through capillary hubs of innovation and growth, combined with favourable administrative and fiscal regulations, which encouraged investment and the rise of start-ups. The participant calls for a rethink of European policies in light of such examples (see [idea](#)). Moreover, an idea suggests granting favourable taxation to start-ups in cutting edge technology sectors (see [idea](#)).

A robust strand of contributions also highlights the opportunity to establish businesses in small European villages and border areas (see example of an [idea](#) and [event](#)), also taking opportunity of teleworking (see [idea](#)). Several ideas argue in favour of decentralisation and enhanced local governance (see [idea](#) and [event](#)), also in view of diminishing regional territorial disparities and the brain drain many regions face (see [event](#)). In a similar light, an [event](#) on how to retain youth in rural and smaller towns was held. On a similar note, several events discussed opportunities to valorise local development of territories to promote sustainable tourism (see [event](#) and [event](#)).

Investments in research and education are seen as critically important (see [idea](#) and [event](#)), with support for knowledge sharing via an open network of laboratories or a European Infrastructure Agency (see [idea](#)). A largely endorsed idea calls for the EU to live up to its promise of dedicating 3% of the GDP to research and innovation (see [idea](#)). Another suggestion discusses a kind of Spotify for science, an accessible database containing 3D printing models (see [idea](#)), e-learning materials and educational programmes collecting international good practices for professional education (see [idea](#)). In connection with research, one of the suggestions is to facilitate patents via a patent fund (see [idea](#)). There are also calls to set up a European High Authority for Health which should encourage public and private research in health (see



[idea](#)). Moreover, to encourage innovation, one citizen argues in favour of supporting innovation through greater freedom in standardisation to reduce legal liability vis-à-vis innovative approaches offering alternative solutions (see [idea](#)). There are numerous proposals to promote research and innovation to foment the development of key enabling technologies in Europe (see [idea](#)).

Other ideas reveal that the digital economy is seen as a prerequisite to innovation and growth, with discussions on cryptocurrency (see example of [idea](#)) and local digital currencies that would be parallel to the euro (see example of [idea](#)). When it comes to cryptocurrency, contributors feel that regulation is needed to protect citizens (see example of [idea](#)).

Innovation and growth are also discussed in relation to the environment and climate change and the green transition (see [idea](#)). As such, ideas around climate neutrality goals and the leading role that the EU could play in establishing and investing in a (global) Green Economy are present across the platform (see example of [idea](#)). For instance, one citizen suggests complementing the green transition with the tracing of industrial policy plan goals, through quantitative indicators to monitor Europe's industrial strategy in global comparison (see [idea](#)). Moreover, a participant highlights opportunity to use artificial intelligence to improve energy efficiency for businesses (see [idea](#)).

Several ideas discuss a practical implementation of the Green Economy, for example, by investing in organic farming and farm-to-fork initiatives (see [idea](#)). Another participant suggests achieving a greener economy while tackling the issue of food security through smart agriculture technologies (see [idea](#)).

Nonetheless, one citizen explains that implementation of the Green Deal should ensure that EU citizens are not adversely affected by the new measures (see [idea](#)). From a business point of view, several ideas discuss measures to encourage and support businesses in achieving a green transition (see [event](#)), for example by setting clear and binding objectives for specific sectors (see [idea](#)), while, at the same time, preventing companies from adopting 'green washing' strategies (see [idea](#)).

Other suggestions refer to strengthening the aerospace industry as a way to spearhead innovative

technologies, for instance by increasing funding for ESA (see [idea](#) and [idea](#)).



Social protection and social security

The most recurring sub-theme, with several ideas being highly endorsed and commented on, concerns the unconditional basic income to ensure the ability of each person to participate in society (see [idea](#) and [idea](#)). Next to an unconditional basic income, there is a recurring call for measures to address (youth) unemployment such as enhanced skills programmes, (see example of [idea](#)) and introducing a European unemployment fund (see [idea](#)). The topic of youth unemployment is also addressed in other topics.

Similarly, related to this sub-theme is the group of ideas discussing income gaps in the EU, suggesting a limited salary difference within the same company (see example of [idea](#)), and a general call for more measures to counter and prevent poverty in Europe (see example of [idea](#)). A participant reiterates that the financing of social benefits must follow a strong economic basis (see [idea](#)).

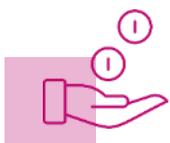
In light of ageing populations, some participants highlight the need to address long-term healthcare to ensure safety and dignity of the elderly (see [idea](#)), as well as tackling old age social isolation (see [idea](#)). They want to encourage intergenerational solidarity to prevent the elderly generation from being sidelined (see [idea](#)). One participant also calls for closing the digital divide among elder people, to ensure they possess the skills needed to complete public administration formalities, and access social and health resources, general information and cultural activities (see [idea](#)).

Related, many contributors discuss the need for coordinated retirement policies and pensions across EU Member States (see example of [idea](#)), with suggestions to set up a unified pension system for mobile citizens (see example of an [idea](#)). Pension reforms are also suggested by participants (see example of an [idea](#)).

Another set of ideas addresses the problem of child- and elderly poverty (see example of an [idea](#)). Female pensioners are more at risk of poverty, as they normally take on the role of caregivers and such years of work are not recognised in their pensions (see [idea](#)).

The right to accessible, affordable housing is another sub-theme related to social security discussed by contributors (see example of [idea](#)). A participant also calls for incentives to counter current demographic decline, through a tax credit measure to alleviate the financial burden for young low-income families (see [idea](#)). Others call more generally for the EU and its Member States to take account of the demographic transformation (see example of an [idea](#)) with suggestions to set up a body to this end (see [idea](#)).

Lastly, there is a group of more ideas relating to administrative processes, for instance, the introduction of a digitised (common EU) social security card and transferable social rights for mobile Europeans, as also discussed under other topics on the platform (see example of [idea](#)). On the same note, one contributor advocates a democratic digital euro and a Universal Basic Dividend, which could be funded by the yields the ECB earns on bonds and stocks acquired through its open-market operations, via digital licensing, or direct investment (see [idea](#)).



Taxation for a fair economy

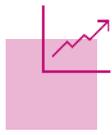
A significant theme involves addressing social, economic and environmental problems through fiscal rules.

A dominant pool of ideas advocates greater tax justice, fair taxation and combatting tax fraud. Suggestions include introducing measures to tackle tax avoidance, introducing a financial transaction tax (see [idea](#)). A large amount of participants submit ideas on avoiding 'social dumping' by harmonising fiscal rules and minimum wages across the Member States (see examples of [idea](#) and [idea](#)). One highly commented and endorsed idea concerns the introduction of a global or EU minimum tax to address tax havens (see

[idea](#)) and promoting a European convergence in direct taxation is also proposed (see [idea](#)). Another idea proposes that the methodology for the list of non-cooperative jurisdictions for tax purposes should be revised (see [idea](#)). Many contributions raise the question of how to tax large technology companies and digital corporations effectively (see example of an [idea](#) and [event](#)).

A substantial strand of ideas argues in favour of tax harmonisation and creating a fiscal union to ensure better wealth distribution across European societies (see example of an [idea](#)). In this respect, a variety of possible taxation measures for an inclusive and fair economy are highlighted on the digital platform (see example of an [idea](#)). The taxation subjects are currently as follows. Firstly, tax measures to promote fair competition between companies, such as either a common Value Added Tax (VAT) system for e-commerce or requiring companies to only pay VAT in their home countries (see [idea](#)). Secondly, taxation related to the environment and climate change, with amongst others, calls for an EU carbon border adjustment mechanism (see example of [idea](#)) or a sustainability tax (see example of [idea](#)). Common taxes, such as carbon footprint taxation, are also seen as a way of bridging inequalities among EU countries and improving the functioning of the single market (see [idea](#)). In this regard, an event in which the need for a reform of the EU budgetary rules applicable in the Member States in order to ensure a sustainable post-Covid recovery and to secure the public investments required for the green and digital transition was held (see [event](#)).

Thirdly, a call for consumer goods to be taxed based on the conditions of production (labour, raw materials, wages) to promote fair trade rather than free trade (see example of an [idea](#)). The last group of taxation measures falls under miscellaneous, including taxation to promote gender equality, with a call to allow the application of the zero or reduced VAT rate for female sanitary products (see [idea](#)).



Further strengthening the European Single Market

A number of contributions relates to the need to further strengthen the European Single Market, putting the focus on economic policies, considering that the Commission's focus has increasingly shifted towards other policy areas (see example of an [idea](#) and [event](#)). In fact many participants view the EU's single market for goods, services, capital and people as the EU's more valuable asset (see example of an [idea](#)).

Some contributions underline the value and importance of connecting local ecosystems across Europe, through which different forms of expertise and know-how have developed (see [idea](#)).

Further, many contributions point to the opportunity, in light of significant increases in container transport costs, for the EU to bring back multinational factories, such as microchip productions, which had previously relocated to Asian countries due to lower production costs (see [idea](#) and [idea](#)). One citizen suggests developing an economic policy to attract global companies to the EU as part of a European Enterprise policy, with homogenous taxation across the EU (see [idea](#)).

Overall, ideas reiterate that Member States should improve the enforcement of existing acquis in the economic realm, avoiding protectionism to make the single market more attractive and competitive (see example of [idea](#)). Other ideas advocate to increase the ECB's functions (see example of an [idea](#)), to limit lobbying interests in the EU (see example of an [idea](#)) and strengthening interconnectedness across borders. As well as improving connections to rural areas (see [idea](#)).

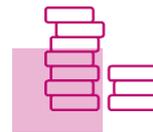
Common taxes, such as carbon footprint taxation and currency, are seen as a way to bridge inequalities among EU countries and improve the functioning of the single market (see [idea](#)). In this regard, an event in which the need for a reform of the EU budgetary rules applicable in the Member States in order to ensure a sustainable post-Covid recovery and to

secure the public investments required for the green and digital transition was held (see [event](#)).

A participant reiterates that internal market rules should be harmonized to increase functioning of cross-border trade. Moreover, prospects for growth and scaling up of SMEs should be assessed following the SME test, to ensure that regulations respond to the real needs of entrepreneurs and citizens (see [idea](#)).

A few ideas place the focus on tourism as a strategic sector for the growth of the European economy (see [idea](#)).

Finally, an idea sustains that adopting Esperanto as a European language would be economically beneficial (see [idea](#)).



Boost jobs

When discussing how to boost jobs, contributors identify a range of issues, from the need to upskill workers, to adapting to the changing labour market and the necessity to address youth unemployment and adapt to the conditions brought about by COVID-19.

Contributors highlight the importance of supporting young people, in particular, when it comes to access to the job market (see example of [event](#)). Youth unemployment is the most prominent issue within this theme (see example of an [idea](#)), with particular reference by contributors to the NEETs (see [idea](#)). Participants highlight how entry-level jobs are inaccessible for entry-level job-hunters, as they paradoxically require work experience (see [idea](#)). One idea suggests integrating some hard-skills into the academic curriculum to strengthen work-oriented skills (see [idea](#)). There is also an emphasis on the development of careers, with calls for programmes and measures to facilitate access to the EU job market, with internships across Member States and an online job-platform (see example of [idea](#)). For instance, the project Upskilling Pathways seeks to place opportunities for training and learning at the centre of the European Social Market (see [idea](#)).

On a similar note, suggestions submitted to the platform include adapting academic qualifications to the labour market, which in turn, would improve the employability of students (see [idea](#)). To address the shortage of skilled workers, and more generally, the shortage of skills for the digitisation of the labour market (see [idea](#)), one participant suggests facilitating the recognition of training acquired abroad (see [idea](#)). Another group of ideas, related to the theme of innovation, calls for the creation of jobs in line with the green and digital transitions (see example of [idea](#)).

On the other hand, participants also underline the need to provide more professional development opportunities in technical fields, where more practical skills are required (see [idea](#)). In fact, several participants stress the lack of vocational training and post-secondary learning and consequently the inability of companies to find skilled employees (see [idea](#)). For instance, one participant calls for the promotion of craft jobs as a means for young generations to rediscover fundamental values, rather than solely promoting jobs in the IT sector (see [idea](#)).

Increasing the mobility of workers in the EU is also seen as economically beneficial (see [idea](#)), which, however, is also discussed in light of giving rise to a brain drain in some countries (see [event](#)). The quest to generate decent jobs on the basis of meritocracy is advanced by a participant on the platform (see [idea](#)).

With regard to working conditions, participants advocate boosting teleworking and 'flexible working' to reduce commuting travel time for employees and office infrastructure fixed costs for employers (see [idea](#)), to reconcile family time, to reduce rural depopulation (see [idea](#)) and to cut harmful emissions through reduced traffic (see [idea](#)). Further suggestions include introducing a shorter working week (see example of [idea](#)), banning unpaid internships, mandatory overtime and precarious working contracts (see example of [idea](#)), or investing in childcare infrastructures to reconcile private and professional life.

Lastly, the idea of eliminating daylight saving time has been expanded with contributors discussing the economic and social benefits of eliminating the 'Daylight saving time' (DST) (see example of an [idea](#)).



Challenging the current economic model

Many ideas under this theme share the objective of reducing inequalities in the economies of the EU (see example of an [idea](#)). This is perceived to be crucial alongside the quest to increase societal balance through enhanced interregional cooperation (see [idea](#)).

Several ideas advocate to put in place a regulation on diversifying the sources of supply of raw materials and processed goods to European industry, with a view to promote the model of "European Capitalism" (see [idea](#) and [idea](#)).

Several contributions also highlight the importance of considering an economic model that looks beyond GDP, to work towards an inclusive and equitable European welfare (see example of an [idea](#) and [event](#) and [event](#)), with indicators to measure growth concepts beyond GDP (see [event](#)). On a similar note, one citizen argues that the regulatory framework of the single market should introduce greater incentives for companies to engage with society and the environment (see [idea](#) and [event](#)). At the same time, an idea delineates the need to consequently adapt monetary policy to the concepts of "environmental taxonomy" and "social taxonomy" (see [idea](#)). Third sector organisations advocate for a share of the NextGenerationEU package to be spent on social welfare and territorial cohesion (see [idea](#)).

One proposal suggests reporting how much different transport habits impact on the carbon footprint, to increase awareness and encourage citizens to choose the least polluting mode (see [idea](#) and [event](#)). Similarly, another participant suggests introducing a carbon credit card system for flights taken in the EU to regulate and limit air travel (see [idea](#)).

Within this theme, the current European economic system is discussed from a more ideological perspective. On the one hand, contributors propose building on capitalism and the free market, with more internal competition, reduced regulatory burden, fewer subsidies and excessive tax rates (see example of [idea](#)). A group of contributors call for the economy to



become more liberal. Their suggestions include in particular decreasing bureaucracy, withdrawing privileges from EU politicians and staff (see example of [idea](#)), lowering taxes for the lower and middle classes, supporting entrepreneurship and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, which in turn provide employment opportunities (see example of an [idea](#)).

As discussed earlier, in contrast, other participants strive towards a more human-centred economy and highlight the perceived shortcomings of the current economic model, such as the lack of transparency of working conditions and origins of goods throughout the production chains (see example of an [idea](#)).

Within this discussion, one idea focuses on the theory of degrowth, as a way to re-establish a new balance between human beings and nature vis-à-vis uncontrolled growth (see [idea](#)). Another participant proposes to take as reference the doughnut economic model (see [idea](#)). A few contributors support initiatives of the circular economy (see [idea](#) and [idea](#)). Further ideas on the circular economy are posted under the topic Climate change and the environment.

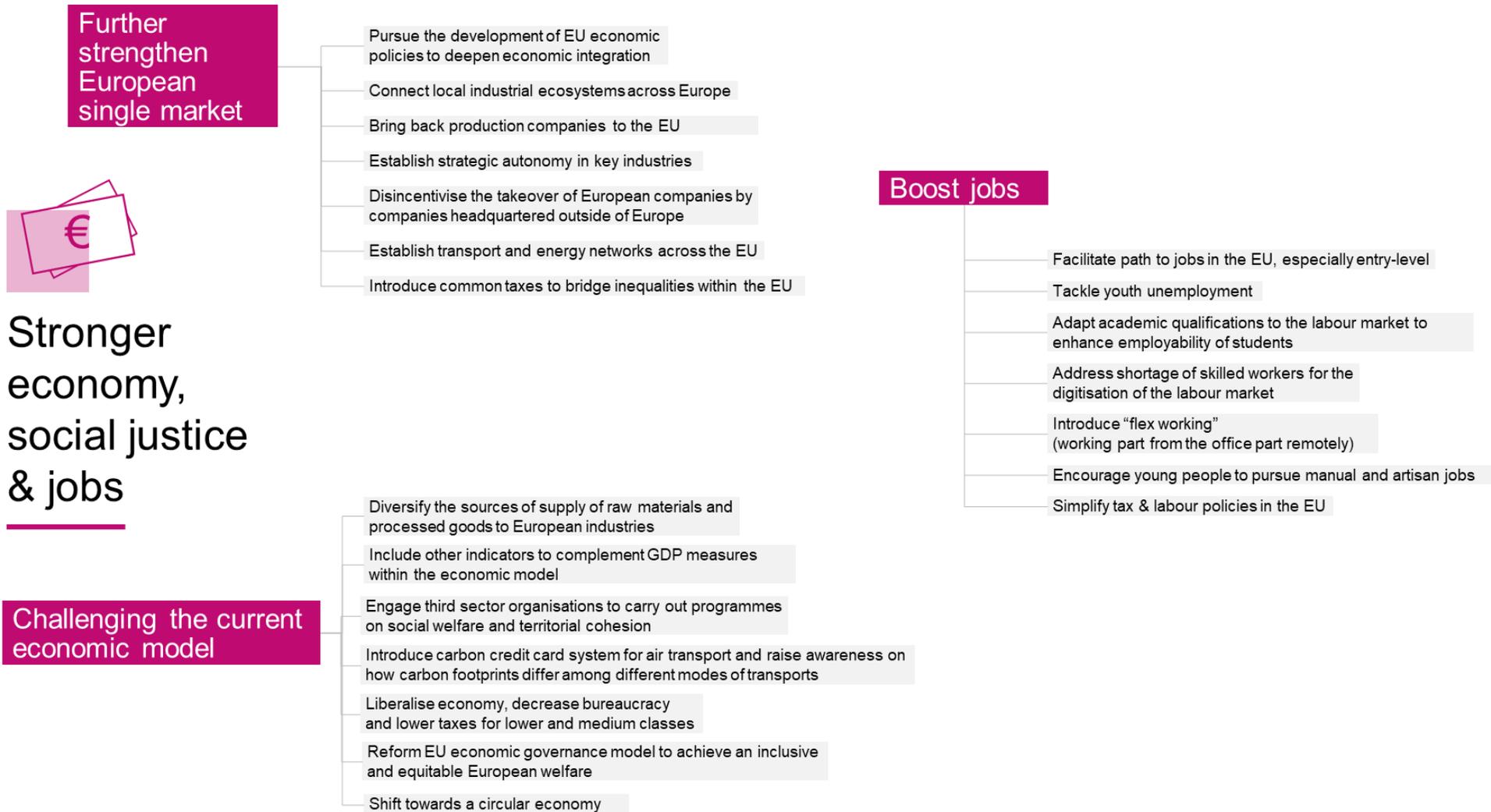


Figure 12 – Mind map ‘A stronger economy, social justice and jobs’ topic part 1





Figure 14 – Mind map ‘A stronger economy, social justice and jobs’ topic part 2





5. EU in the world

Ideas posted under the topic of EU in the world cover a variety of themes related to foreign and security policy, ranging from trade and various other aspects of soft power to defence. Overall, the most recurrent themes for contributors are those calling for a stronger presence of the EU in the global political arena: in its neighbourhood policy as well as in relations with, for instance, African, Pacific and Latin American countries. Contributors to the platform feel that the EU should be bolder in its exercise of both soft and hard power. Since the inception of the platform, this topic has generated an overall number of 3,361 contributions, i.e. 1,222 ideas, 1,696 comments and 443 events. The various ideas can be grouped according to the following themes:

- **Overall objectives of EU foreign policy**
- **Defence and armed forces**
- **Decision making**
- **Neighbourhood policy and relations with others**
- **Enlargement**
- **Trade Policies**



Events

The future of the EU in the World has been the general subject of discussion of many events organised under the banner of the Conference on the Future of Europe. A national debate on the role of the EU in foreign affairs was organised in Poland, gathering representatives from various social backgrounds (see [event](#)), while another event with a similar format in Germany specifically discussed issues related to European common defence, and the creation of a European common army (see [event](#)).

Multiple events have discussed the future enlargement of the European Union. However, whether the EU should pursue future enlargement remains a topic of debate. Support for enlargement to the Western Balkans has especially come from events organised in Hungary (see example of [event](#)), while a more nuanced discussion took place at an event in Slovenia, with speakers focusing on the reasons behind the slowdown of the enlargement process in the last decade (see [event](#)).

Some recent geopolitical developments have generated significant public attention, and events discussing those subjects have multiplied across the Union. That is the case for the American withdrawal from Afghanistan (see [event](#)), but also the role of the European Union within the current geopolitical map characterised by the rivalry between China and the US (see [event](#)). After the US presidential election, multiple events have discussed the state of American politics and the current relationship between the EU and the US (see example of [event](#)).

The tense relationship with Russia and the political situation in the Eastern European countries remained important topics of discussion during the events. An online initiative in solidarity with Belarusian students was organised by the Ukrainian NGO Centre for Civil Liberties (see [event](#)), while another online event purported to understand the growth of authoritarianism and anti-Europeanism in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe from the perspective of experts living in those regions (see [event](#)).

The topic of global trade and infrastructure has been dealt with during a policy dialogue event in The Hague (see [event](#)). More specifically, participants exchanged opinions about the “Global Gateway” initiative by the European Commission, a plan to boost global links in the digital, energy and transport sectors. Participants expressed the opinion that such plan should not be promoted solely as a response to China’s “Belt and Road Initiative”. Beyond analysing the potential pitfalls of the plan, and ways to avoid them, attendees also underlined its potential in reducing global trade’s carbon footprint.



Overall objectives of EU foreign policy

Many contributions under the EU in the world theme want the EU to reinforce its role as global actor and contribute to global multilateralism, as well as to defend democracy and use its soft power against the rise of authoritarianism around the world (see example of [idea](#)). Most of these ideas aspire to a more unified EU in the face of global challenges, like those represented by human rights violations and climate change (see example of [idea](#)).

Discussions about the EU’s role in the world have been especially marked by the Afghan and Ukrainian crises. Contributors have highlighted the importance of the geopolitical change provoked by the increasing withdrawal of the United States from foreign affairs and conflicts. Many contributors see the return to power of the Taliban as a failure for the West, and as a sign that it is time for the EU to assume its own role in foreign policy matters, independently of its strategic alliance with the US (see example of [idea](#)). This recurring call for a united approach on foreign policy has been the subject of several events (see example of [event](#)). Regarding the major crisis at the Ukrainian border with Russia, there are calls for the EU to help Ukraine (see example of [idea](#)) and to speak with one voice against Russia’s military threats, so not to repeat the mistakes of the past, when a divided EU left too much space to foreign powers, especially the US, in

handling military crises (see example of [idea](#)). In relation to the role of the US, regardless of their view on the Ukrainian crisis, some contributions reveal a sentiment of distrust towards the EU's main ally (see [idea](#)).

Contributors express the opinion that the EU's role is changing amidst rising concerns over the climate emergency, a shifting economic and geopolitical power balance, major challenges to multilateralism and the global battle against COVID-19 (see example of [event](#), see example of [idea](#)). Hence several contributors express the opinion that the EU should be bolder in its exercise of both soft and hard power (see example of [idea](#) and [idea](#)).

Concerning the defence of human rights, one of the most endorsed ideas within this topic proposes the need for a common foreign and security policy to ensure the safety of Europeans, while promoting democracy, human rights, the rule of law and environmental protection in its neighbourhood and globally (see [idea](#)). Another idea proposes enhancing human rights protection in the clauses of foreign trade agreements signed by the EU (see [idea](#)). Numerous ideas support a feminist EU foreign policy, both in the sense that the EU should strongly defend women's rights around the world (see example of [idea](#)), but also through an approach based on positive peace and cultural sensitivity (see [idea](#)).

Thus, contributors call for greater cooperation between Member States, and the need to cease competition between the Member States at international level (see [idea](#)). Related is a call for a common European arms export system with strict rules to ensure that weapons 'made in EU' are not fuelling conflicts around the world and leading to violations of human rights (see [idea](#)).

While most ideas call for a more united and integrated EU, thereby reinforcing the EU's role as a global power of law and justice open to interaction with various multilateral institutions, both at a global and regional level (see example of [idea](#) and [idea](#)), others want the EU to focus on its role as an economic actor, as initially envisaged. In this regard, they consider that the EU should not assume the role of a geopolitical actor but should rather maintain its primordial function of a common economic market. Participants consider that

since the EU is not a sovereign state it cannot exercise a political role as a global actor (see example of [idea](#)).



Defence and armed forces

A recurrent and much discussed sub-theme is the need to strengthen the EU's hard power (see example of [event](#)), both by increasing the EU budget for defence (see [idea](#)) and by strengthening the European defence industry in order to achieve strategic autonomy (see example of [idea](#)). Contributors also advocate the creation of a common European army (see example of [idea](#)), one of the most endorsed ideas under the topic, or for the integration of the Member States' armed forces at the EU level (see example of [idea](#)). Existing initiatives in favour of a common European military policy, such as the EU's Strategic Compass for security and defence, are acknowledged by some contributors. One of them, in particular, calls for more attention to be paid to the military's social dimension (i.e. working conditions within the armed forces, see [idea](#)). However, some contributors are more sceptical, if not totally opposed, towards the idea of a common European army. One of them demands not to pursue the idea of a European army, and asks to direct individual countries' military investment on NATO (see [idea](#)).

Contributors also suggest the creation of more specialised forces or institutions at EU level, such as a European National Guard to deploy in emergency situations, for example in the aftermath of natural disasters (see example of [idea](#)). Other participants also want to develop a European Intelligence Service (see example of [idea](#)). Some contributors also propose the establishment of a European Military Academy (see example of [idea](#)). Regarding military education, one participant also proposes the establishment of basic military training for European youth (see [idea](#)). For some contributors, the perceived decline of the EU-US alliance also entails increased cooperation and coordination in foreign policy between EU Member States (see example of [idea](#)).



Decision making

The EU's decision-making process is often seen as slow and quite ineffective when it comes to taking quick action in response to an immediate challenge. In order to overcome this problem, participants advance multiple ideas to reform of the EU's decision-making process.

Contributors consider that pivotal for the EU to act as one solid and united entity in the international political arena, in order to maintain and further strengthen its role. To achieve this, several contributions raise the need for a common foreign policy (see [idea](#)). The call to strengthen the EU's ability to play a role in foreign and security policy was also the topic in the Finnish public consultation Europe Forum, discussing Finland's current and future roles in Europe and the EU (see [event](#)).

Many contributions call for the rethinking of the unanimity rule. One strand of ideas stresses the fact that the current situation based on the unanimity rule allows a single Member State to block common foreign policy (see example of [idea](#) and [event](#)). This is considered problematic as it prevents the EU from having a credible, stable and strong voice in the world. Therefore, according to an idea expressed, the EU should move towards a system of an 'absolute' majority voting. One of the most endorsed ideas under this theme gives a detailed description of an absolute majority voting system for Member States, supported by a simple majority of Members of the European Parliament, for the EU to be able to take executive action and generate a real, credible foreign policy (see [idea](#)). Similar to the discussions within the topic of European Democracy, qualified majority voting is also presented as an alternative to the current unanimity rule (see example of [idea](#)).

A last sub-theme discusses the competences of the European Parliament. Some contributors feel that, although the European Parliament has supported the concept of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) from its inception and has sought to extend its scope, it still only has a peripheral role in EU foreign policy making. Therefore, they believe that it is crucial to allocate more foreign policy competences to the European Parliament (see example of [idea](#)).



Neighbourhood policy and relations with others

A sub-theme of ideas concern the diplomatic representation of the EU with, in broad terms, contributors calling for the EU institutions to represent and defend their interests in the world more visibly (see example of [idea](#)). In this context, they suggest that the embassies of the EU Member States should be replaced by a single EU embassy that would represent and unite all EU Member States. According to one participant, this could be achieved through a reform of the existing European Union External Action Service (EEAS, see [idea](#)). This could also mean single EU membership of all international institutions, such as the NATO (see example of [idea](#)), or one single and permanent representation in the UN Security Council (see [idea](#)). Other ideas include the creation of a common EU passport for all European citizens (see example of [idea](#)) and the systematic use of the European flag and the European anthem in the international context (see example of [idea](#)).

An event in Poland, and its related idea (see [event](#) and [idea](#)), reiterated the economic importance of trade relationships between the UK and the EU for both Poland and the whole EU, and that even after Brexit.

Contributions under this theme refer particularly to the EU's political relations with Russia and China (see example of [event](#)). Contributors advance the need to fundamentally rethink the EU's foreign policy with the implementation of a bolder approach in line with what was discussed in earlier themes. One participant, for example, claims that the EU should increase its maritime presence in the Indo-Pacific area (see [idea](#)). However, other contributors on the platform discuss the opinion that, when it comes to China, the EU should not only develop a more unified and tougher stance in its diplomatic relations given the highly divergent systems of values, but should also develop a European Union's Foreign Investment Strategy to counter China's influence globally and in particular in developing countries (see [idea](#)).

Concerning the relationship with Russia and the Eastern European countries, some participants in an event debating the relations between Germany and

the Baltic countries, called inter alia for the EU to support the opposition in Belarus (see [event](#)). One participant wants the EU to be more involved in political tensions occurring in neighbouring states such as Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, or even in its own Member States such as Cyprus (see [idea](#)). In this sense, this participant also expressed concern with the relationship between the EU and Turkey, and between the EU and Serbia. The EU is also encouraged to play a leading role in the peace-building process between Israel and Palestine (see example of [idea](#)).

As regards the EU's relations with extra-European countries, and particularly the African states, contributors express the opinion that there should be an enhanced partnership and reworked trade relations with Africa (see example of [event](#)). Other citizens call for stronger bilateral partnerships between individual Member States and African countries, also in order to address migration issues. This kind of ideas are reported in greater detail in the Migration chapter. There are also some calls to move away from maintaining the economic and political heritage of former colonial systems (see [idea](#)). Also in relation to the relationship with the African continent, one participant urges the EU to grant full recognition of Somaliland as a sovereign country (see [idea](#)). Some contributors call for a stronger partnership between the EU and other regional multilateral organisations, including the African Union, Mercosur and ASEAN (see example of [idea](#)).



Enlargement

A recurrent theme is that of EU enlargement. Ideas for continued enlargement, particularly to the Western Balkans, receive a relatively high number of endorsements by participants. One of the most endorsed contributions within this topic calls for a continued enlargement of the EU with the integration of the Western Balkan partners to ensure peace and stability in the region (see [idea](#)). Various events discussing issues related to EU enlargement and the Western Balkans have also been organised (see

example of [event](#)). In one youth event in Germany, young participants demanded greater involvement of the EU in the Western Balkans, including as a security actor (see [event](#)). A strongly pro-enlargement stance was adopted during a conference event in Hungary (see [event](#)), which was attended by multiple politicians and academics, who stressed the importance of the enlargement to the Western Balkans for the future of the European Union. Various contributions focus on the geopolitical aspect of EU enlargement (see example of [idea](#)), while others highlight that the prospects of EU accession are a driving force for economic reforms and the strengthening of the rule of law in countries seeking EU membership (see example of [idea](#)). Related to demands for the EU to enlarge to the Western Balkans, there is a call to fully recognise Kosovo (see example of [idea](#)). However, the idea of enlarging the EU to include Kosovo generates various comments that strongly oppose this perspective on various grounds. Another participant demands visa-free entry to the EU to people from Kosovo (see [idea](#)).

Although less frequently than those supporting enlargement, some participants expressed opposition to further EU enlargement, stressing the need to prioritise issues internal to the current Union (see example of [idea](#)). One contribution asks the EU to stop considering Turkey as a candidate country (see [idea](#)).

One respondent generally criticises the ambiguity displayed by the EU in its enlargement policy (see [idea](#)). According to her, this is generating frustration and instability in the candidate countries. Therefore, in her view, the EU needs to clarify its stance on enlargement once and for all.



Trade policies

Ideas related to trade and economic relations are less discussed by participants. However, the theme of strengthening trade relationships and agreements between the EU and other countries in the world is often mentioned among ideas calling for a stronger and active global EU.

A group of contributions within the topic EU in the world wants to enhance trade policies and reform trade agreements in line with EU values, whether with regard to respecting human rights or complying with environmental standards (see example of [idea](#)). A widely endorsed idea calls for a reform of EU trade and investment policy and a relaunch of global multilateralism, with at its core the creation of decent jobs and the protection of fundamental and human rights, including workers and trade union rights (see example of [idea](#)). In a German-speaking workshop, participants discussed the EU trade policy and its implications in Third World countries, particularly in relation to sectors characterised by poor working conditions, child labour and negative environmental impacts, such as the textile industry (see [event](#)).

For some contributors, the health and the climate crises have highlighted the limits of a highly globalised and interdependent European economy. The shortage of masks during the health crisis, the issues with global

supply chains following the pandemic, and the impact of global trade on the environment, have given rise to calls for re-industrialisation and increased local production (see [idea](#)). In this sense, many contributors call for increased coordination between the EU Member States when it comes to the management of supply chains risks (see example of [idea](#)). Another participant proposes the establishment of dedicated institution to anticipate and counter supply shortages of strategic resources. This could take the form of a European observatory (see [idea](#)).



Figure 14 – Mind map ‘EU in the world’ topic part 1

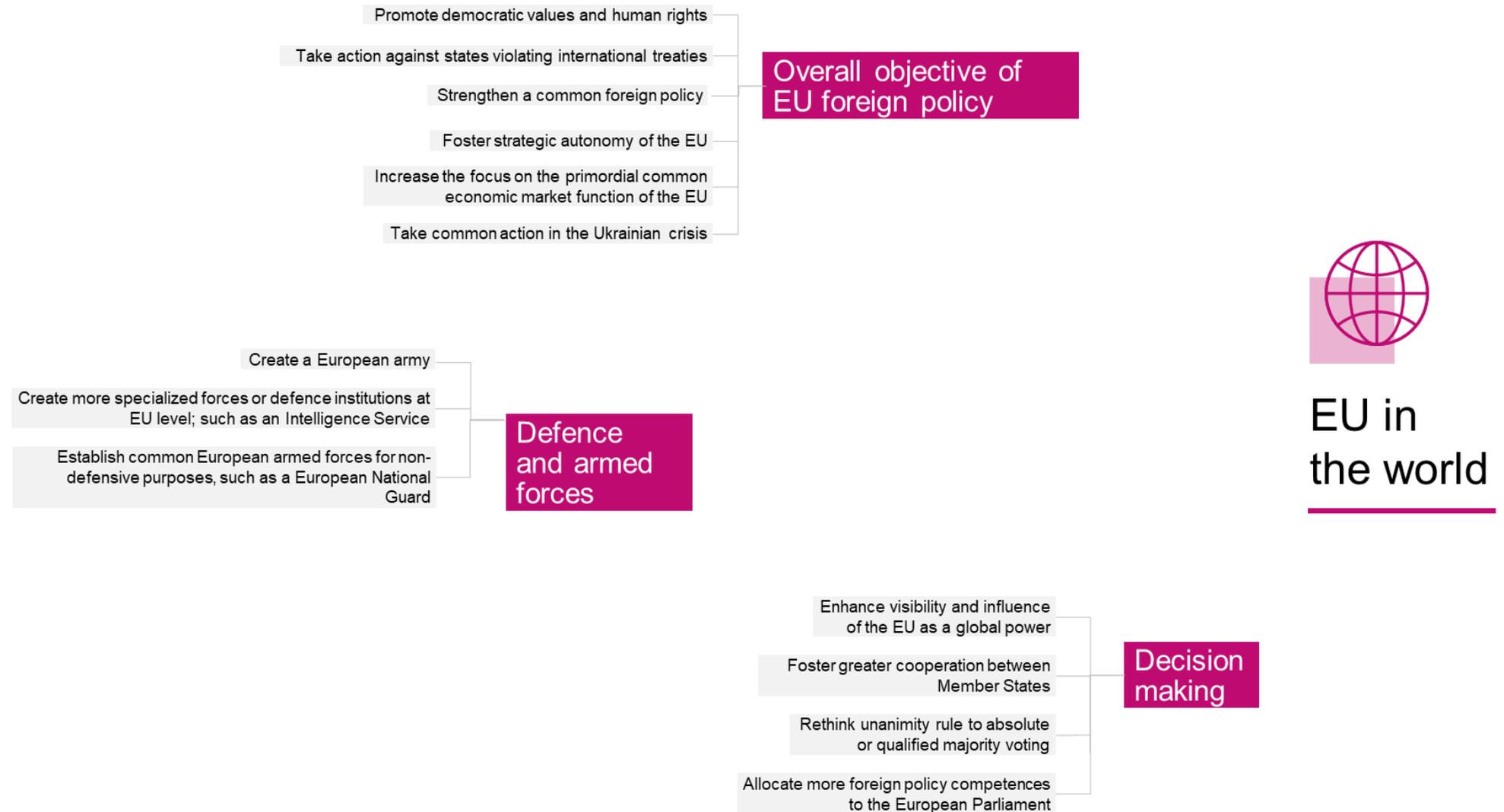
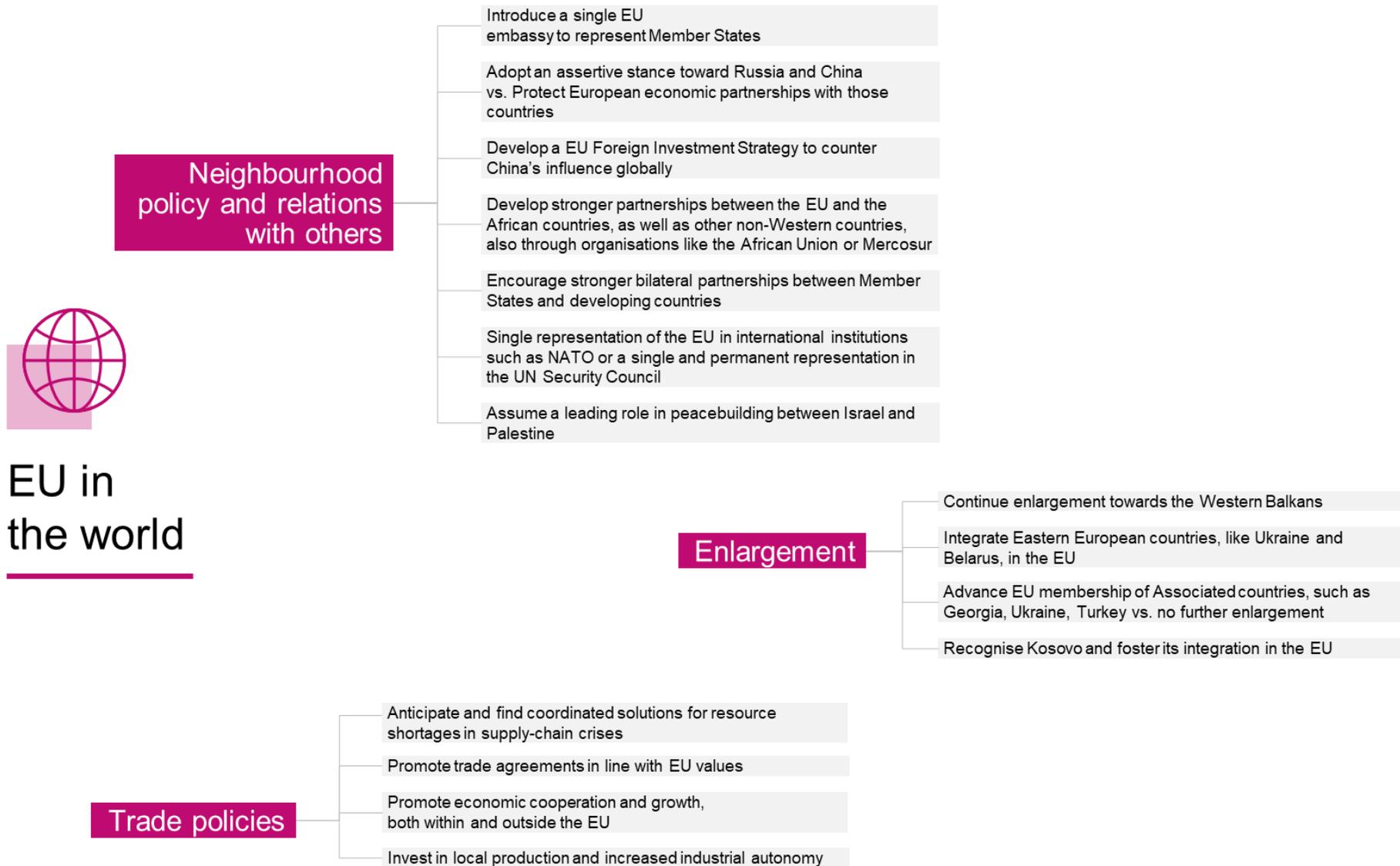




Figure 15 - Mind map 'EU in the world' topic part 2





6. Values and rights, rule of law, security

The topic Values and rights, rule of law, security has generated a total of 4,818 contributions (1,528 ideas, 2,711 comments and 579 events). Contributors advance ideas on various rights and freedoms and equality, and discuss the notion of European values as a guiding principle. Reflecting the diversity of opinions on the platform, other contributors call for the respect of more conservative views. Another substantial theme under this topic discusses the need to uphold and defend the rule of law with regard to what is described as the 'dangers of the rise of illiberal democracies' within the EU, which do not respect EU values and tend towards autocratic regimes. These are seen as a threat. The contributions cover the following themes:

- **Rights and freedoms**
- **Inclusive society**
- **Protecting the rule of law**
- **Security**
- **EU values**
- **Lobbying and corruption**



Events

A number of events discussed the future of Europe in general in relation to the topic of Values, rights, rule of law and security, such as an online open dialogue in Romania (see [event](#)) or a workshop in Normandy themed ‘Europe and Peace: make your voices heard!’ (see [event](#)).

EU values were discussed during a cross-regional dialogue, with reference to challenges in sustaining them across Member States and their importance for the future of European democracies (see [event](#)). Issues surrounding the rule of law were also addressed (see example of an [event](#)) and human rights with a view on equal opportunities for different social groups and non-discrimination (see [event](#)). Preservation of the diversity of EU Member States’ cultural heritage was highlighted during a carnival event (see [event](#)).

The theme of religion and faith in Europe were also explored by representatives of different religious organisations during a participatory workshop (see [event](#)) and during an International Scientific Conference which investigated the protection of religious freedom in Central and Eastern European countries (see [event](#)).

A large amount of events discussed the theme of gender equity such as a participatory workshop organized in Poland discussing ways to combat gender violence and strengthen women’s rights (see [event](#) and see [event](#)), as well as propositions to include the principle of gender equality in the European Union treaty (see [event](#)). An event organised by students also investigated how the pandemic affected women’s rights and equality (see [event](#)). Further, the EU’s role in promoting gender equality in the professional sphere was also tackled (see [event](#)). A youth event in Lithuania developed a number of ideas to promote tolerance in the European Union, on the topics of gender equality, human rights, mental health and cultural integration and cross-cultural tolerance (see [event](#)).

Ensuring equal opportunities for people with disabilities by establishing a European strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities was discussed in a Danish and a Lithuanian debate (see [event](#) and see [event](#)).

An event in Luxembourg discussed the topic of solidarity in the EU Member States in which participants raised a number of concerns such as discrimination against LGBTIQ people, treatment of migrants, climate change and intergenerational justice, a coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a European minimum wage, and the

respecting of the rule of law in Member States (see [event](#)).

In the context of the 2021 European Press Days, an event was organized in France on the theme of press freedom, equally discussing the development of European media and of cross-border media (see [event](#)). The need to regulate more strictly digital platforms was identified by a working group on disinformation and populism (see [event](#)).

An event on the notion of European citizenship discussed obstacles that still hamper freedom of movement, particular in relation to bureaucratic procedures (see [event](#)).

A Spanish event aimed at students of the Faculty of Law debated the EU’s strategic autonomy in relation to security, reflecting the debate also present on the platform in relation to the idea of a European army (see [event](#)). This theme was equally discussed in relation to the EU’s role in combatting terrorism in a French debate (see [event](#)).

An interactive forum addressed victim support strategies (see [event](#)). Moreover, the question of the European army was discussed in relation to soft and hard power during a policy dialogue (see [event](#)).



Rights and freedoms

The theme of rights and freedoms is substantial in its size, in particular due to the wide variety of types of rights and freedoms brought forward by contributors.

A large group of ideas on rights and freedoms discuss the protection of human rights and freedoms in general (see example of an [idea](#)). One of the most endorsed ideas in this topic suggests strengthening the enforceability of various human rights instruments in the EU legal system (see [idea](#)), while others see the need for an update of the human rights to suit today’s and future societal realities (see example of [idea](#)).

The various kinds of human rights are touched upon, being economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights. Some participants bring attention to human



rights violations at European borders, to which some contributors respond condemning human smugglers (see example of an [idea](#)).

Civil and political rights are highly present within this topic on the platform, with the right to privacy and freedom of expression being most present among the contributions (see example of an [idea](#)). Those contributions discussing freedom from discrimination are grouped in the separate theme of inclusive society, as being considerable in size.

In light of our changing society, a diverse range of contributions focuses on issues related to the rights and freedoms in the context of the digital transformation, particularly related to the right to privacy. This sub-theme is equally discussed in the topic of digital transformation. The EU's General Data Protection Regulation is seen as key to prevent companies from selling personal information (see [idea](#)). In general, contributors raise the need for better legislation and tools to address privacy concerns related to the internet and social media, as well as all new technology (see [idea](#)). There are calls for limitations on the use of biometric data for surveillance (see [idea](#)) and on the collection and sharing of personal data more generally (see example of an [idea](#)). In fact, contributors note that digital surveillance through the collection of personal data by technology giants poses a significant threat to citizens' dignity, autonomy and privacy. Accordingly, they call for increased regulations and data protection measures (see [idea](#)). This is also raised in light of the expressed need for increased regulation with regard to artificial intelligence (see [idea](#)).

Another group of ideas discuss the freedom of expression and limits to this freedom. When it comes to ensuring freedom of expression related to press and social media, some contributors have raised concerns that these are being compromised, with content being removed from platforms (see example [idea](#)).

Others tackle the limits of freedom of expression, such as to what extent online content should be regulated and how this impacts free speech, with some citizens supporting the creation of a unified European digital framework (see [event](#)). Fake news, for example is perceived to constitute a threat to fundamental democratic values (see [event](#)). The frequently raised

notion of hate speech points to the need to tackle this issue and increase protection for the victims of hate speech (example of an [idea](#) and [event](#)) and hate crimes (see [event](#)).

A sub-theme concerns economic and social rights as also raised in the topic on Stronger economy, social justice and jobs, such as the right to housing (see example of [idea](#)), ensuring work-life balance (see example of [event](#)), social security for food (see [idea](#)), etc. Some contributors demand an updating of human rights in this respect (see [idea](#)) or even make social rights enforceable (see [idea](#)).

From the angle of rights of a specific segment of the population, several ideas advocate for children's rights and indicate the need to increase child protection in legislation and policies (see example of an [idea](#)).

Framed in the light of the fundamental right to respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity, a widely endorsed idea on the platform is the request for the European Union to recognise Esperanto as a language of European citizens (see example of an [idea](#)).

Another group of contributions underlines the need to lift COVID-19 measures once the effects of the pandemic allow, in order to ensure a return to normality and restore citizens' freedoms (see [idea](#)). In this regard, there is also a call to prevent discrimination against citizens who have chosen not to be vaccinated or undergo regular tests to gain access to basic facilities (see example of an [idea](#)). Issues related to COVID-19 vaccination are addressed in more detail under the Health topic.

Some contributions call for the EU to take the lead in protecting animal rights (see [idea](#)), for example by introducing an 'animal licence' (see [idea](#)). Contributors consider that although the EU treaties recognise animals as sentient beings, abusive and cruel treatments still exist in the farming and meat industries (see example of an [idea](#)).

Others specifically focus on judicial matters and the implications of intra-EU mobility, discussing the need to facilitate the processes, for example in relation to the handling of successions (see [idea](#)), death (see [idea](#)) and suggesting that Member States' registers of

matrimonial property regimes and registered partnerships should be interconnected (see [idea](#)). At an open forum webinar, participants discussed the procedural rights in criminal proceedings across the EU (see [event](#)).

Various participants support the right to self-medicate with cannabis (see example of an [idea](#)) and discuss the decriminalisation and legalisation of drugs more broadly (see example of an [idea](#)). This issue is also addressed under the Health topic.

Some citizens suggest that cash payment options should be recognised as a democratic right (see example of an [idea](#)).



Inclusive society

Various contributions call for greater efforts to be made to create an inclusive society, addressing issues such as freedom, discrimination and equality. A dominant strand of contributions under this theme revolves around ideas relating to gender equality, including a highly endorsed idea on this issue (see [idea](#) and example of an [event](#)), as well as female empowerment (see [event](#)). Related suggestions include increasing the number of women among political and economic decision-makers (see example of an [idea](#)). Gender equality is also widely discussed in terms of achieving equal pay (see example of an [idea](#)), as well as in educational terms from childhood (see [idea](#)). The call for a gendered approach towards traditionally more male dominated sectors, such as STEM, to alleviate gender inequality is also present in other topics.

With regard to sexual and reproductive rights, citizens are divided. A group of contributions underlines the importance of sexual and reproductive health and rights as fundamental means to achieve gender equality and end gender-based violence, including the right to abort (see example of an [idea](#)). In contrast, other contributions advocate protecting the dignity and right to life by halting funding in the areas of EU research, development aid and public health which are seen to promote the destruction of human embryos

(see [idea](#)). Going beyond the topic of abortion, ideas related to sexual and reproductive rights discuss the need to implement effective measures to counter increased gender-based violence (see example of an [idea](#) and [event](#)), and also suggest addressing male stereotypes (see [idea](#)), and countering revenge porn and harassment online (see [event](#)).

Another theme that has attracted numerous contributions is the need to further promote inclusion of persons with disabilities, for instance people affected by Trisomy 21 (see [idea](#)). Contributors call for the inclusion of persons with a disability to be integrated into national constitutions (see [idea](#) and [event](#)), as well as for policies to encourage the employment of persons with disabilities (see [idea](#)) and disability awareness training for all employees (see [idea](#)). Similarly, an idea advocates for training teachers on how to integrate pupils with disabilities within classes (see [idea](#)). Other proposals include: (i) the removal of barriers for persons with disabilities, by making products and services more accessible (see [idea](#) and [event](#)), (ii) adequate protection of their human rights (see [idea](#)), and (iii) countering discrimination against people with mental disabilities (see [idea](#)). A highly commented event, with participants approving in the comment section, similarly calls for the inclusion of people with Down syndrome and legislative initiatives in their support (see [event](#)) to increase their visibility and participation across all levels of society (see [idea](#)).

Some contributors perceive the rights of women, LGBTIQ minorities and human rights to be under attack in some Member States (see example of an [idea](#) and [idea](#)). As follows, numerous participants call for LGBTIQ people to be protected and same-sex marriages to be recognised across the EU Member States (see example of [idea](#) and [idea](#)) and for LGBTIQ parenthood to be allowed (see [idea](#)). One workshop event addressed the integration of LGBTIQ rights across various topics (see [event](#)). Another idea suggests introducing the concept of multiple discrimination, i.e. discrimination based on two or more grounds and taking concrete measures to combat it (see [idea](#)).

In view of ageing European societies, calls to counter ageism have been submitted to the platform (see [idea](#)). An event was also held to investigate the

consequences that the demographic changes have on society's structural foundations (see [event](#)).

A couple of events have also drawn attention to the issue of the rights of national and ethnic minorities (see example of an [idea](#) and [event](#)), including the Roma community (see example of an [idea](#), [event](#) and [event](#)). On the same note, some ideas call for an EU regulation to ensure European minorities' language rights (see example of an [idea](#)). One highly endorsed idea calls for making Catalan an official EU language (see [idea](#)).

Inclusive communication reflections in the Commission were discussed, with participants commenting that European citizens should feel free to celebrate religious festivities, to avoid European citizens from feeling inversely discriminated (see [idea](#) and [idea](#) and [event](#)).

In relation to prospects for a diverse and inclusive Europe, contributors discuss the need for successful integration policies as some highlight that failure to implement effective immigrant integration policies creates tensions in European societies and related security risks (see [idea](#)).



Protecting the rule of law

The need to uphold the rule of law and respect for democratic values is a frequently recurring theme (see example of an [idea](#)). Contributions recognise these as constituting the foundations of European Union (see [idea](#) and [idea](#)). While most contributions raise internal aspects with regards to rule of law, external aspects are also covered, with calls for the EU to adopt a tougher stance vis-a-vis third countries, such as Russia and China.

One of the most endorsed ideas under this topic calls for a review mechanism on Democracy, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights (see [idea](#)). The importance of rule of law for the functioning of the internal market is also highlighted (see [idea](#)). Consequently the idea of setting out a common vision to protect its values and

institutions is widely shared across the platform (see example of an [idea](#)).

Many participants are concerned regarding respect of EU values and the rule of law inside the EU (see example of [idea](#) and [idea](#)), some specifically mentioning Hungary (see example of [idea](#) and [idea](#)) and Poland (see example of [idea](#) and [idea](#)), in particular. A highly endorsed idea highlights that democracy and rule of law should be upheld by all Member States without incurring in double standards (see [idea](#)).

In light of these perceived threats to the rule of law, contributors propose different strategies to counter infringements: (i) reducing grants to the countries, (ii) taking away their voting rights in the Council (see example of [idea](#)), (iii) using budgetary protection mechanisms linked to the rule of law (see [idea](#)), (iv) reviewing Article 7 to make it easier to sanction governments breaching EU values (see [idea](#)), (v) introducing a mechanism whereby Member States can be expelled if they violate the democratic rule of law (see [idea](#)), and (vi) install a watchdog such as the European Union Court of Justice to protect democracy and the rule of law in the EU (see [idea](#)).

A number of ideas to ensure the rule of law, next to other EU values, are suggested as well. A few of them suggest supporting civil society organisations as a way to strengthen and sustain the democratic rule of law (see [idea](#) and see [idea](#)). A contributor has raised a related idea to implement an EU civil society strategy for civil society organisations to operate freely and contribute towards upholding European values (see [idea](#)).

Nonetheless, the most widespread idea calls for the unanimity rule to be eliminated to ensure that Member States that are not aligned with the rule of law cannot block decision-making in the EU (see example of an [idea](#)).

Protection of press and media freedom is considered related to protecting of rule of law, and EU values by extension. This was the topic of a participatory workshop, and the need to increase transparency for mediatic pluralism and ensure greater protection of journalists were key takeaways (see [event](#)). Increased transparency and greater involvement of the citizens

in EU decision-making process is also supported (see [idea](#)).

While the dominant share of ideas points to concerns surrounding violations of the rule of law, another strand of ideas takes a different perspective, where the EU is seen to be encroaching on the constitutions of Member States in an authoritarian manner (see example of [idea](#)). Some calls to reconsider the competence of the European Court of Justice to prevent conflicts with national constitutional jurisdictions are recorded on the platform (see example of [idea](#) and [event](#)). For example, one participant takes the view that so long as popular sovereignty is respected, democracy reigns (see [idea](#)). Similarly, others argue that the veto power is enforced as a political tool granted by the Treaties, and that it is the prerogative of Member States to defend borders and preserve the Christian religion, culture and a homogenous society (see [idea](#)).



Security

The issue of security is widely discussed in other topics such as EU in the world, hence it occurs less frequently as a theme within the topic of Values and rights, rule of law, security. Nevertheless, one of the most commented ideas currently in this topic is a proposal to create an EU army (see [idea](#)), to better protect Member States against hostile foreign actors (see example of [event](#)). Furthermore, participants argue that centralising EU security would be beneficial, both in terms of costs and in view of the declining importance of national armies across Europe, due to weaker allegiances by European citizens to the defence of their own State (see [idea](#)). However, in the comment sections of these ideas others have questioned this proposal, commenting mostly on the political implications and the relationship between EU defence and national defence. For this reason, a participant advocates for the integration and interoperability of national armies (see [idea](#)).

Contributors also discuss the future of foreign policy and how it can be changed to ensure that Europe plays an international role (see [event](#)), with calls also

for the EU to rethink its priorities in terms of its security goals, against the background of issues ranging from the migrant crisis to Afghanistan, to the threat of China in the Asia-Pacific (see [idea](#)). In view of non-traditional militaristic challenges which are being tackled, such as terrorism, criminal organisations' activities and unregulated immigration, one participant argues that these cannot be solved solely through traditional military strategies, as they require security measures established through diplomacy, mediation and societal cohesion (see [idea](#)). Energy security (see [idea](#)) and the objective to decrease dependence to enhance geopolitical defense capabilities of the European Union represents an important example (see [idea](#)). Debates on the platform also saw the juxtaposition of pacifists promoting defensive strategies, against those who argued that when confronted with superpowers, such as China and Russia, militarized security is required (see [idea](#)). Some participants take the view that the EU should not deal with defence matters and that it is better for the Member States to defend themselves with the support of NATO (see [idea](#)).

There are widely shared security concerns with regard to Russia on the platform, such as the threat of disinformation and Russia's influence and leverage towards European countries (see [idea](#) and [event](#)), and views expressing the need to develop common policies (see [idea](#)).

Discussing internal security in the EU, some contributors raise the need to combat different types of threats, such as cyber-attacks through enhanced coordination in cybersecurity (see [idea](#)) and the multiple forms of terrorism with coordinated counter-terrorism programs (see example of [event](#)). Additionally, they highlight the importance of preventing the radicalisation and polarisation of European societies, for example by setting up a Radicalisation Awareness Network to share best practices (see [idea](#) and [idea](#)).

EU coordination is also suggested for police forces to ensure equality and uniform working across Member States (see [idea](#)). In this respect, participants have suggested introducing a military and police Erasmus programme to consolidate allegiance to the EU and facilitate the sharing of good practices (see [idea](#) and

[idea](#)). Similar ideas are also discussed under the topic EU in the world.

As a last strand of ideas, there are several calls on the platform to facilitate prosecution and law enforcement across national borders (see examples of [idea](#) and [idea](#)), for instance by adopting a unified penal code (see [idea](#)). Given the freedom of movement within the EU, some citizens endorse the establishment of a European agency to strengthen collaboration across Member States in the fight against terrorism and organised crime (see [idea](#) and [idea](#)). A participant also notes the danger posed by illegal sales of weapons (see [idea](#)). The strengthening of Europol, the already existing European agency to fight international crime and terrorism, is also envisaged by some participants (see [idea](#)).



EU values

The importance and centrality of sustaining European values is reiterated often on the platform (see example of an [idea](#)). A group of ideas on the platform discusses what it means to be European and the values that the EU should embody and promote (for example, see [idea](#) and [event](#)). In particular, several citizens mention the principles of human dignity, freedom, equality, democracy, rule of law, human rights, pluralism, justice, solidarity (see [event](#)) and gender parity among others, as constituting the European Union's value system, and believe that these should guide its policies. As such a highly endorsed proposal entails introducing a Review Mechanism on Democracy, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in the EU (see [idea](#)). Citizens also refer to the common roots as well as heterogeneous specificities that characterize each Member State (see example of an [idea](#) and [idea](#)).

Some contributors also discuss the need for a European Constitution to clearly define a set of fundamental European values that need to be respected in the EU (see example of an [idea](#)).

A strand of discussions focuses on the place of religion and religious values in Europe with discussions on the role of Christian values and the need to protect them (see [idea](#) and [event](#)), but also calls to respect cultural and religious diversity in Europe (see [idea](#)). With reference to Christianity, an event explored how Eastern European countries reconcile public religious displays with tolerance towards other religions and beliefs (see [event](#)). Religion and its relevance in today's European Union was addressed during an inter-faith meeting in Dublin (see [event](#)). On the same note, participants argue that increasingly divisive ethical issues should be dealt with through interreligious dialogues and intercultural perspectives (see example of an [idea](#)).

Recent entries have also raised the question of antisemitism as a large threat to citizens from Jewish communities in many countries, which have seen an increase in attacks and violence (see [idea](#)).



Lobbying and corruption

As in the case of the topic 'European Democracy', some contributors have focused on issues related to lobbying and corruption. There are suggestions to enhance the regulation and transparency of lobbying by private interests (see [idea](#)) and limit its influence on EU policy (see example of an [idea](#)). Other participants have discussed how to tackle corruption within EU institutions, the use of EU funds and the protection of whistleblowers (see example of an [idea](#)). One participant has suggested introducing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to handle alleged violations of EU Treaties by EU officials (see [idea](#)).

In addition to tackling corruption at the level of EU institutions, there are some calls for the EU to check on the impartiality of national public administrations to counter favouritism and arbitrariness (see [idea](#) and [event](#)) or to tackle judicial corruption (see [idea](#)). Contributors ask for the EU to take action against tax avoidance and corruption in Member States (see example of an [idea](#)). Moreover, some contributors

have voiced their outrage at not being able to have fair
judicial trials (see [idea](#)).



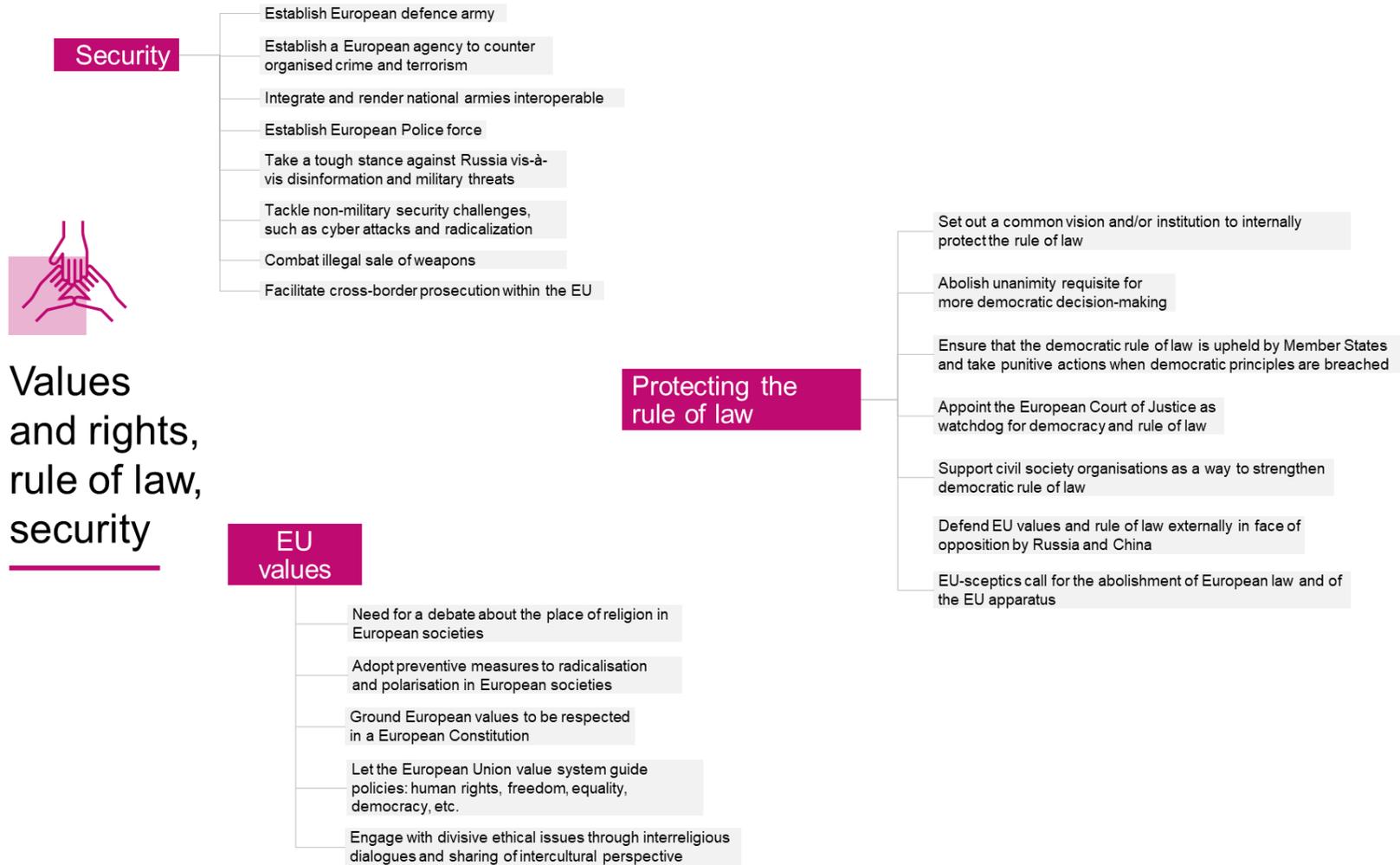
Figure 16 – Mind map topic Values and rights, rule of law, security part 1



Values and rights, rule of law, security



Figure 17 – Mind map topic Values and rights, rule of law, security part 2



Values and rights, rule of law, security



7. Digital transformation

The topic of Digital transformation has generated 893 ideas, 1,169 comments and 357 events, making a total of 2,419 contributions. The contributions in general stress the need for digital transformation with regard to the future economy, collaboration, health and other areas of life. However, they also highlight several challenges related to digital transformation, such as ethical considerations, the growing digital divide, GDPR shortcomings, and cyber threats. In relation to this, as the most occurring themes, contributors express the need to invest in digital education and foster digital skills as well as invest in digital innovation and move towards a digitally sovereign Europe. The various ideas can be grouped according to the following themes:

- **Education and training: digital skills**
- **Digital sovereignty and ethics**
- **Overall digitalisation of society**
- **European digital tools: digitalisation of public services**
- **Digital data**
- **Cyber security**
- **Digital rights and inclusion**
- **Pollution, sustainability and durability**
- **Digitalisation of the economy**
- **Digital health**



Events

A number of events discussed the need for digitalisation, benefits and risks as well as possible approaches for increased digitalisation. They often take on a local perspective such as a citizen debate in Slovenia discussing accelerated digitalisation of rural areas and local economy (see [event](#)).

A number of events discuss the topic of Artificial Intelligence, such as an open dialog with the citizens of Dresden in Germany (see [event](#)). Participants formulated a number of ideas, such as the need to develop human-centred standards for the use and development of artificial intelligence (see [idea](#)). The topic of AI was also discussed in more technical and specialised events, such as an AI Stakeholder Summit in November discussing the benefits and risks of Artificial Intelligence technologies for both the public and businesses (see [event](#)).

Another category of events revolves around debates about the issue of censorship and the spread of hate speech and fake news on digital platforms and social media. Several exchanges among contributors highlighted the need to strengthen freedom of expression and protect consumers rights (see [event](#)).

A Portuguese citizens' dialogue, co-organised by Europe Direct, put equal access and digitisation of rural areas forward as a solution to halt depopulation and stressed the need to ensure good conditions for remote work or digital nomads (see [event](#)).

Some events discussed the environmental impact of digitalisation in relation to waste generation and the environmental cost of producing digital products. In a Latvian event suggestions to combat the artificial expiry date and ways to encourage technology recycling were raised (see [event](#)).

An event organized by the Hungarian National Youth Council discussing with participants the topics of digitalisation and the digital transition. The idea of a common online education platform at EU level to collect good practices in digital education was raised, as well as other ways to stimulate digitalisation processes, digitalisation of youth work with a strong call to support young people who lack the digital knowledge and tools (see [event](#)). These topics were equally discussed in the Polish National Debate on digital transformation, alongside the digitisation of other sectors such as public sector, agriculture and tourism (see [event](#)).

An event organized in Sweden resulted in three ideas related to digital transformation, namely to ensure privacy in the realm of digital payments, to

act on cybersecurity and to ensure inclusion in the new digital society (see [event](#)).



Education and training: digital skills

One of the most recurrent group of ideas on the platform under the topic of Digital Transformation relates to the need to provide EU citizens with the necessary skills and tools to grow and succeed in an increasingly digital world. A number of ideas on the platform advocate comprehensive EU-wide digital literacy efforts in all EU countries as the development and promotion of digital skills is considered a top priority for the economy (see example of [idea](#)). Participants in particular mention the need to develop digital skills of young people in all EU Member States to improve their employability (see example of [idea](#)). The enhancing of digital skills and creating the capacity to navigate the digitalized society is not only felt to have economic benefits, it is also increasingly felt to be a prerequisite for ensuring wider access to education, culture and important public services (see example of [idea](#)). Ideas suggest starting at primary school level and continuing along the education pathway (see example of [idea](#) and [event](#)), including among the elderly population (see example of [event](#), example of [idea](#)). One contributor references the EU Skills Agenda and the Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027 and asks for an accelerated implementation of it with regards to digital skills, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic (see [idea](#)). In addition to digital skills training, there are calls to provide training on the dangers of the internet, such as deep fake videos and educate on methods to prevent online fraud (see example of [idea](#)). Some contributors express the need for EU legislation around digital education to protect minors in the virtual space and ensure high quality education (see [idea](#)).

A theme equally discussed in the topic of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, e-learning in the context of the health crisis has become a recurring theme among contributions with a common call for increased investment and efforts to boost the digitalisation of education (see example of [idea](#)). Going beyond



hardware infrastructure, contributors propose creating a single European remote learning platform (see example of [idea](#) and [idea](#)), developing virtual and immersive pedagogical tools (see [idea](#)) or a common web portal for online digital certificates (see example of [idea](#)). In this connection, contributors equally suggest further promoting scientific careers (see example of [idea](#) and [event](#)) and the development of scientific research programmes for young students, investing in the field of digital and innovation (see [idea](#)).



Digital sovereignty and ethics

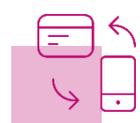
The theme of digital sovereignty occurs frequently and several ideas to invest in open-source software, in particular, have received a high number of endorsements. The ideas submitted on the platform to boost digital sovereignty focus on Europe's strategic independence in terms of hardware, software and social media platforms, with several calls to enforce and promote software resilience and independence as well as investments in innovation (see example of [idea](#) and [idea](#)). A number of ideas call for investment in European open-source software for egalitarian reasons and increased cooperation amongst Member States (see example of a highly endorsed [idea](#)), but also to gain greater digital autonomy (see example of [idea](#)). A sub-theme of ideas involves advancing the EU's digital development and production, taking action with regard to web industry monopolies (see example of [idea](#) and [idea](#)) *vis-à-vis* other actors such as the US or China. As in other topics, contributors advance the idea of Europe owned and lead digital media platforms, such as a European streaming platform (see example of [idea](#)). Related, a contributor discusses the need for the Digital Services Act (DSA) and the Digital Markets Act (DMA) to go further in order to curb the hegemonic position of digital giants from outside the EU. To stimulate digital sovereignty for the EU the contributor calls for the encouraging of innovation by ways of investing in European-wide high potential start-ups and a sovereign cloud amongst

others (see [idea](#)). This call for strategic autonomy for the European Union in the digital field and a European model for digitalisation is equally one of the ideas put forward by a civil participation programme and forum organised by the Germany-Italy-Europe Observatory (see [event](#)).

Next to sovereignty in terms of digital software, other contributors specifically advance the need for the EU to achieve sovereignty in terms of hardware (see [event](#)). For instance, one of the most endorsed ideas suggests developing and promoting Europe's own chip production (see [idea](#)), another idea specifically mentions dependencies on specialty metals (see [idea](#)). One contributor describes a Sovereign and Green European SmartPhone completely manufactured in the EU (see [idea](#)).

Central to the calls for digital sovereignty is the need to invest in innovation and research, with several mentions of European Digital Innovation Hubs (see example of [idea](#)). For digital sovereignty and sustainability to become central in a European digital policy, one contributor suggests to link EU funding closely with digital, sustainable transformation projects and European digital free trade zones (see [idea](#)).

An additional strand of ideas places a strong emphasis on the ethical aspect. Specifically, contributors want to boost the EU's digital sovereignty to be fully in line with European values, standards, transparency and ethics (see example of [idea](#)). Contributors express the need for the EU to be the frontrunner when it comes to digitalisation, also for scientific and technological legislation (see [idea](#)). Additionally, the most highly endorsed idea in this topic calls for fair digitalisation based on human rights, including labour and trade union rights (see [idea](#)), as well as a call to safeguard freedom of expression with actions against forms of hate speech and the spread of fake news (see [event](#)).



Overall digitalisation of society

The overarching thrust of contributions on the topic of digital transformation is for the increased digitalisation



of a variety of areas of EU society, going hand-in-hand with the necessary innovation efforts. In this regard, contributors reference the Digital Decade and call for an acceleration, closely monitoring the progress of Member States (see example of [idea](#)). A variety of participants further suggest a digital transition with ideas on the digitalisation of EU public transport with a common electronic transport pass (see [idea](#)). Others discuss digitalisation in relation to agriculture (see example of [event](#)), justice in the EU (see example of [event](#)) or in the framework of achieving a sustainable, greener economy (see example of [event](#)).

A sub-theme relates to digital voting, where a number of contributors on the platform point out the advantages of electronic voting as well as of electronic signatures (see [idea](#)), in particular in the context of the pandemic (see example of [idea](#)). This question has been explored from the point of efficiency, safety and innovation, not from the perspective of enhancing democracy. There are however some opposing views in the comments which point out a number of disadvantages of electronic voting. Contributors suggest applying blockchain technology or setting up Europe's own highly encrypted mailing system, as a possible means of ensuring the security of digital voting in the EU.

When it comes to digital innovation in particular, the ideas submitted on the platform concerning digital growth advocate first and foremost increasing the EU's role in further developing Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. A call for a concerted effort to co-operate is expressed in an idea for a European AI Research Department (see [idea](#)). For some contributors AI is an essential component to drive economic growth and wealth in the EU (see example of [idea](#)).

A common call is noted for increased planning and regulation with regard to current AI possibilities and algorithmic decision-making systems in order to minimise risks, enhance security and accessibility (see example of [idea](#), see example of [event](#)). The need for legislative action is expressed to minimise risks with artificial intelligence technologies (see example of [event](#)) and to respect fundamental rights. An example of the latter is the call for listing prohibited uses of AI such as algorithmic workers' surveillance (see [event](#)). A much endorsed idea within this theme discusses an ethical AI and suggests legislation to

contain the risks of AI, regulate data use and avoid inequalities (see [idea](#)).

Nonetheless, the benefits of AI, for example, for the public sector or emergency medical services are pointed out by some contributors (see example of [idea](#)). Other contributors, however, are more hesitant and highlight the future risk of creating AI superior to the human brain (see example of [idea](#)).

Another highly endorsed idea discusses the need to ensure that major crowdfunding platforms can be accessed from all Member States (see [idea](#)).

Some ideas also discuss the (potential) disadvantages of the digitalisation of society, such as exclusion of less digitally aware people, environmental pressures, dehumanisation, robotisation, and increased monitoring and surveillance of individuals (see example [idea](#) and [idea](#)). Contributors want these negative consequences of digitalisation to be investigated. Related, some contributions want legislation to be updated in light of the increasing digitalisation of society (see example of [idea](#)).



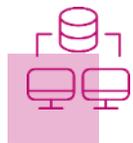
European digital tools – digitalisation of the public sector

A number of contributors suggest the digitalisation of governance and public sector within the EU to allow for interoperability and e-governance (see example of [idea](#) and [idea](#), see [event](#)). A range of specific technological and digital tools for European citizens are proposed by citizens. The sub-theme of the digital unification of the EU is widely discussed (see [idea](#)), with a call for greater harmonisation at European level through the adoption of common digital tools: for example, a dedicated European Social Network for the expression of public opinion (see [idea](#)), for example, by creating a framework which helps all EU countries to work together on IT projects. This idea is developed further with several suggestions for all encompassing digital portals for citizen engagement and daily life identification needs (see [idea](#)).



A large pool of ideas discusses creating digital citizenship with ideas for a Europe-wide identification via a digital ID (see example of [idea](#) and [idea](#)) or highly secure (EU) identification systems, for instance based on the use of a fingerprints code (see example of [idea](#)). Similarly, contributors suggest a European digital wallet with all paper documents replaced by digital documents (see [idea](#)).

Another category of contributions focuses on European e-services: with, for example, a European Single Sign-on Identity Provider for providing access to public services (see [idea](#)), the need to harmonise standards and create a single authentication account at European level (see [idea](#)). Likewise, there is a proposal to introduce a 'Digital EU Cross-border Service Card' to simplify access to public and emergency services for citizens living in cross-border regions (see [idea](#)). The development of digital tools and services such as a Digital Identity for the EU, the creation of a European App or the introduction of a Digital European passport was equally discussed in events (see example of [event](#)).



Digital data

When it comes to the digital data theme, contributors emphasise the progress made so far, mentioning that the EU is a leader in protecting individuals in the digital world. Nevertheless, there is a call for further improvement in this area (see example of [event](#), see example of [idea](#)). For example, suggestions focus on modifying GDPR laws to make it easier to refuse the online collection of personal data (see example of [idea](#)). Another contribution demands clearer regulations when it comes to GDPR and employee data (see [idea](#)). Simultaneously, multiple contributions call for more comprehensible legislation without burdening users with constant requests for consent (see example of [idea](#)). Suggestions include taking GDPR even further and moving towards increased data autonomy for EU citizens (see example of [idea](#)).

Several contributors call for geo-blocking to be restricted or banned (see example of [idea](#)), the harmonisation of data protection systems across the

EU and the introduction a personal cloud for EU citizens (see [idea](#)).



Cyber security

Overall, there is a recurrent call for co-operation at European level, in terms of infrastructure, knowledge and human resources, to strengthen cyber security in the EU (see example of [idea](#) and [idea](#)).

A number of ideas suggest strengthening protection against cybercrime by first and foremost increasing network security, which for many contributors goes hand-in-hand with increased digital sovereignty (see example of [idea](#)). Additionally, the transparency and the accountability of data systems should be improved (see example of [idea](#)). As part of a five-pillar proposal, building on ENISA's recommendations regarding risks of devices connected to the Internet of Things (IoT), contributors suggest creating an EU Label for any IoT product ensuring that the device meets the minimum Internet safety and performance requirements, coupled with manufacturer review and control regulations for third-party software (see [idea](#)). A form of inspection to ensure applications are safe by means of a European network Security Inspection Authority is equally suggested (see [idea](#)).

Cyber terrorism is equally discussed, with several suggestions for an EU centralised approach to defend the EU, its citizens and businesses in case of online threats (see example of [idea](#)). Suggestions range from a European cyber army (see [idea](#)) to expanding the scope of the ENISA agency into a European Cyber Defence Centre (see [idea](#)). Some contributors see a role for the EU in leading the way to a Global Cybersecurity Treaty, based on the example of the 2001 Budapest Convention (see [idea](#)).

In addition to defensive strategies, there are several suggestions for legislative action, for example advocating the introduction of EU-wide legislation to safeguard citizens' privacy (see [idea](#)). A number of contributions equally stress the need to introduce regulation on social media platforms to counter



disinformation, fake news and achieve data sovereignty (see example of [idea](#)). One such regulation could be digital network identification protocols verified by a European authority to avoid defamation, digital bullying or disclosure of false information (see [idea](#)). A contributor sees a role for the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) in strengthening European action against cybercrime and suggests extending their competence to cross-border cybercrimes (see [idea](#)).

Additionally, there is a call for stronger consumer protection in an online environment (see example of [idea](#)), for instance, by making it easier in the future for consumers to change their mind with regard to purchases.



Digital rights and inclusion

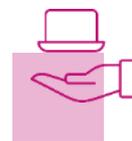
There are several challenges identified with an increased digital society according to contributors. One concern emerging from the contributions is the digital divide affecting vulnerable groups. An online discussion, for example, discussed the increased digitalisation of our society and, as a corollary, the increasing exclusion of a certain population groups, the 'digitalisation losers' (see [event](#)).

Contributors therefore stress the need to guarantee free and inclusive access to digital space and contents, for example with calls for accessible and affordable digital services and appliances (see example of [idea](#) and [idea](#)). Others suggest that digital access should be recognised as a basic need by ensuring systemic funding at European or national level to provide digital services (see example of [idea](#) and [idea](#)). As referenced earlier, several ideas suggest enhancing the level of digital literacy and education of young and elderly population groups in order to promote digital cohesion (see example of [idea](#) and [event](#)). One contributor proposes the introduction of a monitoring mechanism to ensure fair and equal digitalisation and the acquisition of digital skills (see [idea](#)).

Another substantial strand of ideas stresses more specifically the digital inequality between urban and rural areas: improving digital connectivity and access to essential public and private services are some of the most discussed proposals within this theme (see [event](#)).

With reference to digital rights, some contributors would like to see a limitation or reduction of advertising on digital media channels (see example of [idea](#)), while others want, in the interest of freedom of information, to see paywalls removed and make information freely available with no payment needed (see [idea](#)).

One contribution calls for a gender-sensitive approach to digitalisation with suggestions for a legal framework to combat digital violence and a call to promote gender-friendly digital design (see [idea](#)). Additionally, contributors raise the need to increase female entrepreneurship and foster digital skills among women (see the [event](#)). The call for increased gender equity in tech was also discussed in the YEP workshop (see [event](#)).



Pollution, sustainability and durability

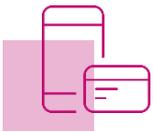
In several cases contributors link digitalisation to a more sustainable society. For instance, there is a call to introduce a digital product passport to promote local consumption and circular economy, accessible via QR codes providing information on product origin, composition, environmental impact, recycling and final handling (see [idea](#)).

However, there is a catch as digitalisation equally contributes to pollution amongst others. To counter this, contributors call for a sustainable digitalisation with increased research in environmental impacts of digitalisation and to inform consumers about the environmental impact of digital products (see example of [idea](#) and [event](#)). Suggestions for sustainable manufacturing with, for example, a call to make data centres greener with green energies (see [idea](#)) or for new products to be produced with recycled electronic waste or other sustainable alternatives (see example



of [idea](#) and [idea](#)). Another strand of ideas revolves around digital waste, calling, for instance, to extend product warranty of digital goods (see [idea](#)). Additionally, there is an emphasis on durable, repairable and fairly and ethically produced digital equipment, which could be promoted, for instance, with lower taxes (see [idea](#)).

Some contributors focus on extending sustainability and accessibility not only to digital devices but also to digital infrastructures, and the development of smart cities (see example of [idea](#)). Another category of ideas in this respect proposes fostering the development of accessible and sustainable technologies by investing in Low Tech (see [idea](#)).



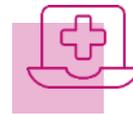
Digitalisation of the economy

In line with a theme also developed under the topic Stronger economy, social justice and jobs, a large number of ideas call for the digital economy and a single digital market to be embraced (see example of [idea](#)). Contributors, for example, discuss the implementation of an EU block chain platform (see example of [idea](#) and [idea](#)). The idea of a Digital Single Market Programme to promote e-commerce as well as ways to enhance SME's capacity to use digital tools and advanced technologies is equally mentioned (see [idea](#)).

Other contributors also discuss cryptocurrencies with requests for governments to adopt cryptocurrencies to benefit and develop a digital and economically active society (see example of [idea](#)), or call for a European cryptocurrency (see [idea](#)). Counter arguments discussing the need for cryptocurrencies to be regulated or banned are also raised on the platform (see example of [idea](#)).

In addition, several ideas advocate the introduction of a digital euro as a secure and convenient payment method (see example of [idea](#)).

Another group of ideas encourages investment and boosting the competitiveness of the European digital market, by promoting a strategy of digitalisation for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (see example of [idea](#)) and improving market conditions for the development of start-ups within the framework of European digital infrastructures (see [idea](#)). Related, one contributor discusses a strengthened digitalisation of the economy with digital receipts, a simplification of digital transactions and online banking made more accessible via phone (see [idea](#)).



Digital health

Within the theme of digital health, a number of ideas on the platform propose concrete measures to improve the health of citizens in the digital world, such as employee rights to disconnect from work (see example of [idea](#)), introducing a social media day off (see [idea](#)), mental health (see example of [idea](#)) or fostering youth digital training to promote healthy and conscious use of technology.

In this regard, one contributor calls for increased regulation of computer and video games, particularly those aimed at (and popular with) children as some of them might introduce gambling patterns amongst others (see [idea](#)).

Equally discussed in the topic of Health, there is a call for digital health integration within the EU (see example of [idea](#)) or introduce a digital European Health Insurance Card (see example of [idea](#)). More elaborate ideas, suggest creating a single platform for electronic health management – which would be particularly interesting for the many Europeans using cross-border mobility possibilities (see example of [idea](#)). The latter idea has been expanded to the creation of EU electronic certificates (see example of [idea](#)). However, commenters often raise concerns on privacy and data protection. The idea of a European Digital Health Platform is often times discussed in relation to COVID-19 vaccinations and the Green Passport (see example of [idea](#)).



Figure 18 – Mind map ‘Digital transformation’ topic part 1

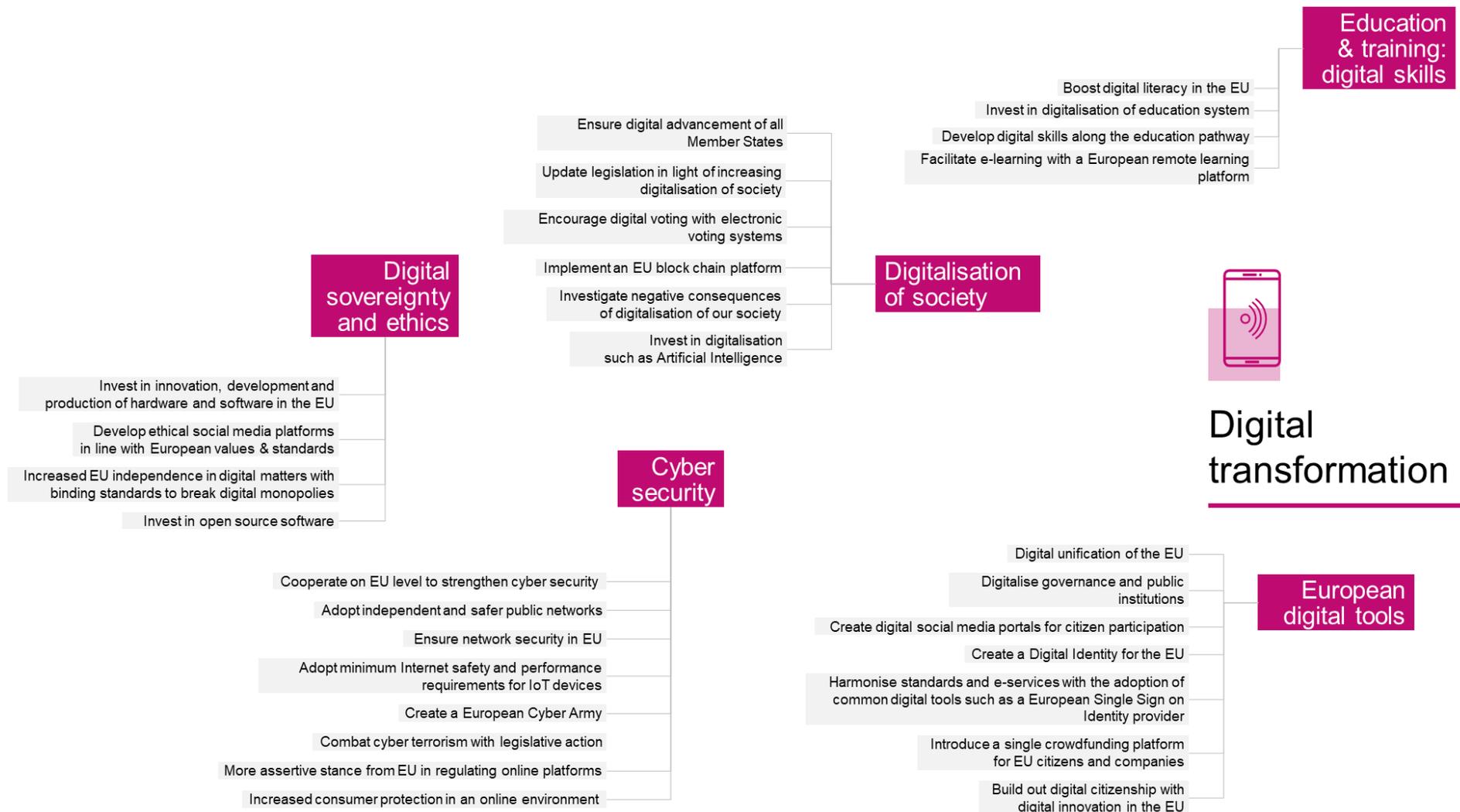
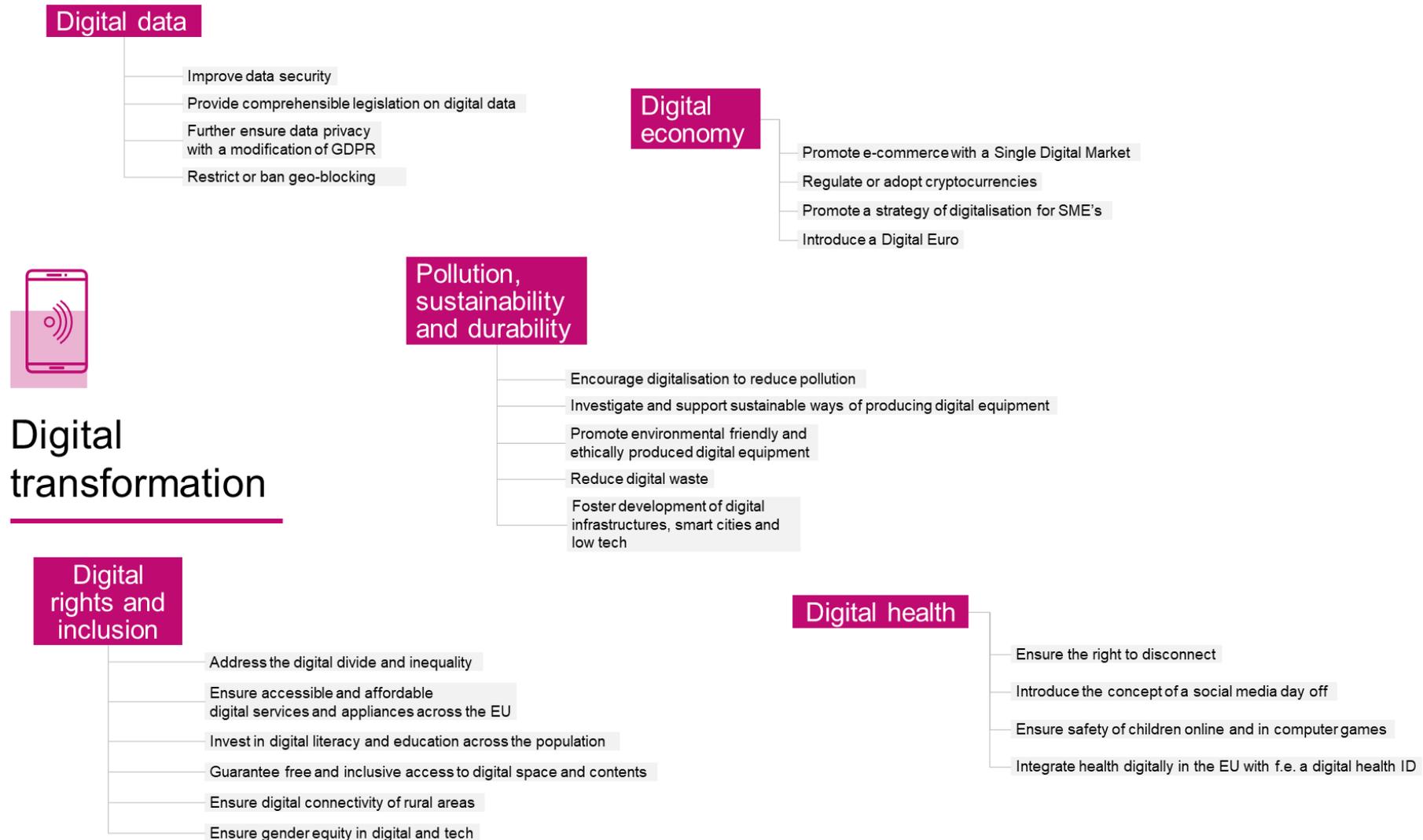




Figure 19 – Mind map ‘Digital transformation’ topic part 2





8. European democracy

The topic of European Democracy had a total of 2,316 ideas, 4,248 comments and 940 events submitted on the digital platform. The most frequently discussed themes are European Parliament elections and a call to restructure European institutions (or even federalise the EU), followed by a broad spectrum of suggestions to increase citizen participation and knowledge about European matters and to foster a European common identity. Overall interactions under this topic are constructive and forward-looking, even if some interactions express a fear of the EU being at risk of implosion due to tensions, populism, and nationalism. While noting a number of overlaps between the different themes and broadly comparable levels of engagement, the contributions have been covered as follows:

- **European Parliament elections**
- **Federalisation of the European Union**
- **Citizen participation and consultations**
- **Institutional reforms**
- **Fostering a common European identity and public space**
- **Protecting and strengthening democracy**



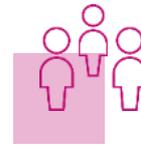
Events

A common objective of the many events organised under the ‘European democracy’ topic is that of collecting ideas that can nourish the discussion within the Conference on the Future of Europe. Multiple events have discussed this in general terms, advancing ideas to improve the European democratic functioning (see example of [event](#)). Others have taken a precise stance, notably adopting a federalist view (see example of [event](#)) or a position in favour of a more politically and culturally “heterogeneous” Union (see [event](#)).

Some events focused on democratic inclusion and participation of disadvantaged groups in politics. In France, an initiative named GHETT’UP reached out to young people living in disadvantaged areas to understand how they wish to contribute to the EU decision-making process (see [event](#)). An online event was dedicated to migrants’ representation in politics, proposing ways to fight against discrimination and strengthen migrants’ political commitment (see [event](#)).

Hearing young people’s say on the future of the EU democratic system has been the aim of many events on European democracy organised as part of the Conference. One event dedicated to university students in Milan asked how to “strengthen European democracy” (see [event](#)). During the debate, participants proposed to abolish or reduce the right to veto, reinforce communication channels between the EU institutions and its citizens, and strengthen coercive measures against those Member States that do not respect the rule of law.

An online event organised by a Lithuanian library analysed the role of non-public governance and its democratic dilemma, namely whether non-elected civil servants can influence public governance. The conference also discussed how to improve transparency in public governance (see [event](#)).



European Parliament elections

A group of ideas under the topic ‘European Democracy’ discuss changes to the way European Parliament elections are held as a means of enhancing citizen engagement in EU democratic processes. A widely endorsed idea, which has attracted different reactions, concerns the creation of EU-wide transnational electoral lists (see [idea](#)). The creation of a new electoral constituency for Europeans living in another Member State to encourage candidates to focus on European, rather than domestic issues, has also been proposed (see [idea](#)). Other electoral reform ideas for promoting pan-European debate, while bringing European Parliament members closer to citizens, have also been proposed (see example of [idea](#)). One specific kind of electoral reform, among the ones proposed, aims at changing the redistribution of seats within the Parliament, to replace the current proportional system with a majoritarian one, based on coalitions (see [idea](#)). One idea advocates that Members of the European Parliament should be nominated by national legislatures, instead of being directly elected (see [idea](#)).

Some of the proposals address more specific ways of increasing voter turnout at the European elections. There are calls for the introduction of mandatory voting (see [idea](#)), as well as suggestions to facilitate participation, for instance by allowing postal ballots (see [idea](#)) and same-day voter registration, making the voting day a public holiday (see [idea](#)), and even voting on the single day for multiple types of elections (see [idea](#)). Some contributors also discuss digital voting, including an idea to create a pool of pan-European digital voters (see [idea](#)). The issue of digital voting is also covered under the topic ‘Digital transformation’.

There are also suggestions to harmonise the minimum age to be eligible to vote at European Parliament elections (see example of an [idea](#)) and to preferably set it at 16 years of age (see [idea](#)). These ideas, among others, are aimed at encouraging young people to engage in politics, an issue which is often

considered key by participants. A workshop in Vienna discussed, among other things, ways of increasing young citizens' participation in the European elections (see [event](#)). The proposals advanced during the workshop stress the need to increase the number of young Members of the European Parliament, allowing candidates as young as 16 years of age to run for election. Participants in an [event](#) organised in Malta discussed the outcomes of the Eurovoters project, an initiative aimed at training young voters in the country. Multiple suggestions were put forward during this event, including the need to move away from considering 'youth' as a single group, which risks discounting specific needs within specific communities. There are calls on the platform to give young people opportunities to regularly present their views in the European Parliament (see [idea](#)), another idea envisages instead another type of platform, where young users are familiarised with Members of the European Parliament and their political proposals (see [idea](#)). A related contribution suggests establishing a quota for Members of the European Parliament who are under 35 years old (see [idea](#)).

Other participants address the issue of voting rights from the perspective of people with disabilities or having health conditions which limit their ability to cast their vote. These contributions advocate European Parliament elections which are more inclusive for these categories (see example of [idea](#)).

One participant suggests establishing a gender parity list for European Parliament elections (see [idea](#)).

Some ideas address specific issues regarding political parties. One contributor, for example, suggests using only the symbols of European parties rather than those of national parties (see [idea](#)), so as to reinforce once again the transnational character of the election. According to another contribution, parties should become more accessible to people from different cultural or socioeconomic backgrounds (see [idea](#)).



Federalisation of the European Union

A large number of contributions under the topic of European Democracy call for a federalisation of the European Union, with different understandings of this notion. This is a recurring subject of events linked to this topic (see example of [event](#)). 'Federalisation' has also generated some of the most endorsed ideas on the platform (see [idea](#) and [idea](#)), as well as different comments from participants.

Some contributors see federalisation as the best way forward for the EU to reach its full potential (see example of [idea](#) and [event](#)), but also as a means of giving the EU more credibility and influence in the global political arena and the power to deal with the transnational problems we are facing today, such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic (see [idea](#)). In addition, it is seen as a way of overcoming Euroscepticism and nationalist sentiments according to the participants who support the idea.

As an example, a highly endorsed and debated idea advocates establishing a constituent Assembly to develop a European Constitution defining the key elements and principles of a democratic European Federation (see [idea](#)). The discussion also includes more specific calls for a common fiscal and economic policy (see [idea](#)), including an idea of a 'European Union of taxpayers' (see [idea](#)), one European army and the federalisation of foreign policy, alongside a redesign of the EU institutions along federalist principles.

Nevertheless, some contributors are sceptical about federalisation. Some participants are worried that this may lead to an excessive centralisation of power or create imbalances between Member States. Others consider that there are many problems to be overcome for such an idea to be able to become a reality. Some participants favour decentralisation with greater power for Member States instead of federalisation (see example an [idea](#)), with more freedom and respect for the identity of Member States and free cooperation in areas where it is useful (see example of an [idea](#)). One of such ideas expresses concern about the idea of "an ever closer Union" and the potential power of federal



courts, advocating for a confederation instead of a federal Union (see [idea](#)).

Considering the distinct national contexts and level of readiness of Member States to become part of a federal union, some participants advance the idea of a step-by-step federalisation, with a system of ‘transition zones’ (see [idea](#)). This type of contributors support the idea of a federal Europe but they might consider it unrealistic at the present stage, and therefore they advocate a multi-speed Union which would improve the EU’s strategic autonomy in the short-term, and the prospect of federalism (see [idea](#)).



Citizen participation and consultations

Contributions to the platform include a number of suggestions to strengthen citizen participation and a sense of ownership as regards EU decision-making.

A group of ideas and events discusses developing more permanent mechanisms based on participatory democracy and interaction among citizens to strengthen and complement representative democracy, including by building on the experience of the Conference on the Future of Europe. Participants propose, for instance, a more systematic use of citizens’ assemblies and panels to prepare the most important and difficult political decisions in the EU (see example of an [idea](#)). One participant proposes that such assemblies should be convened directly by citizens following a successful European Citizens’ Initiative (see [idea](#)). Some contributors propose a ‘Citizen Parliament’, an ‘Assembly dedicated to civil society organisations’ (see [idea](#)) or a ‘Constituent Assembly’ (see [idea](#)) to advise the European Parliament. Participants also discuss the idea of EU-wide referenda on EU institutional and policy topics (see example of [idea](#)). Some participants see it as an alternative to having national referendum on European matters, whose outcomes risk blocking determinate EU policy initiatives regardless of the level of EU-diffused support for those initiatives (see example of [idea](#)).

Some of these contributions discuss specifically the merits of the Multilingual Digital Platform, drawing praise and criticism, but also putting forward suggestions for improvement. For example, various participants stress the need to establish a feedback system to follow-up on citizens’ proposals during the Conference (see example of [idea](#)). Another participant replies to an idea proposing to make the Conference a permanent one by pointing out the need to summarise the content of the platform from time to time and create a discussion around it (see [idea](#)).

The contributions also include a proposal to devise an online one-stop-shop platform centralising all public input, whether European Citizens’ Initiatives, complaints or petitions, into the EU institutional participatory architecture (see [idea](#)), while another contributor raises the idea of a platform exclusively dedicated to associations (see [idea](#)).

Among the kinds of online platforms proposed by participants to enhance democratic participation, one aims at establishing a bottom-up lobbying system, financed by common European citizens through individual donations, and the sharing of ideas via the same portal (see [idea](#)). This platform is intended to solve the issue of unequal influencing ability between individual citizens and big organisations.

Other contributors propose an online digital forum where EU citizens could discuss EU legislation, using a social media-derived system of upvotes and comments (see [idea](#)). A related idea involves a citizens’ lobbying platform as an alternative way for ordinary EU citizens and smaller companies to channel their expertise and views on legislation in the EU decision-making process (see [idea](#)).

The importance of civic technology, especially in the current age of increasing distrust towards political parties, is discussed by many participants (see [idea](#)). According to this idea, civic technologies would allow to understand the increased complexity of public governance in our time and enhance active engagement and participation.

An [event](#) organised in the Italian town of Brindisi advanced a wide range of ideas to improve direct democratic mechanisms at EU level, including boosting public knowledge of some already-existing instruments, such as EU petitions, temporary



committees, European mediators, and the Solvit platform.

Reducing the distance between MEPs and citizens is also seen as a way to improve European democracy. One participant advances various strategies to improve communication and foster direct exchange of ideas between MEPs and their electors (see [idea](#)). Among the ideas proposed, there is the establishment by MEPs of local offices in their own electoral colleges. This idea partially resembles the proposal by another participant to create a system of local EU Councillors (see [idea](#)), as a way once again to reduce the distance between the EU institutions and European citizens.



Institutional reforms

A substantial volume of ideas also discusses reforms of European Institutions more specifically, with the aim of making them more efficient and transparent, and bringing them closer to citizens. The ideas of institutional reform advanced may include proposals for a wider overhaul of the institutional set-up (see example of an [idea](#)), but also strategies to make policy-makers more accountable for the effectiveness of policy initiatives. For example, one participant advances the idea of making impact assessments compulsory at all stages of the legislative process (see [idea](#)).

Regarding the European Parliament, contributors most often call for it to be granted real powers of legislative initiative (see example of [idea](#)). There are also calls for it to be granted fiscal powers (see [idea](#)). The seat of the European Parliament is discussed as well, with contributors calling for a choice between Strasbourg and Brussels (see example of an [idea](#)), also as a way to reduce logistic costs (see [idea](#)).

Discussing the European Council and the Council of the European Union, a recurring idea on the platform and within the topic of European Democracy is a move to qualified majority voting, at least in certain policy areas (see example of an [idea](#)), and to stop veto power (see example of [idea](#)). There are also discussions about the role of the Council in the EU

institutional set-up (see example of [idea](#)) and suggestions to deepen the bicameral legislature in the EU (see example of an [idea](#)).

When it comes to the European Commission, a group of contributions discusses the election of the Commission President and appointment of commissioners, including the Spitzenkandidaten system (see example of an [idea](#)), and direct election of the Commission President by citizens (see example of an [idea](#)). Participants have also raised the issue of the number of commissioners (see example of an [idea](#)).

One much discussed idea is to have a directly elected EU President, for instance by merging the roles of the President of the European Commission and the European Council (see example of an [idea](#)). There are also calls to have a single contact point for the EU to speak with one voice in external relations (see example of an [idea](#)). One participant proposes to merge the role of the Eurogroup President and the European Commission's Vice-President, in charge of the Euro, to create a Ministry of the Economy and Finance, as a way to increase coordination (see [idea](#)).

Additionally, reforms of the Committee of Regions and the Economic and Social Committee are mentioned, for example to make them function more efficiently. The suggestions include reforming the Committee of Regions to encompass adequate channels of dialogue for regions as well as cities and municipalities (see [idea](#)), or giving it an enhanced role (see [idea](#)). Linked to this, another participant proposes to recognise Euroregions as institutional entities (see [idea](#)).

One highly endorsed idea asks the EU to establish a clear mechanism on stateless nations' right to self-determination (see [idea](#)).

The role of the European Court of Justice is also a common subject of discussion (see example of [idea](#)), with calls to clarify or even strengthen its powers (see example of [idea](#)) and others to reduce them (see example of [idea](#)).

Some contributors focus on the role of the European Central Bank (see [idea](#)) and the Eurogroup (see [idea](#)), proposing ways to reform those institutions. One idea calls for the completion of the Banking Union with a European Deposit Guarantee Scheme (see [idea](#)).



Various ideas of reforms display a generational focus. For example, one participant proposes to introduce an impact assessment for EU policies and legislation, aimed at measuring their specific impact on youth (see [idea](#)). Thus “Youth test” would help bringing the young people’s perspective within the institutions and make EU policies more inclusive for young people. Moving from young to old age, another participant, suggests having a European commissioner dedicated to the elderly (see [idea](#)).



Fostering a common European identity and public space

Within this theme contributors discuss a common European identity, on the basis of common European values of democracy (see [event](#)), as discussed under other themes. However, they also advance practical ideas to foster such a common European identity, as well as a common European public space, including through the contribution of media.

The theme of language is the most discussed. A common language is viewed as an effective (and sometimes as the sole), way to create a strong European identity (see example of [idea](#)). Esperanto is often put forward as a unifying language (see example of [idea](#)), also to bypass divisions between the supporters of each national language. Although contributors may disagree on which language should be preferred for Europeans, they all agree on the necessity to foster language training to achieve a common language (see example of [idea](#)). Other contributions call for the principle of multilingualism to be better respected (see example of an [idea](#)), for example by having any official EU publication translated into every EU language (see [idea](#)).

Additionally there are ideas for establishing an EU sports team (see example of [idea](#)), having 9 May as a public holiday in all Member States (see [idea](#)), or creating an EU Passport (see [idea](#)) to foster a European spirit.

One participant also proposes establishing twinning programmes between employees to allow non school-

age Europeans to discover the culture of another EU country, for example by attending a training course abroad (see [idea](#)). Future generations are seen key drivers of a common EU identity, therefore many participants stress the importance of educating youth to European political matters (see [idea](#)), a theme which is extensively discussed also in the Education, Culture, Youth and Sport chapter.

Besides languages, cultural products are also seen as something able to bind Europeans together. Hence, the call by a participant to favour the diffusion of cultural production within European borders by establishing a space of “free movement of information”, meaning reducing copyrights and licencing constraints within the EU (see [idea](#)).

A number of contributions under the theme of European identity touch upon the subject of media and the way in which they can contribute to diffusing knowledge about the EU and create a European spirit (see example of [idea](#)). One recurring suggestion, which has received a relatively higher number of endorsements, is that of establishing pan-European media outlets or networks (see example of [idea](#)) or the creation of a single public EU broadcaster (see example of [idea](#)). This is mainly proposed to increase knowledge on EU issues among citizens, with for example live streaming of discussions and events, but also to foster a common EU spirit celebrating European values and European cultures, with documentaries on EU countries. Some contributors also call for an EU TV and radio channel to project its values beyond the EU’s borders (see example of [idea](#)).

Other participants suggest training journalists on EU reporting or imposing an obligation for public broadcasters to dedicate a percentage of broadcasting time to EU matters (see [idea](#)).



Protecting and strengthening democracy

A number of ideas under this theme relate to the protection of democracy in the EU, with calls for strong



action against governments that violate democratic principles, with reference in particular to Hungary and Poland (see example of an [idea](#)). This issue is covered in more detail under the topic of 'Values and rights, rule of law, security'.

Contributors also acknowledge the danger that disinformation and fake news can pose to democracies. There are calls for a stronger approach to counter the spread of misleading information, including proposals to create a mobile fact-checking app (see [idea](#)) or an independent EU Media Fact-Check Institute (see [idea](#)). A specific EU regulation on the content which can be published on social media is also advocated by some contributors (see example of [idea](#)).

A number of ideas and comments discuss the need to regulate lobbying, with calls for a code of conduct for politicians or the establishment of an independent European body with the means to combat corruption and the undesired influence of lobbies (see example of [idea](#)). One participant calls for a ban on the use of sponsorships during the Presidencies of the EU Council, a practice through which the government of the EU Member State holding the Presidency receives financial support to display brand logos on official online or physical material (see [idea](#)).

There are also calls for general measures to be taken to fight corruption, for example in the granting of tenders at local level (see example of [idea](#)). One participant proposes the introduction of a single database combining the current multiple EU reporting systems (see [idea](#)). Another suggests that European politicians and civil servants who hold important positions – such as Members of the European Parliament or Commissioners – should be banned from owning stocks (see [idea](#)).

A participant expresses concern about undesired foreign influence on European democracy, demanding a screening on how much of the EU's crucial infrastructure is owned by China and asking for the EU to privilege India over China as a strategic economic partner in trade deals (see [idea](#)).

An [event](#) organised in Brussels highlighted the key role of cities and local communities in strengthening democracy and pioneering social progress. In a time of strong disconnection between the institutional

centre and the peripheries, the role of cities and municipalities might be key in building citizens' confidence in democratic institutions.



Figure 20 – Mind map ‘European democracy’ topic part 1

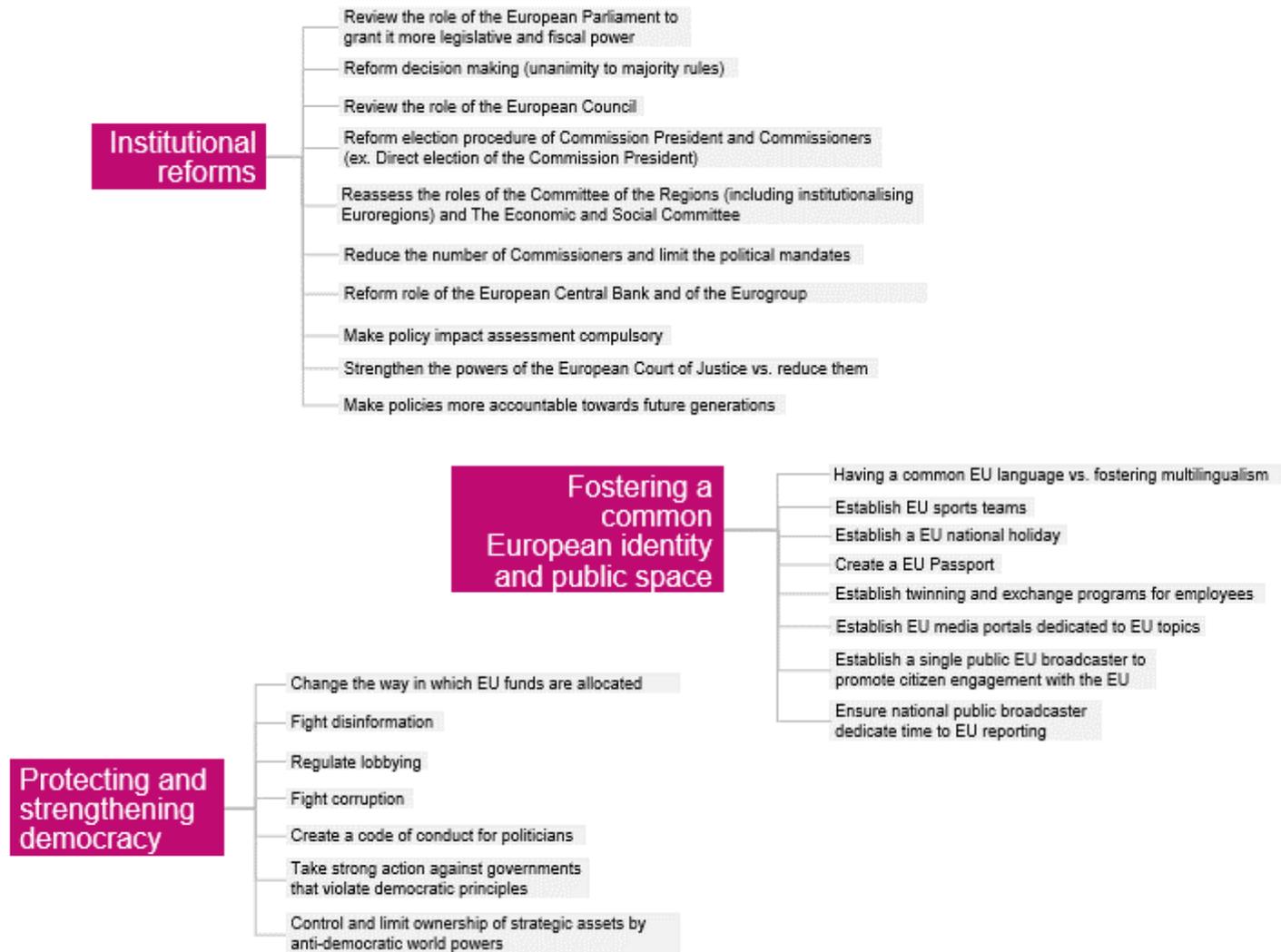




Figure 21 – Mind map ‘European democracy’ topic part 2



European Democracy





9. Migration

Since the launch of the platform, the Migration topic has generated a total of 2,488 contributions, including 847 ideas, 1,457 comments and 184 events. The most recurrent contributions under this topic reveal three general trends. On one hand, one group of interactions call for greater solidarity and better integration procedures, while on the other hand, other contributions want more action to control and reduce migration. Taking an intermediate position, another group of participants would like to foster international mobility, but only between economically developed democracies. The following themes are analysed accordingly:

- **Common EU policy on migration**
- **Humanistic stance on migration**
- **Integration**
- **Non-EU migration as a threat**
- **Border control**
- **Addressing root causes of migration**



Events

Among the events which have discussed migration from a European political perspective there was a “speed-dating” on migration policy that took place in Brussels (see [event](#)). This event looked in particular at migrants’ inclusion from a cultural and employment perspective. Participants demanded greater initiative from the EU against racism and discrimination, and proposed ways to improve migrants’ representation in culture and in the labour market.

Security and border control concerns have dominated other migration-related events, such as a debate organised in Vilnius (see [event](#)). Beyond discussing ways to improve European border protection, participants in this event have dwelled on the migrant crisis at the border between the European Union and Belarus, analysing its implications on the arriving countries. Unlike other events on border control, this discussion has also considered the humanitarian issues related to border control, trying to give an answer to the question: “Can EU borders protect both democracy and humanity?”.

This question has somehow characterised many of the debates around migration policies, such as on an online debate organised by a Greek foundation (see [event](#)). In this event, the pact between Turkey and the EU to control migrant flows was largely debated. Participants were divided between those who supported it, as an effective solution to the failure of the Dublin system, and others who condemned it on the basis of Turkey’s repeated human rights’ violations. Similarly, in a youth event in Poland young people favoured a balanced stance on migration, with rigid border controls, but also a humanitarian approach (see [event](#)). An event in Sweden discussed the current challenges and future perspectives of the European migration system (see [event](#)). Among the takeaways from this event, there is the need to consider the cultural shock that migrants’ face when they integrate in European societies. Participants highlighted the importance of family support in many non-Western societies, and the shift which migrants may face once they move to less family-based societies, like the European ones.

Some events in Spain discussed how migration is represented in schools and the role of education in migrants’ integration (see example of [event](#)). Another school event in Portugal proposed a simulation of the European Parliament, in which students discussed the merits and the limits of the European free-movement area and of the EU’s border policy (see [event](#)).



Common EU policy on migration

Many ideas under this topic demand a common EU migration policy. These are often accompanied by calls for greater respect of human rights, and an effective redistribution system. The need to reform the Dublin system is also frequently mentioned.

Under the sub-theme of legal migration, those advocating stricter migration policies call for a common EU policy of selective migration, with quotas, stricter selection and acceptance procedures (see example of [idea](#)). Alternative approaches to legal migration are suggested such as a European points-based immigration system, which is sometimes seen as necessary to regulate migration flows more efficiently (see [idea](#)). Contributors equally want to explore a model that allows asylum seekers to be moved to centres in a partner country for case reviews (see [event](#)).

Contributions that are more open to migration, similarly call for a unified and more efficient approach, more in line however with European (social) values. For example, contributions specifically discuss a single and efficient EU asylum procedure (see [idea](#)), also pointing to the need to reform the Dublin Regulation to prevent the unequal distribution of asylum seekers and migrants (see example of [idea](#)). Among these contributions, some propose that migrants should be granted a temporary EU passport to access work and residence rights (see example of [idea](#)). One highly endorsed idea under the Migration topic equally calls for a more concrete and fairer European policy on economic migration, with legal channels for entry and an integration policy based on



equal treatment and full respect of human rights (see [idea](#)).

One contribution advances the idea of creating the post of a European Commissioner for asylum and migration, who should act in coordination with the other institutions to supervise a common EU asylum system (see [idea](#)).

An EU labour migration policy or EU recruitment strategies for students and qualified employees coming from third-world countries are also advocated by citizens. In this regard, one contributor highlights the need for increased competences on migration for the EU so that it can manage migration in accordance with the principles and values of the Union (see [idea](#)).

A group of contributors advances the idea of fostering a selective type of immigration. Such participants usually see migration in a positive light because of the economic advantages it creates. They propose targeting specific countries to attract their talents (see [idea](#)), or easing the mobility criteria between economically advanced democracies, in the West and in Asia alike, in particular in the context of Free Trade Agreements (see [idea](#)).



Humanistic stance on migration

Contributors adhering to a humanistic view of migration advocate a change of narrative regarding migrants, especially in the light of their contributions as healthcare workers during the pandemic (see [event](#)).

Some contributions advocate the creation of humanitarian corridors or a fully-fledged open border policy, and they criticise the lack of solidarity towards migrants (see example of [idea](#)). Among participants sharing these ideas, initiatives aimed at patrolling the Mediterranean to push migrants back, or agreements to control migrant flows, such as the one between the EU and Turkey, are generally seen as a failure of the EU's migration system (see example of [idea](#)).

Contributors call for human rights to be respected with solutions to counter unregulated migration and an EU immigration policy with easier and more accessible

asylum procedures in countries of origin, legal and safe migratory routes and a crackdown on human trafficking in order to avoid the deaths of refugees on the EU's borders (see example of [idea](#)).

Some contributors propose a legal framework to halt the forced return of integrated persons and families to unsafe countries of origin (see [idea](#)). Other participants support a strategy of voluntary rather than forced returns, on the basis that the former, if implemented in concertation with the countries of origin, has proved much more effective (see [idea](#)).

Some of these contributions also address issues of inequality affecting the existing asylum-seeking process. For example, they highlight the fact that the share of male asylum seekers is significantly higher than that of female asylum seekers or families (see [idea](#)). Others report the difficulties faced by LGBTIQ asylum seekers, calling for greater protection and better support for this group (see [idea](#)).



Integration

Many proposals are related to the integration of migrants. Participants recognise the need to create more effective integration programmes, with specific attention being paid to language training. A number of participants discuss and endorse an idea asking the EU to create integration programmes, with different views being put forward (see [idea](#)).

Among the ideas discussing integration, many call for a monitored follow-up pathway for migrants in order to ensure full integration in EU Member States. One idea sees great potential in recognising and further activating migrants and members of receiving communities as changemakers (see [idea](#)). The importance of engaging migrants in local projects and volunteering activities is advanced on numerous occasions (see example of [idea](#)). One respondent stresses the importance of adopting a transversal approach to integration, focusing on the transferability of policies adopted at the local level, and an approach spanning from institutions to local associations, with the EU responsible of providing this type of framework



(see [idea](#)). Education is seen as key to integration, with language and European values playing a central role. In this connection, contributors feel that there is a need for sufficiently funded programmes to support the inclusion of school-age migrant children in the public education system (see [idea](#)). Other ideas focus on tertiary education as a key lever for greater integration. In this sense, one participant advocates improved access for young refugees to university programmes (see [idea](#)). A specific proposal addresses the issue of language barriers, advancing the idea of using Artificial Intelligence to overcome the language divide (see [idea](#)).

The successful integration of the migrants in the local labour market is seen as beneficial to the European economy. This is particularly true in the post-pandemic situation, as highlighted during a two-day event co-organised by the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee in Brussels (see [event](#)). One participant highlights in particular the beneficial outcomes of immigration to economically depressed areas (see example of [idea](#)).

There are calls for information campaigns and programmes to sensitise EU citizens to counter racism and move towards a more inclusive society. One contributor calls for greater diversity among the personnel working in policy-making bodies and public services related to migration (see [idea](#)). In connection with the opinions regarding racism and labour market exclusion, there are calls for equal and fair treatment of legally residing third-country nationals (see [idea](#)). Concerning labour market discrimination, one participant points to the necessity of (census) data on the ethnic background of migrants to efficiently inform policy making (see [idea](#)).

Some participants regret the limited rights of permanent residents in the EU. They note that the Union does not grant the right to vote to its permanent residents and demand that voting rights are residency based (see [idea](#)).

This issue is considered by some contributors to be particularly pressing when it comes to UK citizens who had been living in the EU before Brexit. One idea giving rise to a controversial debate is the introduction of a fast-track procedure to get EU-wide rights for British citizens who had been living in the EU before Brexit (see [idea](#)).



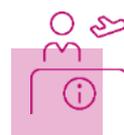
Non-EU migration as a threat

Despite the opposition expressed by some contributors to migration, ideas that openly define migration as a threat to European civilisation or political stability are relatively less endorsed than ideas related to integration and respect for human rights. When specified, concerns regarding European civilisation and political stability are put forward and are significantly endorsed by participants (see example of highly endorsed [idea](#)).

An event in Hungary discussed some fundamental legal issues related to migration. Among the questions which this event purported to answer, there was also 'the right (of a society) to preserve its own national culture, identity and lifestyle' in the face of mass migration (see [event](#)).

Commentators to this type of contributions are outspoken in their ideas and contributions on the topic of migration. One theme observed is the feeling that migration from non-EU countries is a threat to EU civilisation, identity, values and culture (see example of [idea](#)). These contributors call for measures to restrict non-EU migration, a stricter repatriation policy, and strategies hindering migrant mobility, such as tougher border controls (see example of [idea](#)).

Multiple participants warn against the use of illegal migration as a (political) weapon, referring in particular to the large influx of migrants from Belarus to the Lithuanian and Polish borders (see example of [idea](#)). With reference to the migrant crisis at the border with Belarus, contributors' opinions diverge.



Border control

A relatively high number of ideas support a tough stance on immigration. Participants who adopt this line oppose the regularisation of illegal immigrants and call for a further empowerment of European border control authorities, such as Frontex. However, some of them favour a national rather than a European approach to



immigration control, fearing that the EU would be too permissive towards asylum seekers.

In general there is support for more organised and coordinated efforts when it comes to border control, with calls for more comprehensive border controls, including push-back authority (see example of [idea](#)), greater support for Frontex, with a better definition of its functions (see [idea](#)), and a legally binding approach to Search and Rescue (SAR) efforts in the Mediterranean (see [idea](#)). However, the role of Frontex, and of sea patrolling initiatives, is often discussed on the platform, with other participants asking for greater control of their functioning, to assure that human rights are being respected (see [idea](#)). A more endorsed idea demands quick expulsion from the EU for those migrants who commit a serious crime (see example of [idea](#)). A similar idea asking for the return of irregular migrants generates a debate between contributors in favour of immediate repatriations and those against (see [idea](#)). One respondent proposes to interrupt foreign aid to countries that do not accept to repatriate their nationals (see [idea](#)).

Other contributions call for more solidarity and respect for human rights. The ideas discussed here are, for example, a centralised EU distribution system based on solidarity, funding to improve border reception infrastructures (housing and food) or a supranational agency managing European refugee camps, co-managed by different countries and funded by EU resources (see example of [idea](#)).

The recent debate about the extension of EU financing to fund the construction of national barriers against migrants is partially reflected in some contributions demanding increased financial support from the EU to its Member States to reinforce physical border protections (see [idea](#)).

However, when participants call for increased financial support from the EU to tackle migration at the borders, they do not always advocate the construction of new barriers. Some of them recognise the key role of local and regional authorities operating on the national borders, and they want increased financing for projects related to the reception and integration of migrants (see example of [idea](#)).

In an event named 'Stronger borders, stronger Europe', which took place in Budapest, participants advocated a more pragmatic and stricter border policy (see [event](#)).



Addressing root causes of migration

A smaller section of ideas goes deeper into the migration question and considers the need, alongside policy measures managing migration in the EU, to take measures to address the root causes of migration elsewhere. Cooperation between European and third-world countries, particularly the African ones, is seen as key to address the root causes of migration (see example of [idea](#)). Thinking about the future of Europe, contributors highlight the need to address the root causes of migration in order to tackle the migration issues the EU is currently facing. The role of international partnerships, including agreements with third-world countries, in managing immigration flows was the subject of an event in Portugal (see [event](#)).

Suggestions in this regard range from establishing equal trade relations, investing in more development aid plans and academic training, and the professional development of people living in third-world countries (see [idea](#)). A common concern is that development aid is being misused by receiving countries, making it ineffective. In this sense, one participant proposed to improve the traceability of funds and thus monitor their use by employing blockchain technologies and smart certificates (see [idea](#)).

A particular group of contributions takes the EU to task on the basis that it has played a part in regional destabilisation through, for example, subsidised agricultural exports to developing countries (see [idea](#)).

Also in order to address economic inequalities between developed and developing countries, some participants advocate the promotion of sustainable, climate change-proof agriculture in third-world countries (see [idea](#)). This would also help counter 'climate migration' (see example of [idea](#) and [event](#)). The phenomenon of 'climate migration' is indeed largely addressed by participants, who want greater

public focus on this issue and the recognition of the status of climate refugee in international law (see [idea](#)).



Figure 22 – Mind map ‘Migration’ topic part 1

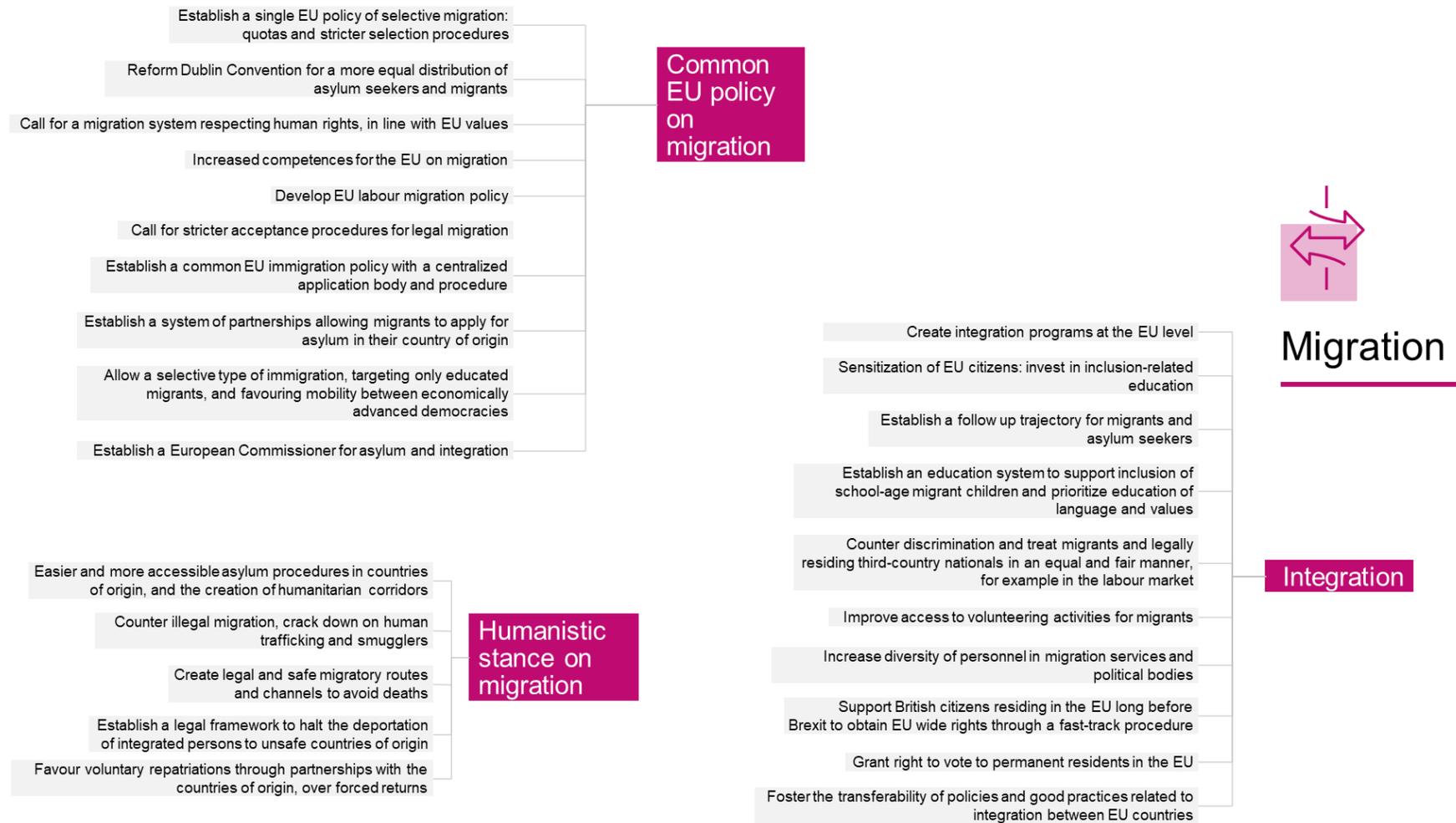
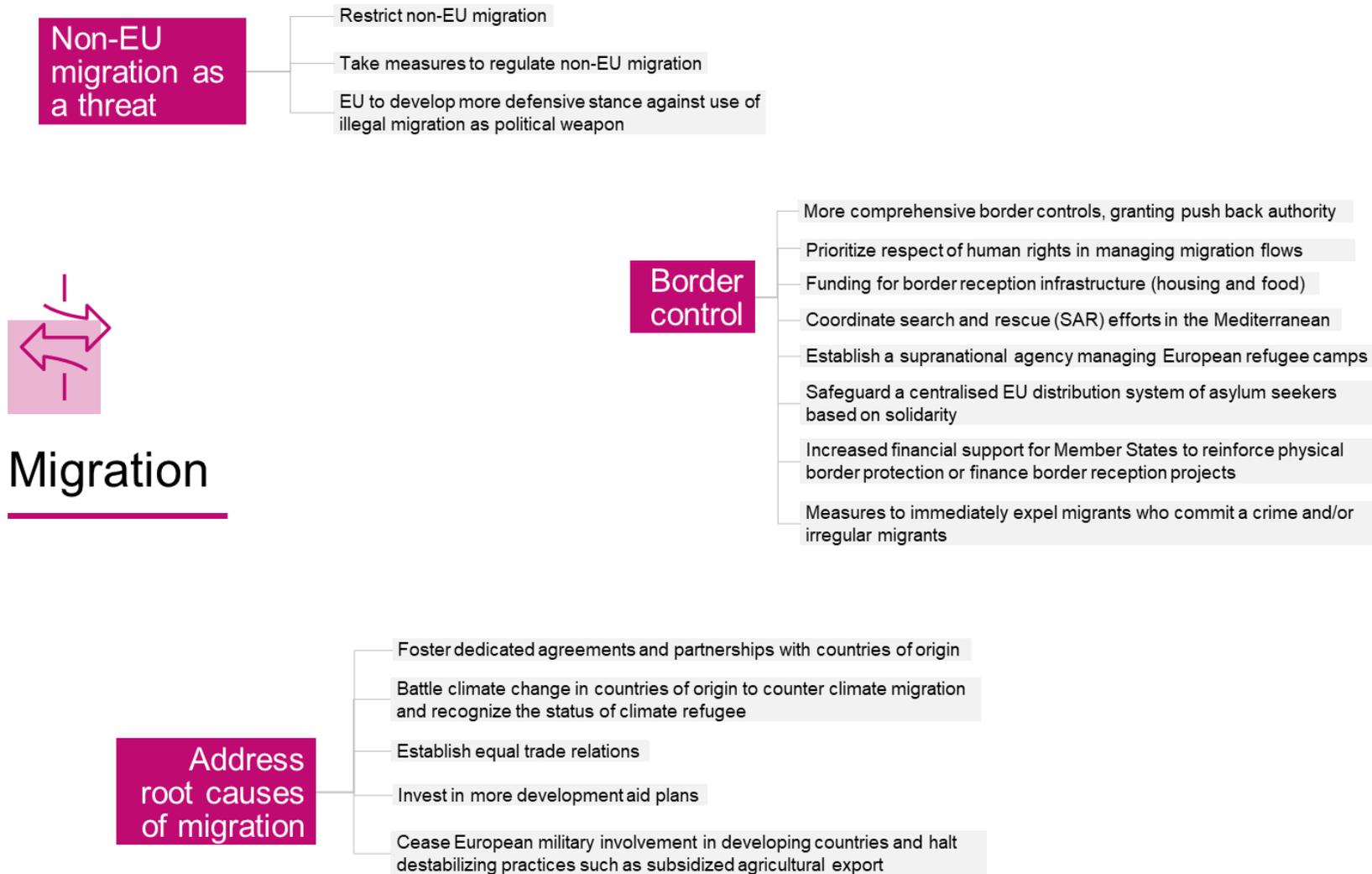




Figure 23 - Mind map 'Migration' topic part 2





10. Education, Culture, Youth and Sport

Ideas posted under the topic of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport cover a variety of themes, given its multi-thematic nature. As elsewhere on the platform, the call to foster a common EU identity is a recurrent underlying sentiment for themes identified in this topic with contributions related to, amongst others, exchange, exposure to different cultures, and mobility. This topic has generated an overall volume of 4,340 contributions, consisting of 1,738 ideas, 1,605 comments and 997 events. The various ideas can be grouped in the following themes:

- **Foster common EU identity**
- **Intra-EU mobility**
- **Future-proof education**
- **Work precariousness and unemployment among youth**
- **European heritage**
- **Access to education and culture**
- **Creative and academic professionals**
- **Inclusivity in sport**



Events

Events that address the issues associated with Education, Culture, Youth and Sport reflect the diversity of the themes that are included under the umbrella of this topic. Since the beginning of the Conference on the Future of Europe, hundreds of events have been organised in various EU countries.

Various events have discussed ways to improve policies in the educational field, including at EU level (see example of [event](#)), and effective youth participation in the democratic processes. In this sense, the merits and limits of the Conference itself have also been analysed (see example of [event](#)). Occasionally, more original approaches to engage young audiences have been used. In Spain, university students at Carlos III University were asked to put themselves in the shoes of a university dean and advance proposals to improve academia (see [event](#)). Another event took the form of a quiz, where the winning team was awarded Interrail tickets (see [event](#)).

Discussions on the future of education were, in some cases, generic and all-encompassing, while in other cases they focused on more specific issues. An event in Croatia discussed professional development opportunities for youth, including up-skilling, and self-employment and activation programmes (see [event](#)). Youth mobility was also discussed during this event. On this topic, some interesting ideas emerged from a youth event organised in Paris, which discussed ways to improve EU initiatives and their visibility (see [event](#)). Among other things, young participants in this event proposed to award ECTS credits in exchange for participation and engagement in EU's initiatives.

Other events discussed how specific youth organisations can contribute to the future of the Union. For example, an event discussed the potential contributions of faith-based scout groups to the EU (see [event](#)).

The relationship between young people in and outside the EU was the subject of another series of events. For example, an event in Kosovo collected recommendations from local young participants on the place of young people in Europe (see [event](#)). Another online initiative by an Austrian youth group discussed the role of young Russian people residing in European countries (see [event](#)).

In relation to culture and cultural exchanges, a youth-dedicated event in Lithuania has discussed the benefits of cultural exchanges between European countries, but also ways to improve mutual cultural understanding (see [event](#)). This event underlined the importance of culture in creating a more tolerant society. On the same note, an event was organised to promote the initiative We All Need Theatre, which aims at raising awareness about the importance of accessibility facilities for disabled people in cultural sites, especially theatres (see [event](#)).

One event in Hungary analysed the impact of digital education of high school pupils and families (see [event](#)). According to its participants, the impact of digital education has been unequal, depending on the families' level of access to the internet and the parents' IT skills. This has entailed different educational outcomes for the pupils: while some took advantage of digital education, other lost out and fell into technological addiction. Participants asked the EU to support digital literacy and IT support, while guaranteeing broad internet coverage.



Foster common EU identity

When it comes to the theme of European identity, one of the most discussed subjects is that of language learning.

Under the notion of language education as a means of fostering intercultural exchanges and how it contributes to a common EU identity, several contributions stress the need to overcome monolingual schooling, and call for the recognition of the heterogeneous and multilingual nature of Europe as a resource (see example of an [idea](#)). Similarly, a panel discussion in Berlin explored Europe's multilingualism and ways to recognise and encourage multi-language diversity (see [event](#)). Another participant advocating multilingualism calls for greater support for the teaching of minority languages in school (see [idea](#)). One contributor suggests



introducing EU-financed travel vouchers for language exchanges (see [idea](#)).

The establishment of one common European language is seen as something which could foster European integration according to many participants (see example of [idea](#)). This is also widely discussed under the topic of Other ideas (see example of [idea](#)). The discussion deals with the various advantages and disadvantages of such a common European language and the various possible languages, including Esperanto (see [idea](#) and [idea](#), both highly endorsed), Latin (see example of [idea](#)), or English (see example of [idea](#)). A conversation about Esperanto in particular has sparked a certain interest online, mirroring the vibrancy of the debate around one neutral language for all EU countries (see [event](#)).

Another idea among the most endorsed ideas refers to the creation of a European public broadcaster (see [idea](#)). Several ideas relate to establishing more EU media portals (TV, radio and social media) to better engage European citizens when it comes to EU matters and issues, with the ultimate goal of strengthening the European identity and core values (see example of [idea](#)). Favouring the circulation of European media productions, for example by establishing a common EU media market, is also advanced as an idea by numerous participants (see example of [idea](#)). One idea is the creation of a specific EU media platform tailored to language learning (see [idea](#)).

A sub-theme of ideas relates to education where contributors suggest the introduction of a mandatory course about the history and institutions of the EU in all European secondary schools as a tool for younger generations to build interest and a sense of ownership with regard to the EU, thereby enhancing the EU identity building process (see example of [idea](#)). European history knowledge is seen as key also by another participant, who proposes to launch a European survey to measure young people's historical consciousness (see [idea](#)), while another advances the idea of creating an official European history textbook (see [idea](#)).

The existence of school events related to the EU is considered as key by many participants (see example of [idea](#)), with one of them proposing the establishment of a teacher in charge of coordinating EU-related

events and programmes (see [idea](#)). Many ideas related to fostering a common EU identity suggest various forms of exchange or twinning between schools in different Member States to foster friendship across Member State borders (see [idea](#)). One idea proposes to promote the study of European history in school curricula, including the history of each individual European country (see [idea](#)).

The sub-theme of sport in relation to fostering a common EU identity discusses the organisation of more transnational, inter-European sports events (see example of an [idea](#)) and the possibility of creating a European sports team which could compete in international events (see example of [idea](#)). Moreover, the importance of common EU symbols has been raised in relation to creating a common EU identity with, amongst others, an idea to incorporate EU flags on the sports equipment and uniforms of athletes from EU Member States (see [idea](#)).

Another idea, which is more endorsed and also widely mentioned in other topics, advocates the establishment of a European public holiday on 9 May to foster a common European spirit (see example of [idea](#)).

The promotion of European culture, such as music in various European languages, is mentioned by one participant who wants radios to be required to stream at least 20% non-English music (see [idea](#)).

Food is also seen as a way to build bridges between European countries and cultures (see [idea](#)), leading a participant to propose the creation a EU-funded European recipes app (see [idea](#)).



Intra-EU Mobility

The topic of intra-EU mobility generates a relatively high number of contributions. These either advance ideas to improve the existing mobility programmes, or come up with new original proposals.

Some participants propose the creation of an EU-led online portal for applying for higher education courses in the EU. This portal could also allow students to simultaneously apply to different programmes within the European Union (see example of [idea](#)).

Another sub-theme raised by several contributors concerns the expansion of Erasmus programme to include young people not in university, for instance by extending it to high school students, including those in vocational education. This would give those who have not gone into higher education the opportunity to live abroad, exchange good practices, learn new languages and cultures, and expand their skillsets in general (see example of [idea](#)).

Moreover, participants have stressed the need to make the Erasmus programme more inclusive for low-income students. One idea is to improve the adjustment of Erasmus scholarships to the cost of living in each country (see [idea](#)). In this sense, one participant proposes entrusting the university in the country of destination with the task of allocating Erasmus scholarships, so that applicants can apply directly to their preferred destination university, rather than applying through their home university (see [idea](#)).

The desire to improve the current form of the programme highlights the awareness of the importance of educational mobility programmes. This is also demonstrated by the existence of various events related to this subject and linked to the two ideas reported above (see [event](#)).

One participant calls for UK students to be reintegrated within the Erasmus+ programme (see [idea](#)).

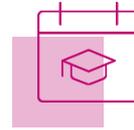
In general, ideas concerning the accessibility and inclusivity of Erasmus programme re-emerge frequently. As an example, the latest contributions suggest extending the Erasmus programme to other categories of training, such as agriculture and other crafts (see [idea](#)).

Another area of focus is the 'DiscoverEU' initiative. Some participants propose extending the *DiscoverEU* initiative to every young European from the age of 18 years (see example of [idea](#)).

Finally, an idea on academic mobility concerns the ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Convention Treaty in order to facilitate professional and academic mobility in Greece (see [idea](#)).

A unique idea concerning mobility, potentially from non-EU countries, concerns the creation of a European 'Student At Risk' scholarship scheme for

students being prosecuted in their own country in order to protect academic freedom (see [idea](#)).



Future-proof education

Many ideas express the need to rethink education in the current digitalised era, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic altered teaching practices in schools and universities. According to many contributors, rethinking education in the digital age is a prerequisite for Europe's future global competitiveness and modernisation (see example of [idea](#)).

In order to facilitate access to courses, participants propose digital credentials and research materials, as well as creating a single repository of all academic resources, or a single European digital platform open to all accredited EU higher education institutions (see [idea](#)). This call goes hand-in-hand with the need to promote ICT in schools and universities, also by subsidising schools to buy hardware (see example of [idea](#)).

In connection with the issue of adequate equipment and spaces for education, a proposal which has been highly endorsed by the platform's users is that of a European Plan for Education. That would be 'a European strategy focused on supporting direct investments in educational infrastructure and improving the accessibility, connectivity and quality of education and lifelong learning' (see [idea](#)). Another highly endorsed idea proposes to establish the right of lifelong learning and training (see [idea](#)).

The promotion of soft skills, and specifically artistic activities is often seen by contributors as another key step in developing EU students' critical thinking and reinforcing their global values, especially at a young age (see example of [idea](#)).

The implementation of inclusive educational methods, and more generally the promotion of diversity in education, is regarded as an important objective for the future of education in the EU (see [idea](#)). This also reflects ideas regarding the necessity to fight feminicides (see [idea](#)) and antisemitism through education (see [idea](#)).



A sub-theme of ideas addresses the need to reform educational practices to produce adults who are able to be active citizens of the EU. Next to exchanges and education on the EU, as discussed above, this sub-theme includes ideas discussing the need to encourage the active social participation of young students in schools (see [idea](#)) or instil cross-cultural skills with, for example, more foreign language learning practices (see [idea](#)). A related idea, namely the diversity of languages and the role that their media exposure can have in facilitating learning and the creation of a common European identity, was explored during a number of events (see example of an [event](#)).

A group of contributors has drawn attention to the need to rethink the current educational system in order to prepare young people for the world of the future. Contributors call for education on economics and finance (see [idea](#)), and climate change (see example of [idea](#)), including the establishment of European Climate Corps (see [idea](#)). Moreover, they call for mechanisms to improve the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) skills of young people, e.g. via an EU wide STEM basic skills programme (see [idea](#)). Additionally, as raised in the topic of digital transformation, contributors call for young people to be trained in digital wellbeing (see example of an [idea](#)). The issue of digital wellbeing may fall also within the scope of the more general call for increased mental health support in schools (see [idea](#)).

In the idea of future-proof education conceived by some participants, school curricula are flexible (see [idea](#)) and schools support students' associations and activities training students to be autonomous adults (see [idea](#)). In this sense, the proposal to increase the influence of civil society organisations in schools might go hand-in-hand with this more 'participative' concept of school (see [idea](#)). Also in line with this view is the idea of fostering sport practice and increasing sport classes in school (see [idea](#)). Teachers' evaluations, ideally coordinated by the European Union, are also advocated by other participants (see [idea](#)).

A strand of ideas also discusses the alignment of (vocational) education with the working world (see example of [idea](#)) and the need to encourage entrepreneurial skills in education (see [idea](#)). Some ideas added on the platform focus on training for innovation and entrepreneurship (see example of

[idea](#)), and on the need for a better recognition of informal learning (see example of [idea](#)). In this regard another proposal involves introducing a mandatory professional orientation to assess the talents and interests of pupils early in their school cursus (see [idea](#)).

Another theme which has emerged following the diffusion of online classes during the pandemic, is that of home-schooling. One participant calls for home-schooling to be recognised in all EU countries (see [idea](#)).

The idea of establishing a standard final exam, common to all EU countries, is proposed by one participant (see [idea](#)).

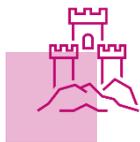


Work precariousness and unemployment among youth

Youth employment is a recurring topic on the platform, also because this is strictly linked to education and training. Many ideas discussing educational programmes also focus on employability and transition to the labour market (see example of [idea](#)). However, when it comes to youth, the issue of unemployment, and of young people 'not in employment, education or training' (NEETs) is also seen as key by participants, and some ideas related to this are highly endorsed (see example of [idea](#)). The topic of work precariousness among youth is discussed by multiple participants, who call for support young people in precarious working conditions through quality jobs, fair remuneration and access to social protection (see [idea](#) and [idea](#)). In relation to precarious employment, one respondent asks the EU to abolish unpaid internships (see [idea](#)). Others propose extending certain guarantees and forms of employment support dedicated to youth (see [idea](#)), or even the implementation of quality standards that would be binding for all jobs created under EU and National Recovery Plans (see [idea](#)). Particular attention is paid by some contributors to those Member States which

are more affected by youth unemployment, such as the Mediterranean ones (see [idea](#)).

An event in Lithuania focused on the multiple challenges faced by young people in the post-pandemic period, including unemployment. The event discussed whether the European Council Strategic Agenda 2019-2024 fully considers young people's specific problems (see [event](#)).



European heritage

A relatively smaller category of contributions are those calling for the protection and celebration of European culture and heritage, for example by way of introducing an EU culture commissioner (see [idea](#)) and in general more investment in the preservation of common EU cultural heritage. There are also calls for the preservation of the traditions expressed by minority groups in particular (see [event](#)), as well as of religious cultural heritage (see [idea](#)).

On a more general level, the creation of a virtual library, associated with the libraries of different EU Member States, has been suggested with the aim of making rare books and artworks more widely available to all EU citizens (see [idea](#)).



Access to education and culture

The theme of access to education is a frequently mentioned one. This embraces different types of inequalities of access, as well as distinct educational levels, with a specific focus on tertiary education. Although the ideas relating to this subject are relatively less discussed, a proposal to make access to education free for everybody has been positively welcomed by some participants (see [idea](#)).

A transition which is considered key by participants is the one between secondary and tertiary education. In this regard, there are multiple calls from participants to support students in this crucial transition (see example of [idea](#)), also through improved university orientation programmes (see [idea](#)). Some categories are particularly disadvantaged when it comes to accessing tertiary education. In this sense, there are calls to support ethnic minorities and disabled people in accessing tertiary studies (see [idea](#)). Other participants are aware that other barriers to education might be of a geographical or economical nature. To overcome these barriers, multiple participants call for greater educational resources in rural areas (see example of [idea](#)), and some propose to establish different types of EU-funded welfare benefits in order to guarantee students' financial autonomy (see example of [idea](#)).

Inequalities of access not only affect tertiary education but also cultural facilities and museums. Hence, the call by one participant to facilitate access to museums for disabled people (see [idea](#)). This was also the subject of the We All Need Theatre campaign (see [event](#)), dedicated specifically to accessibility to theatres for individuals with disabilities. Another proposal concerns introducing an EU Museum Pass to make museums more affordable (see [idea](#)). This idea reflects that of introducing cultural passes or vouchers, advanced by multiple participants (see example of [idea](#)). Another idea aims instead at tackling this issue from a wider perspective, proposing to increase public funding for culture, thus reducing its reliance on private funds (see [idea](#)).

A particular situation of disadvantage highlighted by one participant is that of former inmates. Despite having served their sentence, many former prisoners struggle to go back to a normal social life, which increases their risk of becoming repeat offenders. Therefore education and training in prisons are particularly important (see [idea](#)).

As a way to increase awareness about these issues, one participant advances the idea of establishing an Equal Opportunities Day at European level (see [idea](#)).



Creative and academic professionals

As previously mentioned, the issue of work precarity, particularly among youth, is one which has generated a considerable level of attention from participants on the platform. The creative sector is particularly impacted by precarious work.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the working conditions of cultural practitioners, as well as creative communities, has given rise to a serious reflection on their status and the role of EU institutions in providing a legal framework that would improve the sector's precarity (see example of an [idea](#)). One participant asks the EU to support the creative sector to ensure a fair remuneration for creative workers (see [idea](#)). According to another contribution, Recovery Fund money should be used to fund the cultural sector, and the book sector in particular (see [idea](#)), while one contribution specifically demands to increase financial support for dance institutes (see [idea](#)).

The professionalisation of cultural workers was a crucial topic of discussion during several events that were organised across Europe around culture (see example of an [event](#)). One participant proposes that the EU should recognise the status of artists, which would also facilitate cultural exchanges (see [idea](#)).

Other recommendations with regard to the creative sphere concern both support for organisations that operate at the local level and the establishment of an integrated system of national and regional co-financing that would facilitate more international cultural cooperation (see example of an [idea](#)).

Academic professionals and researchers are another professional category highly affected by work precarity. One idea proposes to change the way in which research grants are allocated to make it more suitable to intersectional research (see [idea](#)).



Inclusivity in sport

Ideas related to sport, especially when this is discussed as a subject *per se*, occupy a somewhat smaller space on the platform. However, the theme of sport has been discussed by multiple participants.

As previously mentioned, many participants advocate a European sport team, and others call for more sport practice in schools, but the subject of sport is often mentioned also in connection with other themes, such as inclusivity. Participants question the ability of sport to be inclusive (see example of [idea](#)) and propose ideas to improve sport's inclusivity (see example of [idea](#)). One contribution asks the EU to guarantee gender equality in sport, also through the establishment of a dedicated European authority (see [idea](#)). In a meeting organized by Europa Press, attendees debated whether sport fashion sexualizes women (see [idea](#) and [event](#)).

Another often mentioned aspect of sport is the unequal public knowledge about less mainstream sports (see example of [idea](#)). In this sense, according to one idea, institutions should intervene to support less widely practiced sports (see [idea](#)).

An event in Germany discussed ways in which sport can contribute to climate action, with participants, who were mostly members of sport clubs, sharing examples of good practices (see [event](#)).



Figure 24 – Mind map ‘Education, culture, youth and sport’ topic part 1

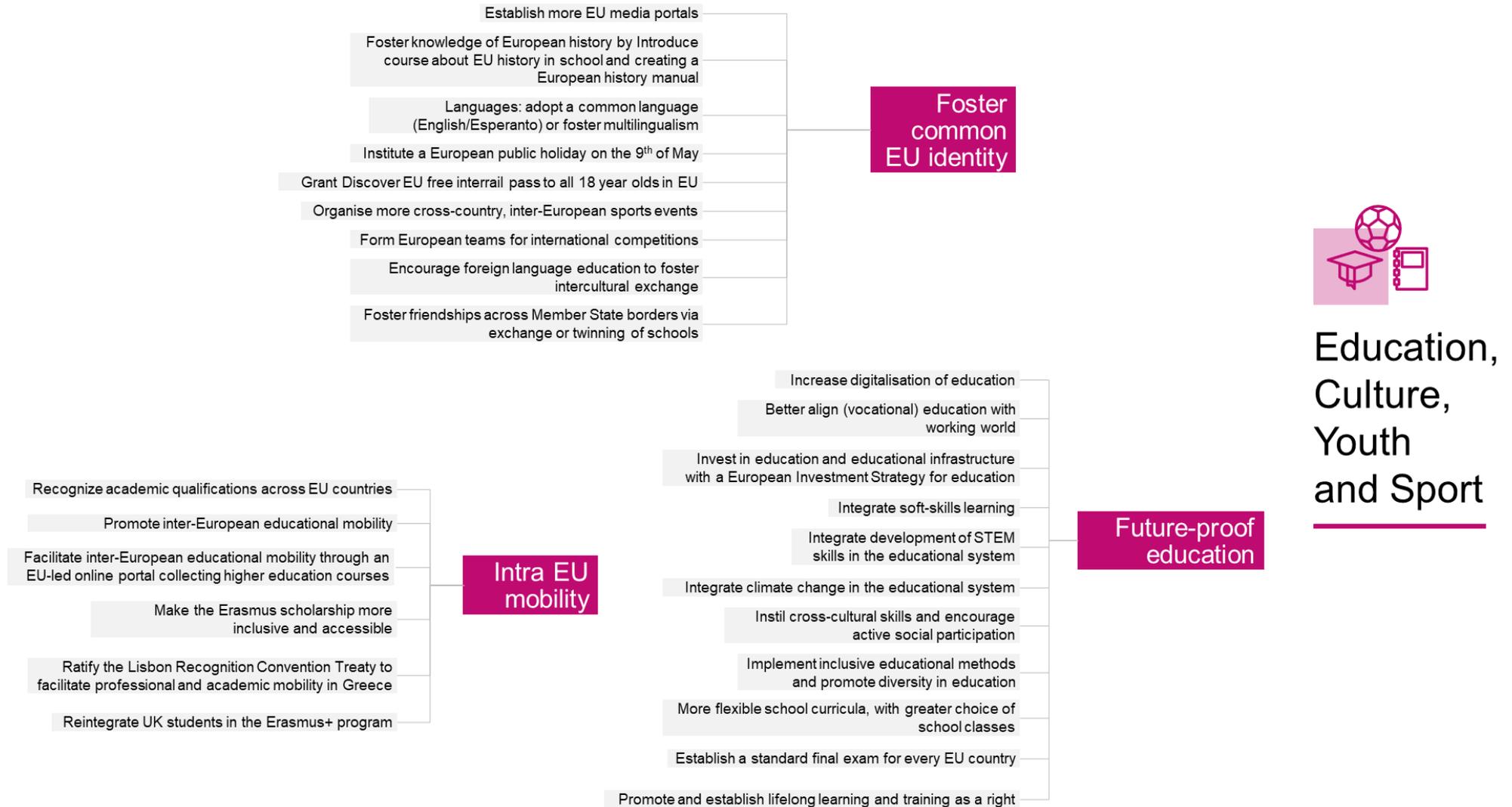
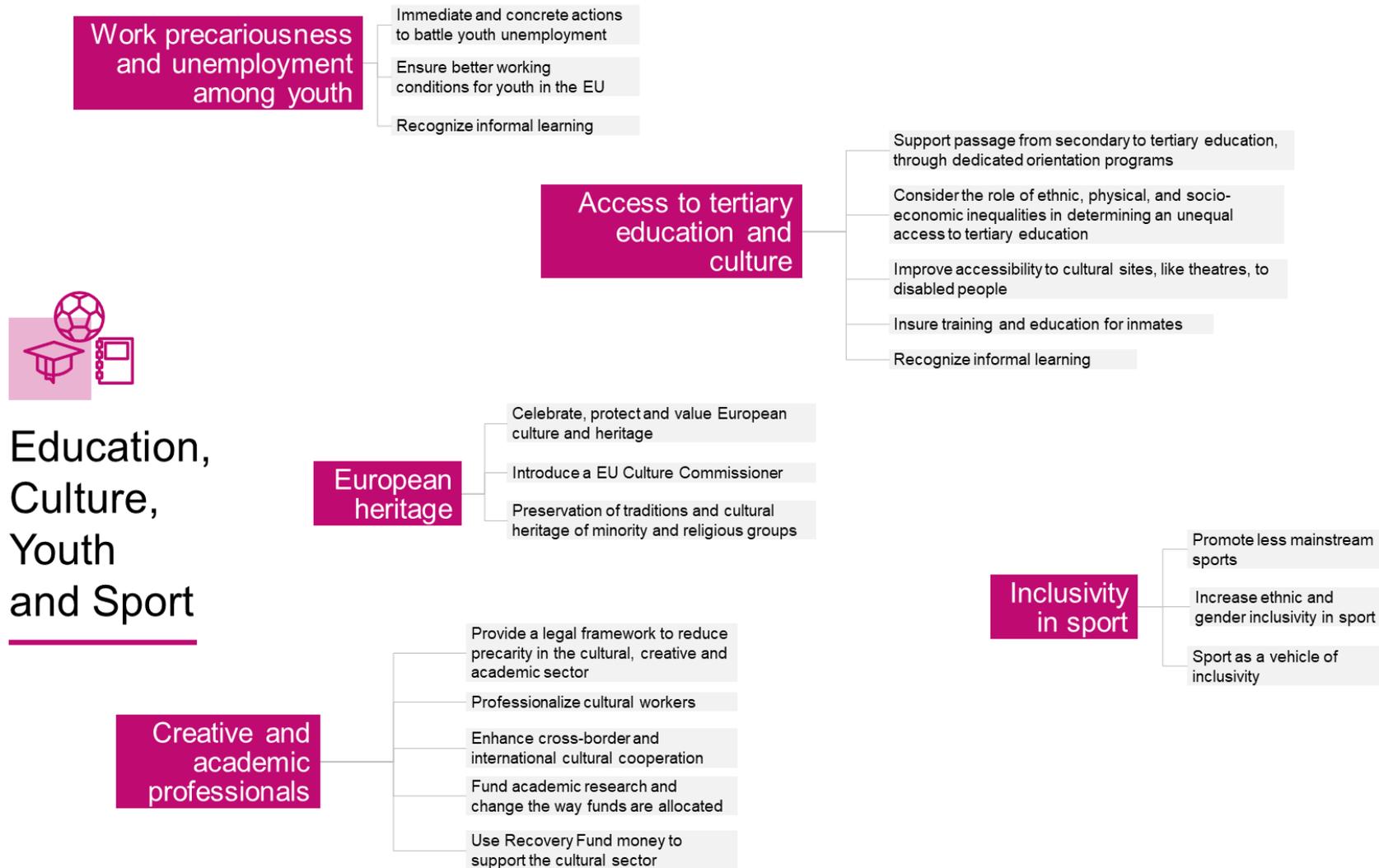




Figure 25 – Mind map ‘Education, culture, youth and sport’ topic part 2





ANNEX I: List of currently most endorsed and commented ideas per topic



Most commented and endorsed ideas per topic (19/04 /2021–20/02/2022)

This Annex presents the most endorsed and commented ideas under each topic as of 20 February 2022, including suggestions made by individuals, as well as ideas promoted by organisations. It also includes the ideas registered under the topic 'Other ideas'; in the rest of the report ideas under that topic have been placed under one of the nine thematic topics, or several topics in case of cross-cutting issues. The aim of this Annex is to reflect a high level of interest in or debate on some ideas on the platform.

Note that endorsements are similar to a 'like/up-vote' in social media. They indicate participants' interest in and general favourability towards an idea, whilst not giving indications about any opposition to it. Therefore, the number of endorsements is not an indicator of overall support for the idea, but just one of the many aspects to be taken into consideration in the analysis of platform contributions. Comments can cover a range of feedback, from neutral to agreeing or strongly disagreeing. For more background on the analysis of contributions on the platform, see Annex II.



	Most endorsed	Most commented
Climate change and the environment	Idea: Just transition (see idea) Endorsements: 472 Comments: 19	Idea: Promotion of nuclear energy where renewable energy cannot be used (translated) (see idea) Endorsements: 118 Comments: 159
	Idea: Stop all fossil fuel subsidies (translated) (see idea) Endorsements: 321 Comments: 28	Idea: Improve protection of nature, environment, biodiversity and people when developing industrial wind power plants in Europe (see idea) Endorsements: 36 Comments: 96
	Idea: Make European railway network more accessible and advisable as a replacement for intra-EU connections (see idea) Endorsements: 237 Comments: 35	Idea: Make nuclear power the focus of the green transformation (see idea) Endorsements: 37 Comments: 76
	Idea: Euro Trainscanner (translated) (see idea) Endorsements: 202 Comments: 63	Idea: Reduce Environment Pollution by Immigration Policy (see idea) Endorsements: 8 Comments: 74
	Idea: Ban of live-bait fishing within the EU (see idea) Endorsements: 175 Comments: 20	Idea: Euro Trainscanner (translated) (see idea) Endorsements: 202 Comments: 63



	Most endorsed	Most commented
Health	<p>Idea: Science-intensive healthy longevity technologies: development and access (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 596 Comments: 83</p>	<p>Idea: Stop daylight saving time change: Adopting astronomically correct time and optionally mandate moving opening hours to 1 hour earlier (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 41 Comments: 131</p>
	<p>Idea: Equal access to affordable and high-quality public services, including health (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 456 Comments: 17</p>	<p>Idea: Science-intensive healthy longevity technologies: development and access (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 596 Comments: 83</p>
	<p>Idea: Research on Myalgic Encefalomyelitis (ME/CFS) (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 217 Comments: 5</p>	<p>Idea: More effective assistance thanks to a common language: Esperanto (translated) (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 43 Comments: 36</p>
	<p>Idea: Focus on Anti-Aging and Longevity research (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 168 Comments: 32</p>	<p>Idea: Multilingualism in the hospital: Medical staff schooled in the international language Esperanto (translated) (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 22 Comments: 35</p>
	<p>Idea: Treaty change to strengthen the EU's powers in health (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 117 Comments: 6</p>	<p>Idea: Focus on Anti-Aging and Longevity research (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 168 Comments: 32</p>



	Most endorsed	Most commented
Stronger economy, social justice and jobs	<p>Idea: Making the EU budget work for Europeans: A Fiscal Union (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 580</p> <p>Comments: 33</p>	<p>Idea: Unconditional Basic Incomes (UBI) throughout the EU which ensure every person's material existence and opportunity to participate in society (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 317</p> <p>Comments: 124</p>
	<p>Idea: New EU economic model and governance (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 547</p> <p>Comments: 33</p>	<p>Idea: How much money would Esperanto save the European Union? (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 79</p> <p>Comments: 85</p>
	<p>Idea: European Pillar of Social Rights for a social market economy (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 550</p> <p>Comments: 36</p>	<p>Idea: Unconditional Basic Income (translated) (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 77</p> <p>Comments: 83</p>
	<p>Idea: A renewed Social Contract for Europe for a fair recovery (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 523</p> <p>Comments: 32</p>	<p>Idea: A social protocol in the Treaties to stop dumping of wages and conditions (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 33</p> <p>Comments: 66</p>
	<p>Idea: A social protocol in the Treaties to stop dumping of wages and conditions (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 329</p> <p>Comments: 66</p>	<p>Idea: Start fighting tax havens inside & outside the EU (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 269</p> <p>Comments: 52</p>



	Most endorsed	Most commented
EU in the world	<p>Idea: ETUC calls for a reform of EU trade and investment policy and relaunch of global multilateralism (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 460 Comments: 17</p>	<p>Idea: The creation of the European Army (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 434 Comments: 203</p>
	<p>Idea: The creation of the European Army (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 434 Comments: 203</p>	<p>Idea: The Internet portal “European Union — News” should also inform in the world auxiliary language Esperanto (translated) (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 40 Comments: 63</p>
	<p>Idea: Acting as one: EU as a global actor (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 299 Comments: 24</p>	<p>Idea: Uniting Europe: Continue the EU enlargement (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 230 Comments: 61</p>
	<p>Idea: Foreign Policy at EU level based on absolute majority, not unanimity (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 257 Comments: 51</p>	<p>Idea: Foreign Policy at EU level based on absolute majority, not unanimity (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 257 Comments: 51</p>
	<p>Uniting Europe: Continue the EU enlargement (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 230 Comments: 61</p>	<p>Idea: Integration of the Armed Forces of the Member States at European level (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 21 Comments: 33</p>



	Most endorsed	Most commented
Values and rights, rule of law, security	<p>Idea: 10 million voices: make Catalan an official EU language (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 823</p> <p>Comments: 95</p>	<p>Idea: Protecting vulnerable human life: a value of Europe (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 242</p> <p>Comments: 190</p>
	<p>Idea: No double standards in the defence of democracy and rule of law (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 573</p> <p>Comments: 39</p>	<p>Idea: Creation of a common European army (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 68</p> <p>Comments: 183</p>
	<p>Idea: Strengthen the enforceability of Human Rights Instruments (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 476</p> <p>Comments: 14</p>	<p>Idea: Trisomy 21: We want more... (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 82</p> <p>Comments: 142</p>
	<p>Idea: Gender equality (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 465</p> <p>Comments: 21</p>	<p>Idea: Protecting our fundamental values: Mechanism on Democracy, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 256</p> <p>Comments: 116</p>
	<p>Idea: Protecting our fundamental values: Mechanism on Democracy, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 256</p> <p>Comments: 116</p>	<p>Idea: Recognition of Esperanto as one of the cultural languages of EU citizens. (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 220</p> <p>Comments: 90</p>



	Most endorsed	Most commented
Digital transformation	Idea: Fair digitalisation (see idea) Endorsements: 489 Comments: 43	Idea: EU-CAP = European Citizens Awareness Platform (see idea) Endorsements: 0 Comments: 81
	Idea: Public support for open source software and hardware (translated) (see idea) Endorsements: 152 Comments: 9	Idea: Ban cryptocurrencies (see idea) Endorsements: 14 Comments: 52
	Idea: European chip-making (translated) (see idea) Endorsements: 120 Comments: 34	Idea: Promote radio and television programmes that inform Esperanto via a digital distribution channel (DAB+ or DVB-T2) also in the world auxiliary language (translated) (see idea) Endorsements: 26 Comments: 47
	Idea: Kickstarter should be equally accessible for all EU citizens (see idea) Endorsements: 100 Comments: 11	Idea: Universal income for open source maintainers (see idea) Endorsements: 58 Comments: 43
	Idea: Towards an Ethical AI: promote debate and avoid inequalities (see idea) Endorsements: 96 Comments: 5	Idea: Fair digitalisation (see idea) Endorsements: 489 Comments: 43



	Most endorsed	Most commented
European Democracy	<p>Idea: Stronger together: A democratic European Federation (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 935 Comments: 183</p>	<p>Idea: We need a common European language (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 120 Comments: 186</p>
	<p>Idea: For a clarity mechanism on the right to self-determination (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 905 Comments: 153</p>	<p>Idea: Stronger together: A democratic European Federation (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 932 Comments: 183</p>
	<p>Idea: Abolish the Council Veto! (Petition to the Conference's Representatives) (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 757 Comments: 87</p>	<p>Idea: For a clarity mechanism on the right to self-determination (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 905 Comments: 153</p>
	<p>Idea: A reform plan for a citizen-based European Democracy (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 611 Comments: 61</p>	<p>Idea: Directly elect the President of the European Union (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 221 Comments: 114</p>
	<p>Idea: There can be no real European democracy without an autonomous fiscal power of the EU (translated) (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 585 Comments: 38</p>	<p>Idea: Better language skills – better democracy. English_and_Esperanto! (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 180 Comments: 110</p>



	Most endorsed	Most commented
Migration	<p>Idea: A common migration and asylum policy, based on respect for rights and equal treatment (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 482 Comments: 56</p>	<p>Idea: No more immigration from non-European or non first world countries (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 132 Comments: 136</p>
	<p>Idea: No more immigration from non-European or non first world countries (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 133 Comments: 136</p>	<p>Idea: Removal of unauthorised asylum seekers/migrants (translated) (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 44 Comments: 91</p>
	<p>Idea: No borders for humanity: a Single Immigration Policy (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 89 Comments: 11</p>	<p>Idea: Migration and integration (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 77 Comments: 71</p>
	<p>Idea: Expulsion from the EU (translated) (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 88 Comments: 38</p>	<p>Idea: Teaching the national language via Esperanto: Promote organisations that do so (translated) (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 22 Comments: 57</p>
	<p>Idea: Migration and integration (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 77 Comments: 71</p>	<p>Idea: A common migration and asylum policy, based on respect for rights and equal treatment (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 482 Comments: 56</p>



	Most endorsed	Most commented
Education, culture, youth and sport	Idea: The EU needs improved language learning (see idea) Endorsements: 718 Comments: 151	Idea: The EU needs improved language learning (see idea) Endorsements: 718 Comments: 151
	Idea: Youth. EU cannot fund precarity (see idea) Endorsements: 475 Comments: 20	Idea: Happier language learners, more successful language teachers (translated) (see idea) Endorsements: 139 Comments: 88
	Idea: Lifelong learning and the right to training to become a reality for everyone in Europe (see idea) Endorsements: 464 Comments: 21	Idea: Language teaching in Europe (translated) (see idea) Endorsements: 184 Comments: 83
	Idea: A lesson about Esperanto for the schoolchildren of the European Union (see idea) Endorsements: 238 Comments: 62	Idea: A lesson about Esperanto for the schoolchildren of the European Union (see idea) Endorsements: 238 Comments: 62
	Idea: Created at European Public Broadcaster (see idea) Endorsements: 195 Comments: 54	Idea: Esperanto — International auxiliary language (see idea) Endorsements: 111 Comments: 60



	Most endorsed	Most commented
Other ideas	<p>Idea: For European sovereignty. The necessary reforms (translated). (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 505 Comments: 26</p>	<p>Idea: Esperanto, a common neutral language, designed to be easy to learn, a tool for a more united European Union (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 261 Comments: 233</p>
	<p>Idea: Official recognition of Esperanto as one of the languages of EU citizens (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 325 Comments: 138</p>	<p>Idea: Official recognition of Esperanto as one of the languages of EU citizens (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 325 Comments: 138</p>
	<p>Idea: Esperanto, a common neutral language, designed to be easy to learn, a tool for a more united European Union (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 261 Comments: 233</p>	<p>Idea: European Flag Greetings (translated) (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 0 Comments: 120</p>
	<p>Idea: An Action Plan to transition to animal-free science (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 226 Comments: 22</p>	<p>Idea: European Union- Federal State (translated) (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 125 Comments: 79</p>
	<p>Idea: Stop Animal Suffering in Exotic Pet Trade with a Positive List (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 221 Comments: 7</p>	<p>Idea: Adoption of a European language (translated) (see idea)</p> <p>Endorsements: 75 Comments: 73</p>



ANNEX II: Methodology

The metrics used for the analysis in this report come from a live platform where data is updated on an ongoing basis, even throughout the period of the research team's data analysis.

The main metrics used for the **quantitative analysis** are the following:

- Numeric data on ideas uploaded by contributors, be it as individuals or as representatives of an organisation. Numeric data consist of number of ideas – overall and within the various topics.
- Numeric data on endorsements: endorsements are similar to a 'like/up-vote' in social media. They help indicate participants' interest in and general favourability towards an idea, whilst not giving indications about any opposition to it. Therefore, the number of endorsements is not per se an indicator of overall support for the idea, but just one of the many aspects that is taken into consideration in the analysis of contributions on the platform. Numeric data consist of the number of endorsements – overall, within the various topics and linked to a particular idea (used also for the listing of ideas by the number of endorsements).
- Numeric data on comments by participants: the analysis also covers the amount of



participants' comments on each other's ideas, as they indicate the level of active engagement on an idea. In terms of substance, comments can cover a range of feedback, from neutral to agreeing or strongly disagreeing. This is reflected in the qualitative analysis (see below). Numeric data consist of the number of comments – overall, within the various topics and linked to a particular idea (used also for the listing of ideas by the number of comments).

- Numeric data on events: contributors can create events on the platform and upload event reports. Numeric data covers number of events – overall and within the various topics.
- Socio-demographic data (anonymised): Prior to engaging with the platform contributors are asked to provide information on their country of residence, educational background, age, gender and employment status. The data are processed anonymously. As this information is shared voluntarily (around 73% of participants provide it), there are limitations on the insight that can be provided into the profiles of participants. Respondents are particularly unlikely to provide information on their occupation, education and country of residence. For organisations, only the country of residence can be provided.

The main focus of the report is on the **qualitative analysis** on the basis of ideas, comments and event reports, to deliver an overview of the content of the platform. Themes and sub-themes are identified within the pre-defined topics.

In practice, within each topic a manual textual analysis and clustering of all the proposed ideas and closed events with event reports has been performed by a research team. To support this work the content available via the platform has been processed by an automated system for Text Analysis, which has been used to help analysts understand large volumes of text input. It enables the grouping (clustering) of contributions across languages, and allows to search for similar contents across the platform and across languages. Analysts use the Text Analysis system to

facilitate multi-lingual content analysis, and to identify more conveniently the multiple occurrences of a similar idea in various contributions. This aids to assess the level of occurrence of an identified theme or sub-theme. The Text Analysis system only evaluates the content submitted via the platform. This includes pseudonymised answers to the sociodemographic questionnaire, which is used to compile the socio-demographic data, and the other content (ideas, comments and endorsements) submitted on the platform (including associated metadata such as the time the input was made). Subsequently, the research team has read through the ideas within the identified cluster as well as the event descriptions and their event reports to provide a summary of the common themes and possible sub-themes, also noting variations and potential points of disagreement in the comment sections. Highly or often endorsed ideas covering the theme or subtheme are also referred to. The identified themes and sub-themes are presented in the order of level of occurrence as assessed by the analyst with the help of the Text Analysis system.

The ultimate goal of this qualitative approach is not only to record the themes or ideas which attract the most attention on the platform, but to also record the breadth and diversity of ideas falling within one topic. In case several ideas submitted on the platform are in practice expressions of the same idea or sub-theme, qualitative indications to this are provided in the summary, by referring to a 'recurrent' or 'prominent' idea or sub-theme.

The summaries also include links to illustrative ideas or events, which describe a concrete proposal or provide a good summary of the general argument of the identified theme or sub-theme.

In analysing events the research team focuses on closed events with an event report. Particular attention is paid to the more participatory and deliberative consultative events, to include the voices and opinions of those citizens who might otherwise not find their way to the digital platform.

The breakdown of a topic into themes and sub-themes or ideas is visually represented in the relevant mind map.