



IED ANNUAL REPORT 2021



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The text was drafted by IED
Publication and Design by EU-Turn
First publication: June 2022
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FOREWORD

The Institute of European Democrats (IED), a European political foundation formally affiliated to the European Democratic Party (EDP), was founded with the aim to promote a better understanding of the core aspects of the European integration process, to bridge the gap between citizens and EU institutions and to play an active role in strengthening the confidence of European citizens in the European project.

To carry out its mission, the IED focuses on two key pillars: the organization of conferences and seminars and the coordination of research activities. In particular, the IED organizes international conferences, seminars and webinars where politicians, experts, EU and national officials, academics and civil society representatives share ideas and discuss concrete problems affecting citizens. Such events are mainly organised in the EU Member States, but also virtually, in order to discuss concrete issues closer to EU citizens and member organisations and to contribute to the national

discussion with a European perspective ensured by the international dimension of the events. At the same time, the Institute carries out research activities and publishes political documents and studies produced by associated researchers and external projects. The IED promotes also a discussion on the situation of democracy in Europe, through its Podcast “the European Democracy Lab Podcast” launched in 2020.

The IED works in close collaboration with both European and national institutions, universities, research centers and international foundations. Through a broad range of activities, the IED aims to play an active role in restoring and strengthening citizens’ confidence in the European Union, and beyond this, in promoting a united and sovereign Europe.

Through this report, the IED wishes to share the topics and findings of these activities conducted in 2021.

We wish you a good reading!

REMARKS ON EXECUTION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES 2021

When drafting the Programme of activities 2021, the IED went through an internal consultation process, as usual. It was designed according to the priorities of the new EU Commission whilst taking into account the concrete thematical proposals suggested by the IED member organisations. Four thematic priorities were settled with the intention to have them translated mainly into Conferences, webinars and Studies.

Priorities 2021

- 1. The EU Green Deal: Promoting a sustainable economy that works for people.** In 2021, the EU Commission intends to reinforce the building blocks of the European Green Deal and raising EU ambitions.
- 2. A stronger Europe in the world: promoting Europe's interests and values.** President von der Leyen announced the EU would need to respond more assertively to global events and deepen its relations with its closest neighbors and global partners.
- 3. Promoting our European way of life: Protecting citizens and freedoms.** The EU Commission will remain vigilant on the rule of law and intends to build a union where racism and discrimination have no place.
- 4. A Europe fit for the digital age.** In 2021, the EU intends to lead the digital transformation, particularly on data, technology and infrastructure.

Despite the Covid 19 Pandemic, the IED managed to implement most of its programme of activities in 2021, notably by adapting to the pandemic context through the continuation of conferences in virtual or hybrid format. The IED has also continued the dissemination of its podcasts and the development of its research activities. We are proud to present the results of these in this annual report.

In addition to the range of initiatives achieved, the IED complied with the holding of the meetings of the ruling bodies, ensuring the effectiveness of the control on the programme implementation.

INITIATIVES CARRIED OUT WITHIN THE CARRY-OVER

As the Institute of European Democrats was allowed to use the unspent funding awarded for the financial year 2021 and integrated by the own resources carrying it to the first quarter of 2022, it has been spent to implement a part of the 2021 activities that couldn't be accomplished in due time. These are:

A research paper by Tsvetelina Tsvetanova/Wijsbroek (17/01) under the title "From measuring impact to the creation of a European sustainability label". In a constantly changing world, economic, biodiversity and climate issues require a constant assessment of the impact of our lifestyles, production and consumption. Changing behaviour and thus acting on these consequences is a difficult task. Therefore, it seems necessary to pay more attention to the sustainability labels that surround us in order to better understand them. This study therefore establishes a framework of analysis that allows for a comprehensive consideration of the main environmental and socio-economic issues, their interactions and, above all, their measurement.

<https://www.iedonline.eu/publications/2022/european-sustainability-label.php>

A new series of podcasts have been produced, to further deepen and spread pivotal issues such as the importance of preserving the biodiversity that is so relevant to our lives, the possibility for the EU to achieve digital sovereignty and the importance of digital citizen participatory practices to restore trust in political processes.

The "IED Strategic Research Papers - EU: a sovereign power for the XXI Century?" is completed with two contributions that were pending. The paper by Ivo Kaplan (10/01) entitled "Sovereignty of the EU, its Energy Policy and the Strategic Compass Process"

<https://www.iedonline.eu/publications/2021/strategic-research-papers/sovereignty-of-the-eu-its-energy-policy-and-the-strategic-compass-process-kaplan>

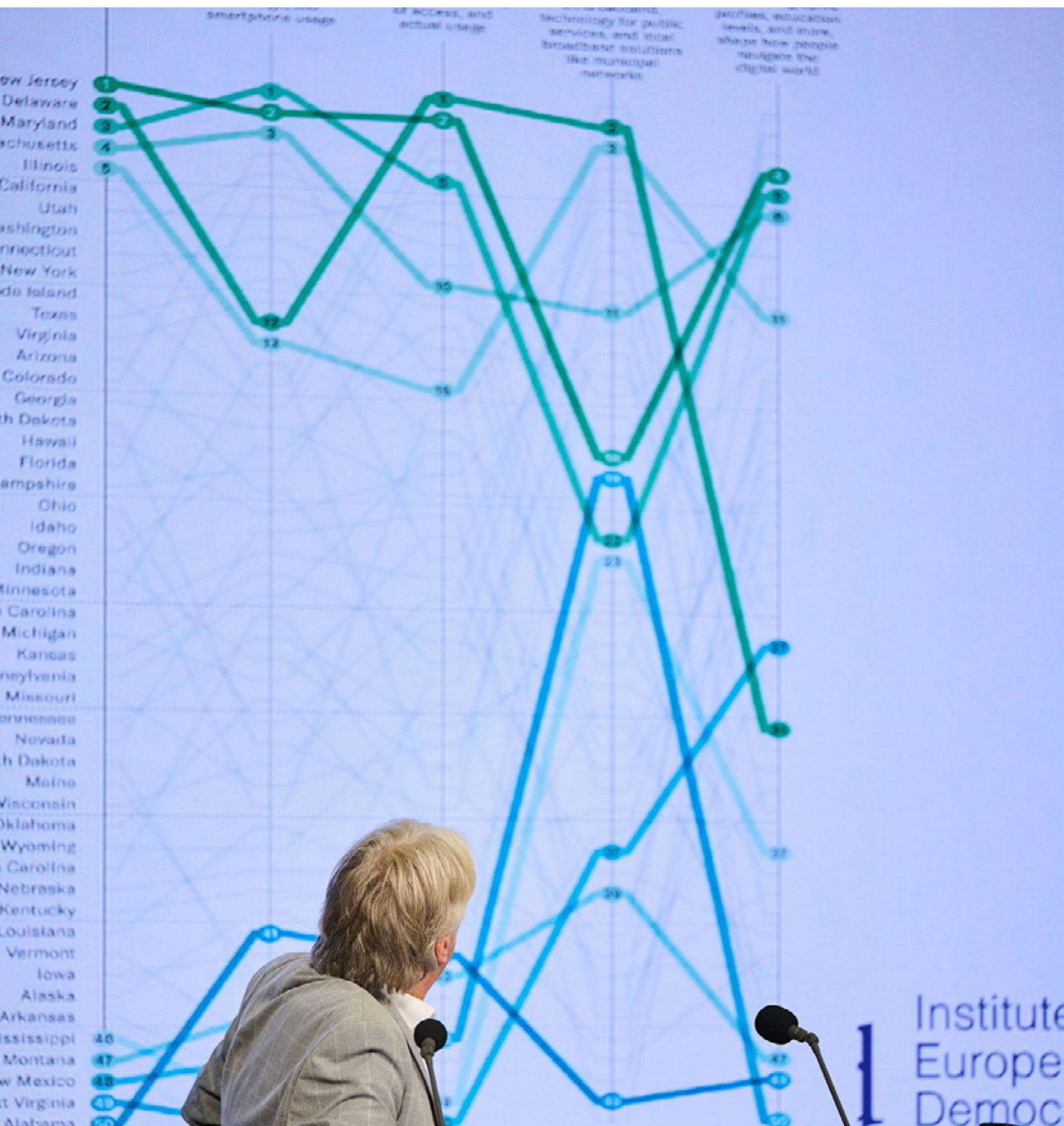
And the paper by Asier Areitio (28/01) entitled "European multilevel governance: a system to ensure the European Sovereignty"

<https://www.iedonline.eu/publications/2021/strategic-research-papers/european-multilevel-governance-a-system-to-ensure-the-european-sovereignty-areitio>

A Research Paper Project is published (28/02) under the title "The Future of Democracy in the European Context". The aim of this research project is to reflect on the future of democracy in the European context and to analyse the characteristics of the political culture that emerge in some spaces of public opinion in the context of the crisis of liberal democracy and in post-co-vid-19 societies; a crisis that is manifested in the disaffection of citizens with respect to actors, institutions and the political system of liberal democracies and also in the weakening of the political structures of representation and management of public policies. Through this research, the IED intends to deepen our knowledge of the factors that are influencing the transformation of the democratic political culture of citizens in post-co-vid-19 societies and the impact of this political culture on the democratic system. We will also explore the alternative of Collaborative Governance and civil initiative with the aim of strengthening democratic systems. This research project includes the following research papers:

- The long route from transversal politics to the European Parliament by Claudia Basta, Marco Perduca, Virginia Fiume, Marco Cappato
<https://www.iedonline.eu/publications/2022/future-democracy/the-long-route-from-transversal-politics-to-the-european-parliament-claudia-basta-marco-perduca-virginia-fiume-marco-cappato>
- The Future of Voting by Ardita Driza Maurer
<https://www.iedonline.eu/publications/2022/future-democracy/the-future-of-voting-maurer>
- Collaborative Governance: Concept, Applications, and Cases by Xabier Barandiaran Irastorza
<https://www.iedonline.eu/publications/2022/future-democracy/collaborative-governance-concept-applications-and-cases-barandiaran-irastorza>
- Four Vices and One Virtue by Victor Lapuente
<https://www.iedonline.eu/publications/2022/future-democracy/four-vices-and-one-virtue-lapuente>

Finally, a seminar was held in Kotor, Montenegro (26/03) under the title "EU – Western Balkans: a future in common?". This seminar took a look from the viewpoint of institutionalised Europe at the rich, varied reality of the Europe of the Western Balkans (Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, North Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo) and investigated on the ground what this region of south-eastern Europe thinks about the EU in the current geopolitical context, and about future membership of the Community.





MEETINGS OF GOVERNING BODIES

1. A meeting of the Board of Directors on the 10 June 2021 by electronic means (exchange of emails) aimed at the adoption of the 2020 financial statements prepared by BPO Accountancy and Grant Thornton auditors. The meeting decided the 2021 membership fees and fixed the date of the following General Assembly.
2. A meeting of the General Assembly held by video-conference on the 18 June 2021, aimed at the approval of the 2020 financial documents provided by BPO accountants and Grant Thornton auditors and the discussion on the priorities for the activities 2021 and their implementation.
3. A meeting of the Board of Directors on the 26 October 2021, in Brussels, aimed at the Convocation of the next meeting of the General Assembly, adoption of the 2022 provisional budget and working programme, as submitted to the EP for the next year grant and the termination of the appointment of Flaminia Baffigo as secretary responsible for the secretariat of the board of directors and the general assembly and appointment of a new secretary responsible for the secretariat of board of directors and the general assembly.
4. A meeting of the General Assembly on the 5 November 2021, in Brussels, aimed at the renewal or revocation of the mandate of the administrators, the adoption of the amendments to the Statutes to make them compatible with the entry into force of legislative changes in Belgium concerning non-profit organisations, the acceptance of the resignation of Citizens Alliance as a member of the IED and the discussion on the priorities for the activities 2022 and their implementation.

Therefore, the IED complied with the meetings of the ruling bodies scheduled, ensuring the effectiveness of all activities in contributing to the political debate being close to the European citizens:

Statutory meetings

The statutory meetings will be held, physically or electronically, depending on the pandemic situation in Europe at the given time.

1st Semester 2021

- A meeting of the Board of Directors
- A meeting of the General Assembly

2nd Semester 2021

- A meeting of the Board of Directors
- A meeting of the General Assembly



2.

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

IED WEBINAR, 12 FEBRUARY 2021

ARE TURKEY'S ASPIRATIONS ALIGNED WITH EUROPEAN INTERESTS?

The IED Webinar, which was live streamed in Greek and English, gathered high level panelists and was attended by 2,700 participants through the Facebook Live.

<https://www.iedonline.eu/events/2021/webinar-turkey.php>



The basic consensus of the Webinar on the query posed “Are Turkish aspirations aligned with European interests?” was answered in the negative. It was the view of the three panelists that in spite of Turkey’s long-term relationship with the European Union and its current status as an official candidate for admission, its behaviour in a number of areas was not in alignment with the interests of the EU. And that in fact those aspirations were contrary to the founding values and principles of the Union.

In this sense, it emerged that the behaviour of Ankara, both in substance and in terms of symbolism, poses serious challenges (a) to the soft power of the EU (b) to EU solidarity among members states, and (c) to the policies of Brussels affecting non-members in its neighbourhood.

The problematic aspects of the EU-Turkey relationship were identified in the areas of foreign policy, especially vis-a-vis EU members Cyprus and Greece, and in the domestic policies of the Turkish regime. The irredentism policies of Ankara, exemplified repeatedly by coercive diplomatic practices against the two EU member states, were identified as particularly challenging to what the EU stands for. At the very least they directly challenge the fundamental principle of EU solidarity.

One of the speakers, critical of EU policy towards Ankara, raised the question – not openly discussed in the official discourse – of the existence of “special interests” within the Union that seek to appease Ankara. This may well be the case, at least, with regards to EU efforts to obtain the cooperation of Ankara on the critical, for the EU, issue of the refugee problem. But it may not be confined to just that.

The other problematic area discussed centered on domestic issues within Turkey that are of direct interests to the EU. The consensus emerged that there exists a great gap between Brussels and Ankara that appears to be unbridgeable, when seen from the perspective of the candidacy of Turkey.

Whereas the founding philosophy of the EU aims at the supremacy of law, due process and securing fundamental rights and freedoms, recent developments in Turkey point to the opposite direction. Authoritarianism and arbitrariness are becoming the norm and secularism- a fundamental criterion for EU admission- is widely challenged by government policies. Additionally, international court decisions about Turkey, such for example decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, are contemptuously ignored by the Turkish authorities.

IED WEBINAR, 24 MARCH 2021

ONE HUMANITY: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR EUROPE IN THE NEW MULTILATERALISM

The IED Webinar, which took place in an Aula of Deusto University in Bilbao, Spain, was live streamed in Spanish and English, gathered high level panelists and was attended by students and academics through the live stream. 75 participants.

<https://www.iedonline.eu/events/2021/one-humanity.php>

In the past century, World Wars brought significant changes in global governance.

The Covid19 pandemic which we are suffering, will cause as well important transformations in the next international order. We can glimpse a new political world architecture based on the One Humanity paradigm.

In this seminar, the keynote speakers went further on this concept, analysing first the new geo-strategic balance worldwide. From the evolution of multilateralism in the recent context of the Biden Administration, to China's rise to global superpower.

They also analysed some deep changes happening in our societies, particularly the growth of artificial intelligence.

In this context of profound change, Europe has a huge opportunity to condition the future of our societies and the progress of humanity, from a determined attempt to innovation and intelligence, both, involving individual talent and all humankind.



Session 1 addressed the question of “The new global architecture and the role of the EU”. Is the global architecture changing towards increased multilateralism? Are we moving towards more conflict or a more peaceful world? What role is there for the EU in this new world order?

Session 2 deepened the question of “Artificial intelligence, human intelligence and societal change” How are the changes in global order related to the internal transformation of societies? What role does artificial intelligence play in this transformation? Who are the central actors in contemporary dynamics of change?

The Event was opened by, Maria Luz Suarez Castiñeira, Director of Dept. of International Relations, Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, Deusto University. Keynote speakers were Juan Antonio March, Ambassador, President ONUART Foundation and Mikel Burzako, Chief Executive Officer, Institute of European Democrats

The discussion was moderated by Steffen Bay Rasmussen, Director of Studies, MA Euroculture, Dept. of International Relations, Deusto University.

After the panel discussion the moderator opened a Q&A session with the virtual Audience, before wrapping-up and concluding the event.

SPEAKERS



MARIA LUZ SUAREZ CASTIÑEIRA
Director of Dept. of International Relations, Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, Deusto University



JUAN ANTONIO MARCH
Ambassador, President ONUART Foundation



MIKEL BURZAKO
Chief Executive Officer, Institute of European Democrats



STEFFEN BAY RASMUSSEN
Director of Studies, MA Euroculture, Dept. of International Relations, Deusto University

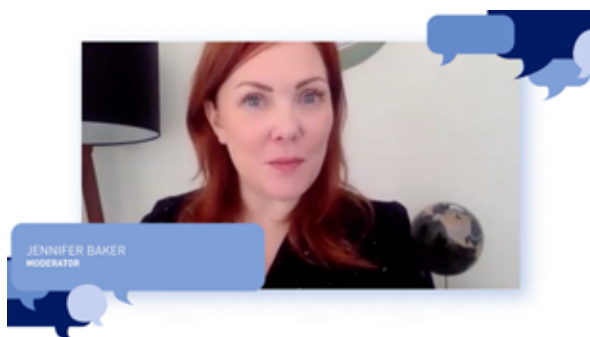
MODERATOR

IED WEBINAR, 29 MARCH 2021

BIG DATA IN EUROPE: ARE PRIVACY AND FREEDOM UNDER THREAT?

The IED Webinar, which was live streamed in English and French, gathered high level panelists and was viewed by more than 500 participants throughout the platform.

<https://www.iedonline.eu/events/2021/big-data.php>



In recent years, the term “Big Data” has started to be used extensively in relation to the digital future of Europe. But what is actually meant by “Big Data” and what challenges does it raise for society in general and for Democracy and Politics in particular? What is the balance between the great value it could create in sectors like healthcare or smart cities, and the downsides of disinformation that could undermine democracy?

Panelists, Quentin Jardon, author of the investigation “Belgian Big Brother,” Ioan-Cosmin Mihai, Cybercrime Training Officer at European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training and Hubert Marcueyz, Business Analyst with Orion Health France gathered online to discuss these issues.

An audience poll examined the question “What makes data big?”. Both audience and panelists agreed that big data starts with the accumulation of personal data and continues with the possibilities that having access to such big amounts of data offers.

From that consensus, the panel examined the risks posed by creating these huge reservoirs of, often, personal data. Specifically, data theft, and the unethical use of personal data. Throughout the panelists’ contributions, there was consensus that personal data had to be stored securely, but panelists pointed out that some companies lacked the technical know-how to do this.

Data consolidation emerged as a concern, with fears that too few organisations control too much of the data.

Mihai explained that one of the problems in keeping data safe stems from the three v’s: Volume velocity, and the variety of different data types involved. Tools such as strong encryption should be used for sensitive personal data.

Marcueyz pointed out that in the case of Personal Health Data, data theft is more often the problem rather than improper or unethical use. According to Marcueyz, “this is both at the same time a source of concern and a reason to be optimistic: Source of concern because the organisations who are responsible for taking care of our personal health information do not have the tools or the weapons to face such attacks as hacking and data theft. But also a reason to be optimistic because it means that our legislators have succeeded in preventing the development of highly lucrative uses of our personal health information that would most likely be unethical.”

This led to a discussion on the undeniable benefits of big data. During the Covid19 pandemic, we saw how Big Data could provide solutions. Panelists considered the possibility of a so-called “data donor card” that would allow citizens to declare for which purposes, how and for how long they would allow their data to be used – generally for the public good.

There was general consensus that education and training are needed so that data processors know what they can actually do with it. While the general public needs to be informed about their rights over their own data.

Jardon urged people to think before handing over their data: does the company or entity concerned really need access to it? If not, why share that information? The principle of data minimisation is something everyone should understand.

When it comes to risk management, the panel concluded that the bigger the risks, the stronger the law should be so we have to set the ground rules for what organisations can and cannot do.

Marcueyz added that he would like to get insights from the so-called digital natives themselves to feed into public government administrations.

All agreed that Big Data can help us better understand the citizens, the local communities and political movements, but can also be used for ill – to manipulate people, blackmail them, or threaten companies with ransomware – so strong safeguards are necessary, now more than ever with the explosion of AI.

WELCOME WORD



Alexandra LEULIETTE
Member of the IED Board

MODERATOR



Jennifer BAKER
European journalist
reporting EU Policy,
Tech and Digital Rights

SPEAKERS



Ioan-Cosmin MIHAI
Cybercrime Training Officer
at European Union Agency
for Law Enforcement Training
(CEPOL)



Quentin JARDON
Co-founder of the magazines
Wilfried and Eddy, visiting
professor at IHECS, Quentin
Jardon has, among other things,
carried out a major investigation
on Frank Robben, the "Belgian
Big Brother", published in
Wilfried in June 2020.



Hubert MARCUEYZ
Director of Studies,
MA Euroculture, Dept. of
International Relations,
Deusto University

IED FILM PREMIERE & PANEL DISCUSSION, 13 JULY 2021 IN BRUSSELS

HYDROGEN – TAKING THE LEADERSHIP

HOW CAN THE EU FIND ITS GREEN ENERGY SOVEREIGNTY?

The EU has been created by uniting economic and political interest behind a common goal. In the last years the EU has been criticized for not having a unifying vision that people can support and believe in. The Institute of European Democrats (IED) believes that hydrogen could be a solution for many economic and ecological challenges of the 21st century. In order to do that the IED has organised an online premiere followed by a panel discussion with the aim to present its film *Hydrogen – Re-connecting Europe*. Through this film, the IED intends to present hydrogen as a driving force for new integration and new collaboration across all EU member states. *55 participants*.

<https://www.iedonline.eu/events/2021/hydrogen-leadership.php>



Hydrogen is considered to be a promising source that will help the industries to adapt and respond to the challenges posted by the climate change, the disruptions in the environment and to aim for carbon-zero emissions. We have two main dimensions of the discussion: EU official position and the representative of NGOs and industry debating ways to expand the role of the hydrogen for Europe and the world, as well as Europe's actions in this area.

The speakers included: **Christophe Grudler** (MEP, Modem), **Jorgo Chatzimarkakis** (General Secretary, Hydrogen Europe), **Victoria Petrova** (Adviser for Hydrogen Economy, European Commission) and **Geert De Cock**, NGO Transport & Environment. With welcoming remarks by **Gabi Schmidt**, the vice-president of IED.

For **Geert De Cock**, hydrogen is a part of the solution, but not the only part. There will be a huge demand for hydrogen. It is important only if it helps decarbonisation. First we need to identify certain sectors that are in need of change or where there are no alternatives. Renewable hydrogen is important because can help us to get to 0 emissions.

As regards **Jorgo Chatzimarkakis** it is important that hydrogen can store energy. He underlined what Christophe Grudler said about coal and steel as the basis of the EC in the 50s and now hydrogen can bring us back together once more.

As for Christophe Grudler, the political and technical level are both important. The Green Deal is very important. Hydrogen has a key role to play to meet this goal – do we want to meet this goal or not? Skilled new jobs are important – the strategic autonomy of Europe is important – the fact that we import oil/gas is not good for our strategic autonomy.

In her early intervention Victoria Petrova said that we do more than just deregulations we put efforts to leverage the greening of our industries, beyond transport sector. The Hydrogen Strategy is an important tool for decarbonizing our society as it provides solutions for many types of users.

There are also some concrete leverage and reference data:

1. June 2020: European Clean Hydrogen Alliance
2. May 17, 2021 – members of the Alliance asked to submit projects/ the numbers of companies that want to reduce carbon use
3. June 2021, The European Hydrogen Forum, 1000 projects registered Project Pipeline They will be started very soon (2021-2023).

The debate was a lively one with questions from the public such as: Is this roadmap ambitious enough?

For **Christophe Grudler** it is an ambitious one but we can do more (especially in France) as we need more money, the industry is ready and we have a lot of innovation. It is good for jobs, for the Green Deal and for our strategic autonomy.

Jorgo Chatzimarkakis underlined the fact that money is not a problem (as public funds are available), but the implementation and attracting investors (private) are still difficult. The countries from Central and Eastern Europe are also supporting it and we should let the market decide which sectors are ready. We need to attract private investors they will come only if they see it starts. We have to help the market, Christophe Grudler underlined.

For **Florian Caspar Richter** we have lost the electro mobility race to Asia and in this case we need to win. Geert De Cock contradicted him as we did not lose – there is a battery alliance: European Battery Alliance. What we need is regulation to drive the lead markets and the demand. For

shipping and aviation there is a difference in terms of money between fossil and green hydrogen. The private investors will have the trust if there is a long term push.

Florian Caspar Richter emphasised that everybody is asking for regulatory measures.

Another question was addressed to **Victoria Petrova** in order to tell to the audience what regulatory measures are needed immediately and where is the Commission heading?

Victoria Petrova mentioned the political declarations of the European Commission President Von der Leyen on the Green Deal and on the Industrial Strategy. During/ after the pandemic the EC has identified the fact that EU is very dependent on many products (medicine etc.) and the pandemic acted as an electroshock. The EC is working on a Taxonomy document for Green products and is preparing Fit for 55 (maybe the title will change) and also a stimulus for the market. The EC is active with the stimulus package – the EC is still lacking the private sector. The EC cannot fund the transition to green energy for the whole EU with a fraction from the EU budget. On electro mobility – she said the EC tries not to lose the race as it launched the Battery Alliance. With FP7 and Horizon 2020 the EC has funded massively hydrogen-related research (for 1/2 decades). EU is consistent and the Commission is working on a very pragmatic approach but more funding will be welcome.

Another question from the audience addressed whether we should we produce hydrogen more locally or should we import it from abroad?

Christophe Grudler mentioned both of them as possible solutions yet local production would be better, as we must encourage local production from local consumption. But we also need more pipelines – because we consume more. Also private companies should have a key role to play. Taxonomy – is very important; certification and carbon pricing – with all these tools we can have a good mechanism to regulate and have more funds into the hydrogen industry.

Jorgo Chatzimarkakis underlined the fact that there is good cooperation between Commission and the Member States. Soon dozens of regulations will be launched that will allow us to reduce at least by 55% the emissions. The industry should produce where is cheaper and hydrogen can make a difference if is globally produced.

Geert De Cock mentioned that the EU should set the global standards for this industry. In a global trade, ports will be central, therefore we should have the hydrogen production near them.

For **Victoria Petrova** Commission is part of a project – at international level – that exists for almost 30 years. We work on tariffs and other taxes and constraints that may constrain the trade in this area. Also, more like a personal reflection, speaking in strategic independence and autonomy: if we have consumers who do not want to buy organic apples from Chile – because is very far away, maybe societally is hard to accept – than how is socially acceptable to have not one kilo of apples, but thousands of tons of green hydrogen shipped from the Antipodes? It is important to have a certain security supply. For countries in Central and Eastern Europe, hydrogen can be a factor of transition towards green energy, the potential for production is very important. Their potential is equal to the Iberian Peninsula. Inclusiveness is also important for Europe.

Christophe Grudler said it is important to produce hydrogen in the cheapest way – it is what we have done with the pharmaceutical products, after we have a crisis like Covid 19 and we are totally dependent in Europe because we have not seen our strategic autonomy. This is very dangerous, if you want to produce it around Europe. We must produce more locally and after that, if we need, import – with cost of transportation and pipelines (which must be taken into account).

Florian Caspar Richter asked if there is an emotional connection with the product.

Christophe Grudler mentioned that as a politician you are a little bit emotional, too, as we are not machines.

The question of hydrogen democratisation and of its availability for every family was also raised by **Florian Caspar Richter**.

Jorgo Chatzimarkakis said that this will happen very soon. We need to diversify the sources from where we get our hydrogen from. We have offshore wind in Africa. There is also a very aggressive approach of China to conquer more and more. Half of Greece is in China's hands. We need a global view on hydrogen, not a local, regional one, it will not work, it has to go hand in hand.

Coal was the unifying factor in the 50s, said **Florian Caspar Richter**, one of the founding stones of Europe as we know it. Today Europe has face a lot of tough times in the last couple

of years: Brexit and other issues – can a project like hydrogen or a project like decarbonisation in general can have an emotional impact on the way Europeans view EU?

Christophe Grudler mentioned that the title of the film is Hydrogen – Re-connecting Europe. It is our responsibility to do it. The energy issues in general are very good for reconnecting people. We need a European attitude and we must stop with Member States attitude. We have a good future for energy and, of course, for Europe.

Geert De Cock mentioned the parallel with Euratom. We are facing a number of crisis we need to tackle on many fronts. Invest in public transport, in bicycles a broader based approach that is a New Deal. Hydrogen needs to be part of a broader strategy.

Florian Caspar Richter was interested to see if there are other changes that need to go with the technological change and Sustainability in general.

In giving his reply **Jorgo Chatzimarkakis** said that circularity is very important as well as better interoperability with other technologies. This documentary is also quite emotional. We can only work to change all this to make this continent net zero climate neutral if we work together. Hydrogen is not the silver bullet, is not the only solution, but is definitely a hero net-zero.

In the same line **Victoria Petrova** expressed her hope that hydrogen is not the only solution but rather is a tremendous opportunity. The development of hydrogen products should firstly support the economies of the countries where is produced., support their economies and respond to their need for growing energy and power and what would be exceeding would be channelled to Europe. It is not about EU cannibalising producing capacities in Africa but it would be about enabling their capacities and when is possible to have exports of the exceeding production. This is something that we really want to underline and is important.

At the end of the event answering to a question of **Florian Caspar Richter** if it is the time now or is the future, **Christophe Grudler** said that is important to be a visionary, we need to see in the future. Is important to look very far away for the future. In the final remarks he mentioned as an example of visionary Jules Verne who in his 1875 book *L'Île Mystérieuse* (The Mysterious Island) stated... *I believe that water will one day be used as a fuel that hydrogen and oxygen that constitute it, used singly or together, will furnish an inexhaustible source of heat and light, of an intensity of which coal is could not have.*

IED CONFERENCE – FONDAZIONE CINI, VENICE,
ITALY, 30 AUGUST 2021

THE EU GREEN DEAL – DECISIVE FOR THE ECONOMY, JOBS AND THE EU'S SOFT POWER

The IED organized this international Conference in the City of Venice, on 30 August 2021, which offered the most eloquent context for examining environmental issues: humanity is confronted with the impact of Climate Change, and Venice is an icon of a community, a History, a cultural Heritage of worldwide interest to be protected and brought to life. Mitigation and adaptation, the strategic objectives of the international climate community, can be measured in Venice where they represent concrete challenges. The Conference was attended by 50 participants and was simultaneously broadcasted live on the IED Website.

<https://www.iedonline.eu/events/2021/eu-green-deal.php>



The event was opened by a written message on behalf of **Mr. Mario Draghi**, Prime Minister of Italy, which stressed the fact that the conference takes place during Italy's Presidency of G20. Last year, the Italian government adopted a series of measures meant to promote sustainable tourism and to support the Italian companies in this costly transition. As all the eyes of the world are on Venice, he believes it can serve as a model for other cities, as Italy seeks to promote a greater environmental awareness and to preserve the cultural heritage, as a way to exercise soft power.

In his intervention, **Mr. Giovanni Bazoli**, Chairman of Fondazione Giorgio Cini, mentioned the fact that UNESCO was the first to prepare a report in 1968 on Venice, based on the problem of the high waters in 1966, stressing the need to coordinate various disciplines to solve the conflict between the problem of natural environment and human made environment, technological development and the safeguard of historical heritage. Yet the current event is not the only one dedicated to the sustainable development of Venice, as



in November 2016 took place the International Conference on Sustainability of local commons with a global value: the case of Venice and its lagoon. At the end of the day, culture is the first and most effective tool of soft power and it is essential to have the utmost commitment to research and innovation.

Mr. Luigi Brugnaro, Mayor of Venice, sent his greetings to the organizers and participants in his capacity as host, since the topic of the conference is of utmost importance. He underlined the importance of being committed to the creation of a sustainable future capable of providing valid growth opportunities for the future generations. The City of Venice has regained a central role in the world when Venice hosted a G20 reunion, and is looking towards a sustainable future, as it becomes a cleaner city, with a strong programme of waste management.

In his video intervention, **Mr. David Sassoli**, President of the European Parliament, underlined the fact that the green transition can strengthen Europe's economy, industrial competitiveness and improve the quality of life of people. The European Parliament is at the forefront of the efforts to combat biodiversity loss as there is no time to lose.



The EU Green Deal is an opportunity for employment, since circular economy will be able to create 700 000 jobs in Europe by 2030, and thus compensate for the job losses suffered in the transition. The Environmental challenge is a soft power challenge for everyone, but especially for Europe. It is even more important for the EU to lead by example, to implement the right policies, and it must allocate adequate resources for this hefty challenge. The EU should support a sustainable development model.

In order to consolidate its role at the international level, the EU should also use diplomacy, international cooperation, and, in this context, multilateralism is key to overcome environmental challenges. Leadership is strengthened with the tools of soft power, cultural diplomacy and cooperation. The G20 and the G7 have a role to play, and the COP26 in November represents an important turning point.

On the path toward a climate neutral Europe and more just for all the context is key, as it is needed to take into account different local situations. That is why Europe should support actions coming from all levels, such as

bottom-up initiatives coming from the citizens, and local and regional authorities. The European Parliament fully supports the Covenant of Mayors, because cities play a central role in the transition towards a green, inclusive and sustainable future.

Mr. Francesco Rutelli, President of IED, mentioned that Venice wants to be the world capital of sustainability because it is the city most threatened by climate change which, due to the rising of the seas, may lead to the end of Venice and to an environmental disaster. “Fit for 55”, a target set by the European Commission, intends to reduce emissions by 55% in just nine years. The main question arising is if it is an achievable goal or would it be perceived as something punitive.

Mr Rutelli remembered that in France the yellow vests started just as a response to opposition to a small fuel tax linked to climate measures, and the same mistake must not be repeated. He said that positive responses should be envisaged in terms of creating new production chains, new jobs, and not just giving a message that can be otherwise perceived as punitive by the population.



Ms. Sarah El Haïry, Minister of State for Youth and Engagement, attached to the Minister of National Education, Youth and Sport (France), mentioned that the European Agency of Environment is very clear on this subject, that if we do not collectively respect the goals set by the Paris Agreement, Venice will disappear under the waters, depriving the future generations of its beauty.

The EU can support the Paris Agreement as our goals are clear: reducing emissions, reducing the external energetic dependence, improving the wellbeing and the health of Europeans, creation of jobs and developing innovation. The Fit for 55 package, presented on 14 July, is the most important one presented so far being a commitment for the planet and for the youth that is a motive of pride. France will invest in the coming months more than 30 billion euro for the green transition. She mentioned the need to work together, because we are all in this together, and we will make this planet great again.

Mr. Simone Bemporad, Group Director of Communications and Public Affairs, Assicurazioni Generali, mentioned in his intervention that the economic losses, due to natural catastrophes, from the first 6 months of this year are estimated at 64 billion euro. This has been happening for the last 10 years, and it's equivalent to the GDP of Spain. Work

is needed for increasing the culture of insurance and risk prevention. The assets managed by the European insurance companies can be made available, through proper regulations and legislation, to the companies and initiatives that support the EU Green Deal. Today everybody is talking about the long term effects of environmental challenges, but there are short term costs associated with the green transition and this is why we have the Just Transition Mechanism.

The insurance companies can play a role in investment in green transition, but also through their core activity, by selling protection and prevention insurance products. The insurance companies have created the Net Zero Alliance, open to anyone in the industry, which is aligned to the net zero by 2050 target. This means that the insurance companies are committed to offer packages that are promoting this goal, which we consider to be a valuable incentive and their contribution for supporting the green transition. Environmental sustainability cannot be detached from social sustainability and governance. It's important to be committed to raising culture and awareness in a largely under-insured world.

For **Mr. Marco Alverà**, CEO Snam, in order to overcome the challenges of green transition in Italy and in Europe, climate diplomacy, which is increasingly decisive also in a geopolitical



key, can play an increasingly important role. An example of soft power is represented by hydrogen, which will allow Europe to exert its influence by assuming true climate leadership.

Ms. Maria Cristina Piovesana, Vice President for the Environment, Sustainability and Culture, Confindustria, stated that, in addition to principles, we also need rules and organizations, such as trade and health protection, which can favour the uniform behaviour of countries in terms of environment protection. These universal principles can be the platform of values on which we can find a new European identity, in order to avoid that the work and investment of the few is nullified by those that are less virtuous or even negligent, which gain a competitive advantage in a globalized economy.

This means finding a balance between economy, environment and employment, which can progress without dumping. Industry and environment, considered for a long time antithetical and in conflict with each other, can now become allies, because with industry we provide employment, research and culture, as well to promote sustainability. The EU needs to adopt measures to protect the industry, both SME and larger enterprises. We can promote the culture of sustainability through industry as an asset.

Mr. Carlo Doglioni, President of Istituito Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia (INGV) mentioned that Venice is a victim of climate change, with flooding due to global warming, and earthquakes due to tectonic activity. Italy has an significant problem in terms of energy and we need to use more renewable energy, such as geothermal energy, which is not always well understood, and it is often underestimated.

According to **Mr. Carlo Barbante**, Department of Environmental Sciences, Informatics and Statistics, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, we are now facing unprecedented concentrations of CO₂ in the atmosphere in the last 2 million years. Sea levels are rising, the surface of the Arctic and the glaciers are disappearing at an alarming speed. The impact of all these phenomena is the climate crisis, manifested through extreme heat, heavy rainfall, drought, fire weather and acidification of the ocean.

He stated that climate policies are needed in order to act in the climate crisis. It's a question of mitigation costs and the impact costs, where the dangerous threshold was set at 2°C. It is not too late, there are a lot of things that can be done. It's a global problem and we have to act globally. Actions must be taken now, because every year counts.

IED CONFERENCE – SAN MARINO, 14 OCTOBER 2021

FUTURE NEEDS – BIODIVERSITY, THE NATURAL RESPONSE TO A NECESSARY CHANGE

Simultaneously with the holding of the [UN Biodiversity Conference](#), the IED organized a conference on 14 October 2021, in San Marino, to discuss the challenges and opportunities for Europe to preserve Biodiversity. The Conference was organised in cooperation with [Repubblica Futura](#), in San Marino and was attended by 50 participants. It was simultaneously broadcasted live on the IED Website.

<https://www.iedonline.eu/events/2021/biodiversity.php>

Biodiversity is of utmost importance and in the last decades we have witnessed an increase of the dialogue and actions taken towards preserving it.

The speakers of the event were **Francesco Rutelli**, President of IED; **Mara Valentini**, Coordinator of Repubblica Futura Group; **Marco Gulatingieri**, economics professor, Founder of Seeds&Chips, Founder and CEO of Sustain&Ability; **Fritz Hofler**, Nurnberg University, Start-up Founder The bee educator; **Piero Manzoni**, Founder and CEO of Neorurale; **Florence Wijsbroek-Tsvetanova**, president and founder Balkan Sustainable Development Institute.

In his welcoming remarks, **Mr. Francesco Rutelli**, President of IED, mentioned that this event is an expression of the “build back better” approach, since it’s happening in the oldest

republic in the world. The values that guide us throughout our actions and events are those of freedom and responsibility, of a tradition of openness and willingness for rebirth.

Ms. Mara Valentini, Coordinator of Repubblica Futura Group, stated in her intervention that change is necessary regarding our approach to nature. Biodiversity represents the extraordinary variety of life on Earth and the natural balance. The synergy between our activities and our needs (food, air) has an impact on our mental health and the economy. Nature is essential and this is why the way we deal with climate change is vital for our existence. She mentioned that Repubblica Futura had just concluded a series of panel discussions on the future of our planet, titled *Future health – health that is changing*. The speakers, among which many researchers, had concluded that the global health system depends on social indicators (wellbeing, psychological and bio-balance) determined by ideological, political, social and environmental processes. This shows that medicine should change and be more focused on prevention rather than on healing, as proven by the Covid-19 pandemic. The social cooperative services are part of our natural balance and it is important not to underestimate their contribution and impact.

Mr. Marco Gulatingieri, economics Professor, Founder of Seeds&Chips, Founder and CEO of Sustain&Ability, tackled in his intervention the aspects related to Biodiversity, the world’s largest economic sector. He mentioned that we should start understanding more the role, impact and the interconnection of any living being in the world, as only approximately 1,6 million of species are known, yet the scientists estimate that there are over 7 million species on the planet. Our current problem is that the links between plants and animals are broken, which has an impact on the whole natural chain. A holistic vision of nature is needed as currently there is only a limited perspective. For instance the bumblebees are essential, because they



are responsible for pollinating 75% of what we eat. Yet we have been causing the disappearance of these pollinating insects.

One clear example of biodiversity loss is the biodiversity in the agri-food sector. Of an approximately 30 000 edible plants, only 7 000 plants have been used by humans across history and in the last decades we have been cultivating approximately 150 types of plants. Moreover, only 30 types of plants cover the food needs of the entire planet and just 3 types of plants make up more than 50% of our daily intake (rice, wheat, corn). As a species we are essentially destroying biodiversity, by cutting the links between species.

Biodiversity is also important for the world economy, as 60% of the world GDP depends on biodiversity (agro-alimentary sector, pharmaceutical, textile, tourism, chemical, building, ecosystemic services). By talking about money, we should talk about the costs of the loss of biodiversity, which generates and is caused by climate change (vicious circle). For instance, the World Economic Forum estimates that, by investing in biodiversity, by 2030, we can generate 9 trillion euro and create 395 million jobs.

It is estimated that in 2050, approximately 70% of our population will live in the cities (3 times more than in the 1950s). Therefore the importance of parks and gardens in cities for biodiversity will be essential and green corridors are very important (peri-urban and urban green areas) for the survival of plants and animals – From “Nice to have” to “Must have”.

Mr. Fritz Hoffer, Nurnberg University, Start-up Founder *The bee educator*, addressed the question of Improving biodiversity in existing agricultural frameworks. The cornerstone of his intervention was centred on **The Agrobiodiversity Project**, funded by the Bavarian State Ministry of Food and Agriculture (October 2020 – spring 2024). The project is implemented in Triesdorf, northern Bavaria, and within this project various measures for agrobiodiversity are currently being researched and tested at the agricultural training institutes in Triesdorf, mainly in close cooperation between the crop production and beekeeping departments. The aim of this project is to identify possible solutions for the federal government’s arable farming strategy, by making the agricultural landscape more permeable to biodiversity through targeted measures and cooperation. This means that biodiverse structures should be established across entire troughs or habitats; in addition to the existing fringing structures, flowering areas or strips of water, other areas are to be upgraded to so-called biotope stepping stones. The influences of management measures are tested and evaluated on the conventional and ecological areas of the Middle Franconia district.

For **Mr. Piero Manzoni**, Founder and CEO of Neorurale, addressing the question of *Investing in biodiversity, agrifood tech and circular economy: the NeoruraleHub case*, implies that the future needs

an optimal use of natural resources. He mentioned that it is not possible to prioritize resources such as water, air, energy, soil, biodiversity, one against the other. With the increased population, the problem of resources is not easily solved.

In 2050 there will be 10 billion people, while today 45% of the population lives in cities. By 2050, there is a need to increase the agricultural production by 60%, while today about 33% of soils is already mid-to-highly degraded due to loss of fertility. The migration from the rural areas to the cities also creates problems, since cities offer more services. Nowadays, 3,4% of the Earth’s surface is covered by cities and by 2050, 70% of the world’s population would live in the cities. Cities need food and energy, which cannot be produced in the cities. Other problems will be the rubbish management and pollution.

One solution is provided by the NeoruraleHub, which offers solutions to create a living, thriving and biodiverse ecosystem in order to improve quality of life and value of agricultural suburbs, turning their mission from food producers to ecosystem and environment service providers for the surrounding cities. In 1996, NeoruraleHub, in cooperation with three international Universities, launched a project involving an area of about 500 hectares in the southern suburbs of Milan. This experiment was aimed at improving the so-called “agricultural desert” of northern Italy, where agricultural land is fully exploited in the most intensive way for food production, and, since ever, no relevant free space is left for animals and flora. This area, called Cassinazza, was redesigned according to the prehistorical status of Po Valley: about 1,8 million trees were planted, while wetlands and bio-filters cans were created for land protection and water purification. The results were impressive: **Biodiversity** increased up to +180%; **Soil fertility** increased by 153%; **Crop productivity** increased on average by 30%; **Cultivation costs** reduced by 18%; an increase of 3% in net earnings from farming activities, at market price.

In his intervention, he mentioned that the “agricultural desert” resulted from a political decision, because the farmers receive incentives through the Common Agriculture Policy of the EU, which they use for productions with higher costs of production than what they would make by selling them, because the globalization resulted in the commodification of crops.

Ms. Florence Wijsbroek-Tsvetanova, President and Founder, Balkan Sustainable Development Institute, had an intervention focused on the topic of *Acting together to preserve biodiversity in Europe? Regulatory framework of the EU, Member States and the place of stakeholders in the actions*. She mentioned that by 2050, the population will double, the economic growth will increase by 4 times, while the exports will increase by 10 times. It is worth remembering that biodiversity is important for each and everyone of us. Additionally it is important for our children, since what we do will

impact them and it is important for the development of the territories, the countries, the EU and for the entire planet. Biodiversity is the entire living fabric of our planet: genetic diversity, diversity of species and diversity of ecosystems. Each human being is an ecosystem. Biodiversity should not be seen in a narrow perspective, just by recycling and measuring the impact on the nature of the economic activity.

At this moment, the problems of climate change and the problems of biodiversity are going together. At the international level, there is increased pressure for reuniting these areas, in order to have a more holistic and global approach, which could enhance the coherence and effectiveness of the actions.

Under the European Green Deal, the European Commission adopted its EU Biodiversity Strategy last year, which aims to put Europe's biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030. The Strategy has the advantage of having a holistic approach, with specific targets for each stakeholder. The governance remains the most important part, because without transversal action and the reinforcement of member states, the results would be small.

Afterwards a session of Q&A took place with a key question addressing the topic of regeneration of agricultural deserts into areas rich in flora and fauna. What kind of incentives were dedicated for farmers in this initiative?

For **Piero Manzoni**, if we put together 7-8 farmers in a consortium forming 100 ha of cultivated area, they can afford to lose 10% of the total surface in order to create a protected area (natural barriers), and invest in the 90% of the remaining area in order to produce as for the entire nominal area, with reduced costs (no use of fertilizers and pesticides). The CAP should offer incentives for such areas, because the farmers would be interested.

As for **Florence Wijsbroek-Tsvetanova**, she stated that in the 2030 Strategy of EU, there is a part which focuses on the restoration of soil and the use of pesticides with specific juridical framework and targets. Each country should design a plan of action for cleaning the area and for financing.

Another question addressed to the speakers was on how to tackle the inequality between developed countries, who can afford to focus on the loss of biodiversity, at the risk of relocating the food production in less developed countries, thus leading to a loss of biodiversity.

Marco Gualtieri is concerned there is this risk, but Neorurale shows that there is a solution for regenerating nature and still producing food. There is an example in Kenya as well, so it's not only limited to the EU. These projects should be supported through government incentives, but we can see that biodiversity is a priority for the government, there is a change. There are tools and everyone should do something.

The model of relocating the production to developing countries will not work, because there is a lot of biodiversity in underdeveloped countries. There should be more dialogue, we should work more for having concrete results.

Florence Wijsbroek-Tsvetanova mentioned that we should ask ourselves what we are doing for this. We should use the data that we have. For example, an EU country has increased agricultural production by 50%, but no one studied and analysed the connection with the increase in the use of pesticides by 50%. EU27 was not capable of having a unitary instrument for measuring the impact of CO₂. CBAM is such an instrument, which can be.



FRANCESCO RUTELLI
President of IED



MARA VALENTINI
Repubblica Futura Group



MARCO GUALTIERI
Biodiversity, the world's largest economic sector



FRITZ HÖFLER
Improving biodiversity in existing agricultural frameworks



PIERO MANZONI
Investing in biodiversity, agrifood tech and circular economy: the NeoruraleHub case



FLORENCE WIJSBROEK-TSVETANOVA
Acting together to preserve biodiversity in Europe? Regulatory framework of the European Union, Member States and the place of stakeholders in the actions



**IED & JAN NAGEL FOUNDATION CONFERENCE
5 NOVEMBER 2021, RESIDENCE PALACE BRUSSELS**

DIGITAL DEMOCRACY – NO APPS NO SAY?

HOW DO WE ENSURE THAT EVERYONE CAN PARTICIPATE IN A DIGITAL DEMOCRACY?

IED & Jan Nagel Foundation organised the conference *Digital democracy – No apps no say?* It comes in the context when all the EU countries are increasingly dealing with an aging society, the negative sentiments towards senior citizens are gaining momentum. The COVID-19 crisis has made us live in a more digitalised society than before, which led to the emergence of a 'new normal', although for our own safety. 66 participants.

<https://www.iedonline.eu/events/2021/digital-democracy.php>

The lives of senior citizens are influenced by an incremental digitization. Information, handling and keeping up with the multiple changes is a challenge. When people lack user skills, and are digital and media illiterate, they stand at the back of the line in getting jobs, finding a suitable and affordable home, and often get into financial problems, among other things. They need to learn, create, participate and be safe online.

Having basic digital skills is essential in our knowledge society. For that purpose a series of questions need to be answered.

- What to do when you are unable to participate in social and political life because of the lack of digital skills?
- Will segregation in society grow because of factors such as: lack of digital skills, inter-generational differences, accessibility to hardware and internet connection, poverty, people with learning difficulties?
- What are the effects of these developments for democracy?

The speakers of the debate included: **Francesco Rutelli** (IED President), **Dr. Caroline van Dullemen** (PhD – Politics of ageing) University of Amsterdam, **Dr. Jolanda Lindenberg** (PhD – Social Cultural Anthropologist) Leyden Academy, **Ittay Mannheim** (PhD Candidate in the Euro Ageism Innovative Training Network), Eindhoven, The Netherlands, **Tobias Gotthardt**, Member of the Bavarian Parliament, FREIE WÄHLER (Independent Voters), Chair of the Committee on Federal and European Affairs and Interregional Relations, Vice-chairman Commission for education. The moderator was **Gerrit Jan Van Otterloo**, Chairman of the Jan Nagel Foundation.

In his welcoming remark, **Mr. Francesco Rutelli** (IED President) underlined that we tend to believe that digitalization is generally easy and beneficial for everyone, which is usually true for the younger generations. For the older and the less skilled people, digitalization may represent a danger for democracy (e.g. the use of deep-fake). There is a need to understand the extent to which the elderly people can be excluded and the price they pay as a result in the context of the digital transformation. The importance of digitalization for the senior citizens and for citizens with difficult access to technology has been neglected.

Mr. Gerrit Jan Van Otterloo mentioned in his opening remarks that in the Netherlands, during the last elections, 3,5 seats from a total of 150 were lost because the postal voting procedures were not followed after the polls were closed. The older people mostly used this system to cast their vote.

Dr. Caroline van Dullemen, University of Amsterdam, emphasized that the use of technology in the public administration, as well as in the public lives has been sped up during the pandemic, leading to the increased activity of the e-government. This development needs to be discussed within the broader topic of digital inclusion.

E-democracy refers to how the internet can increase opportunities for individuals to interact with the government, and for the government to seek input from the community. The important question is how we can connect all the citizens to this process and to avoid leaving behind the vulnerable ones. This issue is not related only to broadband access, being encountered in technologically advanced countries as well. At the same time, this is not a cohort-problem; the current group with limited internet use has a long tail end. People in their 50s and 60s, who can expect to live for another 20 or 30 years with limited use of technology, will be excluded.

The speed with which technology is changing can be a challenge for the people leaving the working place. Digital exclusion is not going to disappear anytime soon. In the EU only 61% from those aged between 65 and 74 are online, and only 10% for the people over 80s. This leads to a total of 20 million citizens who are offline. The group is composed of people excluded because of the lack of skills or access, and some people who are not connected because of their own will.

However, most people are reluctant to go online due to a lack of confidence in their ability to learn. Usually, people over 50s are rarely represented in media images or are represented in sensitive situations (with grey hair, helped by youngsters etc). The socio-economic factors, such as gender and ethnic segregation, can impact the extent to which digital devices are used. Minorities usually have a lower access to technology than the majoritarian

populations. The use of technology is an ethnic-experience and a gender-experience, which has significant costs. It is estimated that 1 trillion dollars were lost due to the fact that women were excluded from access to technology.

Digital inclusion is increasingly prioritized on the policy agenda of different organizations. The Biden administration decided to support digital inclusion with 65 billion dollars. The UN has its own documents addressing this issue.

A broad coalition of stakeholders will be necessary in order to address this problem, comprising governments, civil society organizations, and the private sector.

Dr. Jolanda Lindenberg (PhD – Social Cultural Anthropologist), Leyden Academy, presented the results of an interview study on the experience of old people during the COVID-19 lockdowns in the Netherlands. The interviews were semi-structured and focused on issues related to digital connectivity and more. The questions of how the old people were represented and treated in the media have generated intensive debates, as many resented being treated as an unitary group. With regards to the digital connectedness, the COVID-19 pandemic represented a perceived forced introduction to the digital world, and an impetus to come online, while for others these advantages were not feasible for everyone. For some, the digital represented only a surrogate of the physical interactions (physical disconnectedness), giving a sense of lack of solidarity (solidarity disconnected). Her key message is that it is important to look at heterogeneity among older adults. There is a need to incorporate their voices and keep an eye on possibilities, while carefully considering the framing and the language use (inclusivity).

Mr. Ittay Mannheim (PhD Candidate in the Euro Ageism Innovative Training Network, Eindhoven, the Netherlands, presented a research project about the relation between aging and the development of new technologies. He argued that sometimes ageism is a barrier in accessing technology (not the age/being old). The discourse on ageism (understood as cognitive decline, fragility) is defined as a problem, while digital technology as the solution. There is also an emphasis on developing technologies for care and healthcare for this group, and researchers found that ageism can be embedded in the design process for these technologies. The most easily identifiable form of ageism is the exclusion of the elderly from the process of creation. This begs the questions: who are the people involved in this process, and how are they involved in the design process. He mentioned a way to identify self-ageism or negative perspectives on aging and technology by saying “I am too old for/to use this”. The presence of technology can induce stereotype threats (technology is seen as being used by the young and associated with new) and ageism.

Mr. Tobias Gotthardt, Member of the Bavarian Parliament, FREIE WÄHLER (Independent Voters), Chair of the Committee on Federal and European Affairs and Interregional Relations, Vice-chairman Commission for education discussed about the digital transformation in Germany with a special focus on Bavaria and the educational system. He mentioned in his intervention that Bavaria is one of the leading regions in Germany in terms of e-government and digital public services. In 2020, it launched an app as a digital one-stop shop for all levels of e-government. Digital education is an important topic for the country, and more than 2 billion euros have been invested since 2018 to improve the digital development in schools.

In Germany, and especially in Bavaria, the elections have been digitalized for many levels, while e-petitions are useful instruments for political participation. Digital democracy can increase transparency (e.g. the institutions publish documents on the internet). The internet has democratized opinion and has contributed to a stronger visibility of previously unnoticed people. The political parties in Germany have developed instruments to encourage digital participation and there is also the possibility for e-participation and e-politics for members and non-members. However, no app can replace the emotion of a politician's speech.

The problem of fake news is pushed by the fact that social networks favour exclusion and like-minded approaches, which do not encourage diversity and debates. Sometimes, on the internet, opinion is for sale, for likes and followers created by fake profiles or click workers resulting in propaganda. It will be a challenge to create digital participation for everybody, not just for those who already use the technology.

With regards to the aspects related to digital democracy and the Conference on the Future of Europe, it's been problematic since the beginning, we need to be realistic and admit that, until today, this debate has not really been a public debate which includes the citizens, because not even the citizens' panels do not guarantee the expected level of participation. Even the European Convention in 2001 had more public visibility. If the Conference is to be a success, it needs to get out in the streets and squares and it needs an analogue and real dimension to complete the digital one.

Digital democracy and e-government need to be further developed and we (Europe) should be the home of digital democracy in a global leadership. Both of them have a social dimension. Digital democracy should complement, not replace the real and human dimensions of politics. The dialogue in digital democracy must be followed by action, otherwise participation creates frustration. Digital interaction should take place in a safe environment. The local and regional levels need to be supported in their approach to digitalization (are closer to local municipalities). He

concluded saying that a new digital participation act is required, with politicians, business, and science, and with all levels of participation from local to European.

The Q&A session allowed the participants to comment and debate about the ideas and topics presented, as well as to respond to the questions addressed. A summary of the ideas expressed can be seen below:

- Digital vote should not be exclusive, you should still have the possibility to have your vote at the ballot box. All over the world, older people vote in higher numbers than younger people.
- In the future we may have a shift in the way the workplace is defined. It is possible in some fields to work from home. The EU can invest in the areas left behind in this situation. The next step should refer to how can you connect everybody, knowing that a number of people will not be able to do it, because the infrastructure is not enough, since there is a need to be able to buy smartphones which are updated quite frequently, forcing the users to replace them, leading to questions about the sustainability and costs
- The Fundamental Rights Agency (The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights) will conduct a study on digitalization and the rights of all people (in the EU).

The following question was addressed through Slido: how the EU legislators can improve digital inclusion, and whether it is a national competence or can the EU do something at this level? **Dr. Caroline van Dullemen** stressed that the EU can stimulate the digital transformation, and address the social disparities in many countries, suggesting as possibilities: investments in comparative research among the Member States, discussions about best practices; the European learning agenda, mentioning the initiative of European Universities regarding the development of a lifelong curriculum from a European perspective, which can stimulate national governments to do more. Thus: Education wise, economic wise and research wise there are many opportunities at European level.

A general idea repeated by many speakers and participants was that the management of digital transformation, e-democracy and e-governance needs more and diverse participants. At the same time, the EU can do more, especially in terms of support for research in these areas.

As well as for the previous years, through the abovementioned activities achieved in 2020, the Institute of European Democrats has underpinned and complemented the objectives of the European Democratic Party to which the IED is affiliated. Through many of its initiatives, the IED has given a solid and cultural basis to EDP activity.





EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY LAB PODCAST

The Climate Crisis, Covid-19, and the economic and financial challenges it represents for Europe require global and democratic solutions. How can democratic institutions and a democratic consensus help Europe to answer these new global challenges? The IED has launched in July 2020 its podcast channel in French and English to help citizens in Europe to learn more about European and International Affairs. The episodes are produced monthly.

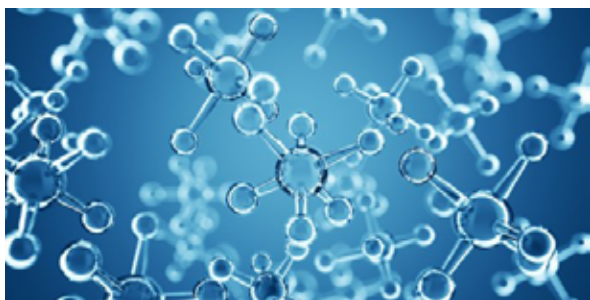
The main platforms used by the audience are Ausha, Apple Podcast and Spotify.



1. GENDER INEQUALITY ON THE LABOUR MARKET DURING COVID-19 – EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY LAB PODCAST, SEASON 1, NO. 7 / 15.02.2021

The impact of COVID19 on gender violence is already well known. But people are less aware of the consequences of the pandemic on gender equality in the Labour market. The COVID19 crisis is unraveling the progress that had been made over the past decades in fostering gender equality. The EU and the Member States have to act in order to reverse the trend. Listen to our discussion with the sociologist Jutta Allmendinger and with the MEP Ulrike Müller.

 AUDIENCE SCORE: 208 LISTENERS



2. WHAT IF HYDROGEN WERE TO BECOME THE MAIN ENERGY SOURCE IN EUROPE IN 2050? – EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY LAB PODCAST, SEASON 1, NO. 8 / 30.03.2021

The EU Commission recently published a strategy to develop hydrogen energy. The aim is to encourage the production of “clean” hydrogen from the electricity of renewable origin and to make this clean hydrogen a viable solution to decarbonize various sectors of the economy, in line with the objectives of the Paris agreements. Are the EU Member States already producing or using hydrogen? And can it become the energy of the future for Europe? This podcast offers crossed perspectives from Belfort (France) with MEP Christophe Grudler, who, in his region, fights for the development of this energy, and from Rome (Italy) with Francesco Rutelli, President of IED, who will tell us why hydrogen is so important for Democrats and for the EU as a whole.

 AUDIENCE SCORE: 187 LISTENERS



3. WHAT IF WE PUT LOCAL BANKS AT THE HEART OF EUROPE’S SUSTAINABLE GROWTH? – EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY LAB PODCAST, SEASON 2, NO. 1 / 31.03.2021

What if the world of finance wasn’t all about the big financial players of our times? What if, by focusing on the big financial institutions, European leaders overlooked the “real” elephant in the room? This podcast is exploring the role played by Local and cooperative banks to boost the investments for SMEs in Europe’s regions. SMEs employ around 100 million people and account for more than 50% of Europe’s GDP. A discussion with Prof Bernhard Herz, professor in Economics at the University of Bayreuth (Germany), and with Susanna Andres, Commercial director of Laboral Kutxa, a Basque credit union located in Mondragón.

 AUDIENCE SCORE: 208 LISTENERS



4. WHAT IF WE IMMUNISED CITIZENS FROM FAKE NEWS? – EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY LAB PODCAST, SEASON 2, NO. 2 / 04.06.2021

Disinformation campaigns in Europe, whether driven by domestic or external actors, bring about harmful effects on the public debate, by disseminating distrust towards institutions and science. And with a massive vaccination campaign being currently rolled out, disinformation could be the Achilles heel of Europe. As the end of the Covid-19 pandemic is still surrounded by uncertainty and the capacity of European governments to effectively deal with the health crisis is put under strain by anti-vax movements, we must ask ourselves, what if... we immunised citizens from fake news? A conversation with Andrzej Potocki, Vice President of the Polish party Stronnictwo Demokratyczne and Peter Kréko, a social psychologist and Director of the “Political Capital Institute”, in Budapest.

AUDIENCE SCORE: 327 LISTENERS



5. WHAT IF WE USED CULTURE TO PREVENT CONFLICTS? – EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY LAB PODCAST, SEASON2, NO. 3 / 07.09.2021

Throughout history, culture, ethnic and religious identity have been at the very heart of armed hostilities, uprisings and wars. Cultural differences and conflicting identities seem to be primarily divisive. But in many other instances, culture has proven to be the exact opposite: a means to bridge gaps between different societies. If the promotion of cultural diversity can foster mutual understanding, can the European Union promote culture as a tool to actually prevent conflicts? Let's find out with our two guest speakers: Juan Antonio March, former Ambassador to the Russian Federation and the WTO, and Prof. Damien Helly, international cultural advisor specialised in EU external cultural action.

AUDIENCE SCORE: 292 LISTENERS



6. IS IT TOO LATE TO SAVE BIODIVERSITY? – EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY LAB PODCAST, SEASON 2, NO. 4 / 09.11.2021

Why is preserving biodiversity so relevant to our lives? Would living in a world without bumblebees be so critical? The basic idea behind biodiversity is interdependence: every element of the system is interconnected. We must act now to preserve biodiversity, because our children probably won't have the same opportunity. Find out more about the Biodiversity Strategy 2030 of the European Union; Listen to the lively discussion with Marco Gualtieri, the founder of Seeds & Chips, and Florence Wijsbroek, the president of the Balkans Sustainable Development Institute, on the occasion of the IED Conference on Biodiversity in San Marino (October 2021).

AUDIENCE SCORE: 286 LISTENERS



7. WHAT IF THE EU ACHIEVES DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY? – EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY LAB PODCAST, SEASON 2, NO. 5 / 15.12.2021

Regulating the chaotic digital world is a tough job, but the EU's got to do it. With their solid political capital and advanced legislative tools, the EU institutions are today at the forefront of the global campaign to rein in the Big Tech, the influential companies that have come to dominate the digital world. Enough to achieve a European digital sovereignty? Listen to our discussion with Daniel Innerarity, professor at the School of Transnational Governance at the European University Institute, and Sandro Gozi, MEP for Renew Europe and Secretary General of the European Democratic Party (EDP).

 AUDIENCE SCORE: 296 LISTENERS

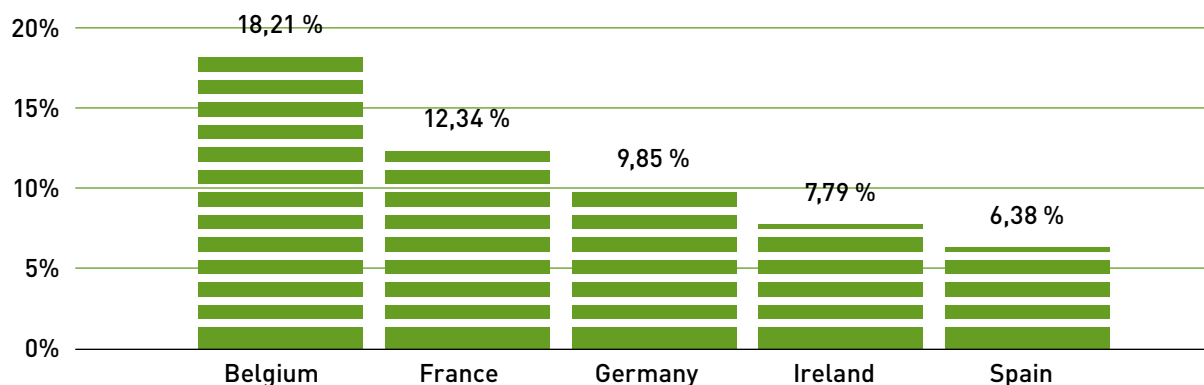


8. WHAT IF DIGITAL CITIZEN PARTICIPATORY PRACTICES WERE THE KEY TO RESTORE TRUST IN POLITICAL PROCESSES? – EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY LAB PODCAST, SEASON 2, NO. 6 / 11.01.2022

Representative democracy is in crisis. Public confidence in the accountability of democratic representation has experienced a steady decline, both within and outside the EU. For many citizens, political actors are distant figures and legislative processes appear too complex to follow and control. However, grassroots participatory democracy initiatives have mushroomed across Europe. This phenomenon speaks to a more promising reality. We have discussed it with a Research from Croatia, Iva Paska, a sociologist and lecturer at the University of the North in Croatia and Vincent Chauvet, Mayor of Autun, in central France and member of the European Committee of the Regions.

 AUDIENCE SCORE: 201 LISTENERS

AUDIENCE STATISTICS: TOP 5 COUNTRIES





RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

The research activities have involved both members of the IED Scientific Committee and young people under 35 through a Call for papers. We have significantly increased our research activity this year, including the launch of two major research projects dedicated to sovereignty and democracy in Europe.

DIGITAL CITIZEN PARTICIPATORY PRACTICES

How to facilitate democratic processes and foster citizen engagement in the European Union?

IED Research Paper by Iva Paska, 30.09.2021

In recent years, the political processes both within the European Union and outside of it have faced a crisis in trust of the process of democratic representation. An increasingly low level of trust in both political actors and legislative processes is being documented in advanced democracies. Simultaneously, as we progress into the digital age and increasingly live within the contexts of the digital environments, the development of digital technologies has provided a space for digital practices which allow citizens to take part in the governance process to some extent.

<https://www.iedonline.eu/publications/2021/digital-citizen.php>

CURRENT CHALLENGES FOR SMES AND REGIONAL BANKS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

IED Research Paper by Horst Gischer & Bernhard Herz, 18.10.2021

This research shows that for a successful fight against the Covid-19 pandemic and the climate crisis, better working conditions for SMEs and local banks, their main funding partners, are indispensable.

<https://www.iedonline.eu/publications/2021/banks-sme-2.php>

EXTERNAL RESEARCH PROJECT

CALL FOR PAPERS

THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL: MOVING TO ACTION

Opportunities and challenges for the European citizens

16.11.2021

The Institute of European Democrats (IED) is proud to present the Research Papers which have been selected in the frame of its Call for Papers on The European Green Deal: moving to action launched in June 2021. The 20 selected research papers are bringing new ideas and proposals to redefine Europe's role and mission on this topic. Through this research, the IED wishes to provide democratic ideas & solutions to promote a new effective multilateralism. We wish you a good reading...

Climate change is no longer a theoretical discussion but a reality that affects us also, not only the "future generations". For that purpose the European Green Deal is the basis for streamlining the EU's climate and environmental goals across its policies. Yet in order to become efficient it needs to reduce the gap between words and action and **promote a transition process across all society, with profound economic, social and political impact. As Europe is striving to become the first climate-neutral continent in the world by 2050** this process is, according to the President of the European Commission von der Leyen, "the greatest responsibility and opportunity of our times."

This programme is one of the most complex one underwent at the European level as this 2050 objective needs to be accomplished while **maintaining the competitiveness of European industry and providing a just transition for the regions, companies, Member States and workers affected.** This process also includes aspects such as **preserving Europe's natural environment and biodiversity, a 'farm to fork' strategy for sustainable food, and a new circular economy action plan.**

The European Green Deal needs to bring together regional and local authorities, civil society, industry and schools to agree on commitments needed to adopt a more ecological behaviour. That would require a **massive society-changing dialogue** at the EU level that must be guided into an orderly way in order to avoid sterile debates or incongruent actions.

We cannot speak of a European Green Deal without a **just transition**. Like in the past technological revolutions, we need all the conditions for social stability to converge, otherwise we cannot maintain the stability of the Member States. Thus the social and political component is of outmost interest.

Also the European Green Deal must reach beyond its borders as it is **both good for Europe** (it represents a historic opportunity to revitalise Europe's economy and provide a common purpose) **and for the world** as it shows that the climate neutrality goal is a possible one from all the points of view.

Also in the context of the medical crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the implementation process of the European Green Deal had to be adjusted in order to allow more focus on the measures needed to overcome the medical crisis. Yet this represents also a unique opportunity for a "green comeback" by pushing the reset button on European industry. However the fixed targets remain unchanged and new instruments such as the Just Transition Fund have been set up in order to manage this process.

View the 20 papers here:

<https://www.iedonline.eu/publications/2021/european-green-deal.php>

- Key Climate allies from the East: Redefining the EU Climate Diplomacy Strategy towards Asia, Angeline Sanzay
- Change on the menu: the New European Bauhaus Initiative as the enabler for the co-creation on the food systems of tomorrow, Tommaso Emiliani
- EU as a green normative power: How could the European Green Deal become a normative tool in EU's climate diplomacy?, Dawid Aristotelis Fusiek
- The European Green Deal and its implications for Democracy: recommendations for facilitating a just and fair transition, Eliza Vas
- The European Union versus Climate Change. Climate Diplomacy as Expression of EU Actorness, Bogdan Muresan
- The EU Green Deal and the Future of the European labour market: Which challenges and opportunities?, Eleonora Lamio
- Political stances in the EU on the Green Deal, Clara Volintiru
- Energy taxation and the need for Reform: The need for a standard EU energy taxation to mitigate against internal competition and the undermining of the policy objectives of the EU Green Deal, Conor Rock
- Paving the way for a green recovery: the contribution of the Resilience and Recovery Facility to the Green Deal, Cristina Dans
- Sustainable and green transition for transport infrastructure in Romania. Case study: the metropolitan train concept implementation, Mădălina Teodor
- The European Green Deal: an opportunity across national borders, Domenico Bovienzo

- The EU Green Deal and climate diplomacy with countries from the Global South: Exploring different perceptions of climate threat through anxiety emotion, Neringa Mataityte
- How can the European Union act as a normative power in the green transition?, Ionuț-Mircea Marcu
- The Transformative power of the New European Bauhaus: Bringing the Aspirations of the Green Deal Closer to Citizens and Territories: Gabriele Rosana
- Integrating the Green Deal targets into the Common Agricultural Policy, Livia Mirescu
- European Green Deal: No urban infrastructure, No sustainable development, Nicola Bilotta
- Rethinking the environmental legal personhood within the Green Deal for a more effective defence of your resources, Sara Soto Velasco
- From oppression to emancipation. Energy Communities to leap towards equality, Jediael De Dompablo
- The European Green Deal as the key factor for the industrial transition in Europe, Asier Areitio
- The International Dimensions of the European Green Deal: The EU as a leader of the climate change diplomacy?, Konstantinos Papanikolaou

IED STRATEGIC RESEARCH PAPERS 2021/22

EU: A SOVEREIGN POWER FOR THE XXI CENTURY? 31.12.2021

The IED has launched in 2021 an external research project titled "EU: a sovereign power for the XXI Century?". The IED has selected a team of prestigious academics, researchers and renowned personalities from all over Europe and has asked them to analyze the current position of the EU at the global level and formulate proposals to display the contents and the opportunities of a season of new EU "Strategic Autonomy, in the context of our International Alliance".

The crises that affected the EU in the last decade as well as the enhanced global competition and the emergence of new or old actors on the world stage have generated a serious debate on the EU role in the world. For that purposes the idea of strategic autonomy of the Union arises in the political and academic spheres, as a possible response especially for the areas of security and defence.

However, these two areas need to be expanded as the financial, scientific, technological or medical areas are also affected and require a comprehensive response. Any discussion about autonomy needs to be linked with the question of solidarity and subsidiarity between the Member States.

This generates also a discussion about the idea of **strategic resilience of the EU**, meaning that the EU as a whole need to **be resilient enough in order to be functional despite adverse conditions, such as the pandemic**, as some Eastern and Central European Member States are reluctant toward the idea of a strategic autonomy decoupled from the United States of America. From the **external point of view the EU needs**, as a global leader, to promote its interests, which are **the sum of the common interests of the Members States**. This depends on the solidarity of the Member States and their common actions.

- How can the EU embody a “responsible global leadership” enhancing its economic, demographic and military strength but also its system of values?
- Which solutions can find the EU to generate world wide support for its values and policy options and also have the ability to implement them?
- How can the EU build external alliances with like-minded partners in order to promote its global agenda?

<https://www.iedonline.eu/publications/2021/strategic-research-papers.php>

- European digital sovereignty, Daniel Innerarity
- Towards a Dual Copernican and Sovereign Revolution?, Jean-Louis Bourlanges
- The case for limited European sovereignty, Ambassador Stefano Stefanini
- The Future of EU Sovereignty and the Role of Democracies after COVID-19, Gianluca Ansalone
- The Difficult Relationship between European Sovereignty and European Democracy in Franco-German Discourse, Ulrike Guérot
- Three conditions and five dilemmas, Lorenzo Vai



ANNUAL REPORT

IED ANNUAL REPORT 2020

APRIL 2021

Through this report, the IED wishes to share the topics and findings of the activities conducted in 2020
https://www.iedonline.eu/download/ied/IED_Annual_REPORT_2020.pdf?m=1617976583&





6.

MEMBERS 2021

The Institute of European Democrats held its general assembly on 5 November 2021 in Brussels. The members of IED gathered physically at the new premises of the Institute, in Rue Montoyer 25. The general assembly took place in hybrid format, together with members who joined the meeting by video conference.

The general assembly accepted the resignation of Zsuzsanna Szelényi and Citizens' Alliance and renewed the other members of the Board for a 2 year's mandate: Francesco Rutelli remains the President of the Institute, Gabi Schmidt was renewed as Vice-President and Mikel Burzako as administrateur délégué.

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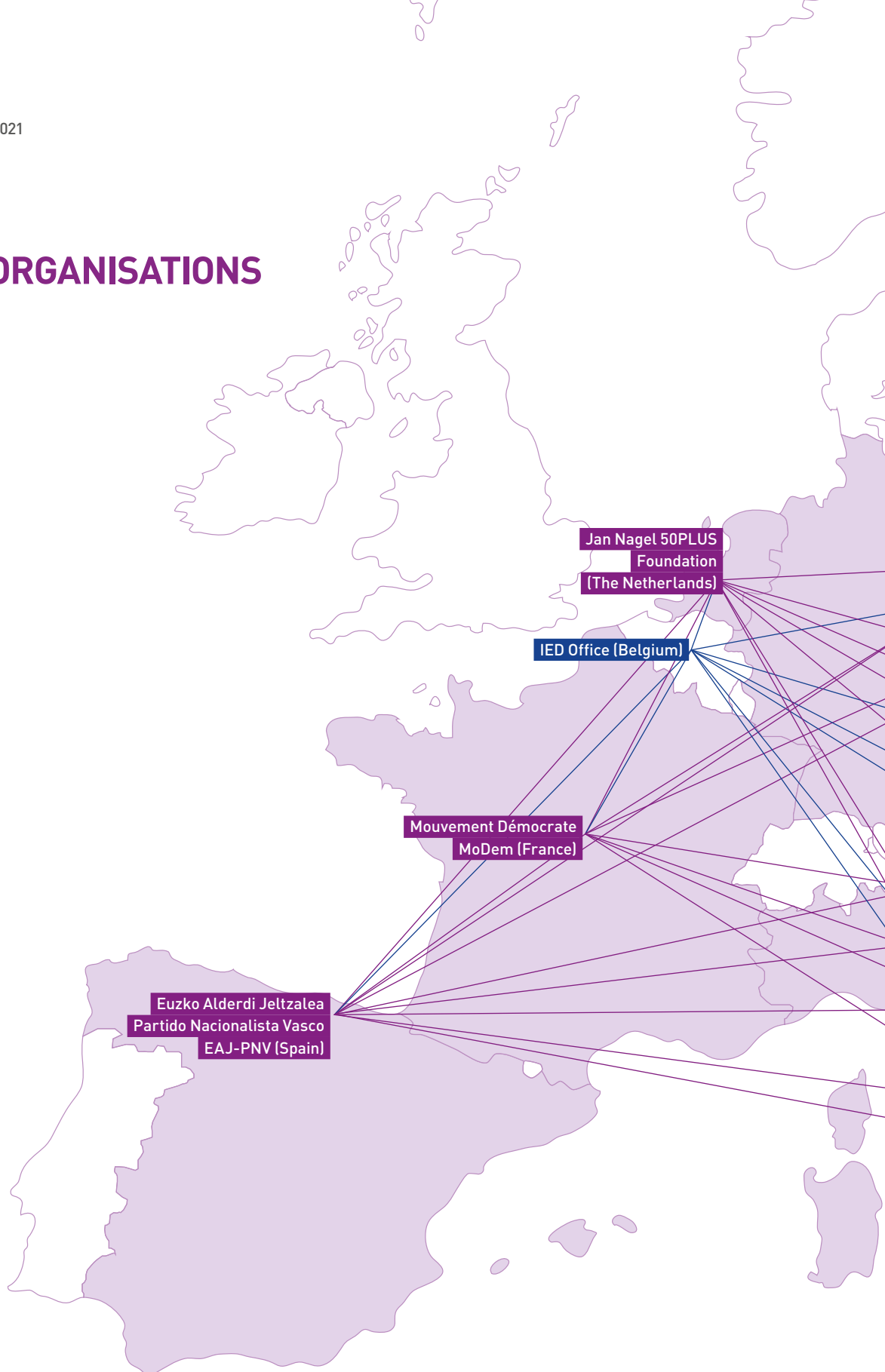
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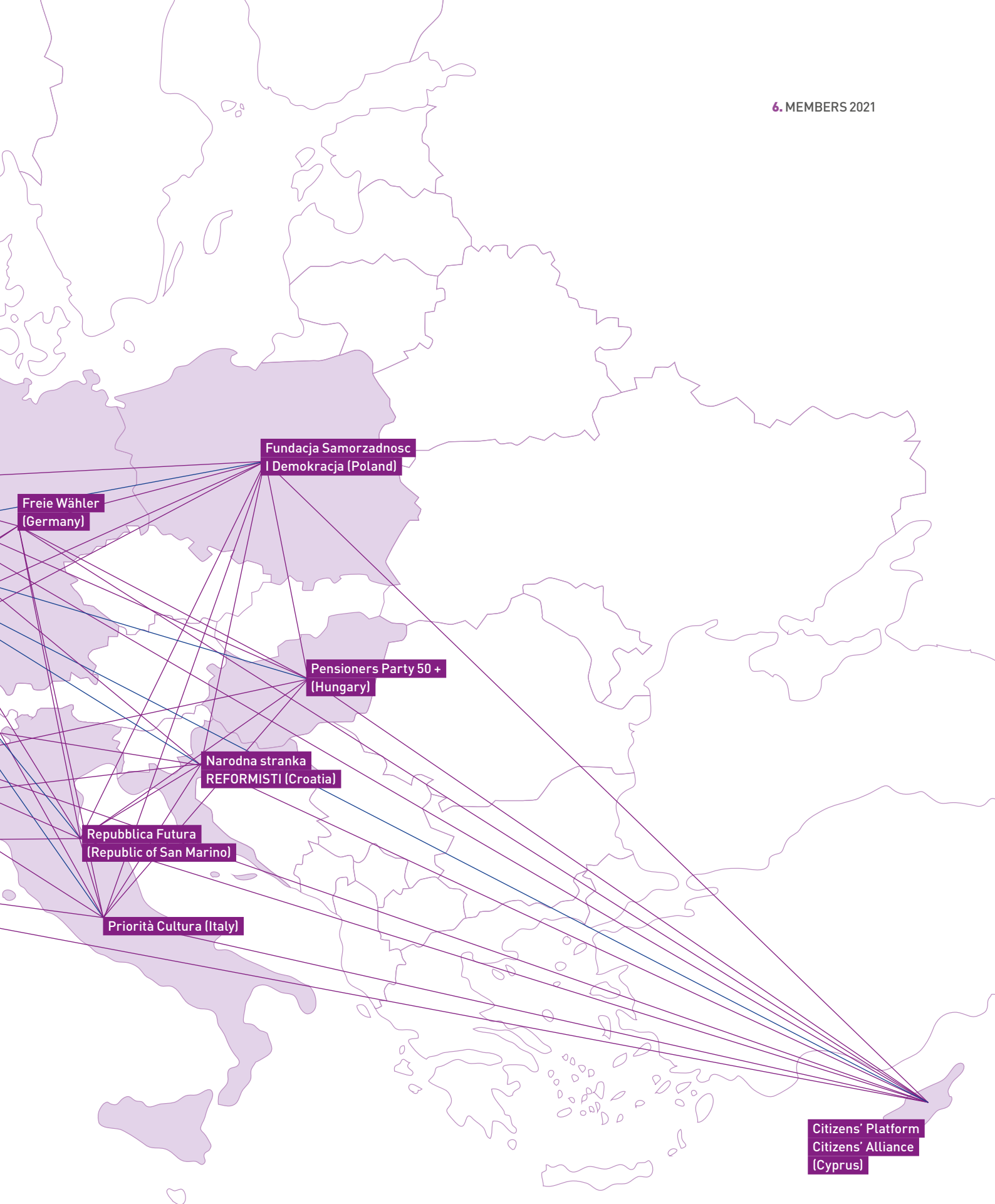


MEMBER ORGANISATIONS



ADHERING MEMBER

Young Democrats for Europe – YDE





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With financial support from the European Parliament



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