

**YOUNG CITIZENS'
PARTICIPATIVE
DIALOGUE ON THE
GREEN DEAL FOR
EUROPE:
MADRID 2019**

**Let's shape the future
of Europe together**



Madrid - 11th & 12th December 2019

Overview

On the 11th December 2019, the European Commission held a Citizens' Engagement Workshop with over 200 young people on the European Green Deal in Madrid. Participative processes were used throughout the day in order to ensure that everyone could take part and develop their ideas and proposals collectively. This created an atmosphere of trust and

motivation. Independent participatory facilitators shaped the programme and guided the process. A strategic illustrator captured the findings to reflect back the essence of what was happening in the room. This is the record that captures the outcomes of what took place.

Welcome

Joachim Ott, Head of the Citizens' Dialogue Unit, welcomed the participants, saying: "This event today is a major step forward in citizens' dialogues, as it is an opportunity for young people to really be heard and to contribute their ideas for action on climate change. The Green Deal for Europe, has been unveiled this morning and lays out a framework for the future. Colleagues from DG Climate Action, DG Environment and DG Energy will lay out some of the big challenges ahead and we are looking forward to hearing your ideas."



Breaking the Ice

To begin engaging the participants, they were invited to be in conversation, sharing with each other what they most cared about that had brought them to this dialogue. A word cloud was produced of the answers and some were heard in the room.



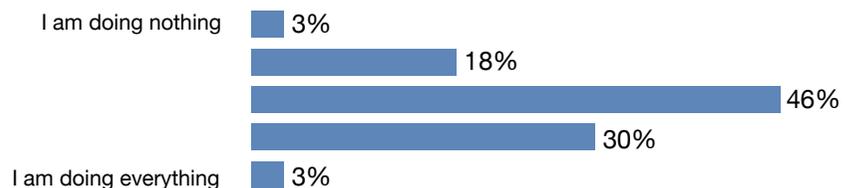
Setting the scene

European Commission Policy Experts, Yvon Slingenberg, Director in DG Climate Action, Alessia Clocchiatti, Policy Advisor in DG Energy, and Luis Planas Herrera, Policy Assistant to the Director General, DG Environment gave an overview of current European policies and explained the challenges and dilemmas that remain to accelerate the transition. They explained the role of the EU in setting targets and common objectives, such as emissions, air pollution and protected areas.

Participants were then asked their views of the EU's climate and environmental policies.



What am I doing to create change to reduce my carbon footprint?



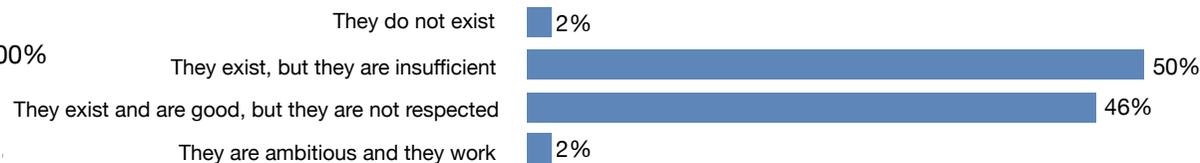
Do you think that these objectives are being accomplished?



Do you think that these objectives should be more ambitious?



What do you think of the EU's climate and environmental policies?



Surfacing concrete actions for people and planet

The young people co-created an agenda for action, around the question, **'What concrete actions can we take that will have a positive impact on people and planet?'** In a highly participative format, the young people created their own themed discussion topics focused on generating concrete actions and ideas for how Citizens together with the European Commission can fight climate change.

Initially, 55 young people stood up to post a topic for concrete action, which greatly exceeded the number of spaces available. However, they collaborated and grouped their topics so that in the end 22 working groups took place. Young people were in animated conversation together, developing ideas and concrete actions around the themes that were most important to them. The following themes and concrete recommendations were proposed:



1 Citizens' Assemblies

Create citizens' assemblies at national and European level, to decide how to make the necessary eco-social transition to combat the climate emergency.

2 Promote vegan food in public institutions and learn about its environmental and health benefits

All EU institutions to promote the positive effects of veganism.

Self-education for citizens about environmental and health benefits.

3 Land/Soil management

Protection of small farmers in rural areas. Right to use of land rather than ownership. Reactivate the 2006 EU directive.

Investment in green infrastructure in Urban areas. Raise awareness and give visibility to the importance of the soil (lower CO₂, increase quality nutrients).

4 Alternative green GDP measuring, end of infinite growth.

Compulsory implementation of the index by EU Institutions, countries, companies, cities.

EU Citizens should consider the indicators when making decisions.

5 Environmental Education

Non-formal education programs by EU Institutions at different scales. Expand the CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) to apply to the environment. Erasmus projects on sustainability.

Transmission of scientific concepts to citizens worldwide. Sharing of good practices.

6 Sustainability Transport, renewable energy

Greater financing for ecological projects from EU Institutions. Tariffs: and income to compensate for contamination.



7 Land without people and people without land (migration, overpopulation, rural depopulation)

EU Institutions to promote local economies by quality and origin labels. Tax for plots of land going unused. Land rental, Energy self-management, Aid for biomass and composting plants.

Local action groups for citizens.

8. Financial Incentives

EU Institutions to implement carbon taxes/carbon dividend: One half reinvestment in green technology, the other half redistribution to citizens.

Free education/marketing for citizens on sustainable lifestyle in schools, universities, offices, events, hospitals, etc.

9. Chemical recycling of plastic

EU Institutions to develop fiscal and economic incentives, aid for SMES

Specific containers. Provide specific containers / 50-litres recycling bins for citizens.

10 Nature based solutions

Greater supervision and responsibility of initiatives from EU institutions. Unlock funds. Strengthen laws for the protection of biodiversity. Facilitate the exploitation of advances in nature-based solutions.

A visible reforestation program with more visibility and reduced costs for citizens.

11 Sustainable local food systems

Creation of a European label of local products by the EU Institutions (Accessible subsidies, circular economy, CO2 neutral). Reform the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy).

Creation of urban allotments enabling citizens to live closer to nature.

12 Wood construction

Green Public Purchasing by EU Institutions. Aid to forest owners. Common Forest Policy. Promotion of Forestry R&D.

Civic participation to enable citizens to be more selective in their purchase of wood products (PEFC & FSC programmes).

13 R + D + I (Research + Development and Innovation)

EU Institutions to provide funding to promote science and technology and a European R&D plan.

Citizens need scientific education. Decentralised populations and consumption.

14 Alternative packaging single use

Fines and tax awareness raising from EU Institutions. BPA restriction.

EU Citizens: encouraged to use glass as a priority container, incentives, information, accessibility, consumer culture.





15 Monetising the Environment

EU Institutions could legislate for Habitat Banking. Transparent carbon footprint reporting by all companies large and small.

EU Citizens and companies need increased knowledge of European grants to support the sustainable / ecological transition. Environmental managers in education centres for Habitat Banking.

16 The Energy Charter Treaty

All EU states must leave the treaty in order to apply the measures of the European Green Deal. Outstanding claims or debts should not be paid.

Citizens must pressure national governments to leave the treaty.

17 Resize the European aeronautical sector: promote alternative means of transport.

The creation of a European train market by the EU Institutions. Raise taxes on kerosene. Raise prices of plane tickets whenever there is a high-speed train alternative available, subsidise train tickets.

EU Citizens need greater awareness and education. Better use of Apps already at our disposal to find train alternatives (cheapest and fastest). Contribute to creating a good image of train transportation (keep them clean). Talk to one another to recommend the use of trains.

18 Green Corporation Project

A unified tax plan created by the EU Institutions to realise this realistically. Create a sustainability label similar to that used in the food industry in Chile. Negotiate and create an evaluation commission that impartially evaluates all companies, making all the information available to citizens.

EU Citizens need to show interest, demonstrate their support and buy from companies that lead in the sustainability ranking.

19 Regulation of industrial ecology

EU Institutions should tax products that harm the environment. Require companies that operate in Europe to maintain ecological standards worldwide. Develop planning and transition commissions.

EU Citizens need to be responsible purchasers with greater social commitment.

20 Training and education of professionals - Qualified staff, economic facilities

More scholarships provided by EU Institutions. Greater financial aid to public centres.

EU Citizens need to be interested in this change and committed to make it happen.

21 Hydrogen as the basis of mobility

Energy independence, better air quality, renewable and inexhaustible source.

EU Institutions should legislate for the use and production of hydrogen. Disclosure campaign. Distribution and storage.

EU Citizens need to build awareness.

22 Laziness pollutes

A formal education and awareness raising is needed. Construct less crowded cities with more self-propelled vehicles.

Think globally, but act locally. Contribute and have empathy for yourself, society and the environment.

Presenting and Selecting the Most Impactful Concrete Actions

A representative from each of the 22 working groups explained their proposals and the thinking behind them to everyone in a plenary session. Participants were invited to listen out for the three most impactful concrete actions that they felt would have the greatest potential for change. A dynamic 'market place' followed with everyone circulating around the different proposals, finding out more about the themes that interested them and collectively voting for their preferred options. Three proposals came out as most powerful and they were:

- **Sustainable Local Food Systems** - Rodrigo López Piquín (Youth Coordinator at UNESCO's Biosphere Programme and IberoMaB)
- **Environmental Education** - Ana Maria Diachend (University of Alcalá)
- **R + D + I (Research + Development and Innovation)** - Víctor Cortés Ortega (Experimental Sciences, Rey Juan Carlos University)

These three concrete actions were then presented to and discussed with Executive Vice President Timmermans in a further Citizens' Dialogue, held on 12th December at the COP25.

Closing

Joachim Ott closed the Citizens Engagement Workshop, thanking everyone for their input. When asked if they would like more sessions like this and if it had been useful and engaging there was a resounding YES and thanks to the Commission for listening and opening the space for conversation. Joachim reminded everyone to meet again at the COP25 where these 3 proposals would be presented and discussed in more detail and everyone would have the opportunity to be in dialogue with Executive Vice-President Timmermans.



Welcome & Overview by EVP Timmermans

Mira Bangel, Professional Facilitator, welcomed the Executive Vice-President of the European Commission, Frans Timmermans to the dialogue and young people who were also present from the previous day. She shared the process of the previous day's workshop and the selection of 3 main proposals out of the 22 generated.

EVP Timmermans began by thanking the young people for their active youth movements on climate change which over the past two years has made it possible for the Green Deal to be presented today, "This is your Green Deal. We need to make sure we take control of our destiny by implementing the Green Deal. Please keep talking to people who don't believe this".

EVP Timmermans went on to speak of the Green Deal as a road map that includes proposals for all areas, such as agriculture, mobility, energy, housing, reforestation, industry and economy. He stressed that in order for the deal to succeed, the most vulnerable must not be left behind and transitional arrangements are needed to help National Governments achieve this. He explained that the Green Deal will support carbon neutrality for our continent by 2050. The consequences of climate change are already noticeable and far reaching, as seen with 'la gota fria' in Spain, which people need to be more prepared for.

Presenting the Proposals

The conveners of the three selected proposals then offered their action points and ideas to Executive Vice-President Timmermans

Rodrigo López Piquín (Youth Coordinator at UNESCO's Biosphere Programme and IberoMaB) :- **Sustainable local food systems**

Taking measures to incentivise local trade, bringing a transition process for more sustainable agriculture and livestock. We propose the creation of a European label of local products: Carbon neutral products, products of circular economy, subsidising them if necessary, to make them accessible to the entire population. The population should be made aware where products come from and should be helped to live closer to nature.



Ana Maria Diachend (University of Alcalá) - **Environmental Education**

The focus of environmental education should be changed, not only in schools, but also with older people, and in companies. We need more scientific education, sustainable training and sharing of good practices because if you know what happens you can act better. Good education helps critical thinking. She offered the example of Erasmus projects on sustainability.

Víctor Cortés Ortega (Experimental Sciences, Rey Juan Carlos University) - **R + D + I (Research + Development + Innovation)**

Science and technology should be encouraged to carry out the project. Biofuel should also be encouraged. To reduce emissions, we need to capture and store carbon. Research on rivers and soils should be carried. A European scientific platform could be created so that it can communicate better. That needs investments. Without science and technology, we cannot fix those problems.



Response by EVP Timmermans

EVP Timmermans began by speaking of the crisis in Biodiversity, and the risk of losing a large number of species. To make this sustainable we need to increase opportunities for agriculture to use biodiversity. As citizens, we also want healthy food and we need to find the programme to make this happen. Next year, the EU will present the 'From Farm to Fork' plan, and we need your ideas. Some solutions need new science and there is a need to help scientists to translate their findings so they can be applied concretely. This requires investment, loans and subsidies. As young people, you are able to ask these questions because you are educated to think critically. There is a need to ensure that there is good education for young people and that knowledge is spread. It is necessary to keep talking to others, to young people who are against this and to those who are not included, nobody should be left behind. The offer stands for young people to have a part in the policy making of the EU (Climate Pact). You need to be heard, and you will be a part of it.

The three participants thanked Executive Vice-President Timmermans and commented that it had been very enriching to work with more than 200 people and to be able to transmit our ideas directly, "We feel we have been given the right to participate and have been heard".

Some highlights of the dialogue between EVP Timmermans and the Audience

I would like to make a request for Europe not to continue saying that it has reduced emissions while it operates with companies and countries that are polluting. Real measures are needed in the Green Deal.

In the Green Deal there are changes with regard to trade policy. If the EU has trade deals with other parts of the world, and the other side says no, then there is no deal. Also, EU consumers should be aware of what they buy. There are a lot of products that come from deforestation. We need to take steps so consumers know these come from deforestation.

National governments and European institutions should give more focus on renewable and non-polluting energy. EU staff should use less polluting means of transport.

You are right, it starts at individual level, use the car less, look at what we buy. The European Commission's target is to be carbon neutral by 2050, for that we will look at our own transport, catering, etc. Other EU institutions should also look into it. I personally need to do more effort to reduce my carbon footprint.

Is it possible to decarbonise our economy and use renewable energy without destroying our biodiversity?

I believe it is possible. It will be more successful if it is offshored. We can also focus on many other areas like the use of cars, bicycles. We can reduce the use of pesticides. But it will remain challenging and we need national and global support. We also need your support. Next year, the Biodiversity Conference is in China, I hope that you will keep telling us your ideas.

In the transport sector, in the aviation industry there is no mention about taxes on kerosene. How are you going to ensure that the aviation industry will pay their fair share?

Aviation must pay its share. The ETS (Emissions Trading System) needs to be reinforced. When we fill our cars with petrol, we pay tax, when we travel by train, we pay tax, when we fly there is no tax on kerosene. This needs to be done internationally, starting with Europe and then globally. The tax money can then go to initiatives for a greener planet.

The last 50 years we had methods, but we haven't done anything because of the politicians. In 'Extinction Rebellion' we believe that citizens' assemblies to participate in decision making and direct democracy can be very efficient.

You belong to the best educated generation. It is good to have ideas and share them via Facebook. In the past two years young people have become more organised. The ideas that are put on the table are ideas that can be used to go forward. It is possible to reform and create alternative structures that are trusted by citizens, but organisation skills are needed for that. If you want a platform, come to me and I will give you a platform. Make sure that you do what is necessary to go forward and that you are organised enough so citizens can trust you. We must help people believe we can fix it and we can fix it with your help.



Closing

Mira Bangel thanked Executive Vice-President Timmermans and all the participants for an open and constructive dialogue, in which everyone had participated and had the opportunity to learn more and contribute to the future.

