



Inspiration for a NextGenerationEU

The Future of Europe seen by EU citizens

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#OURFUTURES

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Technical report

This report is part of a series of reports published in the context of #OurFutures. #OurFutures is a collection of stories from EU citizens describing their desirable futures. The stories are collected in an [open-data base](#) designed by the [Policy Lab: Foresight, Design & Behavioural Insights](#) of the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission. The project supports and inspires a collective dialogue about the future of Europe and its visions for the future.

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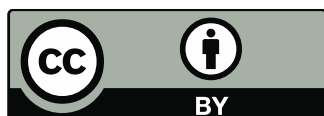
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Abstract

What do you want the future to look like? In which future would you like to live? These are questions of high relevance for policy were at the heart of the Conference on the Future of Europe that ended in May 2022. This EU initiative has created a new space for debate with citizens on how to respond to the European Union's challenges and to create the Union that its citizens collectively want for the future.

However, beyond the formulation of many individual wishes for the future, we must structure these conversations to build coherent, comprehensive and desirable alternative futures that are achievable. This can then provide a meaningful and constructive space for political debate in the EU with a long-term perspective. The #OurFutures - Stories for the future of Europe initiative addresses this long-term need beyond the end of the Conference on the Future of Europe. It offers a simple questionnaire through an interactive multilingual platform able to cater to the 24 official languages of the European Union. It aims at collecting a large number of very short stories that express what participants would like to see in the Europe of the future (2040), with their hopes, their uncertainties and their ideas for a positive future. These stories, written by Europeans from all walks of life, remain anonymous.

To ensure success, the project relies on a robust methodology (powered by SenseMaker©) to exploit, in a foresight perspective, the rich material provided by participants. This methodology operates in all EU languages to maximize reach. To avoid any bias, the analysis bases itself strictly on what the authors themselves tell by answering a few simple questions. The stories, also translated into English, are published on the Futures4Europe.eu platform. This makes it possible to maintain the connection with the participants and stimulate discussions.

#OurFutures is an open-ended project that will remain active for many years to collect as much material as possible and monitor possible shifts. Results can be analysed per country, per age group, per policy domain or other classifications. The analyses can also correlate several parameters to check whether certain values or preferences occur in specific combinations. The first analyses are very promising and the insights that they provide will serve to generate concrete, future-oriented recommendations for EU action to build together the European Union that its citizens want. The purpose of this initiative is to provide a novel tool to empower all Europeans to have their say and influence the creation of their own collective future. It does so by providing concrete ideas about desired futures in the form of structured material that can be analysed to feed constructively the political debate.

#OurFutures

What do you want the future to look like? In which future would you like to live? These questions, of high relevance for policy, were at the heart of the Conference on the Future of Europe that ended in May 2022. This EU initiative has created a new space for debate with citizens on how to respond to the European Union's challenges and to create the Union that its citizens collectively want for the future. However, beyond the formulation of many individual wishes for the future, we must structure these conversations to build coherent, comprehensive and desirable alternative futures that are achievable through policy action. Being able to showcase these possible futures and how coherent they can be with new and ongoing policy initiatives can then provide a meaningful and constructive space for political debate in the EU with a long-term perspective.

The #OurFutures - Stories for the future of Europe initiative addresses this permanent need for long-term perspectives beyond the end of the Conference on the Future of Europe. It offers a simple questionnaire through an interactive multilingual platform able to cater to the 24 official languages of the European Union. It aims at collecting a large number of very short stories that express what participants would like to see in the Europe of the future (2040), with their hopes, their uncertainties and their ideas for a positive future. These stories, written by Europeans from all walks of life, remain anonymous. To ensure the capacity to make sense of this input, the project relies on a robust methodology (powered by SenseMaker®) to exploit, in a foresight perspective, the rich material provided by participants.

This methodology operates in all EU languages to maximize reach. To avoid any bias, the analysis bases itself strictly on what the authors of the stories themselves tell by answering a few simple questions. These stories, also translated into English, are published on the [Futures4Europe.eu](https://www.futures4europe.eu)¹ platform. This makes it possible to maintain the connection with the interested participants as a group and to stimulate discussions.

#OurFutures is an open-ended project that will remain active for many years to collect as many stories as possible and monitor possible shifts in the visions and desires that participants express. Results can be analysed per country, per age group, per policy domain or other classifications. The analyses can also correlate several parameters to check whether certain values or preferences occur in specific combinations.

The objective of this report is to illustrate how this tool can help assess how the desires of EU citizens for the future match ongoing policy initiatives. While the number of stories collected thus far is too low to give statistical significance to the results, the first analyses are very promising. They demonstrate that the insights that they provide can serve to generate concrete, future-oriented recommendations for EU action to build together the European Union that its citizens want.

The purpose of this initiative is to provide a novel tool to empower all Europeans to have their say and influence the creation of their own collective future and to inspire policymakers to orient their action to build a future that EU citizens can support. It does so by providing concrete ideas about desired futures in the form of structured material that can be analysed to feed constructively the political debate.

This report illustrates how the material collected through #OurFutures can be used to make sense of current EU policy initiatives.

¹ <https://www.futures4europe.eu/ourfutures>

Research Methodology

The data reported here results from the collection of future stories written by people living in the EU using the SenseMaker®² tool. SenseMaker® allows for the large-scale capture of ideas for the future through a quantitative framework allowing the participants to become their own ethnographer. It combines the capacity to deal with large numbers of inputs with the explanatory power of narrative.

The contributions from the citizens were harvested both at the occasion of future related events and workshops, and through personal, social media and direct mail campaigns.

The SenseMaker® harvesting tool developed for #OurFutures organises the collected input into 4 sections:

1. Collection of future images: the tool prompts participants to write a story about 2040.
2. Provision of information about the stories: such as thematic area, geographical perspective, feelings, sense of who has agency.
3. Collection of general views towards the future.
4. Collection of demographic information: gender, age, country, employment status, financial security.

Answers are mandatory and participation anonymous. The data presented here were mostly collected during the period June 2021 to May 2022 (ca 600 stories).

Participants were asked to describe stories of the future in 2040 and provide additional information like the feelings related to these stories or their geographical focus. The 2040-time horizon was selected both to give people the mental space to consider large enough possible changes and to remain in a close enough future (less than 20 years) so that most would consider that they would still be around to experience that future.

To avoid any experimental or methodological bias, the analyses of the data are based strictly on what the authors themselves tell through their own answers to a few simple questions. In other words, the citizens themselves, after describing a future story, analyse it and provide and their own associated feelings.

The stories most commonly shared by the participants related to nature/climate, fairness/social justice, and health/wellbeing, followed closely by stories related to technology/science and living together/community. Most are associated with positive feelings, although a significant percentage have chosen to describe different dystopian futures (not shown in this report – see *Emergent patterns: the future of Europe seen by EU citizens – edition dec 2022*³).

Most of the future stories described are associated with issues of global interest. Only a small fraction relates to issues of European, national or local scope.

The texts from the stories presented below were extracted directly from the #OurFutures database but were sometimes edited for clarity.

All data and demographic information are available at:
<https://ourfutures.dashboard.voicesthatcount.net/>

² <https://thecynefin.co/about-sensemaker/>

³ https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/projects-activities/ourfutures-images-future-europe_en

What is presented here is a small sample of the ideas that emerged through this collection of future stories, selected to match the themes of the NextGenerationEU programme.

NextGenerationEU

NextGenerationEU is the recovery plan⁴ that was put in place to help the EU boost its new start after the Covid-19 pandemic. Its purpose is to help make the EU healthier, greener and more digital at the same time as transforming its economies and societies and designing a union that works for everyone.

NextGenerationEU is based on a vision of a green and digital future and mobilises €806.9 billion to support the economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and build this vision. It started in June 2021. The centrepiece of NextGenerationEU is the Recovery and Resilience Facility – a financial instrument that offers grants and loans to support reforms and investments in the EU Member States for a total of €723.8 billion in current prices.

Up to €338 billion of the funds are being provided to Member States in the form of grants and up to €385.8 billion in the form of loans to individual Member States. If the full envelope of loans available under the facility is not used, the remaining amount will contribute to finance REPowerEU, a programme to accelerate the EU's green transition and reduce its reliance on Russian gas.

Funds under the Recovery and Resilience funds are being provided to Member States in line with their national Recovery and Resilience plans – the roadmaps to reforms and investments aimed to make EU economies greener, digital and more resilient.

Many great NextGenerationEU projects have already started to achieve these goals but more ideas and inspiration on how to shape the future of the European Union are needed and we must encourage European citizens from all walks of life to share their dreams for a sustainable future.

NextGenerationEU is articulated around five main topics. For each, this report provides some insights from the future stories that many people shared with us through the #OurFutures initiative: #OurFutures is a tool to collect the stories of all interested EU citizens describing their desirable futures in their own language.

Make it green	Stories about nature/climate and mobility/transport
Make it digital	Stories about technology/science
Make it healthy	Stories about health/well-being and housing/living conditions
Make it strong	Stories about education, stories work/occupation and economy/trade
Make it equal	Stories about fairness/social justice, democracy and refugees/migration

⁴ https://next-generation-eu.europa.eu/index_en

Make it Green – the vision

The EU is on track to become the first climate-neutral continent by 2050 – we will produce no more greenhouse gases than our ecosystems can naturally absorb. With NextGenerationEU, we will invest in environmentally-friendly technologies, roll out greener vehicles and public transport, and make our buildings and public spaces more energy efficient.



But we also need to protect our natural environment. We will:

- improve water quality in our rivers and seas, reduce waste and plastic litter, plant billions of trees and bring back the bees
- create green spaces in our cities and increase the use of renewable energy
- make farming more environmentally-friendly so our food is healthier.

Ideas and inspiration to realise a ‘green’ Europe collected by #OurFutures

The selection below is a set of seeds for inspiration harvested and synthesized from future stories written by diverse people living in Europe. They identify ideas that could feed policy discussions. As they were extracted from future stories, they are formulated as if told by people living in 2040 and edited for clarity.

GREEN SPACES AND BIODIVERSITY

- Many green corridors have been built, following large-scale regional plans in which motorways and housing estates have ceded priority to a network of forests that criss-cross the landscape. The layout of cities has been adapted as far as possible to make people feel connected with their environment and foster social cohesion.
- Streets and gardens show a variety of plants with insects happily buzzing around.
- As many trees as possible have been planted between the buildings to absorb noise. The rails are not paved with asphalt, but grass is allowed to grow freely to provide the planted trees with better chances to thrive.
- The material footprint of buildings is kept as low as possible as a matter of necessity. Old buildings are renovated and repurposed, necessary new buildings use green materials and energy only. They all have an A energy rating.
- Private cars are banned from city centres, walking and cycling are favoured. Public transport is accessible and free. Income from electric vehicles rental is used to maintain gardens and parks. Hologram bracelets make it possible to summon shared city bikes to your location.
- Streetlights light up according to movement to save electricity and promote animal welfare.
- Community gardens, creating smaller pockets of green urban areas, are accessible to people with diverse needs and backgrounds.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

- Outside of urban areas, agriculture has been transformed, with lots of permaculture as a basis and smaller fields with organic food. Efforts have been made to preserve

historic landscapes and biodiversity with diversity of fields. Quotas for inputs have been put in place with smart irrigation and the use of organic fertilisers to ensure that the soil breathes.

- Seed banks are no longer in the hands of multinationals. There is a *“return to the essence and the use of world seed banks on the basis of smart agriculture and organic, pesticide-free, hormone-free production”*.

SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES

- Incentives have been put in place to foster sustainable modes of living and transport to make non-sustainable options expensive. The economy is becoming more circular and regenerative, moving away from the pursuit of growth, towards human well-being and planetary health.
- Living is decentralised, with more infrastructure shifted from dense urban areas to the countryside, creating smaller pockets of green cities, accessible to and for people with diverse needs and backgrounds.

GOVERNANCE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

- Ecologism is the main criteria to make laws.
- Respect & reciprocity for/with the natural world is being encouraged; i.e. by having human representatives as “the voice of nature” in all major decision-making processes
- Citizens intervene more in the public sphere, especially on issues of protecting the natural environment and the transparency of institutions. This is made possible by modern communication solutions.
- This translates into full transparency and true pricing of commercial goods and services regarding their environmental impact. Products are shared among the community as far as possible to keep costs and environmental impacts as low as possible. Fast fashion doesn't exist anymore.
- Biotech companies develop solutions to decrease the plastic waste generated during clinical trials and laboratory research.

INTERNATIONAL EU ACTION

- A European government with a stronger European Parliament has a decisive say on global climate governance and pushes for more ambitious policies. It plays an instrumental role in getting the United Nations to overhaul its climate governance, making the outcomes of the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COPs) binding and enforceable, with a stronger role for the IPCC. All the UN agencies have to abide by this new system and work for sustainability.
- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has been transformed into a “climate bank” on the model of the European Investment Bank, lending money to countries suffering most from climate change.

ENERGY AND TRANSPORT

- A reliable network of solar panels, wind turbines, nuclear facilities and other low C energy technologies is established across the planet. Energy communities facilitate decentralisation and shared governance.
- A complete inter-modal European public transport network based on inter-connections between metropolitan rail (metro/tram), rail, ferry, river and air transport based on new technologies keeps emissions/environmental impacts to a minimum while ensuring good mobility. It is integrated with “the trans-European transport network” offering many high-speed lines connecting the largest cities in Europe. These networks will keep land disturbance to a minimum by investing in underground trains.

Make it Digital – the vision

The future will be driven by technology. So, we're making the next 10 years Europe's digital decade!

With NextGenerationEU:

- you will be able to connect everywhere with 5G and EU-wide ultra-fast broadband
- you will receive a digital identity (eID), making it easier to access online public services and giving you more control over your personal data
- our cities will become smarter and more efficient
- online shopping will be more secure
- artificial intelligence will help us to fight climate change and improve healthcare, transport and education.

The EU is funding online training courses so that everyone, young or old, can improve their digital skills. We're helping small and medium-sized businesses go online. And we're making e-education more accessible.

Ideas and inspiration to realise a 'digital' Europe, collected by #OurFutures.

The selection below is a set of seeds for inspiration harvested and synthesized from future stories written by diverse people living in Europe. They identify ideas that could feed policy discussions. As they were extracted from future stories, they are formulated as if told by people living in 2040 and edited for clarity.

UBIQUITOUS DIGITALISATION

- The development of VR, AR and 4D printing technologies, and their significant cost reduction, pave the way for a new generation of cottage industries. The objects produced are made available through next-generation marketplaces, and consumers can customise them at the creation stage, through AI based digital assistants.
- Technological innovations for grassroots innovation are encouraged. The new information infrastructure facilitates a bottom-up generation of ideas in society. Hubs and spots exist in every corner, in public spaces and infrastructures where people can submit ideas, suggestions, recommendations. Connected platforms filter, sort and translate these inputs towards appropriate institutional decision-making bodies.
- Smart clothing - modern fabric technology - includes intelligent modification of clothes to produce a determined effect, and be re-designed with the aid of technology to change colours, to block sunlight, collect medical data, emit vibrations, or even display custom messages.
- Europeans achieve digital sovereignty (i.e. all key digital services like search, cloud storage, messengers, social networks, video conferencing, etc. come from European data centres, in line with European privacy laws and digital acts).
- Drones transport food or clothing to the person's home, just bought online.
- Europe is not only self-sufficient, but also competitive and innovative in producing key components that fuel digitalisation, such as semiconductors.
- Automation and VR transform our sensory experiences. Our eyes can see more, watch faster, and explore farther, places and dimensions that never existed before. It is like living simultaneously in a static physical world and an immersive/dynamic virtual one.

- *“The union between AI, Virtual Reality, Metaverse, Augmented reality brings a new dimension in human life, even in longevity.”*
- Social media is transformed into global not for profit platforms where people share ideas and live democratically in a purposeful and value driven way.
- Digitalization and automation speed up administrative tasks and increase transparency. Anyone can immediately receive their social benefits, get a certificate and file taxes in a click. Everything is interconnected digitally and payment is digital, with digital ledger certification. This means, professions such as notary, accountant and most administrative tasks disappeared because they are now irrelevant.
- Algorithms and hundreds of employees bring municipal issues to the attention of the people, while local people act as experts in their own areas.
- Using big data analysis, policymakers’ foresight capabilities and actions can be assessed against their prior declarations (of future trends and their own promises).

Make it Healthy – the vision

The coronavirus pandemic has affected us all in one way or another – physically, mentally, socially. Now, we want to build a safer and healthier EU so that we are better prepared for any future crisis.

With NextGenerationEU, we will:

- work with all EU countries to protect against health threats
- invest more in research and innovation to develop vaccines and treatments, not just for new diseases like coronavirus, but also for cancer
- modernise our health systems so that hospitals in every EU country have better access to new technology and to medical supplies
- fund training for Europe's medical and healthcare professionals.



Together, we can make Europe healthier. However, it's not just about big actions. A good diet and regular exercise can go a long way towards improving our physical and mental wellbeing.

Ideas and inspiration to realise a 'healthy' Europe, collected by #OurFutures.

The selection below is a set of seeds for inspiration harvested and synthesized from future stories written by diverse people living in Europe. They identify ideas that could feed policy discussions. As they were extracted from future stories, they are formulated as if told by people living in 2040 and edited for clarity.

PREVENTATIVE HEALTH CARE

- Preventative healthcare is the norm. People learn from a young age how body and nature are connected and work, to grow and stay healthy.
- Preventative health checks in the area of mental health are available, especially for children and young people.
- A good work - life balance is promoted. *"More time for family, hobbies and oneself, activities not related to work or other obligations, more flexible working arrangements, 6-hour working days, easier access to leave, more opportunities to take days, weeks off for self-growth or learning."*
- Taxation of unhealthy products.
- *"Massages or other health treatments are part of everyday life. We are supposed to take care of our physical and mental health, of our social wellbeing. Most people work in the social-health sector, or the environment-health sector."*

PSYCHO-SOCIAL HEALTH

- Electronic devices and social media use for young people are restricted to ensure healthy development, improve mental health, attention spans, etc.
- Children in kindergartens and schools spend time on social-emotional learning. *"They are not afraid to go to school because of bullying. Bullying is dealt with immediately. Everyone has access to help if needed."*

- Everyone / every family has their own personal psychologist available for advice and guidance through life; *“Personal growth aid is as accessible as doctors.”*

FAIR ACCESS TO SANITATION AND HYGIENE PRODUCTS

- Every menstruator has access to safe and hygienic menstrual products and be able to manage their period with dignity regarding sanitation (ex. running water and private toilets) and community stigma.
- No more tampon tax; menstrual products are acknowledged as necessities. A basic need rather than a luxury. Menstrual products are free to everyone who needs them. They are provided in public institutions such as schools, universities, libraries, community buildings, etc. or menstrual products are included in basic health insurance.

FOOD

- People switch from meat- to plant-based diets, thereby reducing carbon footprint.
- *“Use of alternative, environment-friendly diets to be researched by scientists, and endorsed by politicians (e.g. instead of meat and soy consumption, protein is to be sourced from insects).”*
- A large share of the food (meat, dairy, vegetal proteins...) is now produced by cell cultures in large facilities, away from housing settlements. Innovations like a “food duplicator” emerge.
- The choice of ‘natural’ food in shops will be reduced and much more linked to seasons.
- People are encouraged to choose healthy and environmentally friendly alternatives such as healthy local organic food, which will be cheaper than junk food. Different food access due to varied socioeconomic status will be decreased and public food supply policies will aim at improving the diet quality of the population.

Make it Strong – the vision

The pandemic has impacted all of our lives. Many have suffered illness or bereavement; others have lost jobs or income. Now we want to build a stronger, more resilient Europe.

With NextGenerationEU, we are:

- encouraging young people to study science and technology, which open doors to the green and digital jobs of the future
- supporting further education and apprenticeships
- offering loans and grants to young entrepreneurs.



But the EU is also helping many sectors bounce back. We're boosting support for tourism, culture and the arts across the Union, making them more digital and sustainable.

Ideas and inspiration to realise a 'strong' Europe, collected by #OurFutures.

The selection below is a set of seeds for inspiration harvested and synthesized from future stories written by diverse people living in Europe. They identify ideas that could feed policy discussions. As they were extracted from future stories, they are formulated as if told by people living in 2040 and edited for clarity.

EDUCATION AND SOCIETY

- People are given equal opportunity for education and therefore jobs, regardless of their race, place of origin (i. e. migrants and refugees), gender, sexuality or disabilities.
- The educational system is so competent and well organised that students love going to school.
- Increased education and a basic income as lever for cohesion with remaining candidate countries.
- Each youngster has the right to a personal EU mobility budget (s)he can use to go to another European country and live a European mobility experience. This builds on previous EU programmes such as Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps but is enormously scaled up.
- Health and education are free for all.
- The education system has focused on developing the capacity for critical thinking and logic. A capacity that was recognized to be very important especially in an era with several information channels in fierce competition.
- Higher education is encouraged to offer digital, humanistic and creative skills that are needed for the future businesses around the globe. A better future would seem to be one in which an education system is in place that lays the foundations for people to live in communities, to get along, to solve problems together, and to be able to live across different points of view and religions
- *“Active communities in education that keep inclusion alive, learning is in harmony with nature, active and experiential.”*
- Environmental education is promoted as well as sex education.
- Vocational Guidance is effectively integrated into secondary and tertiary education.

- Young people are offered many opportunities for gaining professional experience after finishing education/studies.

WORK AND LIFE

- Measures that enable more balanced work and life are implemented. For example, new job opportunities are created for people through a reduction in the weekly working hours, where more people can access jobs that are now occupied by fewer people for much longer than the legal maximum working hours.
- Four-day workweek is implemented across sectors and countries.
- A unified EU-wide social security system enables workers to move swiftly from one country to another with little paperwork and administrative hurdles.
- New technological solutions help people live and work anywhere in the EU; electronic workbook based on ID card; "Porta-Europa" - small, handy devices that can simultaneously translate twelve languages⁵.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- Laboratories for technology and art help people who are young-at-heart explore their wildest ideas and dreams.
- Basic research is well funded
- Scientific research progresses fast,
- Art is used to bring solutions into society
- All European education and research infrastructure is connected and harmonised to collaborate successfully towards the common good. This leads to efficient vaccines that heal citizens from many cancers, viruses, multifactorial diseases, biological threats etc.
- Smart science-based technological solutions enable efficient employment and fair distribution of resources among people.
- Europe is self-sufficient regarding key raw materials and components that fuel digitalisation (such as semiconductors).
- Technological development focuses on minimising impact on the world we live in.

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE AND COMPETITION TO THRIVE

- On the model of the Olympic games, an International Business Olympiad can foster teams to compete to launch sustainable businesses and other similar minded olympiads can be organised to promote and develop activities and knowledge for sustainability in multiple domains.

⁵ Something similar already exists: <https://hu.ma.ne/media>

Make it Equal – the vision

From north to south, east to west, we want to build a Europe that works for everyone. We want all Europeans to have equal opportunities, whoever they are and wherever they live. And we want to celebrate diversity in all its forms.



With NextGenerationEU, we are:

- fighting against racism and xenophobia
- promoting gender equality and women's empowerment
- protecting the rights of the LGBTQI+ community and combating discrimination
- strengthening EU law to cover all forms of hate speech and hate crime.

Equality also means economic and social opportunities for all. With NextGenerationEU, we are boosting employment opportunities for people with disabilities, as well as for those living in rural, remote or disadvantaged areas. We are helping more people get decent, adequate housing. And we are investing in inclusive education for children, whatever their background, situation or special needs.

Ideas and inspiration to realise an 'equal' Europe, collected by #OurFutures.

The selection below is a set of seeds for inspiration harvested and synthesized from future stories written by diverse people living in Europe. They identify ideas that could feed policy discussions. As they were extracted from future stories, they are formulated as if told by people living in 2040 and edited for clarity.

FAIRNESS AND EQUALITY

- Society has moved on beyond ideas of absolute individual freedom and the pursuit of individual wealth, focusing a lot more around the interests of the community, self-transcendence values and common welfare.
- Social media no longer promote impossible beauty standards and allow people to see the other side of life, where things are not perfect.
- Wealth is distributed more equally; governments ensure that everyone's basic needs are satisfied (like food, shelter and education). People can focus on achieving their goals in life instead of surviving by working multiple jobs. There is an unconditional basic income for everybody.
- Everyone has the same rights, obligations and responsibility. If someone fails, that person will serve the others to recover instead of going to prison.
- The policy outlook is fairness and long-term oriented distribution of resources. Fair taxation (profits, inheritance) respecting planetary limits at individual and company level. Paying taxes is considered as noble and social!).
- Money lending is in the hands of a public body, its benefits aimed at society at large.
- Shift of spending priorities: money saved on border controls, surveillance and immigration services is massively invested in education, fair trade, sustainable energy, nature and climate.
- A secondary monetary system (as recommended by Bernard Lietaer) with local currencies will facilitate cooperation and regional development. This goes hand in hand with more deliberative democracy.

- An important structural change takes place to move resources towards helping young people access affordable housing.

VALUING DIVERSITY, RESPECT AND TOLERANCE

- The value of diversity for a thriving society is taught not only in formal education but also in religious classes as well as within most political parties.
- Non-formal education is a strong pillar in learning new cultures and traditions and this has allowed us to connect deeply with each other by acquiring new knowledge about other cultural perspectives.
- There is a compulsory civil service for all, aimed at exploring and appreciating diversity.
- Kids are taught about consent to understand they have no right over someone else's body. Police are trained to respond properly to reported cases of sexual violence. The justice system is restructured so that women don't feel afraid to speak up and take action against abusers.
- Same-sex marriages are legalised and same sex couples are allowed to adopt.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

- Migration policy respects social justice and human rights, and creates safe and legal escape routes, so that people smugglers lose their power and migration is safer.
- Frontex (European Agency for Border and Coast Guard) focuses more on smugglers than on refugees, protecting the Schengen Area and preventing human trafficking.
- States spend money to ensure that migrants can be integrated as far as possible through language courses, learning of the culture and education. In the long run, migrants help to increase the number of workers and economic productivity.
- All refugees are welcomed and integrated in villages and co-living projects.
- All barriers to refugee family reunification are eliminated.
- All EU member states fairly share the refugees and migrants according to *a uniform rule for distribution (e.g. based on the number of inhabitants, GDP, unemployment rate and already received asylum seekers)*.

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE THAT CARES FOR EQUALITY

- EU governance is stronger, less influenced by lobbying and less beholden to political parties and ideological dogmas.
- Europeans are more accepting of different cultures, religions, race, sexual preferences, etc. They are also more caring of the environment. We capitalise on wisdom of our ancestors, rather than destroying indigenous communities and populations"
- End to corruption in politics
- The EU is at the forefront of ensuring human rights and a decent quality of life around the world. Many countries have become legitimate democracies and fruitful cooperation between countries is deepened in many areas such as research, education, defence and security, and addressing global challenges (such as climate change)

GOVERNANCE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

- The EU administration is lean and democratically elected. So is the European Central Bank. There are less EU bodies.

Aspirations

The quotes presented below offer a sample of many aspirational futures shared by Europeans through #OurFutures. They illustrate how many people still have a strong hope for a better EU future. They can be a source of inspiration for policy.

“ Proudly European I would like to see a prosperous Europe where citizens feel proudly European. A welcoming Europe that no longer lets people drown in the Mediterranean or freeze to death at our borders in the East. A fair Europe, where everyone has access to the same opportunities regardless of their background. A Europe that leads the way in making the world a better place for everyone.

Accept each other I would like to make possible a future where we can all be who we want to be. Where we all appreciate each other for who they are, and we accept each other. I think these are very important values, from a very young age.

“

“ Social consciousness People will have gained empathy for their neighbours and will have fought prejudice and inequality. The state will have invested in its citizens in order to strengthen social consciousness, with the aim of maturing democracy.

No more countless complaints I imagine true gender equality, acceptance of all minorities and the destruction of racism. No more countless complaints of violence and bullying of any kind; no more femicide, no more suicides and a reduction in the rates of depression and mental disorders.

“

Steps towards our common future

In conclusion, as mentioned earlier, the purpose of this initiative is to provide one more small way to empower Europeans to influence the creation of their own collective future. This report shows that the concrete ideas about desired futures shared by our fellow Europeans are not only coherent with current policy initiatives but add both substance and emotions to them. They also translate the motivations and aspirations that many of our fellow citizens harbour, thereby demonstrating the capacity of #OurFutures to act a catalyst to feed and inform the policy debate about our common European future.

#OurFutures was launched at the occasion of the *Conference on the Future of Europe*, but unlike this event, it remains active over the long-term to gather as many voices as possible and detect possible evolutions in the ideas shared by participants. Its intention is to keep feeding the reflection on shared visions for the future of the EU at all levels and in all communities.

Therefore, we encourage you, our reader, strongly, to continue to submit stories and to stimulate others to do the same.

Read all future images at: futures4europe.eu/ourfutures

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