The more I experience DAOs the more they remind me of small nations—with all their peculiarities, awesomeness, and dysfunctions.

I've been a builder and a tech guy since I was 13. Yet somehow over the last 15 years, I kept getting pulled into ecosystem development, working around startup ecosystems and venture capital in the EU, UK, and the Global South. I've been particularly interested in how DAOs would play their role since a project I did in the space in 2015.

A big part of the story began between 2006 and 2012, when with different groups of friends we set up the first hacker house, tech conference, university tech entrepreneurship club, and then accelerator in Bulgaria. This naturally connected me with many people in the Bulgarian diaspora, who were returning as the country joined the EU in 2007.

The was one standout group of Harvard alumni I worked with on economic cluster development, where one of them became a government minister who essentially kickstarted the Bulgarian venture capital scene. With just €200 million of EU funds, we sparked an entire economy.

Around the same time, as he became the chief economic advisor to the president, I got asked to make a list of people I know around the world that would be helpful for advancing the above agenda. We had the president personally invite them, often calling them himself. We organized a number of small private gatherings at the presidential villa, where key relationships and deals were forged. You can now track many of the success stories and unicorns that came out of that scene in one way or another to conversations that happened there. Many of these people now also shape the European venture capital scene out of Brussels and Luxembourg.

From what I've learned since the last GovHack, I believe one of the most important things for the Arbitrum community is to figure out how to support builders sustainably and long-term, while reducing the financial burden of grant-based programs.

Recent developments in that conversation have striking similarities to the stories above.

While we may not have a presidential villa at GovHack, we do have a venture track, which @KlausBrave kindly invited me to help lead.

I can't help but feel that years from now we might end up looking at this event in a similar way as I do to the gatherings from the above story.

There's a great group of tremendously capable and experienced people attending and it would be fantastic to come together, set things in motion, define problem statements, consolidate forces and ideas, and move forward in the most mature way possible.

Which is precisely why I'm so sad that because of a nasty food poisoning I just had to cancel my trip to Brussels. However @ana.vc will be there and I'm sure she'll do an even better job in my place.

Ana-Mariya has been a VC for almost a decade and focused on Web3 exclusively over the last 8 years. She has over 200 deals under her belt and led on over 50 as head of the investment team of Outlier Ventures. She's been leading AVI alongside me since we started at GovHack in Denver a few months ago. I can't think of a better way to more broadly introduce her to the community.

Please feel free to reach out and let us know if you have any objectives that Ana or I can help you achieve in Brussels in regards to Arbitrum Venture funds.