

Invitation to an online workshop

The Future of Europe: What Opportunities Are There for a More Democratic EU?

Left Positions for the Conference on the Future of Europe

8 December 2020 at 6 p.m.

The Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung Brussels Office and MEP Helmut Scholz are devoting the fifth event in our series 'Left Positions for the Conference on the Future of Europe' to the multifaceted issue of democratic participation.

There is much talk of the European Union's democratic deficit, and EU policy is often abstract and opportunities for direct participation are sorely lacking. Despite its proclaimed commitment to democratic values, and its positive achievements, the European Union does not allow legitimate democratic decision-making in every area. The frustration arising from this, which is being exploited by some, not least by reactionary forces, poses a risk for the EU as a whole.

Therefore, the main aim of the Conference on the Future of Europe is to ensure greater participation and involvement of EU citizens. One key factor in achieving this goal is the need to vest the European Parliament, as the only European Union institution that is directly elected by citizens and directly represents the people of the EU, with the right of initiative. However, this would require a treaty revision, which is not currently backed by all EU institutions.

What are our specific demands to enable direct democratic participation at European level? We would like to examine current efforts to expand democratic participation, analyse the Conference on the Future of Europe as an instrument of democratic participation, and discuss treaty revisions that could play a role here.

Our fifth event will therefore address the following questions, among others:

- What specific models of democratic participation can be successful at European level, and what models of this type are worth pursuing?
- What opportunities are currently available to expand democratic participation at European level?
- How do we need to change the EU Treaties to implement an economic policy that has direct democratic support and is tailored to the circumstances and requirements of European Union citizens?



Joining us to discuss these questions will be **Daniela Vancic**, European Programme Manager at **Democracy International**, and **Jeremy Smith**, a barrister and Co-Director of Policy Research in Macroeconomics (PRIME). The event will be moderated by Gabriele Zimmer, former Chair of the Confederal Group of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL).

Interpretation in **English and German** will be provided.

If you would like to attend this exciting, results-oriented debate, please **register** at www.rosalux.eu/future-conference.

Background

When she became European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen made some big promises, including holding a [Conference on the Future of Europe](#) (link in German) that would bring together politicians, civil society and citizens to rethink the integration process and examine how the EU should be reshaped in light of some immense challenges and ongoing crises.

One year on from that announcement, the conference has yet to get off the ground, mainly because of obstructionism by national governments. Nevertheless, we on the left cannot stand on the sidelines when the future of the EU is being debated. We must not leave the field to those who see this conference simply as a means to reaffirm 'business as usual' on the functioning and policy of the EU, rather than opening up new paths and opportunities – something that is long overdue.

We need to get actively involved in this conference! In particular, we need to place the issue of a socially just, peaceful, green and democratic EU based on the principle of solidarity high on the agenda! We want to discuss with you the best way to do this, the topics we should focus on and the specific proposals we should put forward.

To this end, we are organising a series of online events to start sharing ideas about the way ahead. In the spirit of the Conference on the Future of Europe, we are inviting you, together with representatives from trade unions, organisations and civil-society movements, to be a part of these events. So please do get involved – we'd love to hear your ideas, arguments and visions, as well as any questions and objections you may have.

More information about the Conference on the Future of Europe can be found at [this link](#) (in German), among others. There you will also find reports on the previous events, which discussed migration and asylum, the climate crisis, the Red and Green New Deal, the EU's global strategy and the European minimum wage.

