



# Shaping European Democracy

Workshop on the future of the European Union  
with Polish, French and German citizens –  
1 and 2 March 2020 in Berlin

A joint project of the German Foreign Office  
and the Bertelsmann Stiftung



Federal Foreign Office



| BertelsmannStiftung



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## Contents

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<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
The Europe Workshop with Polish, French and German citizens	
<b>Innovations</b>	<b>8</b>
Random selection, multilingual dialogues and interactive exchange	
<b>Key points</b>	<b>14</b>
Procedure and program sequence	
<b>Results</b>	<b>24</b>
The Citizens' Recommendations and the discussion with Federal Foreign Minister Heiko Maas and Foreign Minister Ekaterina Zaharieva	
<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>32</b>
The attitudes the citizens have towards the European Union, and how they appraise the European Workshop	
<b>Experience</b>	<b>42</b>
How the moderators and interpreters evaluate the multilingual, interactive format	
<b>The way ahead</b>	<b>46</b>
Five lessons for cross-border citizen dialogues	
Imprint	51







# Introduction

## The European Workshop with Polish, French and German citizens

Under the motto ‘2020: shaping Europe's future together’, the Bertelsmann Stiftung and the German Foreign Ministry invited citizens, politicians and experts to a joint event on 1 and 2 March 2020.

In a European Workshop, seventy-five citizens from Poland, France and Germany developed ideas and concrete proposals for Europe's future over two days. They then discussed the results of this work at the European Conference with Federal Foreign Minister Heiko Maas and his Bulgarian colleague Ekaterina Zaharieva.

### European Workshop: a new form of cross-border citizen dialogue

The European Workshop is a new form of citizen dialogue. For the first time, the Federal Foreign Office conducted a cross-border citizen dialogue with participants from three European countries, implementing a format that enables direct exchange between EU citizens from different countries and strengthens direct dialogue with politicians. Citizens can communicate and discuss political ideas, inspirations, and proposals about the future of Europe which they have jointly agreed directly to and with political decision-makers. Politicians learn first-hand what is really important to the citizens.

Three innovations are paramount. By randomly selecting citizens from Poland, France and Germany, participants were people who represent

the diversity of these societies and their opinions. A new method of simultaneous interpreting in small table groups enabled the participants to communicate in their native language. By including experts in the interactive citizen discussions, the citizens were supported during the development of their qualified recommendations.

### European Workshop was evaluated and documented

We wanted to know if the innovative approaches were successful. So, we evaluated the European Workshop and interviewed the citizens, the moderator and the interpreters. This publication explains the key methods used in the program, documents the citizens' suggestions, presents the evaluation results and reflects the innovative approaches.

### Positive experiences lend courage

The positive experiences during the European Workshop have encouraged further cross-border citizen dialogues. This publication is aimed at actors from politics and administration as well as interested parties from civil society, academia and in practice.

FIGURE 1 European Workshop: Timeline in three phases

## Timeline in three phases



### PHASE 1 Random selection of participants

#### Diversity criteria

- 25 citizens each from Poland, France, Germany
- Equal number of men and women
- Four age groups from 18-70
- Different educational backgrounds

#### Recruitment steps

- Telephone acquisition of interested citizens
- Invitation, mailing of relevant documents, registration
- Comparison of participants with the criteria  
If necessary: additional recruitment



### PHASE 2 European Workshop in groups

#### Interaction

- Clear structure
- Professional moderation
- Multilingual communication via interpreters

#### Fact-based discussion

- Practical experiences of the citizens
- Factsheets
- Expert knowledge



### PHASE 3 Discussion with politicians

#### Panel discussion with Foreign Ministers

- Citizens' representatives present citizens' proposals
- Politicians reply and discuss with citizens

#### Treatment of results

- Documentation of citizens' recommendations
- Input of citizens' recommendations during Germany's EU Council presidency









# Innovations

## Random selection, multilingual dialogues and interactive exchange

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Citizen dialogues with people from different countries are still new—but they are more important than ever.

The aim of the European Workshop was to bring EU citizens from the three countries, which have very different socio-economic backgrounds, together. Often, citizens from only one country who are interested in Europe come together for a dialogue. We wanted to avoid that. Rather, people from three European countries with diverse opinions, interests and perspectives should get together and discuss their jointly developed proposals with politicians.

### More variety through random selection

Different individuals, young and old, academics and apprentices, EU critics and EU enthusiasts from the three countries came together. Therefore, a selection procedure was chosen that ensures a diversity in the group. The participants were recruited at random. Men and women were equally represented. All age groups were present. Diversity is also seen in the different levels of education.



## Randomly selecting people for a citizen dialogue—how does that work?

### Step 1 PREPARATION

**Method:** Determine from which population or personal databases the participants are selected, and how the persons will be randomly selected.

**Criteria and quotas:** Identify the socio-demographic criteria that are relevant to reflect the diversity of the population, if necessary determine additional project-relevant criteria, determine the number of persons for the respective categories.

**Key points for recruitment:** Scheduling, define services of the service provider if necessary, define interfaces to the organizer and other actors, define services for participants, e.g., expense reimbursement, prepare documents.

### Step 2 IMPLEMENTATION

**Preparation for recruitment:** Determine the organisation and processes in the recruitment process, if necessary commission service providers, clarify data protection, prepare the recruitment documents for the participants, such as the invitation letter, information sheet and registration form.

**Carrying out recruitment:** Drawing the sample, telephone canvassing or other activities to attract interested parties, sending the documents to the interested parties, registration of the participants, and, if necessary, a new drawing.

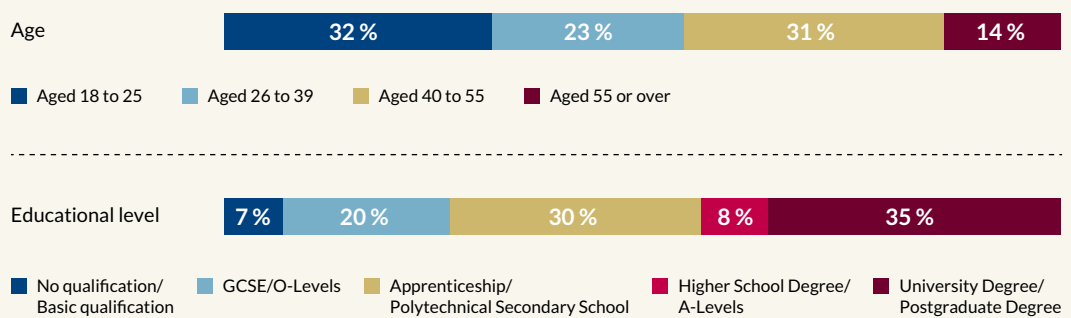
### Step 3 QUALITY CONTROL

**Comparison:** Comparison of the registered participants with the criteria and quotas.

**Recruitment:** Follow-up of telephone acquisition or recruitment campaigns, over-recruit by 10 per cent – 20 per cent.

**List of participants:** Determination of the participants and the successors.

FIGURE 2 European Workshop: Distribution of participants by age and educational qualifications

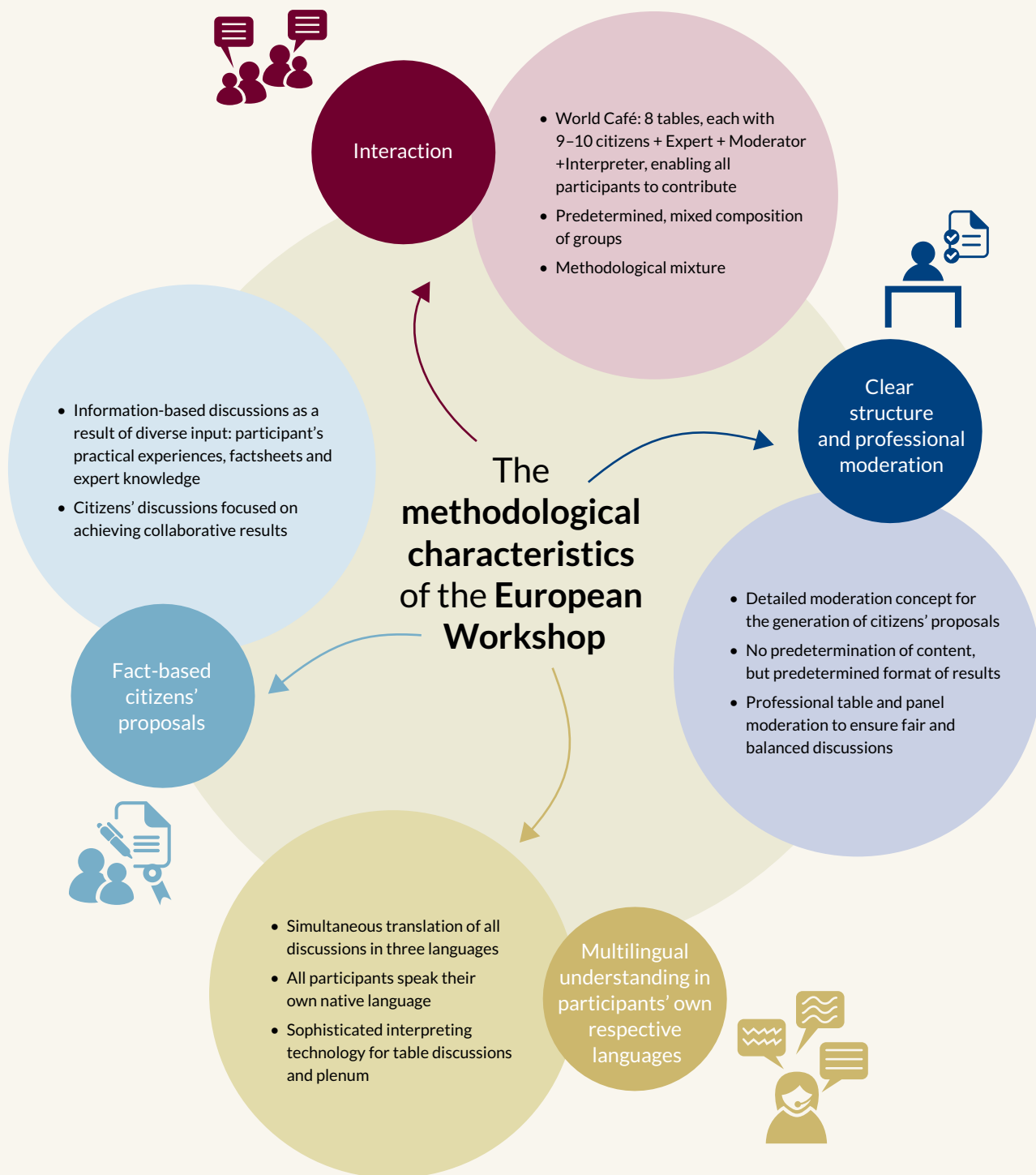


Source: Own results

BertelsmannStiftung



FIGURE 3 European Workshop: Methodological characteristics



Source: Own results

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### Multilingual communication in small table groups using simultaneous interpreters

Intensive discussion in small groups between Poles, French and Germans—how can this be accomplished without knowledge of the other languages and without a common language? Our aim was to keep the barriers to communication between citizens as low as possible. Everyone should have the opportunity to speak in their own language. A special simultaneous interpreting procedure was developed for this, so that everyone could communicate in their own language in small groups at the tables and in large groups in the plenary.

### Interactions in the ‘World Café’ with topic experts

All participants could have their say in the interactive ‘World Café’ in which ideas were discussed and developed in small groups. A constructive dialogue leads to high quality results. The method was adapted to ensure that the discussions are conducted with well-informed citizens and that fact-based proposals are developed. On the one hand, the discussions were structured beforehand and facilitated by experienced moderators, so that a framework was set up which would allow efficient discussions and leave sufficient scope for prioritized ideas and content. On the other hand, experienced experts on European affairs should support the citizens. On the first day there was constantly an expert at each table. On the second day, experts were available upon request from the participants.













# Key points

## Procedure and program sequence

The European Workshop in Berlin was attended by seventy-five randomly selected citizens from Poland, France and Germany. They discussed in small table groups with the support of table moderators and interpreters and developed proposals for the future shape of the European Union. At the subsequent European Conference with foreign policy experts, they discussed their findings with Federal Foreign Minister Heiko Maas and his Bulgarian colleague Ekaterina Zaharieva.

### The dialogue setting in the European Workshop

In the European Workshop the topic '2020: Shaping Europe's Future Together' citizens from Poland, France and Germany worked on four topics:

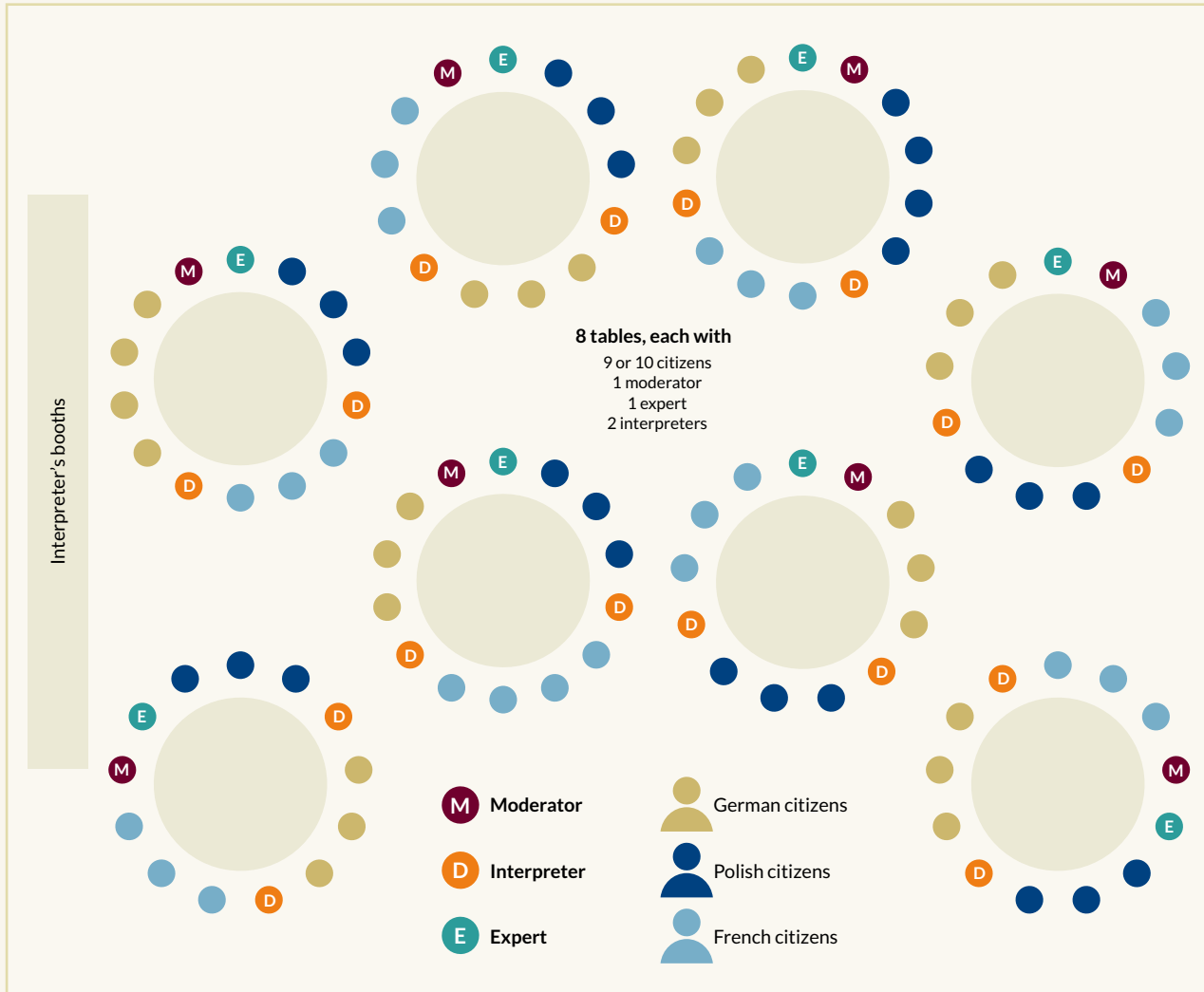
- Cohesion: Do we need more solidarity in Europe?
- Values and democracy: How can the foundation of values be strengthened?
- Globalization: How can Europe's role in the world be shaped?
- Progress: How can Europe become more sustainable?

The discussion process in the 'World-Café' was divided into the following work phases: 1) Introduction to the topic during a brainstorming session on the four topics, 2) exchange of experiences, information on a topic, collection of ideas, 3) prioritisation of ideas and concretisation of proposals, 4) preparation of the discussion with the politicians.

The seventy-five citizens were spread out across eight tables. A total of four topics were dealt with, i.e., two tables each dealt with the same topic. The participants were seated at the tables so that the countries were represented at each table. A total of nine or ten citizens worked at one table, three citizens each from Poland, France and Germany. Three tables were occupied by a total of ten citizens. In addition, each table had a table moderator, two simultaneous interpreters and, on the first day, a topic expert. The moderation in the plenum of the European Workshop as well as the moderation of the discussion with the Foreign Ministers in the European Conference was carried out in tandem by the Dominik Hierlemann and Nathalie Steger.

Participants came up with a total of eight proposals, two proposals for each topic.

FIGURE 4 European Workshop: Seating plan



Source: Own results

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### Interpreting at the table and in the plenum of the European Workshop

Two simultaneous interpreters, who between them spoke the three languages, translated into three languages at the table. Each participant at the table had a headphone and a microphone. Each participant spoke into the microphone. Since nobody had to speak loudly to be heard, the discussions took place in a calm atmosphere. Simultaneous interpretation for the plenary phases in the European Workshop and the Euro-

pean Conference was provided from interpreting booths. Handling the equipment was easy for all participants. A special technique enabled automatic switching between table and plenary interpreting, so that the participants themselves did not have to switch between channels.



## Interpreting Instructions in the European Workshop

*(Original document from the event)*

**Voice codes:** DEU for German, FRA for French, POL for Polish

### FOR PARTICIPANTS AND FACILITATORS

First make sure that the language code on the display is the correct one, i.e., the language you want to hear (the one you understand). If not, please inform your interpreter! He or she will help you to change this.

If you want to speak, press the 'Speak' button. It remains active until you press it again. So please, do not forget to press it again after speaking!

The ideal distance from your mouth to the microphone is about ten centimetres. If you want to change the volume of your headphones, press the + or - buttons below the headphone icon.

### FOR INTERPRETERS

First, make sure that the language code on the left-hand side of the display is the correct one, i.e., that it corresponds to the language that you will be interpreting. Otherwise, you can change the keys between 1-6 (each number represents a different language, as you will see).

You can adjust the volume and the sound on the left-hand side of the console.

On the right-hand side of the console, you need to check channel A to make sure that this channel is set to the language you are interpreting into. If you are interpreting into another language (e.g., French or Polish), select channel B or C.

If you want to speak, press 'Microphone'. It remains active until you press again.

So please do not forget to switch off the microphone after speaking!

## Citizens are being prepared by Information sheets and experts on European affairs

The quality of the discussion was enhanced by information sheets and the participation of experts on European affairs. For each topic there was a two-page information sheet, which contained concise and well-presented information. The contents were based on the questions: What is the European Union doing on this issue? What facts and figures are available?

Eight experts were deployed on the first day and four experts on the second day. The experts supported the discussion with information, put things in order and gave feedback—but they were not meant to steer the discussion in any particular direction.



### Interaction between citizens and Foreign Ministers

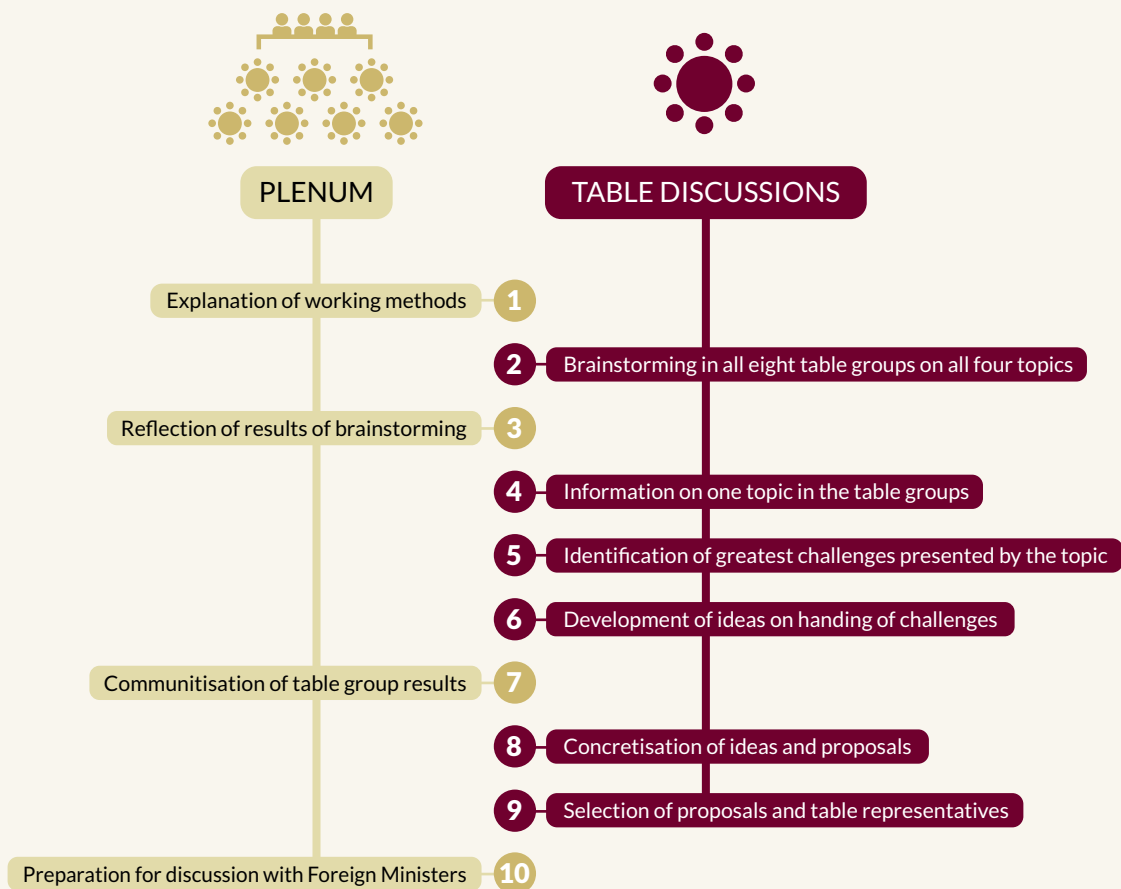
The European Workshop was followed by a public event with about 400 guests from politics, academia and the diplomatic corps. The eight table speakers presented the results of their work to Federal Foreign Minister Heiko Maas and the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria Ekaterina Zaharieva. In selecting the table speakers in the morning, the participants had taken into account the diversity of the group as a whole, so that the results were presented by representatives from the three countries, men and women, older and younger people.

The presentation and discussion took place in two rounds, first the citizens' proposals on the topics of cohesion and values and democracy, then the citizens' proposals on the topics of globalisation and progress and sustainability. The citizens' suggestions, the answers of the politicians and the discussion are detailed in the results chapter. The citizens' recommendations and the discussion with the Foreign Ministers Heiko Maas and Ekaterina Zaharieva have been documented.

Heiko Maas is taking inspiration from the European Workshop to the German Presidency of the Council, beginning in July.

FIGURE 5 European Workshop: from information to concrete proposals

## Ten steps for the creation of citizens' proposals



Source: Own results

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## PROGRAM

### Sunday, 1 March 2020 European Workshop '2020: Shaping the future of Europe together'

- 12:45 Arrival and registration, snack
- 14:00 Welcome and introduction to the European Workshop
- 14:30 – 18:30 Dialogue between the citizens**
- 14:30 First round of table discussions among the citizens:  
**Getting to know each other, brainstorming on the four topics**
- What are your thoughts when you hear:
- Solidarity and cohesion in Europe
  - Values and democracy in Europe
  - Europe in the world
  - Progress and sustainability in Europe?
- Exchange ideas at the tables and recording terms relating to the four subject areas on 12 movable walls.
- 16:00 Coffee break
- 16:30 Second round of table discussions among the citizens:  
**Exchange experience, information and ideas**
- Two tables each deal with one of the four topics based on the following questions:
- How do I experience this situation in my country? Is it the same in Europe?
  - What challenges do I see for the Europe of tomorrow?
  - How should the EU meet these challenges?
  - What should change in EU policy with regard to our topic?
- Fact sheets with information on the topic complement the personal experiences.  
Topic experts inform, explain and classify. The participants prioritise the biggest challenges and agree on one to three ideas.
- 18:30 Dinner together and opportunity for individual conversations

### Monday, 2 March 2020 European Workshop and European Conference

- 8:30 Arrival and registration
- 9:00 Welcome, feedback and community building based on previous results
- 9:30 – 12:30 Dialogue between the citizens**
- 9:30 Third round of table discussions between the citizens among themselves:  
**Concretising ideas and proposals for the future of the European Union**
- What ideas do you have for implementing the proposal?
- Moderator records the concrete implementation of a proposal.
- 10:30 Coffee break
- 11:00 Fourth round of table discussions among the citizens:  
**Preparation for the discussion with Federal Foreign Minister Maas and Bulgarian Foreign Minister Zaharieva**
- Selection of the proposal and the table spokesperson for the panel discussion with the Foreign Ministers.
- 12:30 Lunch buffet



### **13:30 – 17:40**      **European Conference ‘2020: Shaping the future of Europe together’**

13:30                      Introduction by Liz Mohn, Vice-Chair of the Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Executive Board

13:40                      Keynote by Federal Foreign Minister Heiko Maas

14:00                      Presentation of the results of the European Workshop by citizens. Discussion with Federal Foreign Minister Heiko Maas and the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria Ekaterina Zaharieva

15:00                      Coffee break

15:30                      Panel 1:  
**Europe: Equipped for the future?**

Discussion with:

- Margaritis Schinas, Vice President of the EU Commission
- Sophie in’t Veld, Member of the European Parliament, Member of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
- Dr. Katja Leikert, MdB, Deputy Chairwoman of the CDU/CSU Parliamentary Group, Member of the Committee on EU Affairs
- Prof. Dr Henrik Enderlein, Director Jacques Delors Centre

16:40                      Panel 2:  
**How do we increase ‘European sovereignty’ in a more uncomfortable world?**

Discussions with:

- Nils Schmid, MdB, Foreign Policy Spokesman of the SPD parliamentary group
- David McAllister, Member of the European Parliament, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee
- Dr. Daniela Schwarzer, Director German Council on Foreign Relations

17:40                      Farewell





# 2020 EUROPAS ZUKUNFT GEMEINSAM GESTALTEN

# EUROPA

konkrete VORSCHLÄGE  
für die EU!

## SOLIDARITÄT & ZUSAMMENHALT

I ♥ EU  
Europäische  
IDENTITÄT stärken...  
↓  
...SOLIDARITÄT  
fördern

Altersarmut  
bekämpfen  
Pflege  
Medische  
Vorsorge  
Rente &  
Vorsorge

Nehmen  
UND  
Geben!

EU Themen in der  
BILDUNG  
mehr  
AUSTAUSCH  
Kurse für  
"Bürgersinn"  
Standards  
Jung &  
ALT  
International

für alle  
Altersgruppen  
freiwilliges internationales  
SOZIALES JAHR

Idealen nach  
INNEN leben  
bevor wir nach  
AUßEN  
gehen  
Demokratische  
Grundwerte  
Minderheiten  
schützen

## EUROPA IN DER WELT

Themen können  
von einem Land  
ALLEINE nicht  
gelöst werden

stärkere Rolle  
des EU-PARLEMENTS  
& EU  
Staatsan-  
waltschaft  
Sicherheits-  
Politik  
Souveränes  
Auftreten

GLOBALER  
Wohlstand  
MIGRATION  
Vermeiden

präventive / faire  
HANDELPOLITIK

VERBRAUCHER  
sensibilisieren

Unsere  
WURZELN  
Rechte nicht nur  
auch dafür EINST

Wir wollen  
GEHÖRT und  
WAHGENÖSSIG  
werden

75 zu  
ausgewählten  
BURGERINNEN  
DREI LÄ

Arbeitsplätze  
Anstausch!  
Flüchtlings-  
hilfe  
Immigration &  
Integration  
Interkulturelles  
Zusammenleben

Rente & Vorsorge  
Altersarmut  
Ungleichheit  
Minderst-Lohn  
Soziale  
Gesetzgebung  
& Steuern

Handel  
Militär  
Waffen-  
export  
Gemeinsam  
Stark

BRIT  
Europol  
Europäische  
Produkte  
Globalisierung  
Flüchtlings-  
politik  
Entwicklungs-  
hilfe

Sicherheit  
Geschichte  
Die gemeinsame  
Basis:  
FRIEDEN

Nicht nur  
WIRTSCHAFTLICH  
sanktionieren  
→ SOZIAL, KULTURELL

KONFLIKTE  
in Länder  
rundum  
EUROPA

Populismus  
Toleranz  
Freiheit

präventive / faire  
HANDELPOLITIK

VERBRAUCHER  
sensibilisieren

MIGRATION  
Vermeiden









## Results

# The Citizens' recommendations and the discussion with Federal Foreign Minister Heiko Maas and Foreign Minister Ekaterina Zaharieva

Under the motto '2020: Shaping the future of Europe together', citizens from Poland, France and Germany met at the German Foreign Office in Berlin for two days to talk and work together. A large number of ideas and concrete proposals were the result of their mutual exchange of ideas and discussions on the future of Europe. Citizens would like more joint projects to create a European identity and improve cohesion within the Union, such as a European television station and a European sustainability label.

Seventy-five randomly selected citizens from Poland, France and Germany worked out concrete recommendations for the future of Europe during the Europe Workshop. The focus was on the questions: Do we need more cohesion in Europe? How can values and democracy be strengthened? How can Europe's role in the world be shaped? How can Europe become more sustainable? They then discussed their proposals with Federal Foreign Minister Heiko Maas and his Bulgarian colleague Ekaterina Zaharieva in the second part of the event, the European Conference, in front of some 400 guests.

Heiko Maas took inspiration from the European Workshop to the German Presidency of the Council, beginning in July.

Below are the recommendations of the citizens from the eight table groups and the reactions of the politicians.





# Citizen recommendations: Results of the table discussions of the eight cross-border citizens' groups

## Values and democracy in Europe: How can the foundation of values be strengthened?

Greater transparency and availability to the citizens are two central points that were demanded by the citizens during the discussions on the topic of values and democracy. In addition, they would like to see an expansion of participation opportunities for citizens and increased protection for minorities. This should be achieved in a variety of ways.

## More information offers: European television channel, news, app

One proposal to improve transparency is the creation of a European public service television channel called T.E.N. (Transparency. Europe. News.). T.E.N. will offer different formats in the political and cultural areas, as well as broadcasts about individual Member States. The channel aims to explain European politics in a comprehensible and clear way and to make its significance for the everyday life of citizens tangible. It will also provide concrete examples and practical information about the EU.

With the title '5 Minutes for Europe', news programs will regularly report on Europe so that European topics become more firmly established in the news coverage. The idea is that these messages are the responsibility of the EU and not of the Member States.

Citizens would also like to see an app called 'Europe in your pocket', where videos are commented on and moderated. One feature of the app—the comment function—can be used as a starting point for petitions. For all these proposals, it is important to the citizens that the content is presented in a comprehensible fashion, and that they have the opportunity to introduce their own topics, which are then commented on by experts. The formats are designed to serve different information needs and age groups. A youth-oriented design could be established by including YouTubers.

## Reaction from politicians

The two Foreign Ministers welcomed the citizens' proposals and the call for a comprehensible presentation. Comprehensible information is important, so that people know what the EU means in their daily lives. Citizens will also be better able to judge whether their own government or the EU is responsible for certain decisions. However, the Foreign Ministers were rather re-



strained of the question if a public television station could be established at the European level.

#### More participatory formats

In addition to the expansion of information services, it is important for citizens to become more involved in the EU. Citizens want more participatory formats such as citizen consultations or citizen dialogues with responsible politicians. One idea is to broadcast regular live discussions with experts and citizens from different Member States on all public channels and YouTube.

#### Reaction from politicians

Heiko Maas and Ekaterina Zaharieva can well understand the desire of citizens for more citizen participation. They consider it important to have a visible follow-up of citizens' proposals at the European level.

## Cohesion in Europe: Do we need more solidarity in Europe?

From the citizens' point of view, the development of a European identity is important to strengthen cohesion and genuine solidarity with the citizens from other countries. In addition, the citizens discussed the challenges of social policy, such as poverty in old age.

#### Promoting a common identity through cross-border encounters

To increase solidarity and cohesion, it is important to facilitate direct personal contacts and encounters across borders in all areas of life. Opportunities should be created for people to personally experience Europe. This would be made possible by new programs, like a voluntary European Year, or a European exchange for cross-border internships and volunteer work. However, existing structures such as the Erasmus program or cross-border cultural and sporting gatherings should also be given more support and extended to appeal to a wider range of people. For example, the Erasmus program (to senior citizens) and the Interrail service could be extended. In addition to personal exchange and broadening horizons, the use of European symbols can also strengthen the common identity, for example, on the identity card.



**Fighting poverty in old age and the lack of skilled labour**

Citizens are concerned about poverty in old age and the lack of skilled labour, especially in rural areas. The EU can contribute to reducing the risk of poverty in old age by using various approaches. First of all, financial assistance for needy pensioners is required, to enable them to age in a dignified manner. Furthermore, the EU can push the harmonisation of the supply of medicines and provide financial support for equipment that is needed for the sick and elderly. Tackling the shortage of skilled labour, especially in rural areas, can be solved by raising young people's awareness of auxiliary professions and by training programs for volunteers and family members in the nursing and homecare sector. Incentives could also be provided for doctors to work in rural areas, for example through EU programs and scholarships. Further topics of

discussion among the citizens were the tension between national social systems and intra-European solidarity, as well as the discussion about how much cohesion Europe needs, or how it can be tenable.

**Reaction from politicians**

Even though the EU is not responsible for the pension system, the Foreign Ministers want to take the issue of old-age poverty with them and think about what can be done at the EU level to combat senior citizens' poverty more effectively, e.g., in education and training. In addition, they want to reduce the wage gaps between the EU states and advocate a European minimum wage. Heiko Maas explained that the topic of an 'EU framework for a European minimum wage' would also be on the European agenda during the coming Council Presidency.





## Europe in the world: How can Europe's role in the world be shaped?

The origin of many the world's problems lies in inequality. The citizens regard making trade policy fair as the EU's task, in order to avoid the consequences of unequal distribution—such as refugees and migration. The EU must be strengthened from within in order to be strong on the outside.

### Promote fair trade policy

A fair trade policy starts with consumers. In order to raise awareness and educate consumers, citizens are advocating the introduction of product labels. The label is intended to assess the social, ecological and economic impact of the products. To make this possible, an independent certification body is required to assess criteria such as fair wages, occupational safety, environmental protection and tax contributions—and to set standards. The awarding of contracts should be voluntary at first, and later become mandatory. In addition, emerging economies should be supported when fulfilling their responsibilities with regard to trade agreements. In contrast to other major trading powers such as China and the USA, citizens are demanding a sovereign foreign trade policy on the part of the EU.

### Reaction from politicians

The EU can influence those EU companies that produce abroad through its trade policy, and this way they can contribute to fair trade. The EU is already working on a label for these companies that takes into account similar criteria, such as the ecological footprint. Sanctions should be imposed in case of human rights violations.

## Strengthening Europe internally to be strong externally

Europe must play a stronger role in the world. But this will only succeed if the EU also becomes stronger internally. This can be done by extending the European Public Prosecutor's jurisdiction. In the future, the public prosecutor's office should be able to act on fundamental rights issues in addition to financial issues. Citizens are questioning the 'opt-out' and are demanding that the same rights and obligations apply to all EU countries. Access to the public prosecutor's office should be opened to citizens and civil society and procedures should be facilitated. Internal strength should be achieved through greater cooperation in foreign and security policies. The citizens demand that the right of veto of the member states be abolished, and majority decisions introduced (supranationalisation). The legitimacy of the EU should also be strengthened through more control by the European Parliament. The EU should also exercise greater control over the Member States and impose sanctions in an emergency.

### Reaction from politicians

The Foreign Ministers Heiko Maas and Ekaterina Zaharieva are in favour of extending the powers of the European Public Prosecutor.



### **Progress and sustainability: How can Europe become more sustainable?**

According to the citizens, a European sustainability policy can only succeed if it is socially and fairly designed.

#### **Promoting green businesses and supporting employees**

Specifically, the EU should promote the establishment of green companies, especially in economically weaker regions, and support companies by cutting red tape. Workers who lose their jobs as a result of restructuring or closure of carbon-emission intensive industries should also be supported by the EU and retrained where necessary. A general rethinking of sustainability and digitalisation can best be achieved by expanding educational opportunities from primary school to university. But that's not all, citizens also want to see further training courses on the municipal level, for example, in information technology. A common European approach to education is important for citizens.

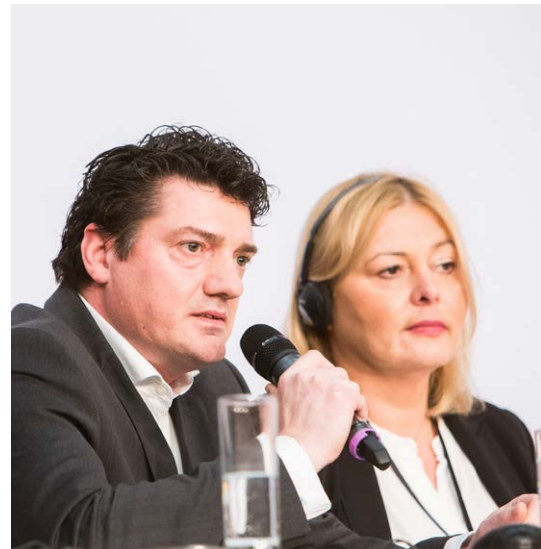
#### **Green deal: Promoting innovation—avoiding waste**

Under the keyword 'Green Deal', citizens also want short-term measures that promote innovation and investment to reduce the waste of our resources, such as sharing program models and new packaging concepts. One important aspect for citizens is transparency. In concrete terms, there is a proposal to introduce a sustainability traffic light labelling system which consumers can use for orientation. Citizens want the price differences between conventional and organic products to be reduced across Europe. All citizens should be able to afford organic products. Appropriate support programs for agriculture can contribute to this. European platforms for the exchange of knowledge and the sharing of information between companies and investors and the promotion of start-ups are as much a part of the Green Deal as measures to reduce competitive disadvantages vis-à-vis non-EU companies.

#### **Reaction from politicians**

According to the German and Bulgarian Foreign Ministers, the Green Deal is a high priority in the EU. More investment in innovation and research is high on the agenda. According to the Foreign Ministers, however, financing the promotion of innovation and sustainability is a challenge. The negotiations currently underway on the EU's multi-annual financial framework are proving difficult due to diverging interests. One example of the conflict is the promotion of organic farming, where a balance must be found with support for traditional farming. In order to lend weight to the demands for more innovation and sustainability in the negotiations, the Foreign Ministers call on citizens to participate and to form working groups. Input and concrete proposals from citizens can help to move the issues forward at European level.







**VOUS VIENT  
A L'ESPRIT ?**

**WAS FÄLLT IHNE**



**é et  
n en  
e**

**Solida  
7**

Solidarité et justice  
Un forum d'initiatives pour des citoyens

Informations, Politiques  
Flüchtlingshilfe  
Dokumentation  
Kommunikation

Homogenität  
oder  
Zusammenschluss  
Vielstehung

Solidarité  
→ Politiques Communes  
→ Migrations

Migrations

Solidarité  
Zusammenschluss  
solitär, Respekt  
2019, 2018

Flüchtlingshilfe

Gleichheit

Solidarité  
- Communauté  
- Association  
- Valeurs Communes

UNITÉ  
PARTAGE

COHÉSION  
- INNOVATION

# Evaluation

## The citizens' attitudes towards the European Union, and how they appraise the European Workshop

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Strong support for innovative forms of citizen participation. Very positive feedback on the interactive concept of the European Workshop. Enthusiasm about the multilingual feature of the dialogue.

### The methods of evaluation

The perspective of the seventy-five citizens from Poland, France and Germany was crucial to the evaluation. The participants were interviewed before and after the event. In the preliminary survey, their attitudes towards the European Union were recorded. In the survey following the event, feedback was obtained on the European Workshop. All seventy-five citizens took part in the preliminary survey and forty-eight in the feedback survey (a response rate of 64 per cent). The following methods were used:



- Preliminary questioning directly on site: Seventy-five citizens
- Feedback survey directly on site: Forty-eight citizens (64 per cent response)
- Feedback survey from table moderators and interpreters
- During the interviews, both closed and open questions were asked



## Preliminary questioning: Citizens' attitudes towards the European Union

Before the citizens began to work on their ideas and proposals for the future of Europe in the European Workshop, their general attitude towards the European Union was surveyed. Citizens were able to indicate, among other things, how satisfied they are with the European Union and democracy, how easy it is for them to find out about the EU, and how much they think politicians are interested in their concerns.

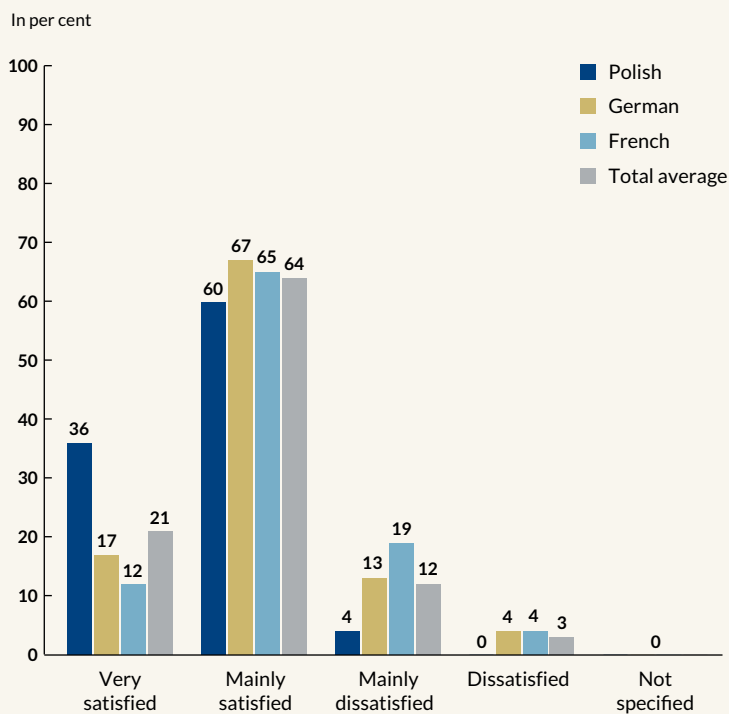
The results show that the majority of participants have a fundamentally positive attitude towards the European Union and its democratic institutions. Eighty-five per cent of citizens are satisfied with the European Union and more than two thirds of citizens are convinced that the European Union is moving in the right direction. However, when it comes to more concrete issues, the attitude of citizens is more sceptical.

Sixty-five per cent of those surveyed said that politicians showed little or no interest in their concerns. Only a third of citizens are convinced that their personal vote counts for something. Despite this attitude, 80 per cent are convinced that their country's membership in the European Union is a good thing.

Clear differences can be seen in the attitudes between citizens from Poland, France and Germany. The Polish citizens have the most positive attitude, followed by the Germans. French citizens are usually more critical than their European neighbours.



FIGURE 6\* How satisfied are you with the European Union?

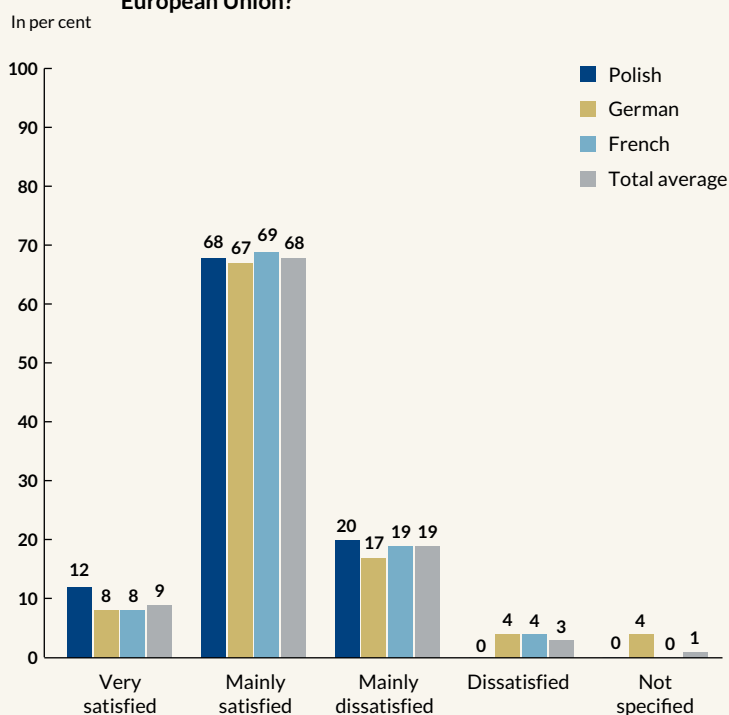


Source: Own results

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The attitude of citizens towards the European Union is very positive. Eighty-five per cent of citizens are 'very satisfied' or 'mainly satisfied' with the European Union. Polish citizens are the most convinced of the European Union.

FIGURE 7 How satisfied are you with democracy in the European Union?



Source: Own results

| BertelsmannStiftung

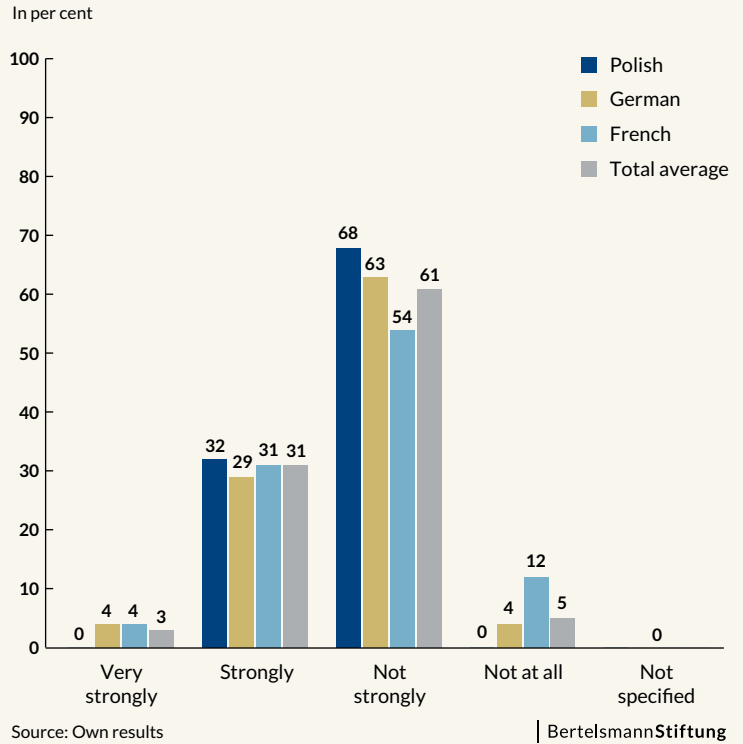
More than three-quarters of citizens are also 'very satisfied' or 'mainly satisfied' with democracy in the European Union. There is not much difference between the citizens from the different countries.

\* Due to rounding, the sum of the percentages in Figures 6-17 does not always add up to 100 per cent.



The citizens are more sceptical about the politicians. Over two-thirds of citizens feel that politicians are ‘less interested’ or ‘not interested at all’ in their concerns. The interest of politicians in the interests of the citizens is most doubted by the French.

FIGURE 8 In your opinion, how strongly are politicians interested in citizens’ issues?



Only 35 per cent of citizens are convinced that their personal voice counts for something in the European Union. There are clear differences between citizens from different countries on this issue. While only 25 per cent of German citizens assume that their voice makes a difference, the proportion of Polish citizens is twice as high at almost 50 per cent.

FIGURE 9 Do you believe that your personal vote counts in the European Union?

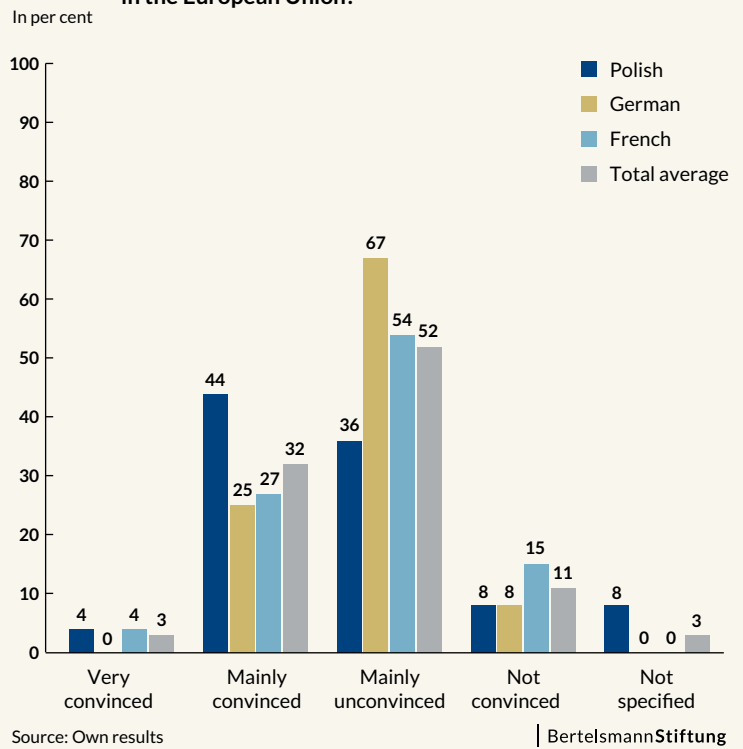
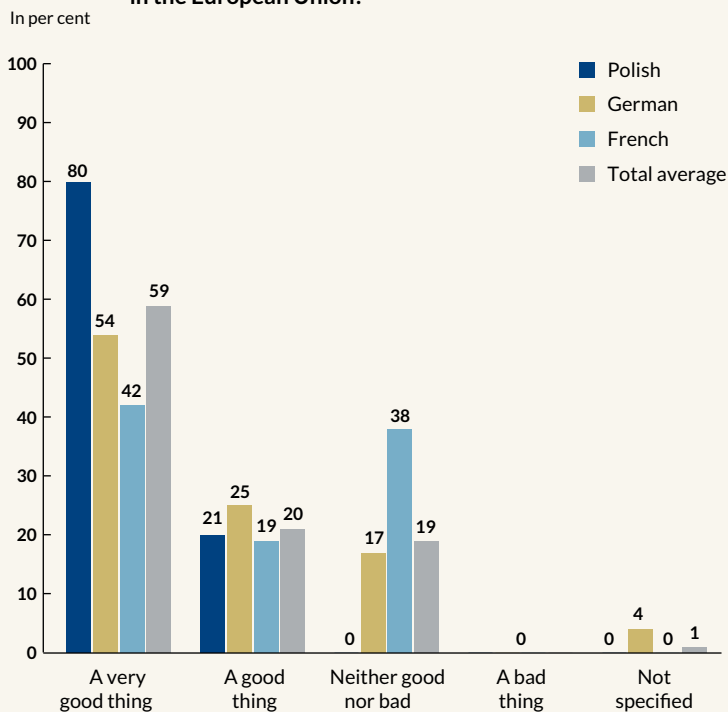


FIGURE 10 What do you think about the membership of your country in the European Union?



Source: Own results

| BertelsmannStiftung

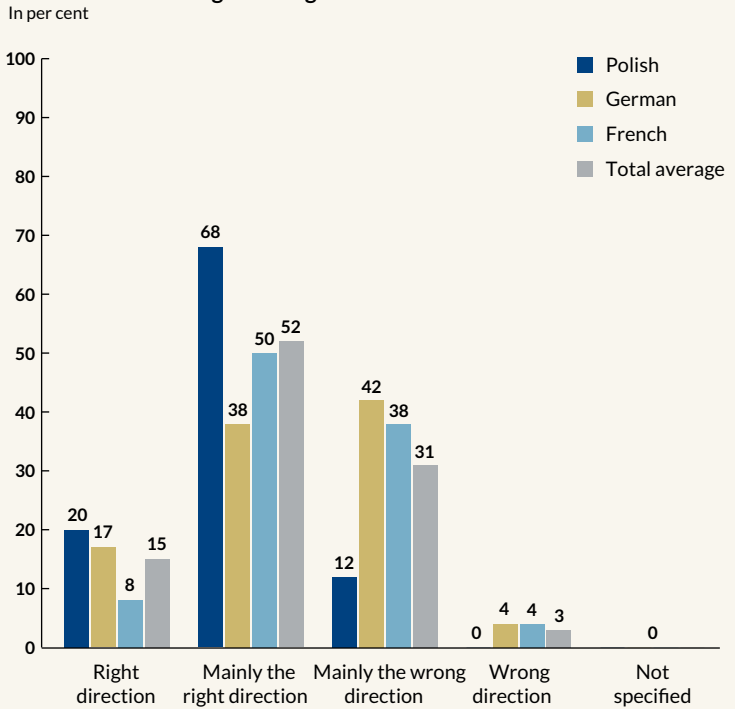
The majority of citizens rate their country's membership of the European Union as a 'good' or 'very good' thing. The clear front-runners are the Polish citizens, who support this opinion 100 per cent. More sceptical, on the other hand, are the French, almost 40 per cent of whom believe that France's membership in the European Union is only a moderately good thing.





Two thirds of citizens rate the developments of the European Union as correct. In comparison, the Polish citizens of the European Union give the best marks in this respect as well. The assessment of the German and French citizens is similar in this question.

FIGURE 11 Do you believe that, on the whole, the European Union is moving in the right direction?

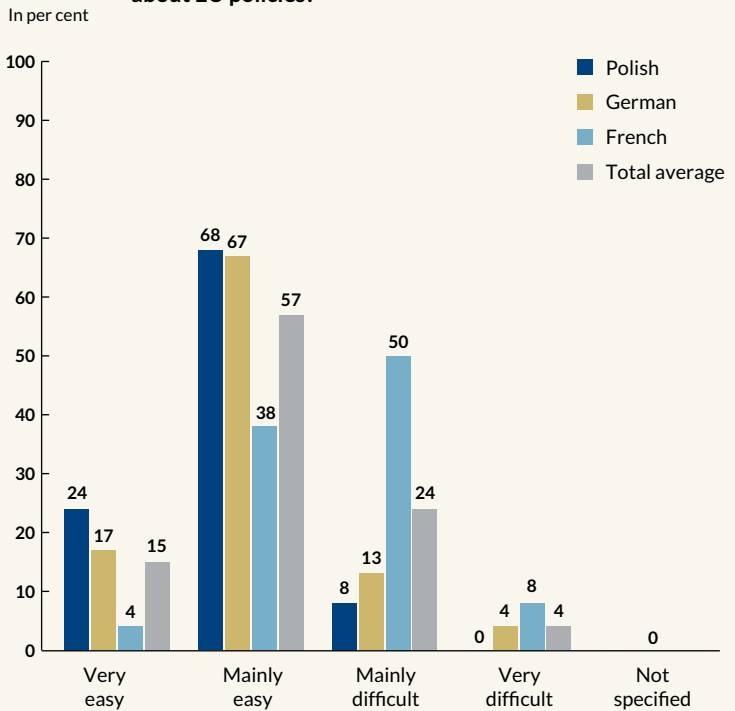


Source: Own results

BertelsmannStiftung

Over 70 per cent of citizens find it 'very easy' or 'rather easy' to find out about EU policies. However, it is striking that over 50 per cent of French citizens find it 'mainly difficult' or 'very difficult' to obtain information.

FIGURE 12 How easy or difficult do you find it to get information about EU policies?



Source: Own results

BertelsmannStiftung

## Feedback survey after the event: The citizens' assessment of the European Workshop

For the participants from Poland, France and Germany, the cross-border Europe Workshop was a big win. All participants rated the event as 'good', with 81 per cent of them rating the European Workshop as 'very good'. The best rating came from the French participants.



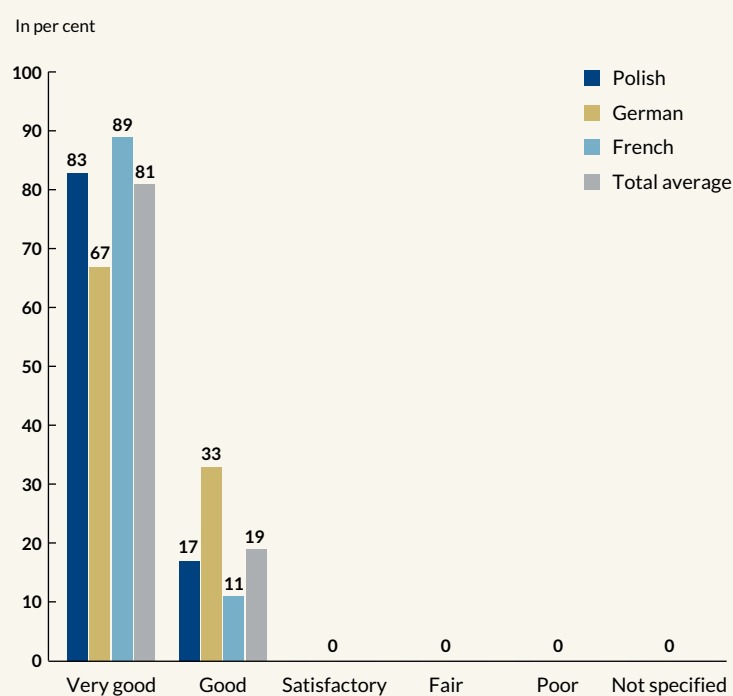
*'Very good organisation and mutual appreciation despite (sometimes) differing views.'*

*'Simple exchange, great organisation, discussion partners and contact persons were successful. Gladly repeat.'*

*'Perfect organisation, international character with people who represent the breadth of society.'*  
*'Methodology as a whole very inclusive and very demanding for the citizens.'*

Citizens' quotes

FIGURE 13 Evaluation of the event overall



Source: Own results

BertelsmannStiftung





The cross-border character was the special highlight of the European Workshop. Ninety-eight per cent of the participants rated the cross-border character as 'very good' or 'good'. The exchange with other Europeans showed the participants new perspectives and led to intensive discussions.



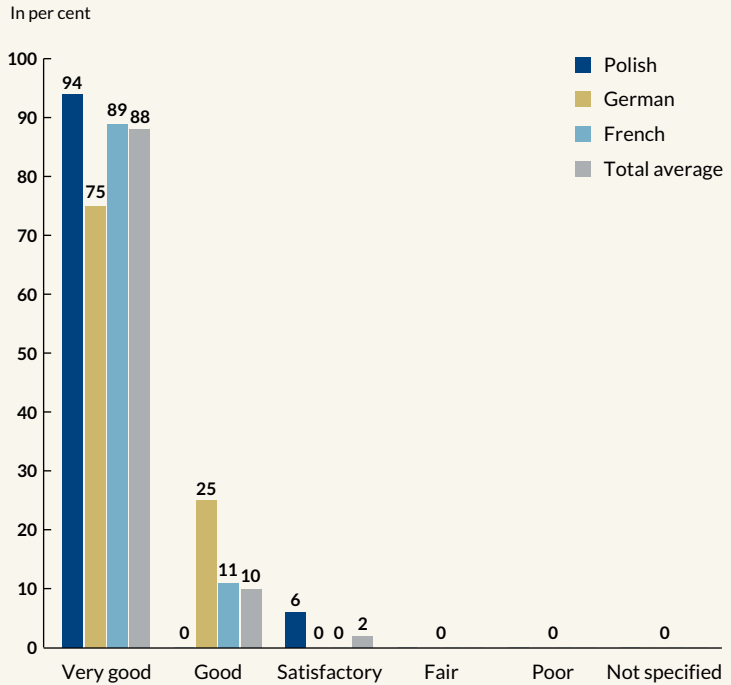
*'What I liked best was the diversity of countries and the opportunity to meet and interact with people of other nationalities. We learned of their problems that we were unaware of.'*

*'The opportunity to get to know the views of other people with different life situations and to feel that the EU serves its citizens.'*

*'The exchange with the Poles and Germans was interesting and enriching.'*

Citizens' quotes

FIGURE 14 Cross-border character of the event



Source: Own results

BertelsmannStiftung

The opportunity to exchange views on important European topics was rated 'very good' or 'good' by 88 per cent of the participants. The Poles were the most positive about the discussions on European issues, while the Germans were a little more sceptical.



*'I liked the fact that you could bring your own ideas to the table.'*

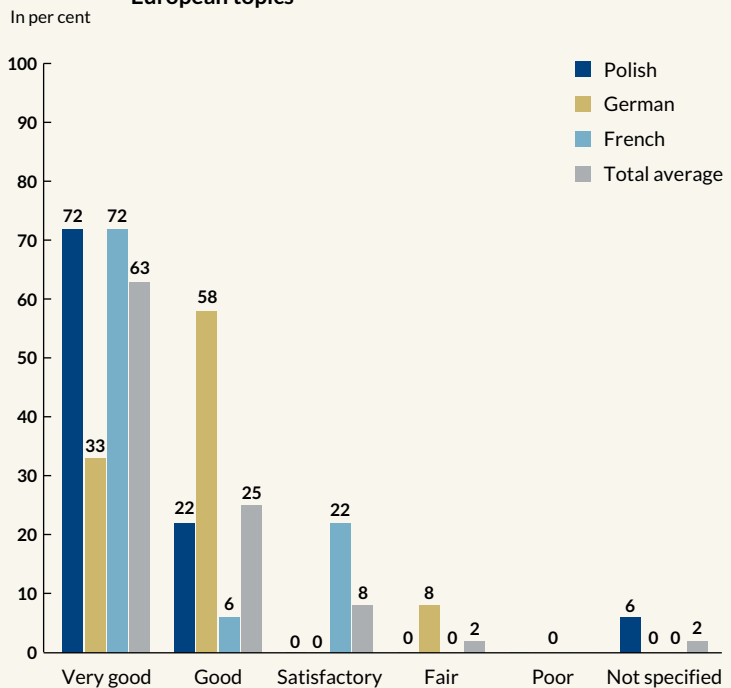
*'I enjoyed the opportunity to consider the concerns of the Union and its citizens.'*

*'More time! We still had many open questions and problems!'*

*'More freedom to choose topics of discussion, discuss topics for shorter periods of time.'*

Citizens' quotes

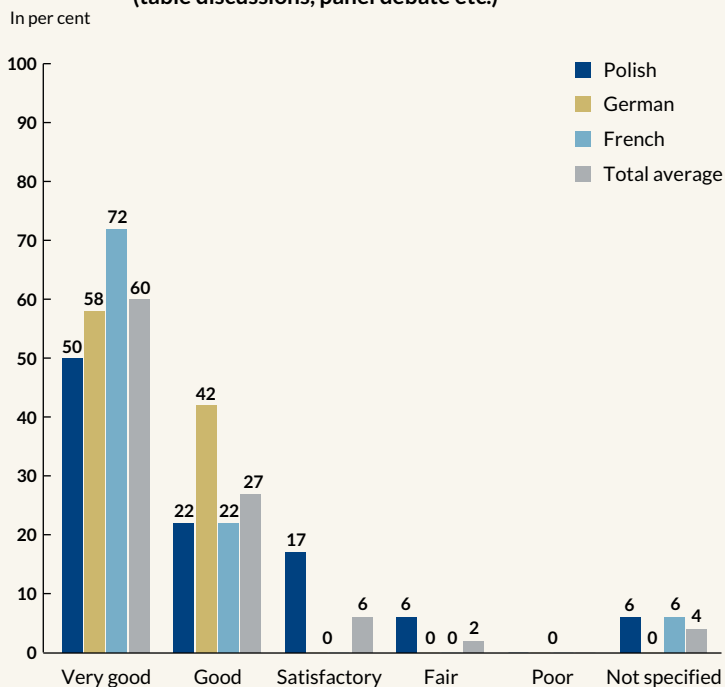
FIGURE 15 Opportunity to exchange ideas on important European topics



Source: Own results

BertelsmannStiftung

FIGURE 16 Methodological variety (table discussions, panel debate etc.)



Source: Own results

| BertelsmannStiftung

The different methods were very enriching for the discussions. Eighty-seven per cent of citizens rated the mix of methods as 'very good' or 'good'. Above all, the French were convinced.



*'Overall methodology very inclusive and citizens very demanding.'*

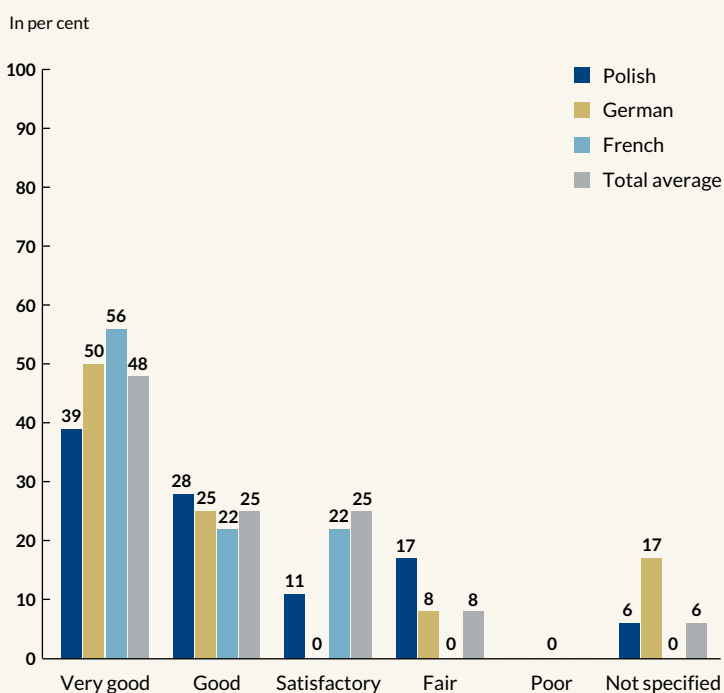
*'The reception, the organization, the process, the goal, the participation was very good.'*

*'Opportunities for exchange on various subjects at the same table.'*

*'Issues and debates have been too heavily directed.'*

Citizens' quotes

FIGURE 17 Willingness of Foreign Ministers to listen to the citizens



Source: Own results

| BertelsmannStiftung

More than 70 per cent of the citizens gave the Foreign Ministers a 'very good' or 'good' mark for their willingness to listen. However, they would have liked more time for discussion with the Foreign Ministers.



*'I learned something new, and after the workshops, at least I know someone is listening to us.'*

*'More time to talk to the Foreign Minister.'*

Citizens' quotes







# Experience

## How the moderators and interpreters evaluated the multilingual interactive format

We asked not only the citizens, but also the table moderators and interpreters about their impressions.

Using open and closed questions, we wanted to know how the interactive dialogue format worked in the multilingual setting with simultaneous interpreters at the table from the point of view of the moderators and interpreters, and how the discussion took place under these conditions.



*'Everyone respects the basic rules of communication. Everybody has their say, everybody lets the other one finish and everybody works together towards a result.'*

Quote from moderator

### The respectful treatment of each other and the good culture of discussion was impressive

The moderators and interpreters praised the respectful treatment of each other and the positive atmosphere during discussions. The participants treated each other with respect.

This statement was fully endorsed by 100 per cent of the respondents. The opinions of minorities were not lost either. This statement was agreed by 100 per cent of the moderators and 80 per cent of the interpreters.

The willingness of the participants to compromise was positively evaluated. Eighty-five per cent of the interpreters and 80 per cent of the moderators agreed with the statement 'The participants are willing to compromise'. The citizens justified their positions in a comprehensible way. This was stated by 100 per cent of the presenters and 70 per cent of the interpreters.

### Cross-border composition enriches the exchange

The diversity of the participants was expressed by the fact that they expressed very different opinions and positions on the topics of the European Workshop. This was confirmed by 100 per cent of the moderators and 92 per cent of the interpreters. The diversity of opinions has been evaluated positively by the moderators and interpreters. From their point of view, it was very instructive for the citizens to learn first-hand about the situation in Poland, France and Germany.



## Interpreting procedures bring advantages

The interpreting procedure worked well. This statement was fully agreed by 62 per cent of the interpreters and 20 per cent of the facilitators, 38 per cent of the interpreters and 80 per cent of the moderators tended to agree with it. This enabled everyone to take part in the discussion in their own language. The interpreting procedure brought further advantages: Simultaneous interpretation contributed to a slower and more orderly flow during the discussions. The moderators in particular found this very helpful.

*'At my table there were very different opinions. The Polish guests had a significantly different opinion than others at the table on migration, terrorism and crime.'*

*'Despite the very different points of view of the participants at the discussion table, all of them were able to agree on a common proposal at the end, with which they were satisfied.'*

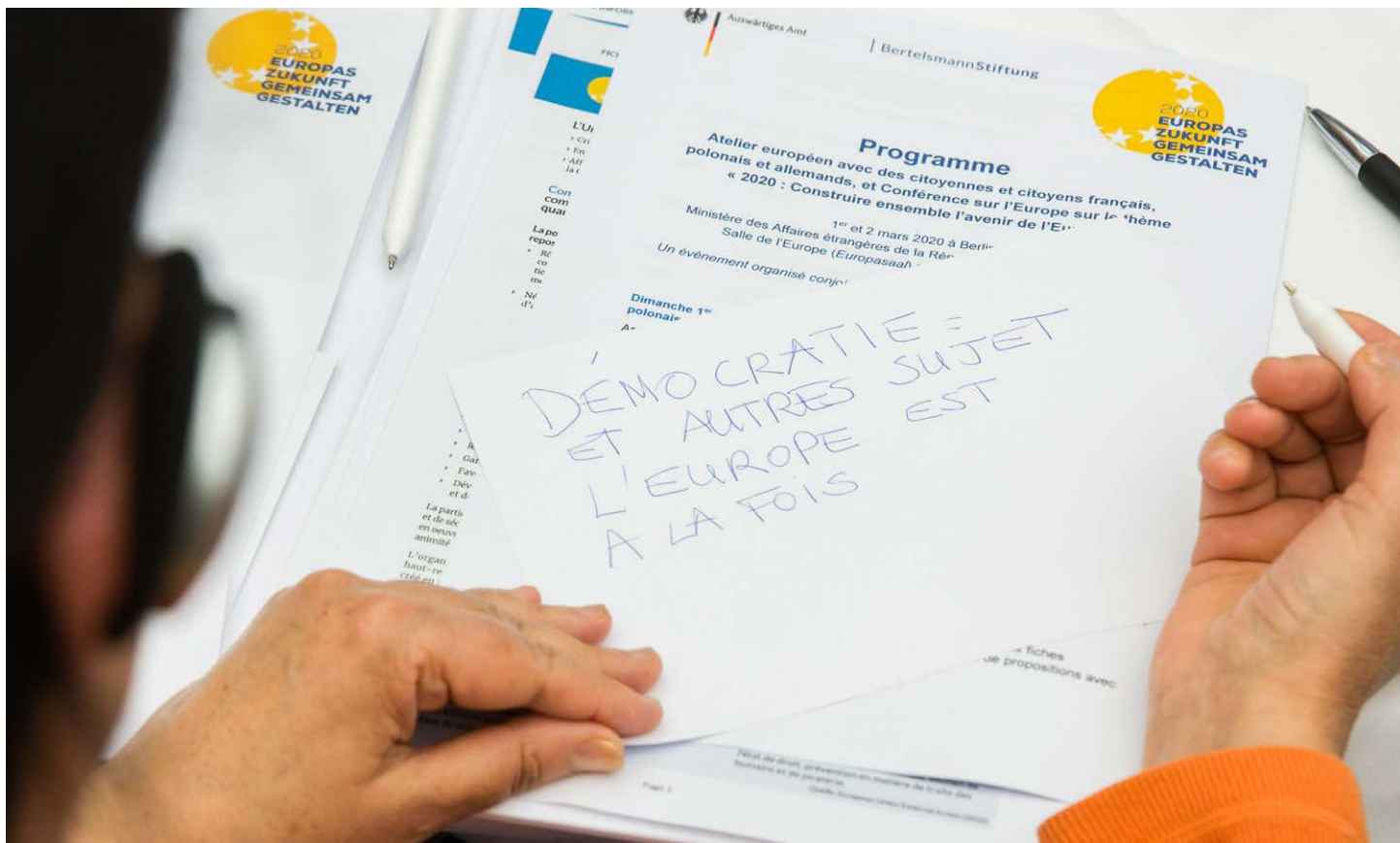
*'Despite the different languages there was a fluent discussion; simultaneous translation was very helpful.'*

Quotes from moderators

*'Anyone could participate, the people were not shy because the group was small and they could speak freely in their respective mother tongues. A lot of time was saved thanks to the interpreting equipment.'*

Quote from interpreter











# The way ahead

## Five lessons for cross-border citizen dialogues

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The new European Workshop format allowed European citizens from different countries, and speaking different languages, to meet face-to-face to exchange views. Afterwards, they discussed their joint results in a direct dialogue with politicians. People with a wide variety of experiences, opinions and viewpoints were able to contribute, working together to produce results of an impressively high standard. The most important conclusion drawn was that interactive and participatory methods lead to improved understanding between citizens and politicians. While citizens gain a better insight into how political processes work, politicians have a more realistic picture of what is important for ordinary 'Europeans in the street' and are inspired by this knowledge in their political work. Cross-border Citizens' Dialogues can only have such a profound effect if the processes involved are planned meticulously and high-quality practical implementation is guaranteed.

Today, citizens expect more opportunities for open exchange of opinions and direct influence on political decisions. For some years now, municipalities, federal states and nation states have increasingly been trying to combine innovative forms of dialogue and participation with regular political processes.

Cross-border citizen dialogues with participants from several European countries are still new in the world of dialogue-oriented civic participation. So far, there are only a few examples. The European Workshop at the Federal Foreign Office was the first cross-border citizen dialogue with randomly selected citizens from the three European countries. The participants jointly elaborated proposals about the future of the European Union and discussed them with the Foreign Ministers.

In the following five points, we present the most important lessons for the design of cross-

border citizen dialogues. They are the result of our experiences with the European Workshop, as presented in this brochure with its specific innovations (random selection, multilingual dialogues and interactive exchange) as well as other cross-border participation formats.

### **The European Workshop shows: Cross-border citizen dialogues are needed for European issues**

All participants from Poland, France and Germany assess the transnational character of the citizen dialogue as extremely positive. It is precisely the exchange across borders and cultures that creates the special value of these dialogues.

For citizens, the encounter with citizens from other countries and the direct exchange in diverse European citizen groups is very exciting.

They will learn first-hand a lot about other European countries, their problems and perspectives. These transnational EU Citizens Dialogues do more than just help to bring understanding between citizens who come from different Member States. Unlike in national discussion groups, where citizens from other nations are discussed, cross-border groups talk to each other. This automatically creates a 'we-feeling'. The participants experience first-hand that they are part of a common Europe.

These cross-border citizen dialogues also have a significant added value for politicians. The dialogue results are more than opinion polls, more than the stringing together of individual citizen opinions and more than the opinions of homogeneous groups. Results from transnational discussions in heterogeneous groups on European topics differed substantially from purely national discussions on topics. This is why these dialogues are such a valuable knowledge resource for policy makers. Politicians receive inspiration with substance from the population, and experience first-hand what is important to citizens from several countries.

### **A clear structure is crucial**

Interactive and consensus-oriented methods such as the 'World Café' can also be used very well in cross-border multilingual citizen dialogues. However, in these groups, even more than in citizens' groups from a single nation, it is necessary to structure the discussions clearly. People from very different milieus and countries of origin are not accustomed to discussing political issues with each other and to working out concrete proposals together, and certainly not in different languages. These dialogues require a clear, firm structure and professional moderation. This ensures that the goals are clear to all the participants and that everyone knows why what happens is being done when it happens.

This is the only way to ensure that everyone has their say in this setting, that the diverse perspectives and experiences are incorporated into the discussion, that the participants take a common path and work together on proposals. This prevents individual or sub-groups (e.g., the

'Germans' from the group) from dominating the discussion and asserting themselves through their ideas. This will enable citizens to discuss issues in a balanced way and to draw up proposals that are supported by all parties involved.

Experience shows that clearly structured discussion processes require intensive preparation. This includes a moderation concept with a detailed process flow, with time specifications and appropriate time periods for the development of intermediate results, as well as prepared materials. This also includes intensive preparation of the professional moderators and interpreters for this special setting.

### **High quality of content thanks to mixed citizen groups**

The quality of content in citizens' groups is also nurtured by the diversity of the citizens. Participants from Poland, France and Germany bring different perspectives, cultural influences and country-specific backgrounds to the discussion. The different perspectives and experiences are a result of the different age, gender and socio-economic backgrounds, serving to enrich the discussion.

Thanks to sophisticated interpreting technology, language diversity is no obstacle. Despite its complexity, the interpreting procedure ensures good communication between the participants and enables the collective development of concrete proposals.

As the citizens' recommendations show, the results of the discussions are of considerable quality. The topic-specific factual information and expert knowledge also contributed to this outcome. Topic-specific information sheets that provide facts have proven worthwhile, as have topic experts who can explain facts and classify ideas on site.

In the moderator survey, 100 per cent confirmed that the experts enriched the table discussions.



*'The exchange of opinions and facts is very helpful for the participants. There is a strong need for first-hand information.'*

*'The expert sometimes immersed himself very quickly in certain technical positions, which made it interesting, but somewhat difficult to follow for participants who were not familiar with the subject.'*

Quotes from interpreters



### Quality has its price: Participatory know-how and resources are needed

Cross-border multilingual interactive citizen dialogues with randomly selected citizens are very demanding. Even more so than in the case of national citizen dialogues, there are a number of logistical challenges, such as the application of the principle of random selection of participants from several countries, organizing travel for participants and managing the linguistic diversity.

The evaluation results, with their high satisfaction values from the citizens, and the good quality of the citizens' recommendations prove that this new format has been successfully implemented. In order to achieve this quality and ensure success, this format required a great deal of effort.

Experience has proven: It is particularly important that the initiating organisations and the political decision-makers and those responsible for preparing the decision-making process have participatory know-how and assessment skills and know what constitutes good citizen

participation and what conditions are required to accomplish it. For example, objectives and general conditions must be clarified in advance: What is the goal of the cross-border citizen dialogue? Which topics are likely to be relevant, for the citizens? For the politicians? How far are the topics predefined? What happens to the results of the citizen dialogue? What can realistically be implemented with the existing human and financial resources?

Participation experts ensure careful process planning and professional implementation, as do professional moderators with explicit participation expertise.

A good transnational project needs a good budget. Recruiting random mixed transnational citizen groups, performed by service providers, costs money. Translations at the tables with the correspondingly sophisticated interpreting technology also incur considerable costs. This is because there are as yet no technical translation solutions that can be used in the complex setting of the 'World Café' method without giving up quality.

### Process and result quality in cross-border citizen dialogues—the most important factors

- **Diversity of participants:** The different experiences, opinions and perspectives enrich the contents of the discussion.
- **Interactive and consensus-oriented dialogue method:** Everyone has their say and everyone is heard. Individual opinions do not prevail but are incorporated into the development of joint proposals.
- **Clear structure:** A clearly structured process provides orientation for all participants and ensures that work is carried out jointly towards a common goal. This ensures that interim results are produced and a common result is achieved at the end.
- **Moderation:** Professional moderators ensure that the structure is adhered to, that everyone has an equal say and that the discussions are respectful and fair. This way, everyone experiences recognition and appreciation.
- **Facts and experts:** The participants' different levels of experience are very enriching for the discussion of the content. Fact-based information and expert knowledge complement the participants' knowledge and make the discussions more objective. They help in trade-offs and prioritising and ensure that convincing arguments and proposals prevail.
- **Communication in your own language:** Very few people dare to speak in the large multilingual group in plenary. Simultaneous interpretation at the tables allows everyone to speak in their own language. The process supports structured dialogues, as the necessary translation slows down the discussion, disciplines the participants and promotes mutual consideration.




## Think about the outcome in the beginning: Integrating citizens' recommendations into political decision-making processes

The positive evaluation results of the European Workshop show that the citizen dialogue was a great benefit for all participants. Dialogue with citizens is sustainable and particularly valuable when there is a real interest in citizens' proposals from politicians.

The citizens in the European Workshop had the opportunity to discuss their proposals with the Foreign Ministers of Germany and Bulgaria. This direct dialogue and access to high-ranking politicians is an important first step towards listening to citizens' suggestions and influencing political decisions.

The European Conference directly following the European Workshop was a good opportunity to discuss the citizens' proposals. Important factors for a good dialogue with politicians are a) the selection of the table speakers by the citizens themselves, b) the moderation of the discussion by moderators known and trusted by the citizens and c) scheduling sufficient time for presentation and discussion.

Federal Foreign Minister Heiko Maas has announced that the results will be incorporated into the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2020. The EU institutions are also open to greater participation of European citizens in European politics. Recent examples show that new formats of dialogue-driven citizen participation at the European level are a modern and positive complement to the usual policy development. In particular, citizen dialogues containing qualified citizens' proposals—prepared by mixed citizens' groups and reflecting the diversity of opinions in society—have the potential to stimulate the discussions of the EU institutions.



*'Such cross-border citizen dialogues should be conducted regularly and with people from all EU countries.'*

Quote from participants

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### **You can find a video about the European Workshop at**

<https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/de/mediathek/medien/mid/europawerkstatt-und-europakonferenz-2020-europas-zukunft-gemeinsam-gestalten>

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