



first aid
democracy
toolkit

European Elections Dystopia

To: *Citizens*
Your guide to
participating in the 2024
European Parliament
elections



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WHAT IS CROWDSOURCING?

Crowdsourcing is a digital democracy tool that harnesses the collective 'wisdom of the crowd' to address public policy challenges. As an e-participation instrument, digital crowdsourcing promises to bolster representative democracy by facilitating direct citizen engagement in decision-making. This method has the potential to generate policy perspectives that better resonate with citizens' concerns, thus reaffirming a fundamental democratic principle: not merely hearing citizens but actively incorporating their input in the formulation of public policies that impact them.

WHAT WAS THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS DYSTOPIA?

In 2023, ECAS implemented the European Elections Dystopia crowdsourcing process in all 27 Member States, which challenged EU citizens to imagine fictional dystopia scenarios that could highlight vulnerabilities that the EU democratic system might face under extreme circumstances. From a starting point of 'creative destruction' and an approach of gamification, participants were encouraged to share their fears and start thinking about their actions to finally end with possible solutions to avoid their worst nightmares for Europe. This crowdsourcing process was carried out online via ECAS's own Crowdsourcing Platform, and workshops were implemented in person, online, or hybrid format by our civil society partners across the EU.

WHAT THIS PROCESS ACHIEVED:

- ✓ Engage citizens in reflecting on the future of EU democracy, especially in the context of the upcoming 2024 European Parliament elections
- ✓ Identify solutions to improve the electoral process and functioning of the European Parliament
- ✓ Raise awareness among citizens about the upcoming elections
- ✓ Inform EU policymakers about the preferences of EU citizens regarding specific policy priorities

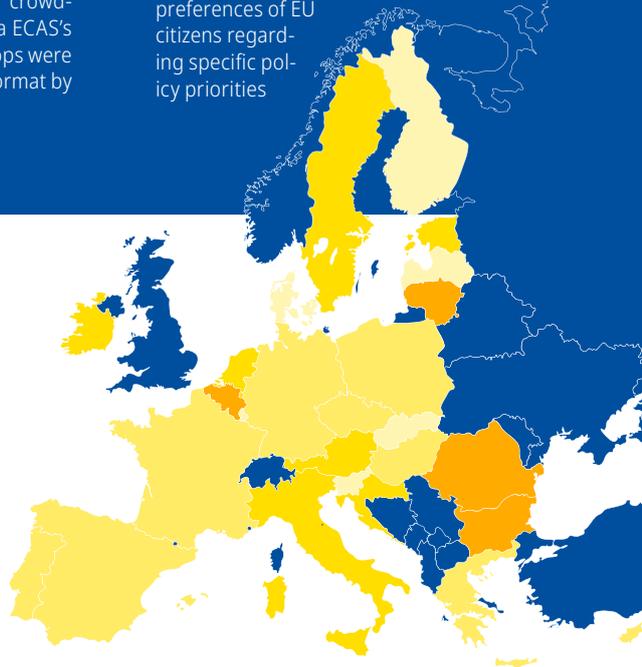
HOW MANY PEOPLE PARTICIPATED, AND FROM WHERE?

Total number of contributions:
1,435

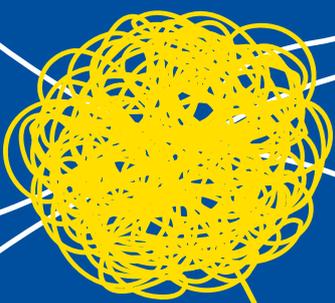
Number of contributions via online crowdsourcing:
665

Number of contributions via workshops:
770

Participants per country: **1**  **169**



WHAT ARE CITIZENS CONCERNED ABOUT?



CONFLICT

Citizens worry about the potential for a large-scale conflict, particularly fearing World War III or involvement in nearby conflicts like the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

EXTREMISM

Citizens worry about how the prevalence of extremist parties in the European Parliament can lead to political gridlock and impact the efficiency of the decision-making process.

NATIONALISM

Citizens worry about how far-right MEPs will advocate for nationalist agendas and policies that may challenge the EU's inclusive and cooperative principles, thus deviating from the values that unite EU citizens.

UNFAIR ELECTIONS

Citizens worry about manipulation, electoral fraud, and disinformation impacting the upcoming elections. Particularly in the context of advancing digital technologies, citizens raised concerns about the electoral system's susceptibility to external manipulative forces.

POPULISM

Citizens worry about democratic backsliding as populist leaders seek to consolidate power, limit the independence of democratic institutions, and curtail the rights and freedoms of specific population segments.

UNEQUAL REPRESENTATION

Citizens worry that low voter turnout may result in a European Parliament failing to adequately represent the general population's interests, characterised by skewed representation and diminished legitimacy of elected officials.

Citizens expressed concerns regarding the upcoming 2024 European Parliament elections, highlighting the potential risks and challenges that could shape the future of the EU.

RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the main messages of this crowdsourcing process is that, while citizens believe that some threats to EU democracy are out of their control, they also think that certain unfavourable situations can be prevented if they actively engage in the upcoming European elections. By the end of the crowdsourcing activity, citizens reached real decisions about what they could do (or stop doing) to prevent their 'European Dystopia' from becoming a reality. Citizens also reflected on what they think EU decision-makers and civil society organisations should prioritise before and after the European elections in 2024.

- 1 Go out to vote!** Exercise your democratic right by actively participating in the 2024 European Parliament elections.
- 2 Choose candidates wisely:** Prioritise candidates aligned with societal priorities over self-interest. Review their commitments, assess their alignment with your values, and avoid supporting unrealistic MEPs.
- 3 Reflect on biases:** Challenge your preconceived notions for informed decision-making. Consider alternative viewpoints when evaluating candidates and issues.
- 4 Talk politics to understand!** Engage in conversations with peers, aiming for understanding rather than agreement. Contribute to a diverse exchange of ideas for a more informed electorate.
- 5 Consider the impact of your vote beyond national borders:** The outcomes of European elections can have implications beyond national borders. Consider how your vote will contribute to shaping the future of the EU.
- 6 Encourage others to vote:** Inspire family, friends, and colleagues to participate in the upcoming European elections.
- 7 Verify information using multiple sources:** Be critical about the information you consume. Verify the accuracy of information by referring to multiple reliable sources before sharing.
- 8 Combat fake news:** Report fake news and propaganda, especially on social media. Take an active role in countering harmful narratives.
- 9 Stay updated on election procedures:** Ensuring a smooth voting process by familiarising yourself with election procedures, including how to register to vote, where to vote, and what identification is required to vote.
- 10 Stay engaged:** Remain informed and engaged in political issues between elections. Follow news updates, engage in community discussions, and support advocacy efforts aligned with your values.