



Co-funded by the  
Europe for Citizens Programme  
of the European Union

## POLICY PAPER



# E(U))LECTIONS'19

THINK DECIDE CHANGE!

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# The Project

The project aimed to contribute to an active engagement in European citizenship including a better understanding of the importance of participating in European elections, as well as awareness of the risks of populism and misinformation on European issues. For that purpose, our project succeeded in developing a variety of methods, in person, online and hybrid. We promoted debates, seminars and conferences, quizzes, as well as active learning methodologies like group-work, brainstorming sessions, prospective analysis and creative approaches with various forms of artistic expressions (Lego Serious Play, drawing, video making, theatre improvisation). The project has involved a variety of target-groups (secondary and university students, teachers, youth associations, members of civil society organizations, senior citizens) in all the three countries (PT, IT, NL). The cooperation with local partners (schools, universities, local authorities, civil society organizations) in various cities was crucial to contribute to the decentralization of the debate on the future of Europe.

This policy paper presents the main reflections produced by the many participants of different nationalities who, over the last two years, have taken part in the various activities promoted within the framework of this project. In such events, which varied in format over time, they had the opportunity to think about the current state of the European Union, their European citizenship, and in particular to reflect on the future of Europe. Apart from this introductory part, which briefly presents the project, the document is divided into two main parts. In the first, there is a summary of the main pros and cons associated with each scenario of the '5 Scenarios for the Future of Europe' - considerations taken from all the presentations and conversations held in the different countries. In the second part, which is in turn divided into two parts, it is possible to give an account of the main recommendations for the EU on the one hand, and on the other hand, recommendations for the citizens themselves. Both produced throughout the different activities, completed with direct quotes from the participants and the place where those events took place.

# The Numbers

3  
COUNTRIES



Portugal



Netherlands



Italy

4  
PARTNERS

cei\_iscte  
Center for  
International Studies



FONDAZIONE FLAMINIA  
PER L'UNIVERSITÀ  
IN ROMAGNA

15  
EVENTS



8 x Presential



7 x Online

733  
PARTICIPANTS

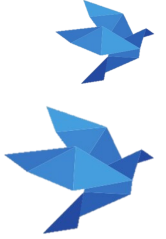


From 12 Nationalities



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# 5 Scenarios: Pros and Cons



1

Carrying On

## PROS

- Citizens' rights derived from the EU law are upheld;
- The positive agenda of action continues to deliver concrete results, based on a shared sense of purpose.

## CONS

- Possible economic crises and the possible imbalances that can/can be generated between more advanced and less advanced countries and how they can become promoters and new needs and protect acquired rights and values.

2

Nothing but the  
Single Market

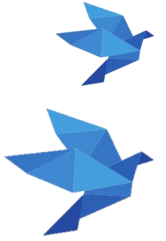
- Strengthening the goods and capital markets;
- Preservation of the free movement of goods;
- Eurocentrism: economic centralism;
- Foreign policy issues are dealt with bilaterally: cooperation;
- Freedom of choice in migration and asylum policies;
- Clearer decision-making.

- Movement of persons and services not fully guaranteed;
- Limited cooperation in the euro area;
- Loss of European identity;
- Loss of political relevance in the international system;
- Focus on trade breeds disunity and rivalry between countries;
- Citizens' rights derived from the EU law may become restricted over time;
- The supremacy of profit to the detriment of the founding values of the European community such as cooperation, mutual respect, environmental protection and human rights.

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# 5 Scenarios: Pros and Cons



## PROS

## CONS

3

Those Who Want  
More Do More

- Strengthened single market, with scope for progressive agreements;
- Tax flexibility for diverse economies;
- Defence cooperation (different security priorities and capabilities);
- Supplementary budget for some states (for health, education);
- The gap between expectations and delivery starts to close in the countries that want and choose to do more.

- Possibility of countries not cooperating in cases such as migration crises;
- Creation of 2 or more blocs within the EU: imbalance that would be created in Europe between countries with more economic and decision-making possibilities than the poorest countries;
- More complex decision-making processes: questions arise about transparency and accountability of the different layers of decision-making.

4

Doing Less More  
Efficiently

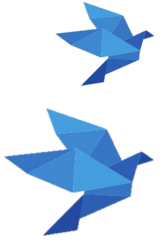
- By having fewer projects, it becomes easier to carry them out and better;
- More transparency in the EU decisions;
- More cooperation between the EU countries;
- The EU becomes "one" by agreeing on certain projects;
- Improved precision in foreign policy, defence and security operations;
- Citizens' rights derived from the EU law are strengthened in areas where we choose to do more and reduced elsewhere.

- Difficulty in choosing projects in favour of others;
- Loss of relevance in relation to the international scene;
- Increased bureaucratisation in the EU;
- Prioritisation of the financial sector rather than the social sector;
- National interests are not represented in the EU;
- Problems associated with the entry of citizens from non-European countries - stereotypes linked to/associated with migratory phenomena would be strengthened.

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# 5 Scenarios: Pros and Cons



## 5 Doing Much More Together

### PROS

- Valuing the Union;
- Strengthening European identity/citizenship;
- Citizens have more rights derived directly from the EU law;
- Enhancing the efficiency of the single market;
- Strengthening and giving more credibility to the EU in the international sphere;
- Mutual help;
- A single, strong voice;
- Self-sufficiency;
- Combating Euroscepticism.

### CONS

- Not everyone cooperates;
- 'A priori' inequalities;
- Resistance to difference;
- Difficulty in reaching consensus;
- Loss of autonomy/identity of each country in favour of a common European voice;
- Deterioration of commercial relations with the exterior;
- Risk of standardization of policies and the economy.



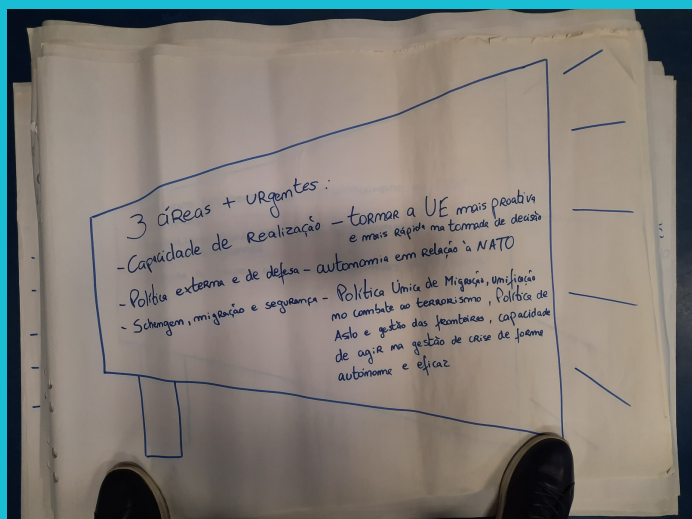
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# Recommendations

For EU



## "3 Most Urgent Areas

(1) **Delivery capacity:** making the EU more proactive and quicker in taking decisions;

(2) **Foreign and defence policy:** autonomy from NATO;

(3) **Schengen, migration and security:** Single Migration Policy, unification in the fight against terrorism, Asylum Policy and border management, ability to act autonomously and effectively in crisis management."



Portugal

## MORE ATTENTION TO THE LOCAL LEVEL

**Anastasiya:** "I think the European Union is doing a great job with the youth, because there are many projects like this, where the youth is very involved, and there are lots of opportunities, but I suppose the problem is that at local level it is the same,".



The Netherlands

## CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN EUROPE AND ITS CITIZENS

**Sofia:** "(...) to work more on the approaching of what Europe is and to explain what the EU is to its citizens, as I think that populists' movements, the extreme left as well as the extreme right, emerge from the gap that exists from the distance between Europe and its citizens."



Portugal

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# Recommendations

For the EU



**"More democracy and representation."**

"From future Europe I expect more logic, more common sense."

 Italy

## INVEST IN THE YOUNGER GENERATIONS

**Ziagul:** "Start with education, and invest in the younger generations, as they will be the future of our world (...)".

 The Netherlands

## A MORE REPRESENTATIVE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

**Erica:** "(...) I feel that there needs to be an effort from the Parliament to approach Citizens, so they feel that they are being represented by other people, by other European citizens, and this way to be closer to the vote and institutions in general."

 Portugal

## MORE PRESENCE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

**Henrique:** "As we are in an increasingly globalised and internet-connected society, the EU should take a more "aggressive" approach on social media, seeking the views and concerns of citizens in all EU countries."

 Portugal

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# Recommendations

## For Citizens



### VOTE MORE

**Jolene:** "(...) the key thing is if you don't vote, someone else will decide for you, and I think it's very important, especially for younger generations that they start voting (...)".

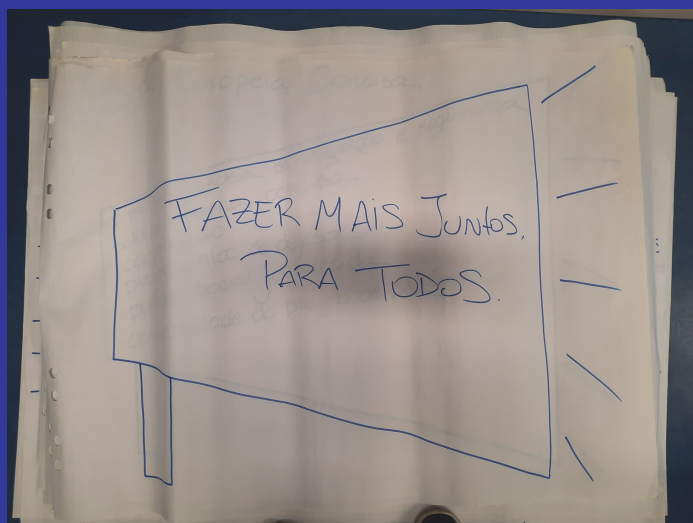


The Netherlands

**Simão:** "As citizens we can vote, more and more and with more knowledge and responsibility (...)".



Portugal



**"Doing more together, for all."**



Portugal

### MORE SOLIDARITY

**Leonor:** "To show more solidarity and to seek knowledge by taking into account themes that are debated in the EU (...)".



Portugal

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# Recommendations

## For Citizens

### BE MORE INFORMED

**Andreia:** "Citizens have to be aware of the importance of being informed and wanting to know more about what the European Union wants to do and what it already does, so that they can form an opinion and start to be part of this community by no longer being so passive either."

 **Portugal**



### TAKE INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVE

"(...) if you want to see a change, you can not whine to others to do something, you have to take initiative, like "I'm going to do this, join me if you want to."."

 **The Netherlands**

### BE MORE ATTENTIVE

**Inês:** "To be more attentive to the political and social issues of one's own country, to try to understand the impact of the interactions between European and national policies. To be proactive, to demand and to give ourselves."

 **Portugal**

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THINK DECIDE CHANGE!

KEEP DEBATING THE FUTURE OF EUROPE!