



# CITIES AS ARENAS OF POLITICAL INNOVATION IN THE STRENGTHENING OF DELIBERATIVE AND PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

## The future of democracy in Europe - envisioned by its citizens

From the rise of populism, to decreasing public trust in governance institutions, exacerbated inequalities due to COVID-19, and the war in Ukraine - democracy across Europe has experienced immense challenges. **We need to re-think what democratic participation looks like.** Hence, the need for foresight.

Foresight in [EUARENAS](#) seeks to understand, explore, and (re)imagine the future of participation in Europe. In an ever-changing world, it asks us to think about our future, what challenges are on the horizon, and how we can address them to achieve shared outcomes.

Here are the source materials, methods, and results of our foresight research activities.



### What is the media talking about?

The media is both a window into, and a shaper of the ideologies and behaviours of society. With actors from the social, political and research spheres, we conducted a snapshot analysis of contemporary media discourses from across Europe.

Frequenting these discourses were topics on recovery from the Pandemic, climate change, and the relationship and power relation between grassroots activism and governmental institutions. >>>



### What are people's lived experiences of democracy?

33 citizen stories on citizens' experiences and engagement with local democracy were gathered from a diverse range of people including the youth, migrant communities, and local volunteers.



From these stories, key challenges in present day European democracies emerged, such as the lack of engagement of specific demographics including young people and migrant communities, and the under-utilised potential of technology to democratise decision-making and support citizen participation. >>>



## What are the words on the tweet?

Our researchers collated 50+ social media posts from national activist groups, then invited researchers and practitioners to analyse them for positive and negative influencing factors of future demography.

Education on critical thinking, joined forces between grassroots movements and more mainstream democratic organisations, and simply actions were some of the needs that our experts identified. >>>

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## What do citizens across Europe want for their neighbourhoods?

In spring 2023, local-level future scenario workshops were held in Finland, Poland, Estonia, Italy, and Germany. From making vision boards to building with LEGO blocks, citizens were given the means, space, time, and peers to share their wishes for the future of their neighbourhoods together.

Bringing these visions to our pan-European level future scenario workshop, our researchers joined forces with city officials, practitioners, activist groups, and residents of Berlin to co-construct participatory spaces for Europe. >>>



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## City of The Future report

The results, and insights from our 2.5 years of foresight research work are summarised in our “City of The Future report”. In addition to the report, we have visualised the participatory space builds into a “City of The Future graphic”.



Get the report and illustration here!

For all EUARENAS deliverables: [euarenas.eu/deliverables](https://euarenas.eu/deliverables)

### About us

EUARENAS investigates the ways in which social movements, coupled with local government reform initiatives manifesting themselves in local-level experiments, create momentum for political change that include more inclusive and participatory forms of governance.

### Our consortium



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