

European Citizens' Consultations

Bulgarian Citizens' Perspectives on the Future of Europe

National Consultation in Bulgaria
Sofia, 10.-11. February, 2007



The National Citizens' Consultations are part of a pan-European dialogue project called the "European Citizens' Consultations". Each of the 27 national events is coordinated and organised under the responsibility of a national partner, independent non-for-profit organisations all over Europe. The consultations at national level are co-funded by national foundations.

The European Citizens Consultations are organised by a group of independent organisations led by the King Baudouin Foundation (Belgium) in collaboration with European Citizen Action Service (ECAS), the European Policy Centre (EPC) and the Network of European Foundations (NEF). They are supported by Compagnia di San Paolo, Riksbankens Jubileumsfond and the Robert Bosch Stiftung and co-funded by the European Commission.

**Consultations Européennes
des Citoyens**

Faites entendre votre voix

Rozhovory s občany Evropy
Nechte zazníť svúj hlas

**Europæiske
borgerkonsultationer**
Lad din stemme blive hørt

**Europese
Burgerberaadslagingen**
Laat uw stem horen

**Euroopa Kodanike
Foorum**
Tehke oma hääl kuuldavaks

**Euroopan kansalaisten
konsultaatiot**
Saada äänensä kuuluville

**Europäische
Bürgerkonferenzen**
Bring deine Stimme ein

**Διαβουλεύσεις των
ευρωπαίων πολιτών**
Κάντε τη φωνή σας να ακουστεί

Europa noastra
Spune ce crezi

**European Citizens'
Consultations**
Making your voice heard

Eiropas pilsoņu debates
Izsaki savu viedokli

Граждани за Европа
Твоят глас е важен

**Európai Polgárok
Konzultációja**
Hallatjuk a hangját

**Consultazioni Europee
dei Cittadini**
Fai sentire la tua voce

**Debata obywateli
Europy**
Niech nas usłyszą

**Consultas aos
cidadãos europeus**
Fazendo ouvir a sua voz

**Konzultácie s
občanmi Európy**
Využite svoj hlas

**Posvetovanja z evropskimi
državljeni**
Naj se sliši vaš glas

**Consultas a la
ciudadanía europea**
Haz oír tu voz

**Europeiska
medborgarråd**
Gör din röst hörd

**Pasitarimas su
Europos piliečiais**
Tegul jus išgirsta

**Il-konsultazzjonijiet
taċ-ċittadini Ewropej**
Semma leĥnek



European Citizens' Consultations

Making your voice heard



The European Citizens' Consultations

The European Citizens' Consultations provide the **first-ever opportunity** for members of the public from all Member States to debate the future of the European Union **across the boundaries of geography and language**. Citizens reflecting the diversity of the population are chosen randomly to take part in the deliberations. They identify common ground and make recommendations to policy-makers. The results aim at inspiring European as well as national institutions as they prepare to take decisions on the next phase of Europe's development.

The consultations create a **truly European discussion**, bringing citizens together at European events and linking simultaneous national debates on a shared agenda of broad ideas and visions set by the citizens themselves. The debates ensure that every voice is heard through an **innovative combination of professional facilitation and modern technology**.

The European Citizens' Consultations process is driven by a consortium of independent and non-political European foundations and civil society organisations led by the King Baudouin Foundation and co-financed by the European Commission's Plan D.

The Agenda-Setting Event

The Agenda-Setting Event was the first stage of the ECC process. Randomly selected participants from all European Member States met in Brussels to **set the agenda for the following dialogue process**. The following three topics were selected by **eight citizens from each of the Member States**:

- 1) Energy & Environment: The environmental and economic impact of Europe's energy use
- 2) Family & Social Welfare: The social and economic conditions for Europe's families
- 3) EU's Global Role & Immigration: The EU's role in the world and the management of immigration

National Citizens' Consultations

At the heart of the project are the National Citizens' Consultations – simultaneous, interlinked debates in all 27 Member States. From February to March 2007 they debate the three topics identified at the Agenda Setting Event and identify common ground to recommend broad policy directions in “National Citizens' Perspectives on the Future of Europe”. Each consultation has five to ten other consultations in other Member States happening at the same time following a shared timetable. Within this timeline there are pre-defined integration points with the other national consultations. At these points in time the consultations exchange their results and thereby enable a European dialogue across locations. The consultations are organised by national partners and supported by a European coordination team. National Citizens' Consultations do not work according to a one-size-fits-all approach. They are shaped by a broad consortium of national foundations and non-profit organisations from all over Europe that adapt the events to their respective national contexts. While all consultations follow the same basic format, the size of these events varies between a minimum format of 30 participants and up to 200 participants and additional follow-up activities, depending on additional support that can be mobilised in each country.



The European Citizens' Consultation in Bulgaria

The Citizens Consultation gathered 66 citizens in Sofia on 10.-11. February 2007 to develop the Bulgarian perspectives on the future of Europe. The citizens participating were randomly invited according to criteria of representativeness: different age groups, different educational levels, gender, and other Member States-specific criteria are considered to ensure an approximately representative composition of the consultations.

The event was organised by the Centre for Liberal Strategies, co-funded by the Open Society Institute, Sofia, and supported by Alpha Research.



Special guests/speakers included: Meglena Kuneva (European Commissioner for Consumer Protection (via video), Martin Dimitrov MEP, Konstantin Dimitrov MEP, Evgeni Kirilov MEP, Krista Kilvet (Charges des Affairs of Estonia in Bulgaria), Geoffrey Keating (Irish ambassador to Bulgaria), Ingrid Shikova (Representation of the European Commission in Bulgaria)

This report is a short record of the outcomes of the Bulgarian Citizens Consultation and was distributed at the end of the event. A long report will be available by end of February 2007. Please contact the organisers or visit www.cls-sofia.org to obtain a copy and find out more.



Bulgarian Citizens' Perspectives

1) Energy & Environment: The environmental and economic impact of Europe's energy use

"We want to live in a Europe that is environmentally clean, resulting from safe, efficient and economically viable nuclear power stations, a common energy system and alternative sources of energy, with energy at reasonable prices achieved through market competition, modern technologies and energy efficiency."

The EU should be involved in the establishment of a common energy system, and in the creation of a competitive energy market as well as the development of new technologies. The EU should not be involved in the operation of nuclear power stations, in the policies for using alternative sources of energy and stimulating energy efficiency.

2) Family & Social Welfare: The social and economic conditions for Europe's families

"We want to live in a Europe with common regulations for child protection, that supports financially the families with children and provides work flexibility for parents; a Europe where the national economies are developed to such an extent so that people do not migrate and a Europe which provides resources for a better life of the pensioners."

The EU should be involved in drafting common regulations for child protection and supporting the accelerated development of the national economies. The member-states and national governments should be responsible for financial support of families and children; providing work flexibility for parents; providing resources for a better life of pensioners.

3) EU's Global Role & Immigration: The EU's role in the world and the management of immigration

"We want to live in a Europe of equality in which immigrants are not discriminated against and have equal economic and social rights with the other EU citizens; a Europe of solidarity which provides support to the developing countries; a Europe of cultural diversity and tolerance achieved through intercultural education for immigrants and EU citizens; a Europe with secure external borders which is a priority at European level and is achieved through provision of technical support and a joint information system."

The EU should set rules and regulations for the equal treatment of immigrants on the labour market; make decisions with regards to providing support for developing countries by taking into consideration the financial capacity of each Member State; establish a common framework for external border control; provide financial support for granting equal economic and social rights to immigrants and EU citizens; provide financial support for achieving tolerance through school curricula.

The national governments should determine the specific mechanisms to achieve equal treatment of immigrants on the labour market; take specific measures to improve external border control; perform the main activities aimed at granting equal economic and social rights for immigrants and EU citizens; determine the content of the curricula for immigrants and EU citizens designed to promote tolerance.



How were the results achieved?

The result of the national consultations is a combination of carefully facilitated table discussions among citizens, the exchange of results across locations and the prioritisation of their ideas through voting mechanisms. At each event, groups or tables of citizens were overseen by a table facilitator who kept the discussion going and made sure that every voice was heard. Results were shared at pre-defined points in time by exchanging information through an online forum and live conferences. Prior the event, citizens received background information on the project and the 3 topics. No prior knowledge was required. Citizens were chosen in random selection and based on demographic criteria that ensured diversity.

	Setting	Activity
Day 1: Morning	Plenary	Welcome / Introduction Citizens obtain information on schedule of the day, process as a whole, their role, and the format of expected outcomes.
	Plenary	Voting Citizens share demographic data (gender, age, profession etc.) among themselves and across locations
Day 1: Afternoon	Table groups	Generating objectives: Citizens are split into three groups (one per topic). For each of the 3 topics, all citizens complete the phrase "In 2020, I would like to live in a Europe that...". Their input is recorded on cards and put on a pin board.
	Table groups	Grouping objectives: In each group, citizens try to group or categorise these ideas and to name this category. They thereby condense the variety of ideas to several strong objectives.
	Table groups	Challenging the objectives: Resource persons, i.e. experts, join the groups. Citizens try to detect problems or trade-offs regarding their objectives. Experts complete missing challenges.
	Rotation	Citizens visit other groups to learn about the objectives they came up with
	Plenary	Opinion snapshot: Each citizen is given 15 votes (5 for each of the 3 topics) to express which of these objectives he/she consider most important. This serves as a rough guideline to help citizens focus their subsequent discussions
	Tables groups	Formulating an achievable vision: Based on their objectives, trade-offs and the results of the opinion snapshot each group is asked to come up with one achievable vision on the Europe they would like to live in.
	Table groups	Role of the EU: Citizens define whether they see a role of the EU or not in achieving this vision.
Dinner and Party		
Day 2: until early afternoon	Plenary	Presentation and sharing of results: Citizen representatives present the results (vision, definition of the EU's role) of their group. They then learn what the groups in the other countries have come up with.
	Rotation	Content Feedback : Citizens visit other groups and obtain and exchange feedback on the results.
	Table groups	Editing: Citizens work the feedback into their results. Last chance for final amendments.
	Plenary	Confidence Voting: After being presented the final results, citizens vote to express whether they are satisfied or feel comfortable with these results.
	plenary	Closing Ceremony / End of National Consultation



Demographic information on the participants

35 women

30 men

8 students

22 employees

9 civil servants

4 private business owners

2 housewives

20 not working (unemployed and pensioners)

15 from Sofia

23 from district centers

13 from small towns

14 from villages

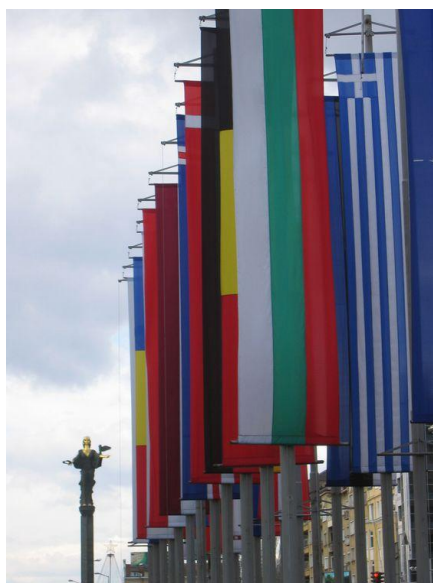
Assisted by 9 moderators, 6 assistants, 3 experts and 10 facilitators.



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www.european-citizens-consultations.eu

Impressions from the Bulgarian Citizens' Consultation





The ECC all over Europe

European Consortium

- § **Project Lead /Co-funding:** King Baudouin Foundation, <http://www.kbs-frb.be/>, Gerrit Rauws, Rauws.g@Kbs-frb.be
- § **Media Coordination:** European Citizen Action Service, www.ecas.org, Nathalie Calmejane, nathalie.calmejane@ecas.org, +32 (2) 512-01 13
- § **Policy Advice:** EPC – European Policy Centre, www.theepc.be, Jacki Davis, j.davis@theepc.be
- § **Scientific Advice:** University of Siena, www.unisi.it, Pierangelo Isernia, isernia@unisi.it
- § **Coordination of Funding:** NEF – Network of European Foundations, www.nefic.org
- § **Evaluation:** Dialogik gGmbH, www.dialogik-expert.de, Ortwin Renn, renn@dialogik-expert.de
- § **Process Management / Events:** IFOK GmbH, www.ifok.de, Felix Oldenburg (General Mgmt), felix.oldenburg@ifok.de, +49 (30) 53 60 77-32, and Stefan Schäfers (Partner Mgmt), Stefan.schaefers@ifok.de, +32 (2) 500 88-11

National Partners

- § **Austria:** Centre for Social Innovation, www.zsi.at, Sigrun Bohle, bohle@zsi.at
- § **Belgium:** King Baudouin Foundation (Funding and Operational Partner), www.kbs-frb.be, Hervé Lisoir, Lisoir.h@Kbs-frb.be, Chancellery of the Belgian Prime Minister www.belgium.be, Belgian Chamber of Representatives www.lachambre.be (Funding Partners)
- § **Bulgaria:** Open Society Institute (Funding Partner) www.soros.org/about/foundations/bulgaria, Centre for Liberal Strategies, www.cls-sofia.org, Antoinette Primatarova, cls@cls-sofia.org,
- § **Cyprus:** Institute of Statistical Research, Analysis and Documentation, www.aueb.gr/statistical-institute, John Panaretos, opan@aub.gr
- § **Czech Republic:** Partners Czech, o. p. s., www.partnersczech.cz, Veronika Endrstova, veronika.endrstova@partnersczech.cz
- § **Denmark:** Danish Cultural Institute, www.dankultur.dk, Lars Høgh Hansen, lhh@dankultur.dk
- § **Estonia:** Open Estonia Foundation, www.oef.org.ee/et, Kelly Grossthal, kelly@oef.org.ee (Funding and Operational Partner)
- § **Finland:** Svenska Studiecentralen, www.ssc.fi, Björn Wallén, bjorn.wallen@ssc.fi
- § **France:** Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation (Funding Partner), www.fph.fr, Fondation de France (Funding Partner), www.fdf.org, Economie et Humanisme www.economie-humanisme.org, Bernard Pellecuer, bernard.pellecuer@economie-humanisme.org
- § **Germany:** Robert Bosch Stiftung (Funding Partner), www.bosch-stiftung.de, IFOK GmbH, www.ifok.de, Felix Oldenburg, felix.oldenburg@ifok.de
- § **Greece:** Bodossaki Foundation, www.bodossaki.gr, Alexander Onassis Foundation, www.onassis.gr, Leventis Foundation, www.leventisfoundation.org, Stavros Niarchos Foundation, www.snfoundation.org (all funding partners), Institute of Statistical Research, Analysis and Documentation, www.aueb.gr/statistical-institute, John Panaretos, stat-inst@aub.gr
- § **Hungary:** Partners Hungary Foundation, www.partnershungary.hu, Almási Judit, partners@partnershungary.hu
- § **Ireland:** Forum on Europe in Ireland, www.forumoneurope.ie, Eileen Kehoe, info@forumoneurope.ie
- § **Italy:** Compagnia di San Paolo (Funding Partner), www.compagnia.torino.it, University of Siena (Operating Partner), www.unisi.it, Pierangelo Isernia, isernia@unisi.it
- § **Latvia:** Centre for public policy PROVIDUS, www.providus.lv, Dace Akule, akule@providus.lv
- § **Lithuania:** Baltic Partners for Change Management, www.partnersbaltic.lt, Gaila Muceniekas, gaila@partnersbaltic.lt
- § **Luxembourg:** Université de Luxembourg, Unité de Recherche STADE, www.cu.lu/stade, Raphael Kies, raphael.kies@uni.lu
- § **Malta:** Fondazzjoni Temi Zammit, www.ftz.org.mt, Brian Restall, brian.restall@pim.com.mt
- § **Netherlands:** European Cultural Foundation (Funding Partner), www.eurocult.org, Ivo Hartmann, i.hartman@publiek-politiek.nl
- § **Poland:** Partners Polska, www.fpp.org.pl, Maciej Tanski, maciej.tanski@partnerspolska.pl
- § **Portugal:** Instituto de Ciências Sociais da Universidade de Lisboa, www.ics.ul.pt, Pedro Magalhães, pedro.magalhaes@ics.ul.pt
- § **Romania:** Romanian Academic Society, www.sar.org.ro, Ana Maria Dorobantu, deliceana@yahoo.com
- § **Slovakia:** PDCS - Partners for Democratic Change Slovakia, www.pdcs.sk, Lenka Raposova, lenka@pdcs.sk
- § **Slovenia:** CNVOS - Centre of non-governmental organisations of Slovenia, www.cnvos.si, Alenka Blazinsek, cnvos@mail.ljudmila.org
- § **Spain:** Luis Vives Foundation, www.fundacionluisvives.org, Alia Chahin Martín, a.chahin@fundacionluisvives.org
- § **Sweden:** Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (Funding Partner), www.rj.se, Global Utmaning (Operational Partner), www.globalutmaning.se, Erika Augustinsson, erika.augustinsson@globalutmaning.se, Pernilla Baralt nennen, pernilla.baralt@globalutmaning.se
- § **United Kingdom:** Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, www.jrct.uk, Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust, www.jrrt.org.uk, Carnegie UK Trust, www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, www.jrf.org.uk (Funding Partners), Power Inquiry, www.powerinquiry.org, Oliver Henman, ohenman@gmail.com
- § **Citizens' Juries:** nexus e.V., www.nexus-berlin.com, Nicolas Bach, bach@nexus.tu-berlin.de



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