

PRELIMINARY AGENDA

9:30 – 9:40

Welcome and Opening

Cinzia Leone,
WP5 Coordinator

9:40 – 10:30

Introduction and Thematic Presentation

Verena Ringler,
Director of European Commons, Innsbruck, Austria.

10:30 – 10:45

Break

10:45 – 12:00

Interactive Session

Questions, Ideas and further Thoughts on the Citizen Engagement Programme, also in view of the Handbook with common provisions to organise, implement and evaluate it.

Ulysseus European University WP5

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

An Introductory Seminar

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Citizen engagement (CE hereafter) has become increasingly important across the European Union (EU) following the so-called participatory turn developed mainly in the 1980s and 1990s. CE is often used interchangeably with the terms “Civic Engagement” or “Citizen Participation”; however, there are important differences between all three concepts, which will be illuminated in the seminar.

While CE is a broad concept of citizen activities invited by public or institutional authorities (including universities), a prominent practice of CE at the science-policy interface and in general in the knowledge production context is citizen science.

CE as a field of practice has developed in multi-faceted ways and at all levels of governance in recent decades.

Characteristics of the field of CE

1. Across the EU today, it can be observed that CE practice prevails above CE theory. Academic research and teaching remain scarce in quantity and tend to lag in the face of this quickly developing field.
2. The field of practice itself is as sprawling as it is dispersed. Overarching regulatory frameworks by public authorities or national, regional or communal CE strategies are still absent.
3. CE is a field of innovation—not just social or civic or science communication innovation, but also methodological innovation of multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral deliberation, open dialogue, and inductive policy-making.



Verena Ringler

19 May 2021 – from 9:30 am to 12:00 noon

Verena Ringler

is the founder (in 2005) and director of European Commons www.europeancommons.eu. This Think and Do Tank initiates dialogue formats, systemic processes, engagement and communication concepts at the interface of the EU and the citizens / civil society from its headquarters in Innsbruck.

Verena has tackled European integration from many perspectives:

- From 2002 to 2006, she worked as a staff editor with Foreign Policy magazine in Washington DC.
- From 2006 to 2009, she built the media mechanism of an EU-led transatlantic diplomatic team in Pristina, Kosovo.
- From 2013 to 2018, she led the Europe program of Germany's Stiftung Mercator.

She got her MA from the Johns Hopkins University's School for Advanced International Studies in 2002 (Bologna, Washington). She also studied in Uppsala, Vienna, and Innsbruck. Verena is a co-author of "Realistic Hope" (Amsterdam University Press, 2018), a member of Altius Society (Oxford) and a lecturer at the Management Center Innsbruck, MCI.

She has authored, or led, several hundred written, stage, or multi-media contributions on Europe (TEDx, FAQ, Global Peter Drucker Forum, GMFUS Brussels Forum, Munich Security Conference, European Forum Alpbach etc.) <https://www.linkedin.com/in/verenaringler/>

Seminar programme:



In my introduction to the Ulyseus European University community, my focus is first on CE at the official EU level. The Conference on the Future of Europe, to be kicked off on 9 May 2021, is communicated as the current EU's flagship initiative of CE, for instance. Furthermore, CE plays a key role in the new Horizon Europe cycle and Cohesion Policy. Institutionally, the Joint Research Council of the EU (JRC) plays a key role in conceptualising and developing CE across the legislative process. There is still no institutionalisation of CE in the EU's and national political-administrative systems, nor the existence or development of a comprehensive CE strategy.

My second focus area is on the CE field of practice. I present a handful of non-orthodox case studies, thought leaders, and arenas of CE practice:

- *introducing the communal or campus level and community interfaces they exhibit as an emerging arena for CE,*
- *hinting on climate action as a central theme for CE around the world, and*
- *presenting how CE morphs into multi-stakeholder engagement in the case of StartNet: Puglia, a southern region of Italy, plus regions across the EU work for youth employment chances.*
- *mentioning The Good Lobby, a new type of young expert group that fosters CE practice and professionalism among citizens and lawyers across the EU.*

After that, I present three visions for making CE permanent in the EU, for professionalising the field, e.g. by a future EU Citizen Relations Commissioner, and for unlocking CE's long-term potential by creating a non-profit Single Market.

We will then enter an open debate about CE in the context of Ulyseus. We will share first ideas and reflections and sketch future strategies useful for the work to be performed in TASKS 5.1 and 5.2.

I finish my presentation hinting at key sources, including videos, websites, and readings.

