

EUROPEAN SUPRANATIONAL DEMOCRACY AS A MODEL FOR CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION BEYOND BORDERS

The Jean Monnet House declaration

Houjarray and Paris, April-May 2023

A vision about the common future of all Europeans, driven by Jean Monnet, led to the inception of European unification with the Schuman Declaration, drafted in 1950 in this very place.

By sharing steel and coal production capacities, the pooling of sovereignty began, creating an unprecedented supranational body as the heart of a new political framework. Six countries initiated this institutional process that led to a common European Union in the perspective of a European federation: a continental community where people would find durable peace, shared prosperity and all the benefits flourishing from close cooperation between and beyond states - when engaged in the path of an ever closer union.

Today, we have a vision that democracy and our capacity to dialogue and deliberate together, at the scale of 450 millions citizens across 27 countries, are the resources at the heart of the next step of the European construction.

Europe's future relies on the quality of the relationship between Europeans. Good dialogue and deliberation on complex questions we are facing will be the only way to solve them. Good dialogue means the involvement of all people living within the EU, citizens and non-citizens. Deliberation should be inclusive and consequential, leading to concrete public policies.

We cannot see our future without seeing the future of all humanity and the other species that share this planet. Earth needs peace, renewed capacity to solve complex questions, and the means to build new processes for the respect of all citizens of the planet, for future generations, the incredible diversity of humanity, for the living system we are part of and that makes our lives possible.

We are creating a new paradigm for peace, one that is centred on human beings in continuous dialogue, beyond borders.

Transnational participation will generate a new approach of politics, where citizens are encouraged to contribute, giving the time to bring their proposals and share the energy for the implementation of new programmes and policies. Therefore public authorities have the duty to help participation with this: providing citizens with specific time off work, setting out inclusive measures, and showing due consideration for the outputs of deliberation. Transnational participation will be at the root of the rethinking of the institutions and a new design of the relationship between citizens and the decision making process. Nowadays, the leaders that are needed should

have incredible quality to listen, to consider, to share the problems and trust the community in its capacity to find the right path.

Over the course of these days, we have been working under the inspiration of the soul of Jean Monnet, his collaborators and the leaders who changed Europe and the world forever, starting a process of progressive unification, by pooling sovereignty beyond national interests.

We want to continue this mission, in our action for the common good, and nourish the next 75 years of Europe and the world.

We citizens, scholars, teachers and students convened in the Jean Monnet House to discuss European's supranational democracy as a model for citizens' participation beyond borders, agree therefore on the following points for the future of European and World Democracy:

- That democracy is an evolving, never ending process, where citizens are the protagonists and where peaceful dialogue and respectful deliberation are the key;
- That deeper integration in the EU also requires political debates across national borders as the basis for a political union towards a full-fledged European Federation.
- That its ultimate goal is to strengthen equality, solidarity and a sense of belonging in order to take decisions for the well-being and common good of people, animals and nature;
- That democracy may work cross-border and above border, and from the local to the global dimension and that the international institutions themselves can be democratized;
- That democratic tools and solutions are scalable, from municipalities to supranational institutions: also using digital tools, but having people sharing a space in person is essential to the discourse, adding emotions and rational passion to the debates;
- That democracy is not just about voting and elections, but rather a process of discursive reason and collective deliberation, in which the representation of a society's diversity can be also effectively achieved by means of stratified sortition - taking inspiration also from democracy's ancient roots;
- That 'institutionalization' of citizens' assemblies or other innovative democratic tools - such as deliberative polls or participatory budgeting- does not have to mean always and everywhere necessarily 'formalizing them through law/regulations' or 'constitutionalizing them', but it could also mean to start with a continuous rigorous practice so that 'people become familiar with' them, considering them as common as elections;
- That democracy is founded on transparency and reliable information; it requires relying on accessible tools such as official tv, newspapers and web channels, but also stopping fake news campaigns and political interferences;

- That intermediate bodies such as political parties, trade unions but also NGOs and civic associations are rings in the democratic chain, empowering individuals and collective processes - and may also be strengthened by utilizing internally deliberative democracy innovations;
- That individuals and organized civil society do make a difference in politics and this is a major lesson learned from the life and experience of personalities like Jean Monnet - or Altiero Spinelli, whose name welcomes European citizens at the entrance of the European Parliament in Brussels;
- That the European Parliament is an extraordinary accomplishment, but it should be complemented by a single electoral law and transnational European representation as a precondition to building a European political sphere;
- That the European Citizens Initiative deserves more visibility but also more resources to be efficient. It is a quite advanced political instrument that deserve better integration in the EU law making process, t becoming a growing source of distrust towards the institutions;
- That the European Citizens' Panels are an unprecedented exercise of transnational deliberative democracy that can lead to a permanent European Citizens' Assembly as part of EU law making - along with a strengthened reformed European Citizens' Initiative and a possible future pan-European Referendum;
- That representative democracy is still the norm, but should be complemented by new instruments of participatory and deliberative democracy at the local, transnational and global level.
- That permanent citizens assemblies should be in charge of keeping the interest of next generations: long-term should be the key factor in evaluating decisions, both in the public and private sectors, overcoming the current short-termism's logic;
- That citizens assemblies can be an effective instrument to promote the principle of reciprocity in the EU external relations, favouring dialogue beyond conflicts - and that they could also be part of the conditionality mechanisms;
- That deliberative democracy and transnational citizens' assemblies could more in general become a fundamental tool for the construction of peace beyond borders;
- That the European supranational model of democracy should continue to be a ferment of change in international relations, inspiring other parts of the world to pursue macro regional integrations to achieve common goals without the use of force - in the perspective of a global perpetual peace.

Signing

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together with the Eu Law and Political Sciences students of the University of Salento and the Universities of Paris who participated in the seminar “European Supranational Democracy as a model for Citizens’ Participation Beyond Borders”, co-organized by Jean Monnet House and University of Salento in Paris and Houjarray/ Bazoches-sur-Guyonne, April 5-8 2023.