

“Does Europe’s Democracy need a fundamental update?”

Results of the 5th round of European HomeParliaments by Pulse of Europe

April 2022

Dear participants,
dear members of the European Parliament and German Bundestag,

Inspired by the Conference on the Future of Europe, the 5th round of European HomeParliaments was dedicated to the **future of Europe's democracy**.

From 29th of January to 3rd of April 2022 around **590 people from 17 European countries** shared their opinions and wishes on three concrete reform proposals under the guiding question “Does Europe's Democracy need a fundamental update?”.

Participants hosted **77 HomeParliaments**, **51** of which took place **offline**, while **26** HomeParliaments took place **online**.

About 63% percent of the participants came from Germany, 10% percent from Austria, 8% from the Benelux, 7% from Portugal. The remaining 12% were divided among various EU countries – from Estonia and Poland to France, Hungary and Cyprus.



















EUROPEAN HOME PARLIAMENTS



For the 5th time, the pro-European citizens' movement **Pulse of Europe** organized this successful dialogue format and offered citizens an opportunity to discuss ideas and share their perspectives on the future of Europe. Each HomeParliament round is followed by an opportunity for citizens to get in touch with politicians and hear more about their work and ideas.

A wide range of European politicians support European HomeParliaments. This round following politicians participated and / or offered to provide feedback on the results afterwards.

	Manfred Weber	EPP
	Angelika Niebler	EPP
	Michael Gahler	EPP
	Hildegard Bentele	EPP
	Katarina Barley	S&D
	Gaby Bischoff	S&D
	Michael Roth	SPD
	Nicola Beer	Renew Europe
	Jan Christoph Oetjen	Renew Europe
	Michael Link	Renew Europe
	Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield	Greens / EFA
	Henrike Hahn	Greens / EFA
	Franziska Brantner	Bündnis 90 / Die Grünen
	Sergey Lagodinsky	Greens / EFA
	Helmut Scholz	GUE / NGL
	Damian Boeselager	VOLT

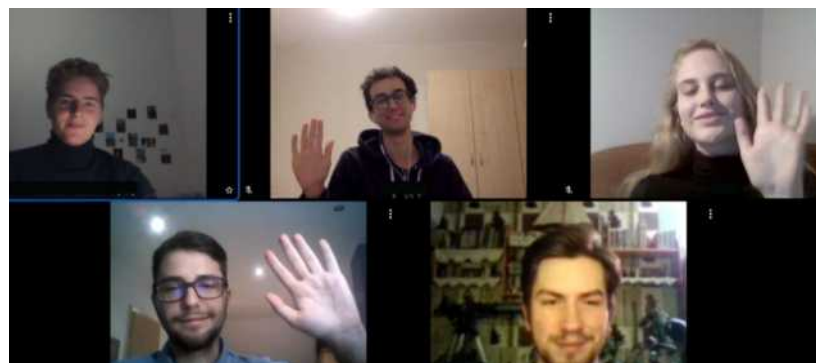
EUROPEAN HOME PARLIAMENTS



HomeParliaments – online and offline

After two years of the pandemic people have a desire for physical political exchange and dialogue. Therefore around **66 percent** of the citizens held a HomeParliament at home, at a café or public space, while **34 percent met online** using a video conference tool. The video formats in particular made **international HomeParliaments** easy to organize and thus made a concrete contribution to cross-border European dialogue. For these digital HomeParliaments, people were either drawn to each other by a matching process or the participants motivated their acquaintances and friends from other countries.

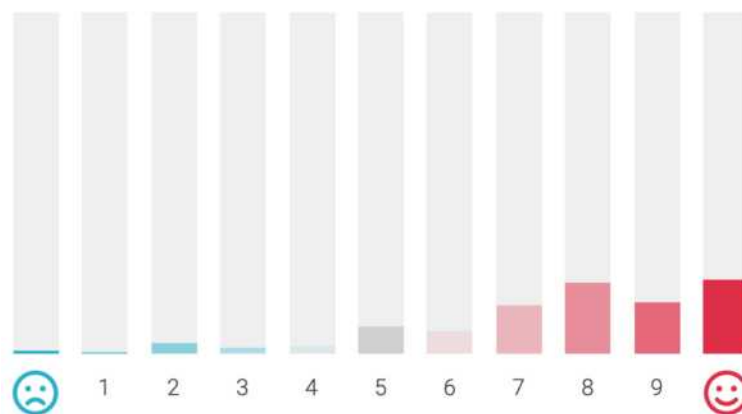
With the European HomeParliaments, **Pulse of Europe offers a pan-european, scalable grassroots project** for European citizen dialogue and political engagement.



The results of the 5th round of the European HomeParliaments presented below will now be passed on to the **16 politicians from 6 parties**. These politicians from the European Parliament or German Bundestag will comment on the results in webinars or by video or text message.

Results of the European HomeParliaments 2022

1. question: Should the principle of unanimity in the Council of the European Union be abolished and replaced by qualified majority voting?



The clear majority of participants believe that the principle of unanimity in the Council of the EU should be abolished and replaced by a qualified majority. On a scale from 0 (no way) to 10 (yes, absolutely), the HomeParliamentarians chose an average score of **7.4**. The highest score of 10 was given most often.

According to the participants, the most important argument for abolishing the principle of unanimity is the increased **capacity to act**. Without the requirement for unanimity, **decisions can be made more quickly and decisively** – an advantage, especially in times of crisis. The abolition of the veto creates **confidence** in the EU's ability to act.



EUROPEAN HOME PARLIAMENTS
UNANIMITY IS UNDEMOCRATIC
2022





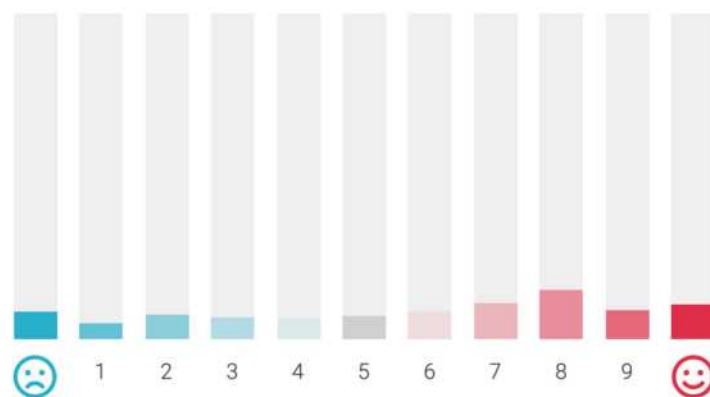
EUROPEAN HOME PARLIAMENTS
BIG PLAYERS SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO DECIDE ALONE.

Although a majority of HomeParliamentarians would like to see the principle of unanimity abolished, this is not the case in all political fields. One possibility could be the abolition of the veto only for certain policy areas, e.g. foreign policy. With regard to the war in Ukraine, there is a great need for faster and more decisive European decisions.



The most important counter-argument mentioned was **the risk of power imbalances between large and small states**. Smaller EU member states could feel left out. Therefore, the unanimity principle safeguards national sovereignty and independence.

2. question: Should a representative citizen's council advise the EU institutions on fundamental decisions?



On the question of whether a representative citizens' council should be established as an advisory body for the EU institutions, opinions are widespread.

The average score is **5.6**, showing only slight support for such a committee. It is worth noting that the voting results are widely spread. Opinions are divided on this question. Most participants agree that **a representative citizens' council creates proximity and can strengthen trust in European democracy**.



EUROPEAN HOME PARLIAMENTS
STRENGTHENS THE COHESION OF SOCIETY AND THE UNDERSTANDING OF POLITICS



The most common argument among both the hesitant and the enthusiastic questions the **criteria** for such a measure. For instance, participants argued that the **selection process should be carefully defined** and **not all issues should be presented to the citizens' committee**. Other aspects raised many questions. Should the appointees be trained? How can they be supported? Is such a committee socially inclusive enough or another pool of academics?

Furthermore, the participants feared that the citizens' councils – if they have more than just an advisory function – would **enter into direct competition with the European Parliament**.



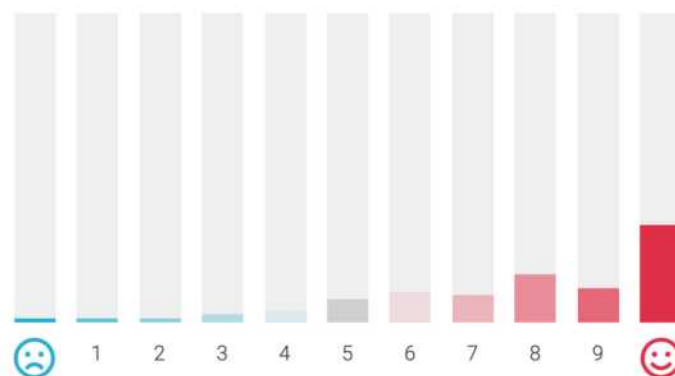
The opponents of the introduction of a citizens' body at EU level also agreed that this would place **high demands on the citizens involved**.

EUROPEAN HOME PARLIAMENTS
THERE ARE ALREADY EUROPEAN
CITIZENS' INITIATIVES AND
ENOUGH OPPORTUNITIES FOR
INPUT.
2022

Participants also stressed that citizens' councils should be protected from external influences and should **not become the target of lobbying**.



3. question: Should the European Parliament be able to propose and initiative its own legislation in addition to the EU Commission?



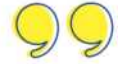
A clear trend can be seen in the third question. On average, the participants chose a value of **7.5** and thus cast a clear vote for the right of legislative initiative for the

EUROPEAN HOME PARLIAMENTS



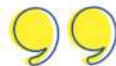
European Parliament. More than half of all voting results are in the upper voting range between 8 and 10.

The main argument put forward by those in favor of the right of initiative was that it would **strengthen European democracy**. By granting the European Parliament the right, its role in the power structure of the EU would be substantially strengthened. This has the direct consequence of giving **European decisions greater legitimacy**. Moreover, the "royal right" of a people's representation carries a **strong symbolism**.



EUROPEAN HOME PARLIAMENTS
**MUCH MORE REALISM AMONG
MEPS**

2022



EUROPEAN HOME PARLIAMENTS
**GOOD DECISIONS REQUIRE
TIME AND MANY
STAKEHOLDERS. THE CURRENT
SYSTEM MAKES THIS POSSIBLE.**

2022



Critics of the right of initiative for the European Parliament point to a **more difficult and complex path to lawmaking**. **Duplicate competences** would not only lengthen procedures, but also weaken the **influence of the EU Commission**. Critics underline that the **distribution of power between the institutions is crucial** and already see a well-functioning process in the current configuration.

EUROPEAN HOME PARLIAMENTS



Background to the 5th Round of European HomeParliaments

The 5th round started on 29.01.2022 with an international digital **kick-off event** with 70 participants from 7 countries. Participants met in international and nationally composed HomeParliaments in individual digital break-out rooms and then exchanged views with MEP Gabriele Bischoff.

During the round, connections were frequently made with the ongoing **Conference on the Future of Europe #CoFoE**. Participants of the HomeParliaments were invited to contribute their ideas there as well, and with Pulse of Europe board member Stephanie Hartung, as the national representative of the German Citizens' Forums, the format also had an important voice in the plenary of the Conference. During the 5th round, the HomeParliaments team worked together with representatives from **JEF Estonia, Portugal, Hungary and the Cyprus Youth Council**, among others, who also organized HomeParliaments in their networks.

The round was overshadowed by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Issues of European democracy and institutional reform took a back seat during the first weeks of the war, making it difficult to mobilize participants for the 1.5-2 hour private dialogue format. The round was therefore extended by two weeks.



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