

Briefing Document - Civic Council on European Democracy #2



Photo of Palermo, by Gianni Cipriano

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Civic Council on European Democracy – Talks Across Europe #2:

National governments all across Europe order their citizens to stay in the confinement of their homes via the freedom-inhibiting curfews. In these times of technocratic decision-making and crisis-managing, it is often unclear which information our leaders are basing their verdicts on. How can we as citizens hold our elected officials accountable for their policy implementations?

Especially in this historic crisis, it is of utmost importance that we protect our European democracies and give each individual a voice. As citizens, we need to be able to hold our representatives responsible at a time when their endeavors remain unknown to many Europeans. This begs the question of what we all can do to improve the working of our democracies under the current circumstances.

During this think-tank session, we will critically assess current democratic systems and come up with concrete recommendations to send to leaders, both at the national and European level.

About the Civic Council on European Democracy

The Civic Council will gather for three sessions, spread across three critical locations in Europe. In cooperation with European Alternatives, this next occasion will include Sicilian citizens who will contribute their insights to the discussion. This is one of the key regions where these topics are of great concern.

The [first Civic Council session](#) took place in Amsterdam during the Forum on European Culture and the third and final session is planned for Warsaw in the summer of '21 in cooperation with Gazeta Wyborcza.

This program is part of the [Forum on European Culture](#) and is made possible by Europe for Citizens.

Programme outline

SESSION#1: March 12

Time: 15:30 - 18:00 CET

Location: Zoom / <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81784698874>

Moderator: Anne- Marijn Epker

Secretary: Simon de Leeuw

Participants: Mathieu Segers, Francesca Bria, Kalypso Nicolaïdis, Réka Kinga Papp, Géraldine Schwarz, Francesca Melandri, Simon Strauss, Yoeri Albrecht, Niccolo Milanese, Vasyl Cherepanyn, Rytis Zemkauskas, Orlando Figes, Anna Galas-Kosil, Alicja Gescinska, Bastiaan Rijpkema, Virginia Fiume, Yasmine Ouirhrane, Alberto Alemanno, Lina Issa, Federico Fubini, Lorenzo Castellani, Andrea Garreffa + 10 Palermitan & Sicilian residents.

Outline

15.20 - 15:30 *Everyone online. Check mics & videos*

15:30 - 15:40 Introduction by moderator, explaining desired outcome + process

15:40 - 15:50 Key note 1: How can we hold our politicians accountable in the online dimension and base our decisions on transparent information? ALBERTO ALEMANNNO

15.50-15.55 Reflection #1: Yasmine Ouirhrane

15.55-16.15 Plenary discussion

16.15-16.20 Reflection #2 Bastiaan Rijpkema

16.20-16.40 Plenary discussion

16.40-16.50 Short break

16.50-16.55 Introduction part II by moderator

16.55-17.05 Statement Francesca Bria

17.05-17.20 Plenary discussion

17.20-17.30 Statement Rytis Zemkauskas

17.30-17.50 Plenary discussion

17.50-17.55 Reflection visual illustrator Marina Roa

17.55-18.00 Wrap- up by the moderator and end of session.

SESSION#2: March 13

Time: 10 - 12:30 CET

Location: Zoom / <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83184653271>

Moderator: Anne- Marijn Epker

Secretary: Simon de Leeuw

Participants: Mathieu Segers, Kalypto Nicolaidis, Réka Kinga Papp, Géraldine Schwarz, Francesca Melandri, Simon Strauss, Yoeri Albrecht, Niccolo Milanese, Vasyl Cherepanyn, Rytis Zemkauskas, Orlando Figes, Anna Galas-Kosil, Bastiaan Rijpkema, Barbara Leda Kenny, Lina Issa, Eric Jozsef, Emilia Esini, Federico Fubini, Lorenzo Castellani, + 10 Palermitan & Sicilian residents. Palermitan students

Outline

09:50 - 10:00 *Everyone online. Check mics & videos*

10:00 - 10:10 Introduction to the day by moderator

10:10 - 10:30 Key note and theatrical performance based on leading question: How can we include the voices of those who are not yet part of the discussion? LINA ISSA

10.30-10.35 Reflection #1 Alicja Gescinska

10.35-10.50 Plenary discussion

10.50-10.55 Reflection #2 Barbara Leda Kenny

10.55-11.10 Plenary discussion

11.10-11.20 Short break

11.20-11.30 Statement Géraldine Schwarz

11.30-11.50 Plenary discussion

11.50-12.10 Working groups: 2 groups in breakout rooms to discuss

- Group 1: Which recommendations should we give to national politicians?

- Group 2: Which recommendations should we propose to EU politicians?

12.10-12.25 Plenary discussion with outcomes from working groups.

12.25-12.30 Reflection visual illustrator Marina Roa

12.30-12.35 Wrap-up + next steps by moderator

PARTICIPANTS

Virginia Fiume (Italy/ Belgium, 1983) is an environmental, democracy and fundamental rights activist, currently active as coordinator of the Eumans project. Eumans, based in Brussels, involves individuals, groups and organizations to prepare a package of European Citizen Initiatives to influence the European political agenda from the bottom across national, partisan and philosophical boundaries. <https://twitter.com/gillafiume>



Yasmine Ouirhrane (Italy, 1996) is the host and founder of the podcast series *We Belong - Voices of the New Daughters of Europe*. She was awarded the title of Young European of the Year in 2019, an award that recognized her contribution to international understanding and European values. An Italian citizen and a student of a prestigious political school in France, Yasmine is shaping the discourse of a more hopeful, tolerant Europe. Her numerous projects promote gender equality, better opportunities for refugees and the representation of young people from underprivileged backgrounds. <https://twitter.com/yasmineouir>

Alberto Alemanno (Italy, 1975) is an Italian lawyer. He has been Jean Monnet Professor in EU Law at HEC Paris since 2009, and also Global Clinical Professor of Law at New York University School of Law. Among his many achievements, Alemanno campaigned and drafted the first EU directive aimed at protecting whistleblowers in the European Union. He is also the founder of The Good Lobby aimed at fostering active citizenship and accountability via citizen-lobbyists at the European level. <https://twitter.com/alemannoEU>



Lina Issa (NL/ Italy/ Lebanon 1981) a multidisciplinary artist. She studied graphic design at the American University of Beirut, after which she completed courses at the Jan van Eyck Academy and the Piet Zwart Institute. Through her work, she creates conditions for personal relationships within complex contexts and for insisting on the personal as political. In her work, Lina questions the ways we construct and (re)enact our subjectivities. She was recently invited to make work in the context of COVID-19 by Studio Rizoma in Palermo, *A Space to Hold*.



Francesca Bria (Italy, 1977) is the President of the Italian National Innovation Fund. She is an Italian information technologist who lectures at various universities and is a consultant to the United Nations and the European Commission. Bria is Honorary Professor in the Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose at UCL in London.

https://twitter.com/francesca_bria

Barbara Leda Kenny (Italy) was trained as an anthropologist, is editor-in-chief of [InGenere](#), an in-depth online magazine that deals with social and current gender issues. She is one of the founders of Tuba, the bookshop dedicated to the imaginary and the world of women in the Pigneto district of Rome.



Journalist **Eric Jozsef (France, 1966)** has worked for Libération since 1989 and has been a correspondent for this French newspaper in Rome since 1992. He has a column in *Internazionale* and also writes for other French-language newspapers. He has also written several books on Italian politics, including in 2001 *L'irrésistible ascension de Silvio Berlusconi* ('The irresistible Rise of Silvio Berlusconi') and in 2008 *Les années Cavalière. De Berlusconi a Berlusconi* and he made a television documentary

about the Italian mafia.

Emma Esini (Italy) is "the brains and the brawn behind every project proposal" at Maghweb, a social promotion association from Palermo that mainly deals with information and communication for international cooperation and social activities. Esini recently launched *Palermo è fimmina*, a 12-month project that will try to counter the false and poor representation of women in society.



Federico Fubini (Italy, 1966) is deputy editor-in-chief at Italy's *Corriere della Sera*, where he covers economy and finance. Fubini has also contributed stories and columns to Project Syndicate, Die Zeit, and Foreign Policy. In his articles, Fubini describes the contemporary economic situation, while in his books he tells the stories and depicts the lives of those who come to grips with economic crises. Fubini uses these stories to show how people deal with an evolving globalized society and find the courage to pursue their own personal revolution. He is the award-winning

author of four books. <https://twitter.com/federicofubini>

Lorenzo Castellani (Italy, 1989) is the author of *l'Ingranaggio del potere*, In this essay, Castellani, who teaches History of Political Institutions at Luiss, traces the unexplored history of the entanglement between democracy and technocracy - from the nineteenth century onwards, when professional bureaucrats enter the state machine starting to manoeuvre the threads of power up to today's techno-



democracy, in which irresponsible elites and demagogic policies collide fatally, and deep cracks open in the legitimacy of our power structures. <https://twitter.com/lorenzocast89>



Vasyl Cherepanyn (Ukraine, 1980) is the director of the Visual Culture Research Center in Kyiv, a platform for collaboration between artists, activists, and academics. He holds a PhD in Philosophy and teaches at the Cultural Studies Department of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. In 2015, the European Cultural Foundation presented the Visual Culture Research Center with the ECF Princess Margriet Award for Culture.

Orlando Figes (United Kingdom, 1959) is a professor of history at Birkbeck College, University of London. He has written extensively on nineteenth and early twentieth-century Russian history, and recently published the book *The Europeans: Three Lives and the Making of a Cosmopolitan Culture* (2019). In the book, "... a reminder of the unifying force of European civilisation..." he traces the origin of a European identity, expressed and experienced through the arts. He wrote a wonderful essay for the series 'The People of Europe', which you can read [here](#).

<https://twitter.com/orlandofiges>



Anna Galas-Kosil (Poland) is a theatre studies expert and the curator of the International Warsaw Biennale, which supports the role of art in shaping public debate. She is a graduate in theatre studies at The Aleksander Zelwerowicz National Academy of Dramatic Art in Warsaw and helped prepare the first Polish exhibit for The Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space, an international exhibition in set design. In addition to curating the Warsaw Biennale, Galas-Kosil is the managing director of the On the Move network, which focuses on mobility in the cultural sector.

Francesca Melandri (Italy, 1964) is an Italian author, screenwriter, and documentary filmmaker. Her novels, such as her award-winning debut *Eva Sleeps* (2010) and *Sangue giusto* (2017, English *The rightful blood*), deal with themes such as regional identity, Italy's national identity, and its amnesia with respect to its fascist and colonial past. She wrote an eerily prescient letter from Italy to the rest of Europe, appearing in the [Guardian](#) in March 2020 in which she described the situation in Italy under lockdown.



Niccolò Milanese (London, 1984) is one of the directors of European Alternatives, a civil society organisation promoting democracy, equality and culture beyond the nation-state (www.euroalter.com). He is currently a Europe's Futures Fellow at the Institute of Human Sciences in Vienna. Together with his



colleague Lorenzo Marsili, in 2018 he published *Citizens of Nowhere: How Europe can be saved from itself*. Niccolò has over 13 years of experience in civil society activism across Europe and the Mediterranean and has been involved in setting numerous cultural, political and intellectual organisations and projects.

<https://twitter.com/NiccoloMilanese>

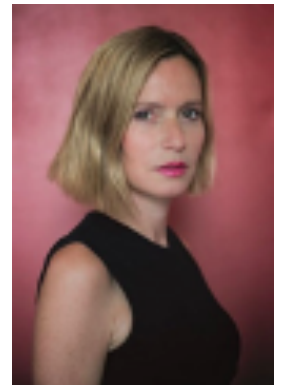
Réka Kinga Papp (Hungary, 1985) is a journalist specialized in environmental, feminist, civil rights and social issues. She is editor-in-chief of Eurozine, a network of European cultural journals that gather together, translate and publish some of the most promising articles and European culture and citizenship from all over Europe. She is also the anchor of the Hungarian social sciences radio program *Professzor Paprika*.

<https://twitter.com/papprekakinga>



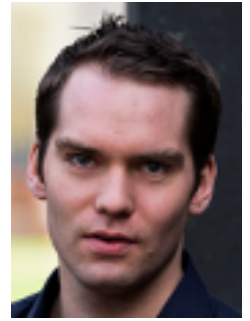
Kalypso Nicolaïdis (France/Greece, 1962) is a Professor of International Relations and director at the Centre for International Studies at the University of Oxford. She is currently engaged in the European Democracy research project, which seeks to redefine the European Union as a project of peoples rather than states. She has written and co-authored a number of books including *Echoes of Empire: The Present of Europe's Colonial Pasts* (2014) and most recently *Exodus, Reckoning, Sacrifice: Three Meanings of Brexit* (2019). <https://twitter.com/KalypsoNicolaid>

Géraldine Schwarz (France/Germany, 1974) is a journalist, author, and documentary filmmaker based in Berlin. Her novel *Les Amnésiques* ("The Amnesiacs", 2017) draws on her family heritage – her grandparents were a Nazi Party member and a gendarme under the Vichy regime – and pleads for a confrontation with our past in order to prevent the resurgence of right wing extremism in today's Europe. It won her the 2018 European Book Prize. Schwarz wrote an incredibly compelling essay for our series 'The People of Europe', which can be read [here](#) in preparation for the Civic Council.



Mathieu Segers (Netherlands, 1967) is Professor of Contemporary European History and European Integration. He writes columns for *Het Financieele Dagblad* and *De Groene Amsterdammer* and has a well-known podcast: *Café Europa*. He wrote a number of books, including *Reis naar het continent, Nederland en de Europese integratie 1950 – heden* (2013) and *Europa en de terugkeer van de geschiedenis* (2016), as well as co-authoring the book *Re:Thinking Europe, Thoughts on Europe: Past, Present and Future* (2016) on the occasion of the first Forum on European Culture. <https://twitter.com/MathieuLLSegers>

Simon Strauss (Germany, 1988) is a historian and author as well as a writer for the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. He is the initiator of the European Archive of Voices, an initiative to preserve the original vision and importance of the European project by talking to public intellectuals born in the first half of the twentieth century. He seeks to develop a vision that is focused on the promise and ideals of the European project, rather than the technocratic and material benefits it provides.



Since 2016, **Rytis Zemkauskas (Lithuania, 1969)** has been an associate professor at the Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas. He is a member of the curatorial board for Kaunas, European Capital of Culture 2022. His journalistic and producing work has been awarded numerous public and professional awards. Since 1998 he has been active as a writer and director of documentaries on music, literature and science, and he owns a small TV production company.

Andrea Garreffa (Italy, 1990) is one of the founders of the popular Italian protest movement 6000Sardine. The grassroots movement has enjoyed incredible momentum in late 2019, when they mobilized in huge numbers to speak up against the growing polarization and xenophobia brought on by the political presence and the discourse of Matteo Salvini's Lega and other far-right groups.



Alicja Gescinska (Belgium/Poland, 1981) is a professor at Amherst College where she teaches courses on the philosophy of freedom and on European politics. She is also a writer, TV-presenter and philosopher. She has written columns for Trouw, De Morgen and Filosofie Magazine, giving philosophical commentary and perspectives on current events. She was the maker and presenter of *Wanderlust*, a television programme in which she discussed the large questions of life with numerous influential thinkers of our time. She is also the author of numerous books, including *Allmensch: Van*

middelmaat tot meesterschap, about the nature of humanity and individual development. <https://twitter.com/Gescinska>

Bastiaan Rijpkema (Netherlands, 1987) is Associate Professor of Jurisprudence at Leiden University. He writes columns for De Volkskrant and is the author of the book *Weerbare Democratie (Militant Democracy)*, which won the Prinsjesboekenprijs in 2016. In 2017 he was named New Scientist Science Talent. <https://twitter.com/bastiaanrij>



Yoeri Albrecht (Netherlands, 1967) is the General & Artistic director of De Balie, and curator of the Forum on European Culture. He studied History, Philosophy and





International Law in Leiden, and European Politics in Oxford. Before joining De Balie, he worked as a journalist for Vrij Nederland. Yoeri is also a founder and board member of the European Press Prize, chair of media company Veronica and chairs the boards of Wordt Vervolgd magazine, Amnesty International The Netherlands, and Open Society Initiative for Europe. He also sits on the board of international investigative journalism organization Bellingcat. <https://twitter.com/YoeriAlbrecht>