



College of Europe  
Collège d'Europe



Natolin

European Political and Governance Studies  
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## WORKSHOP IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### THE EU PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY: HOW CAN CITIZEN ACTION CONTRIBUTE TO A MORE TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE EUROPE

This workshop intends to provide a strategic, timely and hands-on understanding of the various channels of participation that the EU offers to citizens and organisations. Despite the recurrent claims of democratic deficit and opaqueness, the EU offers a panoply of avenues of participation that while little known and – as a result – historically underused are increasingly mobilised by a variety of actors. These avenues are used by citizens, grassroots organisations, NGOs – all generally by relying on philanthropic support – as well as sometimes private actors to gain a voice in EU policy-making. The EU participatory tool-box includes *agenda-setting tools*, such as Lighten the Load within the Refit Platform and the European Citizens' Initiative, *input mechanisms* in policy formation, such as public consultations on new initiatives, *administrative actions*, such as petitions to the European Parliament, requests for access to documents to the EU institutions and complaints to the EU Ombudsman, as well as *judicial devices*, such as amicus curiae brief to influence a pending case before EU Courts. Through the study of some major pan-EU campaigns and actions driven by citizens (e.g. Stop Glyphosate ECI, Barrosagate, Fake News complaint, Transnational Lists, Whistle-blowers Directive, etc.) and acting under the guidance of the instructor, participants will gain a first-hand experience of these participatory mechanism into the EU public sphere. EU participatory democracy will also be contextualised in the rapidly-shrinking space of civil society.

The workshop will consist of 4 sections organised over 2 in-class lectures:

#### Class 1

1. **The EU Turn to Participation:** An opening lecture about the rationale of participatory democracy in the EU context;
2. **The EU Participatory Tool-box:** Discussion and first-hand simulation of the EU participatory tool-box through the examination of the daily operation of various participatory channels – both institutional (such as ECIs, public consultations, and EP petitions) and unconventional (such as digital campaigning, and astroturfing) – deployed in the EU policy space.

#### In-between class 1 and 2

3. **The EU Participatory Project:** Choice and preparation of individual or collective participatory projects consisting of a simulated or real-life participatory experience with the EU (e.g. request for access to document, submission to a public consultation, drafting of a letter of complaint, ECI registration, etc). This project can be related to a cause you deeply care about, your Master's thesis, future research article, blog post or Op-Ed as well as to the benefit of a NGO you'd like to assist. In doing so, you will rely on the how-to-guide developed in "Lobbying for Change: Find Your Voice to Create a Better Society".

## Class 2

4. **The EU Participatory Pitch:** spark talks of 3 minutes for each project, followed by Q&A and debrief from instructor and peers. This final part of the workshops will provide a final debate on the state-of-the-art of EU participatory democracy and wrap-ups.

## **Bibliography**

Alberto Alemanno, [Lobbying for Change: Find Your Voice to Create a Better Society](#), London: Iconbooks, 2017.

Recommended readings:

"[Unpacking the Principle of Openness in EU Law, Transparency, Participation and Democracy](#)", *European Law Review*, February 2014, vol. 39, n° 1, pp. 72-90.

Luis Bouza Garcia, [Participatory Democracy and Civil Society in the EU, Agenda-setting and Institutionalisation](#), Palgrave, 2015.

## **Background**

Alberto Alemanno is Professor and Jean Monnet Chair at HEC Paris, founder and director of EU Public Interest Clinic with NYU School of Law. Due to his commitment to bridge the gap between academic research and policy action, Alberto has been involved in dozens of campaigns and strategic legal actions in the EU transnational space, including the registration of the ECI that terminated international roaming, the complaint against the EU Commission for mishandling of the so-called Barrosagate, the adoption of plain packaging for cigarettes by UK, France, and EIRE under the new EU Tobacco Products Directive, the campaign for EU transnational lists, as well as the recent complaint to the EU Ombudsman challenging the EU approach to fake news, in particular the so-called Disinformation Review. Alberto is the founder of The Good Lobby and sits on the board of various EU civil society organisations such as Access Info Europe, European Alternatives, We Move, the first pan-European citizens' campaigning movement, ProBonoLab and Riparte il Futuro, an anti-corruption campaigning community. His MOOC – Understanding Europe: Why it Matters and What it Can Offer You, freely available on Coursera, empowered more than 200,000 citizens on how to leverage on Europe to solve their local problems.

He was nominated Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum and European Young Leader 40 under 40. He worked as *référéndaire* at the [Court of Justice of the European Union](#) and for [Enzo Moavero Milanesi](#) at the [General Court of the European Union](#) before joining academia full time. He qualified as an attorney in law in New York City.

Originally from Italy, he is a graduate of Harvard Law School and Bocconi University where he obtained his PhD in International Law & Economics. He's an *ancien* of the College where he served as a Teaching Assistant in 2001-02.