



College of Europe
Collège d'Europe



Natolin

European Political and Governance Studies
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WORKSHOP IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

EU PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY: EMPOWERING CITIZEN ACTION FOR A MORE TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE EUROPE

As the European Union embarks on the Conference on the Future of Europe, this workshop intends to provide a strategic, hands-on understanding of the various channels of participation (and influence) that the EU offers to citizens, at a time of erosion of the rule of law and shrinking space of civil society. 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 open to citizens, grassroots, NGOs – that typically rely on both public and philanthropic funding – as well as by private actors in order to gain a voice in EU policy-making. The ‘EU participatory tool-box’ includes *agenda-setting tools*, such as the European Citizens’ Initiative and Fit for Future Platform, *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 a combination of fish-bowls, brain-storming, group exercise and presentations, we will contextualise participatory democracy into the current EU model of democracy and discuss a set of case studies of some major pan-EU campaigns and actions driven by citizens (e.g. Voters without Borders, Transnational lists, Stop Glyphosate, STOP TTIP, Barrosagate, etc.). By acting under the guidance of the instructor, participants will gain a first-hand experience of these participatory mechanisms into the EU public sphere.

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

Class 1

1. The EU Turn to Participation: An opening lecture combined with major brainstorming 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

MUST READ:

Alberto Alemanno, [Unboxing the Conference on the Future of Europe](#): A Preliminary View on its Democratic Raison-d'être and Participatory Architecture (September 16, 2021). HEC Paris Research Paper No. 10/2021.

Alberto Alemanno, [Leveling the EU Participatory Playing Field](#): A Legal and Policy Analysis of the Commission's Public Consultations in Light of the Principle of Political Equality, *European Law Journal*, 2020.

Recommended readings:

Luke Cooper et al., *The Rise of Insurgent Europeanism. Mapping Civil Society Visions of Europe 2018-2020*, LSE Ideas, 2021.

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

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

Textbook of reference:

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

Background

Alberto Alemanno is the Jean Monnet Professor of European Union Law & Policy at HEC Paris. Due to his commitment to bridge the gap between academic research and policy action, Alberto has pioneered innovative forms of academic and civic engagement and activism in the EU transnational space via his civic start up [The Good Lobby](#) as well as the EU Public Interest Clinic he established with New York University School of Law. He has been involved in dozens of campaigns, ranging from the first European Citizen Initiative putting an end to international roaming to the drafting of the EU whistleblower directive, and advocated for EU transnational lists and currently EU mobile citizens' political rights (Voter Without Borders' ECI).

He's the author of more than thirty scientific articles and several academic books such as the acclaimed 'Nudge and the Law – A European Perspective'. Alberto is a regular contributor to Le Monde, The Guardian, Politico Europe, Bloomberg, Forbes, Il Sole 24 Ore and Domani, and his scholarly and public interest work has been featured in The Economist, The New York Times, the Financial Times as well Science and Nature.

His latest book, '[Lobbying for Change: Find Your Voice to Create a Better Society](#)' provides a timely analysis and guide to levelling the democratic playing field by empowering ordinary citizens to speak up and inform policy decisions at local, national and international level.

The World Economic Forum nominated him Young Global Leader in 2015, Friends of Europe included him among the 40under40 European Young Leaders and Ashoka named him life-long fellow for his social entrepreneurship. He sits on the board of several civil society organisations, such as European Alternatives, Access Info Europe and Diritto di Sapere, as well as the citizens' campaigning movements We Move, which operates transnationally, and Riparte il Futuro, which is active in Italy.

Originally from Italy, Alberto is a graduate of Harvard Law School, the College of Europe (where he served as a teaching assistant in 2001-2002) and holds a PhD in International Law & Economics from Bocconi University.