YOUTH SHAPING EUROPE'S TOMORROW

Training on Youth Participation, Democracy and Education (EU Institutions and System)

D8.2 Training Materials

YOUTH SHAPING EUROPE'S TOMORROW

U4EU
2.0

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Project Overview

The U4EU 2.0 "Youth Shaping Europe's Tomorrow" project builds upon the successes and lessons learned from its predecessor, "Youth Debating the Future of Europe" (U4EU) project. Implemented from September 2020 to September 2022, the project proved highly successful in engaging young people from 9 EU countries: Greece, Bulgaria, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Germany, Hungary, Belgium and the Netherlands. It provided a platform for young citizens to voice their views and concerns regarding diversity, European identity, and the future of the EU through a participatory approach.

U4EU 2.0 takes these achievements to the next level by moving from collecting views to fostering tangible actions and policy engagement. Its rationale is to empower young citizens across the nine partner countries and beyond to become active contributors to the EU's decision-making processes. In doing so, the project promotes a stronger sense of belonging to the EU and its values, while equipping participants with the knowledge and skills to shape Europe's future.

The project runs from May 2024 to April 2026 and is co-funded by the CERV (Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values) program of the European Union.

2. Introduction to the Training

As part of the U4EU 2.0 project, a two-day training on Youth Participation, Democracy and Education was organised in Brussels on 16–17 September 2025. The training brought together young participants from across the partnership countries and beyond to explore democratic life in Europe through interactive and experiential methods.

The program combined non-formal education activities, creative group work and a direct visit to the European Parliament which offered participants both reflective and practical insights. Guided by the concept of futures literacy, the training encouraged participants to examine democracy through the lenses of past, present and future. In this process, they strengthened their knowledge of democratic processes at European and national levels, reflected on the challenges and opportunities facing democracies today, experimented with creative methods to imagine possible futures and formulate policy recommendations, and deepened their sense of belonging as Europeans.

This guide presents the training materials used in Brussels. It complements the training agenda by detailing the concrete tools, templates and resources applied in each session to ensure that the activities can be replicated, adapted and reused in other contexts.

The materials are intended for a wide audience of stakeholders, including:
- Youth organisations and civil society organisations who can replicate and adapt the training methods in their own educational or community activities.
- Trainers and facilitators in civic education and youth work who can integrate the modules into training sessions, workshops and exchanges.
- Policy-makers and institutions at local, national and European levels who look for innovative tools to involve young people in democratic processes.
- Young people themselves as multipliers who can carry out similar activities in their own communities.

The training materials are structured around three thematic lenses:
- The Past of Democracies to learn from memories and intergenerational dialogue.
- The Present of Democracies to reflect on contemporary challenges and perceptions.
- The Futures of Democracies to use futures design, foresight and creativity to imagine democratic life in 2040.

Together, these materials provided participants with a holistic journey through time which linked history, current realities and future possibilities of democracies in Europe. The training materials contribute to capacity-building by equipping young people with the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to participate actively in democratic life. The activities are rooted in experiential learning that encourages participants to learn by doing through debates, interviews, scenario-building and interactive workshops. At the same time, they enhance young people's understanding of European policies, institutions and decision-making processes, while also fostering inclusive participation by ensuring that voices from diverse national, cultural and social backgrounds are heard and valued.

3. Training Overview

The training took place in Brussels on 16–17 September 2025, hosted at VET House, the European Parliament and Atelier29. It was designed as a journey through time, moving from the past to the present and futures of democracies in Europe, and concluding with the Democracy Castival – castival standing for international podcast festival – a public event to celebrate participation and exchange ideas jointly organised with another European project called Window Youth.

On the first day, participants gathered at the VET House for a full day of interactive sessions. The program began with a welcoming and team-building activity that is Scavenger Hunt (see annexes) and designed to help participants get to know one another and build a sense of belonging. After this ice-breaker, the group moved into the first thematic session that explores the past of democracies through intergenerational memory work.

Prior to the training, participants had been provided with a template (see annexes) to ask questions of their parents, grandparents or relatives about how they experienced Europe, democracy and the EU in earlier decades. A gallery of stories was created and one of the trainers commented on the patterns of memories and struggles emerging from the past. This was followed by a short presentation introducing the European Union, explaining the role and functioning of its institutions, the decision-making process and opportunities for youth participation. This provided participants with a common baseline before moving further into critical discussions.

The next activity focused on the present of democracies, using the "Elephant in the Room" exercise and street interviews (see annexes). Participants first worked in their national groups to exchange views on democracy at local level, and then went outside to interview people in front of the EU institutions and asked about their perceptions of democracy and EU institutions today.

After returning indoors, participants were reshuffled into new groups for a 30-minute discussion to reflect on the street interviews. This gave them the chance to share experiences across countries and compare perspectives on what they had heard. Representatives from the groups then presented a short summary of the main points emerging from their discussions.

In the afternoon, attention shifted to the futures of democracies. Participants engaged in a set of creative futures design activities and began with a sensorial experience in which they listened to a futures podcast designed to stimulate imagination and narrative thinking. This exercise helped them to build a "future world" and narrative framework (narratio), which then fed into the futures collage and futures palmistry. Working in groups, they first imagined the daily life of a young person in 2040, before expanding their vision to the wider society surrounding this person.

These activities encouraged participants not only to picture alternative futures but also to critically assess the drivers of change that might shape them. By identifying key social, political, technological and environmental factors, they were able to link imaginative storytelling with concrete analysis. Each group then formulated a set of recommendations that highlight what should be done today to move towards desirable futures and to prevent risks they had identified. This combination of creative futures design activities and policy reflection gave participants both the freedom to imagine and the responsibility to translate their visions into actionable recommendations. Day 1 closed with group presentations of the scenarios and policy recommendations and an informal networking dinner.

On day 2, participants gathered at the European Parliament, where they took part in a guided visit of the Parliament, which provided a direct insight into how the institution functions and how decisions are taken at European level. The visit allowed them to connect the reflections from the previous day with the institutional realities of law-making and representation. Before leaving the Parliament, a short evaluation session was held to capture participants' impressions and what they had learnt during the visit and training. The group then moved to Atelier29, where the Democracy Castival took place. Conceived as an international podcast festival and public event, the Castival was designed to celebrate participation, creativity and exchange. The event opened with a welcoming session, followed by a fishbowl discussion that brought together participants, trainers and invited guests in an open and dynamic conversation about democracy and youth engagement. The Castival concluded with a closing reflection and a networking cocktail to give participants the opportunity to connect informally with peers, partners and stakeholders.
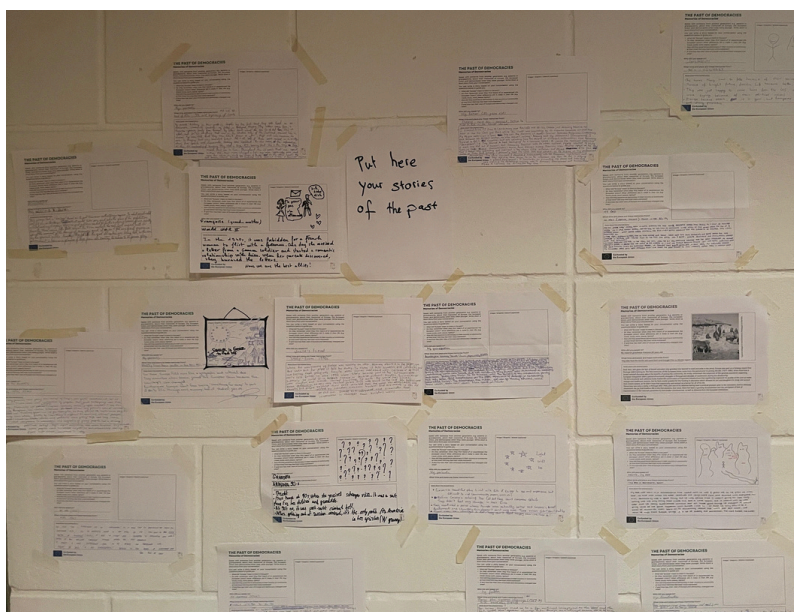

Photo 1: Collage of "The Past of Democracies"

4. Training Modules

The training in Brussels was structured around three main thematic lenses: the past, present and futures of democracies. Each module was supported by specific learning objectives, interactive methodologies and dedicated templates (see annexes). This chapter presents the materials in detail and shows how they guided participants through a journey from intergenerational reflection, to contemporary analysis, and finally to imagination.

4.1 The Past of Democracies

Objectives

The aim of this module was to introduce participants to an intergenerational perspective on democracy and the European Union. Young people were encouraged to explore how Europe and democracy were experienced in the past and how these experiences continue to shape attitudes today by collecting and sharing stories from older generations.

Methodology

Ahead of the training, participants were asked to interview parents, grandparents or relatives using a structured template (see annexes). Guiding questions encouraged them to explore personal memories of democracy, the European Union and Europe's meaning in daily life.

During the training itself, time was dedicated for participants to finalise their templates. Once completed, each participant stood up and hung their story on the wall which gradually created a "gallery of stories". Participants were then invited to walk around the room, read each other's contributions and reflect on the intergenerational perspectives that emerged.

Facilitation Tips

- Allow at least 20–30 minutes for participants to complete their templates during the session, even if they have already collected input before the training. This ensures everyone arrives at a comparable level of detail.
- Create a physical space (e.g. with flipcharts or wall panels) where stories can be displayed visibly.
- Encourage participants to circulate freely, read the stories and make notes about similarities or contrasts they observe.
- After the gallery walk, trainer(s) should provide an analytical reflection on recurring patterns and themes.
- Invite participants to share their own reactions and they can focus on emotions, surprises and insights.

Materials

See Annex: The Past of Democracies Template

Expected Outcomes

This activity helped participants to recognise how democracy and Europe have been experienced across generations. It encouraged empathy, critical reflection and a sense of continuity between the struggles of the past and the challenges of today. The gallery format provided a collective, visual way of linking personal stories into a shared European memory

4.2 The Present of Democracies

Objectives

This module aimed to bring participants into direct engagement with the realities of democracy today. It combined dialogue (Elephant in the Room) with experiential learning (Street Interviews) which, both, encouraged participants to reflect on local challenges, confront sensitive issues and test their perceptions against those of Europeans in the streets of Brussels.

Methodology

Between the Past and Present modules, participants received a short introduction to the European Union and its institutional system. The aim of this session was to provide a bridge between intergenerational reflections and the contemporary challenges explored later in the day. Participants gained a common baseline by learning about the functioning of EU institutions and decision-making processes which allowed them to place their own experiences and reflections in a broader European context.

The input focused on three key elements:
- the main EU institutions (European Parliament, Council, Commission, European Council) and their roles;
- how laws are proposed, debated and adopted at EU level;
- opportunities for young people to engage with the EU, such as Erasmus+, the European Youth Portal and the European Solidarity Corps.

Rather than preparing new material, facilitators drew on freely available resources from the European Parliament and European Commission, such as infographics, factsheets, diagrams of the decision-making process and videos. The table below is a selection of resources that can be used in this session.

Title	What it explains / good features	Link
The European Union: Institutions & Functions	Introduction to the main EU institutions (Commission,	Youtube
Animation on the Council of the European Union and the European Council	Helps understand the difference between two	Youtube
Who Really Runs the EU? The European Commission Explained	Good deep dive into how the Commission works	Youtube
What do the EU institutions do? (infographic)	Infographic from the European Parliament	European Parliament
Decision-Making at a Glance: How do EU laws get approved?	Visual chart of the ordinary legislative procedure (co-	IAPP

After this short introduction, for the Elephant in the Room exercise, participants were divided into country-based groups of around five to six people. This allowed them to begin by reflecting on their local contexts and then move to the situation in their country as a whole. Each group was asked to identify the most pressing issues in their society, such as polarisation, disinformation, mistrust of institutions or low youth engagement. Participants were also provided with a template (see annexes) to capture these reflections, either as a group or individually if they came from diverse backgrounds. The groups filled in their templates with the key challenges they had identified and then placed them on the walls of the room. This created a visible collection of the "elephants" that often remain unspoken, which participants could explore later in the training. Without a plenary presentation at this stage, the groups then moved directly outside to conduct the street interviews.

For the Street Interviews, participants stayed in their country-based groups and were given the street interview templates (see annexes). They had 45 minutes to go out into the area around the EU institutions, approach people on the street, ask the questions from their template and write down notes and insights from the conversations.

After completing the activity, all groups met for lunch together outdoors, which also gave some extra time for groups that had not yet finished their interviews to complete the task.

When they returned, participants were reshuffled into new groups for a 30-minute group discussion. Instead of a large plenary, these smaller groups allowed for more in-depth sharing of experiences across countries. Some representatives were then asked to briefly present the key points from their group discussions and observations.

Facilitation Tips

- When introducing the Elephant in the Room, reassure participants that sensitive or controversial issues are welcome. Stress that the aim is not to solve these problems immediately but to make them visible and open to reflection.
- Encourage country groups to start from their immediate local context (e.g. their community or region) and then move to the broader national level. This helps them ground abstract issues in real experiences.
- Display the completed templates clearly on the walls in a way that participants can revisit them later. Grouping them together creates a visual map of concerns across countries.
- For the Street Interviews, provide clear instructions about safety and ethics: introduce themselves politely, respect refusals, keep interviews short and never press for answers.
- Remind participants that the aim is not statistical accuracy but to practise active listening and capture authentic voices.
- In the reshuffled discussion groups, encourage participants to compare what they heard from Europeans with the "elephants" they identified earlier. This makes the connection between local/national reflections and the wider European context.

Materials

- Elephant in the Room template (see annexes)
- Street Interviews template (see annexes)

Expected Outcomes

This module helped participants to identify and articulate the democratic challenges in their local and national contexts, while also exposing them to perspectives from Europeans in Brussels. By combining internal reflection with external engagement, participants strengthened their skills in critical thinking, teamwork, interviewing and analysis. The wall of templates created a shared visual record of both hidden challenges and fresh insights, which could be revisited later in the training. Above all, the module encouraged participants to recognise commonalities across borders while respecting the particularities of each context.

4.3 The Futures of Democracies

Objectives

This module encouraged participants to use imagination and foresight to explore possible democratic futures. The aim was to help them think beyond immediate challenges, imagine desirable alternatives, and translate creative visions into concrete, actionable policy recommendations. By working with futures design methods, participants were also invited to reflect on uncertainty, change and the role of agency in shaping Europe's future.

Methodology

The session began with a sensorial experience: participants listened to a specially prepared futures podcast (see annexes for the script) designed to stimulate imagination and storytelling. This shared entry point created a common atmosphere and prepared the ground for collective imagination.

From there, participants moved into Futures Collage. Working in groups, they were asked to imagine the daily life of a young person in 2040. Each group created a visual collage on large A3 sheets and flipcharts using magazines, newspapers, scissors and glue. The task was to represent the imagined world of this young person through images, shapes and colours.

To begin, participants worked in silence for fifteen minutes. They then opened up into group dialogue. The groups gave their collage a title and prepared a short story about their imagined young person's life. They also identified two "drivers of change" – political, social, technological, cultural, economic or environmental forces that shape the imagined world – and wrote these visibly on their collage.

The second exercise, Futures Palmistry, expanded the vision from the individual to society as a whole. On a large sheet of flipchart paper, participants drew a hand. Each finger represented a dimension of democracy in 2040:
- Thumb: Power – who holds it and how it is used.
- Index finger: Direction – where society and institutions are heading.
- Middle finger: Tensions – the conflicts, risks and inequalities shaping life.
- Ring finger: Values – what holds democracy together and what people commit to protect.
- Little finger: Innovation – how societies adapt and create new democratic forms, especially for youth.

Participants filled each finger with words, symbols or short phrases and then gave their "hand" a title. The palmistry exercise concluded with a collective reading of the hand to explore what it revealed about the future of democracy and how the fingers stretched into possible scenarios for 2040.

Finally, participants were asked to "return from the future." Based on their collages and palmistry hands, they formulated three clear policy recommendations. To support this step, facilitators provided prompts (see annexes) to guide them in making their proposals specific and actionable: what should be done, by whom, and why it matters. These recommendations were then linked back to the imagined futures and prepared for presentation.

Facilitation Tips

- Set the atmosphere carefully at the start. Play the podcast in a quiet setting and allow a short pause afterwards so participants can capture their first impressions before speaking. Due to copyright restrictions, the podcast used in the training in Brussels cannot be shared with readers of this guide. However, the script is included in the annexes and trainers are encouraged to create and record their own version based on the script.
- In the collage exercise, begin with 15 minutes of silent individual work to give everyone time to reflect before opening into group dialogue. This ensures more balanced participation.
- Encourage groups to identify at least two concrete drivers of change behind their collages or palmistry hands.
- Display the collages and palmistry hands around the room as a gallery. This makes the work visible and allows groups to revisit each other's ideas during later discussions.
- When moving to recommendations, use the prompts provided in the annexes to help participants phrase their proposals clearly: what action, by whom, and why it matters.
- Keep group presentations short but structured. Ask each group to explain their scenario briefly and then share their three recommendations.

Materials

- Futures podcast script (see annexes – trainers are encouraged to record their own version)
- Sleeping masks for participants (used during the podcast exercise to enhance focus)
- Futures Collage materials: magazines, newspapers, scissors, glue, markers, large A3 paper
- Futures Collage template (see annexes)
- Futures Palmistry template (see annexes)

Expected Outcomes

This module enabled participants to imagine and articulate different democratic futures in a structured yet creative way. By combining the sensorial experience with collage-making and palmistry, they developed scenarios that moved beyond abstract ideas and became vivid, relatable stories of daily life in 2040. The process encouraged them to identify concrete drivers of change, thus linking imagination with concrete actions, and to recognise the multiple pathways that democracy might take.

Through the formulation of recommendations, participants also learned to translate visions into action. They produced proposals that were both imaginative and practical and addressed what should be done today, by whom and why it matters. The gallery of collages and palmistry hands, combined with the written recommendations, created a tangible record of their work and provided material that could be shared with others after the training.
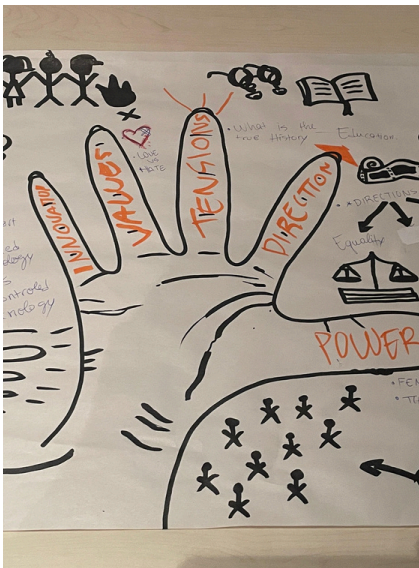
Overall, the module strengthened participants' futures literacy, creativity, analytical skills and sense of agency in shaping Europe's future.

Photo 2-5: Collage of "Futures Collage and Palmistry"

5. Sustainability, Dissemination and Further Use

The training materials developed for U4EU 2.0 are designed to be adaptable, transferable and reusable in a variety of contexts. By documenting each module with clear objectives, methodologies, templates and facilitation tips, the guide ensures that organisations and educators across Europe can replicate or adapt the activities to their own realities.

The materials will be shared with youth organisations, civil society actors and educators within the U4EU 2.0 partnership and beyond. They will be made available online and promoted through project communication channels, including newsletters, social media and partner networks. Policy-makers and institutions will also be encouraged to draw inspiration from the methods, particularly as tools to involve young people more effectively in democratic processes.

Sustainability is supported by the modular design of the activities. Trainers can use the full two-day programme or select individual sessions depending on their needs and resources. The annexes provide ready-to-use templates, which can be adapted for different cultural or linguistic contexts. In this way, the materials are not limited to a single event but remain a living resource for future workshops, exchanges and civic education across Europe.

6. Annexes

- Annexe 1: Online Preparatory Meeting Agenda
- Annexe 2: Scavenger Hunt
- Annexe 3: The Past of Democracies - Memories of Democracies
- Annexe 4: Presents of democracies - Elephant in the Room
- Annexe 5: Presents of democracies - Street Interviews
- Annexe 6: Futures Podcast Script
- Annexe 7: The Futures of Democracies: Futures Collage
- Annexe 8: The Futures of Democracies: Futures Palmistry
- Annexe 9: Agenda of the two-day training program

Annexe 1: Online Preparatory Meeting Agenda

U4EU 2.0 Training
Youth Participation, Democracy and Education

17:00 – 17:05   **Connections & Music**

- Log in, test your audio and camera, settle in with some background music while we gather.

17:05 – 17:10   **Introductions from the organisers**

- Marie and Furkan open the meeting and share a few words of welcome.

17:10 – 17:15   **Democracy objects**

- A quick icebreaker: each participant has 1 minute to find an object nearby that represents democracy in their country. Share your object in the chat (and show it on camera) and explain briefly why you chose it.

17:15 – 17:20   **Overview of the online meeting**

- Walk-through of the session and what we will do together today.

17:20 – 17:35   **Program of the training**

- Introduction to the Brussels training: aims, flow, and what participants can expect.

17:35 – 17:55   **Break-out room discussion**

- Introduce yourself to each other.
- Share your first memory of engaging with democracy in your childhood.
- Talk about what's happening with democracy in your country today.
- Share your expectations for the training in Brussels.

17:55 – 18:00   **Group presentations back in plenary**

18:00 – 18:10   **Program logistics**

- Logistics for Brussels: travel, venue, accommodation, and practical tips.

18:10 – 18:20   **Q & A**

- Open space for any remaining questions.

18:20 – 18:30   **Closing and see you in Brussels**

- Final words, reflections, and a "see you soon" in Brussels.

DEMOCRACIES
Scavenger Hunt

15 Minutes

How many nationalities you can count in your group? (write the nationalities in the back of the paper)

Write the name of the youngest person in the room.

Write the name of the oldest person in the room.

Write the longest name in your group.

Which group has the longest trip (in km) to Brussels?

How many languages can your group speak?

How many people have already visited the European Parliament in your group?

How many of you have taken part in a protest or demonstration in your group?

Which song would best describe democracy today?
FS: Sleepwalking - Bring me the Horizon

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Annexe 3: The Past of Democracies - Memories of Democracies

THE PAST OF DEMOCRACIES
Memories of Democracies

Speak with someone from another generation, e.g. parents or grandparents, about their memories of Europe, the European Union, and democracies when they were younger. Write down a short story from your conversation.

You can write a story based on your conversation using the questions below to guide you.

- *What did "Europe" mean to them in the past?*
- *Do they remember when they first heard of or experienced the European Union? What difference did it make in their life (e.g. travel, study, work, peace, rights)?*
- *How did they experience democracy in their country or community at that time? Did they feel their voice mattered?*
- *If and how has their view of Europe and democracy changed over time?*

Who did you speak to?

What time and place are these memories from?

Note down the shared story.

Image / Graphic / Sketch (optional)

Annexe 4: Presents of democracies - Elephant in the Room

PRESENTS OF DEMOCRACIES
Street Interviews

Interview Notes

Interview Notes

Sample Questions

- When you hear "European Union", what is the first thing that comes to mind?
- Do you feel the EU affects your daily life? If yes, how?
- Do you know how decisions are made in the EU?
- Who do you think has the most influence when EU decisions are taken?
- What works well and what doesn't in how democracy functions today?
- If you could change one thing about how the EU works, what would it be?

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PRESENTS OF DEMOCRACIES
Street Interviews

Interview Notes

Interview Notes

Sample Questions

- When you hear "European Union", what is the first thing that comes to mind?
- Do you feel the EU affects your daily life? If yes, how?
- Do you know how decisions are made in the EU?
- Who do you think has the most influence when EU decisions are taken?
- What works well and what doesn't in how democracy functions today?
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Annexe 6: Futures Podcast Script

[Opening – 2 min]

[Gentle music - Reflections by Sertaç Özgümüş]

[Gentle music continues in the background]
Welcome back. Please put on your sleeping masks now.

And if you're ready… blink twice.
We'll take that as a yes.
Did you really try blinking? I love your energy.

We hope you enjoyed the first half of the training with memories of the past, group discussions, street interviews, and of course the Greek lunch.

Now we are entering the futures.

For the next twenty minutes, you will not be guided by a facilitator in the room. It is just you and me.

Everything will happen through this voice, through your headphones. Therefore, please keep your headphones on because we want this experience to be immersive.

In this activity, you will imagine a future world.
You will create a future world.

You will hear a story.
You will build pictures in your mind.
And later, you will use these images to create scenarios for the futures of democracy, of Europe, and of the way we will live together.

Take a deep breath.
It's time to close your eyes, everyone.
We are starting.

[Gentle music continues]

[Worldbuilding]

[Voice begins from the right side, gradually moving to the left and back again, as if the speaker is walking across the space]
[Gentle music continues in background]

Wake up.
It's 8 am.

Annexe 6: Futures Podcast Script

The air is hotter than you remember.
It's dry.

Next to you, your cat is waiting.
She sits by the bed, and she is watching you.
She does this every morning.
She wants food.

Next to you, your cat is waiting.
She sits by the bed, and she is watching you.
She does this every morning.
She wants food.

You sit up on your bad.
The floor is already warm under your feet.
You walk slowly to the kitchen.
Your cat follows, and you open the cupboard and fill the bowl.
You make your cat happy.

For a moment, it feels like an ordinary morning.
But then you notice the heat again.
The air pressing against your skin.

It's time to leave.

You step towards the door.
Your cat looks up, but then it just goes back to eating.

You open the door, and you step outside.

[Music changes to Sorrow by Fabrizio Paterlini]
[Music continues in the background]

Again, again, again.

The air is still hot.
Dry.

Is this... the fault of previous generations?

The news this morning said forty-five degrees,
maybe even fifty in some parts of the city.
That there is water but only for three hours a day.

Annexe 6: Futures Podcast Script

And you see some billboards and politicians smile.
They promise to raise the defence budget.
Isn't it already enough?

Beneath the billboards there are homeless people... they are sleeping because there is some shadow there.
But one of them steps closer and asks for coins to get some food.
You say: *I don't have any coins*.

And you continue walking.

On one side, tall glass towers shine in the sun.
Between them, older stone buildings still stand.
But behind you, the fields are dry and cracked.
Farmers linger there, and they all watch you in silence.

And ahead of you, there is the city.

You start to walk towards the city.
The road becomes narrower.
The sound of the city reaches you.
Voices. Footsteps. Doors. Shops. Everything.

As you go further, you see small shops.
A bakery. The smell of warm bread mixed with dust.
A café. The smell of strong coffee... People are waiting for their croissants and espressos.

[Music stops]

They are all...Quiet. Patient. But look very tired.

You walk further.
The noise grows louder.
And then you see it.
A narrow shop with a simple sign on the door.
It says "Barbershop".

And inside, two men are waiting for you.
Manuel. Luigi.
Let's enter.

[At this point, the Barbershop binaural audio about a virtual haircut starts for about 1.5 minutes.]

Annexe 6: Futures Podcast Script

Ehm, maybe we should leave Luigi and Manuel and let them do their business. And we focus on democracy a bit more.

So, we need to move on.

You leave the barbershop.

[Ambient sounds of a festival begin in the background.]
You are back on the street and the city is still carrying on around you.

But wait… do you also hear that? There is music, coming from somewhere in the distance.

[Music starts, Iron Sky by Paolo Nutini, slowly becoming louder]

You start again walking. You get past the crowd.
The sound gets louder with every step you take.

And then finally. Yes, yes, it is there.

[Music continues and background noise of festival]

There is the festival. There are people everywhere.
They cheer. They laugh. They shout.
And look! There is even a mosh pit… That is crazy!

The crowd's attention is on the stage.
Someone's speaking.
And everyone is listening to that person.

That includes you.

So… listen.

[Pause — fade in Charlie Chaplin's excerpt from Iron Sky by Paolo Nutini (1940).]

[Voice from right side, music gets lower but continues]

Words from another time.
But they still cut through the noise.
A plea for freedom. For humanity. For democracy.

And yet… Here we are, in our own time, still searching for the same answers. Indeed.

Annexe 6: Futures Podcast Script

What does democracy mean today?
What does it mean for those standing beside you, now, in this very room, in this very festival?

Let's listen to the voices in the crowd.
Their hopes. Their doubts. Their struggles.
These are the voices…

[Music gets louder]

[Music gets lower, continues in the background]

[Pause — actual recordings/ interviews from the festival, background noise of festival. Different voices
- 1st person speaking: Mentions issues related to democracy: Purpose of democracy is to give people a voice, but they think that the young generation doesn't think they have a voice. Climate change, anxiety, social media etc., make the young generation less politicised.
- 2nd person speaking: Democracy feels far away. We vote, but we don't really know what we vote for.
- 3rd person speaking: Has hope, not about democracy though. Currently, the European Parliament cannot directly propose laws, which is a big problem for democracy. It is problematic that we vote for people only, not for proposition. Lobby and money have a big influence on EU politics, and this is not democratic.
- 4th person speaking: Demorcacy is in danger right now, because of the influence of many countries. Person is not very hopeful.
- 5th person speaking: Doesn't want to put another person in this world, as we are so many already. Europe is strong, but we must unite more.
- 6th person speaking: Has hope but cannot specify about what exactly. But has hope that eventually humanity will realise they have to act.]

[Gentle music starts again, Steps Through Darkness - Faster by Sertaç Özgümüş]

[Gentle music continues in background]

Look, look at the faces in the crowd. They are all around you.
Maybe you see some hope in some of those people.
Or it is only the frustration you see in some others.

I know, everyone has some questions… and now, around you, everyone is so tired of trying to find answers.

What comes next?
What kind of democracy will grow out of this?

Annexe 6: Futures Podcast Script

We don't have time left. We have to leave the festival now.
And you have one question remaining.

[A whispering voice enters softly from the left]

Wake up. Time to remove your masks and open your eyes please.

[Gentle music fades away and The World Burns Around Us by Secession Studios & Greg Dombrowski]

Thank you so much for bearing with us in those 15 minutes, that you dedicated for this futures podcast. We hope you enjoyed the journey and that we kind of managed to create an image of the future of democracy, of the way we live together and of the European Union.

In the next two hours we have two more activities for you. And they are mainly connected to collective scenario building.

The instructions of the first activity will first come through this podcast, so that is why you still need to listen to me.

The idea is that, together with your group members, 5,6 or 7 people, you need to imagine the daily life of a young person who lives in 2040. We have some questions already prepared for this activity and you receive them through a flyer.

And you do this activity with flipcharts, A3 papers, newspapers, magazines, scissors, glue sticks. But please, remember, you are not allowed to talk during the first 15 minutes of the activity. No communication, no talk, no blinking, no podcast. It is just you and your group members trying to figure out the daily life of that young person by using the images and shapes, colours, photos, pictures from those materials.

And at the end of the 15 minutes, you are then allowed to talk and negotiate. And try to see what everyone had in mind. Close to the end of this activity, we will ask you to define or select or come up with two different drivers of change. But what does that mean? The answer will be also in the flyer. But if you have some unclear points or questions, please feel free to find us, especially me for this activity.

And we then follow with another activity after the break. And then at the end of the second activity we will find some time to actually hear about all the stories. It was a pleasure for me to be your guide through this journey, and maybe in 2040 we will see each other, maybe even before, maybe even now.

[music continues and then fades away]

THE FUTURES OF DEMOCRACIES
Futures Collage

30 Minutes

Your task is to imagine the daily life of a young person in the year 2040. Your group will create a collage on A3 paper(s) to show their world through images, photos, shapes and colours.

You begin this activity by working in silence for the first fifteen minutes. Each group has magazines, newspapers, glue sticks and scissors.

Cut out images, pictures and shapes from the magazines and newspapers in your group, and arrange them to represent how this young person lives in the future.

Think about their daily life:

- Where do they live?
- How do they learn or work?
- How do they receive information and whom do they trust?
- How do they take part in democracy? Do they vote, protest or join assemblies etc.?
- Who listens to them, and who does not?
- What problems shape their life?
- What hopes carry them forward and what does the EU mean for them?

After fifteen minutes of silent work, pause and look at your collage together without speaking.

Then begin to talk as a group.

Give your collage a short title and prepare a very short story (two minutes) to explain who this young person is and what their life tells us about the futures of democracies.

Moreover, decide together on the two most important drivers of change that define your young person's future. Write these two drivers clearly on your collage.

Drivers of change

When you discuss your collage, think about the bigger forces that shape the life of your young person in 2040. These are called drivers of change.

They are the political, social, economic, cultural, technological, or environmental shifts that influence how people live and how democracy works.

Examples of drivers of change include rising temperatures, water shortages, armed conflict and defence, foreign intervention and many more that may just happen in the future.

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THE FUTURES OF DEMOCRACIES
Futures Palmistry

50 Minutes

In this activity, you will read the "hand" of your young person from 2040. Palmistry is inspired by the practice of reading the lines of a hand to predict the future. Here, the palm represents the conditions of democracy in 2040, while the fingers represent different pathways into that future. Together, they will help you imagine the wider society, institutions and environment in which your young person lives.

On your flipchart paper, begin by drawing a large hand with five fingers or you use the ink provided.

Then move finger by finger. Each finger represents a different dimension of the future of democracy:

- The thumb is **Power:** who holds it, how it is used, and how decisions are made.
- The index finger is **Direction**: where society and Europe are heading, the path institutions take.
- The middle finger is **Tensions**: the conflicts, risks and inequalities that shape people's lives.
- The ring finger is **Values:** what holds democracy together, what people commit to and protect.
- The little finger is **Innovation:** how EU institutions and societies respond, adapt and create new ways for people, especially young people, to take part.

Work together to imagine how each of these five aspects develops by 2040. Write words, short phrases or draw symbols on each part of the hand to show your ideas.

At the end, give your hand a title. Prepare a short reading (three minutes) where you present your palmistry to the plenary alongside your young person's story. What the palm reveals about the conditions of democracy in 2040 and how the fingers stretch into the possible futures of democracy and society.
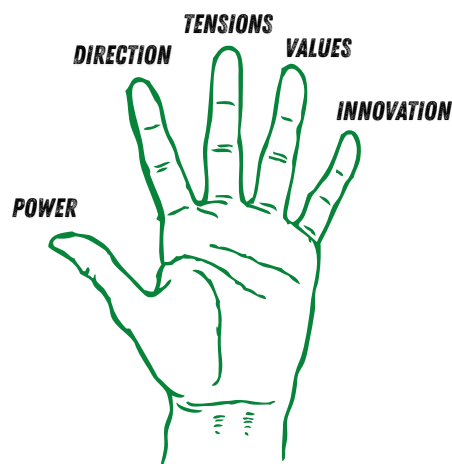
Now that you have imagined the world of your young person in 2040 and explored the society around them through palmistry, it is time to bring these ideas back to today. Look at your hand and think about the story it tells. Which parts of this future are positive and worth working towards? Which parts are risky or harmful and should be prevented? Use these reflections to shape simple, clear recommendations for action.

As a group, write three recommendations on your flipchart. Each one should say **what should be done**, **who should do it**, and **why it matters**. You can choose to address EU institutions, national governments or any other stakeholder. Keep your recommendations short and concrete.

THE FUTURES OF DEMOCRACIES
Futures Palmistry

Prompts

- In 2040, young people will need _____. To make this possible, _____ should _____.
- If we want to avoid a future where _____, then today _____ must _____.
- Democracy in 2040 will only be strong if _____. This means that _____ should _____.
- Our young person's story shows that _____ matters most. That is why we recommend _____.
- The EU can make a difference by _____, so that in the future _____.

You can also use your own prompts to formulate policy recommendations.

Example: In 2040, young people will need **equal access to digital tools for learning and participation**. To make this possible, **the European Parliament** should **guarantee free and safe online platforms where all young people can take part in debates and decision-making**.

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Annexe 9: Agenda of the two-day training program

U4EU 2.0 Training
Youth Participation, Democracy and Education

16-17 September 2025 | Brussels, Belgium

Final Program

15 September 2025	**Arrival Day**
20:00 – 22:00	**Common dinner at Chandigarh**
16 September 2025	**1st day of the training - VET House, (Bd Charlemagne 28, 1000 Bruxelles)**
09:00 – 09:30	**Welcoming & Registration**
09:30 – 10:15	**Opening and team building activity**
10:15 – 10:30	**Overview of the training**
10:30 – 11:00	**Past of democracies - memories of Europe**
11:00 – 11:15	**Coffee Break**
11:15 – 11:45	**What's the EU for us?**
11:45 – 12:15	**Presents of democracies - elephant in the room**
12:15 – 13:00	**Presents of democracies - street interviews**
13:00 – 14:30	**Lunch at Wine Not**
14:30 – 15:00	**Presents of democracies - what we found on the streets**
15:00 – 15:30	**Futures of democracies - sensorial experience**
15:30 – 16:15	**Futures of democracies - collective scenario building: Futures collage**
16:15 – 16:30	**Break**
16:30 – 17:15	**Futures of democracies - collective scenario building: Futures palmistry**
17:15 – 17:45	**Futures of democracies - scenario pitching and recommendations**
17:45 – 18:00	**Closing**
18:00 – 19:00	**Free time**
19:00 – 21:00	**Informal common dinner at the garden (Bd Charlemagne 28, 1000 Bruxelles)**

Annexe 9: Agenda of the two-day training program

U4EU 2.0 Training
Youth Participation, Democracy and Education

16-17 September 2025 | Brussels, Belgium

17 September 2025	2nd day of the Training - European Parliament
09:30 – 10:00	Energiser at Espace Leopold (Rue Wiertz 60, 1047 Bruxelles)
10:00 - 12:00	EU Parliament Visit
12:00 - 12:30	Evaluation of the training at the Parliament
12:30 – 13:00	Walk to Atelier29
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch Break at Atelier29
17 September 2025	2nd day of the Training - Democracy Castival at Atelier29
14:00 – 14:15	Democracy Castival Opening
14:15 – 15:45	Fishbowl Discussion
15:45 – 16:15	Award Ceremony
16:15 – 16:45	Evaluation & Closing of the Democracy Castival
17:00 - 19:00	Networking & Cocktail at Atelier29

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