



Extraction of climate related stories for sensemaking

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## Abstact

This documents present a collection of narratives selected from the total collection of 1081 narratives collected by Eurosense related to Climate Change, Climate adaptation and sustainability. The detailed selection process is described in Appendix.

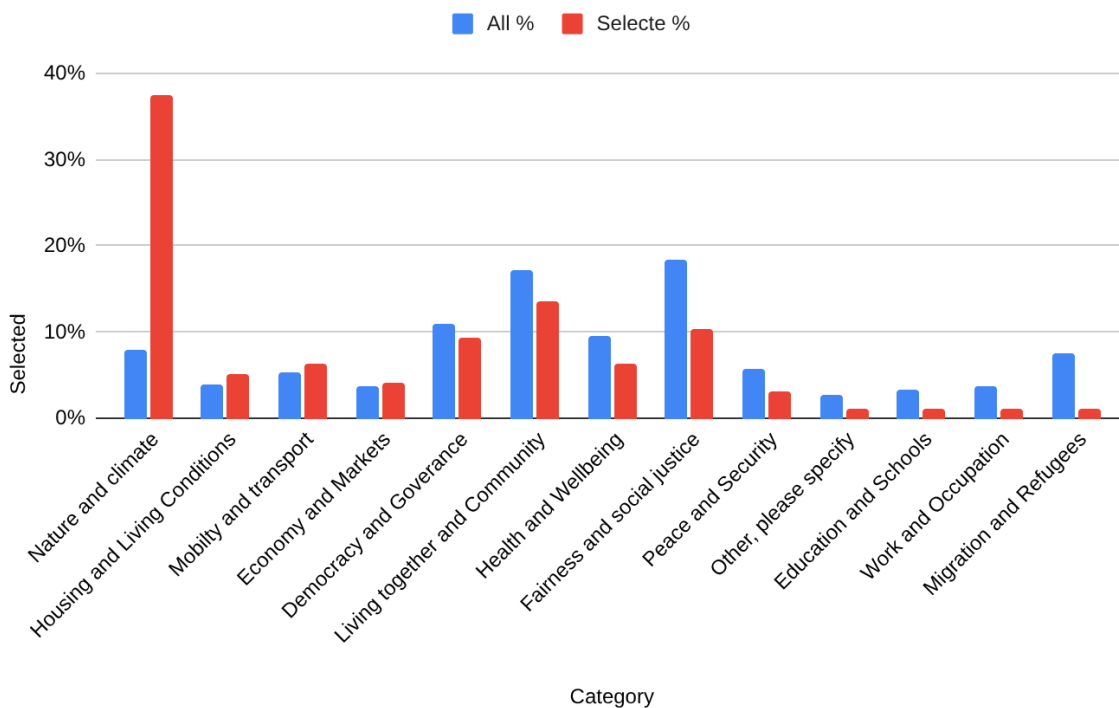
Narratives are presented grouped by the categories they have been assigned by the respondents. The goal of this document is to provide material for sensemaking sessions

## Story selection

The narratives have been selected in two steps, first a semantic analysis has narrowed down the corpus from 1081 narratives to 91. In a second, manual step, 43 stories directly related to the topic of interest have been kept.

The following figure shows the distribution of the narratives across the categories identified by the respondents. In blue is the distribution of the complete set and in red the selected set.

Distribution of the narratives across the categories



Unsurprisingly the category ***Nature and climate*** is overrepresented in the selected set. At the opposite, ***Migration and Refugees, Work and Occupation, Education and School*** and ***Other***, are underrepresented in the selected set.

## The storyboard

In this section the narratives are listed, grouped by category. Since each story can be associated to more than one category, it will appear in each subsection.

## Mobility and transport

### Victim of the green transition or of the Italian authorities?

I have a car in excellent condition, but it's a Euro 5 diesel, and I'll probably no longer be able to use it in September. The regional government hasn't given any guidance on this matter, and this fact has truly created a climate of uncertainty for me and everyone else in the same situation. This issue surfaces in the media every now and then, but nothing is clear.

Original title: Vittima della transizione green o delle autorità italiane?

Original language: it

EU is like: Neverland by Edoardo Bennato

Europe is like: A quarrelsome chicken coop

Democracy is like: a crystal vase

Who should hear: The President of the Region and the Minister of the Environment

Question: nan

In general this experience was: Negative

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Mobility and transport ; Nature and climate ; Living together and Community ;

### Spend more

I have to change my car, that I use very few times because of city center restrictions

Original title: Spend more

Original language: en

EU is like: nan

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: nan

Question: Not everybody has money to change cars

In general this experience was: Negative

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Mobility and transport ;

### Lack of courage to change

In my opinion, many people lack the willingness to face necessary changes, let alone proactively shape them. The end of the combustion engine is a case in point. This is now being questioned again. How many more natural disasters will it take?! to understand that we should stop burning fossil fuels.

Original title: Mangelnder Mut zu Veränderung

Original language: de

EU is like: a community of solidarity

Europe is like: cultural diversity

Democracy is like: A form of government without alternatives

Who should hear: Everyone!

Question: What do you imagine sustainable coexistence to be?

In general this experience was: Very negative

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Mobility and transport ; Nature and climate ; Health and Wellbeing ;

The municipality disregards the participation process with the neighborhood and unilaterally changes a plan with a very negative impact on local residents.

I served on the advisory group for a housing development project in our neighborhood. We went through an intensive participatory process, resulting in a plan approved by the municipal council that everyone involved agreed with, a trade-off between housing and green space in our highly urbanized neighborhood. As an advisory group, we were then unpleasantly surprised when the municipality suddenly proposed replacing the green space with a four-story above-ground parking garage in the middle of a residential area. This meant that, instead of a small green park, many homes suddenly faced a parking garage. This hadn't been communicated beforehand, and it suddenly became a fait accompli... A negative experience indeed.

Original title: Gemeente heeft lak aan participatietraject met de buurt en verandert eenzijdig een plan met zeer negatieve impact op omwonenden

Original language : nl

EU is like : Something at a distance where our influence is not concrete, but the decisions taken there are far-reaching

Europe is like: The old continent that gave rise to much of what we now call the 'Western world'

Democracy is like: A great asset where it must be clear how decisions are made

Who should hear: Anyone involved in participation

Question: Do you dare to do what will benefit the people directly affected by a decision the most, even if this is not your political position?

In general this experience was: Very negative

The experience you described was: rare but it happens from time to time

This story also appears in Mobility and transport ; Fairness and social justice ; Housing and Living Conditions ;

## Climate denial

Many people in my personal circle assume that there are problems with the climate, but they do not connect any consequences to their actions

Original title: Klimaat ontkenning

Original language : nl

EU is like : Organization

Europe is like: Society

Democracy is like: Should be core value

Who should hear: Policy influencers

Question: Start policy with the world people experience

In general this experience was: Negative

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Mobility and transport ; Nature and climate ;

## Public transport in the border region

I live on a European internal border (Germany/Netherlands) and therefore travel by public transport on both sides. Thanks to an EU project, a train now crosses the border here, but the connection is very unreliable because the two systems are incompatible, meaning each section is always operated by a local crew. Especially on the German part of the route, disruptions due to staff shortages are extremely common. I also need a separate app with a separate account for each mobility provider. Compatibility is usually non-existent, especially across the border, which I find very regrettable. For climate protection reasons, it is extremely important to me to use public transport, even if it sometimes takes considerably longer. Nevertheless, I greatly enjoy the opportunity to visit neighboring cities without having to exchange currency, etc. I am convinced that better connections across borders will bring Europe closer together. Especially here on the border, it feels like the Union has long been a reality, even though major hurdles still need to be overcome.

Original title: ÖPNV im Grenzland

Original language : de

EU is like : Future in the making

Europe is like: my home

Democracy is like: Brushing your teeth. Sometimes annoying, but simply necessary for it to work and keep everyone healthy.

Who should hear: nan

Question: Cross-border traffic is important, but why do we still rely so heavily on air transport for European transport in times of climate change? Why isn't a Europe-wide high-speed network being discussed? The Transrapid would be a suitable option, as it comfortably achieves the necessary speeds and can thus effectively connect European capitals and metropolises. The existing national high-speed networks retain their function of local development, so there will be no competition (or only in very specific cases like Eurostar).

In general this experience was: Negative

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Mobility and transport ; Nature and climate ; Living together and Community ; #

## Fairness and social justice

### A living clean environment is common sense - your & my responsibility!

Every day I see garbage and waste in our immediate environment that dirty, pollute, destroy and in the worst case kill our nature and wildlife. We have lost respect for our dear nature, living environment and fellow humans. Egon sees himself above the group that "someone else can fulfill my responsibility". The worst thing is that this reprehensible behavior is becoming the norm.

Original title: En levande ren miljö är sunt förnuft - ditt & mitt ansvar!

Original language : sv

EU is like : an overcoat

Europe is like: an extension of our country

Democracy is like: a value system, changing and life-giving

Who should hear: ?

Question: How can we get those in power and media forces to stand up as examples of long-term common sense and not just vote/click maximization?

In general this experience was: Very negative

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Fairness and social justice ; Nature and climate ; Living together and Community ;

## Ecosystem Awareness

My concerns about an almost full lack of ecosystem related knowledge in local government was met with an 'it is what it is' statement by a member of the municipal council (gemeenteraad). On these grounds, me and other climate mayors (Klimaatburgemeester) are on one hand asked to perform unpaid civic duties, whilst there is absolutely no possibility for the local government to actually move it's ass and take action.

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Original language : en

EU is like : A valuable mothership which can penalize the lack of (climate) action and instill rules to officially integrate the best available knowledge in local governments.

Europe is like: a pitfall with spikes full of newborn babies learning how to even science

Democracy is like: a hoax

Who should hear: NRC, Dutch School of Public Administration, Scientific Council for Government Policy

Question: When will you change, or simply move away so better equipped people can take charge?

In general this experience was: Very negative

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## positivity is key

It's becoming increasingly frustrating to watch and read the news as climate change, plastic pollution, the biodiversity crisis, social injustice etc becomes each day worse.

that being said I feel increasingly hopeful that in some part we are gonna succeed in creating a better world, come good news scattered around help a lot in this, I feel like it matters a lot that we do not only communicate the good and not only the bad news.

Original title: positivity is key

Original language : en

EU is like : the teacher that teaches to the kids how things should be done, however even teachers make Errors (though definitely fewer than the children)

Europe is like: a continent full of differences, values, cultures and hypocrisy

Democracy is like: that game you wanted so bad as a Child and that, just few weeks after finally getting, it you started taking for granted

Who should hear: pessimists

Question: do you really want to leave a world like this to your children?

In general this experience was: Positive

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Fairness and social justice ; Nature and climate ; Migration and Refugees ;

## Woking ourselves to death

My contribution to society is alienated seemingly because expertise does not count unless it is accompanied by a socially acceptable label - my label carries no value in the currency of wokery. The inheritance of respect is discredited!

I see policy makers oblivious to the evidence and science where I am familiar with the subject and I see charlatans and the grossly unqualified claiming expertise in other areas. The marquee example is Greta Thunberg - who claims a knowledge of climate impacts and moderation and proclaims 'the science is settled' [few scientists are climate experts and have no specific insight into the problem, science never works by consensus nor is science ever settled - it is a democratic process in which any person however humble can produce evidence which over-turns the theories of the greats].

The Greta Thunberg phenomenon - led by the palpably unqualified nonetheless proclaimed by the system - is evident across so many of our institutions and the policies they develop. It is anti-democratic, anti-meritocracy and often corrupt.

Original title: Woking ourselves to death

Original language: en

EU is like: A totalitarian regime coverings its conscience with a show of faux democracy (such as citizens assemblies).

Europe is like: A collection of geographical regions with interesting but eroding national idiosyncrasies

Democracy is like: A noisy but chaotic expression of different views - without fear, favour or bias.

Who should hear: There should be a comission on the 'crisis in representation'. Media stars should not be given a voice in areas such as politics or complex policy

Question: Do you ever have doubts that you are not capable of understanding the issues around which you make policy?

In general this experience was: Very negative

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Fairness and social justice ; Democracy and Goverance ; Economy and Markets ;

## Integrative living and working

Current developments seem worrying: climate crisis, wars, democracy threatened by right-wing extremism, and discrimination becoming socially acceptable. For a long time, I imagined the future as a beautiful, utopian one. Now I wake up and notice many problems as

if we were sliding straight into dystopian doomsday scenarios. At the same time, I find great strength within myself and my relationships. I experience new depth through mindfulness and meditation. I find hope in my growing self-confidence and trust in the universe that solutions will find themselves. A deeper understanding of humanity, connection, and appreciation help me deal with external uncertainties. Inner and outer resources give me stability. I sense a growing together in confronting problems and opportunities for development in crises. Trauma-sensitive work, the integration of sustainable technologies, and the integration of social divisions hold potential that is incredibly underestimated. Mystical-spiritual, psychological-scientific, human-centered innovation approaches are shining on the horizon. Diversity deserves to be celebrated. Finding commonalities in culture, religion, and origins allows us to draw strength from the fact that we live on one Earth, have shared warming stories around the fire for millennia, and breathed and exhaled this same air. Humanity is experienced in change and crisis. By finding a sense of belonging, collaborating, and co-creating, we have developed new visions through every storm.

Original title: Integratives Leben und Arbeiten

Original language : de

EU is like : a huge oil tanker that is slowly adjusting its course, but urgently needs to spend some time in port refitting to set up its solar sails.

Europe is like: a landmass on which diverse groups of people have managed to come together.

Democracy is like: A fit grandpa with a crutch who loves hiking in the Alps, but turns a blind eye to the fact that his granddaughters already know the Rocky Mountains and the Himalayas and could one day learn to surf together.

Who should hear: Well, all of course, only in resonance with each other do people find new stories, images and visions and can build each other up, copy and discover new things

Question: How do they use their policies to connect differences? What do they build on? What do they leave behind? How do they empower disadvantaged groups? When did they last change their minds? What does their gut feeling tell them? How do they manage to dance with their opponents instead of fighting them?

In general this experience was: Very positive

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Fairness and social justice ; Democracy and Governance ; Living together and Community ;

**The municipality disregards the participation process with the neighborhood and unilaterally changes a plan with a very negative impact on local residents.**

I served on the advisory group for a housing development project in our neighborhood. We went through an intensive participatory process, resulting in a plan approved by the municipal council that everyone involved agreed with, a trade-off between housing and green space in our highly urbanized neighborhood. As an advisory group, we were then unpleasantly surprised when the municipality suddenly proposed replacing the green space with a four-story above-ground parking garage in the middle of a residential area. This meant that, instead of a small green park, many homes suddenly faced a parking garage. This hadn't been communicated beforehand, and it suddenly became a fait accompli... A negative experience indeed.

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Who should hear: Anyone involved in participation

Question: Do you dare to do what will benefit the people directly affected by a decision the most, even if this is not your political position?

In general this experience was: Very negative

The experience you described was: rare but it happens from time to time

This story also appears in Mobility and transport ; Fairness and social justice ; Housing and Living Conditions ;

### Less "economies of scale" means more "social justice."

Having fled the city shortly after my retirement, I took refuge in a corner of the countryside. 6,000 liters of rainwater irrigate my toilets and my land when drought strikes. Photovoltaic panels sit atop the roofs. I leave my few acres of garden fallow and reintroduce plant species native to my region. I buy my dairy products from a nearby farm. I have local produce delivered. Over the course of my life, I've seen major retailers gradually kill off local commerce, the kind that built society. Today, they play the violin in the ears of consumers who are tired of their credo: "economies of scale." They've started mimicking the neighborhood grocery store they banished decades earlier. It's a deception. A single religion prevails: profit. Price has become the sole selling point, to the detriment of quality, sustainability, and health. Producers are being strangled. I'm doing my part, but it seems tiny compared to what needs to be done to return to a minimum of humanity and social cohesion. Europe must be united or risk being crushed. But it must be united around more regionalized projects. We can move mountains with social cohesion. The neoliberalism that drives globalization is destroying the bond and the very essence of humanity. Volt interests me because of the cross-border aspect, and I also like to hear that you have an approach that respects regional specificities. People who are losing their identity and see the far right as a way out frighten me. What level of deprivation of freedoms and cultural mortification are they capable of adhering to? The duty of remembrance is no longer enough. We must highlight all the human rights violations that accompany dictatorships. The United States is showing us the wrong path... Have we failed? Are our children no longer being raised in the spirit of enlightenment? Is it the digital tidal wave that is destroying the very engine of our democracies: contradictory analysis? Is it possible to rediscover values other than the sole pursuit of profit? Have we forgotten to this extent that we are mortal and that the accumulation of goods is futile as long as we can house, feed, clothe, and heat ourselves? Can we still count on the political world to stop climate change? Citizen mobilization seems more convincing today. If we can no longer influence decision-makers, we must act at the Achilles' heel: consumption, which fuels the power of those who are acquiring more and more monopolies. Do we want to boost an economy? How can favoring large companies and monopolies encourage entrepreneurship? Does creating startups prevent them from ending up being sold to large corporations that then swallow them up to become ever more powerful? I grew up with the mantra: "the economy regulates itself through the principle of supply and demand"... This is no longer very relevant. If we allow a company to become a behemoth that takes all the market share, where is the self-regulation? More SMEs competing with each other—isn't that what boosts the economy?

Original title: Moins d' "économie d'échelle", c'est plus de "justice sociale".

Original language : fr

EU is like: An economic union that struggles to remember the political values it prides itself on.

Europe is like: A solution to defend against obscurantism

Democracy is like: The only way to preserve the fundamental freedoms of the individual

Who should hear: More than a story, I transcribed my daily life, my fears, my anxieties. It's by joining forces with those who have the same questions that we can create a critical mass that makes things happen. If I go knocking on the door of my five neighbors to try to convince them, it's a safe bet I'll be met with total indifference. They don't realize that the common good is the driving force behind their own self-interest. Only the present fuels their vote... when they still care about the nature of their vote. The general disinvestment in politics is blatant. Self-interest and short-termism dominate.

Question: Do you have a job you enjoy, outside of politics?

In general this experience was: I don't know / Not sure

The experience you described was: not sure

This story also appears in Fairness and social justice ; Nature and climate ;

## Torn apart

I feel increasingly trapped and unable to act and live according to my own values and beliefs. Climate and nature conservation, sustainability and poverty reduction, equal opportunities and conditions for all (including outside of Europe), as well as consideration and humanity, are extremely important to me. However, I am confronted with the following decisions every day: Do I actively restrict and limit myself – by not buying certain things, by not using the car to get somewhere, by using a bicycle instead, or by critically examining myself and my actions – and thus become more and more of an outsider in this society OR do I simply accept that I can't change anything and that the real levers don't lie with me, and despair at this realization?

Original title: Zerissenheit

Original language: de

EU is like: nan

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: nan

Question: Do you still act according to your own convictions? Do you regularly question yourself and consider the bigger picture (the entire world, historically current and future), or are you just going around in circles about the next election period? Do you ever think about the future and the lives of others? Can you still look in the mirror?

In general this experience was: Very negative

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Fairness and social justice ; Nature and climate ; Democracy and Governance ;

## Climate change event illustrates weaknesses in democracy and society

We had an unusually destructive ice storm in the middle of April. It took down most of the trees in the city and with them, the powerlines. My city was without power for over a week. This highlighted the way that we take energy for granted, the power of community banding together, how ill prepared the city, province is for unusual events (no redundancy to deal with

things in terms of supply chains etc.) and how much people can feel entitled and like the city is responsible, even for acts of god.

Original title: Climate change event illustrates weaknesses in democracy and society

Original language: en

EU is like: Countries working together in a united way, which is great, but in the face of climate change, increased globalization, must wane to make way for increased localization.

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: a system, like so many others that is showing signs of severe strain due to the multicrisis, at the heart of which is the health of our planet

Who should hear: Everyone - everything is connected.

Question: Why are you not adopting a systems thinking lens to enable you to see that the health of ALL systems (political, economic, social, etc. are predicated on the health of our ecological systems. Without a life-sustaining planet, nothing else matters!

In general this experience was: Negative

The experience you described was: rare but it happens from time to time

This story also appears in Fairness and social justice ; Nature and climate ; Living together and Community ;

## New ways of being a community

A few months ago I attended a presentation meeting of the Cebase energy community and it was an extremely positive experience.

Original title: Nuove modi di essere comunità

Original language: it

EU is like: A way to preserve European values

Europe is like: A continent rich in traditions and values to be preserved

Democracy is like: A plant dies if it is not watered constantly.

Who should hear: nan

Question: How do they imagine the world after their mandate expires?

In general this experience was: Very positive

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Fairness and social justice ; Nature and climate ; Housing and Living Conditions ; #

## Nature and climate

### Victim of the green transition or of the Italian authorities?

I have a car in excellent condition, but it's a Euro 5 diesel, and I'll probably no longer be able to use it in September. The regional government hasn't given any guidance on this matter, and this fact has truly created a climate of uncertainty for me and everyone else in the same situation. This issue surfaces in the media every now and then, but nothing is clear.

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EU is like: Neverland by Edoardo Bennato

Europe is like: A quarrelsome chicken coop

Democracy is like: a crystal vase

Who should hear: The President of the Region and the Minister of the Environment

Question: nan

In general this experience was: Negative

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Mobility and transport ; Nature and climate ; Living together and Community ;

### A living clean environment is common sense - your & my responsibility!

Every day I see garbage and waste in our immediate environment that dirty, pollute, destroy and in the worst case kill our nature and wildlife. We have lost respect for our dear nature, living environment and fellow humans. Egon sees himself above the group that "someone else can fulfill my responsibility". The worst thing is that this reprehensible behavior is becoming the norm.

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EU is like: an overcoat

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Democracy is like: a value system, changing and life-giving

Who should hear: ?

Question: How can we get those in power and media forces to stand up as examples of long-term common sense and not just vote/click maximization?

In general this experience was: Very negative

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Fairness and social justice ; Nature and climate ; Living together and Community ;

### Climate change denial

I am outraged that Friedrich Merz, our elected Chancellor, is claiming that climate protection isn't important, that Germany's contribution is pointless anyway. These stories reach millions of people. I thought the issue of climate change was settled, that everything was set in stone, that everything was resolved. Instead, its relevance is now being denied in my country, too. I can't believe it. Now I, too, feel the disconnect between myself and the policies being implemented at the top.

Original title: Klimawandelleugnung

Original language: de

EU is like: an organization that helps us act together

Europe is like: my cultural home, my community of values in all its diversity

Democracy is like: the essence of our society

Who should hear: nan

Question: What are you really concerned about? Deep down?

In general this experience was: Very negative

The experience you described was: rare but it happens from time to time

This story also appears in Nature and climate ;

## Systems / behaviour change for nature restoration at scale

I recently spent some time in South Portugal and stayed at or visited a number of ecosystem restoration and community building projects. The experience was both positive and negative: positive in that I witnessed the huge progress and accomplishments made by most of those projects in the past 1-3 years. Negative in that 100% of those projects are currently in a situation of intense financial and overall resource scarcity, despite the clarity of their vision, the skills and willingness of their co-founders and the dedication of an ongoing flow of unpaid workers in the space.

Original title: Systems / behaviour change for nature restoration at scale

Original language: en

EU is like: nan

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: nan

Question: nan

In general this experience was: Neutral

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ;

## Ecosystem Awareness

My concerns about an almost full lack of ecosystem related knowledge in local government was met with an 'it is what it is' statement by a member of the municipal council (gemeenteraad). On these grounds, me and other climate mayors (Klimaatburgemeester) are on one hand asked to perform unpaid civic duties, whilst there is absolutely no possibility for the local government to actually move it's ass and take action.

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EU is like: A valuable mothership which can penalize the lack of (climate) action and instill rules to officially integrate the best available knowledge in local governments.

Europe is like: a pitfall with spikes full of newborn babies learning how to even science

Democracy is like: a hoax

Who should hear: NRC, Dutch School of Public Administration, Scientific Council for Government Policy

Question: When will you change, or simply move away so better equipped people can take charge?

In general this experience was: Very negative

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Fairness and social justice ; Nature and climate ; Democracy and Governance ;

## Gold suggests on effective climate actions amidst boring business as usual.

The last two days, I listened to online conferences on energy policy, how to reduce climate emissions from buildings, new EU guidelines on the matter, new subsidies for heat pumps and renovations. Although this is my field of work, most presentations were boring, so I quickly switched to other parallel sessions. In the end I did hear some interesting perspectives, in the midst of endless superficial conversations.

Original title: Gold suggests on effective climate actions amidst boring business as usual.

Original language: en

EU is like: essential for our future.

Europe is like: peoples like me

Democracy is like: something where all should have equal say, but in reality we have a democracy by the powerfull

Who should hear: politicians, innovators

Question: please come and see how things go in practice

In general this experience was: Positive

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Housing and Living Conditions ; Economy and Markets ;

## The climate concern paradox

I talk to many people who have been very concerned about climate change for quite a while. Very few of them have changed their behavioural patterns in order to translate the concern into any action that may have a positive impact.

Original title: The climate concern paradox

Original language: en

EU is like: a true miracle that people either take for granted after a while or even blame it as the mother of all problems

Europe is like: a wonderfully complex piece of art that looks & feels more attractive the further you are away from it

Democracy is like: family: Not always fun and at times really demanding, but indispensable

Who should hear: nan

Question: What would change if you seriously asked yourself every day: How can I contribute meaningfully to a future worth living for as many people as possible?

In general this experience was: Neutral

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Health and Wellbeing ; Economy and Markets ;

## Volt for Europe and sustainability

After a world voyage by sailboat, I was convinced of the urgency of taking action against climate change. However, this message was silenced in Dutch politics. Until I encountered Volt! That determined my decision.

Original title: Volt voor Europa en duurzaamheid

Original language : nl

EU is like : The United States of Europe

Europe is like: The smallest unit we can stand in the world

Democracy is like: Everyone thinks and decides together

Who should hear: Everyone

Question: What problems are you really going to delegate to Europe?

In general this experience was: Very positive

The experience you described was: a one time occurrence

This story also appears in Nature and climate ;

### positivity is key

It's becoming increasingly frustrating to watch and read the news as climate change, plastic pollution, the biodiversity crisis, social injustice etc becomes each day worse.

that being said I feel increasingly hopeful that in some part we are gonna succeed in creating a better world, come good news scattered around help a lot in this, I feel like it matters a lot that we do not only communicate the good and not only the bad news.

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Democracy is like: that game you wanted so bad as a Child and that, just few weeks after finally getting, it you started taking for granted

Who should hear: pessimists

Question: do you really want to leave a world like this to your children?

In general this experience was: Positive

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Fairness and social justice ; Nature and climate ; Migration and Refugees ;

### Nature + Climate and Other Life as a Legal Entity.

That we absolutely do not value or respect nature (and the climate) or other life forms. Whether it's the meat industry, milk, eggs, or nature. As long as it gets in the way of our profits, we horrifically destroy everything. But we do enjoy walking the dog.

Then there's the climate, our biggest security problem. If it were a country invading us, we'd do what was necessary, but with the climate, yolo.

We constantly apply double standards and, laughing, we destroy the world, for others and ourselves.

Original title: Natuur + klimaat en ander leven als rechtspersoon.

Original language : nl

EU is like : Holy (I'm not religious). No EU, no peace on this continent, and no path to world peace.

Europe is like: A future for us but also as an example for others.

Democracy is like: Until we find something better, even sacred. The only form that seems to work.

Who should hear: I don't need people who hear it. I do need people who have the courage to look in the mirror.

Question: What should I ask? I don't know what to ask anymore. People don't want to suffer; it's shameful what they choose. Not just those in power, but also no one is going vegan for the sake of the climate. They simply want to destroy the earth. Even within Volt, I think their eyes are ajar.

In general this experience was: Very negative

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ;

### Carbon tunnel vision distracts city council from the real problem

The municipality I work for organized an information session for the city council about sustainability. They hired an engineering firm to explain topics such as 'climate neutral' and 'energy neutral'.

After introducing climate neutral, it was mentioned the city is responsible for emissions from ships that fare the rivers. Somebody said those emissions were already compensated by national solar and wind energy parks. Therefore, the municipality does not have to compensate those emissions. As a response, the speaker tried to explain that it does not matter how it is compensated (national or in the municipality), the municipality just has to provide reasoning for it.

I felt helpless as I thought: why are we bickering over CO2 budgets, when this is about ecological overshoot, the breaching of 6 out of 9 planetary boundaries? The warming build in the pipeline has too big of a momentum to stop, and climate change is just one of the factors.

So painful to see a completely sidetracked discussion.

Original title: Carbon tunnel vision distracts city council from the real problem

Original language : en

EU is like : a powerful influence that loses power due to its heterogeneity

Europe is like: a collection of landscapes on spaceship earth

Democracy is like: majority rules the minority, and although clumsily implemented, the best we have until we are able to have wise dialogue and action.

Who should hear: city councils

Question: I you study and understand ecological overshoot and planetary boundaries, and how our economy ultimately depends on ecology, do you still believe in green growth and CO2 as a key metric?

In general this experience was: Negative

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ;

## sealing

Despite the need to adapt our cities to climate change, more and more green spaces are being sealed and built on, especially in my city. And this is against the declared will of the residents. Politicians are doing exactly the opposite of what is necessary to make life in the city bearable in the future, given the increasing warming.

Original title: Versiegelung

Original language: de

EU is like: a hope for a United Europe

Europe is like: my home

Democracy is like: important and essential

Who should hear: All people

Question: Why do they act according to the motto: After me, the deluge?

In general this experience was: Negative

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Health and Wellbeing ;

## Lack of courage to change

In my opinion, many people lack the willingness to face necessary changes, let alone proactively shape them. The end of the combustion engine is a case in point. This is now being questioned again. How many more natural disasters will it take?! to understand that we should stop burning fossil fuels.

Original title: Mangelnder Mut zu Veränderung

Original language: de

EU is like: a community of solidarity

Europe is like: cultural diversity

Democracy is like: A form of government without alternatives

Who should hear: Everyone!

Question: What do you imagine sustainable coexistence to be?

In general this experience was: Very negative

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Mobility and transport ; Nature and climate ; Health and Wellbeing ;

## Weltschmerz

Given the current global situation and political developments (the election of Donald Trump, the end of the traffic light coalition, and the resulting political chaos in Germany), I am deeply concerned about the future of our world. This is especially true with regard to social justice, democracy, society, and climate protection. I simply feel helpless and don't know how I can have an impact on climate protection, democracy, social cohesion, and social justice.

Original title: Weltschmerz

Original language: de

EU is like: an anchor that must hold together but also deal with the current problems in Europe!

Europe is like: a unit that should stick together!

Democracy is like: a basic law.

Who should hear: All

Question: How do you look to the future? Where are we headed?

In general this experience was: Negative

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Democracy and Governance ; Living together and Community ;

## Citizens' participation and climate change

Last year my name was drawn to be part of Bologna's Citizens' Assembly on Climate Affairs. This gave me the opportunity to learn more about climate change, meet many active fellow citizens, get more involved and be a small part of solutions in our city. The city council took over most of our recommendations, and we are now actively monitoring their implementation with the aim of keeping the council to its promises. The experience taught me how important it is that citizens be involved in forming climate policies. Most carbon emissions are directly or indirectly produced by citizens, and most consequences of climate change fall directly upon their shoulders - it is important that they get agency, and that they understand that it cannot be solved without them.

Original title: Citizens' participation and climate change

Original language : en

EU is like : a fantastic tool that we are still learning how to use effectively

Europe is like: a home full of brothers and sisters

Democracy is like: a dear friend in fragile health who needs to be taken care of, nursed and fed

Who should hear: Citizens and political leaders of European cities where citizen participation in climate affairs has yet to be given shape.

Question: Please involve your constituencies in developing and implementing climate change policies.

In general this experience was: Very positive

The experience you described was: a one time occurrence

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Democracy and Governance ;

## Talk to a PVV member, to 'the other'.

I had my first extensive conversation with a PVV member. I discussed topics such as climate change (both agreed) and the role of humans in it (completely disagreed). It was fun to talk about, and it just goes to show how important personal contact is in building public perception.

Original title: Praat eens met een PVV-er, met 'de ander'.

Original language : nl

EU is like : the only way to improve the world/Europe; but the EU must change and be more proactive.

Europe is like: my cultural and emotional homeland

Democracy is like: the best form of all evil forms of regulated societies

Who should hear: As many people as possible, from all backgrounds. TALK TO EACH OTHER! We mustn't allow ourselves to be incited to opposition, hatred, and violence.

Connection is the key, meeting is the form, and mutual understanding and respect is the result. Hopefully...

Question: Why don't you share more about what you're working on? Openness makes people feel involved. Why don't you do that?

In general this experience was: Neutral

The experience you described was: rare but it happens from time to time

This story also appears in Nature and climate ;

## Climate denial

Many people in my personal circle assume that there are problems with the climate, but they do not connect any consequences to their actions

Original title: Klimaat ontkenning

Original language : nl

EU is like : Organization

Europe is like: Society

Democracy is like: Should be core value

Who should hear: Policy influencers

Question: Start policy with the world people experience

In general this experience was: Negative

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Mobility and transport ; Nature and climate ;

## Entangled Everything

I have always wanted to work with and for nature. Then I got interested in people and human relationships. I have never really been interested in Politics with a capital P. Still, I am slowly recognising that all of it, everything we do in this relational space is in some way or another inherently political. On that smaller level. Whether this is working with kids, with neighbourhoods, with nature, or with climate change, there is some connective tissue inherent in the world and the participation with it that connects all of it. It is tiring to think that big Politics is still about party politics, power dynamics, single issues, linear thinking, this versus that, as if the world wasn't connected. It is good to see that there are more and more initiatives around that operate with a different logic...

Original title: Entangled Everything

Original language : en

EU is like : An ensemble, where a lot of good stuff is neither seen nor recognized, along with some really stupid rules

Europe is like: a community of places and people still trying to figure out co-living

Democracy is like: you notice its benefits once it is absent or wrongly held

Who should hear: nan

Question: nan

In general this experience was: Positive

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Living together and Community ; Other, please specify ;

## Flood policy

I witnessed a construction project being pushed through in the middle of a flood zone without proper input from the neighbors. This motivated me to advocate for greater citizen participation. Since then, I've had a different view of democracy.

Original title: Hochwasserpolitik

Original language: de

EU is like: a vision that is unfortunately still quite undemocratic

Europe is like: Hometown

Democracy is like: the unfinished basis of all politics

Who should hear: All

Question: Given the possibility of combining citizens' councils and referendums, what is your idea of a good, fair democracy?

In general this experience was: Very negative

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Democracy and Governance ; Living together and Community ;

## Travel to the near future

There's a lot of negativity surrounding the energy transition. Unfeasible. Unaffordable. Meanwhile, all generations are traveling more and more. Simultaneously, activists and conservatives are hardening in their trenches. My journey involves the development of a new technology you probably haven't heard of yet. But one we've been working hard on for the past seven years. One that allows everyone to have their own compact power plant at home. One that puts citizens back in charge of their own homes. The transition will be greatly aided by a green technology, cheaper than the most polluting and fossil fuels. Decentralized, preventing grid congestion. Because it's green, affordable, and European, that topic of polarization is off the table. Win-win. As it should be. It's a typical Volt product. Green, inclusive, and democratic. Power to the people. [www.ion-energy.nl](http://www.ion-energy.nl)

Original title: Reis naar de nabije toekomst

Original language: nl

EU is like: a United States of America, from before the Hamilton moment.

Europe is like: The only refuge of decency and human values, seriously threatened from outside and within

Democracy is like: The only way to actually get out of the circle of power and abuse of power and stay out of it.

Who should hear: Every Volt resident deserves to hear it. And outside Volt too.

Question: When are you going to use that power to make the world a better place than it was before you got that power?

In general this experience was: Very positive

The experience you described was: rare but it happens from time to time

This story also appears in Nature and climate ;

## We're fooling each other

Almost everyone makes some sustainable choices, such as separating waste or installing solar panels. But this is essentially an economic choice. If residual waste isn't priced or solar

panels aren't profitable, we won't do it. We also abuse these sustainable choices to continue using fossil fuels, to fly, etc.

We don't want to formulate and implement necessary policy on a national level, but only within the European framework or even more broadly. And there, we delay policy development and blame "Brussels" for undermining our sovereignty.

In short, we cling to our self-interest even though the climate is deteriorating, poverty is increasing, we are threatened by Russia, the US, big tech, etc. And no politician dares to challenge this, lest they lose the voters' favor. Anyone who dares gets my vote.

Original title: We houden elkaar voor de gek

Original language: nl

EU is like: our future in terms of safety, climate, economy and migration

Europe is like: an opportunity for the world when it comes to cooperation and progressive policies

Democracy is like: the best we have, a means to realize an acceptable existence for all people now and in the future

Who should hear: Everyone.

Question: Why is staying in power more important to you than what's best for the world's people?

In general this experience was: Negative

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Living together and Community ; Peace and Security ;

## Strategically generating your own green energy combines perfectly with arable farming and nature restoration

As an energy cooperative, we are working on creating a solar farm in Renkum: the "doorwerksse Zonnehoeve" (The Solar Farm). This farm combines a natural area with an agricultural area. This dual land use is the future for financing our compensation and making our agriculture sustainable. The positive side is that this is possible. The negative side is that the governing province, the BBB (Belgian Association of Energy Cooperatives), is opposed to it.

Original title: Strategische eigen groene energie opwerk combineert perfect met akkerbouw en natuurherstel

Original language: nl

EU is like: Essential for our survival

Europe is like: Where we live and live together

Democracy is like: For a just society, They at village level as well as at continent level

Who should hear: All of Europe

Question: How can you help ensure that your loved ones can live in a safe, clean, and prosperous environment for generations to come?

In general this experience was: Very positive

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Health and Wellbeing ; Peace and Security ;

## Transformation to more efficient energy use

A step backward in climate protection. We must finally move away from combustion and toward the use of quantum mechanics (e.g., heat pumps).

Original title: Transformation zu effizientere Energienutzung

Original language: de

EU is like: a guarantee of stability and prosperity.

Europe is like: Our common home

Democracy is like: Sometimes difficult but I can't think of anything better.

Who should hear: All

Question: How many more climate disasters in Europe will it take before decisive action is taken?!

In general this experience was: Very positive

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Housing and Living Conditions ; Economy and Markets ;

## Less "economies of scale" means more "social justice."

Having fled the city shortly after my retirement, I took refuge in a corner of the countryside. 6,000 liters of rainwater irrigate my toilets and my land when drought strikes. Photovoltaic panels sit atop the roofs. I leave my few acres of garden fallow and reintroduce plant species native to my region. I buy my dairy products from a nearby farm. I have local produce delivered. Over the course of my life, I've seen major retailers gradually kill off local commerce, the kind that built society. Today, they play the violin in the ears of consumers who are tired of their credo: "economies of scale." They've started mimicking the neighborhood grocery store they banished decades earlier. It's a deception. A single religion prevails: profit. Price has become the sole selling point, to the detriment of quality, sustainability, and health. Producers are being strangled. I'm doing my part, but it seems tiny compared to what needs to be done to return to a minimum of humanity and social cohesion. Europe must be united or risk being crushed. But it must be united around more regionalized projects. We can move mountains with social cohesion. The neoliberalism that drives globalization is destroying the bond and the very essence of humanity. Volt interests me because of the cross-border aspect, and I also like to hear that you have an approach that respects regional specificities. People who are losing their identity and see the far right as a way out frighten me. What level of deprivation of freedoms and cultural mortification are they capable of adhering to? The duty of remembrance is no longer enough. We must highlight all the human rights violations that accompany dictatorships. The United States is showing us the wrong path... Have we failed? Are our children no longer being raised in the spirit of enlightenment? Is it the digital tidal wave that is destroying the very engine of our democracies: contradictory analysis? Is it possible to rediscover values other than the sole pursuit of profit? Have we forgotten to this extent that we are mortal and that the accumulation of goods is futile as long as we can house, feed, clothe, and heat ourselves? Can we still count on the political world to stop climate change? Citizen mobilization seems more convincing today. If we can no longer influence decision-makers, we must act at the Achilles' heel: consumption, which fuels the power of those who are acquiring more and more monopolies. Do we want to boost an economy? How can favoring large companies and monopolies encourage entrepreneurship? Does creating startups prevent them from ending up being sold to large corporations that then swallow them up to become ever more powerful? I grew up with the mantra: "the economy regulates itself through the principle of supply and demand"... This is no longer very relevant. If we allow a company to become a

behemoth that takes all the market share, where is the self-regulation? More SMEs competing with each other— isn't that what boosts the economy?

Original title: Moins d' "économie d'échelle", c'est plus de "justice sociale".

Original language : fr

EU is like : An economic union that struggles to remember the political values it prides itself on.

Europe is like: A solution to defend against obscurantism

Democracy is like: The only way to preserve the fundamental freedoms of the individual

Who should hear: More than a story, I transcribed my daily life, my fears, my anxieties. It's by joining forces with those who have the same questions that we can create a critical mass that makes things happen. If I go knocking on the door of my five neighbors to try to convince them, it's a safe bet I'll be met with total indifference. They don't realize that the common good is the driving force behind their own self-interest. Only the present fuels their vote... when they still care about the nature of their vote. The general disinvestment in politics is blatant. Self-interest and short-termism dominate.

Question: Do you have a job you enjoy, outside of politics?

In general this experience was: I don't know / Not sure

The experience you described was: not sure

This story also appears in Fairness and social justice ; Nature and climate ;

## Polarized society

Climate change polarizes society into climate fanatics and climate deniers.

Original title: Polarisierte Gesellschaft

Original language : de

EU is like : the beginning of the United States of Europe

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: do instead of complain

Who should hear: nan

Question: nan

In general this experience was: Neutral

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Health and Wellbeing ; Living together and Community ;

## The crisis screams - no one listens

Lately, I've noticed how much the media presence of Fridays for Future and the Last Generation has declined. Their actions used to be a constant topic—in the news, on social media, in conversations. Now, you hardly hear anything about them. I think that's a shame, because climate change hasn't become any less urgent. It feels to me as if the issue is disappearing from public consciousness, even though it should be present everywhere.

Original title: Die Krise schreit - Keiner hört zu

Original language : de

EU is like : a place that should do better and learn from the past and serve as a role model.

Europe is like: a place that should do better and learn from the past and serve as a role model.

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: All

Question: When should something change? When will the issue be taken seriously?

In general this experience was: Very negative

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ;

## Climate indifference

I'm not really interested in the climate issue. We can't change anything now anyway. I certainly won't limit myself because of it.

Original title: Klimagleichgültigkeit

Original language : de

EU is like : nan

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: nan

Question: What do you want to do?

In general this experience was: I don't know / Not sure

The experience you described was: not sure

This story also appears in Nature and climate ;

## Missing male turtles

Due to climate change, the temperature in the soil has risen. However, the temperature in turtle nests determines whether the turtles will be male or female. The increased temperature means that almost exclusively female turtles hatch, and some species have already become extinct. (Contribution to me: I was involved in a turtle conservation program in Malaysia, tagged the mother turtles, and dug up the eggs to bury them on the project site. The sand there can be kept wet and therefore cool.)

Original title: Fehlende männliche Schildkröten

Original language : de

EU is like : A great opportunity

Europe is like: A multiple personality in which all personalities think egocentrically

Democracy is like: Freedom

Who should hear: Anyone who doesn't believe that a few degrees Celsius will change anything.

Question: nan

In general this experience was: Very negative

The experience you described was: rare but it happens from time to time

This story also appears in Nature and climate ;

## Extraordinary weather events

A few years ago, there was a severe flood in the Ahr Valley. The heavy rainfall was entirely foreseeable. However, there was no adequate automatic alarm system. Many people there lost their homes, or large parts of them. My step-aunt was also affected. The water even reached the front door of the house where I lived as a child. These unusual weather events are becoming increasingly regular. We are currently experiencing recurring dry periods, which are then interrupted by monsoon-like downpours. This is increasingly leading to lower yields for farmers.

Original title: Außergewöhnliche Wetterereignisse

Original language: de

EU is like: The only possible solution

Europe is like: A coherent unit

Democracy is like: The best possible version of government, but one realizes that it still needs some adjustments

Who should hear: nan

Question: To what extent should one rethink one's own actions holistically, instead of always reacting only selectively to problematic developments within society?

In general this experience was: Negative

The experience you described was: rare but it happens from time to time

This story also appears in Nature and climate ;

## Torn apart

I feel increasingly trapped and unable to act and live according to my own values and beliefs. Climate and nature conservation, sustainability and poverty reduction, equal opportunities and conditions for all (including outside of Europe), as well as consideration and humanity, are extremely important to me. However, I am confronted with the following decisions every day: Do I actively restrict and limit myself – by not buying certain things, by not using the car to get somewhere, by using a bicycle instead, or by critically examining myself and my actions – and thus become more and more of an outsider in this society OR do I simply accept that I can't change anything and that the real levers don't lie with me, and despair at this realization?

Original title: Zerissenheit

Original language: de

EU is like: nan

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: nan

Question: Do you still act according to your own convictions? Do you regularly question yourself and consider the bigger picture (the entire world, historically current and future), or are you just going around in circles about the next election period? Do you ever think about the future and the lives of others? Can you still look in the mirror?

In general this experience was: Very negative

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Fairness and social justice ; Nature and climate ; Democracy and Governance ;

## together we can achieve greater benefits

Last summer, thanks to the party, I attended an event promoting the Cebase energy community. I must confess that I was unfamiliar with the world of energy communities before then. I came away enthusiastic because energy communities represent a project with many positive implications, as they allow people to save money, make the environment cleaner, and rediscover a sense of belonging to a community that seemed irretrievably lost in modern society.

Original title: insieme si possono maggiori vantaggi

Original language : it

EU is like : the greatest experiment in peaceful union between states

Europe is like: the cradle of democracy and rights

Democracy is like: a plant that needs constant care otherwise it dies

Who should hear: especially politicians

Question: What vision do they have of the world because in my opinion many don't even have one of the country they govern?

In general this experience was: Very positive

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Housing and Living Conditions ; Living together and Community ;

## Stupid, stupider, stupidest

No one can think outside the box anymore. Especially older people, but also young people. Massive egos and anti-intellectualism are becoming more and more widespread. Examples include ignoring and denying climate change, anti-vaxxing, etc. At the same time, there is a gigantic leap forward.

Original title: Dumm, dümmer, am dümmstem

Original language : de

EU is like : a cool head around mad

Europe is like: Hometown

Democracy is like: something that you only appreciate when you have lost it

Who should hear: The ones up there.

Question: Is the light always off for you or only when you need it?

In general this experience was: Negative

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Democracy and Governance ; Education and Schools ;

## Climate change event illustrates weaknesses in democracy and society

We had an unusually destructive ice storm in the middle of April. It took down most of the trees in the city and with them, the powerlines. My city was without power for over a week. This highlighted the way that we take energy for granted, the power of community banding together, how ill prepared the city, province is for unusual events (no redundancy to deal with things in terms of supply chains etc.) and how much people can feel entitled and like the city is responsible, even for acts of god.

Original title: Climate change event illustrates weaknesses in democracy and society

Original language : en

EU is like : Countries working together in a united way, which is great, but in the face of climate change, increased globalization, must wane to make way for increased localization.

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: a system, like so many others that is showing signs of severe strain due to the multicrisis, at the heart of which is the health of our planet

Who should hear: Everyone - everything is connected.

Question: Why are you not adopting a systems thinking lens to enable you to see that the health of ALL systems (political, economic, social, etc. are predicated on the health of our ecological systems. Without a life-sustaining planet, nothing else matters!

In general this experience was: Negative

The experience you described was: rare but it happens from time to time

This story also appears in Fairness and social justice ; Nature and climate ; Living together and Community ;

## Climate protection and security.

Climate protection seems to be making far too little progress. On the other hand, there are also many truly great things happening. Unfortunately, many people—including those close to me—are victims of disinformation. Unfortunately, the latter has a very serious impact on many issues: social justice, lies orchestrated by the Kremlin.

Original title: Klimaschutz und Sicherheit.

Original language : de

EU is like : the best and most important thing there is!

Europe is like: A great opportunity for peace and climate protection.

Democracy is like: the crown of civilization.

Who should hear: I'd love to be in the European Parliament. A parliament envisioned by progressive parties like the Greens or Volt. But I'm also undecided.

Question: Difficult. Now that it's so far, I can't think of anything. -- The best question would be: will we make it?

In general this experience was: I don't know / Not sure

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ;

## Public transport in the border region

I live on a European internal border (Germany/Netherlands) and therefore travel by public transport on both sides. Thanks to an EU project, a train now crosses the border here, but the connection is very unreliable because the two systems are incompatible, meaning each section is always operated by a local crew. Especially on the German part of the route, disruptions due to staff shortages are extremely common. I also need a separate app with a separate account for each mobility provider. Compatibility is usually non-existent, especially across the border, which I find very regrettable. For climate protection reasons, it is extremely important to me to use public transport, even if it sometimes takes considerably longer. Nevertheless, I greatly enjoy the opportunity to visit neighboring cities without having to exchange currency, etc. I am convinced that better connections across borders will bring Europe closer together. Especially here on the border, it feels like the Union has long been a reality, even though major hurdles still need to be overcome.

Original title: ÖPNV im Grenzland

Original language : de

EU is like : Future in the making

Europe is like: my home

Democracy is like: Brushing your teeth. Sometimes annoying, but simply necessary for it to work and keep everyone healthy.

Who should hear: nan

Question: Cross-border traffic is important, but why do we still rely so heavily on air transport for European transport in times of climate change? Why isn't a Europe-wide high-speed network being discussed? The Transrapid would be a suitable option, as it comfortably achieves the necessary speeds and can thus effectively connect European capitals and metropolises. The existing national high-speed networks retain their function of local development, so there will be no competition (or only in very specific cases like Eurostar).

In general this experience was: Negative

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Mobility and transport ; Nature and climate ; Living together and Community ;

## New ways of being a community

A few months ago I attended a presentation meeting of the Cebase energy community and it was an extremely positive experience.

Original title: Nuove modi di essere comunità

Original language : it

EU is like : A way to preserve European values

Europe is like: A continent rich in traditions and values to be preserved

Democracy is like: A plant dies if it is not watered constantly.

Who should hear: nan

Question: How do they imagine the world after their mandate expires?

In general this experience was: Very positive

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Fairness and social justice ; Nature and climate ; Housing and Living Conditions ; #

## Health and Wellbeing

### The climate concern paradox

I talk to many people who have been very concerned about climate change for quite a while. Very few of them have changed their behavioural patterns in order to translate the concern into any action that may have a positive impact.

Original title: The climate concern paradox

Original language : en

EU is like : a true miracle that people either take for granted after a while or even blame it as the mother of all problems

Europe is like: a wonderfully complex piece of art that looks & feels more attractive the further you are away from it

Democracy is like: family: Not always fun and at times really demanding, but indispensable

Who should hear: nan

Question: What would change if you seriously asked yourself every day: How can I contribute meaningfully to a future worth living for as many people as possible?

In general this experience was: Neutral

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Health and Wellbeing ; Economy and Markets ;

## sealing

Despite the need to adapt our cities to climate change, more and more green spaces are being sealed and built on, especially in my city. And this is against the declared will of the residents. Politicians are doing exactly the opposite of what is necessary to make life in the city bearable in the future, given the increasing warming.

Original title: Versiegelung

Original language : de

EU is like : a hope for a United Europe

Europe is like: my home

Democracy is like: important and essential

Who should hear: All people

Question: Why do they act according to the motto: After me, the deluge?

In general this experience was: Negative

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Health and Wellbeing ;

## For more courage and Dolce Vita

There is a lack of optimism, the will and courage to change, and the realization that we are doing well and that we can change everything. Somehow, pride in what we have achieved is missing.

Original title: Für mehr Mut und Dolce Vita

Original language : de

EU is like : An anchor

Europe is like: An opportunity

Democracy is like: a big challenge

Who should hear: nan

Question: How do we achieve our goals?

In general this experience was: Positive

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Health and Wellbeing ; Work and Occupation ; Democracy and Governance ;

## Lack of courage to change

In my opinion, many people lack the willingness to face necessary changes, let alone proactively shape them. The end of the combustion engine is a case in point. This is now being questioned again. How many more natural disasters will it take?! to understand that we should stop burning fossil fuels.

Original title: Mangelnder Mut zu Veränderung

Original language: de

EU is like: a community of solidarity

Europe is like: cultural diversity

Democracy is like: A form of government without alternatives

Who should hear: Everyone!

Question: What do you imagine sustainable coexistence to be?

In general this experience was: Very negative

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Mobility and transport ; Nature and climate ; Health and Wellbeing ;

## A star on the horizon.

Many people are dissatisfied and insecure. They feel fear, dissatisfaction, hopelessness, and disappointment, and complain about the current situation or lash out at others. Sometimes it feels truly hopeless, even overwhelming, especially when you want to change something yourself. You're often laughed at, not taken seriously, or even labeled a dreamer or a wannabe hero. But that's exactly where I come in. I'm putting my hope and myself into the effort to change things for the better. Together with Volt.

Original title: Ein Stern am Horizont.

Original language: de

EU is like: A crumbling alliance.

Europe is like: A chance for togetherness.

Democracy is like: a tool to make decisions for a better future.

Who should hear: Anyone who is interested in her.

Question: Why do you find it so difficult to work with us to create a sustainable, safe, and livable future for everyone?

In general this experience was: Positive

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Health and Wellbeing ; Living together and Community ; Peace and Security ;

## Strategically generating your own green energy combines perfectly with arable farming and nature restoration

As an energy cooperative, we are working on creating a solar farm in Renkum: the "doorwerksse Zonnehoeve" (The Solar Farm). This farm combines a natural area with an agricultural area. This dual land use is the future for financing our compensation and making our agriculture sustainable. The positive side is that this is possible. The negative side is that the governing province, the BBB (Belgian Association of Energy Cooperatives), is opposed to it.

Original title: Strategische eigen groene energie opwerk combineert perfect met akkerbouw en natuurherstel

Original language: nl

EU is like: Essential for our survival

Europe is like: Where we live and live together

Democracy is like: For a just society, They at village level as well as at continent level

Who should hear: All of Europe

Question: How can you help ensure that your loved ones can live in a safe, clean, and prosperous environment for generations to come?

In general this experience was: Very positive

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Health and Wellbeing ; Peace and Security ;

## Polarized society

Climate change polarizes society into climate fanatics and climate deniers.

Original title: Polariserte Gesellschaft

Original language: de

EU is like: the beginning of the United States of Europe

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: do instead of complain

Who should hear: nan

Question: nan

In general this experience was: Neutral

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Health and Wellbeing ; Living together and Community ; #

## Migration and Refugees

### positivity is key

It's becoming increasingly frustrating to watch and read the news as climate change, plastic pollution, the biodiversity crisis, social injustice etc becomes each day worse.

that being said I feel increasingly hopeful that in some part we are gonna succeed in creating a better world, come good news scattered around help a lot in this, I feel like it matters a lot that we do not only communicate the good and not only the bad news.

Original title: positivity is key

Original language: en

EU is like: the teacher that teaches to the kids how things should be done, however even teachers make Errors (though definitely fewer than the children)

Europe is like: a continent full of differences, values, cultures and hypocrisy

Democracy is like: that game you wanted so bad as a Child and that, just few weeks after finally getting, it you started taking for granted

Who should hear: pessimists

Question: do you really want to leave a world like this to your children?

In general this experience was: Positive

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Fairness and social justice ; Nature and climate ; Migration and Refugees ; #

## Work and Occupation

### For more courage and Dolce Vita

There is a lack of optimism, the will and courage to change, and the realization that we are doing well and that we can change everything. Somehow, pride in what we have achieved is missing.

Original title: Für mehr Mut und Dolce Vita

Original language: de

EU is like: An anchor

Europe is like: An opportunity

Democracy is like: a big challenge

Who should hear: nan

Question: How do we achieve our goals?

In general this experience was: Positive

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Health and Wellbeing ; Work and Occupation ; Democracy and Governance ; #

## Housing and Living Conditions

### Gold suggests on effective climate actions amidst boring business as usual.

The last two days, I listened to online conferences on energy policy, how to reduce climate emissions from buildings, new EU guidelines on the matter, new subsidies for heat pumps and renovations. Although this is my field of work, most presentations were boring, so I quickly switched to other parallel sessions. In the end I did hear some interesting perspectives, in the midst of endless superficial conversations.

Original title: Gold suggests on effective climate actions amidst boring business as usual.

Original language: en

EU is like: essential for our future.

Europe is like: peoples like me

Democracy is like: something where all should have equal say, but in reality we have a democracy by the powerfull

Who should hear: politicians, innovators

Question: please come and see how things go in practice

In general this experience was: Positive

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Housing and Living Conditions ; Economy and Markets ;

The municipality disregards the participation process with the neighborhood and unilaterally changes a plan with a very negative impact on local residents.

I served on the advisory group for a housing development project in our neighborhood. We went through an intensive participatory process, resulting in a plan approved by the municipal council that everyone involved agreed with, a trade-off between housing and green space in our highly urbanized neighborhood. As an advisory group, we were then unpleasantly surprised when the municipality suddenly proposed replacing the green space with a four-story above-ground parking garage in the middle of a residential area. This meant that, instead of a small green park, many homes suddenly faced a parking garage. This hadn't been communicated beforehand, and it suddenly became a fait accompli... A negative experience indeed.

Original title: Gemeente heeft lak aan participatietraject met de buurt en verandert eenzijdig een plan met zeer negatieve impact op omwonenden

Original language: nl

EU is like: Something at a distance where our influence is not concrete, but the decisions taken there are far-reaching

Europe is like: The old continent that gave rise to much of what we now call the 'Western world'

Democracy is like: A great asset where it must be clear how decisions are made

Who should hear: Anyone involved in participation

Question: Do you dare to do what will benefit the people directly affected by a decision the most, even if this is not your political position?

In general this experience was: Very negative

The experience you described was: rare but it happens from time to time

This story also appears in Mobility and transport ; Fairness and social justice ; Housing and Living Conditions ;

## Transformation to more efficient energy use

A step backward in climate protection. We must finally move away from combustion and toward the use of quantum mechanics (e.g., heat pumps).

Original title: Transformation zu effizientere Energienutzung

Original language: de

EU is like: a guarantee of stability and prosperity.

Europe is like: Our common home

Democracy is like: Sometimes difficult but I can't think of anything better.

Who should hear: All

Question: How many more climate disasters in Europe will it take before decisive action is taken?!

In general this experience was: Very positive

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Housing and Living Conditions ; Economy and Markets ;

### together we can achieve greater benefits

Last summer, thanks to the party, I attended an event promoting the Cebase energy community. I must confess that I was unfamiliar with the world of energy communities before then. I came away enthusiastic because energy communities represent a project with many positive implications, as they allow people to save money, make the environment cleaner, and rediscover a sense of belonging to a community that seemed irretrievably lost in modern society.

Original title: insieme si possono maggiori vantaggi

Original language : it

EU is like : the greatest experiment in peaceful union between states

Europe is like: the cradle of democracy and rights

Democracy is like: a plant that needs constant care otherwise it dies

Who should hear: especially politicians

Question: What vision do they have of the world because in my opinion many don't even have one of the country they govern?

In general this experience was: Very positive

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Housing and Living Conditions ; Living together and Community ;

### New ways of being a community

A few months ago I attended a presentation meeting of the Cebase energy community and it was an extremely positive experience.

Original title: Nuove modi di essere comunità

Original language : it

EU is like : A way to preserve European values

Europe is like: A continent rich in traditions and values to be preserved

Democracy is like: A plant dies if it is not watered constantly.

Who should hear: nan

Question: How do they imagine the world after their mandate expires?

In general this experience was: Very positive

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Fairness and social justice ; Nature and climate ; Housing and Living Conditions ; #

## Democracy and Governance

### Ecosystem Awareness

My concerns about an almost full lack of ecosystem related knowledge in local government was met with an 'it is what it is' statement by a member of the municipal council (gemeenteraad). On these grounds, me and other climate mayors (Klimaatburgemeester)

are on one hand asked to perform unpaid civic duties, whilst there is absolutely no possibility for the local government to actually move it's ass and take action.

Original title: Ecosystem Awareness

Original language : en

EU is like : A valuable mothership which can penalize the lack of (climate) action and instill rules to officially integrate the best available knowledge in local governments.

Europe is like: a pitfall with spikes full of newborn babies learning how to even science

Democracy is like: a hoax

Who should hear: NRC, Dutch School of Public Administration, Scientific Council for Government Policy

Question: When will you change, or simply move away so better equipped people can take charge?

In general this experience was: Very negative

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Fairness and social justice ; Nature and climate ; Democracy and Governance ;

## Woking ourselves to death

My contribution to society is alienated seemingly because expertise does not count unless it is accompanied by a socially acceptable label - my label carries no value in the currency of wokery. The inheritance of respect is discredited!

I see policy makers oblivious to the evidence and science where I am familiar with the subject and I see charlatans and the grossly unqualified claiming expertise in other areas. The marquee example is Greta Thunberg - who claims a knowledge of climate impacts and moderation and proclaims 'the science is settled' [few scientists are climate experts and have no specific insight into the problem, science never works by consensus nor is science ever settled - it is a democratic process in which any person however humble can produce evidence which over-turns the theories of the greats].

The Greta Thunberg phenomenon - led by the palpably unqualified nonetheless proclaimed by the system - is evident across so many of our institutions and the policies they develop. It is anti-democratic, anti-meritocracy and often corrupt.

Original title: Woking ourselves to death

Original language : en

EU is like : A totalitarian regime coverings its conscience with a show of faux democracy (such as citizens assemblies).

Europe is like: A collection of geographical regions with interesting but eroding national idiosyncrasies

Democracy is like: A noisy but chaotic expression of different views - without fear, favour or bias.

Who should hear: There should be a comission on the 'crisis in representation'. Media stars should not be given a voice in areas such as politics or complex policy

Question: Do you ever have doubts that you are not capable of understanding the issues around which you make policy?

In general this experience was: Very negative

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Fairness and social justice ; Democracy and Governance ; Economy and Markets ;

### For more courage and Dolce Vita

There is a lack of optimism, the will and courage to change, and the realization that we are doing well and that we can change everything. Somehow, pride in what we have achieved is missing.

Original title: Für mehr Mut und Dolce Vita

Original language : de

EU is like : An anchor

Europe is like: An opportunity

Democracy is like: a big challenge

Who should hear: nan

Question: How do we achieve our goals?

In general this experience was: Positive

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Health and Wellbeing ; Work and Occupation ; Democracy and Governance ;

### Integrative living and working

Current developments seem worrying: climate crisis, wars, democracy threatened by right-wing extremism, and discrimination becoming socially acceptable. For a long time, I imagined the future as a beautiful, utopian one. Now I wake up and notice many problems as if we were sliding straight into dystopian doomsday scenarios. At the same time, I find great strength within myself and my relationships. I experience new depth through mindfulness and meditation. I find hope in my growing self-confidence and trust in the universe that solutions will find themselves. A deeper understanding of humanity, connection, and appreciation help me deal with external uncertainties. Inner and outer resources give me stability. I sense a growing together in confronting problems and opportunities for development in crises. Trauma-sensitive work, the integration of sustainable technologies, and the integration of social divisions hold potential that is incredibly underestimated. Mystical-spiritual, psychological-scientific, human-centered innovation approaches are shining on the horizon. Diversity deserves to be celebrated. Finding commonalities in culture, religion, and origins allows us to draw strength from the fact that we live on one Earth, have shared warming stories around the fire for millennia, and breathed and exhaled this same air. Humanity is experienced in change and crisis. By finding a sense of belonging, collaborating, and co-creating, we have developed new visions through every storm.

Original title: Integratives Leben und Arbeiten

Original language : de

EU is like : a huge oil tanker that is slowly adjusting its course, but urgently needs to spend some time in port refitting to set up its solar sails.

Europe is like: a landmass on which diverse groups of people have managed to come together.

Democracy is like: A fit grandpa with a crutch who loves hiking in the Alps, but turns a blind eye to the fact that his granddaughters already know the Rocky Mountains and the Himalayas and could one day learn to surf together.

Who should hear: Well, all of course, only in resonance with each other do people find new stories, images and visions and can build each other up, copy and discover new things

Question: How do they use their policies to connect differences? What do they build on? What do they leave behind? How do they empower disadvantaged groups? When did they last change their minds? What does their gut feeling tell them? How do they manage to dance with their opponents instead of fighting them?

In general this experience was: Very positive

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Fairness and social justice ; Democracy and Governance ; Living together and Community ;

## Weltschmerz

Given the current global situation and political developments (the election of Donald Trump, the end of the traffic light coalition, and the resulting political chaos in Germany), I am deeply concerned about the future of our world. This is especially true with regard to social justice, democracy, society, and climate protection. I simply feel helpless and don't know how I can have an impact on climate protection, democracy, social cohesion, and social justice.

Original title: Weltschmerz

Original language : de

EU is like : an anchor that must hold together but also deal with the current problems in Europe!

Europe is like: a unit that should stick together!

Democracy is like: a basic law.

Who should hear: All

Question: How do you look to the future? Where are we headed?

In general this experience was: Negative

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Democracy and Governance ; Living together and Community ;

## Citizens' participation and climate change

Last year my name was drawn to be part of Bologna's Citizens' Assembly on Climate Affairs. This gave me the opportunity to learn more about climate change, meet many active fellow citizens, get more involved and be a small part of solutions in our city. The city council took over most of our recommendations, and we are now actively monitoring their implementation with the aim of keeping the council to its promises. The experience taught me how important it is that citizens be involved in forming climate policies. Most carbon emissions are directly or indirectly produced by citizens, and most consequences of climate change fall directly upon their shoulders - it is important that they get agency, and that they understand that it cannot be solved without them.

Original title: Citizens' participation and climate change

Original language : en

EU is like : a fantastic tool that we are still learning how to use effectively

Europe is like: a home full of brothers and sisters

Democracy is like: a dear friend in fragile health who needs to be taken care of, nursed and fed

Who should hear: Citizens and political leaders of European cities where citizen participation in climate affairs has yet to be given shape.

Question: Please involve your constituencies in developing and implementing climate change policies.

In general this experience was: Very positive

The experience you described was: a one time occurrence

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Democracy and Governance ;

## Flood policy

I witnessed a construction project being pushed through in the middle of a flood zone without proper input from the neighbors. This motivated me to advocate for greater citizen participation. Since then, I've had a different view of democracy.

Original title: Hochwasserpolitik

Original language: de

EU is like: a vision that is unfortunately still quite undemocratic

Europe is like: Hometown

Democracy is like: the unfinished basis of all politics

Who should hear: All

Question: Given the possibility of combining citizens' councils and referendums, what is your idea of a good, fair democracy?

In general this experience was: Very negative

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Democracy and Governance ; Living together and Community ;

## Torn apart

I feel increasingly trapped and unable to act and live according to my own values and beliefs. Climate and nature conservation, sustainability and poverty reduction, equal opportunities and conditions for all (including outside of Europe), as well as consideration and humanity, are extremely important to me. However, I am confronted with the following decisions every day: Do I actively restrict and limit myself – by not buying certain things, by not using the car to get somewhere, by using a bicycle instead, or by critically examining myself and my actions – and thus become more and more of an outsider in this society OR do I simply accept that I can't change anything and that the real levers don't lie with me, and despair at this realization?

Original title: Zerissenheit

Original language: de

EU is like: nan

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: nan

Question: Do you still act according to your own convictions? Do you regularly question yourself and consider the bigger picture (the entire world, historically current and future), or are you just going around in circles about the next election period? Do you ever think about the future and the lives of others? Can you still look in the mirror?

In general this experience was: Very negative  
The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Fairness and social justice ; Nature and climate ; Democracy and Governance ;

## Stupid, stupider, stupidest

No one can think outside the box anymore. Especially older people, but also young people. Massive egos and anti-intellectualism are becoming more and more widespread. Examples include ignoring and denying climate change, anti-vaxxing, etc. At the same time, there is a gigantic leap forward.

Original title: Dumm, dümmer, am dümmstem

Original language: de

EU is like: a cool head around mad

Europe is like: Hometown

Democracy is like: something that you only appreciate when you have lost it

Who should hear: The ones up there.

Question: Is the light always off for you or only when you need it?

In general this experience was: Negative

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Democracy and Governance ; Education and Schools ; #

## Economy and Markets

### Gold suggests on effective climate actions amidst boring business as usual.

The last two days, I listened to online conferences on energy policy, how to reduce climate emissions from buildings, new EU guidelines on the matter, new subsidies for heat pumps and renovations. Although this is my field of work, most presentations were boring, so I quickly switched to other parallel sessions. In the end I did hear some interesting perspectives, in the midst of endless superficial conversations.

Original title: Gold suggests on effective climate actions amidst boring business as usual.

Original language: en

EU is like: essential for our future.

Europe is like: peoples like me

Democracy is like: something where all should have equal say, but in reality we have a democracy by the powerfull

Who should hear: politicians, innovators

Question: please come and see how things go in practice

In general this experience was: Positive

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Housing and Living Conditions ; Economy and Markets ;

## The climate concern paradox

I talk to many people who have been very concerned about climate change for quite a while. Very few of them have changed their behavioural patterns in order to translate the concern into any action that may have a positive impact.

Original title: The climate concern paradox

Original language: en

EU is like: a true miracle that people either take for granted after a while or even blame it as the mother of all problems

Europe is like: a wonderfully complex piece of art that looks & feels more attractive the further you are away from it

Democracy is like: family: Not always fun and at times really demanding, but indispensable

Who should hear: nan

Question: What would change if you seriously asked yourself every day: How can I contribute meaningfully to a future worth living for as many people as possible?

In general this experience was: Neutral

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Health and Wellbeing ; Economy and Markets ;

## Woking ourselves to death

My contribution to society is alienated seemingly because expertise does not count unless it is accompanied by a socially acceptable label - my label carries no value in the currency of wokery. The inheritance of respect is discredited!

I see policy makers oblivious to the evidence and science where I am familiar with the subject and I see charlatans and the grossly unqualified claiming expertise in other areas. The marquee example is Greta Thunberg - who claims a knowledge of climate impacts and moderation and proclaims 'the science is settled' [few scientists are climate experts and have no specific insight into the problem, science never works by consensus nor is science ever settled - it is a democratic process in which any person however humble can produce evidence which over-turns the theories of the greats].

The Greta Thunberg phenomenon - led by the palpably unqualified nonetheless proclaimed by the system - is evident across so many of our institutions and the policies they develop. It is anti-democratic, anti-meritocracy and often corrupt.

Original title: Woking ourselves to death

Original language: en

EU is like: A totalitarian regime coverings its conscience with a show of faux democracy (such as citizens assemblies).

Europe is like: A collection of geographical regions with interesting but eroding national idiosyncrasies

Democracy is like: A noisy but chaotic expression of different views - without fear, favour or bias.

Who should hear: There should be a comission on the 'crisis in representation'. Media stars should not be given a voice in areas such as politics or complex policy

Question: Do you ever have doubts that you are not capable of understanding the issues around which you make policy?

In general this experience was: Very negative

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Fairness and social justice ; Democracy and Governance ; Economy and Markets ;

## Transformation to more efficient energy use

A step backward in climate protection. We must finally move away from combustion and toward the use of quantum mechanics (e.g., heat pumps).

Original title: Transformation zu effizientere Energienutzung

Original language : de

EU is like : a guarantee of stability and prosperity.

Europe is like: Our common home

Democracy is like: Sometimes difficult but I can't think of anything better.

Who should hear: All

Question: How many more climate disasters in Europe will it take before decisive action is taken?!

In general this experience was: Very positive

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Housing and Living Conditions ; Economy and Markets ; #

## Living together and Community

### Victim of the green transition or of the Italian authorities?

I have a car in excellent condition, but it's a Euro 5 diesel, and I'll probably no longer be able to use it in September. The regional government hasn't given any guidance on this matter, and this fact has truly created a climate of uncertainty for me and everyone else in the same situation. This issue surfaces in the media every now and then, but nothing is clear.

Original title: Vittima della transizione green o delle autorità italiane?

Original language : it

EU is like : Neverland by Edoardo Bennato

Europe is like: A quarrelsome chicken coop

Democracy is like: a crystal vase

Who should hear: The President of the Region and the Minister of the Environment

Question: nan

In general this experience was: Negative

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Mobility and transport ; Nature and climate ; Living together and Community ;

## A living clean environment is common sense - your & my responsibility!

Every day I see garbage and waste in our immediate environment that dirty, pollute, destroy and in the worst case kill our nature and wildlife. We have lost respect for our dear nature, living environment and fellow humans. Egon sees himself above the group that "someone else can fulfill my responsibility". The worst thing is that this reprehensible behavior is becoming the norm.

Original title: En levande ren miljö är sunt förnuft - ditt & mitt ansvar!

Original language: sv

EU is like: an overcoat

Europe is like: an extension of our country

Democracy is like: a value system, changing and life-giving

Who should hear: ?

Question: How can we get those in power and media forces to stand up as examples of long-term common sense and not just vote/click maximization?

In general this experience was: Very negative

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Fairness and social justice ; Nature and climate ; Living together and Community ;

## A star on the horizon.

Many people are dissatisfied and insecure. They feel fear, dissatisfaction, hopelessness, and disappointment, and complain about the current situation or lash out at others. Sometimes it feels truly hopeless, even overwhelming, especially when you want to change something yourself. You're often laughed at, not taken seriously, or even labeled a dreamer or a wannabe hero. But that's exactly where I come in. I'm putting my hope and myself into the effort to change things for the better. Together with Volt.

Original title: Ein Stern am Horizont.

Original language: de

EU is like: A crumbling alliance.

Europe is like: A chance for togetherness.

Democracy is like: a tool to make decisions for a better future.

Who should hear: Anyone who is interested in her.

Question: Why do you find it so difficult to work with us to create a sustainable, safe, and livable future for everyone?

In general this experience was: Positive

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Health and Wellbeing ; Living together and Community ; Peace and Security ;

## People's selfishness

Climate change isn't being tackled decisively enough. Much more should be done, but people are too selfish to do without. People still want to fly on vacation every year. The fact that this harms the climate and thus endangers millions of human lives is simply accepted. This selfishness also leads to voting for the right. The main thing is that one's own well-being

is good. And that's what the right-wing promises. If only we would put society above our own prosperity, we would all be better off.

Original title: Egoismus der Menschen

Original language : de

EU is like : the largest peace project in the world

Europe is like: A huge pool of untapped potential for collaboration

Democracy is like: One of the most central values

Who should hear: The whole society

Question: Why is maintaining power more important to them than making a real impact on history through positive change?

In general this experience was: Very negative

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Living together and Community ;

## Integrative living and working

Current developments seem worrying: climate crisis, wars, democracy threatened by right-wing extremism, and discrimination becoming socially acceptable. For a long time, I imagined the future as a beautiful, utopian one. Now I wake up and notice many problems as if we were sliding straight into dystopian doomsday scenarios. At the same time, I find great strength within myself and my relationships. I experience new depth through mindfulness and meditation. I find hope in my growing self-confidence and trust in the universe that solutions will find themselves. A deeper understanding of humanity, connection, and appreciation help me deal with external uncertainties. Inner and outer resources give me stability. I sense a growing together in confronting problems and opportunities for development in crises. Trauma-sensitive work, the integration of sustainable technologies, and the integration of social divisions hold potential that is incredibly underestimated. Mystical-spiritual, psychological-scientific, human-centered innovation approaches are shining on the horizon. Diversity deserves to be celebrated. Finding commonalities in culture, religion, and origins allows us to draw strength from the fact that we live on one Earth, have shared warming stories around the fire for millennia, and breathed and exhaled this same air. Humanity is experienced in change and crisis. By finding a sense of belonging, collaborating, and co-creating, we have developed new visions through every storm.

Original title: Integratives Leben und Arbeiten

Original language : de

EU is like : a huge oil tanker that is slowly adjusting its course, but urgently needs to spend some time in port refitting to set up its solar sails.

Europe is like: a landmass on which diverse groups of people have managed to come together.

Democracy is like: A fit grandpa with a crutch who loves hiking in the Alps, but turns a blind eye to the fact that his granddaughters already know the Rocky Mountains and the Himalayas and could one day learn to surf together.

Who should hear: Well, all of course, only in resonance with each other do people find new stories, images and visions and can build each other up, copy and discover new things

Question: How do they use their policies to connect differences? What do they build on? What do they leave behind? How do they empower disadvantaged groups? When did they last change their minds? What does their gut feeling tell them? How do they manage to dance with their opponents instead of fighting them?

In general this experience was: Very positive

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Fairness and social justice ; Democracy and Governance ; Living together and Community ;

## Weltschmerz

Given the current global situation and political developments (the election of Donald Trump, the end of the traffic light coalition, and the resulting political chaos in Germany), I am deeply concerned about the future of our world. This is especially true with regard to social justice, democracy, society, and climate protection. I simply feel helpless and don't know how I can have an impact on climate protection, democracy, social cohesion, and social justice.

Original title: Weltschmerz

Original language : de

EU is like : an anchor that must hold together but also deal with the current problems in Europe!

Europe is like: a unit that should stick together!

Democracy is like: a basic law.

Who should hear: All

Question: How do you look to the future? Where are we headed?

In general this experience was: Negative

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Democracy and Governance ; Living together and Community ;

## Entangled Everything

I have always wanted to work with and for nature. Then I got interested in people and human relationships. I have never really been interested in Politics with a capital P. Still, I am slowly recognising that all of it, everything we do in this relational space is in some way or another inherently political. On that smaller level. Whether this is working with kids, with neighbourhoods, with nature, or with climate change, there is some connective tissue inherent in the world and the participation with it that connects all of it. It is tiring to think that big Politics is still about party politics, power dynamics, single issues, linear thinking, this versus that, as if the world wasn't connected. It is good to see that there are more and more initiatives around that operate with a different logic...

Original title: Entangled Everything

Original language : en

EU is like : An ensemble, where a lot of good stuff is neither seen nor recognized, along with some really stupid rules

Europe is like: a community of places and people still trying to figure out co-living

Democracy is like: you notice its benefits once it is absent or wrongly held

Who should hear: nan

Question: nan

In general this experience was: Positive

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Living together and Community ; Other, please specify ;

## Flood policy

I witnessed a construction project being pushed through in the middle of a flood zone without proper input from the neighbors. This motivated me to advocate for greater citizen participation. Since then, I've had a different view of democracy.

Original title: Hochwasserpolitik

Original language : de

EU is like : a vision that is unfortunately still quite undemocratic

Europe is like: Hometown

Democracy is like: the unfinished basis of all politics

Who should hear: All

Question: Given the possibility of combining citizens' councils and referendums, what is your idea of a good, fair democracy?

In general this experience was: Very negative

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Democracy and Governance ; Living together and Community ;

## We're fooling each other

Almost everyone makes some sustainable choices, such as separating waste or installing solar panels. But this is essentially an economic choice. If residual waste isn't priced or solar panels aren't profitable, we won't do it. We also abuse these sustainable choices to continue using fossil fuels, to fly, etc.

We don't want to formulate and implement necessary policy on a national level, but only within the European framework or even more broadly. And there, we delay policy development and blame "Brussels" for undermining our sovereignty.

In short, we cling to our self-interest even though the climate is deteriorating, poverty is increasing, we are threatened by Russia, the US, big tech, etc. And no politician dares to challenge this, lest they lose the voters' favor. Anyone who dares gets my vote.

Original title: We houden elkaar voor de gek

Original language : nl

EU is like : our future in terms of safety, climate, economy and migration

Europe is like: an opportunity for the world when it comes to cooperation and progressive policies

Democracy is like: the best we have, a means to realize an acceptable existence for all people now and in the future

Who should hear: Everyone.

Question: Why is staying in power more important to you than what's best for the world's people?

In general this experience was: Negative

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Living together and Community ; Peace and Security ;

## Polarized society

Climate change polarizes society into climate fanatics and climate deniers.

Original title: Polarisierte Gesellschaft

Original language : de

EU is like : the beginning of the United States of Europe

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: do instead of complain

Who should hear: nan

Question: nan

In general this experience was: Neutral

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Health and Wellbeing ; Living together and Community ;

## together we can achieve greater benefits

Last summer, thanks to the party, I attended an event promoting the Cebase energy community. I must confess that I was unfamiliar with the world of energy communities before then. I came away enthusiastic because energy communities represent a project with many positive implications, as they allow people to save money, make the environment cleaner, and rediscover a sense of belonging to a community that seemed irretrievably lost in modern society.

Original title: insieme si possono maggiori vantaggi

Original language : it

EU is like : the greatest experiment in peaceful union between states

Europe is like: the cradle of democracy and rights

Democracy is like: a plant that needs constant care otherwise it dies

Who should hear: especially politicians

Question: What vision do they have of the world because in my opinion many don't even have one of the country they govern?

In general this experience was: Very positive

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Housing and Living Conditions ; Living together and Community ;

## Climate change event illustrates weaknesses in democracy and society

We had an unusually destructive ice storm in the middle of April. It took down most of the trees in the city and with them, the powerlines. My city was without power for over a week. This highlighted the way that we take energy for granted, the power of community banding together, how ill prepared the city, province is for unusual events (no redundancy to deal with things in terms of supply chains etc.) and how much people can feel entitled and like the city is responsible, even for acts of god.

Original title: Climate change event illustrates weaknesses in democracy and society

Original language : en

EU is like : Countries working together in a united way, which is great, but in the face of climate change, increased globalization, must wane to make way for increased localization.

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: a system, like so many others that is showing signs of severe strain due to the multicrisis, at the heart of which is the health of our planet

Who should hear: Everyone - everything is connected.

Question: Why are you not adopting a systems thinking lens to enable you to see that the health of ALL systems (political, economic, social, etc. are predicated on the health of our ecological systems. Without a life-sustaining planet, nothing else matters!

In general this experience was: Negative

The experience you described was: rare but it happens from time to time

This story also appears in Fairness and social justice ; Nature and climate ; Living together and Community ;

## Public transport in the border region

I live on a European internal border (Germany/Netherlands) and therefore travel by public transport on both sides. Thanks to an EU project, a train now crosses the border here, but the connection is very unreliable because the two systems are incompatible, meaning each section is always operated by a local crew. Especially on the German part of the route, disruptions due to staff shortages are extremely common. I also need a separate app with a separate account for each mobility provider. Compatibility is usually non-existent, especially across the border, which I find very regrettable. For climate protection reasons, it is extremely important to me to use public transport, even if it sometimes takes considerably longer. Nevertheless, I greatly enjoy the opportunity to visit neighboring cities without having to exchange currency, etc. I am convinced that better connections across borders will bring Europe closer together. Especially here on the border, it feels like the Union has long been a reality, even though major hurdles still need to be overcome.

Original title: ÖPNV im Grenzland

Original language : de

EU is like : Future in the making

Europe is like: my home

Democracy is like: Brushing your teeth. Sometimes annoying, but simply necessary for it to work and keep everyone healthy.

Who should hear: nan

Question: Cross-border traffic is important, but why do we still rely so heavily on air transport for European transport in times of climate change? Why isn't a Europe-wide high-speed network being discussed? The Transrapid would be a suitable option, as it comfortably achieves the necessary speeds and can thus effectively connect European capitals and metropolises. The existing national high-speed networks retain their function of local development, so there will be no competition (or only in very specific cases like Eurostar).

In general this experience was: Negative

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Mobility and transport ; Nature and climate ; Living together and Community ; #

## Education and Schools

### Stupid, stupider, stupidest

No one can think outside the box anymore. Especially older people, but also young people. Massive egos and anti-intellectualism are becoming more and more widespread. Examples include ignoring and denying climate change, anti-vaxxing, etc. At the same time, there is a gigantic leap forward.

Original title: Dumm, dümmer, am dümmstem

Original language : de

EU is like : a cool head around mad

Europe is like: Hometown

Democracy is like: something that you only appreciate when you have lost it

Who should hear: The ones up there.

Question: Is the light always off for you or only when you need it?

In general this experience was: Negative

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Democracy and Governance ; Education and Schools ; #

## Peace and Security

### A star on the horizon.

Many people are dissatisfied and insecure. They feel fear, dissatisfaction, hopelessness, and disappointment, and complain about the current situation or lash out at others. Sometimes it feels truly hopeless, even overwhelming, especially when you want to change something yourself. You're often laughed at, not taken seriously, or even labeled a dreamer or a wannabe hero. But that's exactly where I come in. I'm putting my hope and myself into the effort to change things for the better. Together with Volt.

Original title: Ein Stern am Horizont.

Original language : de

EU is like : A crumbling alliance.

Europe is like: A chance for togetherness.

Democracy is like: a tool to make decisions for a better future.

Who should hear: Anyone who is interested in her.

Question: Why do you find it so difficult to work with us to create a sustainable, safe, and livable future for everyone?

In general this experience was: Positive

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Health and Wellbeing ; Living together and Community ; Peace and Security ;

### We're fooling each other

Almost everyone makes some sustainable choices, such as separating waste or installing solar panels. But this is essentially an economic choice. If residual waste isn't priced or solar

panels aren't profitable, we won't do it. We also abuse these sustainable choices to continue using fossil fuels, to fly, etc.

We don't want to formulate and implement necessary policy on a national level, but only within the European framework or even more broadly. And there, we delay policy development and blame "Brussels" for undermining our sovereignty.

In short, we cling to our self-interest even though the climate is deteriorating, poverty is increasing, we are threatened by Russia, the US, big tech, etc. And no politician dares to challenge this, lest they lose the voters' favor. Anyone who dares gets my vote.

Original title: We houden elkaar voor de gek

Original language: nl

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Europe is like: an opportunity for the world when it comes to cooperation and progressive policies

Democracy is like: the best we have, a means to realize an acceptable existence for all people now and in the future

Who should hear: Everyone.

Question: Why is staying in power more important to you than what's best for the world's people?

In general this experience was: Negative

The experience you described was: very common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Living together and Community ; Peace and Security ;

## Strategically generating your own green energy combines perfectly with arable farming and nature restoration

As an energy cooperative, we are working on creating a solar farm in Renkum: the "doorwerksse Zonnehoeve" (The Solar Farm). This farm combines a natural area with an agricultural area. This dual land use is the future for financing our compensation and making our agriculture sustainable. The positive side is that this is possible. The negative side is that the governing province, the BBB (Belgian Association of Energy Cooperatives), is opposed to it.

Original title: Strategische eigen groene energie opwerk combineert perfect met akkerbouw en natuurherstel

Original language: nl

EU is like: Essential for our survival

Europe is like: Where we live and live together

Democracy is like: For a just society, They at village level as well as at continent level

Who should hear: All of Europe

Question: How can you help ensure that your loved ones can live in a safe, clean, and prosperous environment for generations to come?

In general this experience was: Very positive

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Health and Wellbeing ; Peace and Security ;  
#



## Other, please specify

### Entangled Everything

I have always wanted to work with and for nature. Then I got interested in people and human relationships. I have never really been interested in Politics with a capital P. Still, I am slowly recognising that all of it, everything we do in this relational space is in some way or another inherently political. On that smaller level. Whether this is working with kids, with neighbourhoods, with nature, or with climate change, there is some connective tissue inherent in the world and the participation with it that connects all of it. It is tiring to think that big Politics is still about party politics, power dynamics, single issues, linear thinking, this versus that, as if the world wasn't connected. It is good to see that there are more and more initiatives around that operate with a different logic...

Original title: Entangled Everything

Original language : en

EU is like : An ensemble, where a lot of good stuff is neither seen nor recognized, along with some really stupid rules

Europe is like: a community of places and people still trying to figure out co-living

Democracy is like: you notice its benefits once it is absent or wrongly held

Who should hear: nan

Question: nan

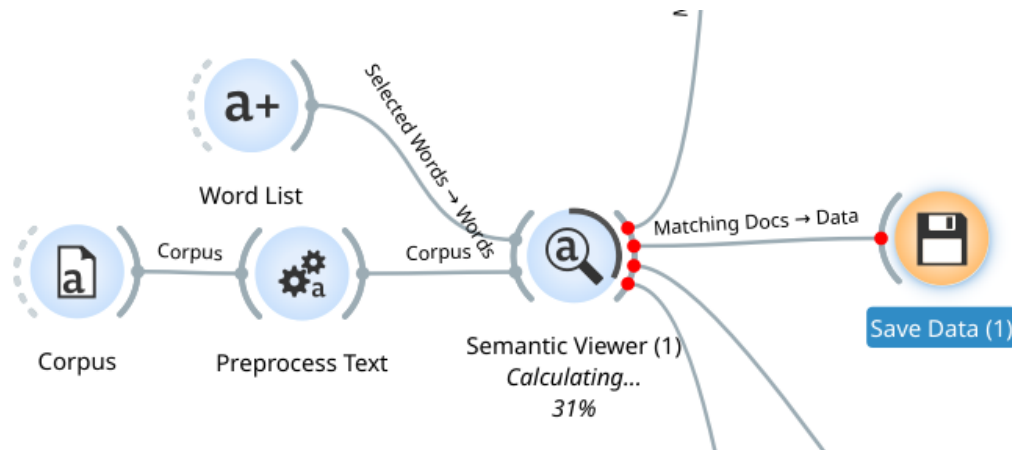
In general this experience was: Positive

The experience you described was: somewhat common

This story also appears in Nature and climate ; Living together and Community ; Other, please specify ;

## Appendix : story selections

In a first step the narrative corpus has been processed using the Orange datamining package as illustrated in the figure below.



The processing steps where :

- Export from sensemaker platform to a .csv file
- Translate the textual elements to english using Googletranslate
- Import int Orange datamining : Title, Narrative text, Question
- Preprocess
  - To lowercase
  - Remove accents
  - Tokenize to individual words
  - Remove standard stop words
  - Lemmatize<sup>2</sup> using Lemmagen (“(PDF) LemmaGen” 2025)
- Semantic matching wit a set of keywords
  - Keywords : climate, weather, greenhouse, fossil, fuels, temperature, heat, cold, adaptation, heatwave, climate-conscious, deniers, green, adapt, flood, drought, warming, community, change, nature, ecosystem

<sup>2</sup> Lemmatisation is the process of finding the normalised forms of words appearing in text. It is a useful preprocessing step for a number of language engineering and text mining tasks.

- Select 91 best matches
- Export to a csv file
- Manually discard narratives that are not related to climate change, climate adaptation energy transition or ecosystems