



Housing across Europe Storyboard

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Roberto Bonino

Volteuropa, Brussels and LUSVAL Paris

This storyboard contains narratives collected across all EUrosense projects that have been assigned to the Housing and Living Conditions category by the respondents. Narratives are grouped by country and sentiment. Readers can retrieve additional information about the narratives by selecting the country and the sentiment from the public dashboard available from eurosense.eu.

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Summary

Number of entries per country

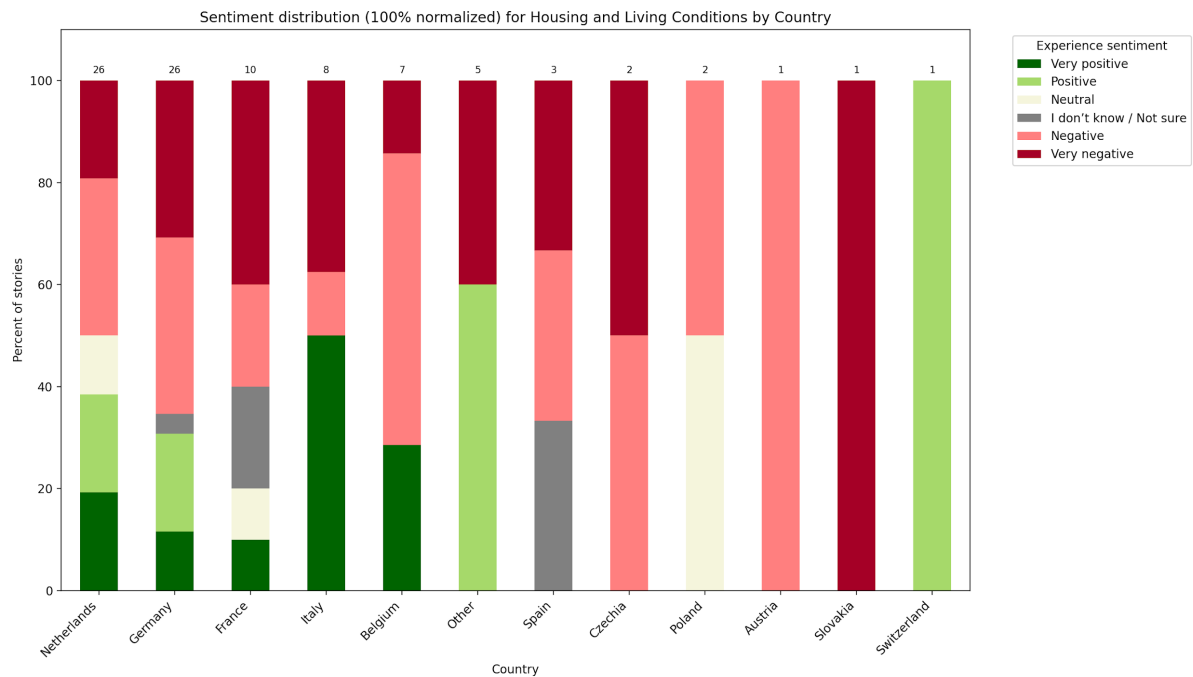
Country	Total
Netherlands	26
Germany	26
France	10
Italy	8
Belgium	7
Other	5
Spain	3
Czechia	2
Poland	2
Austria	1
Slovakia	1
Switzerland	1

Sentiment distribution by country (percent)

Country	Very positive	Positive	Neutral	I don't know / Not sure	Negative	Very negative
Netherlands	19.2	19.2	11.5	0.0	30.8	19.2
Germany	11.5	19.2	0.0	3.8	34.6	30.8
France	10.0	0.0	10.0	20.0	20.0	40.0
Italy	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	37.5
Belgium	28.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	57.1	14.3
Other	0.0	60.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	40.0
Spain	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	33.3	33.3
Czechia	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0

Country	Very positive	Positive	Neutral	I don't know / Not sure	Negative	Very negative
Poland	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	50.0	0.0
Austria	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
Slovakia	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Switzerland	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Plot of sentiment by country



Story contents grouped by country and sentiment

Country: Netherlands

Very positive

1. Appreciating my country from the window of the train

I was driving in the train in The Netherlands. I usually take the car, as I have this feeling public transport always represents trouble. I was so wrong. While driving the train and looking out the window, I felt a deep appreciation for how enormously high the quality of living in my country is, and how well we have organised society for all. Notwithstanding the trouble we face as society in several areas (housing, welcoming refugees, education, healthcare in the years to come), we are doing so well. This felt really good, and it's a memory I told many of my friends about.

Original title: Appreciating my country from the window of the train

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltnws

EU is like: an important collaboration between countries that alone do not have impact

Europe is like: the best place in the world to live

Democracy is like: the possibility to influence how we organise our country in the best possible way

Who should hear: Anybody who likes to

Question: Why are we not investing in reorganising our health care system, as demographic developments show we will have an incredibly high demand on care in the future, and we are not ready for that. We are waiting until it is too late. I would ask to set-up a think-tank to bring together groundbreaking initiatives from many countries, learn from the experiences and make practical recommendations.

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

2. Biobased construction put into practice

Last Monday, I organized a working visit to nine biobased new-build homes constructed by a housing association. Many builders, developers, and other associations turned up. It was great to see that this method of construction is gradually starting to permeate the entire construction chain.

Original title: Biobased bouwen in de praktijk gebracht

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltnws

EU is like: Bureaucratic behemoth in which a lot of money is burned and that simultaneously controls checks and balances.

Europe is like: my backyard with very, very many opportunities

Democracy is like: a system that is under severe pressure worldwide

Who should hear: nan

Question: Why don't you put your words into action and avoid necessary choices?

The experience was: somewhat common

3. Good help is at hand

Received independent and free advice, including a home visit and expert on-site assessment, on how to switch from a fossil heating source (gas) to sustainable energy.

Original title: Goede hulp is bij de hand

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltnws

EU is like: my homeland

Europe is like: a kaleidoscopic cradle of civilization

Democracy is like: genuinely wanting the best for your fellow man

Who should hear: whoever wants to hear it

Question: Are you using all your power and capabilities to the best of your knowledge for a better world?

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

4. Living in a self-built tiny house

I built my own tiny house and moved into a community. I have come to find living smaller, affordable, and eco-friendly, with close contact with my neighbors and lots of greenery around me, very valuable.

Original title: Wonen in een zelfgebouwd tiny house

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltnws

EU is like: a reasonably level-headed and mature way of conducting politics, compared to the US, China, and Russia, which still tries to somewhat curb the power of Google, Apple, and other tech companies.

Europe is like: one of the safest ports in the world

Democracy is like: Claudia de Breij: 'an elected majority that stands up for the needs and wishes of the minority, with an independent rule of law and a free press'. New Year's Eve Conference 2019.

Who should hear: Municipalities, Mona Keijzer, farmers with land

Question: If you ask people in power something, you get an explanation as to why they think it can't be done. So instead, just do it: ban billionaires. That should provide enough money to buy land and build tiny houses. And a whole lot of other problems you could solve, it seems to me (:

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

5. Striking difference between city and village

I find that life in a village is different from life in the big city. We moved recently. There is less polarization here, more neighborly help, and a much less hectic atmosphere.

Original title: Opvallend verschil stad en dorp

Language: en

Unique identifier: demag

EU is like: solidarity, front against major countries

Europe is like: the same

Democracy is like: important, but much more than voting once every few years

Who should hear: nan

Question: Do you honestly have any idea what is going on outside your managerial bubble?

The experience was: very common

Positive

6. Caring society

People live past each other. We need to be willing to do more for one another. For example, more housing construction, but everyone only wants it for their own children. We need to build communities in neighborhoods and regions. If you are involved with each other, you don't argue. We used to say: better a good neighbor than a distant friend. That has been somewhat ruined.

Original title: Zorgzame samenleving

Language: en

Unique identifier: rpc

EU is like: Necessary, but people often don't realize it

Europe is like: That's where we live! My backyard. I feel at home there.

Democracy is like: Logical, but you have to work on it constantly.

Who should hear: everyone

Question: Do you really think about what you do (or don't do) with your power?

The experience was: very common

7. Insight into shocking circumstance

On Christmas Eve, around midnight, I got off the metro and encountered a man who was going to spend the night outside, lacking sufficient funds to pay the night shelter. I gave him ten euros, whereupon he dashed off, shouting, "You are an angel, now I can still get into the night shelter just in time (before midnight)."

Original title: Inzicht in onthutsende omstandigheid

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltnws

EU is like: A promise! The EU has the instruments at its disposal to improve social and economic life for all (residents of) member countries.

Europe is like: A multitude of affiliated countries with circumstances and opportunities that I know (too) little about, but am curious about.

Democracy is like: A means to use to achieve goals.

Who should hear: Local politicians, politicians in the Netherlands, residents, bystanders, those responsible for reception locations

Question: How is it possible that this situation of hopelessness persists for many individuals, while you, in your position of power, can and should bring about change?!

The experience was: somewhat common

8. Living in the Netherlands

Visit to housing forum

Original title: Wonen in nl

Language: en

Unique identifier: rpc

EU is like: Bread necessary

Europe is like: Connection

Democracy is like: Inspiration

Who should hear: nan

Question: Are you independent

The experience was: somewhat common

****9. NIMBY always wins, apparantly... ****

We had a neighborhood meeting about plans to build flats/appartments in our area, which has family houses (no high buildings yet). We will lose a big parking area, and traffic is not guided well here in our streets. Many people here do NIMBY while we urgently need houses for starters and seniors. It is unbelievable how selfish people come across when they think/feel they might not benefit directly from something which is meant to be good for the greater community. I was shocked. Two schools in this area are old and need an update as well as expansion. I welcome the schools, but many do not... too much noise, and the parents take up space when they pick up their kids by cars.

Original title: NIMBY always wins, apparantly...

Language: en

Unique identifier: nan

EU is like: A natural outcome from the EEG etc. We MUST unite !

Europe is like: my home country - it is the same

Democracy is like: a prerequisite for living

Who should hear: My neighbours - we do meet and discuss. But many do not LISTEN.

Question: Could you please be inspired by LOVE instead of economics and power.

The experience was: somewhat common

10. Private space

A nice conversation with the neighbor about the fact that her children, aged 26 and 24, have finally moved out.

Original title: Eigen ruimte

Language: en

Unique identifier: charged1

EU is like: an alliance between countries.

Europe is like: the wealthy region where I live.

Democracy is like: relative freedom.

Who should hear: Those who make the choices about how the resources we have are deployed.

Question: Make a choice and stand behind it fully.

The experience was: somewhat common

Neutral

11. Amsterdam welcomes foreigners but leaves them to their fate.

For over a year, I cared for an elderly German man who used to moor his dilapidated sailboat on the bank of the water we overlook. He lived a very unhealthy lifestyle, drank and smoked heavily, but also needed care. Our welfare state could not provide it, especially because he was a foreigner. After more than a year, he passed away on his boat. He was picked up by the municipality, and they gave him a very solitary funeral (just my wife and I, and a representative from the neighborhood team) at the municipality's expense. It is a pity that nothing could really be done for him during his lifetime.

Original title: Amsterdam verwelkomt vreemdelingen maar laat ze wel aan hun lot over

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltnws

EU is like: a union with fine principles but with (too) little clout

Europe is like: my homeland

Democracy is like: an endangered form of society that everyone should actually strive for

Who should hear: nan

Question: nan

The experience was: a one time occurrence

12. Future of Dutch children.

We have 10 grandchildren. The eldest son lives with four children in a two-bedroom flat. He is a history teacher. The nice stories about priority for certain professional groups regarding housing make me sad. The results of the primary schools worry me. These children are the future of the Netherlands.

Original title: Toekomst van Nederlandse kinderen.

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltnws

EU is like: A number of countries that must cooperate to address the current major problems.

Europe is like: Countries that must conform to specialists and experts for a better future

Democracy is like: Walking outside and not asking yourself, "Am I allowed to be here?"

Who should hear: The politicians responsible for the education and housing portfolio

Question: What kind of houses do your children live in?

The experience was: somewhat common

13. Resistance to climate change is against our own interests.

I have all the green stuff, my energy bill is only €17,-/month so clearly it's working! The energy transition is also the solution to the cost of living crisis here in the Netherlands. However we see a lot of unfounded resistance. For example: my friend owns a company called inductie.nu which sole business is to make rental homes gas free. It's funded by the rental company not having to pay for the gas supply anymore. That money is used for a loan to pay my friend. Renters get a free induction stove and free pans. It doesn't cost them anything! Yet quite often people slam the door in his face because they don't want to know anything about it. Only to then call back in tears 2 months later that they cannot cook anymore since gas supply has been cut off, begging him to deliver the free stove anyway. It's honestly sad how people are so stuck in their ways and act against their own interests. It's also maddening that the Dutch gouvernement is cutting gasoline taxes yet trains tickets continue to rise.

Original title: Resistance to climate change is against our own interests.

Language: en

Unique identifier: cca

EU is like: An abstract far away necessity that acts way too slowly

Europe is like: A continent with like minded countries

Democracy is like: The least bad system of gouvernement. It has it's flaws, but the alternative is way worse.

Who should hear: Policy makers and media figures. Or representatives in general.

We need to reach those stubborn people who fall for this oil propaganda and keep voting against their own interests.

Question: Why don't we abolish the 46 billion in fossil subsidies and use the money to make ourselves energy independent with renewables?

The experience was: very common

Negative

14. Housing crisis in the Netherlands

I have been trying to find an apartment in the Netherlands as my current apartment was sold by the owner and I need to move out as soon as possible. I had to pay subscription fees to multiple real estate websites in order to be notified as soon as possible when something new was listed as a rental. I managed to go to a viewing for this kind of moody apartment and in order to stand a chance to be selected as a tenant I had to pay 500 EUR as a reservation payment which is technically illegal (you cannot ask someone to pay before they sign the contract).

Original title: Housing crisis in the Netherlands

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltsense

EU is like: freedom

Europe is like: home

Democracy is like: this imperfect system that is indispensable

Who should hear: Netherlands policy makers

Question: Take into consideration people of all backgrounds, the working population that is struggling to find a decently priced house/apartment to live in

The experience was: very common

15. Housing failure

I live at home with my parents, and I've gotten frustrated at the lack of housing in my hometown. I want to move out, but I can't find affordable places to live.

Original title: Housing failure

Language: en

Unique identifier: nan

EU is like: A huge success

Europe is like: An indispensable community of shared values

Democracy is like: Extremely important, and under threat

Who should hear: Everyone. Especially politicians.

Question: nan

The experience was: very common

16. How to help homeless

There is a homeless person that sits in front of the supermarket most days selling newspapers in the cold. I feel bad for him but don't know what I can do to help him. I bought a snack for him a few times. He doesn't seem to speak any language that I speak. I'd like for him to be happy, I'd also like for myself to know what is the best way to help homeless people asking for money. I heard that giving money usually doesn't help as they buy drugs with it, but what should I do then?

Original title: How to help homeless

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltnws

EU is like: not amazing, but the best option we have

Europe is like: a large place

Democracy is like: the least bad way to govern

Who should hear: Investigative journalists

Question: nan

The experience was: somewhat common

17. I'd like to help, but how?

Something that touches me time and again is how society looks down on the homeless, even though so many factors often play a role and you don't just end up on the street for no reason. In my opinion, there have been so many points in someone's life where some help could have been provided, so that they would be better off now. I have often searched for organizations that help people with, for example, "simple" financial matters, etc., in order to prevent people from becoming homeless, but I haven't come across anything yet. I would like to make a difference, but I don't know where or how.

Original title: Graag helpen, maar hoe?

Language: en

Unique identifier: eurosense

EU is like: an alliance in which we can benefit so much more from each other than is currently the case

Europe is like: the place where freedom and looking out for one another coexist

Democracy is like: A cohabitation agreement for everyone, in which you establish the rules together by mutual agreement.

Who should hear: policymakers, NGOs

Question: Are you aware of the power you have and what you do with it?

The experience was: very common

18. Livability falls victim to commercial decisions

The only supermarket (Jumbo) in our village closed last month. It was doing well, but because another Jumbo opened in a large town just across the border with Belgium, 8 km away, the management decided to close down here. Now there is only a fruit shop and a butcher. For me, this is merely an inconvenience. I have a car. But a considerable number of residents do not have one and cannot cycle. For them, it is a disaster. The nearest supermarket is 8 km away – and you can only take the bus at the beginning and end of the day (there is only a school bus during the school period, or you have to order a stop bus 2 hours in advance). The streets are also much emptier; there was always a constant coming and going of Dutch and Belgian customers. I think this is having a negative effect on the quality of life in our village.

Original title: Leefbaarheid de dupe van commerciële beslissingen

Language: en

Unique identifier: rpc

EU is like: Common interest and soil, and therefore also the future

Europe is like: A beautiful continent where we can work together, each with their own strengths and weaknesses.

Democracy is like: Trying to live and make choices in freedom—but not at the expense of others' freedom.

Who should hear: nan

Question: Look at the small communities and actually support them.

The experience was: a one time occurrence

19. Safety

Concern about safety in Europe

Original title: Veiligheid

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltnws

EU is like: nan

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: nan

Question: nan

The experience was: very common

20. Wanting to do it properly is not always the easiest and quickest way

My father has passed away and we took over his old car. I wanted to park the car (our only car that we want to share with our neighbours) in my neighbourhood and tried to arrange the necessary park permit. Trying to arrange this permit, I discovered that this was not possible since the municipality marked our garden as parking place on own premises. Our garden was paved when we bought our house 15 years ago, but we were not aware that we were obliged to use this as parking spot. Also the real estate agent did not inform us about this. It turned out I had to make an official objection to this 'parking place on own premises' and that this would take at least 2 months. After that we could possibly arrange the parking permit. Duration: approx 1-2 months. Meanwhile I have to search for parking spots in the neighbourhood where a parking permit is not required. Bothering other people in their parking possibilities. While I really just want to pay for a permit in the neighbourhood of my house. Why is the municipality so slow in deciding to give me a permit? Why does the decision that I cannot park on my own premises take so long?

Original title: Wanting to do it properly is not always the easiest and quickest way

Language: en

Unique identifier: nan

EU is like: a vital institute to support a more sustainable and fair development in Europe and the world which should be more powerful

Europe is like: a jigsaw with very different pieces. Also pieces that does not really fit in the jigsaw of the EU.

Democracy is like: a system of governing society in a way with the least negative effects , also a system that needs innovation to include the voice of minorities much better

Who should hear: nan

Question: Please be more strict to the parties or governments in the EU that are more autocratic, undermining freedom of speech and sustainable development. Speed up and simplify the Green Deal

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

21. Web portals place impossible demands on the digital skills of older people.

I helped an elderly lady who wants to sell her oversized home and move to a rental apartment. The bureaucracy she faced was dreadful. It was impossible for her to complete the registration process via a web portal. We spent two hours working on it together, and she still wasn't registered. First, she had to create an account with the rental agent. She had to expose her entire personal and financial life. This had to be done through an intermediary (which also required creating another account first), whom she had to authorize via DigID to gather all her information from various government websites: the Tax Authorities, the Land Registry, the Population Register, the Social Security Administration, and so on. For many older people, it is an impossible task to arrange a move in this way. Furthermore, I wonder if it is desirable to request and store so much information from a potential tenant in this manner.

Original title: Webportalen stellen onmogelijke eisen aan de digitale vaardigheden van oudere mensen.

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltnws

EU is like: A source of hope to meet the major challenges of our time and specifically to control the power of Big Tech.

Europe is like: A valuable melting pot of cultures that must work together to peacefully stand our ground against the rising power of other continents.

Democracy is like: Checking power, taking minorities into account

Who should hear: Politicians and institutions

Question: Ensure that older people can participate fully in society, and do not forget that one day you too will be old. Do not think that by then you will be able to keep up with the latest developments in society; that is (unfortunately) not the case.

The experience was: somewhat common

Very negative

22. Exploitation by the rich

My landlord, who owns 12 houses, is doing everything he can to get us out so that he can fix it up (after 40 years of neglect) and sell it for a high price.

Original title: Uitbuiting door de rijken

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltnws

EU is like: The only chance for a desirable world order

Europe is like: Nothing without unity

Democracy is like: basic necessity

Who should hear: People who can change our tax system

Question: Levy more tax on passive income, and use it for important things such as quality education, the poorest, the living environment, and defense.

The experience was: very common

23. Housing crisis

My brother, who works as a risk analyst at a commodity trading company (highly educated job) in the Netherlands with a permanent contract, cannot find a new apartment to rent after already searched for almost 2 months. If you cannot find housing even as someone highly educated and experienced, who can? As someone who is soon gonna finish their education and still wants to live in the Netherlands after. How am I gonna find housing? How can we say that we have truly open borders if finding housing is increasingly difficult in the Bloc?

Original title: Housing crisis

Language: en

Unique identifier: MVE

EU is like: nan

Europe is like: Home

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: nan

Question: nan

The experience was: very common

24. Housing crisis

Within the family there are a couple of nephews in their twenties who are having and extremely hard time finding somewhere to live. They have literally been looking and waiting for years to find something. One has recently found a small studio to rent for around 1000 euros per month!! The other has just been able to buy a house with his partner. This house was built in the 1970's and is nothing special and not in any of the big cities, but cost them around 450.000 euros. To be so young and have such a high mortgage to start seems so unreasonable. This not only the story of my family, but is the case for most young people in the Netherlands. There is not enough reasonably priced accommodation to go around. This is the basis of a lot of resentment that results in certain political choices (read right wing populism).

Original title: Housing crisis

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltnws

EU is like: an essential European community.

Europe is like: a community I can relate to and want to protect and help develop.

Democracy is like: worth fighting for, because the alternatives will ensure less freedom.

Who should hear: Everyone.

Question: Choose long term policies for housing that ensure fair chances for all societal groups and generations.

The experience was: very common

25. Kafka in mortgage

A small change to my mortgage has landed me in a Kafkaesque situation of absurd rules and impossible demands. There is a risk that I will soon be out on the street.

Original title: Kafka in hypotheek

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltnws

EU is like: the United States

Europe is like: South America

Democracy is like: the least bad option

Who should hear: nan

Question: Why so complicated? Rules are made complicated to take everyone and all circumstances into account as fairly as possible. But the complexity this entails actually leads to the opposite: only people who are skillful enough know how to bend the rules to their will.

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

26. 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 project in our neighborhood. We went through an intensive participation process in which a plan was adopted by the city council that all stakeholders could agree on—a balance between housing and greenery in our very built-up neighborhood. As an advisory group, we were subsequently very unpleasantly surprised because the municipality suddenly had a plan to replace the greenery with a four-story above-ground parking garage in the middle of a residential area, meaning that many homes would suddenly be facing a parking garage instead of a small green park. This had not been communicated, and it was suddenly a fait accompli... A negative experience, therefore.

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

Language: en

Unique identifier: demag

EU is like: Something distant where our influence is not concrete, but the decisions made there are far-reaching.

Europe is like: The old continent with which much of what we now call the 'Western world' began.

Democracy is like: A great asset for which it must be clear how decisions are made.

Who should hear: Everyone involved with participation

Question: Do you dare to do what benefits most the people who are directly affected by a decision, even if this is not what you politically stand for?

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

Country: Germany

Very positive

27. Clubhouses as a place of retreat and a social element

In times of great uncertainty (first the pandemic, then wars, natural disasters, and economic and financial upheavals), clubs and associations—in my case, the gymnastics and sports club, and in my wife's case, two singing clubs—gain in importance because the gatherings in the sports hall and afterward in the clubhouse offer valuable places of retreat. Sports and singing are meaningful leisure activities in which one can also volunteer. Without volunteers, our society would be significantly poorer. Therefore, strengthening and recognizing volunteer work is a crucial aspect.

Original title: Vereinsheime als Rückzugsort und geselliges Element

Language: en

Unique identifier: AA=

EU is like: ...a toothless giant.

Europe is like: ...my very own continent.

Democracy is like: ...the air to breathe.

Who should hear: Of course, politicians should listen to these thoughts, and at all levels: local, regional, state, Germany, EU.

Question: What duties and responsibilities does a leader have towards their own people and country? Are obligations to their own country and citizens more important than providing military equipment to other nations? Should a country's financial resources primarily be used to support its own citizens?

The experience was: very common

28. The magic of dialog

We hosted a Round Table in a small Black Forest village. 13 people participated, many of whom shared a frustration around how things are going in local politics, and about not really having a say in them. After 2 hours of dialog and exchanging around experiences and ideas as to what could be done to change things, the energy shifted towards a strong sense of agency. The group came out with 3 concrete projects, one of them being to host regular Round Tables in the village.

Original title: The magic of dialog

Language: en

Unique identifier: nan

EU is like: a huge machine or tanker that takes long to shift gears

Europe is like: home

Democracy is like: an evolving entity that needs constant attention and care

Who should hear: citizens that are frustrated with how politics is going in their environment

Question: Do you love what you are doing? Does it make you thrive and more alive?

The experience was: a one time occurrence

29. Transformation towards more efficient energy use

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

Original title: Transformation zu effizientere Energienutzung

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltnws

EU is like: a guarantee of stability and prosperity.

Europe is like: Our shared home

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

Who should hear: All

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

The experience was: very common

Positive

30. Contextualised human experience

I met a lady on a German train who is half Russian and half Russian who grew up in Germany and said that German politicians don't realise how hard the cost of living is to manage for normal people.

Original title: Contextualised human experience

Language: en

Unique identifier: eurosense

EU is like: A guarantor of peace

Europe is like: A potentially cohesive future

Democracy is like: Today's critical inclusive governance mechanism

Who should hear: nan

Question: How will you manage capitalism to deliver social justice?

The experience was: somewhat common

31. Gold nuggets 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 nuggets on effective climate actions amidst boring business as usual.

Language: en

Unique identifier: nan

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

The experience was: very common

32. Inclusive Housing

The cooperative housing concept is fantastic. But there are far too few of them.

Original title: Inclusive Housing

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltnws

EU is like: A great idea that does not adhere to its promises anymore

Europe is like: a lot of history and inventions that stopped innovating

Democracy is like: a society with highest inclusion and fairness, but existing less and less

Who should hear: Politicians.

Question: We need more political backing housing innovators to make housing more affordable and inclusive - by giving free unused real estate space for housing, especially in Berlin. Wheee there is a lot of insured space and a lot of demand for housing.

The experience was: very common

33. Long way

In my neighborhood, there were major issues after a pedestrian zone was opened to cars. Along with noise and nighttime disturbances, there were also drug-related incidents. After we organized as a citizens' initiative, the city has finally decided—after two years of effort—to support us. The street will be closed to cars again and redesigned.

Original title: Long way

Language: en

Unique identifier: training

EU is like: community

Europe is like: A rainbow

Democracy is like: Hard look

Who should hear: My Cityhall

Question: nan

The experience was: a one time occurrence

34. Worth it

Since there were issues on our street and the neighboring one, the residents came together and proposed various solutions. Now, the street will be closed to traffic, and we're working on creating a more pleasant environment. The politicians have approved the plan, and we hope the redevelopment will start soon. It was exhausting, but definitely worth it.

Original title: Wörrh it

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltsense

EU is like: Working together

Europe is like: Home

Democracy is like: Equality

Who should hear: Anyone who things he cannot change things

Question: Why do things always take so long to change?

The experience was: a one time occurrence

I don't know / Not sure

35. Talking about politics

It rained a lot and the tram did not come (I later found out it was because of flooding). The app did only show the cancelation a minute before with no explanation - people waiting where unhappy. When I took a different tram and then a walk into the same direction with a women who also waited we talked about the tram. When mentioning my association with local government via volt, she told me a lot of "complaints" (not only related to transport policy)

Original title: Talking about politics

Language: en

Unique identifier: eurosense

EU is like: Usefull

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: A flawed system

Who should hear: nan

Question: nan

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

Negative

36. A fence does not solve the drug problem

Yesterday I did a short cycling trip with my partner. Afterwards, we went to a great Falafel place to grab lunch. The place is close to a local park that is known for the drug abuse happening there. It was the first weekend of spring, quote sunny and not freezing cold

anymore. Outside the park there were a lot of dealers hanging around. And then we passed a place where there were many people consuming. I haven't seen an open drug scene such as this before. I know there park and I regularly see people, marked by drug abuse and sleeping rough, asking for money which I often give them. But this scene was quite shocking to me - there were children and families lounging in the sun and playing inside the park while outside really broken people were struggling with the consequences of addiction. Local government has built a fence around the park and they're closing it at night to keep out the drug scene. But I think this is not a security but rather a social issue. These people won't go away just because they're being locked out. They will go somewhere else.

Original title: A fence does not solve the drug problem

Language: en

Unique identifier: ctpg

EU is like: nan

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: nan

Question: nan

The experience was: somewhat common

37. European cooperation: between joy and frustration

I work in research with many European partners and see how much fun we have. But this is constantly marred by obstacles: regulations regarding working from home, workplaces, housing shortages, exploitation of ignorance of local laws, lack of recognition of educational achievements and the resulting low pay – often exacerbated by the false narrative spread by right-wing fearmongering. I work in research with many European partners and see how much fun we have. But this is constantly overshadowed by obstacles: regulations regarding working from home, workplaces, housing shortages, exploitation of ignorance of local laws, lack of recognition of educational achievements and the associated low pay – often compounded by the false narrative of right-wing fearmongering.

Original title: Europäische Zusammenarbeit zwischen Freude und Frustration

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltnws

EU is like: my home.

Europe is like: my nation

Democracy is like: the blood in my body

Who should hear: Political decision-makers; authorities and institutions; the general public

Question: I would have many questions for those in power, but the first and most important one would be: "Through migrations of peoples, we have long since become one nation, so why are you so afraid of genuine European integration?"

The experience was: very common

38. How to find accommodation for separated couples

I've separated from my partner, but it's impossible to find a new place to live. So I'm forced to share two homes with my ex-partner, one of which is where the children live. Talking to people around me, I've learned that many separated couples with children are in the same situation and are trying to think of new housing arrangements (co-living between fathers or mothers, etc.).

Original title: Comment se loger pour les couples séparés

Language: en

Unique identifier: nan

EU is like: nan

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: All families

Question: How to provide decent housing for every individual

The experience was: very common

39. No enough housing

Several years ago our family started looking into purchasing an apartment for better financial security and quality of life. Because of the housing crisis the only relatively affordable option was to buy a rented out apartment, which we cannot use for ourselves for at least 10 years.

Original title: No enough housing

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltsense

EU is like: a journey that will eventually bring together all people in Europe from Portugal to Russia.

Europe is like: a continent that includes all countries between Atlantic, Ural mountains and Caucasus.

Democracy is like: the form of the government that relies on well-informed, educated and engaged voters

Who should hear: Politicians focusing on long-term economic development, inequality and housing topics.

Question: Why there is still no sensible long-term strategy that would address social issues related to housing and transform the property market, making housing a basic human right rather than an investment and rent extraction mechanism?

The experience was: very common

40. Rückwärtsgewandt

I'm reading about the coalition agreement and it's making me sick... so incredibly backward-looking, as if we've gone back to the seventies. A world without empathy but with plenty of performance.

Original title: Rückwärtsgewandt

Language: en

Unique identifier: DV

EU is like: The better alternative

Europe is like: At home

Democracy is like: Air to breathe

Who should hear: Everyone, especially politicians from the CDU and SPD

Question: Where do you live?

The experience was: very common

41. Shaking Ampel

Feel insecure around the coalition within Germany it seems like now with Trump win there is little orientation and maybe even more trouble for the economy ahead and Europe seems not fit and certainly the Ampel is not fit to take real leadership.

Original title: Shaking Ampel

Language: en

Unique identifier: AA

EU is like: nan

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: nan

Question: nan

The experience was: somewhat common

42. The Berlin rental market is just crazy

My building didn't had gas for three weeks, so we have had no hot water or access to cooking. The society that manages the building has barely communicated with us for these three weeks and didn't offer a discount on our rent. The cool thing is that the other neighbors organized a Telegram chat to align on what to do collectively.

Original title: The Berlin rental market is just crazy

Language: en

Unique identifier: nan

EU is like: Home

Europe is like: Also home

Democracy is like: The underlying structure of everything good

Who should hear: The Federal and national government of Berlin

Question: Can't you see that behaving shitty makes people made and will make our society go to hell?

The experience was: somewhat common

43. The family

The compatibility of family and career is not sufficiently valued in Germany: Compared to my parents' generation (Boomers), where it was socially normal and more feasible for one parent (usually the mother) to stay home or work part-time, this has changed drastically. For both parents to work full-time is virtually impossible without support from family (especially grandparents). It's frustrating to look at neighboring countries where this is much easier to reconcile (from our personal circle of friends, especially Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland, but also France).

Original title: Familien

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltsense

EU is like: an exuberant work of art.

Europe is like: a nostalgic potential.

Democracy is like: The only viable form of government is compared to alternative forms of government.

Who should hear: nan

Question: How do you prioritize topics?

The experience was: very common

44. Too much to do to do good

People I invite to public projects that aim to improve something in our immediate neighborhood often don't have the time to volunteer, even though they would like to participate.

Original title: Zu viel zu tun, um Gutes zu tun

Language: en

Unique identifier: eurosense

EU is like: an organized community government that tries to stay afloat, doing too little of the good and too much of the bad.

Europe is like: a continent in the world where I live

Democracy is like: the worst of the evils of government forms we have

Who should hear: All

Question: Why are you trying to maintain your power instead of doing the right thing?

The experience was: very common

Very negative

45. Can't we do better?

Lately, I've been really moved by seeing people begging, for example, on the subway. The other day, someone was shouting really loudly, "Please, can someone help me? Can someone give me something to eat? I'm hungry!"—and nobody moved. Not even me. I feel a bit ashamed about it, and it also makes me very sad. I wish I lived in a society that also cared for people who can no longer, or no longer want to, live indoors.

Original title: können wir das nicht besser?

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltnws

EU is like: the vision of a shared world based on values such as humanity

Europe is like: my current home.

Democracy is like: something that arises from ourselves, from our actions, not from lamenting.

Who should hear: nan

Question: nan

The experience was: very common

46. Crystallized Housing Problem

The housing problem (finding accommodation) is becoming extremely complicated even here in Berlin. I have the feeling that this is a fundamental problem that undermines individual development and risks becoming an existential blocker with an extremely negative impact on both locals and expats.

Original title: Problema Housing cristallizzato

Language: en

Unique identifier: nan

EU is like: Political institution

Europe is like: A large federal country

Democracy is like: Water, you can't live without it

Who should hear: nan

Question: nan

The experience was: very common

47. European housing crisis

Lack of housing development is very bad for young people especially. It reduces our mobility, opportunities and is bad for the entire economy too. We as Europe need to build way more housing in our cities.

Original title: European housing crisis

Language: en

Unique identifier: wrkplc

EU is like: nan

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: Local politicians who control the planning and land use decisions.

Question: Why are are land use and planning so strict

The experience was: very common

48. Hatred and envy towards everything they have not learned to respect from a young age, or which they can manipulate and exploit for their personal benefit.

A few years ago, I moved within Germany from a western to an eastern state. There, I'm constantly pressured to explain my background, my circumstances, why I moved there, what I want to do there, and why I don't go somewhere else. This is accompanied by repeated false accusations, insults, threats, and sexist remarks directed at me, all from locals and almost exclusively from older people, around 50 years and up. When I realize what they think of me and what they're threatening me with, it hits me like a ton of bricks every time. I'll just pick out one episode with a neighbor as an example: A neighbor, initially quite friendly, arranged to meet me. She talked about herself, laughed about my birthday on Walpurgis Night, April 30th, and listened to me. Until, after a few months, she started making antisemitic remarks about me in a friendly, conversational tone: She said my clothes were missing a "brooch," two triangles, preferably sunflower yellow. Or she repeatedly recommended that I walk as far as possible along the paths behind the houses on the edge of the settlement. She thought they were especially suitable for me in the spring, regardless of whether I went left or right; whatever I experienced there, she assured me, would be the absolute and highest thing in my life. I thought of beautiful scenery and viewpoints until I realized she was referring to the Nazi routes used to evacuate the camps in April 1945. To the left led to the labor camps, and to the right, the brutal, often deadly marches across the Harz Mountains. There are more examples like this. I try to avoid her now, to keep my distance. But after the last New Year, I had something to do at the post office on my very first day back at work. We were standing one behind the other in line. She had a bad cold, looked pale and ill. I was simply being polite, greeted her, and automatically wished her a Happy New Year. She sneezed and sniffled and replied that her current information wasn't good enough for her to still be hoping for anything good. I asked if it was because of her cold. Afterward, I wanted to go to the pharmacy myself and offered to pick up some medicine for her. She replied, "Why the pharmacy? You're still here."

Original title: Hass und Neid auf alles, was sie nicht von klein auf zu respektieren gelernt haben oder zu ihrem persönlichen Vorteil manipulieren und ausschachten können.

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltnws

EU is like: A shop with many large and small cans. You can't tell what's in the cans, even if you're standing right in the middle of the shop. Each can is separate and on its own. Sometimes they open it a crack and mix something together outside the cans. Then they're back to normal, each one on its own.

Europe is like: many different relatives with whom I feel more or less connected.

Democracy is like: A card game. The rules, the meaning of the cards, and the objectives are known. But the players change, the cards are constantly shuffled, and within the rules, there are different ways to achieve one's goals.

Who should hear: Police, politicians, press, practically everyone. The neighbors and other people know many similar stories and participate themselves, either amused by it or pretending they don't notice anything.

Question: Do you still know how a free, democratic and peaceful Federal Republic of Germany works, or do only appearances and personal wealth count, while the real problems continue to be downplayed and thousands of them are ignored as so-called isolated incidents?

The experience was: somewhat common

49. Hospital, healthcare

It was a weekday afternoon. All the doctors' offices were closed, I was experiencing severe chest pains, and I wanted to see a doctor. The emergency hotline told me they couldn't refer me to an ambulance until 7 p.m. The pain worsened, and eventually, I couldn't breathe. My husband tried to call an ambulance, but no one was available, so he had to drive me to the hospital himself. He and our young daughter had to wait there.

Original title: Krankenhaus, krankenversorgung

Language: en

Unique identifier: insta

EU is like: nan

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: nan

Question: nan

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

50. Slide down

My mother is facing personal bankruptcy after a failed business venture. I'm still a student and can barely help. Without friends, we wouldn't know how to go on. She's also dealing with mental health issues. At 61, she has to start all over again, and I'm more or less helpless by her side.

Original title: Rutsch nach unten

Language: en

Unique identifier: eurosense

EU is like: a family divided

Europe is like: a unit

Democracy is like: a very fragile house of cards, which is nevertheless strong enough to stop the rain

Who should hear: Politicians who can make a difference and people in a similar situation to show that they are not alone.

Question: What specific plan do you have to reduce such experiences?

The experience was: not sure

51. Voting to make things worse on the promise of "regaining sovereignty" and 350m Euros/week for the Health Service

Brexit:

Original title: Voting to make things worse on the promise of "regaining sovereignty" and 350m Euros/week for the Health Service

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltnws

EU is like: A good attempt at bringing people closer together (rather than fighting) which is not perfect, but then no man-made system ever can be

Europe is like: A geographical/geological term.

Democracy is like: Proportional Representation (a UK-specific issue)

Who should hear: Whoever wants to.

Question: People are people so why should it be "Them and Us" get along so awfully?

(c) Martin L. Gore

The experience was: a one time occurrence

52. deception

For many people, reason no longer prevails, only fear. Above all, the fear of change. Be it change that has already occurred, such as climate change, or change that must happen soon, for example in health and social policy. Instead, many are afraid of minorities, for example, migrants.

Original title: Verblendung

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltnws

EU is like: a chance to finally overcome the warlike past.

Europe is like: Hometown.

Democracy is like: the only form of government that strives for justice for all.

Who should hear: All.

Question: Why don't you focus on the truly important changes that are coming up?

The experience was: somewhat common

Country: France

Very positive

53. The sociologue and the theatre

I attended a presentation by a sociologist who is working with the local theatre to engage villagers in giving the theatre a meaningful place in the community. It was very interesting and showed the problem of housing. I never knew that 40% of the houses in this village are secondary homes. Young people have trouble finding a place locally. Mind you, there is also not much economic activity, and many young people choose to live in cities these days. There was one person that I found interesting, because he thinks systemically about issues. He was talking about the commons in a way that I hadn't heard before. Many people benefit from the area, it's a great nature tourism place, but all we get back is the money they spend

locally. Our thinking is so dominated by money and the economy. We have to change the way we think about ourselves, our environment, the way we live, the solutions we can find together. The concept of the commons may be brought back to life. What if we manage to renovate the old textile buildings that are now empty, for housing of young people? One person has space to make an apartment in her house, but she is not doing it, because too many rules and norms will make it costly, and then the rights of the tenants are so strong, you can never get people out anymore. Hmm, who knows what we could do if we just tried to come together? A seed had been planted...

Original title: The sociologue and the theatre

Language: en

Unique identifier: ChangeNOW25

EU is like: nan

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: the local government

Question: Can we get the community together and renovate old buildings so that these respond to the most essential rules and norms for housing.

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

Neutral

54. My partner's Bday...

My partner is turning 65, and I would love to throw a party, but he hates parties, especially surprise parties. Yet, friends in the valley are asking me about what will happen this weekend. You have to know my partner is doing a lot for the people. He visits our elderly neighbour of 88 every day - we live on a mountain top, she has a farm and lives on her own, remote, far away from her kids, but refusing to leave her farm. We moved here during covid - and already my partner is known by so many people. I am the "wife of" - and that's fine. Just to say he is such a networker, glue in the community, and people love him, and he deserves a party, but how to do it... A few more days, I'll find a solution!

Original title: My partner's Bday...

Language: en

Unique identifier: AA

EU is like: nan

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: nan

Question: nan

The experience was: somewhat common

I don't know / Not sure

55. Compliance with regulations

The park's closing times are not always respected, so sometimes people get locked in (when this happens before the scheduled time).

Original title: Respect de règlements

Language: en

Unique identifier: training

EU is like: nan

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: nan

Question: nan

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

56. Too much and too little water

This summer we had the biggest downpour every in the area I live. The water came through the ground into the cellar, which has just never happened before. Fortunately we live in an old farmhouse, and water can easily flow without damaging the construction. It makes me think that people in the olden days really understood how to build and take the natural flow of ground and surface water into consideration. We are lucky because on our part of the valley we haven't experienced water shortages yet. In a way, our house is build on the area with most water. The other side of the valley is a different story. This year, there were no major problems (yet) but the last few years people on that side of the valley experienced shortage: the sources started to dry up. They were replenished, but you wonder, will they next time? We are too far from the village to get town water. People are concerned, but they do not think about what could be done.

Original title: Too much and too little water

Language: en

Unique identifier: cca

EU is like: nan

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: nan

Question: nan

The experience was: somewhat common

Negative

57. Cursory inspection by city hall official

A restaurant in our building is creating many nuisances kitchen odour in the staircase, noise at night, and more. We complained with city hall and they sent an inspector, but he arrived in the afternoon while most of the odour nuisance is in the morning, and concluded there was no problem. So now we need to engage additional resources to have the issues sorted.

Original title: Cursory inspection by city hall official

Language: en

Unique identifier: training

EU is like: A common house

Europe is like: A safe haven

Democracy is like: A communal table

Who should hear: City hall

Question: Do you listen to people?

The experience was: somewhat common

58. Internet and storms !

In our home town, in the event of a storm, there may be a power outage, and therefore a loss of telephone access via the internet box. This was not the case with old telephone lines. As a result, some elderly people prefer not to switch to the internet.

Original title: Internet and storms !

Language: en

Unique identifier: training

EU is like: nan

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: nan

Question: nan

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

Very negative

59. Fear of strangers

I was shocked by the refusal of my (normally friendly) neighbors to allow homeless people and undocumented refugees to move into a building in our neighborhood offered by the municipality.

Original title: Peur des inconnus

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltnws

EU is like: A promise of freedom, democracy and solidarity

Europe is like: A common house

Democracy is like: The guarantee of our freedoms and rights

Who should hear: All

Question: nan

The experience was: somewhat common

60. Prejudices about state aid for foreigners

Very recently, a friend of mine, who isn't a French citizen, had to get a blood test. Even though he had a prescription, a simple blood test cost him €160. Normally, for a French citizen with a prescription, a blood test only costs between €17 and €25. Fortunately, my friend can afford this blood test, which he had no choice but to get. However, many foreigners in France wouldn't be able to afford such a sum, even for such vital and necessary treatment. Despite this, many people spread hateful rhetoric towards foreigners in France. They accuse them of coming to France and not paying anything, of "taking advantage of state aid," of being able to get "free" treatment in hospitals, and of therefore "exploiting" the system. However, this is far from the reality, but prejudices are so strong that they prevail over public opinion, which is reflected in the ballot box.

Original title: Les préjugés sur les aides d'Etat pour les étrangers

Language: en

Unique identifier: cca

EU is like: a creation with a great future and great capabilities, but increasingly complicated to agree upon given the wide diversity of opinions among member states

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: citizen participation, a government that truly listens to public opinion, and does so in a fair and just manner (all "groups" are listened to in the same way)

Who should hear: Governments and racists

Question: Why do you deliberately allow such prejudices to circulate?

The experience was: very common

61. Unsolvable nuisance problem

The noise made by the tenant in this slumlord's apartment is keeping us awake. This apartment has been reported to the town hall and the police, but the neighbors are afraid to complain for fear of reprisals.

Original title: Problème de nuisance insoluble

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltsense

EU is like: nan

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: Public authorities

Question: Why are you doing nothing against slum landlords?

The experience was: somewhat common

62. the risks of renting property by elderly individuals

I have an apartment for rent in an old building in the heart of a medieval village, preferably to a single man, as it's on the ground floor and relatively dark, suitable for someone who works and only returns home in the evening. The apartment meets all health and safety standards, however, and the rent is reasonable. It has been managed for a long time by an agency that

I was very satisfied with, especially thanks to its secretary. She has since left, and one of the owner's children has been assigned to find a new tenant. There were many applications, yet the rental failed three times. The first time, the selected candidate didn't have the security deposit when moving in. The second time, the candidate's son advised her against finalizing the lease, saying the apartment was too small. Finally, the third candidate, upon moving in, decided to repaint everything and destroyed all the work we had done to prepare the apartment after the previous tenant left. He removed and threw away the kitchen cabinets, which I had agreed to help replace. I then learned that he was in a relationship and wanted to have a child in this apartment, which was completely unsuitable for that purpose. The agency ignored my recommendations, and we terminated the lease. I don't have the energy to redo the work, and the agency informed me that they are no longer marketing or managing the property.

Original title: les aléas de la location immobilière par les particuliers âgés

Language: en

Unique identifier: eurosense

EU is like: nan

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: nan

Question: nan

The experience was: somewhat common

Country: Italy

Very positive

63. New territories

As a German couple living in Switzerland, we bought a small holiday home in Italy. It's located in a small community of about 1,000 residents. Today, 2 years later, we've been fully accepted there, and it has become another home for us.

Original title: New territories

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltnws

EU is like: well meant but needs reform

Europe is like: my home country

Democracy is like: in the midst of a transformation. In the best case, we will overcome the parties and find our way to a regionally organized grassroots democracy.

Who should hear: everybody who wants to hear it.

Question: is that really what you wanted to do?

The experience was: a one time occurrence

64. 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

Language: en

Unique identifier: IT_AG Toscana

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?

The experience was: somewhat common

65. Volunteering in Milan

Volunteering in Milan's cultural sites.

Original title: Volontariato a Milano

Language: en

Unique identifier: eurosense

EU is like: nan

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: nan

Question: nan

The experience was: somewhat common

66. 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

Language: en

Unique identifier: eurosense

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?

The experience was: somewhat common

Negative

67. A prison not to commit suicide but to build a new life

Italian prisons are a world of suicides and horrors. I'm fighting with a large network called Sbarre di Zuccherò, but the right-wing government sees only the repression of even mothers with young children who are in prison until they're three years old.

Original title: Un carcere non per suicidarsi ma per costruire una nuova vita

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltsense

EU is like: the true homeland of the citizens of 27 countries

Europe is like: the continent of rights and freedoms

Democracy is like: the system in which minorities can count

Who should hear: especially public opinion because that's the only way to put pressure on politicians

Question: replace prison for minor crimes with social commitment, work and study

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

Very negative

68. A train crashing into a wall

If she has to think of experiences that have made her angry, she says the recurring theme is access to healthcare and the lack of care for people with particular physical and psychological problems.

Original title: Un treno che va contro il muro

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltsense

EU is like: The friend who understands you because he thinks like you but also the boomer parent you have to fight against.

Europe is like: A project that seems almost achieved.

Democracy is like: An exercise we stopped doing.

Who should hear: Politicians and institutions.

Question: Giorgia Meloni: What themes do you feel are yours, and why? To understand your personal level of perception of things.

The experience was: very common

69. Housing difficulties

I'm a neurodivergent university student. I have a hard time managing time to work and study simultaneously. I've had a hard time finding affordable housing in my city and finding scholarships and/or welfare programs that could help me.

Original title: Difficoltà abitativa

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltsense

EU is like: A positive utopia currently halfway through its realization

Europe is like: A large community of people

Democracy is like: A fundamental tool for achieving equality

Who should hear: Local political institutions, universities and those who rent housing

Question: How can we manage this situation legally so that it doesn't happen again for anyone?

The experience was: somewhat common

70. Poor Organization

The sea is beautiful but there are no sewers and no methane gas, but there is a lot of tourism, crazy tourism.

Original title: Scarsa Organizzazione

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltsense

EU is like: nan

Europe is like: Beautiful and interesting

Democracy is like: Okay, positive

Who should hear: Mayor

Question: nan

The experience was: very common

Country: Belgium

Very positive

71. Hooray for the local medical center!

I registered at the local medical center around the corner after saying goodbye to my GP in a final conversation; he was very good but difficult to schedule as a solo doctor. Today I had a check-up with a specialist nearby, booked a few days ago, instead of my other one who doesn't have time for another month.

Original title: Hoera voor het lokale medisch centrum!

Language: en

Unique identifier: DV

EU is like: Still insufficiently integrated on medical and social levels

Europe is like: Feeling at home everywhere

Democracy is like: Having the courage to stand up for what is right

Who should hear: Politicians, neighbors, medical specialists

Question: Can you do more to make these kinds of pragmatic solutions possible?

The experience was: somewhat common

72. Neighborhood and being "seen"

In Brussels, shop assistants are often willing to engage with customers personally. They ask where you're from and chat a little. I get the impression of being "seen" here.

Original title: Nachbarschaft und „gesehen“ werden

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltnws

EU is like: a perpetual motion machine

Europe is like: a good old acquaintance who always manages to surprise you.

Democracy is like: It's actually a great idea, but unfortunately it doesn't always produce the result I hope for, and it's actually very tiring.

Who should hear: all those who worry too much about their future

Question: Why and when are you sure that you have the right answers to the challenges of our time, whether big or small?

The experience was: somewhat common

Negative

73. Common misfortune, common misfortune

I live in an apartment with central heating, and the heating makes annoying noises, even at night. After 3 years, it has never been reported, and winter means many sleepless nights.

Original title: Mal comune, mal comune

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltsense

EU is like: a path

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: nan

Question: nan

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

74. Moving country post-covid

I recently moved from the Netherlands to Belgium. I've moved quite a few times but since after COVID it just feels so much worse these days... Housing is harder to find, deposits are higher, the cost of living is higher, landlords are pulling dirtier tricks to keep deposits.. it's quite disheartening to see and feel like decency and humanity being eroded for greed and it's a little terrifying. I'm privileged enough to be able to move, but what about those who aren't?

Original title: Moving country post-covid

Language: en

Unique identifier: eurosense

EU is like: Somewhere between a glorified trade union and one of the biggest safeguards of democracy and preventing corporate capture

Europe is like: A confused continent with a superiority complex but also often a desire to do better

Democracy is like: A concept in danger when people can't tell what's real anymore

Who should hear: Centre right and further right, and their voter base (finger is being pointed the wrong direction)

Question: How can we make people feel more secure in a world that feels like it's becoming increasingly insecure?

The experience was: a one time occurrence

75. Moving to a 'bad' neighbourhood

Viewed a very nice flat and was going to make an offer to buy it, but decided not to because I found out someone was short on the next street one week before. Estate agent advised me 'there are not many people like you in this neighbourhood'

Original title: Moving to a 'bad' neighbourhood

Language: en

Unique identifier: nan

EU is like: nan

Europe is like: My region

Democracy is like: The only option

Who should hear: Local and national government. 'Expat' community of Brussels

Question: Why is there such bad inequality between different parts of the city? Why do you not do something about it

The experience was: somewhat common

76. Why are the streets still home to so many?

Recently I've found myself thinking about the worryingly high number of people in poverty in Brussels, living in the streets and begging every day, with very low chances of having as little as a warm meal and a roof to sleep under every day. And I also reflected on how this problem is not only very widespread in BXL (and elsewhere of course), but it seems that no solution is in sight

Original title: Why are the streets still home to so many?

Language: en

Unique identifier: nan

EU is like: nan

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: nan

Question: nan

The experience was: very common

Very negative

77. The invisibles of society

Mine is more of a constant reality than a singular experience: In Saint-Gilles, almost every day I see homeless people living on the streets, in the cold, with all the differences and suffering that comforts them. Whenever someone does lend them a hand, it's through civic or religious associations or initiatives. But (it seems to me) never from the municipality, and I don't understand why so many people are still allowed to be abandoned, without any point of reference in society or even without a roof over their heads to shelter them from the cold and rain.

Original title: Gli invisibili della società

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltsense

EU is like: feel at home even abroad

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: Local and regional authorities

Question: nan

The experience was: very common

Country: Other

Positive

78. Ecochamber

My partner and I are deciding to move in together upon my return from London. I'm feeling quite happy and hopeful about this joint project. This has been a key factor for me to go back to my country since economic, social, and political conditions are very hostile at the moment. This made me think about how many bubbles we inhabit (forced and sometimes by choice) to make the world a friendlier place.

Original title: Ecochamber

Language: en

Unique identifier: symb

EU is like: an unequal group of countries

Europe is like: a place I want to live in the future

Democracy is like: the heart of our society and the key for a better future

Who should hear: Anyone who feels that autocracy and politics are beyond them, we can escind ourselves from our context.

Question: where is your empathy?

The experience was: a one time occurrence

79. Equal Tea

While visiting an emergency accommodation centre in work. One of the employees of the centre offered a cup of tea to me and the family I was visiting. This is the first time in 5 years that's happened. It felt like they appreciated (finally) a service going in and I like how giddy Mum got when she was offered. She was visibly sitting up straighter when it happened. Maybe it felt a bit like her 'home', where she may offer a visitor tea.

Original title: Equal Tea

Language: en

Unique identifier: eurosense

EU is like: well intentioned community but is finding it hard to use its voice

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: where everyone is acknowledged and listened to. Then communicated to respectfully

Who should hear: Everyone

Question: How would you fair living in emergency accommodation and not being able to offer a visitor a cup of tea until someone in power initiated it for you.

The experience was: very common

80. Helping the homeless

A homeless man in a wheelchair was visibly unwell; and in need of near-immediate attention. I reported him to a homeless protection service and he was found and given help.

Original title: Helping the homeless

Language: en

Unique identifier: ChangeNOW25

EU is like: nan

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: nan

Question: nan

The experience was: a one time occurrence

Very negative

81. Seville Tourism v.s Housing Protest

I was in Seville at the weekend and witnessed a protest. The people were protesting that tourism is having a negative effect on housing. I agree with them. We were staying in a lovely apartment, but that could house people. It got me thinking about Air B & B, and how, during Covid, when there were no tourists, our housing problem seemed to disappear.

Landlords can make more money out of short-term/weekend rentals than they can from long-term lets, so fewer places are available for people to be resident.

Original title: Seville Tourism v.s Housing Protest

Language: en

Unique identifier: eurosense

EU is like: A parent that makes rules for its children, but each child is different so sometimes the rules suit better in some places than others

Europe is like: A wonder mix of culture, diversity, history

Democracy is like: A reasonable way to govern, but requires us to be able to really listen to one another to understand difference

Who should hear: Governments, to legislate to protect housing stock Landlords, to understand that there is a social responsibility to owning property, it should not be solely for profit maximization

Question: Please try to walk in the shoes of those experiencing challenges of: Poverty Homelessness Disadvantage

The experience was: somewhat common

82. Who is creating the stories we learn from.

I have regular experience of the bias imparted on people by the narrow selection of information they choose to consume.

Original title: Who is creating the stories we learn from.

Language: en

Unique identifier: nan

EU is like: an unknown stabilising force.

Europe is like: an exciting mix.

Democracy is like: a struggling concept.

Who should hear: everyone

Question: How do we move from a control theory of governance to a learning theory.

The experience was: very common

Country: Spain

I don't know / Not sure

83. Losing local shops and people living worse

Lots of shops have been transformed into houses

Original title: Losing local shops and people living worse

Language: en

Unique identifier: training

EU is like: a promise to improve

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: The best worst political system
Who should hear: Consumers Interantional trade
Question: nan

The experience was: very common

Negative

84. Housing crisis

I am 29, have a bachelor and a master degree and have been working for 5 years but I still live in a flat that is falling apart and has only one bathroom and a small fridge together with 3 friends. I don't know if I will ever be able to afford to have a proper apartment on my own.

Original title: Housing crisis
Language: en
Unique identifier: training
EU is like: the art of what is possible
Europe is like: a home
Democracy is like: A jigsaw
Who should hear: Politicians, employers, flat owners, housing companies
Question: What are you specifically doing to address this problem?

The experience was: very common

Very negative

85. Alienated youth in a broken housing system

A housing crisis is devastating the future perspectives of young spaniards. In the news, a long queue of university students was being reported, waiting for a meeting with a housing agency. Through the meeting, the students would access the opportunity to rent a room or a flat with their friends during the year, in order to attend the university. The prices are totally disproportionate, the flats are small and often with poor living standards, and young students were peacefully waiting for a meeting with the agency, looking at their phones, totally alienated from their reality. I am certain that most of them know and care about the unfairness of the system, that brings workers (their parents or them) to devote most of their working hours to keep enriching landowners, often constituted as societies with multiple properties, often international companies, with no other purpose than to live off the work of others. The DOCILITY of university students (as myself!), which is supposed to be the most politically active group in the society, left me astonished. Why weren't housing agencies being brought down to flames all over the country? Wouldn't that be the expected response from university students under these conditions? If students do not raise their voices now, what are we to expect from the future?

Original title: Alienated youth in a broken housing system
Language: en
Unique identifier: voltnws
EU is like: nan

Europe is like: nan
Democracy is like: nan
Who should hear: nan
Question: nan

The experience was: somewhat common

Country: Czechia

Negative

86. Housing problems

Although I work for a multinational corporation as a clerk, I don't have enough money for housing. When my roommate moved out, we looked for a smaller apartment than I have, but the market is so distorted that a smaller apartment will cost me more than the old sublet of a larger apartment. I had to apply for social benefits. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs boasts about digitalization, but after submitting a request for housing support online, I received an email saying that I should print out paper forms, fill them in by hand, and scan them and send them back.

Original title: Potíže s bydlením
Language: en
Unique identifier: voltsense
EU is like: my homeland
Europe is like: my homeland
Democracy is like: an absolute necessity for life
Who should hear: politicians
Question: When will you stop listening to the manipulated crowd of screamers and start solving the real problems of society?

The experience was: somewhat common

Very negative

87. State bureaucrats gone wild

Different officials are issuing mutually exclusive requests that I must both fulfill despite it being impossible

Original title: State bureaucrats gone wild
Language: en
Unique identifier: AA
EU is like: Safety from local idiots
Europe is like: Home
Democracy is like: Essential like oxygen
Who should hear: Politicians
Question: nan

The experience was: somewhat common

Country: Poland

Neutral

88. still living here in our city?

Today, I saw some friendly people again that I didn't see in the past 2 years or so. Same city, doing our same hobby. All 3 asked me with a surprised tone "Are you still living here, in this small Polish city?" One even added "you're still young!". Apparently it's surprising that a Dutch person still lives in the same small Polish city after 7 years.

Original title: still living here in our city?

Language: en

Unique identifier: eurosense

EU is like: a safety net

Europe is like: a diverse meal with interesting ingredients

Democracy is like: a fair method to collaborate and share power

Who should hear: Polish people

Question: nan

The experience was: very common

Negative

89. Work

I didn't get a raise in the company so I work for a below-market rate, unfortunately after signing a non-compete agreement my bargaining power is lower

Original title: Praca

Language: en

Unique identifier: voltnws

EU is like: nan

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: nan

Question: nan

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

Country: Austria

Negative

90. Disappointing experience with local politician

At the local elections in my city I talked to the major about the heavy truck traffic in our street. The street leads to a processing company and every day many semi-trailer trucks drive along it. The street is quite narrow and it is difficult to pass them. In my opinion is not only annoying but also posing a danger to the locals living in and close to the street. There is a street bypassing the whole city which would divert the traffic from our street but unfortunately it is not finished. Only about 200m are missing, but they are on the private ground of the factory and the factory does not want to pay for completing it. I asked the major if she could do something so that the missing part of the street, but she said that the factory is very important for the city as tax payer and employer of 200 persons. But there are also over 200 residents in our street who suffer from the traffic. She said she cannot do anything. This was very disappointing.

Original title: Disappointing experience with local politician

Language: en

Unique identifier: eurosense

EU is like: homeland

Europe is like: cultural nest

Democracy is like: freedom

Who should hear: Local politicians

Question: nan

The experience was: a one time occurrence

Country: Slovakia

Very negative

91. Beautification the modern way

I walked down the street to a bus stop. The bus stop stands in front of a new construction site and it used to be partly shaded by a tree. Somebody from the construction site decided that after they've already built the building, it's time to beautify the surrounding area by, among other things, cutting down the tree that was next to the bus stop.

Original title: Beautification the modern way

Language: en

Unique identifier: training

EU is like: A living environment.

Europe is like: A bioregion.

Democracy is like: A set of tools and ideas.

Who should hear: nan

Question: How do they imagine the future? Do they even imagine it?

The experience was: somewhat common

Country: Switzerland

Positive

92. Networking of neighbors

I met a neighbor and talked to him about his heating system upgrade. He explained why he installed his specific solution. Recently, another neighbor asked me if I could help her with replacing her heating system. Ideally, I was able to connect the two of them. The neighbor showed the other neighbor his solution, and she's now considering something similar. Although they live quite close to each other, they were unaware of each other's work.

Original title: Vernetzen von Nachbarn

Language: en

Unique identifier: training

EU is like: nan

Europe is like: nan

Democracy is like: nan

Who should hear: nan

Question: nan

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