



State of the Union Citizens' Rights:
Towards the European Elections 2019

25 September 2018
BIP, Rue Royale 2-4, 1000 Brussels

-REPORT-



EUROPEAN PROGRAMME FOR INTEGRATION AND MIGRATION

AGENDA

- 9:00 – 9:30 Registration
- 9:30 – 10:00 Keynote speakers:
- **Jaume Duch Guillot**, Director General for Communication and Spokesperson of the European Parliament
 - **Marie-Helene Boulanger**, Head of Unit, Union Citizenship Rights and Free Movement, European Commission
- 10:00 – 11:15 *Panel 1: State of Play: current challenges faced by EU citizens*
- Moderator: **Lisbeth Kirk Iversen**, Founder of EUobserver and member of ECAS' Board of Directors
- **Dr. Richard Youngs**, Senior Fellow, Democracy, Conflict, and Governance Program, Carnegie Europe
 - **Assya Kavrakova**, Executive Director, ECAS
 - **Mauro Striano**, Migration & Participation Policy Officer, European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA)
 - **Dr. Alina Ostling**, Researcher, European University Institute
 - **Dr. Dominik Hierlemann**, Senior Expert, Program Future of Democracy, Bertelsmann Stiftung
- 11:15 – 11:30 Coffee break
- 11:30 – 12:45 *Panel 2: Grassroots action for citizens-centric Europe*
- Moderator: **Elisa Lironi**, Digital Democracy Manager, European Citizen Action Service (ECAS)
- **Dr. Anthony Valcke**, Founder and Supervising Solicitor, EU Rights Clinic
 - **Paolo Vacca**, Secretary General, Union of European Federalists (UEF)
 - **Niccolò Milanese**, Director, European Alternatives
 - **Teresa Buczkowska**, Act4Free Movement, 'Bloody Foreigners' Campaign
 - **Bledar Feta**, Act4Free Movement, 'KnowRights' Campaign
- Launch of You Vote EU – the online platform for the 2019 European Parliament Elections!*
- **Doru Peter Frantescu**, Director, VoteWatch
 - **Priscilla Robledo**, Project Manager, Riparte il Futuro
- 12:45 – 13:00 Concluding remarks: **Dr. László Andor**, Former Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Senior Fellow at Hertie School of Governance and Visiting Professor at ULB University, member of ECAS' Board of Directors
- 13:00 – 14:00 Lunch

On 25 September 2018, ECAS held its first annual State of the Union Citizens' Rights conference - Towards the European Elections 2019. It focused on the current challenges faced by EU citizens with regard to their rights' enforcement and on grassroots actions of civic campaigning and engagement.

The event hosted the official launch of *YourVoteMatters*, an innovative web platform aimed at informing citizens about EU policies and connecting them with their current representatives, new candidates for the 2019 European Elections, civil society organisations and other voters.

The conference was organised in the framework of the YouVoteEU project under the Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme of the European Commission and the ACT for Free Movement project supported by the Thematic Fund on EU Mobile Citizens' Access to Rights of the European Programme for Integration and Migration (EPIM). Over 100 participants from 20 different countries took part in the conference and the event reached over 2,000 people online.

Keynote speech and opening remarks

Jaume Duch Guillot, Director General for Communication and Spokesperson of the European Parliament, opened the conference by delivering a keynote speech on the next European elections. He affirmed that the European Parliament as an institution has the duty to communicate about the next elections. Voting is the quintessential democratic act and the more people vote the more legitimate European democracy becomes. European elections represent the moment when citizens choose which direction the EU should take, and the future of Europe will be very much shaped by the outcome of the next elections.

He remarked that the current political situation presents a series of challenges, but on the other hand, trust in the EU has been on the rise for the past two years. Given the political context in many Member States, the importance of the next European elections will be even greater because citizens will have to choose among very different proposals for the future of the Union. He highlighted how in its communication effort the Parliament needs to reach out to citizens and convince them to vote. In order to maximise the outreach, it is pivotal to cooperate with other stakeholders (i.e. civil society organisations) that can act as multipliers of the messages. There is a deep concern at the heart of Europe particularly with the rise of populism, but many civil society organisations (CSOs) are mobilising, given the importance of reaching out to citizens and getting them involved. He concluded that the next elections will be a turning point for the EU, and it is critical to protect citizens' rights and make sure they will vote according to fully informed decisions.

Marie-Helene Boulanger, Head of Unit, Union Citizenship Rights and Free Movement, European Commission, underlined the importance of the electoral process and presented an overview of the [2017 EU Citizenship Report](#) and the follow-up actions undertaken by the European Commission. She remarked that free movement in the EU is a key citizenship right and more than 16 million citizens are currently residing in other Member States. Mobility has steadily increased in the past ten years and people are aware about their status as European citizens, but they still do not know enough about their rights. In particular, it is important to raise awareness about their rights to vote and to consular protection. The European Commission's [EU Citizenship Report of February 2017](#) highlighted how EU mobile citizens do not vote in local elections and the rates of registration vary greatly among Member States and registration systems. Furthermore, the turnout in European elections has dropped over the years, as people find national elections more important. She affirmed that it is important to challenge this view, and that supporting a higher turnout in European elections is a shared responsibility. There is a need for better information at local level and for removing barriers hindering participation. She concluded her speech by reaffirming the European Commission's commitment on data protection and cybersecurity in order to guarantee secure and fair elections.



First panel

During the first panel, moderated by **Lisbeth Kirk Iversen**, founder of EU Observer and member of ECAS' Board of Directors, the speakers discussed the key challenges to freedom of movement and political participation faced by mobile EU citizens, and provided recommendations on how to ensure better inclusion of mobile EU citizens in civic and political life of their host countries.

Dr. Richard Youngs, Senior Fellow, Democracy, Conflict and Governance Programme at Carnegie Europe, provided an explanation of what should be done in order to reshape the European project based on his recent book "Europe Reset: New Directions for the EU". He underlined that one of the biggest challenges is to link together the initiatives organised at local and EU level. Secondly, in his opinion, EU decision-makers should pay more attention to those citizens who do not demonstrate any engagement in political life. Finally, Mr Youngs suggested that civil society organisations and citizens should look for more informal channels of influence.

Assya Kavrakova, Executive Director, European Citizen Action Service (ECAS), pointed out that EU citizenship was not mentioned at all in the last State of the European Union speech by President Juncker. It is particularly worrying given the challenges that mobile EU citizens continue to face, especially those threatening their rights to healthcare and family life. Ms Kavrakova underlined that in the framework of article 11 of the Lisbon Treaty, the European Citizens' Initiative is the only instrument for engagement of EU citizens at EU level. However, given its specificity, it cannot be widely used by citizens. EU institutions should, therefore, take advantage of the technological developments and consider other mechanisms for citizens' engagement, such as crowdsourcing legislation. She explained that ECAS has recently launched a crowdsourcing platform with the aim to gather citizens' opinions and ideas on obstacles to free movement and political participation. Finally, she presented an interactive map, which was developed by ECAS to identify good practices in facilitating the right to free movement of EU citizens across the EU.

Mauro Striano, Migration & Participation Policy Officer at FEANTSA, focused on problems faced by homeless mobile EU citizens, explaining that one of their biggest challenges is access to services, such as accommodation. Given that in some Member States access to social housing is part of the social security system, homeless people risk being considered a burden on social security systems and, as a result, they may be expelled from their host country. Other obstacles include difficulties in getting permanent residence or opening a bank account. He suggested that the European institutions should focus more on issues relevant to the average European, such as social policies, in order to enhance the

political participation of EU citizens. Concerning obstacles to free movement, Mr Striano said that a new Communication on the Citizenship Directive is necessary to clarify the existing loopholes.

Dr. Alina Ostling, Researcher at the European University Institute, provided an overview of the obstacles to political participation in some EU Member States. In Denmark, the problem is polling cards being available only in Danish, which constitutes a significant challenge to those mobile EU citizens who do not speak the language. In Greece, the municipalities do not properly communicate the deadlines and procedures for voter registration. As Dr. Ostling emphasised, mobile EU citizens are not usually a target for local authorities and, therefore, they tend to be excluded from any integration programmes. She also provided a few ideas on how to enhance EU citizens' political inclusion: providing information about elections and electoral procedures in multiple languages, sending messages as a reminder about the election date, simplifying electoral procedures, prioritising EU citizens' integration by, for instance, subsidising language courses.

Dr. Dominik Hierlemann, Senior Expert, Program Future of Democracy at Bertelsmann Stiftung, acknowledged the EU efforts aimed at reducing the gap between the EU institutions and citizens, but at the same time he emphasised that more should be done to reach those who are uninvolved in political life. He pointed out that some of the initiatives undertaken by the European



Commission, such as citizens' dialogues, have been successful, but should not be limited to simply a few meetings with a selected group of people, and more mechanisms for deliberative democracy should be considered to better involve EU citizens in decision-making.

Second panel

During the second panel, moderated by **Elisa Lironi**, Digital Democracy Manager at the European Citizen Action Service (ECAS), speakers analysed grassroots actions that NGOs are undertaking in order to address key challenges faced by citizens. The panellists stressed the importance of these actions and provided suggestions on how civil society could strengthen its voice in view of the next European elections. The interactive approach of the panel allowed the audience to engage with the speakers after each presentation by asking questions and adding relevant comments to the discussion.

Dr. Anthony Valcke, Founder and Supervising Solicitor of ECAS' EU Rights Clinic, presented the EU Rights Clinic, a non-profit service launched in January 2013 by the University of Kent in Brussels and ECAS. The service helps EU citizens and their family members overcome problems they encounter when moving within the EU. He affirmed that the EU Rights Clinic is currently working on Brexit-related issues. The starting point is the EU's negotiation position, where both the Council and the Commission promised that EU citizens' rights will be fully protected throughout the negotiation process. In his presentation, he underlined that the reality is quite different and what has been agreed and eventually will be signed off is a substantial reduction of citizens' rights for both EU and UK citizens. Finally, he

explained how the Clinic is providing support to EU citizens in other countries. For instance, a complaint was submitted recently by the EU Rights Clinic to the European Commission against Sweden for the failure of the Swedish Migration Agency to issue residence cards to non-EU family members of EU citizens within the deadline of six months laid down by EU law.



Paolo Vacca, Secretary General of the Union of European Federalists (UEF), called upon NGOs to influence public opinion in view of next year's European elections. He remarked that NGOs are promoting a stronger and more democratic Union at a time when this concept is very much questioned. Due to the rise of populist movements, the real essence of the EU will be challenged in the next EU elections and the role of civil society will be to defend the vision of a Union capable of evolving. Vacca

stressed the importance of capturing the will of European citizens by addressing the issues they perceive as most urgent. He suggested that, if NGOs want to have an impact on the current political situation, it is essential to focus on values, vision and identity rather than figures.

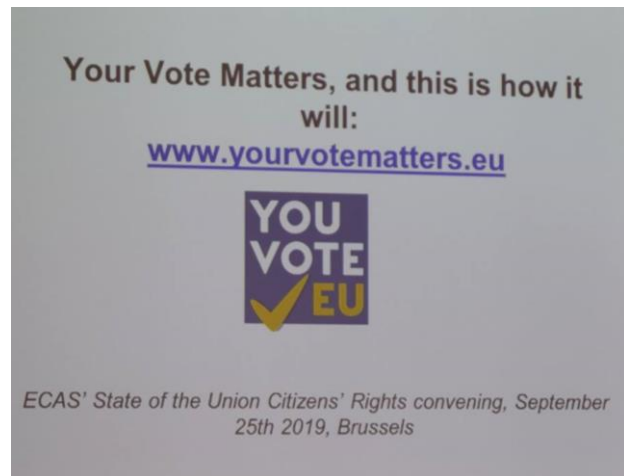
Niccolò Milanese, Director at European Alternatives, discussed the role of the EU institutions in taking into account the current political problems in Europe. He underlined politicians' lack of awareness and information about the impact of certain decisions on EU citizens living in the UK, with particular reference to Brexit. In his view, political institutions are failing to focus on and address the most important problems for citizens. Given the staggering disconnect between institutions and citizens, there is a need for new participatory mechanisms for engaging in politics, such as using various tools of activism, and joining them together to defend citizens' rights. Finally, he remarked that the Act4Free Movement project combines advocacy within the institutions with journalism and media activism to better frame the debate around freedom of movement.

Teresa Buczkowska, Act4Free Movement, gave a presentation about the Bloody Foreigners' Campaign. The campaign aimed at highlighting the positive contribution that Polish citizens residing in Ireland make to their Irish community through blood donation. She observed that EU citizens in Ireland are the biggest migrant group in the country, but on a practical level many people are struggling with accessing their rights. People live in a sort of "vacuum" because technically, as *EU citizens*, they are not known to need integration or help from institutions, however as *migrants* they are not completely perceived as integrated members of the community. The campaign was both a success and a failure at the same time; it was able to attract public and media interest, but on a political level the discussion did not develop as hoped. She concluded her presentation by saying that it is important for institutions and citizens to acknowledge the problems faced by EU mobile citizens, and to keep the discussion on these issues alive.

Bledar Feta, Act4Free Movement, presented the Know Rights Campaign, which focused on mobility rights of third country nationals who are family members of EU citizens. The campaign tried to address the problems that they experience during cross-border movements when a lot of bureaucratic impediments limit their right to free movement. The campaign reached out to 20 embassies in three countries (Greece, Slovenia and Italy), and as a result noticed that consular staff were unaware of some of the provisions that they must apply to EU citizens' third country family members. The campaign also

had to deal with the disinformation of non-EU family members of EU citizens regarding their mobility rights. Finally, he remarked on the importance of refreshing the interest of EU policy-makers about family reunification rights. There is a need to upscale the initiative from civil society level to governmental level in order to put an end to the restrictions of free movement of non-EU family members of EU citizens.

Doru Peter Frantescu, Director of VoteWatch Europe & **Priscilla Robledo**, Project Manager at Riparte il Futuro, officially presented to the public the new *YourVoteMatters* platform created in the framework of the YouVoteEU project. The multilingual platform is an innovative communication tool between the 2019 European election candidates and voters. It aims at connecting citizens with MEPs and candidates in the next European Parliament elections in order to make the process more transparent and enhance the dialogue among all the actors involved in the elections. They explained how the project's consortium identified 25 key issues voted on in the last European Parliament term on which citizens can compare their views. Through an interactive quiz, citizens can see which politicians, national parties and EU political groups match their opinions. The platform also allows NGOs to be part of the discussion. Organisations can register to the platform by answering a questionnaire on the same 25 key issues and have the possibility to publish their policy views. They concluded their presentation by remarking on the innovative and positive impact that this tool can have for all the actors involved in the next European elections.



Dr. László Andor, Former Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and member of ECAS' Board of Directors, brought the conference to a close with a reflection on the importance of citizens' mobilisation. Dr. Andor stressed the importance of a discussion around the challenges posed to citizens' rights. There are several attacks on the integrity of the EU and on the rights of EU citizens, and it is critical to underline this aspect while approaching the next European Parliament elections. The issue of free movement has been at the heart of the Brexit debate and the situation of EU citizens living in the UK and British citizens living in the Union still represents a major challenge. Mobility is linked to a lot of risk, and mobile citizens are more vulnerable than others, as for them sometimes democratic participation is less of a reality. In the current political landscape, it is clear that the situation is complex and there are countries where democracy is undermined and rights are eroded. The EU is becoming the guardian of democracy and the rule of law and further instruments have to be developed for this purpose. He concluded by suggesting that it is necessary to have a new vision for a better Europe which people that have been alienated can trust.



Six recommendations for enhanced inclusion of EU citizens in civic and political life:

1. Local and EU institutions should use innovative and digital participatory tools more frequently, including crowdsourcing legislation, in order to foster citizens' involvement in decision-making.
2. EU institutions should put more effort into reaching out to those citizens who are disenfranchised and uninvolved in politics.
3. The loopholes in the application of the right to free movement should be addressed by a new European Commission Communication on the Citizenship Directive.
4. EU institutions should deliver more on the issues that are close to citizens' everyday concerns, such as social policies, in order to enhance citizens' interest and participation in political processes.
5. EU institutions should provide support to NGOs' activities and upscale some of these initiatives to a governmental level to better protect citizens' rights.
6. NGOs should undertake a coordinated effort and understand citizens' most urgent needs in order to counter the rise of populist movements in the next European elections.

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Biographies of Speakers



Jaume Duch Guillot is the Director-General for Communication of the European Parliament and its Spokesperson. He graduated in Law from the University of Barcelona (1980-1985), where he later also served as a Professor of International Public Law. In 1990 he became a European Parliament official and since then has always worked in communication-related positions, such as Spokesperson for the then President of the European Parliament, José María Gil-Robles, Head of the Press Room or Media Director, a position to which he was appointed in 2006. In February 2017 he was appointed as Director General for Communication, a role which he combines with being the Spokesman of the institution. He speaks Spanish, French, English, Italian and Catalan, has a basic knowledge of German. He is the author of various publications, articles and communications on issues related to the European Union, the role of the European Parliament and communication policies.



Marie-Helene Boulanger is the Head of the unit in charge of citizenship rights and free movement at Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers of the European Commission. She started her career working 6 years in the field of data protection with Professor Poulet at the University of Namur. She then joined the Belgian Data Protection Authority where she spent more than 5 years, for 2 years of which she was the secretary of this authority. She subsequently joined Directorate-General Internal Market of the European Commission as a national expert with the data protection unit. Following that, she transferred to the unit responsible for large scale IT systems of the Directorate General of the European Commission in charge of Justice and Home Affairs, where she has been responsible for the legal team of the unit and also specialised in the policy aspects of the Schengen Information System. Between September 2009 and June 2014, she was heading the data protection unit in charge among others of the reform of EU data protection law.



Assya Kavrakova is the Executive Director of the European Citizen Action Service (ECAS), an international non-profit organization, based in Brussels, with a pan-European membership and 27 years of experience in EU citizens' rights enforcement and civic participation in the EU decision-making process. Before joining ECAS in 2012, Assya served as the Director of European Policies and the Civic Participation Program at the Open Society Institute (OSI-S) in Sofia, Bulgaria, from 2000 to 2012. At the OSI-S in Sofia, Ms. Kavrakova was also responsible for leading the analytical and research activity of the European Policies Initiative. She personally authored the paper: "The Unfinished Business of the Fifth Enlargement Countries".



Elisa Lironi is the Digital Democracy Manager for the European Citizen Action Service (ECAS). She develops and leads ECAS' Digital Democracy agenda by implementing EU projects and research studies in this focus area. She managed the project Digital Ecosystem for E-Participation Linking Youth (Erasmus+ programme) and coordinates ECAS' part in the EUCROWD (Europe for Citizens programme). Her most recent publications includes the "Potential and Challenges of E-Participation in the EU" (2016) for the European Parliament and "EU Public Consultations in the Digital Age: Enhancing the Role of the EESC and Civil Society Organisations" (2017) for the EESC.

She is currently working on research projects on crowdsourcing at the EU level and supports the European Commission's development of the European Citizens' Initiative Online Collaborative Platform.



Lisbeth Kirk founded EUobserver in 2000, the non-profit investigative newspaper focusing on the European Union. She oversees strategic development of the organisation's news service, including cross-border and investigative journalism. She has a degree from the Danish School of Media and Journalism. Prior to EUobserver, she worked as a journalist, analyst, editor, and consultant for Danish media, including Notat and Danmarks Radio. She holds an executive business degree from Copenhagen Business School and is a board member of several Danish and international companies and NGOs.



Dr Richard Youngs is a Senior Fellow in the Democracy, Conflict, and Governance Program, based at Carnegie Europe. He works on EU foreign policy and on issues of international democracy. Youngs is also a professor of international relations at the University of Warwick. Prior to joining Carnegie in July 2013, he was the Director of the European think tank FRIDE. He has held positions in the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office and as an EU Marie Curie fellow. He was a Senior Fellow at the Transatlantic Academy in Washington, DC, from 2012 to 2013. Youngs has authored twelve books. His most recent works are "Europe Reset: New Directions for the EU" (I.B. Tauris, 2017), "Europe's Eastern Crisis: The Geopolitics of Asymmetry" (Cambridge University Press, 2017), and "The Puzzle of Non-Western Democracy" (Carnegie, 2015).



Mauro Striano has worked at FEANTSA as Policy Officer since 2011. He is in charge of migration policies as well as participation of people with experience of homelessness. His area of expertise includes EU free movement issues, policies and law related to migration from third countries, destitution among mobile EU citizens and third-country nationals. Among other activities, he coordinates a project that aims at protecting the rights of destitute mobile EU citizens (PRODEC). He holds a master in European politics and a certificate in European law on migration and asylum.



Dr Alina Ostling holds a PhD title in Political Sciences from the European University Institute (EUI). Alina has a long experience as researcher, providing expertise not only in academia but also in assignments for regional and international organisations (EC, UNDP, UNICEF, OSCE/ODIHR) and to civil society organisations (Transparency International, Open Government Partnership) in the areas of political participation, (new) media and elections.



Dr Dominik Hierlemann is a Senior Expert and head of the European democracy project at the Bertelsmann Stiftung, Germany, and an expert in deliberative democracy. He is a political scientist with a Master in Public Policy (MSc) and a doctoral degree (PhD) in Social Sciences and started its work for the Bertelsmann Stiftung, one of Germany's leading think tanks, in 2004. Dominik was the project leader of the Citizens' Forum in 2011, initiated by the Federal President, which has been the biggest project in the field of citizen engagement in Germany. It involved 25 cities, 100 online-facilitators and 10.000 participants. Since then he has created and carried out multiple civic engagement projects and facilitated large-scale events with the Federal President and the Chancellor. In addition, Dominik has lectured on new forms of public participation at Universities in Germany and Australia.



Paolo Vacca is the Secretary General of the Union of European Federalists (UEF), a pan-European, non-governmental political organisation dedicated to the promotion of European political unity. He is also Secretary General of The Spinelli Group, a network of federalist members of the European and national parliaments and like-minded supporters across Europe. A long-time campaigner for European unity and federalism, Paolo has organised and contributed to countless conferences, seminars, events and grass-root campaigns and actions across Europe promoting European democracy and European unity. Professionally he works as Director Legal Affairs Europe for a global chemical multinational with European headquarters in The Netherlands.



Dr Anthony Valcke is the founder and supervising solicitor of the EU Rights Clinic, the first law clinic to specialise in EU law which was set up by ECAS in collaboration with the University of Kent in Brussels. He has also been an advisor for Your Europe Advice for over twelve years. He is visiting lecturer at Kent where he teaches postgraduate courses on EU migration law and EU advocacy. He is also Adjunct Professor of Law at Vesalius College in Brussels where he teaches undergraduate courses on EU law relating to the single market and legal aspects of migration. He is qualified as a solicitor in England and is also a member of the Brussels and Palermo bars. He received his PhD in Comparative Law from the Università di Palermo (Italy) and holds degrees in English and French law as well as a postgraduate qualification in EU law.



Niccolò Milanese is the Director of European Alternatives: a civil society organisation promoting democracy equality and culture beyond the nation state. He has been involved in campaigning around citizenship and free movement issues for a decade and has been working on the Act4Freemovement project.



Teresa Buczkowska is a Polish migrant woman living in Ireland since 2005. Teresa holds a MA in Ethnography and Social Anthropology from Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland. Currently she works for the Immigrant Council of Ireland which she joined in 2013 initially as an Integration Intern, and eventually progressing in to the position of the Integration Team Coordinator in 2015. Teresa and her team have been working with a range of organisations and partners to promote greater cultural, social, economic and political integration of people of migrant background living in Ireland. Delivering diverse anti-racism projects is a cornerstone of their work. While working for the Immigrant Council Teresa completed a study of the experience of racism in the taxi industry, and she co-authored a report on racially motivated anti-social behaviour in social housing. Between May 2016 and May 2017 Teresa served as a Board Member of the European Network of Migrant Women (ENoMW).



Bledar Feta is a Political Scientist with a long-term experience in working with inter-governmental and civil society organizations. He studied European and International Relations at the University of Piraeus and obtained his MA Degree from the Faculty of Political Sciences and Public Administration of the University of Athens. In the course of his career, he has engaged in different projects, many EU and UN-funded, exercising an important role in the field of research, policy analysis, and project implementation. Bledar is a passionate human rights activist demonstrated through his work with Humanity in Action and European Alternatives. In this context, he is running the Know Your Rights Campaign, a transnational campaign supported by the Act4FreeMovement Project.



Doru Peter Frantescu is the CEO and Co-founder of VoteWatch Europe. A political scientist by training, in 2009 Doru co-founded a one-of-a-kind international platform which provides EU affairs insights to stakeholders across the world through an innovative digital working method. His data-driven reports and forecasts on the impact of the major political/economic events across the EU are quoted regularly in Europe and elsewhere. A passionate futurist, Doru is also a member of the European Alliance for Artificial Intelligence.



Priscilla Robledo, formerly an intellectual property lawyer, she joined the non-profit sector in 2015, working on various topics: environment, migrants and refugees, anticorruption and transparency, civic engagement. She is an advocacy campaigner and she manages Riparte il futuro's strategic projects and operations. Earlier in 2018 she has been awarded the IVLP scholarship from the US Department of State. For YouVoteEU, she is responsible for the management and coordination.



Dr László Andor is the Head of Department of Economic Policy at Corvinus University (Budapest) and Senior Fellow at the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (Brussels). He was EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (2010-14). Since 2015, he has been lecturing at Hertie School of Governance (Berlin), ULB (Brussels) and Sciences Po (Paris) and became member in various think tanks (EPC, RAND Europe, Friends of Europe). He is a Policy Fellow at IZA (Bonn) and a team leader for an EFOP research project on the future of work at Corvinus. He was awarded Doctor Honoris Causa at Sofia University of National and World Economy and the Legion of Honour by the French President in 2014.