

National debates with citizens

The aim of these debates was to discuss the critical perceptions of the EU and to identify the sources of Euroscepticism.

Austria

Debates took place in various towns across Austria (Pressbaum, St. Pölten, Purkersdorf, Großmain, Elixhausen, Innermanzing, Siegersdorf), from 03/10/2017 to 16/10/2017.

Highlights from some debates:

- Siegersdorf: the end of the roaming was one of the highlights for the young ones.
- St. Pölten: the debate focused on opinions of engaged citizens in rural areas – as diverse as the world itself.
- Purkersdorf: "EU means overcoming national boundaries – but the 'overregulation' is part of the dark side of EU."
- Salzburg: "Yes, EU brought us peace and progress – but EU regulations are sometimes too much interfering with the daily life of citizens."

Debates involved 58 citizens from Austria.



Bulgaria

Debates took place in various towns across Bulgaria (Pazardzik, Berkovica, Razlog), from 07/10/2017 to 20/10/2017.

Short description of the debates:

- Pazardzik: Previous researches on euroscepticism describes the usual eurosceptic as an "older woman with low education, low income who perceives rather high income inequality and claims to be on the losing side of the European integration". For our first debate in Bulgaria we decided to take the bull by the horns and went to the city of Pazardzik to meet poor old women and hear their opinions on EU and the fears they have about it. The debate shows flashes of encouragement - even the most devoted eurosceptics realize the benefits EU brings are much more than the negatives.
- Berkovica: We had our second discussion on euroscepticism in a small town of Berkovica situated in the heart of the North-Western region of Bulgaria - officially the poorest region of the European union. That might explain why we received mainly economic reasons for euroscepticism from this discussion. Regardless of that, people, especially younger ones, still showed decent level of optimism.
- Razlog: Our third debate was in the town of Razlog, situated in South-West region of Bulgaria – the richest of Bulgarian regions bordering another EU member state - Greece. This fact affected the development of the region in recent decades and affected the discussion as well.

Debates involved 53 citizens from Bulgaria.



Germany

Debates took place in various cities across Germany (Köln, Hamburg, Frankfurt am Main), from 10/10/2017 to 22/10/2017.

Short description of the debates:

- Citizens involved in the debates expressed their wish for an open dialogue about the future development of the European Union. There was a mutual consent that the EU needs to tackle urgent reforms and to further engage in certain policy fields, such as foreign and security policy.

Debates involved 60 citizens from Germany.



Hungary

Debates took place in various towns across Hungary (Pilisjászfalu, Pécs, Miskolc, Hatvan, Balassagyarmat), from 22/09/2017 to 04/10/2017.

Short description of the debates:

- Pilisjászfalu: We organized discussion with local students in Pilisjászfalu. Participants shared their view on the state of the European Union, focusing on the most important pressure points such as migration and economy. They expressed their feelings about advantages and disadvantages of Hungary's EU membership.
- Pécs: We organized discussion with local citizens in Pécs, dominated by women. Participants shared their view on the state of the European Union, focusing on the most important pressure points such as migration and economy. They expressed their feelings about advantages and disadvantages of Hungary's EU membership.
- Miskolc: We organized discussion with local citizens in Miskolc. Participants shared their view on the state of the European Union, focusing on the most important pressure points such as migration and economy. They expressed their feelings about advantages and disadvantages of Hungary's EU membership.
- Hatvan: We organized discussion with local citizens in Hatvani, with mainly construction workers and former entrepreneurs. Participants shared their view on the state of the European Union, focusing on the most important pressure points such as migration and economy. They expressed their feelings about advantages and disadvantages of Hungary's EU membership.
- Balassagyarmat: We organized discussion with convicted persons in Balassagyarmat. Participants shared their view on the state of the European Union, focusing on the most important pressure points such as migration and economy. They expressed their feelings about advantages and disadvantages of Hungary's EU membership.

Debates involved 52 citizens from Hungary.



Latvia

Debates took place in various towns across Latvia (Kuldiga, Talsi, Preili, Livani, Ungurpils), from 27/09/2017 to 11/10/2017.

Short description of some debates:

- Kuldiga: We organized discussion in western Latvia: Kuldiga. There was lively experience-sharing and discussion on European Union and euroscepticism. We also watched and discussed fragments from Jean-Claude Juncker's State of the Union speech.
- Talsi: We organized discussion in western Latvia: Talsi. There was lively experience-sharing and discussion on European Union and euroscepticism. We also watched and discussed fragments from Jean-Claude Juncker's State of the Union speech.

Debates involved 95 citizens from Latvia.



Slovakia

Debates took place in various towns across Slovakia (Detva, Michalovce, Ružomberok, Pezinok, Zvolen, Bratislava), from 14/08/2017 to 10/10/2017.

Short description of some debates:

- We discussed the problems of the EU with citizens in Detva, Detva, Michalovce, Ružomberok, Pezinok, Zvolen, Bratislava. The debate met with success and citizens brought up many interesting ideas.

Debates involved 90 citizens from Slovakia.

