

REVIVING DEMOCRACY FOR A CITIZENS-LED EUROPE

FutureLab Europe Manifesto - 2016

We, the fifth generation of Future Lab Europe, are deeply worried about the future of Europe. The complexity of EU policy-making, the lack of appropriate responses to the multiple crises facing Europe, the prevalence of national topics in the media and in public discourse, the inadequacy of our education systems to respond to the challenges of today and tomorrow, as well as growing distrust in our political system leave us no alternative but to call for radical change. Our politicians and leaders lack any sense of urgency. We, as young Europeans, believe that these changes cannot happen without one crucial shift of paradigm: by changing the face of democracy and turning it towards a citizen-centred governance model.

Democracy cannot be the same in a multi-level governance system. But one key principle should always be respected: Citizens first! On this basis and with this manifesto, we encourage policy-makers, leaders and fellow citizens to rethink our political system with us and to put more effort into bringing people back to the heart of the democratic participatory process. Here are some steps we consider necessary for such a major rethink in which the EU would play a central role:

- 1. FOSTER A TRULY EUROPEAN POLITICAL CULTURE**
- 2. LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY FOR A GENUINE EUROPEAN PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY**
- 3. DEVELOP AND SCALE UP INSTRUMENTS OF DIRECT DEMOCRACY**
- 4. COMBAT CORRUPTION AND FIGHT FOR TRANSPARENCY TO RESTORE TRUST IN THE INSTITUTIONS**
- 5. ENCOURAGE EU MEMBER STATES TO INVEST IN EDUCATION TO PROMOTE INFORMED PARTICIPATION**

There is no doubt that reviving democracy in Europe requires the combined efforts of all institutions and levels of governance. But if some are reluctant to cooperate, we believe that the EU should take the lead and thereby become a pioneer in creating a new form of democracy, where citizens would have a chance to shape their own future. Not only will this benefit the European project by restoring citizens' trust in the EU and its capacity to influence member states in realising the common good for all but it will also turn Europe into a blueprint that can be followed on a global scale.

Europe's future depends on the choices we make now. Let us choose to develop solutions that involve everybody's opinion and that serve the common good. Make the choice with us!