

FEMINIST FESTIVAL: A CITIZENS DELIBERATION ON THE GREEN TRANSITION

Saturday, April 20, 2024 at 09:00
AM through April 22, 2024
Brussels, Belgium



**REAL
IDEAL**



Be aware of power imbalances

Promoting and ensuring inclusiveness

Work with and protect nature

Collaborating with bottom-up activism and cultivating environmental citizenship

Transitioning the economic model to a green economy



Illustration: Leyla Ali

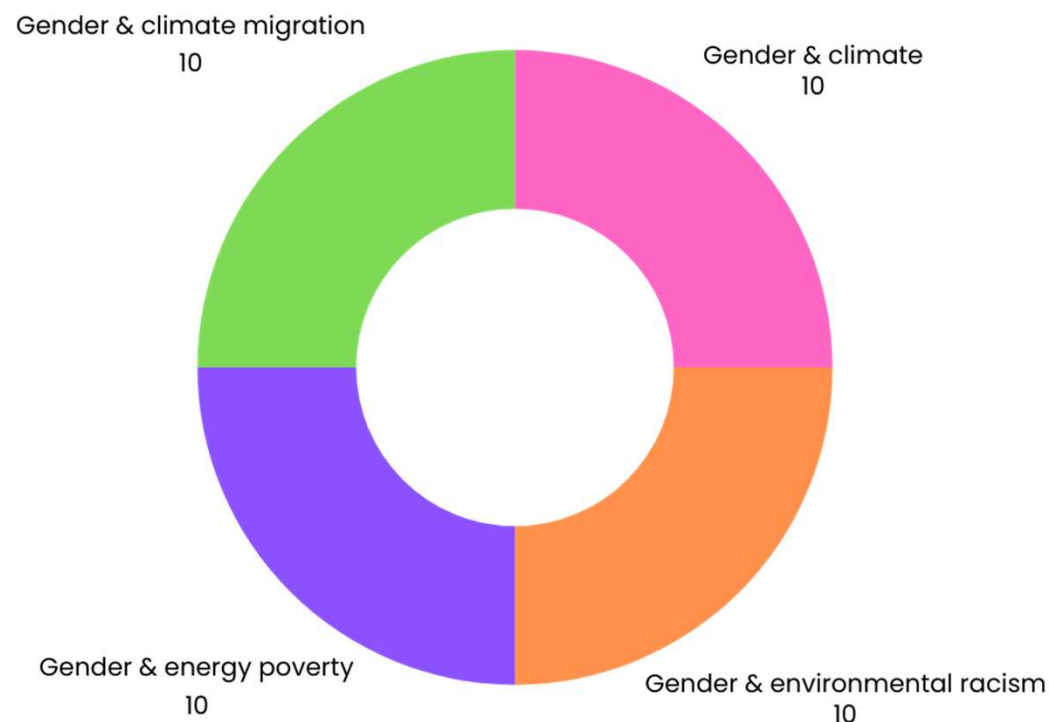
INTRODUCTION TO THE FEMINIST FESTIVAL

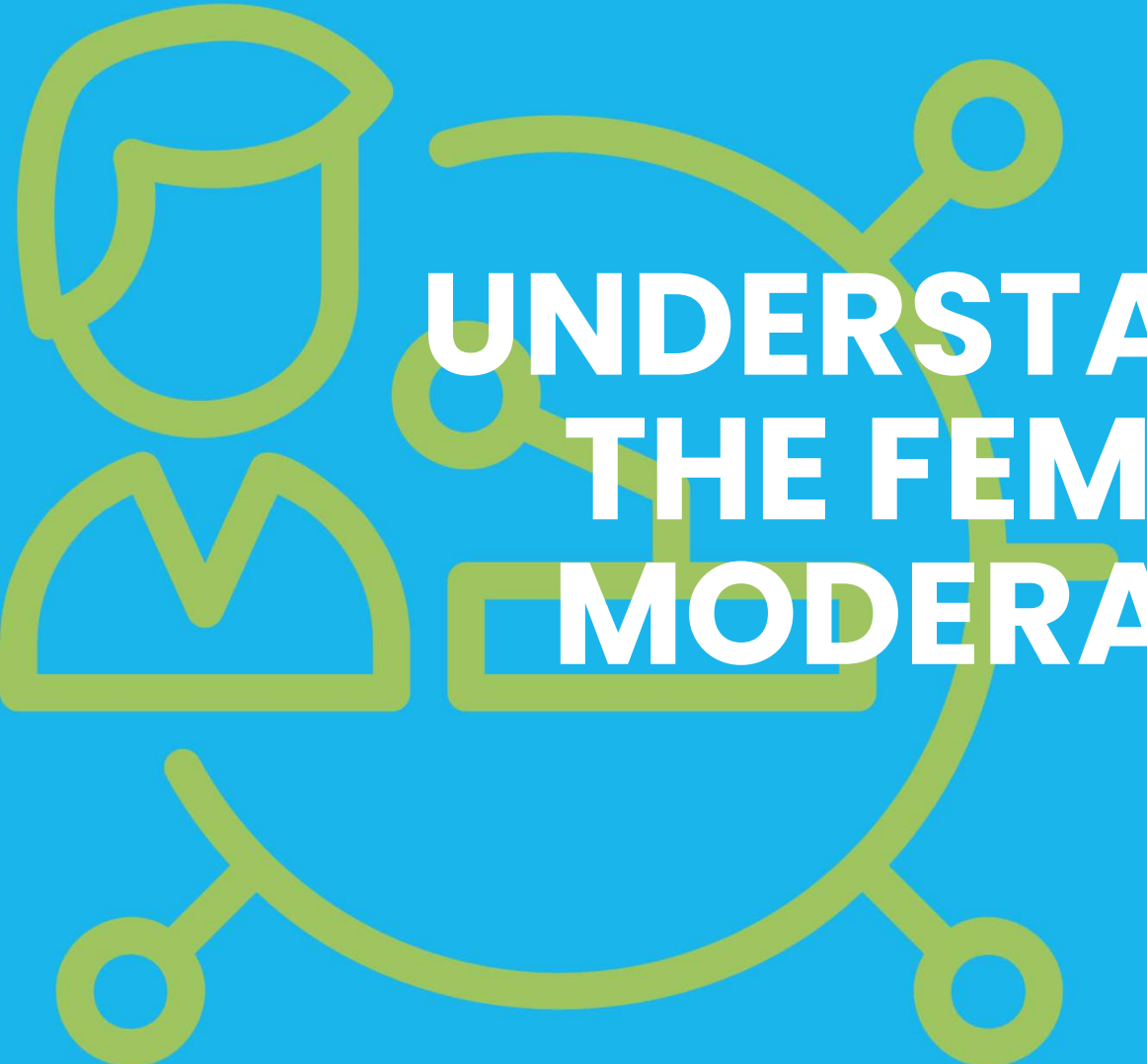


The Feminist Festival: A Citizens Deliberation on the Green Transition was a jointly organized event by Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF) and the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) aimed at reshaping the dialogue surrounding EU policy-making. For **inclusive democracy**, we prioritized centering the **lived experiences of individuals** across Europe in shaping policies related to climate and environmental action within the European Union.

Our mission is to reimagine the landscape of EU policy **through the lens of ecofeminism**. Too often, decisions made at the EU level fail to fully consider the **diverse perspectives and challenges** faced by citizens. So, we planned to bridge the gap between policy-making and people's everyday realities.

- The feminist festival was open to **individuals of all genders and backgrounds, regardless of prior knowledge**, who wish to contribute to EU policies regarding the green transition.
- During the Feminist Festival, participants engaged in a series of dynamic activities designed to **foster dialogue, collaboration, and collective action**.
- Throughout the festival, we employed **feminist methodologies**, including workshopping and **creative democratic methods**, to **amplify voices that are often marginalized** in policy-making spaces.





UNDERSTANDING THE FEMINIST MODERATION

t moderation

- Feminist moderation means creating an inclusive space where everyone has a fair chance to participate and share their thoughts.
- It also means acknowledging and tackling power dynamics that affect how participants engage in discussions.



- Feminist moderation applies a series of moderation techniques which focus on breaking patterns of dominance exercised passively or actively by one group of people toward another. Often the experiences of systematically excluded groups are marginalized in participatory spaces. This happens through, for example, dominant members of the group taking up most of the speaking time, undermining statements and not taking others seriously as equal members in the process.
- This is not to say that perpetrators are always white men and excluded groups are always women – it is not this clear cut. But in general, people who experience privilege are less aware of the experiences of others, and therefore may not notice the ways they impact others in participatory spaces. Feminist moderation is not only about gender imbalances.



- The moderator acts as a guide in the participatory process, leading the group's discussion. They do not necessarily participate in the discussion themselves, but is there **to facilitate others' engagement**. It is the task of the moderator to identify and break up socially constructed barriers to ensure the group's communication flows smoothly.
- There are two approaches to equality that the moderator can facilitate with, equality of access and equality of participation.



Safe space

A safe space is where those in the space should be free from any form of violence and discrimination. This includes discrimination based on any characteristics or identities. It is a place where participants feel emotionally and physically secure.

Brave space

A brave space is where participants are encouraged to challenge their biases and expand their understanding of others.

Red lines

Refers to boundaries that should not be crossed or actions that are considered unacceptable or intolerable. Red lines includes, but is not limited to: discrimination, hate crimes, sexual harassment and assault.



HOW WE APPLIED THE FEMINIST METHODOLOGY

We selected participants for the feminist festival based on methods that Hanna and Rose had learnt during WMG and UN Women selection processes. Whilst the previous EU test case had been done using random selection, we aimed to select based on diversity criteria. This is of course not a perfect method for ensuring diversity, but the aim was to capture some key characteristics about the people applying and then use this information to ensure we had people from underrepresented and structurally excluded groups.

The names were removed so we could not see which participants gave which answer. We screened the security question first to see who to remove, and then removed people who were known to us as part of the “NGO bubble”.

We then randomly selected participants based on quotas for some questions. E.g., we aimed to have two people from each country of residence that applied, as well as members from each nationality that applied

For other questions, we prioritised people of certain groups:

- People from the Global South
- Queer people
- Disabled people
- youth and older persons
- unemployed
- People from rural areas
- racialised people

Finally, we randomly selected 20 people as the questions on the questionnaire were optional and not all had been filled in

SOLIDARITY PRINCIPLES

01/

Be present

I will not multi-task, I value the space set up.

02/

Engage fully

I am here, because I want to be here, and I have valuable things to add.

03/

Make space

And take space. I will take a step to the side if I'm talking more than others.

04/

I will expect the best of people

If something is not clear, I will ask people what they mean.

05/

Attack the issue

I will attack the root issue, not the person. I will respect people who are telling me their truth. I will use a structural analysis.

06/

No discrimination

I respect human rights. I will seek to tackle systems of discrimination. That means I will keep an eye on my own privileges.

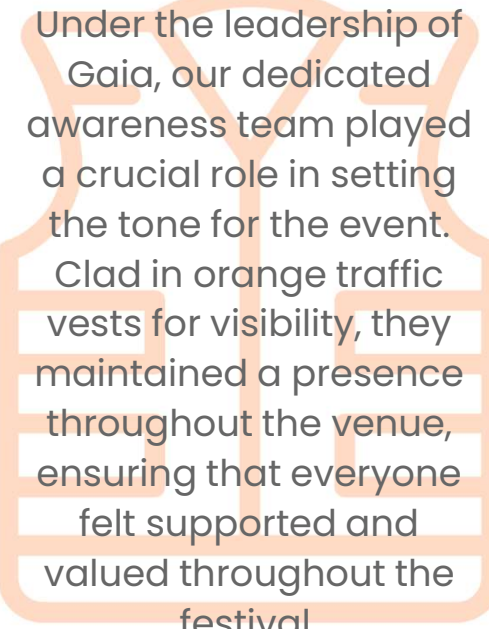




To foster inclusivity and create a safe environment for all participants, we transformed all restroom facilities into gender-neutral spaces. This involved replacing traditional binary signage with universally recognized "toilet" signs.

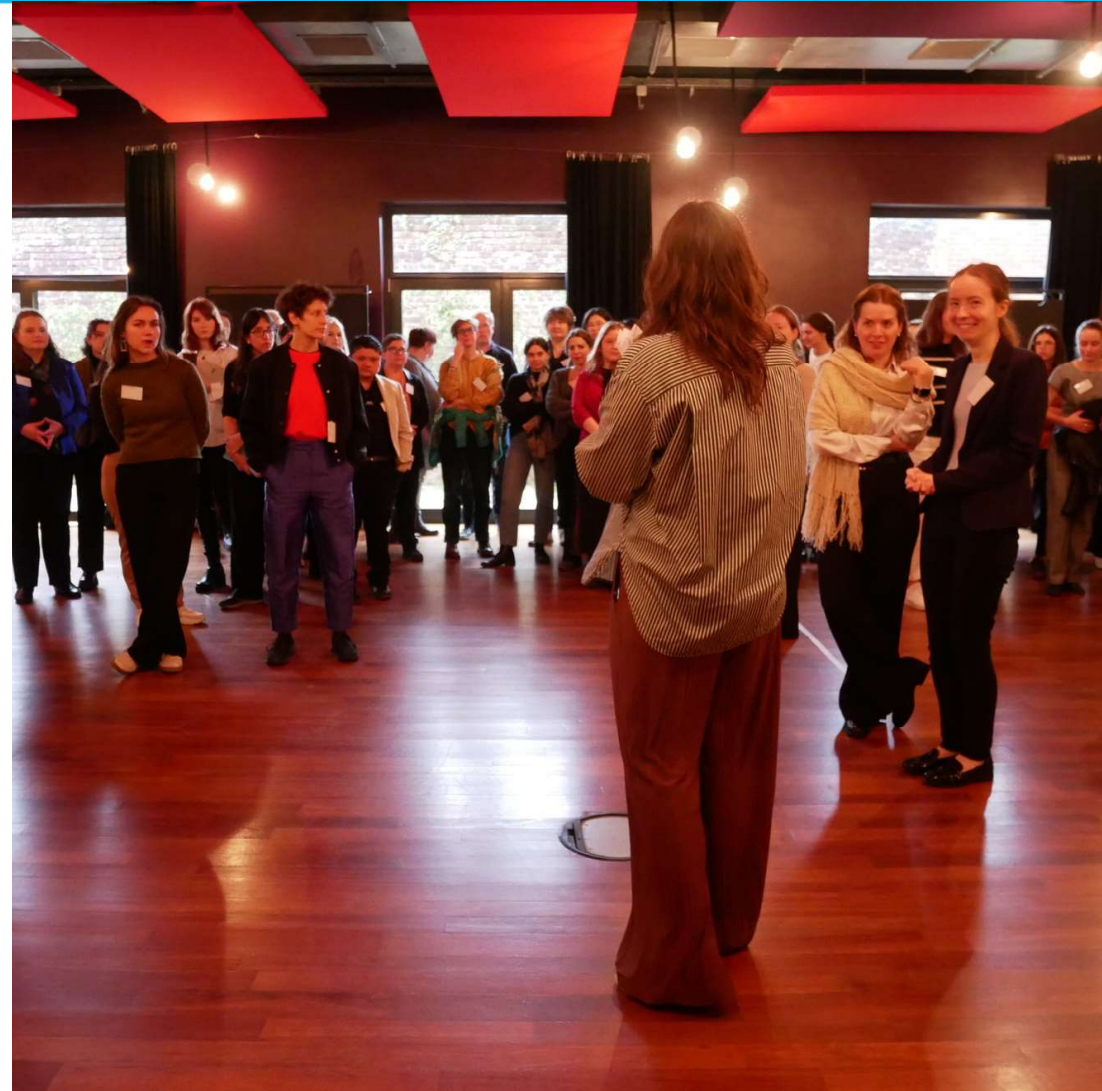


In addition to these physical changes, we displayed our house rules and awareness team posters prominently in every restroom throughout the venue. These posters served as reminders of our commitment to creating a welcoming and respectful atmosphere for everyone in attendance.



Under the leadership of Gaia, our dedicated awareness team played a crucial role in setting the tone for the event. Clad in orange traffic vests for visibility, they maintained a presence throughout the venue, ensuring that everyone felt supported and valued throughout the festival.

- Informal tone set for the meeting, with moderators and hosts dressed comfortably
- Emphasis on creating a relaxed atmosphere
- Extended breaks provided ample time for networking and informal conversations
- Moderators selected for their experience in facilitating equitable dialogue as well as being representative of diverse backgrounds
- We provided guidance to moderators to be mindful of distributing speaking opportunities evenly
- We actively monitored discussions, reminding moderators to ensure everyone had a chance to contribute



Setup: Chairs were arranged away from the center of the room, fostering an open space for dialogue.

Moderator Role: Positioned in the center, the moderator presented a thought-provoking statement to initiate discussion.

Participant Engagement: Participants chose one of four corners representing their stance on the statement.

Platform Discussions: Following the small group discussions, participants reconvened for a platform discussion involving representatives from each corner.

Group Discussion: Each corner engaged in a 10-minute discussion amongst themselves, exploring their perspectives.

Example Statements Discussed:

- **1. Intersection of Gender and Climate:**
- **Statement:** "Climate change is not about gender; focusing on gender distracts from the real environmental challenges."
- **2. Economic Growth and Gender Equality in Climate Policy:**
- **Statement:** "Gender equality should be a top priority in climate policy, regardless of its impact on economic growth."

This methodology facilitated nuanced discussions and allowed participants to explore diverse viewpoints on complex topics related to gender, climate, and policy.



Facilitator Insight: Provides valuable insights for the facilitator to observe group dynamics and identify participants who may dominate discussions or require additional attention throughout the day.

Engaging Introduction: Serves as an effective icebreaker, easing participants into the topic in a fun and interactive manner. Acts as an energizer, setting a playful and informal tone for the day's discussions.



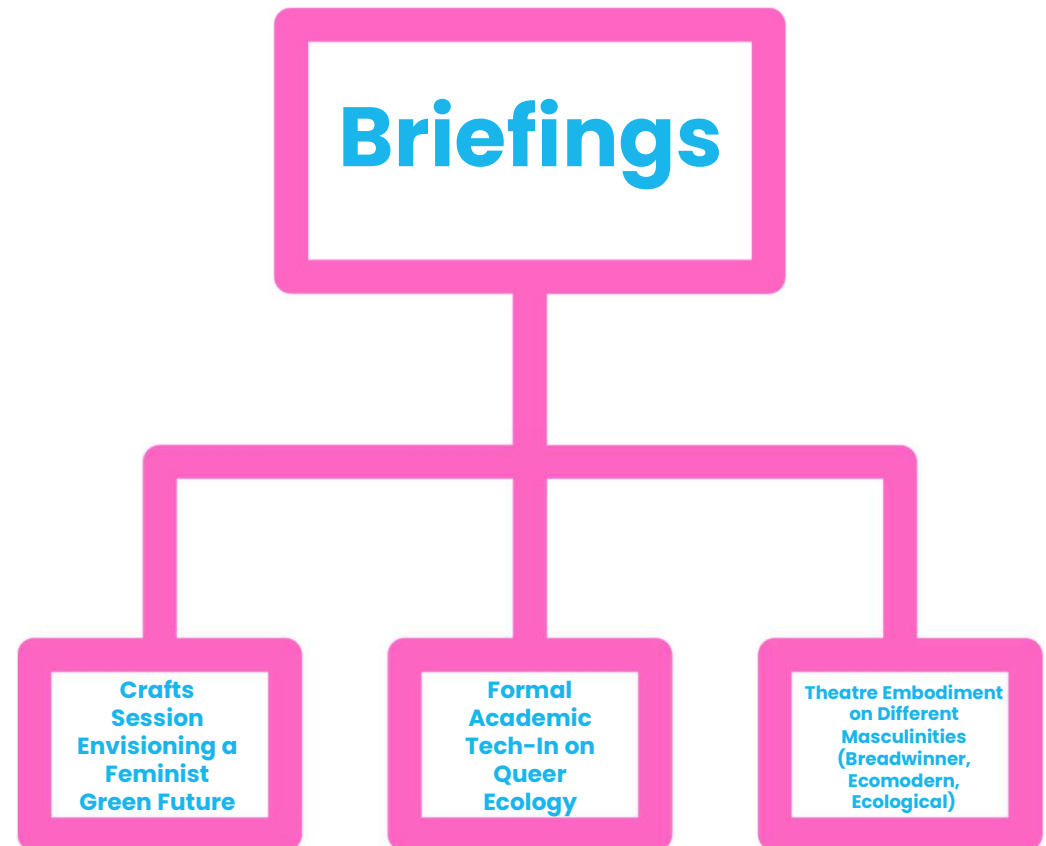
Accessibility Challenges: Standing for an extended period may not be accessible to all participants. While chairs could mitigate this issue, the exercise may still pose challenges for those uncomfortable sitting on the floor. Limited to a maximum duration of one hour to avoid fatigue.

Potential Exclusion: With a large number of participants, sub-groups formed in the corners may inadvertently exclude individuals who end up outside the discussion circle. Reasons for non-participation vary and may include shyness, disinterest, or a conscious decision to yield space to others. Identifying the root cause of non-participation is challenging.

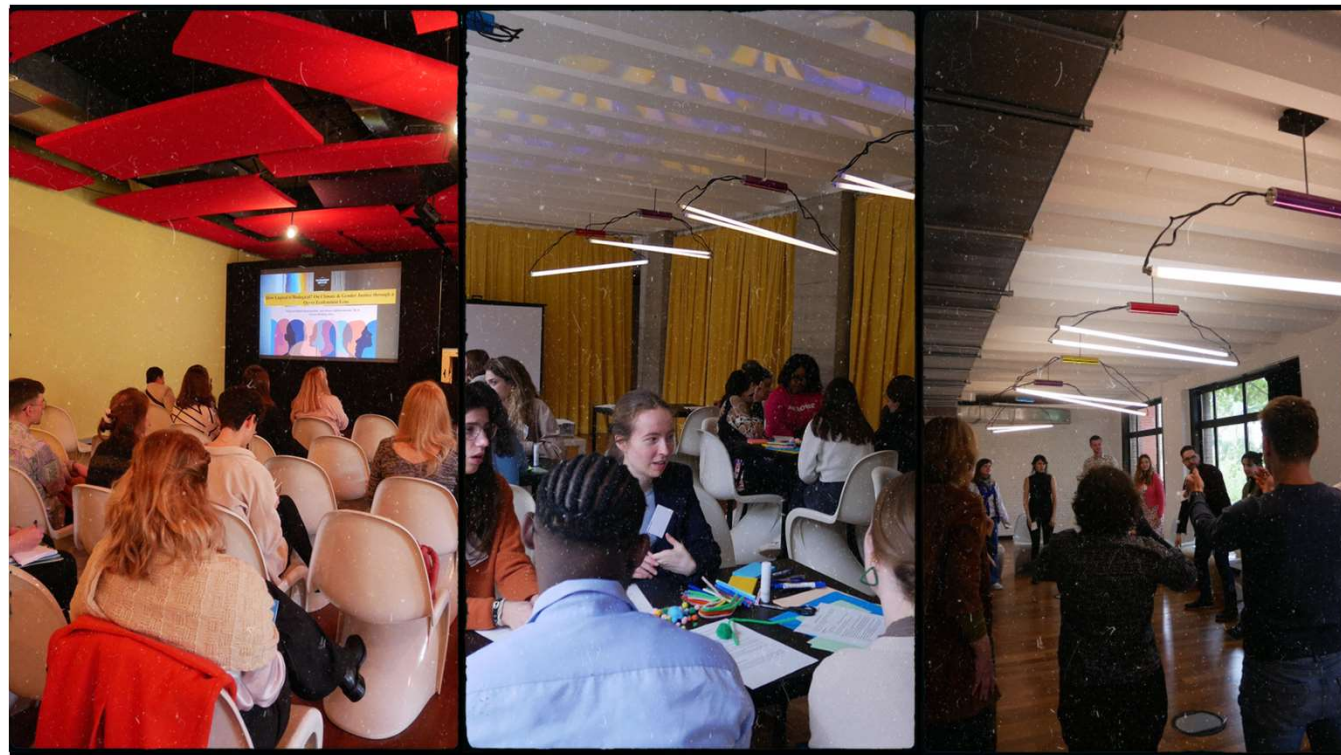


3 BRIEFINGS ON THE SAME TOPIC

- **Methodology:**
- **Varied Learning Approaches:**
 - Offered diverse learning formats to explore the same topic, "gender & climate," catering to different learning styles and preferences.
- **Success:** The approach was highly successful, allowing participants to engage with the topic in ways that resonated with them personally.
- **Room for Improvement:** The embodiment session could have benefited from more time for initial input. Some participants felt it lacked depth initially, but ultimately found it to be a **powerful and relaxing exercise**, contributing to the positive atmosphere of the event.



- **Impact on Participants:** Feedback from one participant highlighted the profound impact of the embodiment session, particularly for individuals less accustomed to **expressing emotions** verbally. For example, a male participant from Eastern Europe found the session **empowering**, as it provided a non-verbal outlet for emotional expression.
- This methodology effectively catered to **diverse learning styles** and fostered meaningful engagement with the topic, leaving participants feeling empowered and relaxed.





LEARNING SPACES

We chose the three topics based on what participants expressed interest in when filling out the application form:

In the afternoon we had a more traditional format with inputs and then discussions and joint recommendations drafting. Each working group had secret observers, who turned the recommendations into poems and embodiment theatre, that was presented alongside the recommendations at the end.

- **Success:** Participants were able to share their unique experiences on the topic and connect this with the theory and policy information they learnt in the presentation.
- **Room for Improvement:** As we did not have a lot of time for overview of the way the EU works, it was sometimes difficult to formulate recommendations in a way that reflected the EU policy space, more time to go through this would have been beneficial.



Environmental
Racism

Energy Poverty

Climate
Migration

- **We will meet online with participants and go through the recommendations to finalise them.**
- **We will then publish these and mobilise around them to ensure they get noticed by decision makers.**





KEY INSIGHTS AND FEEDBACK

Whatsapp Group:

Participants initiated the creation of a Whatsapp group, indicating a strong sense of community and a desire to maintain connections beyond the event.

Safe Space and Connection:

Participants utilized the group to share personal insights and express gratitude for engaging in meaningful discussions. Exchange of LinkedIn profiles and professional links reflects a desire for continued networking and collaboration beyond the event.

Social Bonding: Beyond virtual interactions, participants engaged in offline social activities, such as group outings for dancing. The group served as a resource for support and assistance, exemplified by one participant seeking help after encountering an intrusive situation at a club.

"I need to leave now, but if I'd known that this meeting would be so diverse I would've stayed."

A cis-male engineer shared that he was quite new to the topic, but that he felt quite safe to make "errors" in this space.

"I want to express my sincere gratitude for organising such an enlightening Feminist Festival in Brussels. The event was truly insightful, and the engaged audience made it even more remarkable. I trust that the recommendations discussed will find practical application... Once again, thank you for your dedication and hard work. I look forward to our paths crossing again soon!"

"Hi Jeffrey, Hannah and Rose, Thanks so much for the event. I don't think I have ever been in an event where the host set the tone so clearly and nicely for it to lead to such a safe space. Thanks a lot for that. Besides, I learnt a lot and met amazing people, so I can only be grateful for it :) "

**Marie Van**

PhD • 2nd



Researcher; Project Manager; Policy Making; Communication Offic...

4d •

Thrilled to be here on Saturday, with 100 participants from Europe and beyond, to think about the ecological transition and the future(s) under climate change, through a feminist lens. We need these spaces to realise and build on all that unites us, drawing on our different backgrounds and experiences, listening to our different contexts, their challenges and their strengths - it's so important! Thank you to the organisers for making this space possible: [European Environmental Bureau](#) & [WECF International](#)

[#RealDealEU](#)**Dayana Harris**

2nd

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Student assistant in Power-to-X at Topsoe | MSc stud...

3d •

Many thanks to the [#RealDealEU](#) project for an incredible day discussing the intersection between gender, climate justice, and energy transition. This was a valuable experience where different perspectives coexisted in a safe space allowing for healthy deliberation 🙌



Mariana Pinto · 1st
researcher | strategist | co-designer | social impact
1d · Edited ·

Last weekend I was in Brussels 🇧🇪 attending the [#FeministFestival](#): A Citizens Deliberation on the Green Transition 🌱, a decision-making space where [#feminism](#) met [#environmentalism](#), made possible by [WECF International](#) and the [European Environmental Bureau](#) (EEB), as part of the [#REALDEAL](#) consortium.

Along with 70+ amazing people from all over Europe, we engaged in meaningful conversations and participatory processes where we:

- Outlined obstacles we must overcome to make EU policies a better reflection of our realities.
- Problematised and proposed what a feminist green transition could and should look like.

These insights will be used to create recommendations to shape the EU's Feminist Green Transition 🤝

As someone who advocates the importance of opening co-creation spaces that foster public participation and engagement with diverse stakeholders, I was thrilled to be part of an initiative that flipped the script on traditional policy briefs, and proposed a safe space to listen, learn, and act ✨

[#RealDealEU](#) [#ecofeminism](#) [#greentransition](#) [#genderequality](#) [#environment](#)



Caroline Faurskov · 1st
MSc International Marketing and Management | Student Assistant ...
3h · Edited ·

Last weekend I was in Brussels 🇧🇪 attending the [#FeministFestival](#): A Citizens Deliberation on the Green Transition organized by [European Environmental Bureau](#), [WECF International](#) and [#RealDealEU](#).

There, I met people from all over Europe, and participated in discussions that will be used to create recommendations to shape the EU's green transition 🌱

The citizen-led format sparked valuable conversations, and hopefully, the recommendations will contribute to a more inclusive green future 💪

I look forward to hopefully attend future events.

CONCLUSIONS

Consider different values and cultures

Safe spaces and awareness team

Strong focus on preparation and selection of participants

Need of alternative spaces and other forms of participation beyond text and discussion

Feasibility and resources





ENGAGE WITH US

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