

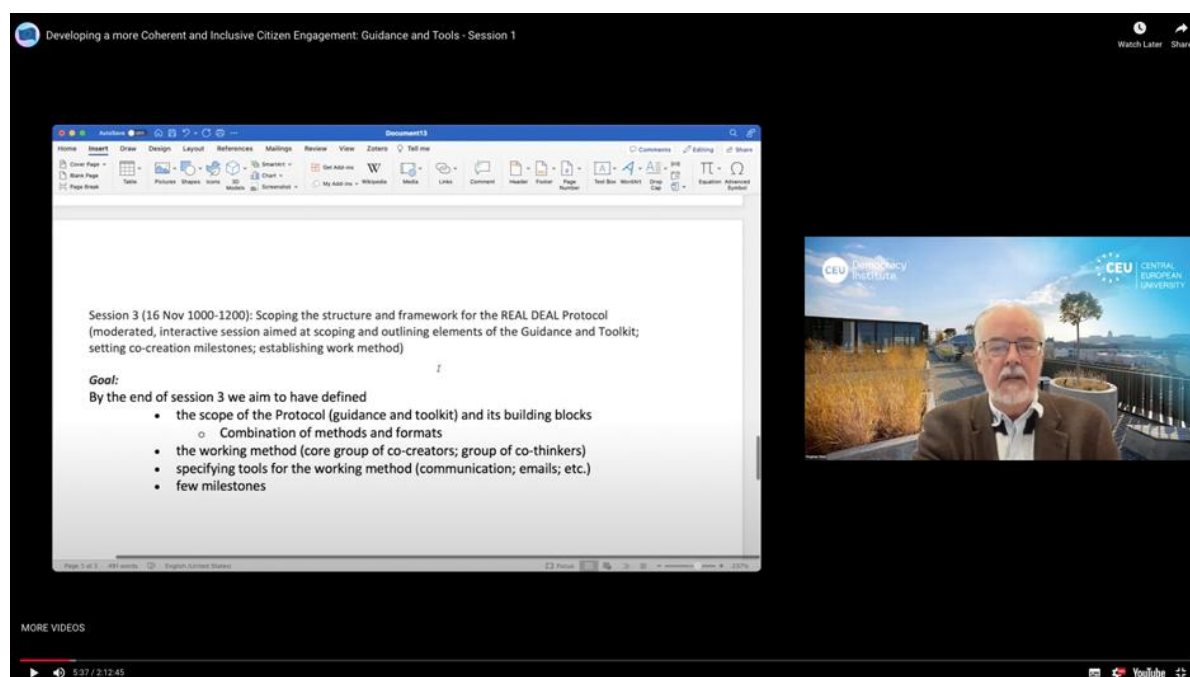


## REAL DEAL Pre-Summit

### Harnessing the Power of Participatory Democracy in Shaping the Green Deal

**Date: 15 - 16 November 2023**  
**(Online)**

The Real Deal pre-summit convened to address a crucial question: *How can citizen participation and engagement serve as a catalyst for sustainable change under the Green Deal?* Through a series of discussions and presentations, speakers and participants explored this interplay, identifying tools and opportunities, but also challenges to ensuring citizens are at the heart of the green transition. The purpose of these discussions? To collaborate with people from varying sectors to ensure the final REAL DEAL protocol is as robust as possible.



## **Innovative Approaches to Democratic Engagement**

At the heart of the pre-summit was the conviction that the fight against climate change requires the active participation of all societal actors. The discussion addressed the challenges citizens are facing as a result of Covid-19, geopolitical tensions and the green transition itself, demonstrating that the need for a socially just transition is more apparent than ever. The emphasis was on innovating democracy itself — making it as inclusive and robust as possible to meet the challenges of our time.

## **Social Justice: A Cornerstone of the Green Deal**

A critical theme of the summit was the inseparable bond between social justice and environmental policy. As Europe strides toward a sustainable economy, it must not leave behind the communities most affected by this transition. The discussions acknowledged the challenge of policy polarisation and underlined the imperative for an overarching EU framework that supports those who may otherwise bear the brunt of the transition unequally.

## **Deliberation at the Core: The Case for Citizens' Assemblies**

Across two days of presentations, speakers introduced a variety of tools for citizen participation and deliberation. Citizen assemblies were one such example, spotlighted as a beacon of participatory democracy, with deliberation playing a vital role in dissecting complex issues. The assemblies were presented not just as forums for discussion but as vehicles for direct involvement in decision-making, particularly in addressing the systemic challenges of environmental sustainability.

## **Democratic Innovation: Lessons from the CoFoE**

The conversation took a specific look at the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE), heralded as a pioneering model, utilising civic technology and diverse citizen panels to facilitate direct conversations between the public and elected officials. The CoFoE as an EU-wide citizen assembly is not only novel, but paves the way for embedding such citizen-led discussions and other engagement tools into regular policymaking.

## **Inclusivity and Accessibility: Pillars of Effective Participation**

The summit did not shy away from the challenges in current participatory processes. The pre-summit discussions underscored an overarching priority across panelists: making participatory processes more inclusive and effective. Conversations highlighted barriers to achieving this goal, including procedural transparency, recruiting participants, and

ensuring representation of vulnerable groups. Innovative methods to overcoming these hurdles included civil society forums, where stakeholders engage directly with policymakers, and the Competence Center on Participatory and Deliberative Democracy's work to citizen input and amplifying the voices of those often sidelined in policy debates.

## **Looking ahead**

The pre-summit for the REAL DEAL project marked a critical assessment of the impending REAL DEAL protocol. What will emerge from this protocol are two tools: a comprehensive guidance and a practical toolkit, both tailored to ensure effective citizen engagement in achieving the Green Deal's ambitions. The pre-summit not only showcased the context for these tools, but also provided the opportunity to ensure expert insights are fed directly into the final protocol. The REAL DEAL protocol is scheduled for release at the REAL DEAL Summit this June, 2024 in Budapest.

## **Conclusion: A Collective Journey Toward Sustainability**

The Real Deal pre-summit highlighted the crucial role citizens play in the Green Deal's success. The innovative approaches discussed at the pre-summit, from civil society forums to citizens' assemblies, have the potential to transform the relationship between citizens, policymakers, and the environment. The final protocol of the REAL DEAL project aims to unlock the full potential of the Green Deal through its inclusion of these tools for citizen engagement.

## **Programme**

### **Session 1: Introduction and REAL DEAL Overview (November 15, 10:00-12:00 CET)**

Moderator: **Stephen Stec**, Central European University (CEU)

Speakers and panelists:

- **Esther Koopmanschap**, Wageningen University and Research (WUR)
- **Pia-Johanna Schweizer**, Research Institute for Sustainability (RIFS)
- **Hilmi Tekoglu**, SOLIDAR
- **Jochen Krattenmacher**, Global Climate Forum
- **Thomas Blanchet**, Technical University Berlin
- **Else Giesbers**, WUR
- **Rose Heffernan**, Women Engaged for a Common Future (WECF)
- **Aine Sperrin**, Trilateral Research
- **Ortwin Renn**, RIFS

## **Session 2: Policy Development in the EU (November 15, 14:00-16:00 CET)**

Moderator: **Ingeborg Niestroy**, RIFS

Panelists:

- **Clara Dassonville**, SOLIDAR
- **Gaetane Ricard-Nihoul**, European Commission, Secretariat of the Conference on the Future of Europe
- **Ulrike Liebert**, European University Institute
- **Angela Pereira**, European Commission, JRC
- **Yves Mathieu**, Missions Publiques
- **Laurence Graff**, European Commission, DG CLIMA

## **Session 3 (November 16, 10:00-12:00 CET): Scoping the structure and framework for the REAL DEAL Guidance and Toolkit (Protocol)**

A moderated, interactive session aimed at: scoping and outlining elements of the Guidance and Toolkit; setting co-creation milestones; establishing work method.

Moderator: **Esther Koopmanschap**, WUR