Conference on the Future of Europe:

Step-by-Step Guide for Event Organisers

Conference
on the **Future**
of **Europe**

Want to organise an event but not sure where to begin?
This guide will help you prepare and host your event. It contains various suggestions for how to organise an event and recommended possible formats. This can all be adapted depending on the setup (digital, physical, hybrid), as well as the number of participants.

Before the event

First Steps

Here are the concrete ways you can make your event happen and be part of the Conference on the Future of Europe. Make sure to follow the necessary steps to make your event inclusive.

▶ **How do I register my event on the Conference platform?**

Events happening now

Have your voice heard and share your ideas with online and in-person events happening near you.

Go to futureu.europa.eu and add your event to the map. Follow our detailed guide if you need help with this.

▶ **What kind of information should I prepare for participants?**

Prepare the following documents. Make them available to all the participants at the beginning of the event.

- ■ **Charter** for event partners and participants

- ■ All **material** needed for your participatory formats, such as post-it notes, pens, etc.

- ■ **Registration list** to obtain participants' emails - with their consent - so that they can be contacted afterwards to receive feedback on their contributions to the Conference.

- ■ **Consent form for photos** and possibly video recording, which could be used for communication purposes around the event.

▶ How do I prepare the (digital) room?

If it is an in-person event, make sure there are enough chairs and tables for everyone. You can also prepare the walls so that they can be used to display people's ideas. A projector/screen can be used in bigger rooms. Pens, paper and whiteboards can be handy for people to note down their ideas.

If the event is **online (or hybrid)**, make sure you set up a waiting room with a welcome message (so people know they are in the right place) and mute people on entry to avoid noise problems. Prepare a space where people can ask questions or request support (it can be the tool's internal chat or a more sophisticated tool). It is a good idea to rehearse, to make sure that everything goes as smoothly as possible when the event starts.

During the event

A Conference on the Future of Europe event should **focus on citizens' ideas and the active involvement of participants**. Even if experts can be consulted to frame the issue or as fact-checkers, it is not a top-down expert meeting and must be accessible to people who are not familiar with public debates and the topic discussed.

▶ How should I run and moderate my event?

The **presence of a professional moderator can be of great help**, as it is a delicate function to perform.

We recommend distinguishing between the chair of the event and the moderator, as this person needs to be seen as neutral and independent from the organiser, with the task of making sure that everyone has a say.

▶ Time management and planning

Prepare a timed agenda/schedule for the event and try to stick to it. Leave room for breaks and try to catch up if delays occur. Bear in mind peoples' attention spans.

▶ What work is required on the day

Ideally, you should have at least one **person to take notes** (see also tips for reporting below) and one person keeping an eye **on the chat** if the event is online.
If you work with breakout groups, pre-assign the groups to make sure that everyone knows what they have to do and **try to have one person moderating each discussion**.

If language is an issue in the area where the event will take place, make sure you have interpreters during the event. Another solution could be to ask people to express their needs and linguistic abilities at the beginning or on name-badges, so that other participants can assist them.

Tips for running the event

1. Introducing the event

When the event starts, **explain to participants**:

- The Conference's objectives
- The event's rules (see the Charter) and method chosen to organise the debate
- How the event's discussions will feed back to the European level

Mention the consent form if photos or videos are taken, and inform the participants in advance that photos/videos may be reused for the purposes of the Conference.

2. Presentation by an expert (OPTIONAL)

If the event is about a specific topic, this could be a good time for a **short presentation of the context by an expert** – perhaps highlighting the trade-offs on decisions. Remember that **the focus is on citizens' discussions, not on the expert**. Experts should frame the topics in the most fact-based and neutral way possible, bringing in different perspectives and outlining uncertainties and contested issues.

3. Group discussions

Feel free to pick a format from the suggestions in this guide and adapt it to your context. No matter which format you choose, this deliberative part should always be the core of the event.

Tips for moderators

- Start with a short presentation round and ask a **simple warm-up question** to participants such as "What kind of Europe do you dream of?"
- **Ensure that everyone** has the opportunity to speak.
- If needed, help someone to develop their point using s**imple follow-up questions**.
- Do not overly re-interpret or rephrase what people say. When in doubt, ask them what they mean.
- **Encourage people to look for information on the topic if needed**. In case of disagreement about facts, invite the participants to use the experts/fact-checkers present in the room or the factsheets to facilitate a rapid return to a productive deliberation.

4. Close the event

Inform the participants of how you intend to write the report. There are two options:
(1) the report is drafted by the organisers but sent to all the participants with a deadline for potential comments;
(2) the report is drafted right after the meeting with the help of (a small group) of volunteers (see also the toolkit on inclusivity).

As a follow-up to the event, **encourage people to read the report** on the Conference platform. See the guide for event organisers on how to use the Conference platform.

Thank the attendees for their participation and encourage them to contribute further to the Conference.

Remind them that their ideas will be posted on the Conference platform and that they can continue to debate with others and develop their ideas online.

Tell them that you commit to sending them a message (if they have provided their contact details), as soon as the report from the event is uploaded on the platform. If you decide to do so (recommended if you can), you can also commit to contacting them once the **feedback on the Conference** is available on the platform.

Communicating about the event

Read the tips below on how to reach out to as many people as possible and organise an inclusive event. (see also the toolkit on inclusivity)

- **Contact local and/or (specialised) traditional media in advance** to attract the public and to share the outcome afterwards. You can also consider
building up a partnership with one specific media partner, whereby both parties could gain mutual visibility by working together.

- **Social media outreach** is key in today's world, especially for events that are held online. Try to create a buzz beforehand using the hashtag **#TheFutureIsYours** and produce a follow-up communication afterwards. Ask your (media) partners to do the same.

- If your event is held locally, contact your local authorities, which should have the **capacity to reach out** to all the inhabitants through their own communication tools.

- Engage with your target audience through any safe means you can think of. For instance, some **civil society organisations you could collaborate with** may have their own media or newsletters to reach out to their networks.

Event formats you can choose from

There are **three main factors to consider** before choosing the format of your event: the setup (online, in-person, or hybrid), the theme of the discussion, and the number of participants. Have a look at the different options presented below, which you can use and adapt. Bear in mind that:

- **All formats work best when appropriate time is allocated**. A couple of hours with breaks might be enough for some events. But if many participants are foreseen to attend, for example, the event may work better if spread over a longer time span such as half a day or even a full day.

- **Breakout groups** work best when they have **fewer than ten people, with a moderator** for each sub-group.

- The aim of the event is to **lead people towards** the drafting of **collectively agreed proposals**. Whatever the format of your event, it should contribute to achieving constructive and concrete conclusions.

We trust you will find the right format for your event! Here are some suggestions.
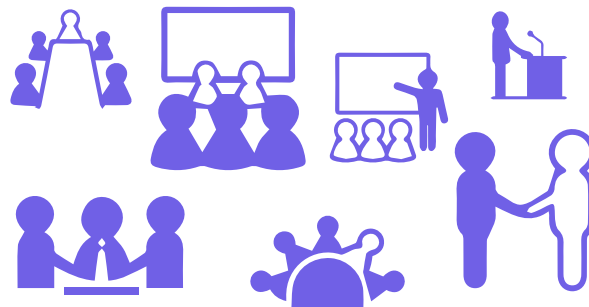
Option 1 • Participatory Workshop

STEP 1   ◔ MINIMUM 20 MINUTES
Generate ideas

Start the discussions with broad and open questions to warm up participants. For instance, "what does Europe mean to you?" or "What kind of Europe do you dream of?"

Give the participants some time to discuss in groups of maximum 10 people each, and to get familiar with each other. At the end, foresee some time for some of the participants to share the highlights of their discussions with the whole room. You can also collect the ideas written on post-it notes and read some of them aloud.

STEP 2   ◑ MINIMUM 30 MINUTES
Identify topics and challenges

Based on the previous contributions, you can now dig deeper and identify topics that the groups can discuss. Ask the groups which ones they want to assign themselves.

Once that is done, you could ask the groups to identify challenges related to their own topic.

STEP 3   ◔ MINIMUM 40 MINUTES
Come up with solutions

After identifying challenges, it is now time to find solutions to overcome them. Make sure these solutions are written down in detail, as they will be the most important result of the event.

Option 2 • World Café

Participants rotate between different groups every ten minutes. They brainstorm new ideas, then write them down on paper or on a computer. When this method is used face-to-face, you organise the room like a café with tables spread out.

Option 3 • Open Space

If you are in the early stages of formulating ideas and have time for participants to explore different issues, try an open space.

STEP 1

You as an event organiser set a question (for example "How do we lower carbon emissions?" or "How do we resolve challenges in the job market?") and participants organise themselves into groups to tackle the challenge.

STEP 2

Participants can choose between three roles: the initiator, who initiates a theme that they want to discuss and therefore creates a group, the bumblebee, who stays and contributes to one or two groups, and the butterfly, who cannot choose just one topic and wants to switch and contribute to several groups.

STEP 3

At the end, all the groups present their ideas to each other and people can add suggestions.

Option 4 • Forum

If your possibilities of having group discussions are limited (no digital breakout rooms or no possibilities for face-to-face discussions), organise the event in the form of a **forum** and provide people with a way to contribute, for example through an **interactive survey tool** whose results are displayed live, or give them access to cards on which they can write their ideas.

After the event

▶ **How can I ensure the discussions and outcomes from my event are taken forward?**

Report on the Conference platform

Once you have drafted the report, go back to the platform and report on your event by adding:

■ a written summary, including if possible information about the number and types of participants

■ the proposals submitted by the participants

■ reactions/answers to potential contributors online

You can find a detailed guide on how to do this here.

Share your highlights

Share your highlights of the event on the web and social media, or with your (media) partners, using the hashtag **#TheFutureIsYours**.