

Participation Pop-Up Danmark

Date & duration: 12 June 11.00 – 17.00

Location: Allinge, Bornholm – The People's Meeting



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Executive Summary

The participation pop-up event in Denmark is a part of the EU-project Citizens for Climate – a project designed to strengthen democracy by promoting meaningful citizen participation in climate policy. Implemented in seven EU Member States, Denmark, Germany, France, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Belgium, the project builds a transnational network that analyses successful participation models and develops joint recommendations.

This event provided an inclusive platform for dialogue and knowledge exchange between civil society organisations, citizens, researchers, policymakers, and political representatives. It supported democratic engagement in climate governance and promoted mutual learning on participatory approaches, wellbeing-oriented economic models, and the green transition at local, national, and EU level. A particular focus was placed on youth engagement and accessible participation through an open drop-in format at the Danish Democracy Festival / The People's Meeting (Folkemødet) on the island of Bornholm.

The programme consisted of five public sessions, including panel discussions, keynote presentations, and a dance workshop. Topics covered wellbeing economics, new economic narratives beyond growth, citizen participation in climate governance, and the EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) in relation to the green transition.



The event was implemented as an open-access, full-day programme, allowing participants to freely join and leave sessions. The event facilitated knowledge exchange between citizens, civil society actors, researchers, and policymakers, increasing awareness of key developments in climate governance, participatory democracy, and EU policy processes. It strengthened cross-sector dialogue and supported informal networking among stakeholders.

Key discussions highlighted both opportunities and barriers to citizen engagement, including unequal access to participation, and the gap between willingness and ability to engage.

Communication and dissemination were carried out through newsletters, the website of Nyt Europa, social media channels, and partner networks, complemented by on-site engagement during Folkemødet. Communication activities reached approximately 500 newsletter subscribers. Digital outreach achieved a total reach of 1,667 on LinkedIn, 4,085 on Instagram, and 659 views on Facebook. The open festival setting additionally enabled broader offline outreach.



The event directly contributed to promoting inclusive democratic participation in climate policy and strengthening engagement with EU and national policy processes. It provided practical insights into participatory methods, barriers to engagement, and insights into policymaking.

The results will inform future projects and events at Nyt Europa, including a *Climate Participation Booklet* as well as further climate policy events in 2027, particularly regarding effective engagement practices and approaches to strengthening inclusivity, accessibility, and impact in citizen participation processes.

Objectives and Relevance

The event contributed to strengthening citizens' participation in climate policy by creating an inclusive platform for dialogue and knowledge exchange between civil society organisations, citizens, researchers, politicians, and policymakers.

The event took place at the Danish Democracy Festival (Folkemødet) on Bornholm, an annual gathering that brings together stakeholders from across society to discuss political and societal challenges. Building on this setting, our activities created opportunities for participants to engage in discussions on climate policy solutions, effective approaches to citizen engagement, and strategies to strengthen public support for climate action.

The overall objective was to facilitate knowledge sharing and mutual learning between citizens, researchers, and policymakers, which proved highly valuable in fostering constructive dialogue and exchanging experiences on participatory climate governance.

In addition, the event provided participants with up-to-date information on current political developments at both national and European levels. Sessions included presentations and discussions on recent policy developments in Denmark, including the government's proposal to establish a commission on wellbeing economics, as well as discussions at EU level on ensuring a green and sustainable EU budget within the context of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) negotiations.

Special attention was also given to youth participation and engagement. By organising the activities at Folkemødet, which attracts a large number of young students and activists each year, the event ensured strong outreach to younger audiences. Furthermore, the venue setup including a stage located on a boat attracted additional visitors and created an open and accessible environment. The programme also included informal and interactive activities, such as a dance workshop at the end of the day, helping to engage youth participants beyond traditional policy discussions.

Key contributions:

- Bringing together CSOs, citizens, researchers, and policymakers to discuss climate policy and participation
- Facilitating knowledge exchange on effective citizen engagement practices
- Increasing awareness of ongoing climate-related policy developments at Danish and EU level, including the MFF negotiations
- Promoting youth participation through accessible and interactive event formats

Target Group(s)

To ensure broad accessibility and encourage participation from marginalised and underrepresented groups, the event was organised as an open drop-in format, allowing participants to join without prior registration or barriers to entry.

The democracy festival on Bornholm also attracts a diverse audience, including citizens, civil society organisations, students, activists, researchers, policymakers, and political representatives. Hosting the activities within this setting helped ensure broad outreach across different demographic and social groups and created opportunities to engage participants with varied backgrounds and perspectives.

Outreach efforts were carried out through social media channels and other communication platforms to reach diverse audiences and increase awareness of the event. This approach supported wider participation and created opportunities for engagement across different demographic groups.

Event Implementation

The event was implemented as a full-day programme of public discussions, panel debates, and keynote sessions. The overall design aimed to create an open, accessible and participatory environment where citizens, civil society organisations (CSOs), researchers, policymakers and political representatives could exchange perspectives on climate policy, democratic participation and wellbeing economy.



Agenda Overview – 12 June 2026

11:00–12:00 | Wellbeing Economy in Practice (Panel)

This session explored how municipalities can balance short-term budget priorities with long-term societal wellbeing. Discussions focused on how local governments can respond to climate change, inequality and public health challenges through preventative investments, community-centred approaches and longer-term policy planning.

12:00–13:00 | Keynote: Why We Need a New Economic Narrative

The keynote addressed limitations of growth-centred economic models and reflected on the new commission for wellbeing economy in the new Danish government agreement.

13:00–14:00 | Who Decides in the Green Transition? (Panel)

This panel explored questions of democracy, participation and power in climate governance. Researchers, policymakers, consultants, activists and citizens discussed the extent of citizen influence in climate policymaking and examples of climate democracy in Denmark.

14:00–14:45 | A Green and Sustainable EU Budget (Panel)

This session focused on the role of the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) in supporting the green transition. Discussions addressed alignment between public spending and climate goals, and how financial instruments can contribute to a socially just and sustainable transition.

16:15–16:45 | Whacking for Wellbeing (Workshop)

An interactive movement workshop connected themes of wellbeing, inclusion and social participation through dance. Drawing inspiration from the history of whacking as a form of self-expression and empowerment.

Methodology and Participation Approach

The event combined different participatory formats including panel discussions, audience interaction, facilitated dialogue, case-based reflections and informal engagement activities. Participants were able to drop-in for the different sessions and join discussions according to their interests, supporting accessibility and lowering barriers to participation.

The panellists during the day were among others Lars Tønder, professor in political science and ecological democracy, Lise Coermann, consultant at Democracy X working with deliberative democracy, Rukiya Sheriff, rights and just transition advisor at Nyt Europa, Elisabeth Brio, climate activist, Villy Søvnald, Danish MEP of The Greens, Franciska Rosenkilde, MP and leader of the green party Alternativet and Lars Mortensen, circular economy expert at the European Environment Agency.

The panels intentionally brought together a broad range of perspectives, including citizens, local and national policymakers, European stakeholders, experts, researchers and politicians. Activists and younger voices were actively included to strengthen intergenerational dialogue and ensure broader representation in conversations on climate governance.

Moderation methods focused on constructive dialogue, encouraging audience contributions and creating opportunities for exchange between speakers and participants.

Facilitation and Inclusivity Measures

The facilitation approach prioritised openness, accessibility and inclusion. Moderators worked to create an inclusive atmosphere by ensuring respectful dialogue and encouraging contributions from participants.

The venue remained open throughout the day and was accessible to all Folkemødet visitors. The location and open structure created a continuous flow of participants joining and leaving sessions, contributing to broad outreach and diverse participation.

Monitoring and Data Collection

Due to the open event and outdoor format and the practical conditions at Folkemødet, collecting participant signatures proved challenging. As a result, the final number of registered participants does not fully reflect the total audience reached throughout the day.

Similarly, participant feedback surveys were distributed after the event rather than collected on site. The outdoor setting and the large number of parallel activities at Folkemødet made in-person survey collection difficult. Follow-up communication therefore served as the primary method for gathering participant feedback and evaluating the event's outcomes.

Ethics, EU Values and Inclusion

The event was designed and implemented in line with core ethical principles and EU values, with a strong focus on inclusive participation, democratic dialogue and respect for diverse perspectives. An open and accessible format supported voluntary participation and created opportunities for participants to engage in discussions in a safe and respectful environment.

The programme promoted key EU values including democracy, equality, active citizenship and participation in public decision-making. Through panel discussions and exchanges between citizens, civil society organisations, researchers and policymakers, the event encouraged democratic engagement and strengthened dialogue on climate governance and public policy.

Gender equality and non-discrimination were integrated into both programme design and facilitation by aiming for diverse representation among speakers and creating space for different voices and experiences.

An intersectional approach informed the event by recognising that climate and wellbeing challenges affect groups differently and that inclusive policymaking requires consideration of multiple social, economic and demographic perspectives. The event therefore sought to include a diversity of viewpoints and encourage broad participation in conversations on climate and societal transformation.

Results and Outcomes

Outputs

The event consisted of five sessions delivered during the democracy festival, Folkemødet on Bornholm. A minimum of 35 participants were formally registered; however, due to the open drop-in format and the venue, the total number of participants is likely significantly higher, as attendees were able to join and leave sessions freely throughout the programme.

Outcomes

The sessions facilitated knowledge exchange between civil society organisations (CSOs), policymakers, experts, and citizens. The sessions demonstrated strong policy relevance, particularly in relation to wellbeing economy approaches, citizen participation in decision-making processes, and ongoing negotiations on the EU Multiannual Financial Framework. In this way, the event contributed to broader reflections on how democratic participation and social sustainability can be better integrated into climate and economic governance.

A recurring theme was that while opportunities for citizens to influence climate policy exist in Denmark, they are unevenly distributed, with access often depending on social position and resources. Landowners and property owners may have more direct influence in local decision-making, while young people and citizens without formal assets can struggle to be heard. At the same time, although most citizens are willing to engage in climate action, many lack clear pathways to do so, creating a gap between willingness to participate and perceived impact and highlighting the need to strengthen trust and opportunities for meaningful participation.

Impact

Participants gained increased awareness and understanding of key topics, including citizen engagement in climate policy, participatory approaches to climate governance, the greening of the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), and the role of a wellbeing economy in enabling a green and just transition that integrates environmental, democratic, and social dimensions.

The event also contributed to strengthening dialogue and networks across sectors, supporting mutual learning and exchange between stakeholders with different backgrounds and roles in climate and policy processes. Folkemødet offers a unique national platform in Denmark where barriers between sectors can be reduced, enabling dialogue that supports more inclusive and accessible climate policymaking.

Innovation and Change

The event demonstrated open-access drop-in formats, interdisciplinary panel discussions, and informal engagement spaces. These approaches enabled flexible participation and supported engagement from diverse audience groups.

By bringing together stakeholders from different sectors and policy levels, the event facilitated cross-sectoral and informal learning exchanges. The format also supported emerging practices for citizen engagement in climate policy and encouraged new ways of thinking about inclusive and accessible democratic participation.

Outlook and summary

The implemented event at Folkemødet provided a platform for dialogue on citizen participation in climate policy, democratic governance, and the role of a wellbeing-oriented approach to the green transition. Across five sessions, the discussions highlighted both the opportunities and challenges related to policy making and strengthening citizen engagement in climate decision-making at local, national, and EU level.

A key insight emerging from the sessions was that opportunities for citizens to influence climate policy exist in Denmark but are unevenly distributed. Access to influence often depends on social position and resources. For example, landowners and individuals with property may have more direct influence in local climate decision-making processes, whereas young people and citizens without formal assets may find it more difficult to engage and be heard. At the same time, research and practice suggest that while a large majority of citizens are willing to engage in climate action, many do not know how to do so in practice.

The discussions further revealed a gap between willingness to participate and perceived impact. Even active citizens and activists may experience that their voices are not fully heard within formal political processes. This points to the importance of strengthening trust and creating clearer pathways for meaningful participation.

Panel contributions emphasised that effective citizen engagement requires both institutional openness and a belief in the value of citizen input. Building democratic confidence among citizens was highlighted as an important prerequisite for stronger participation. Inclusive participation was also identified as a key challenge, particularly in relation to ensuring that different social groups have equal access to participatory spaces and that existing structural inequalities are addressed.

The need to recognise differences in access, representation, and lived experience was strongly emphasised.

It was further noted that citizen engagement is not a “one-size-fits-all” approach. Multiple methods and channels are required to ensure meaningful inclusion. At the same time, there is a need for clearer structures, including political mandates, feedback mechanisms, and follow-up processes that allow citizens to see how their contributions are used in policymaking. Without such mechanisms, there is a risk of disengagement and reduced trust in participatory processes.

The importance of social justice in climate action was also underlined, particularly in relation to ensuring that vulnerable groups are not disproportionately affected by the green transition. In addition, the discussions highlighted the need for sustained political and institutional commitment, as well as adequate resources to support citizen participation at scale.

Overall, the sessions demonstrated a strong shared understanding that the green transition requires broad societal involvement and democratic legitimacy. While there is significant interest among citizens in engaging with climate policy, further efforts are needed to strengthen structures for participation, ensure inclusiveness, and translate engagement into tangible political influence.



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