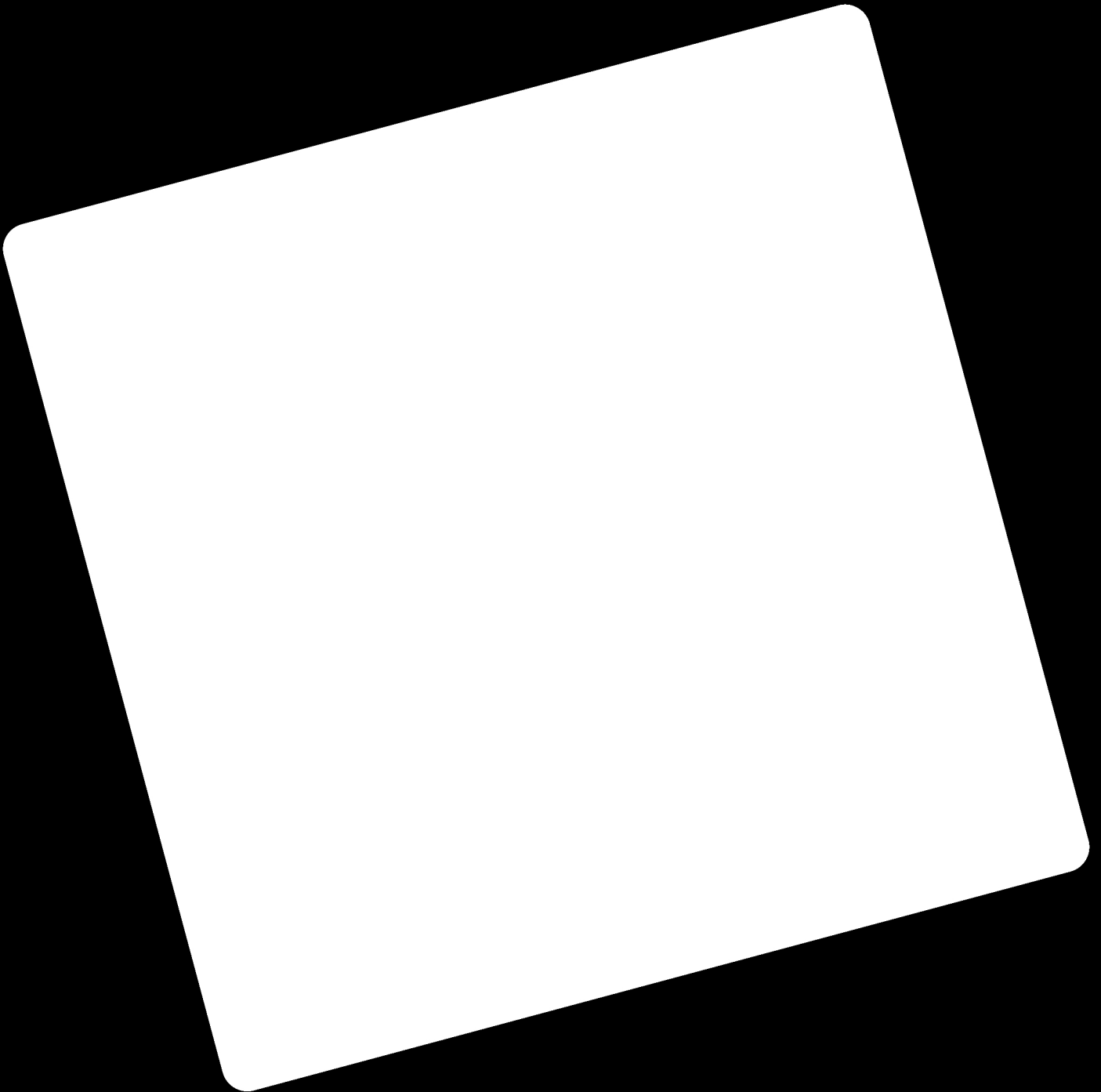


INVITATION

**BLANK CANVAS**  
AN OPPORTUNITY  
FOR EUROPE?



Dear Member of Parliament,

We cordially invite you to join us for the Open European Dialogue's Seventh Annual Policymakers Dialogue – **Blank Canvas: an opportunity for Europe?** – taking place from the 9th to the 11th September 2022, in Lisbon.

## **Europe and its policymakers have faced unparalleled challenges over the last years.**

Between a global pandemic that forced our societies and economies into uncharted waters and the ongoing war in Ukraine its humanitarian and geopolitical implications, policymakers have been dealing with unprecedented challenges, taken on enormous responsibilities, and have had to make difficult decisions. As the compound effect of these policy and political challenges is yet unknown, policymakers across Europe grapple with a profound uncertainty about the future.

Could this very moment in time represent an opportunity for Europe?

## **Bringing European policymakers together around the issues that matter most to them.**

The Seventh Open European Dialogue will deliver:

**New thinking, perspectives and ideas** // We will reflect on some of the most pressing political questions of our time, including the war in Ukraine and the aftermath of Covid-19. Our discussions will be enriched by high-level expert input and the perspectives of parliamentarians from across Europe;

**Unique connection and cooperation opportunities** // You will connect with parliamentarians from very different political, cultural, and geographical backgrounds as well as thought leaders and creative policy thinkers across sectors. A facilitated process will guide you through enriching exchanges and will offer the chance to learn from different opinions and perspectives while identifying opportunities for collaboration with colleagues from across Europe;

**Reflection space** // An opportunity to step away from daily political life in order to reflect and make sense of some of the momentous shifts we have been experiencing and what these might mean for the future of Europe and policymaking more broadly. The dialogue is designed to provide an informal environment and the opportunity to connect with peers in an inspiring and intellectually stimulating setting.

## **A dialogue for parliamentarians, by parliamentarians.**

Over two and a half days you will engage with a richly diverse and selected cohort of parliamentary colleagues. We will offer you the opportunity to understand and learn from the opinions, experiences and perspectives of others, as well as share your own.

We have designed for you a space to share ideas, insights and best-practices on pressing political issues, including:

- The war in Ukraine and its implications for European strategic autonomy, Europe's relationship with Russia and the potential emergence of a new global order;
- The aftermath of Covid-19 and the long-term consequences for our societies, including exacerbated socio-economic inequalities and the impact of financial responses to the pandemic on our current economic models and paradigms;
- Critical transitions, including the advancement of the digitalization agenda and digital rights, and the question of energy security and supply in the context of the green transition and climate change action.

Yet, the dialogue is a space for parliamentarians, but also by parliamentarians. Thanks to the internationally recognized 'Good Offices' of the Open European Dialogue (OED) and an innovative open-agenda format, you will choose which issues matter most to you and connect and work together with colleagues who share your same interests.

You will have a chance to propose and lead discussions, with parliamentarians from different countries and political backgrounds, supported by the dialogue and cooperation tools of the OED.

**A different kind of political conversation in a trusted and protected environment.**

The Open European Dialogue is specialized in creating a secure space for dialogue and understanding between parliamentarians. You will be able to openly share your views with colleagues as we operate under the OED House Rules - you can trust that your view and that of others will be respected and heard.

**Make it yours.**

Finally, the Open European Dialogue offers a unique network experience and an opportunity to establish long-term connections between people who share not only a profession but also a responsibility and passion for shaping the future. We ensure you will stay in touch with your colleagues after the dialogue – and we can even offer you a platform to launch an OED event of your choice which we help to plan and implement. It is your network.

Please note that the Open European Dialogue will cover the expenses of your participation in the dialogue.

We would be honored to have you with us and hope to see you soon in Lisbon.

Kind Regards,

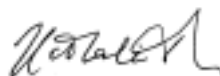
Anne Duncker  
Stiftung Mercator



Stefan Schäfers  
King Baudouin Foundation



Nathalie Tocci  
IAI




Pol Morillas  
CIDOB



Chiara Rosselli  
GMF



Ian Lesser  
GMF



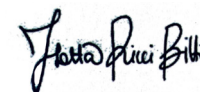
Henry Alt-Haaker  
Robert Bosch Stiftung



George Pagoulatos  
ELIAMEP



Isotta Ricci Bitti  
APROPOS



## About us

The Open European Dialogue (OED) is an informal and politically neutral platform exclusively tailored to Members of Parliament. Our aim is to create a conversation space that is respectful of all political views and where the sharing of political and personal perspectives can lead to a better understanding of complex political challenges. The OED is internationally-renown for its Good Offices and has been internationally recognized by the OECD in 2021 as a global best-practice for cross-border collaboration and innovation.

Find out more at:

[www.openeuropeandialogue.org](http://www.openeuropeandialogue.org)

This European network is a project by the German Marshall Fund of the United States in cooperation with the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs, the Istituto Affari Internazionali in Rome, the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy in Athens, APROPOS - Advancing Process in Politics in Berlin, and is funded by Stiftung Mercator, Robert Bosch Stiftung and the King Baudouin Foundation.

## Reserve your spot!

Our Annual Policymakers Dialogue is an exclusive retreat reserved to selected parliamentarians from across Europe.

We aspire to connect a wide-ranging and high-level cohort of parliamentarians representative of diversity in terms of political, geographical, cultural, and social backgrounds.

For this reason, we reserve the right to select the final cohort of participants that serves this aim the most.

As there are very limited spots, we kindly ask you to signal your interest in participating in our Annual Policymakers' Dialogue at your earliest convenience by e-mailing [jcoenen@gmfus.org](mailto:jcoenen@gmfus.org).

## An enlivening exclusive retreat in Lisbon

We will host participants for two-and-a-half days in a unique retreat location. The dialogue will take place in the [Sintra National Park](#), classified by UNESCO as a world Heritage site in the category of cultural landscapes!

Participants will step away from politics as usual and have an opportunity to reconnect in profound and meaningful ways with colleagues in one of the most beautiful landscapes offering views of the sea and mountains.

The property encourages discovery and will be the perfect backdrop to our political reflections.

Over the course of two and a half days, a select group of policymakers across countries and parties will explore new thinking, perspectives, and ideas in a listening conversation about the current unprecedented political challenges affecting the European continent. Enriched by expert input and innovative dialogue methodologies, this will be a dialogue for parliamentarians and by parliamentarians around the issues that matter most to them. We will bring together reflections about the past and future and prompt ourselves to ask: 'what has happened in Europe and what is this telling us?', 'where are we going from here?' and, 'could this critical moment in time represent an opportunity for Europe?' Participants will be able to choose from a variety of topics to delve into during the dialogue, while also having the opportunity to propose their own topics and shape the the day's agenda.

## Friday, 9 September, 14.00 – 21.00 CEST

The first day of the Dialogue will be dedicated to exploring the local surroundings and familiarizing with the cultural and political realities of fellow parliamentarians across Europe. Networking opportunities will be offered next to a stimulating exchange with high-level experts over an exclusive political evening.

- \*Early Bird Special\* – Get in the Spirit: Outing in the Sintra National Park, UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Meet & Greet: Networking Session and Perspectives Exchange between Colleagues
- Political Evening with High-Level Experts and Discussion Tables

## Saturday, 10 September, 9.00 – 21.00 CEST

Day two will set the tone of the Dialogue with rich topic impulses. Parliamentarians will engage in peer-to-peer work and reflect on the topics they find most important. 'Topic Stations' will be offered together with the opportunity for parliamentarians to introduce new topics for conversation, thanks to an 'Open Space Technology' method. Next to the discussion of priority themes, a part of the day will be dedicated to policymakers' storytelling and collecting further intellectual input from top-tier experts.

- Big Picture Framing: What Has Happened in Europe, Where Do We Go From Here?
- Policymaker's Storytelling & Intellectual Input
- Identifying Key Issue Areas and Organizing Policy Deep-Dives
- Social Outing: Immersion into Portuguese Culture and Networking Dinner

## Sunday, 11 September, 9.00 – 17.00 CEST

The last day of Dialogue will be a stock-taking moment: past and future will come together building on the political discussions and exchanges of the previous days and will focus on the question of 'what can we do from here?' - time for further networking and collaborative exchange will be offered before coming to the closing of the working sessions.

- \*Optional\*: Practical Workshops and Networking Activity
- Reflection, Sense-Making, and Ideas for Action
- Taking a Crack at the Future: Building Opportunities
- Stepping Back into the System: Reflection and Takeaways
- \*Optional\*: Social Gathering

Please note the meeting will require your presence from September 9th (18:00 CEST) to September 11th (16.30 CEST).

## **Registration - Please Note that there are Limited Places**

To ensure your participation, please make sure to register at your earliest convenience and no later than the **27th of June**. Please register by filling in the linked [participation form](#) or emailing Jo Coenen at [jcoenen@gmfus.org](mailto:jcoenen@gmfus.org). After the 27th of June, registrations will only be accepted depending on the availability of places.

Detailed information on travel arrangements, the venue and accommodation will follow soon.

## **Expenses**

Travel and accommodation costs are covered by the Open European Dialogue, unless you specifically wish to pay yourself. Please note that we can only cover economy class flights.

## **Childcare**

Family comes first. If you have a child or children and your participation depends on the offer of childcare for the duration of the event, we are happy to arrange a solution for you. We are flexible with regard to your preferred option. Please do not hesitate to get in touch and let us know how we can best tailor an offer to meet your family's needs.

# CONTACTS

For registration or logistical questions:

## Rebecca Farulli

Project Manager  
APROPOS - Advancing Process in Politics  
Karl-Marx-Allee 98, 12043 Berlin  
+39 328 209 3488  
[rebecca@apropos.international](mailto:rebecca@apropos.international)



## Jo Coenen

Project Manager  
Open European Dialogue  
The German Marshall Fund of the United States  
Rue de la Loi 155, 1040 Brussels  
+32 487 60 7899  
[jcoenen@gmfus.org](mailto:jcoenen@gmfus.org)



You may also contact your regional representative:

## Federico Castiglioni

Research Fellow  
Istituto Affari Internazionali  
Via Angelo Brunetti 9, 00186 Rome  
+39 334 964 1350  
[f.castiglioni@iai.it](mailto:f.castiglioni@iai.it)



## Héctor Sánchez Margalef

Researcher  
Barcelona Centre for International Affairs  
Elisabets 12, 08001 Barcelona  
+ 34 647 41 1191  
[hsanchez@cidob.org](mailto:hsanchez@cidob.org)



For questions about the project:

## Chiara Rosselli

Head of the Open European Dialogue  
The German Marshall Fund of the United States  
Rue de la Loi 155, 1040 Brussels  
+32 476 79 1092  
[rosselli@gmfus.org](mailto:rosselli@gmfus.org)



## Alexander Mattelaer

Recruitment Partner in Belgium  
on behalf of King Baudouin Foundation  
Rue Brederode 21, 1000 Brussels  
+32 495 25 1672  
[a.mattelaer@egmontinstitute.be](mailto:a.mattelaer@egmontinstitute.be)



## Elizabeth Phocas

Director of Operations  
Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign  
Policy  
49 Vas. Sofias Ave., 10676 Athens  
+30 210 725 7122  
[elizabeth@eliamep.gr](mailto:elizabeth@eliamep.gr)



# THE OPEN EUROPEAN DIALOGUE AT A GLANCE

The Open European Dialogue is a politically neutral platform that aims to improve European politics by supporting policymakers in better understanding challenges and perspectives from across Europe. We do that by connecting European politicians across parties and countries, providing space for dialogue, and promoting innovative political conversations in ways that no one else does.

The network serves as a platform to the EU's ca. 10,000 national parliamentarians. Its active network comprises over 170 members from 23+ member states, representing around 70 different political parties.

Our members convene regularly for dialogues, conference calls, fact-finding missions, expert workshops, and other activities.

Since 2017, the network also empowers parliamentarians to develop their own cooperative, cross-party and cross-country spin-off initiatives. Our policy experts from four internationally renowned think tanks offer input to ensure the highest quality of dialogue.



**23 EU MEMBER STATES AND BEYOND**



**70+ POLITICAL PARTIES**



**OVER 170 ACTIVE MEMBERS**



**4 INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED THINK TANKS**



**EXCLUSIVE PUBLICATION SERIES**



**REGULAR CONFERENCE CALLS**



**MP-LED INITIATIVES**

## THE DIALOGUE EXPERIENCE: FEEDBACK FROM OUR MEMBERS



"A very good concept - an innovative way of creating parliamentary networks outside of formal protocol."

"It is an opportunity to have a conversation with my EU peers, away from daily politics and not too influenced by national party political lines."

"Thank you for building bridges among european mps and bringing us together for always enriching debates..."

"I found the process very innovative and enjoyable. It gave everyone a chance to get their viewpoint across."



## A EUROPEAN PROJECT BY A EUROPEAN NETWORK OF PARTNERS

This European network is a project by the German Marshall Fund of the United States in cooperation with the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs, the Istituto Affari Internazionali in Rome, and the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy in Athens and is funded by Stiftung Mercator by the King Baudouin Foundation, and the Robert Bosch Stiftung. In 2020, we were joined by our strategic partner APROPOS - Advancing Process in Politics in Berlin, who brings the expertise of political process design to the network.

The consortium is not merely spread across the continent to create regional points of contact, but to also bring together top-notch researchers from some of Europe's most influential political think tanks with different regional and thematic foci. This helps to ensure the best possible quality of informed conversations within the network.



# JOINING FORCES IN THE OPEN EUROPEAN DIALOGUE

## STIFTUNG MERCATOR

Stiftung Mercator is a private and independent foundation with extensive scientific expertise and practical project experience. Through its work, it strives for a society characterized by openness to the world, solidarity and equal opportunities. To achieve these objectives, it supports and develops projects that improve participation and cohesion in an increasingly diverse society. Stiftung Mercator wants to strengthen democracy and the rule of law in Europe, address the impact of digitization on democracy and society, and drive forward climate change mitigation. Stiftung Mercator pursues activities in Germany, Europe and worldwide. It has a particular affinity with the Ruhr area, the home of its founding family and of the foundation's headquarters.



*Working together for a better society.*

The King Baudouin Foundation's mission is to contribute to a better society. The Foundation is an actor for change and innovation, serving the public interest and increasing social cohesion in Belgium and Europe. We seek to maximize our impact by strengthening the capacity of organizations and individuals. We also stimulate effective philanthropy by individuals and corporations. The Foundation's key values are integrity, transparency, pluralism, independence, respect for diversity, and promoting solidarity. The Foundation's current areas of activity are poverty and social justice, philanthropy, health, civic engagement, developing talents, democracy, European integration, heritage and development cooperation. The King Baudouin Foundation is a public benefit foundation. The Foundation was set up in 1976 on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of King Baudouin's reign.



The Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH is one of the major German foundations associated with a private company in Europe. It works in the areas of health, education, and global issues. With its charitable activities, it contributes to the development of viable solutions to social challenges. For this purpose, the Foundation implements its own projects, enters into alliances with partners, and supports third-party initiatives. The Foundation benefits from over 50 years of experience and a comprehensive global network of experts and practitioners. It supports interdisciplinary exchange between decision-makers and opinion leaders and supports the work of high-profile, practice-focused think tanks. Since it was established in 1964, the Robert Bosch Stiftung has invested around 1.8 billion euros in charitable work.



The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) strengthens transatlantic cooperation on regional, national, and global challenges and opportunities in the spirit of the Marshall Plan. GMF contributes research and analysis and convenes leaders on transatlantic issues relevant to policymakers. GMF offers rising leaders opportunities to develop their skills and networks through transatlantic exchange, and supports civil society in the Balkans and Black Sea regions by fostering democratic initiatives, rule of law, and regional cooperation. Founded in 1972 as a non-partisan, non-profit organization through a gift from Germany as a permanent memorial to Marshall Plan assistance, GMF maintains a strong presence on both sides of the Atlantic. In addition to its headquarters in Washington, DC, GMF has offices in Berlin, Paris, Brussels, Belgrade, Ankara, Bucharest, and Warsaw.

# JOINING FORCES IN THE OPEN EUROPEAN DIALOGUE



The Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) is a private, independent non-profit think tank, founded in 1965 on the initiative of Altiero Spinelli. IAI seeks to promote awareness of international politics and contribute to the advancement of European integration and multilateral cooperation. IAI is part of a vast international network, and interacts and cooperates with the Italian government and its ministries, European and international institutions, universities, major national economic actors, the media and the most authoritative international think tanks.

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ELIAMEP is an independent, non-profit and policy-oriented research and training institute. It neither expresses, nor represents, any specific political party view. ELIAMEP's mission is to provide a forum for public debate on issues of European integration and international relations to conduct scientific research that contributes to a better informed and documented knowledge of the European and international environment.



The Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB) is an independent and plural think tank based in Barcelona, dedicated to the study, research and analysis of international affairs. Created in 1973 as an International Documentation Centre of Barcelona, it is a private foundation since 1979. CIDOB promotes global governance and good practices – based on local, national and European democratic government – to ensure that people possess the basic elements to live their lives free from fear and in liberty, by facilitating a dialogue that includes all diversities and which actively defends human rights and gender equality. CIDOB is a dynamic community of analytics that works to produce and offer to all political actors – from individual citizens to international organizations – information and ideas to formulate and promote policies for a more secure, free and fair world for everyone.

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## APROPOS

To work together well, we need to understand and respect each other despite our differences. Democracies listen. To build respect and understanding in politics, APROPOS combines research with experimentation and decades worth of practical experience in designing deliberative decision-making processes and unique political dialogues. We design and carry out meetings with policymakers, facilitate conversations, train practitioners, and publish research on political process to advance the dialogue and collaborative capacities that will be vital for the decades of comprehensive societal changes ahead of us.

The Open European Dialogue is a politically neutral platform that aims to improve European politics by supporting policymakers in better understanding challenges and perspectives from across Europe.

It connects European politicians across parties and countries, providing space for dialogue and cross-border collaboration.

In 2021 it was selected as an OECD global best practice for public-sector innovation.