

ESDN Conference 2020: The European Green Deal: Our Pact for the Future

Summary of Breakout Groups

A New Push for Democracy

Heather Grabbe from the Open Society Foundations European Policy Institute moderated and presented results from the breakout group on democracy. She stressed that **a just transition does not only require financial or economic support, but also the engagement of the citizens**. There are many new and innovative forms of citizen engagement, for example citizen's assemblies and engagement and deliberative processes. However, **in the area of climate change policy, there is a poor track record of representative democracy**, yet creating and sustaining public consent is crucial in order to move things forward. Climate assemblies and other forms of deliberation can be very helpful, but they need to be tied into democratic processes and well thought out. The question is how this can be applied at the EU level. At the moment, the most successful examples of citizen engagement happen at the regional level. The **Conference on the Future of Europe** is the Commission's strategy of including more citizen's engagement in policy-making. However, the Commission is rather unexperienced in this field and needs sophisticated methods. For this, it can learn from the regional and local level. This way, we can **create sustained ownership and buy-in of citizens and regional and national institutions**.

Participants of the breakout group also discussed the model of China, where no democratic culture exists and things could move faster, because they are imposed top-down. However, the breakout group concluded that there are not only ideological reasons to support democratic processes with regards to implementing climate policies, but that **only through allowing people to voice their opinions, can public support be sustained**.