



**“Voters for the Future: Reframing Political Apathy in Future European Elections.”**

APPENDIX

Tamara Večić, MSC STRATEGIC PRODUCT DESIGN

## Appendix A: Graduation Project Brief





# IDE Master Graduation Project

## Project team, procedural checks and Personal Project Brief

In this document the agreements made between student and supervisory team about the student's IDE Master Graduation Project are set out. This document may also include involvement of an external client, however does not cover any legal matters student and client (might) agree upon. Next to that, this document facilitates the required procedural checks:

- Student defines the team, what the student is going to do/deliver and how that will come about
- Chair of the supervisory team signs, to formally approve the project's setup / Project brief
- SSC E&SA (Shared Service Centre, Education & Student Affairs) report on the student's registration and study progress
- IDE's Board of Examiners confirms the proposed supervisory team on their eligibility, and whether the student is allowed to start the Graduation Project

### STUDENT DATA & MASTER PROGRAMME

Complete all fields and indicate which master(s) you are in

Family name	<input type="text" value="Večić"/>		IDE master(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> IPD	<input type="checkbox"/> Dfl	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SPD
Initials	<input type="text" value="T.V"/>		2 <sup>nd</sup> non-IDE master	<input type="text"/>		
Given name	<input type="text" value="Tamara"/>		Individual programme (date of approval)	<input type="text"/>		
Student number	<input type="text" value="5863112"/>		Medesign	<input type="checkbox"/>		
			HPM	<input type="checkbox"/>		

### SUPERVISORY TEAM

Fill in the required information of supervisory team members. If applicable, company mentor is added as 2<sup>nd</sup> mentor

Chair	<input type="text" value="Sine Celik"/>	dept./section	<input type="text" value="Design, Organisation and Strategy"/>	<p>! Ensure a heterogeneous team. In case you wish to include team members from the same section, explain why.</p> <p>! Chair should request the IDE Board of Examiners for approval when a non-IDE mentor is proposed. Include CV and motivation letter.</p> <p>! 2<sup>nd</sup> mentor only applies when a client is involved.</p>
mentor	<input type="text" value="Deger Ozkaramanli"/>	dept./section	<input type="text" value="Human-Centered Design"/>	
2 <sup>nd</sup> mentor	<input type="text"/>			
client:	<input type="text"/>			
city:	<input type="text"/>	country:	<input type="text"/>	
optional comments	<input type="text"/>			

### APPROVAL OF CHAIR on PROJECT PROPOSAL / PROJECT BRIEF -> to be filled in by the Chair of the supervisory team

Sign for approval (Chair)



Name

Date

Signature



### CHECK ON STUDY PROGRESS

To be filled in by SSC E&SA (Shared Service Centre, Education & Student Affairs), after approval of the project brief by the chair. The study progress will be checked for a 2<sup>nd</sup> time just before the green light meeting.

Master electives no. of EC accumulated in total  EC

Of which, taking conditional requirements into account, can be part of the exam programme  EC

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES	all 1 <sup>st</sup> year master courses passed
<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	missing 1 <sup>st</sup> year courses

Comments:

Sign for approval (SSC E&SA)

Name

Date

Signature

### APPROVAL OF BOARD OF EXAMINERS IDE on SUPERVISORY TEAM -> to be checked and filled in by IDE's Board of Examiners

Does the composition of the Supervisory Team comply with regulations?

YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	Supervisory Team approved
NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	Supervisory Team not approved

Comments:

Based on study progress, students is ...

<input type="checkbox"/>	ALLOWED to start the graduation project
<input type="checkbox"/>	NOT allowed to start the graduation project

Comments:

Sign for approval (BoEx)

Name

Date

Signature



Name student **Tamara Večić**

Student number **5,863,112**

#### PROJECT TITLE, INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM DEFINITION and ASSIGNMENT

Complete all fields, keep information clear, specific and concise

**Project title** **Voters for the Future: The Role of Citizenship Duty in Political Context Among European Youth**

*Please state the title of your graduation project (above). Keep the title compact and simple. Do not use abbreviations. The remainder of this document allows you to define and clarify your graduation project.*

#### Introduction

*Describe the context of your project here; What is the domain in which your project takes place? Who are the main stakeholders and what interests are at stake? Describe the opportunities (and limitations) in this domain to better serve the stakeholder interests. (max 250 words)*

My project is situated within the domain of politics, focusing specifically on political engagement among youth in Europe. Political participation serves as a cornerstone of a healthy democracy, and the decline in youth participation poses a significant threat to it. This decline, evidenced by decreasing election turnout, reflects broader challenges facing the younger generation's perspective on citizenship. Contrary to common misconceptions of youth apathy, recent studies reveal deeper issues, including insufficient information, disempowerment, and distrust in political institutions. The complex relationship between youth and politics exposes the need to reexamine traditional notions of citizenship duty, rather than political participation alone. Main stakeholders in this domain include local and national governments, European institutions such as the European Parliament, educational institutions specializing in political science, and young citizens themselves. While opportunities for addressing these challenges exist through innovative approaches to citizenship perception and political empowerment, limitations include outdated notions of citizenship and resistance to change within political systems. Despite these challenges, the urgency and importance of redefining citizenship duty offers a portfolio of opportunities for the design field to explore alternatives, ones that are not bound by policy and institutional restrictions.

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*introduction (continued): space for images*



image / figure 1 © Vikky Mir / Adobe Stock

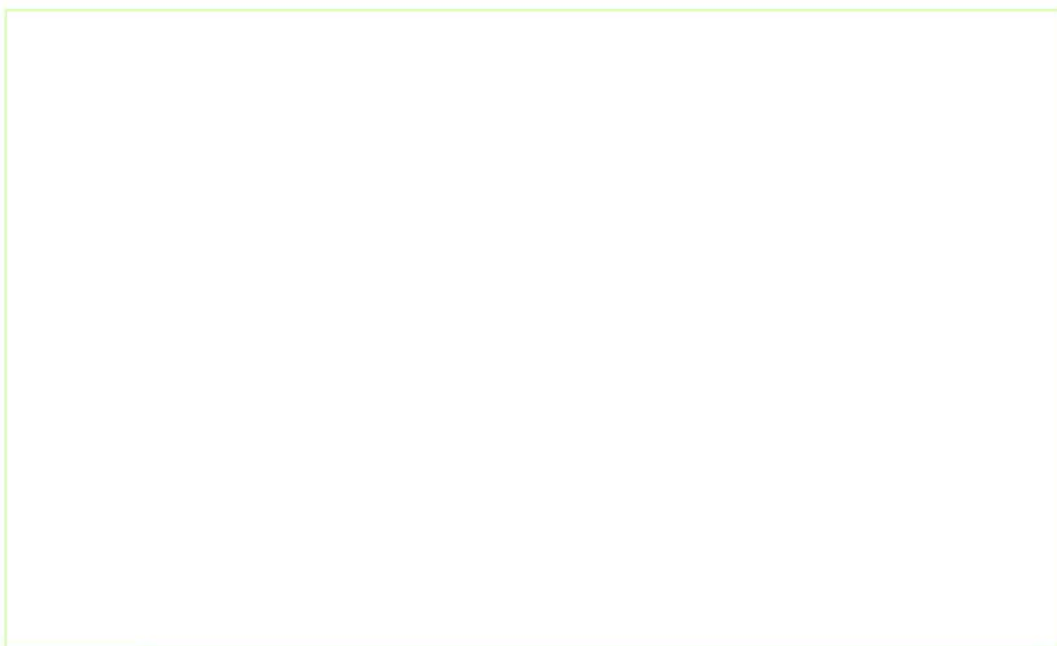


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### Problem Definition

*What problem do you want to solve in the context described in the introduction, and within the available time frame of 100 working days? (= Master Graduation Project of 30 EC). What opportunities do you see to create added value for the described stakeholders? Substantiate your choice.  
(max 200 words)*

In recent years, electoral turnout, exemplified by the Dutch parliamentary elections, has shown a decline, dropping from 78.71% to 77.74%. Although higher compared to peers like Croatia (46.90%), Bulgaria (37.98%), and Romania (31.95%), it signals a broader crisis in European political engagement. This trend began in the 1950s, especially evident in youth participation, where nearly 60% of 16/18 to 24-year-olds abstain from voting. Even among 25 to 29-year-olds, participation lags. Efforts to address this have focused on engaging young voters, yet defining "active political participation" remains narrow. Is a politically active 21-year-old Instagram user apathetic for skipping national elections? Is an 18-year-old volunteer for women's rights politically disinterested for not joining a party? The current labeling of such individuals as apathetic or disinterested reflects outdated views. Addressing political participation requires reevaluating the modern citizen's political duty, as highlighted in a recent European Parliament study. Despite existing studies, recommendations often lack forward-looking solutions. Hence, exploring citizenship duty in European youth political participation through a future-oriented design approach holds significant value.

### Assignment

*This is the most important part of the project brief because it will give a clear direction of what you are heading for. Formulate an assignment to yourself regarding what you expect to deliver as result at the end of your project. (1 sentence) As you graduate as an industrial design engineer, your assignment will start with a verb (Design/Investigate/Validate/Create), and you may use the green text format:*

*Create an impactful design intervention which would stimulate and facilitate a more productive communication between European youth and European political institutions on the topic of future citizenship duty.*

*Then explain your project approach to carrying out your graduation project and what research and design methods you plan to use to generate your design solution (max 150 words)*

In my master's thesis, I aim to develop a design intervention fostering more effective communication between European youth and political institutions regarding future citizenship duty. I intend to challenge prevailing perceptions of citizenship duty among youth and envision future citizenship scenarios in collaboration with stakeholders. This will involve translating findings into a tangible output to spark stakeholder engagement and meaningful discourse. While my focus is on a design intervention, I remain flexible to concluding with broader recommendations depending on initial research outcomes. Key questions addressed include youth perspectives on citizenship duty and the evolving role of political citizenship for stakeholders. I will explore how a future-oriented design approach can drive political innovation and dialogue, employing a blend of speculative, participatory, and future-thinking design methods aligned with the standard double diamond framework. Speculative design will challenge assumptions and provoke critical thought, while participatory design ensures stakeholder perspectives are central, and a future-thinking approach translates insights into forward-looking solutions anticipating future challenges and opportunities.

### Project planning and key moments

To make visible how you plan to spend your time, you must make a planning for the full project. You are advised to use a Gantt chart format to show the different phases of your project, deliverables you have in mind, meetings and in-between deadlines. Keep in mind that all activities should fit within the given run time of 100 working days. Your planning should include a kick-off meeting, mid-term evaluation meeting, green light meeting and graduation ceremony. Please indicate periods of part-time activities and/or periods of not spending time on your graduation project, if any (for instance because of holidays or parallel course activities).

Make sure to attach the full plan to this project brief.  
The four key moment dates must be filled in below

Kick off meeting	11 Apr 2024
Mid-term evaluation	5 Jul 2024
Green light meeting	16 Aug 2024
Graduation ceremony	20 Sep 2024

*In exceptional cases (part of) the Graduation Project may need to be scheduled part-time. Indicate here if such applies to your project*

Part of project scheduled part-time	<input type="checkbox"/>
For how many project weeks	25
Number of project days per week	5,0

Comments:  
2 weeks of vacation, 10 days in total are planned.

### Motivation and personal ambitions

Explain why you wish to start this project, what competencies you want to prove or develop (e.g. competencies acquired in your MSc programme, electives, extra-curricular activities or other).

Optionally, describe whether you have some personal learning ambitions which you explicitly want to address in this project, on top of the learning objectives of the Graduation Project itself. You might think of e.g. acquiring in depth knowledge on a specific subject, broadening your competencies or experimenting with a specific tool or methodology. Personal learning ambitions are limited to a maximum number of five.  
(200 words max)

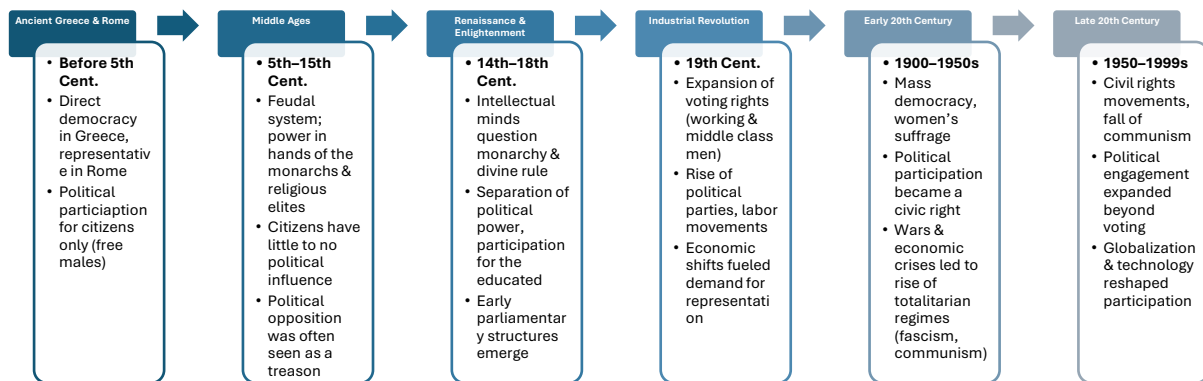
Since high school, I have actively engaged in politics, coming from Slovenia, a post-communist nation where political interest and discourse are relatively subdued compared to Western Europe. Despite my consistent efforts to stay informed about political affairs, I've noticed that my level of involvement is more of an anomaly among my peers. While many of them express regular concerns about issues such as women's rights, the housing crisis, and employment opportunities for young adults, the majority abstain from participating in elections. This discrepancy sparked my interest both as their friend and as a designer. While my initial curiosity was sparked by personal frustrations in Slovenia, recent electoral results in the Netherlands motivated me to broaden my exploration to a European scale, presenting a significantly larger research opportunity. The issue of youth citizenship in the political realm is often confined to closed political circles, with little room for design to make a meaningful contribution. Through my master's thesis, I aim to challenge myself as a designer by entering into this circle, while also seeking to identify avenues where design can play a meaningful role. This endeavor not only aligns with my personal passions but also holds potential to shape my future career, as I aspire to work within the realm of European politics.



## Appendix B: The history of political participation

Political participation has evolved throughout history, being shaped by societal structures, cultural norms, and technological advancements. From early collective decision-making to modern digital activism, **the ways in which individuals engage in politics have continuously transformed**. In this section I intended to research when the relationship gap appeared and how it changed throughout centuries. This section provides an insight into the origins of political participation [2.1.1], its historic development [2.1.2], and modern-day manifestation [2.1.3].

Figure 1: Political participation timeline.



### Origins of political participation

Political participation is by no means a modern phenomenon. Like many other social constructs, it dates to the earliest human societies. Its origins can be traced to **prehistoric times when humans began forming first communities**, commonly known as tribes (Elman Rogers Service, 1975). In these early societies, survival was the primary objective. However, as communal life became more complex, the need for organization, rules and leadership emerged. **The responsibility of organization was entrusted to a selected few deemed capable** (Fukuyama, 2011). In essence, the foundations of *politics* were built.

First written definitions of the word *politics* date back to Ancient Greece. In his work *Politika*, Aristotle explained the **term not only as a co-existence in community, but also a system of governance** (Aristotle, 2017). This suggests that politics as such superseded the mere primitive interpretations of survival and **started addressing a human need to contribute to the collective good on a large scale, such as nation** (Aristotle, 2017; Bloom & Kirsch, 2016).

**Fact: Politics**, from the Greek word **Πολιτικά**, [politika], consists of two words: *polis* “city-state” and *technē* “a technique”, together translating to the “*technique of organizing the city’s affairs*”.

However, Aristotle’s interpretation and what we recognize as politics today, only began to take shape in 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. One of the earliest and well-documented forms of political systems was democracy, a system that allowed **Athenian citizens to engage in decision-making regarding their polis** (Greek city-state). In practice, that meant that Athenians gathered in public spaces such as *Agora* (Athenian main square), **to debate, propose, and vote on rules and laws**.

**Participation in Athenian democracy was far from inclusive**—women, enslaved individuals, and foreigners were not allowed to join the discussion (Cartledge, 2016).

**Fact: Democracy**, from the Greek word **δημοκρατία** [dēmokratīā] consists of two Greek words: *dēmos* “common people” or citizens and *kratos* “strength”, together meaning the “rule of people”.

Other Greek polis at the time, such as Sparta, adopted a more oligarchic structure of governance, where the political power was concentrated in the hands of a small elite, rendering political participation almost non-existent.

Figure 2: 19th century Philipp Foltz painting depicting the Athenian politician Pericles delivering his funeral oration.



Source: (Foltz, 1852)

### 2.1.1 Evolution of political participation

Over the following centuries, politics and political participation experienced numerous changes. Since its beginnings, **political participation evolved alongside societal and political changes across the European continent**. From ancient to modern times, democratic politics were periodically replaced by totalitarian, oligarchic and authoritarian regimes, all of which had a direct impact on political participation.

#### The rise of Roman politics and representative democracy

Political participation and democracy expanded during the **Roman Republic** (509 BCE-27BCE). This period saw the emergence of *representative democracy*, a system in which officials are elected to represent the interests of citizens. Due to its quick expansion, the task of organizing the Republic became very complex, so the Romans decided to elect a set of trusted officials in different cities which would take care of the main political affairs.

Though, the Roman system allowed slightly greater inclusion than Greek *democracy*, it still favoured the rich individuals. Higher social classes were allowed to politically engage, while the

mass majority were left with minimal to no political influence. This changed only around the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE, when citizens demanded greater individual rights, ultimately resulting in **political participation becoming a universal for the first time in history** (Wasson, 2016).

However, the thriving Roman representative democracy gradually fell apart with Roman emperors **consolidating absolute political power in their hands**. This change effectively erased all political engagement. Individual ambitions to control European territories and to be celebrated by the masses, caused a shift from democracy to oligarchy.

### **Feudalism and limited political participation in the Middle Ages**

In Ancients times, political participation was largely understood as **a relationship between citizens and the state (Polis or Roman Republic)**. However, this interpretation shifted towards **a more personal relationship between individuals and a figure of authority**, such as knights, lords and kings in the Middle Ages (Heater, 2004).

Following the collapse of the Western Roman Empire in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, much of Europe was left abandoned and destroyed—allowing small settlements to emerge with landowners gaining economic and societal power. Gradually, democratic political structures were replaced with *feudalism*, a hierarchical system in which monarchs held supreme civic powers (Rostovtzeff, 1926). In feudalism, **the landowners governed under the doctrine of divine power**—a belief they derived their political authority from God, rather than from the vote of citizens. During this time, **civic political engagement was virtually non-existent**, with rebellion against the authority being perceived as sinful (Wills, 2020).

First significant change came only around 12<sup>th</sup> century with *Magna Carta* that **placed limitations on the king's power and established foundations for modern civil rights** (Turner & Hamilton, 1994).

### **The rise of political thought in Renaissance and Enlightenment**

The re-democratization of European societies gained momentum in Renaissance and Enlightenment, with significant **shifts in both societal and individual mindset**. This period—often referred to as the “Age of Reason”—replaced the “Age of Faith” by embracing the idea that **nothing is predetermined or divinely ordained** and that the universe and societies operate on principles of reason (B., 2025).

During the Renaissance (14<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> century), people **increasingly started to** spark debates on **human rights** (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2025a). Thinkers such as Niccolò Machiavelli, were the first to challenge traditional notions of governance. In his work “*The Prince*”, he argued that rulers should be pragmatic and strategic rather than solely operating on the divine right (H, 2025). His and other philosophical works laid the groundwork for future European re-democratization, with several countries forming first democratic institutions, such as the *Parliament*.

The Enlightenment (17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> century) brought an even more transformative political thought, with philosophers such as John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Montesquieu introducing concepts of **civic political rights and responsibilities**. Locke for instance, advocated for

fundamental individual rights across European nations, Montesquieu proposed the separation of the executive, legislative, and judicial government branches, and Rousseau introduced the idea of the social contract, focusing on mutual responsibility between citizens and the rulers (Levi, A.W. et al., 2024)

In the following decades **the establishment of human rights became central to European political movements**. For instance, British constitutional monarchy was formed, including **first political parties** (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2025b).

### **The Age of Expanding Rights During the 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

The 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century marked **a period of increasing demand for inclusion in political participation**. While awareness and adaptation of individual rights had grown significantly during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, large segments of society remained excluded. Politics served the educated wealthy men—such as the Enlightenment philosophers. **However, during the industrial revolution social structures began to shift**. Industrialization led to the expansion of labour market, urbanization, social classes, all of which fuelled **mass movements for workers' rights and first focus on voting rights** (Barzun, J. et al., 2025).

**The evolution of voting rights was gradual**. Initially in Ancient times, the suffrage was limited to wealthy property-owning men, which extended to middle-class men, and by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to certain segments of the working class. However, women remained excluded and the question of gender equality in political participation gained traction in early 20<sup>th</sup> century with **women's suffrage movements**. Those succeeded in assuring voting rights for all citizens, including women, in several countries, such as **Finland** in 1906, **the United Kingdom** in 1918, and **the United States** in 1920 (Barzun, J. et al., 2025).

During this time, individuals primarily engaged in political movements driven by the pursuit of better working conditions, personal freedoms, and the desire to influence legislation (Barzun, J. et al., 2025). This was mostly achieved through **voting and labour unions**, two main forms of political participation in 19<sup>th</sup> century. Towards the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, new political ideologies such as socialism and liberalism started to gain prominence, which fuelled the tensions between working class and economic elite.

### **The fight for mass democracy in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century**

The early 20<sup>th</sup> century marked **a shift from individual rights towards mass democracy**, following the collapse of several monarchies, the rise of republics, and the continued spread of liberal mindsets. **The classical understanding of political participation as a voting obligation began to fade**. A more liberal view of participation emerged, in which **political engagement became optional** (Shapiro, I. et al., 2025).

Although, in theory, **everyone could politically engage, the inequalities persisted**. Many minorities still needed to fight for political recognition. Minorities called for equality through **mass protests and civil rights movements, which gained large momentum in 1940s** (Shapiro, I. et al., 2025). These movements included the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, the anti-apartheid fight in South Africa, and mass uprisings across Europe.

Early 20<sup>th</sup> century also **experienced large global shifts**. The devastation of World War I and II profoundly shaped European politics. The postwar period saw many established democracies fall into an economic turmoil, creating a fertile ground for populist movement, such as Nazism in Germany and Fascism in Italy. During this time, **political participation was largely driven by the ideological agendas of authoritarian rulers rather than civic development** (Shapiro, I. et al., 2025).

### **The rise of mass participation and institutionalized democracy in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and 21<sup>st</sup> century**

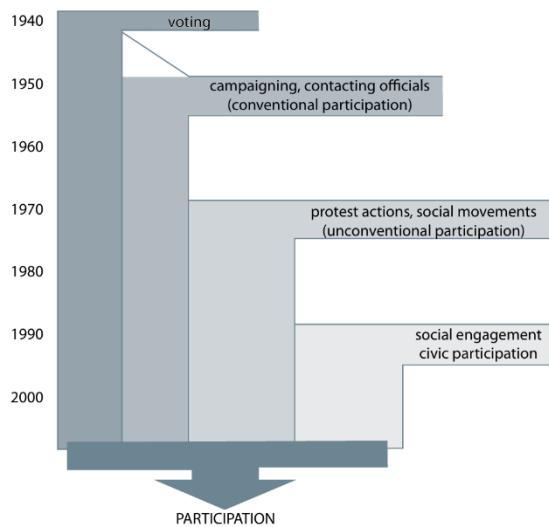
The aftermath of World War II brought significant political and societal transformations, leading to **increased democratization and mass political engagement across Europe**. The establishment of the United Nations in 1945 symbolized a global commitment to diplomacy and international cooperation, while the Cold War (1947–1991) polarized much of the world into competing ideological blocs—capitalist West and communist East (W.A., 2024).

In Western democracies, the post-war period saw **the strengthening of civil rights movements**. The 1960s and 1970s, in particular, were marked by widespread **political activism**, with protests for gender equality, decolonization, and environmental protection (W.A., 2024).

In contrast, **Eastern bloc nations experienced a more restricted political participation, with single-party rule and state-controlled political engagement**. However, growing dissatisfaction with regimes, eventually led to mass uprisings and the collapse of communist European governments between 1989 and 1992 (W.A., 2024).

This period also brought a wave of neoliberal economic policies, such as **capitalism**. In combination with rapid **globalization and technological advancements**—particularly the rise of television and traditional media—the **political participation became more accessible than ever**. For instance, elections and political debates became broadcasted on the TV, while the mass protests gained media attention across the globe, allowing for movements to grow faster and bigger in other countries as well. **Technological innovation continued to accelerate political participation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**. (W.A., 2024).

*Figure 3: The expansion of the political action repertoire.*



Source: (W. van Deth, 2001)

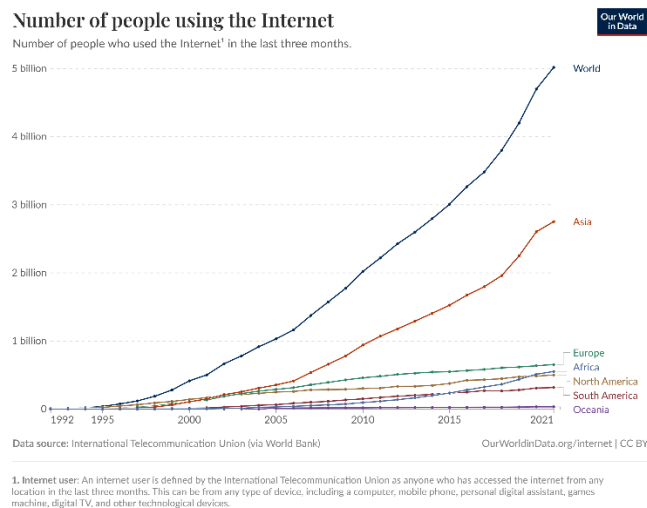
### 2.1.2 Modern political participation (Done)

The development of information and communication technology (ICT), such as smartphones and digital apps, has had a significant impact on modern political participation (Norris, 2002). **These technological advancements have diversified, expanded and invented new forms of political engagement.** For instance, internet and social media introduced forms of engagement, which can take place in digital world only, such as online petitions or commenting on politician's posts (Sloam, 2016).

#### The uptake of the internet

The rise of digital (online) politics was largely driven by the **public uptake of the internet in the early 1990s**. Since its launch in 1991, internet usage has grown exponentially. In its beginnings, "only" 4 million people—approximately 0.075% of the world's population—had access to the internet. By 2000, this number had increased to 416 million, reaching 2.02 billion in 2012 and 4.7 billion in 2021 (Ritchie et al., 2023). **While less than 7% of the global population was online in 2000, more than half of the world has the internet access today.**

Figure 4: Number of people using the Internet.



Source: (Ritchie et al., 2023)

In its early stages, internet access was limited to select governmental agencies and universities only, which expanded to personal use in the following years (In, 2012).

### Digital politics: a shift from traditional to alternative political engagement

With the mass adoption of internet, the manner in which individuals engaged in politics changed drastically. Firstly, individuals were able to access information faster and easier than ever before. This began the first wave of change, **the informative political online engagement** (Hyuksoo Kim et al., 2019).

Gathering political information changed with traditional media migrating to digital platforms. News began to reach the audience in a faster and less energy-consuming manner, creating a **hybrid information ecosystem of traditional and alternative media** (Dijk & Hacker, 2018).

With political information being available to more people, **the networking political engagement emerged**. Besides media, governments were also eager to leverage internet's rapid and far-reaching power to reach a **larger number of potential voters** (P&RR, 2023). Citizens on the other hand, saw the value in networking engagement through **voicing personal concerns, connecting with like-minded individuals, and mobilizing around specific issues**.

The ability of internet to not only inform citizens on current political events, but also connect and mobilize them, was leveraged even more through social media in the following years (Sloam, 2016).

### Social media revolution

2010s fundamentally changed the way people engage in digital politics with emergence of social media—a form of digital media that allows users to form online communities for socializing, sharing information, and posting user-created content. In its early beginnings in 2000s, the medium mostly served for **people to connect and socialize**. However, with development of new functions, social media platforms like *Myspace, Facebook and X* (earlier known as *Twitter*),



introduced options to share links to external websites, like and comment user posts, and create groups with similar minded individuals (Paljug, 2025). All these features allowed **politics to become more accessible, interactive, and decentralized than ever**.

One of the most significant effects of social media on political participation has been the **rise in political awareness**. Platforms like *Facebook*, *X*, and *Instagram* provided real-time updates on political events, policies, and elections, keeping citizens informed and encouraging them to take part in discussions and debates (Kidd & McIntosh, 2024).

Figure 5: Barack Obama's Facebook campaign on Facebook in 2012.



Source: (Pranjić, 2022)

**Social media has also become a tool for mobilization and activism**, enabling grassroots movements to grow rapidly. The Fridays for Future movement, for instance, first gained momentum through social media in 2018, mobilizing millions of young people worldwide to demand action on climate change (Fridays for Future, 2020). Similarly, the 2019 Catalan protests in Spain were largely organized via *Telegram* and *Twitter* (Burgen & Jones, 2019).

Figure 6: FFF TikTok posts



Source: (Fridays for Future, 2020)

The relationship between politicians and voters has also evolved due to social media. Instead of relying on traditional media outlets, **political figures began to communicate with citizens**



**independently through social media posts, live Q&A sessions, and TikTok videos.** This shift is particularly notable amongst youth, whose lives are highly dependent on digital media (Paljug, 2025). For instance, American politician Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's leveraged Instagram's live streams to gain young women attention on the issue of abortion, after Roe v. Wade law got rejected by the US supreme court. This sole action earned the politician over a million views in the span of few hours (Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, 2022).

*Figure 7: Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's Instagram live stream in June 2022.*



*Source: (Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, 2022)*

Beyond activism and election engagement, social media introduced **new forms of participation, such as e-participation in policymaking.** Platforms like *Change.org*, *Avaaz*, and *the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI)* allow users to push for policy changes and voice opinions on government actions (Adnan et al., 2022). For Instance, in 2021, the initiative "*End the Cage Age*," which called for a ban on caged farming, collected over 1.4 million signatures through online petitions, prompting the European Commission to address the issue (European Commission, 2021). Currently one of the largest initiatives is the "My voice, my choice" campaign which is trying to collect a minimum of 1 million signatures across the EU for safe and accessible abortion. Both initiatives were led by an independent group of citizens and European NGOs (Ro, 2024).

*Figure 8: "End the Cage Age" initiative in 2021.*



Source: (Slow Food, 2019)

Despite all the positive aspects, **social media also contributed to political polarization and the spread of misinformation** (Paljug, 2025).

### 2.1.3 Key Insights

- **The relationship between citizens and politicians has always been troublesome.** The break between the politician system and citizens is nothing new. Throughout history, there has always been a gap between the two—sometimes narrower, sometimes wider, but never absent.
- **Political participation has evolved beyond formal institutions to self-initiated civic activity.** Early political engagement was largely limited to voting. Due to fading collective presence in modern society and a more independent and individual approach to life., it moved from being organized by political system to being self-initiated. For instance, in 19th and 20th century we saw the rise of labour union and mass protests, whereas late 20th and 21st centuries introduced a more individual engagement with digital technology.
- **Social, technological, and ideological shifts shaped political participation throughout history.** Political participation has continuously adapted and coincided with broader societal changes. From feudalism in the Middle Ages to Enlightenment's emphasis on individual mind, and from the industrial revolution to global conflicts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Each era contributed to refinement of previous engagements and introduced a new one.
- **Digital platforms have revolutionized the way in which people participate in politics.** The internet and social media have radically transformed how citizens interact with politics, making engagement more instantaneous, accessible and interactive. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter enable individuals to voice their opinions, mobilize for cause, and communicate directly with politicians and other citizens.

Table 1: Overview of Political Participation Through the History

<i>Period</i>	<i>Political system</i>	<i>Citizen-politics relationship</i>	<i>Forms of engagement</i>	<i>Main driving force</i>	<i>Who</i>
<b>Ancient Greece &amp; Rome</b>	Direct democracy, representative democracy	Citizens had a duty to engage in politics	Voting, public debates	Civic identity, lawmaking	Free and influential male citizens
<b>Middle Ages</b>	Theocracy, feudal monarchy	Citizens have loyalty towards monarchs	Rare—mostly rebellion	Repression of personal freedom	Free and influential male citizens
<b>Renaissance &amp; Enlightenment</b>	Early constitutionalism, absolute monarchy	Citizens question authority and church, and seek individual rights	Voting, philosophical writings, political assemblies	Rationalism, human rights discourse	Influential male citizens
<b>19th Century</b>	Constitutional monarchies, early republics	Citizens demand wide-class inclusion	Voting, labour unions, protests	Industrialization, economic inequality	Male citizens
<b>Early 20th Century</b>	Mass democracy, totalitarianism	Citizens demand voting to be an individual right	Voting, civil rights movements	Nationalism, wars, economic crisis	Citizens
<b>Late 20th Century</b>	Institutionalized democracy	Political engagement as personal identity	Voting, mass protests, online debates	Technology development, fall of communism	Citizens
<b>21st Century</b>	Liberal and illiberal democracy	Political engagement as extension of identity	Digital activism, e-participation	Technology, geopolitics, economy, rise of populism	Citizens

## Appendix C: Defining political participation

In this section the **concept of political participation is described** in detail, from its complexity to be defined and consequential different interpretations [2.2.1] to **different activities** the term encompasses [2.2.2].

### The Complexity of Defining Political Participation

**The study of political participation has expanded across different sectors**—including politicians, journalism, and academia—in the past fifty years. The academic interest has contributed to concept's evolution, but also led to diverse, and sometimes even contradictory, interpretations.

Furthermore, modifying the term with adjectives like *youth* or substituting *participation* with words such as *activity*, *engagement*, or *manifestation* does not contribute to its clarity. **Instead, it only adds complexity.** Therefore, defining the term is essential to ensure a coherent and consistent discussion in this thesis.

#### *Different interpretations of politics and political participation*

**In the 1950s, the first academic definitions of political participation were coined**, primarily focusing on conventional political practices, such as elections and party membership (Verba &

Nie, 1972). Step-by-step ever since, the spectrum stretched to activities like campaigning, signing petitions, and contacting officials—activities nowadays referred to as “conventional politics”. Particularly since 1960, the alternative methods started to develop with protests and demonstrations (Campbell et al., 1980).

Simultaneously, the scope of governmental responsibilities grew as well. Today’s political systems oversee diverse sectors of civic life, resulting in increased interactions with political context by citizens daily.

In simple terms, **political participation is connected to diverse aspects of our modern lives**. To address the issue of broadness, political experts developed strategies to define political participation. However, before diving deeper into different definition of political participation, it is important to have a general understanding of the term *politics*. Elections on autopilot (Done)

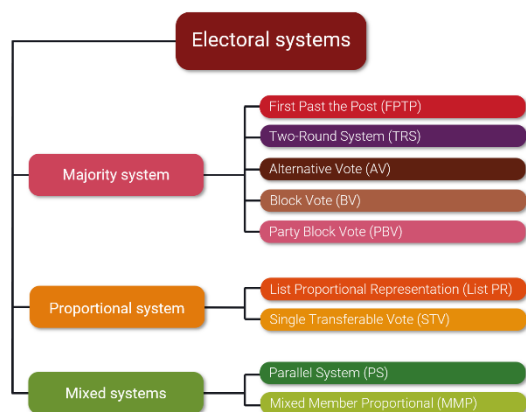
Institutional and legal democratic structures shape the access, process and influence of the voting. With clear negative European youth participation trends, the design of elections can be the main reason for the break in their relationship with politics. **A system that has been designed centuries has been on autopilot ever since, with very little change happening.**

## Appendix D: Electoral Systems

An **electoral system** is a process of translating votes into seats and determining the winner of elections (Britannica, 2025). It’s a structural framework and typically does not change from one election to another. Electoral system defines the **electoral formula (winning calculation)**, the **district boundaries (with number of seats)** and the **ballot design**.

Broadly there are three main electoral systems: **majoritarian**, **proportional**, and **mixed system**.

Figure 9: Classification of electoral systems



Source: (Krykun & Pavlov, 2021)

Most European countries use **proportional electoral systems** for their parliamentary elections. **In proportional systems, parties win seats in proportion to the percentage of votes gained in election.** In contrast to majoritarian systems, voters don’t vote directly for a candidate, but rather a political party. Such systems can enable smaller parties to gain representation,

stimulate compromise—as the name suggests, and often produce more diverse legislatures (The Electoral Knowledge Network, 2025c).

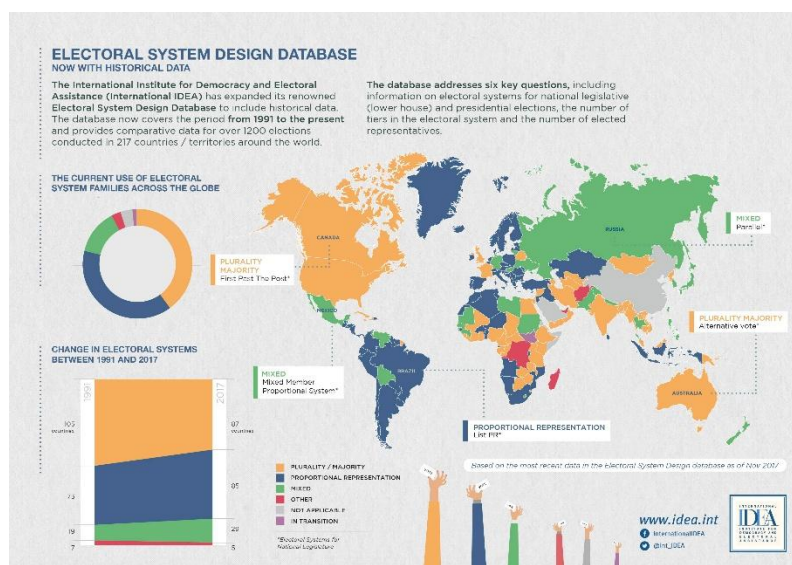
The most common method of consensus electoral system is **the party-list proportional representation (list-PR)**, which lists preregistered political parties and its candidates. The list can be either **closed**—voters can only choose a party—or **open**, where voters can also indicate preference for specific candidates within a party (The Electoral Knowledge Network, 2025c). **The list-PR** method is used both in Slovenian and Dutch parliamentary elections (Difford, 2022; Twende Kamer, 2025). Both Slovenia and the Netherlands use **open list systems**, with Netherlands offering the option of **preferential vote**.

Slovenia also holds presidential elections, something the Netherlands doesn't do as a monarchy. They use the **majoritarian system**.

**Majoritarian (plurality) systems** allow voters to cast votes to candidate directly. The winner is the **candidate with the most votes**, either with an absolute majority—more than 50% votes, or a plurality—more votes than any other candidate (Tiedemann, 2022).

Presidential elections in Slovenia use the **two-round system (TRS)**, a voting held in two rounds. Firstly, **two candidates with the highest number of votes are determined in the first round**. In the second round, the candidate with most votes, wins. This method is commonly used in France, Portugal, Poland and Croatia.

Figure 10: Electoral systems across the globe



Source: (IDEA, 2025)

## Appendix E: Ballot structure

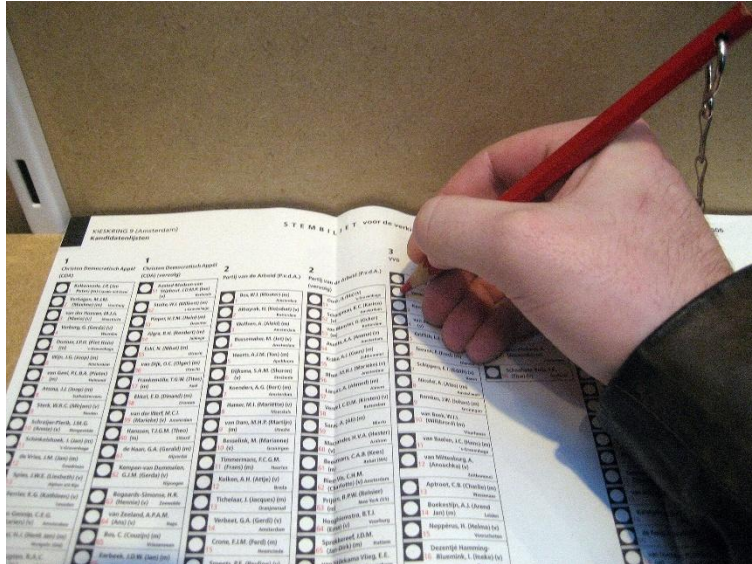
Following the design of the system and district division, a **ballot structure determines how the choices are presented to voters during voting**.

Depending on the type of electoral system used in the election, different ballots are used. Ballots may present a list of candidates with voters either **selecting a single candidate**



(first-past-the-post), **ranking multiple** (preferential), or **vote for a party list** (list proportional) (The Electoral Knowledge Network, 2025a).

Figure 11: Voting ballot for the Dutch House of Representatives election, using the open list proportional system.



Source: (Wikipedia, 2025)

**Fact:** Dutch voters cast their votes using a red pencil.

Figure 12: Slovenian voting ballot for Parliamentary elections in 2011, using the open list proportional system.

**GLASOVNICA**  
**ZA PREDČASNE VOLITVE POSLANCEV V DRŽAVNI ZBOR**  
**4. decembra 2011**  
 Št. volilne enote: 4 Št. volilnega okraja: 1-11

NAVODILO: Glasuje se samo za enega/eno (1) kandidata/kandidatko tako, da se obkroži zaporedna številka ob imenu liste, ki je pred imenom in priimkom kandidata/kandidatke.

1.	SMS - ZELENI	IME IN PRIIMEK:
2.	DRŽAVLJANSKA LISTA GREGORJA VIRANTA	IME IN PRIIMEK:
3.	NOVA SLOVENIJA - KRŠČANSKA LJUDSKA STRANKA	IME IN PRIIMEK:
4.	DSD DEMOKRATIČNA STRANKA DELA	IME IN PRIIMEK:
5.	SLS RADOVANJA ŽERJAVA - SLOVENSKA LJUDSKA STRANKA	IME IN PRIIMEK:
6.	SSN STRANKA SLOVENSKEGA NARODA	IME IN PRIIMEK:
7.	SLOVENSKA NACIONALNA STRANKA - SNS	IME IN PRIIMEK:
8.	LDS LIBERALNA DEMOKRACIJA SLOVENIJE	IME IN PRIIMEK:
9.	LISTA ZORANA JANKOVIČA - POZITIVNA SLOVENIJA	IME IN PRIIMEK:
10.	GIBANJE ZA SLOVENIJO	IME IN PRIIMEK:
11.	DESUS - DEMOKRATIČNA STRANKA UPOKOJENCEV	IME IN PRIIMEK:
12.	STRANKA ZA TRAJNOSTNI RAZVOJ SLOVENIJE - TRS	IME IN PRIIMEK:
13.	SD - SOCIALNI DEMOKRATI	IME IN PRIIMEK:
14.	SLOVENSKA DEMOKRATSKA STRANKA - SDS	IME IN PRIIMEK:
15.	NAPREJ SLOVENIJA - NPS	IME IN PRIIMEK:
16.	ZELENI SLOVENIJE	IME IN PRIIMEK:
17.	ZARES - SOCIALNO LIBERALNI	IME IN PRIIMEK:

Imena kandidatov po 11 okrajih enote Bežigrad bodo različna, zato jih ne navajamo.

Source: (Neža Loštrek, 2018)

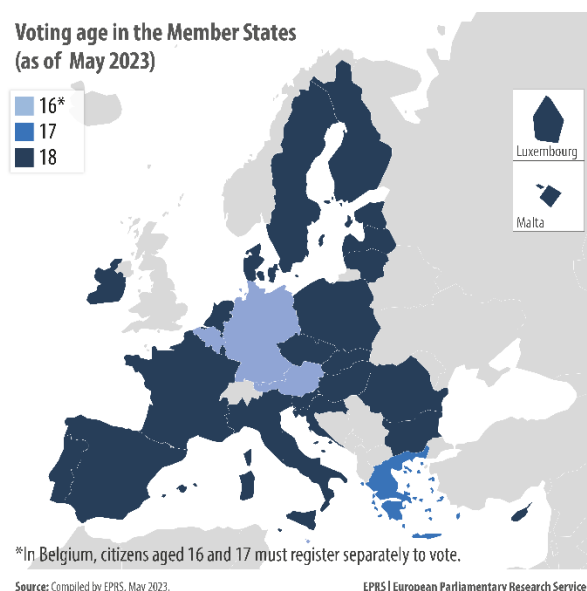
Source: (Council of Europe, 2022)

## Appendix F: Electoral rules and regulations

**The right to vote is a cornerstone of any democratic political participation.** However, this right is not universally granted, which can exclude significant segment of the population—particularly young people.

**Voter eligibility refers to the legal criteria that determine who can vote in elections.** These rules typically focus on age, citizenship, residency, and sometimes criminal record status (The Electoral Knowledge Network, 2025b). While **most European countries keep their minimum voting age at 18**, some recently lowered it to 16 (Vote16, 2025). **Austria** was the first EU country to grant full voting rights to 16-year-olds in 2007, including local, national and European Parliament elections (European Commission, 2025). Both the Netherlands and Slovenia have the minimum voting age set at 18.

Figure 13: Voting age in the European Member States



Source: (European Parliament, 2023)

## Appendix G: Political socialization

**Political socialization** is a process by which individuals develop their political beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours. This process is particularly present during youth, when core political beliefs are starting to form (Neundorf & Smets, 2017). Several **agents** contribute to development. **Family remains one of the strongest influences**, as political discussions at home often shape early perceptions of politics (Sapiro, 2004). **Schools also play a significant role through civic education**, though the effectiveness of these programs varies across countries (Quintelier, 2007). **Peers increasingly impact political views**, especially in a digital age where online communities amplify discourse.

The way young people perceive politics as a concept is strongly influenced by these early experiences. For example, **if family discussions are politically engaged and civic education is**

**present, then youth are more likely to develop trust and interest in political processes** (Neundorf & Smets, 2017). Conversely, when these socializing environments are conflictual, dismissive of politics, or emphasize political inefficacy, youth may perceive politics as corrupt, ineffective, or irrelevant to their lives. Such perceptions can discourage them from voting or participating in formal political structures, even if they remain interested in broader societal issues (Ekman & Amnå, 2012).

In both **the Netherlands** and **Slovenia**, youth share certain similarities in how they perceive politics today. They express **growing dissatisfaction, distrust, and cynicism toward institutional politics** (European Commission, 2022).

## Appendix H: Hope for change?

Even though current strategies are clearly not effective with youth or are not even aimed at them; **there are initiatives that aim to close the gap between youth and politics**. Both governmental and non-governmental organizations, local institutions, national governments and European institutions, have recently launched projects to improve the relationship. They have different goals; from stimulating youth to vote more, increase their decision-making opportunities, offer a two-way conversation, and give more policy control.

### *Initiatives*

#### ***Together.eu (EU)***

*Together.eu* is an initiative launched by the European Parliament to encourage greater citizen participation in European democracy, with a particular focus on increasing voter turnout in European elections (Associazione Joint, 2024).

#### ***Consul (SLO)***

*Consul* is an innovative digital solution aiming to increase direct citizen participation in governance through **participatory budgeting**. Consul stimulates and allows citizens to **participate in their local politics by being an open-source platform**. The platform has been implemented in more than twenty Slovenian municipalities (Danes Je Nov Dan, 2023a).

*Figure 28: Consul platform for Slovenian municipalities.*





### Mislimetar (CRO)

*Mislimetar* is an educational and entertaining tool for formal and informal education. It aims to encourage the development of critical thinking and media literacy among young people (Danes Je Nov Dan, 2023b)

Figure 14: *Misilimetar* design



Source: (MCOOnline Redakcija, 2023)

### Democracy Club (UK)

*Democracy Club* is a non-governmental NGO that provides practical voter information and electoral data to British citizens. It encourages voter participation by simplifying voting process. Democracy Club aims to bring voters closer to politics by creating a single, accessible space with relevant and reliable information for all voters (Democracy Club, 2025).

### The Youth Parliament (LUX)

The Youth Parliament is an assembly composed of youth, working for youth. Every citizen aged between 14 and 24 with residency in Luxembourg can become a member. It is composed of commissions and an executive board and since its creation, it has published several resolutions on a variety of policy areas. The youth parliament holds regular meetings with government officials (OECD, 2020).

Figure 15: Youth Parliament of Luxembourg at the meeting with Ministry of Economy discussing the energy dependence resolution.



Source: (Jugend Parlament Luxembourg, 2025)

### Coffee with politicians (LAT)

*Coffee with politicians* is a type of participation channel initially developed in Sweden and later adapted in Latvia. Its aim is to provide an opportunity to both youth and politicians to meet and discuss issues in person. For youth, it is often the first opportunity to meet governmental officials in person, address them directly and immediately, and engage in a debate with them about issues that concern them. It is also an opportunity for politicians to hear about the issues young struggle with (OECD, 2020).

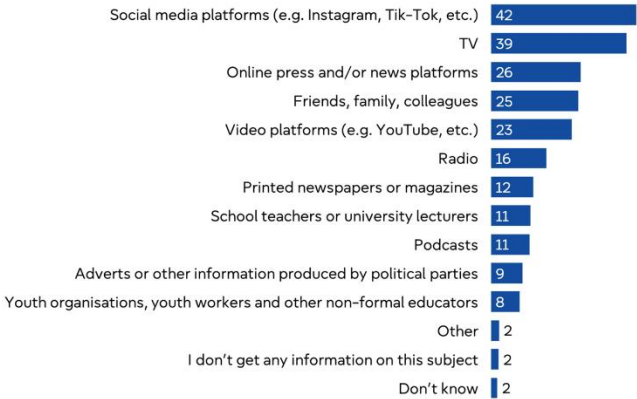
Figure 16: "Coffee with Politicians" event in Latvia in 2023



Source: (World Our Home, 2023)

Figure 17: Popularity of news sources in the EU (2024)

**Q7 From which of these sources do you get most of your information on political and social issues?** Please select up to three responses. [Multiple answers]



Source: (European Parliament, 2024)

Appendix I: Shifting world order

In addition to system design and tensions between main stakeholders (politicians and youth), **several global events and developments influence youth electoral engagement in Slovenia and the Netherlands.**

- First, **geopolitical instability events**—such as the war in Ukraine, and crisis in Gaza—have highlighted young Europeans’ concerns about **security and defense**, with over two thirds fearing the spillover to the EU (Dressler & Howard, 2022) and **economic vulnerability** (Pascoe, 2025). For instance, in the Netherlands, nearly half of voters—including young people—support higher defense spending in response to the conflict (Darroch, 2025). In both Slovenia and the Netherlands, youth are paying attention to candidates’ positions on EU defence policy and NATO agreement, shaping voting priorities based on those.

Case insight box 1: Migration & protectionism

Security is a core value for Dutch citizens, shaped by long history of national stability. When it is threatened— during the 2016 migration crisis—public pressure leads the government to act swiftly. Despite being a founding member of majority of European institutions, Dutch response in times of crisis reveal a weak sense of responsibility towards collective European society and putting national interest first.

*Migration crisis 2016, the Netherlands*

Case insight box 3: Migration & security

Solidarity remains a strong social value in Slovenia, shaped by its history and geographical position in the Balkans. Slovenians often feel responsibility towards neighbouring countries, such as Croatia. The mentality of shared burden and cooperation was evident during the 2016 migration crisis. Rather than closing borders, Balkan governments, including Slovenia, collaborated to establish a humanitarian corridor that allowed migrants to move faster from one border to the next. This prevented any single country becoming the migration “bottleneck” and showed commitment to regional stability.

*Migration crisis 2016, Slovenia*

- Second, **economic globalization events**—like **rising living costs**, **job markets**, and **housing crises**—dominate youth worries across Europe. For instance, in Slovenia 60% of young people under 34 still live at home due to housing unaffordability (The Slovenia Times, 2024). The economic strains are pushing young people to demand politicians with concrete housing affordability, wage and job security. Similar situation is seen in the Netherlands, where “housing as an investment” mentality made the access to affordable housing, especially for youth very difficult.

#### **Case insight box 8: Housing as an investment**

In the Netherlands, housing is widely seen as an investment opportunity rather than a social right, reflecting broader societal values of economic independence and entrepreneurship. Homeownership is seen as characteristic of responsible citizenship, a mindset historically supported and reinforced by government policy, which lowered the taxes for homebuyers. However, this investment-driven approach has led to growing criticism by Dutch youth. Long waiting lists for social housing, increasing private rents, and limited affordable options have made it more difficult for youth to live alone.

*Housing crisis, the Netherlands*

#### **Case insight box 9: Housing & independence**

Dutch youth typically leave their parents' homes early, driven by culture of independence and supported by a system that provides financial aid for housing and education. This balance of self-reliance and state help reflects a broader trust in the Dutch welfare infrastructure—citizens know help is available if needed. Social housing is viewed a normal option for all, not just a safety net for the poorest. However, in recent years, government investment in social housing has declined, based on the assumption that citizens are capable of securing a house independently.

*Housing crisis, the Netherlands*

- **Climate change** remains one of the most popular political issues for youth. Besides increase in **climate strikes**, boycotts and protests, climate changes directly impact **energy resources**, **migration waves** and **prices of everyday products**, like coffee. Slovenian and Dutch youth often feel that climate change policies are often sidelined by other policies like military, increasing their impatience with governmental action (Naik, 2025).
- **AI ethics**, **job automation**, and **digital rights** are steadily rising, with roughly 79% youth worry about their future employment due to AI. This fear feeds into youth demands for transparency, ethical practices, and future-ready policies (PWC, 2023).
- **Migration & Demographic Change**  
Around 14% of EU residents aged 15-29 were born abroad, with another 12% living outside their citizenship country (Eurostat, 2024). This diversified youth demographic raises questions about inclusion, voting rights, and connection to national political systems—especially for active diaspora.

#### **Case insight box 2: Migration & identity crisis**

Historically, the Dutch held an open mindset towards immigrants and multiculturalism, shaped by their colonial past and a perceived moral duty toward former colonies, like Indonesia. However, this openness has come under pressure recently. Following the 2016 migration crisis, concerns about national security and erosion of Dutch identity intensified. While policymakers expected migration to address labour shortages, they underestimated the complexity of integration and significance of national identity for immigrants. In response, the government introduced stricter migration quotas and a more rigid asylum process.

*Migration crisis 2016, the Netherlands*

## APPENDIX G: Speculative Worlds

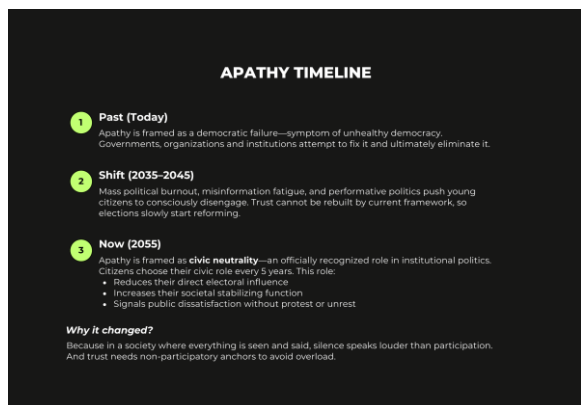
### The Glass Horizon World

- **Tagline:** *“When everything became visible, silence became power.”*
- **World summary:**

Europe in 2055 has transitioned to new systems **after years of environmental crises and political turbulences**. Glass Horizon is marked by transparency in governance, technology, and society—metaphorically (open data, radical transparency) and literally (smart cities with glass architecture and visible infrastructure). Society operates around advanced public monitoring technologies. Citizens can choose between active political participation or deliberate political withdrawal—each seen as an equally valuable civic role. Elections are redesigned to include apathy as a structural feedback signal that influences outcomes and candidate legitimacy.
- **Target group:**

The youth of today, have grown up in a **hyper-connected digital world full of misinformation while flooded with inputs**. The individualism and self-serving nature of politicians **destroyed the environment and trust in them**. Now in 2055 youth are adult citizens with their own children, who demand more authenticity and transparency from their leaders.





**World building blocks:**

<p><b>Environment:</b> Europe is ecologically devastated but undergoing a <b>large-scale, carefully managed restoration process</b>, with designated zones of recovery and <b>strict personal resource quotas</b>. Urban areas are redesigned with green infrastructure like solar power, CO2 capture systems, and green roofs, making <b>sustainability visible in daily life</b>.</p>	<p><b>Trends:</b> <i>Wildlife corridors in cities, urban forests to combat climate change.</i></p>
<p><b>Economy:</b> It operates on a <b>resource-based model backed</b> by transparent <b>Eco Credits</b>, regulating consumption tightly to protect the environment. Employment is focused on ecological recovery and sustainable infrastructure, intentionally limiting destructive industries. <b>Circularity and local production</b> define economic activity.</p>	<p><b>Trends:</b> <i>Circular economy, Cradle-to-cradle production methods.</i></p>
<p><b>Demography:</b> Population distribution is uneven due to ecological and resource constraints, with <b>cities becoming main hubs</b>. Due to increasingly aging population, <b>the proportion of youth is smaller</b>. The aging population has been balanced by a pro-immigration mentality, making Europe more culturally diverse.</p>	<p><b>Trends:</b> <i>Inclusive immigration reforms, co-housing communities, multi-generational living arrangements.</i></p>
<p><b>Society/Culture:</b> A culture of radical transparency and accountability dictates daily life, fostering <b>collective responsibility</b>. Social norms emphasize cooperation, shared resource stewardship, and resilient community bonds, <b>balancing individual freedoms with common good</b>.</p>	<p><b>Trends:</b> <i>Resurgence of communal living, collective care.</i></p>
<p><b>Technology:</b> Smart technology <b>controls resource, checks environmental health, and monitors political life</b>. Technology is hyperconnected, yet non-intrusive. <b>Participatory digital platforms enable liquid democracy</b> and open data access, supporting informed decision-making.</p>	<p><b>Trends:</b> <i>Surveillance technology, blockchain, smart contracts.</i></p>
<p><b>Politics:</b> Governance operates through <b>liquid democracy</b>, allowing citizens to vote directly or via selected agents. <b>Political decisions are publicly visible</b> and <b>subject to real-time</b></p>	<p><b>Trends:</b> <i>Rise of issue-based politics, multi-level citizenship.</i></p>

<b>monitoring.</b> The system balances diverse voices of apathy.	
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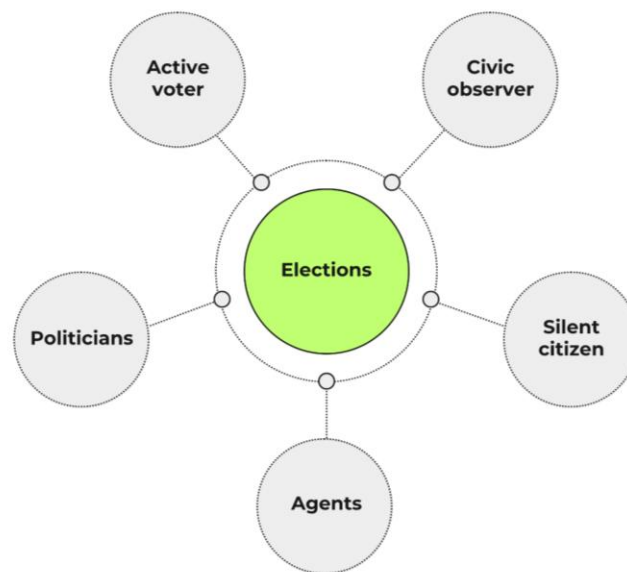
**Design concept:** *The Echo Vote*

- **Tagline:** “*Not all voices are loud. Some echo.*”
- **Description:** A future-facing election system that recognizes silence, neutrality, and action as equally meaningful political choices.
- **System purpose:** To allow citizens to choose how they engage with democratic processes—with **voting reimagined as a multi-modal participation spectrum**, not a binary act.

**Core political participation roles:**

- **Active voter:**
  - Cast votes on policies, representatives, or priorities.
  - Can delegate votes using a **liquid democracy model** (i.e., assign their vote to a trusted individual or expert on a specific topic).
  - Their voting history is visible to others on request, building a trust ecosystem.
- **Civic observer:**
  - Opt-out of direct voting.
  - Instead, monitor political actors through **GovTrace Programme** (public ledger showing promises, statements, actions).
  - Their **Echo Dashboard** allows them to issue civic nudges, which stimulate politicians to react.
- **Silent citizen:**
  - Decline to vote or observe, but agree to have **personal impact data** (behavior, lifestyle, ecological footprint, tax contributions, etc.) published.
  - This reflects their civic impact outside the electoral process.
  - Functions as a social contract: “I don’t vote, but I’m visible.”
  - Their absence is treated as political presence, but not action

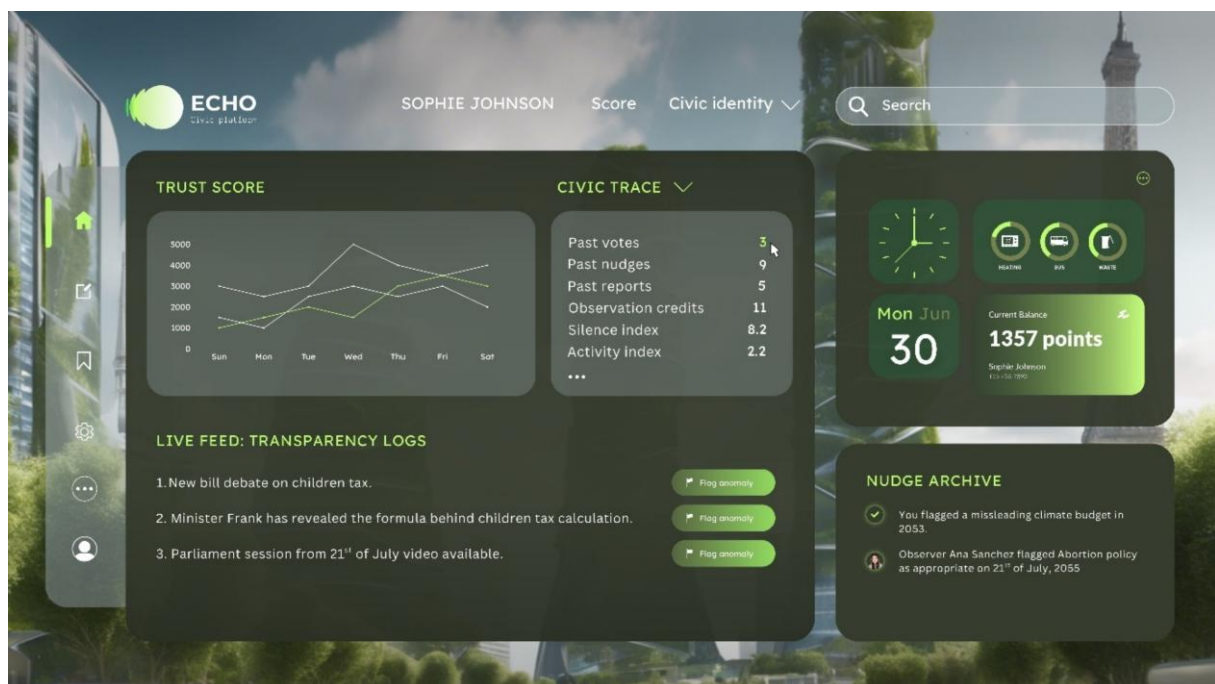




### System of elections:

- **Civic Digital Wallet:** Stores voter civic role, voting records, and Eco credits.
- **“GovTrace” Platform:** All policies, political promises, decisions, and public spending are tracked in real time, viewable to all citizens—especially observers and abstainers.
- **“Echo Dashboard” for citizens:** Personalized interface depending on civic role. Voters see campaign inputs, simulation tools, voting breakdowns. Observers see consistency timelines, nudge features, and follow-the-vote pathways. Abstainers see their personal trace and societal footprint.

### “Echo Dashboard” prototype example for a civic observer:

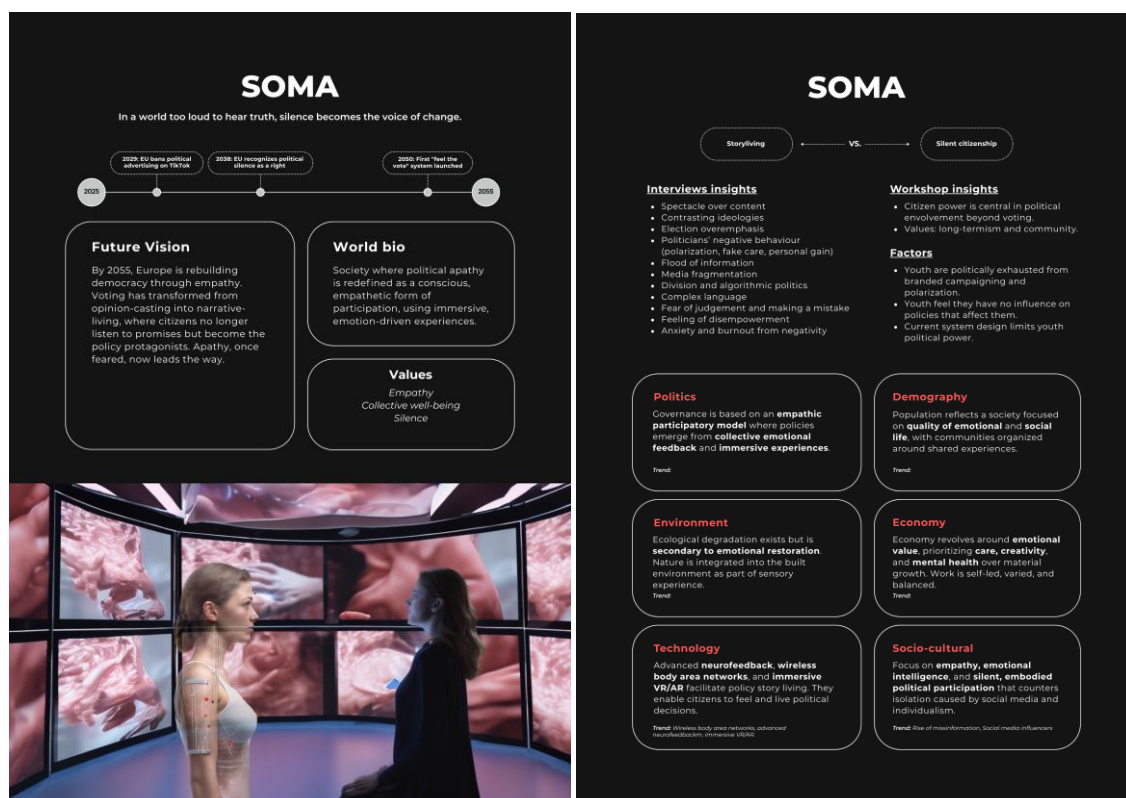


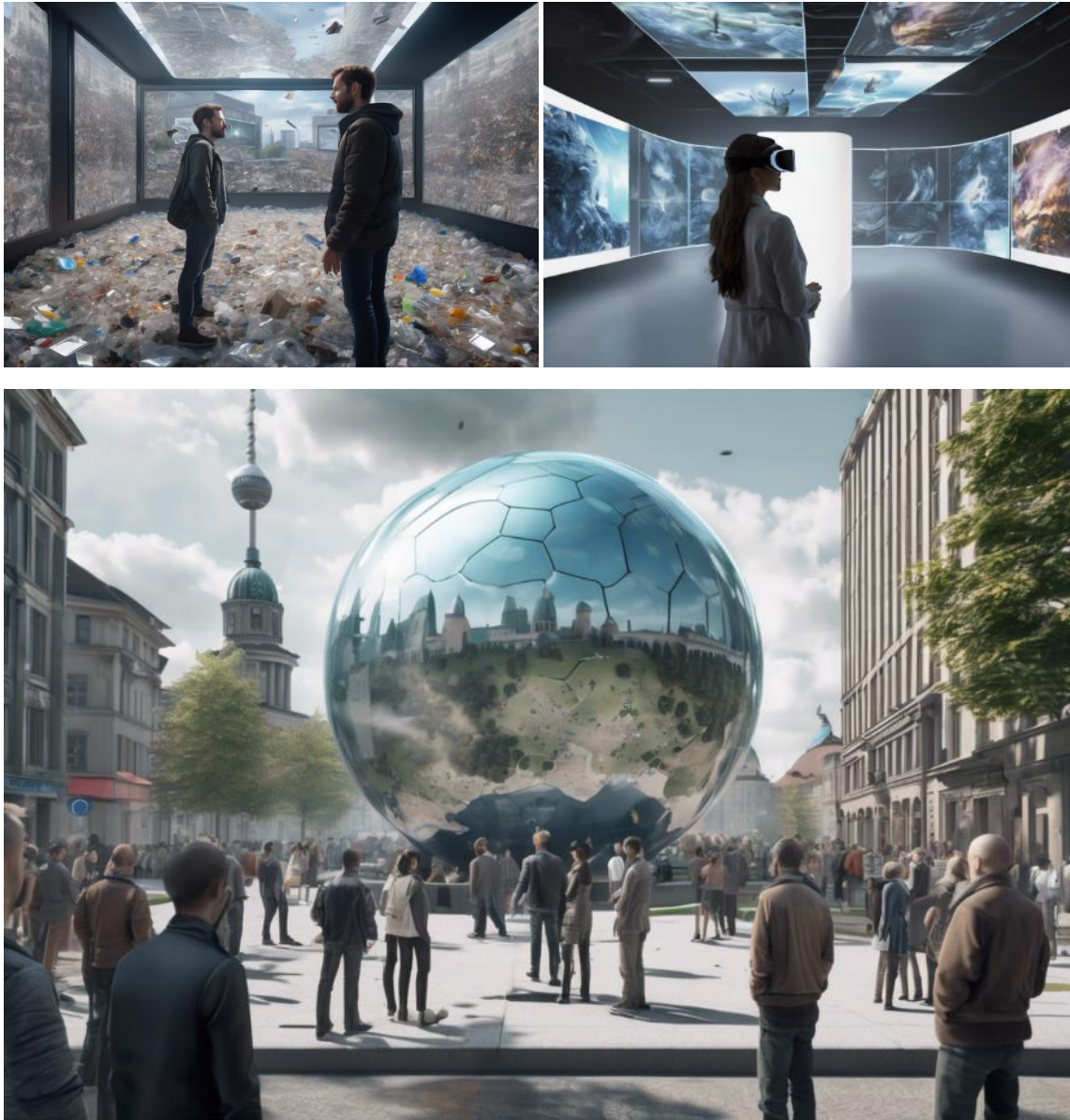
## How the system operates?

- **Citizens chosen their civic mode** every 5 years.
- **Apathy is a calibrated political signal.** Non-voters aren't ignored, instead they're interpreted as system pressure points. This allows pressure of participating to taken of their shoulders and rather engage with politics in a different manner.
- **Accountability flows both ways:** Politicians are transparent, but so are citizens. Everyone leaves a civic trace, visible to others.
- **Decision-making adapts to collective modes:** If abstention (non-voters) spikes, AI governance assistants flag the need for participatory redesign. The system is **self-reflective**, not rigid.

### 7.1.1.1 "SOMA" World

- **Tagline:** *"In a world too loud to hear truth, silence became the voice of change."*
- **World summary:** Europe in 2055, after decades of political disillusionment, misinformation and loud politicians, is **rebuilding democracy through empathy**. Everything fake has taken over the world and as a response society turned to silence. Voting has transformed from opinion-casting into narrative-living, where citizens no longer listen to promises but become the policy protagonists. Apathy, once feared, now leads the way.





### World building blocks

<p><b>Environment:</b> Ecological degradation exists to a certain degree but is a <b>secondary concern to social and emotional restoration</b>. Nature is integrated into the built environment as part of sensory and affective political participation, <b>stimulating emotions toward environment</b> as well.</p>	<p><b>Trends:</b></p>
<p><b>Economy:</b> The economy revolves around emotional and relational value, prioritizing <b>care, creativity, and mental health over material growth</b>. Work is self-led, varied, and</p>	<p><b>Trends:</b></p>

balanced to promote well-being and resist ritualistic, robotic routines.	
<b>Demography:</b> Population dynamics reflect a <b>society focused on quality of emotional and social life</b> , with communities organized around shared experiences. <b>Diversity and inclusion</b> are prioritized.	<b>Trends:</b>
<b>Society/Culture:</b> Social culture centres on empathy, emotional intelligence, and silent, embodied political participation that counters isolation caused by social media and individualism. <b>Relationships, care networks, and shared rituals</b> create resilient social fabrics emphasizing connection over spectacle.	<b>Trends:</b> <i>Rise of misinformation, social media influencers</i>
<b>Technology:</b> Advanced neurofeedback, Haptic technology, Wireless Body Area Networks, and immersive VR/AR tech facilitate policy story living, <b>enabling citizens to feel and live political decisions</b> . Technology mediates silent citizenship, emotional consensus, and <b>embodied participation beyond verbal or textual discourse</b> .	<b>Trends:</b> <i>Wireless body area networks, advanced neurofeedback, immersive VR/AR.</i>
<b>Politics:</b> Governance is based on an empathic participatory model where <b>policies emerge from collective emotional feedback and immersive experiences</b> . Formal voting is supplemented by emotional responses.	<b>Trends:</b>

**Design concept: “The Crystal Ball Concept”**

- **Tagline:** “*Feel policy. Shape futures.*”
- **Description:** An immersive “voting” that shifts political participation from active campaigning to a subtle, empathic process where citizens engage silently through embodied experiences. Instead of casting traditional ballots or attending noisy debates, users immerse themselves in multisensory storyliving environments where they *feel* the impact of policies on communities, ecosystems, and individual lives.
- **System purpose:** To allow citizens to express their political views individually, free from political noise and polarization and permit them to become valuable contributors to them system.

## Election Process: "The Pulse Path"



### Reframing apathy:

- **Before:** Apathy was seen as a failure to care.
- **Now:** Political apathy is no longer seen as indifference but as a valuable form of silent participation.
  - Instead of forcing vocal debate or performative activism, the system recognizes that many citizens prefer to reflect inwardly and connect emotionally rather than argue or campaign.
  - The system respects fluctuating political energy, offering options to participate actively or observe quietly, reducing burnout and enabling a relational form of democracy.



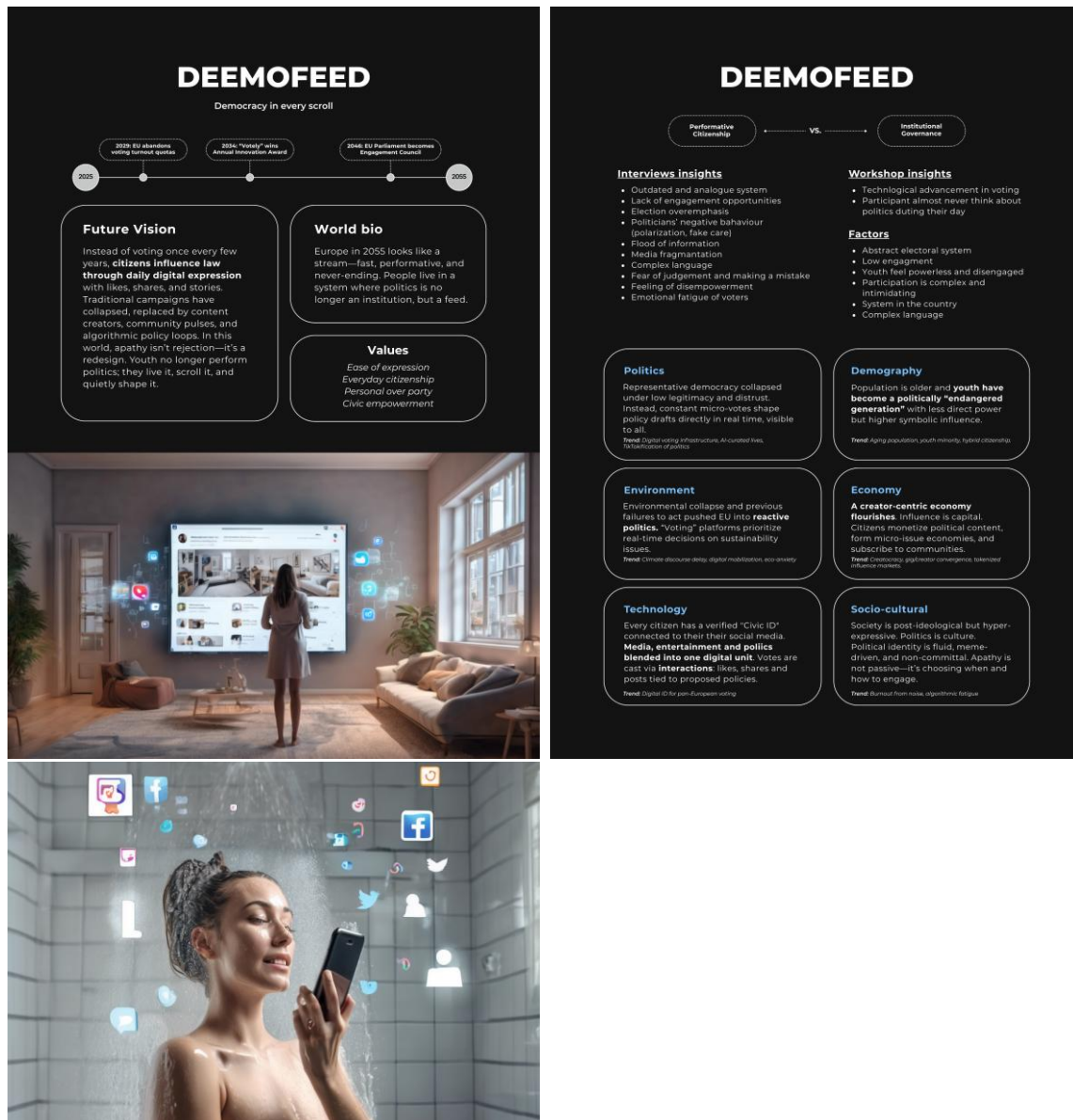
**“The Crystal Ball”** prototype example:



**7.1.1.2 “Demofeed” World**

- **Tagline:** “*Democracy in every scroll.*”
- **World summary:**

Europe in 2055 looks like a stream—fast, performative, and never-ending. People live in a system where politics is no longer an institution, but a feed—voting is continuous, public, and emotionally charged.



## World building blocks

**Politics:** Representative democracy collapsed under low legitimacy and distrust. Instead, **constant micro-votes shape policy drafts directly in real time**, visible to all. Politicians become "Policy facilitators", not decision-makers. **Politics has become a daily routine**, same as brushing teeth, making breakfast or going for a run. Legitimacy is earned through attention, not authority.

**Trend: "Politainment", AI-enhanced social media, digital authoritarianism.**

<p><b>Technology:</b> The feed is everything. Politics, entertainment, commerce, and personal identity all blur on <b>hyper-personalized, AI-curated platforms</b>. Every swipe, like, and scroll is recorded as participation.</p> <p><b>Blockchain ensures transparency;</b> digital world is decentralized. <b>Deepfake detection tools</b> are a common thing and regulated by EU.</p>	<p><b>Trend:</b> <i>Digital voting infrastructure, AI-curated lives, TikTokification of politics, Web 3.0 replacing the internet 2.0.</i></p>
<p><b>Environment:</b> Environmental collapse and previous failures to act pushed EU into <b>reactive politics</b>. “Pulse-Voting” platforms prioritize real-time decisions on sustainability issues. Social virality of environmental issues creates <b>pressure for immediate visible action</b>.</p>	<p><b>Trend:</b> <i>Digital mobilization, eco-anxiety, Climate discourse delay.</i></p>
<p><b>Economy:</b> A <b>creator-centric economy</b>. Influence is capital. Citizens monetize political content, form micro-issue economies, and subscribe to communities rather than parties. <b>Traditional jobs decline;</b> “socio-political creators” rise. Being political is also work.</p>	<p><b>Trend:</b> <i>Creatocracy, gig/creator convergence, tokenized influence markets.</i></p>
<p><b>Society &amp; Culture:</b> Society is post-ideological but <b>hyper-expressive</b>. Politics is culture. <b>Political identity is fluid, meme-driven, and non-committal</b>. Apathy is not passive — it’s choosing <i>when</i> and <i>how</i> to engage. Silence, scrolling, and abstaining are legitimate stances.</p>	<p><b>Trend:</b> <i>Burnout from noise, algorithmic fatigue, digital minimalism.</i></p>
<p><b>Demography:</b> Europe’s population is aging, but <b>youth dominate political influence through online platforms</b>. Traditional civic education has collapsed—TikTok, community Discords, and streamers teach civics now. <b>Youth trust creators more than governments</b>. Migration is digital; digital natives often participate from outside the continent.</p>	<p><b>Trend:</b> <i>Aging population, youth political disillusionment, platform-based learning, hybrid citizenship.</i></p>

**Design concept: “Votely”**

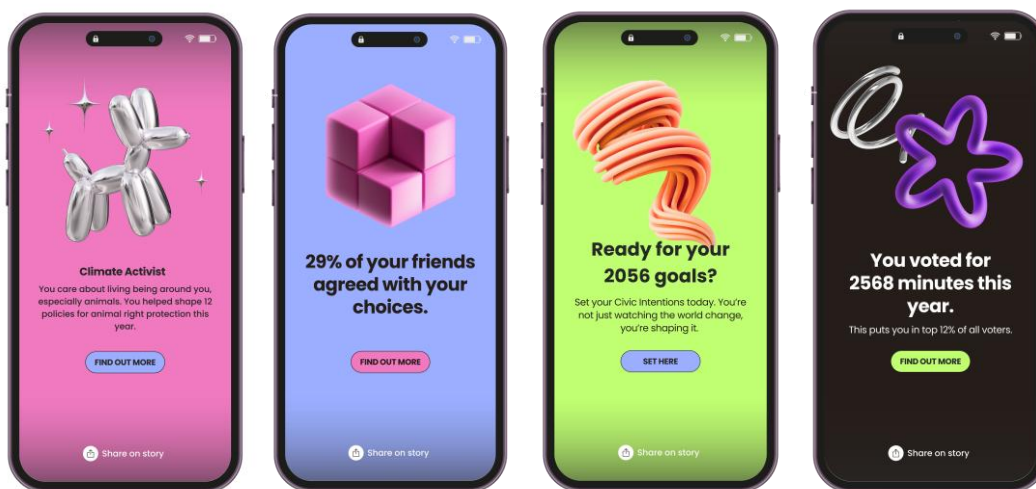
- **Tagline:** *“Every swipe is a stance.”*
- **Description:** **Votely** is a **habit-forming, always-on voting platform** where users—especially youth—engage with bite-sized policy questions daily. Each action boosts their



**Civic Score**, a dynamic measure of their political presence, agency, and influence. Instead of waiting years for elections, **users cast micro-votes every day, building political power gradually and consistently**. There is no more election day, instead voting is constant, contextual, and rewarding.

- **Connection to “Demofeed”**: Political campaigns have collapsed due to user driven engagement overtaking politics. Social media influencers still exist but can’t sway public power directly. Micro-votes from millions shape law *in real time*, rather than people voting on election day. Institutions watch, adapt, and respond based on live dashboards of public sentiment. Politicians’ role is to *interpret, synthesize, and build consensus* from the collective opinion.

“**Votely**” prototype example (inspired by Spotify Wrapped feature):



#### Core mechanics:

- **Daily Voting Prompts**: Every day, users receive a prompt related to a specific clause of a real-time policy discussion (e.g., "Should AI-written content be labelled in political ads?"). They vote with a tap, drag, slider, or emoji—*fast, intuitive, mobile-native*.
- **Unified Feed (ScoreCiti)**: All political prompts, news, social trends, and entertainment are bundled in a single scrollable feed—the **only channel**. No more toggling between apps or being overwhelmed.
- **Live Micro-Legislation Updates**: Users can track how their micro-votes contribute to the shaping of laws. A public dashboard displays “civic momentum” on specific proposals.
- **Civic Streaks & Badges**: Similar to apps like Duolingo, users maintain voting streaks and unlock badges like *Policy Pro*, *Local Legend*, or *Transparency Tracker*.
- **Yearly Civic Wrapped**: Once a year, each user receives their **Civic Wrapped**, which is a personalized summary of:
  - Their voting trends
  - Laws they influenced
  - Demographics they align with
  - A reflection of their evolving political identity

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