



OPEN
EUROPEAN
DIALOGUE

OPEN EUROPEAN DIALOGUE YOUR NETWORK OF POLICYMAKERS

APRÓPOS
Associação de Estudos e Relações Internacionais

IAI
Instituto de Estudios Internacionales

CIDOB
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BARCELONA

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20+ years of building knowledge for policy

G | M | F
The German Marshall Fund
of the United States
STRENGTHENING TRANSATLANTIC COOPERATION

STIFTUNG
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Foundation
Working together for a better world

Robert Bosch
Stiftung

BertelsmannStiftung



JOIN EUROPE'S 1ST PLATFORM FOR POLICYMAKER DIALOGUE

The Open European Dialogue (OED) 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.

OUR MISSION: CHANGE THE WAY POLICYMAKERS TALK

- **IMPROVE** the way European policymakers talk and collaborate
- **CONNECT** policymakers across diverse political backgrounds
- **IDENTIFY** policy areas of shared interest across ideological and geographical borders
- **NAVIGATE** complex policy areas through the sharing of perspectives and best practices
- **UNDERSTAND** the political realities of other European member states

YOUR MEMBERSHIP ENTAILS

- ✓ You commit to take part in one or more meetings per year, together with other policymakers and on the topics of your choice.
- ✓ You agree to be kept in the loop about OED activities including our annual dialogues, workshops, special engagement opportunities, and OED publications.
- ✓ You embrace and respect the OED House Rules of confidentiality, open mindedness, and constructive dialogue.

WHAT WE CAN DO FOR YOU

- ✓ You gain access to a future-thinking space for dialogue exclusively tailored to the needs of policymakers.
- ✓ You benefit from contacts, peer-to-peer insights, as well as expertise from internationally renowned think tanks.
- ✓ You can choose to kick-start your own initiatives and be supported by a dedicated team, whether you want to organize a field trip, be connected to other policymakers, or request some research.



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MAKE IT YOUR OWN

We are a network led by members of parliament. That means that we tailor to your specific needs. Everyone has a different way of using this network to their benefit. Some members just come to learn about specific topics, some start their own initiatives through the network, and others enjoy the recurring open calls and check-ins with their peers. Whatever your preference, we are committed to making this a valuable resource to you, so feel free to let us know what YOU need.

THE NETWORK

At the moment the network counts over 200 active members from over 70 parties and 29 European countries. We aim to represent and engage with diverse voices across the political spectrum. We select profiles for our network that we believe can enrich our exchanges.

Want to know more? Why not ask a member of our Parliamentary Steering Committee?

Carmen Jeitler-Cincelli, Austrian People's Party|Austria Koen Metsu, New Flemish Alliance|Belgium
Yoko Alender, Estonian Reform Party|Estonia Denitsa Simeonova, We Continue the Change|Bulgaria
Jens Zimmermann, Social Democratic Party|Germany Nantia Giannakopoulou, Movement of Change|Greece
Dimitris Keridis, New Democracy|Greece Agnieszka Pomaska, Civic Platform|Poland
Adam Szłapka, Nowoczesna|Poland Miguel Costa Matos, Socialist Party|Portugal
Oana Toiu, Save Romania Union|Romania Brando Benifei, Democratic Party|Italy
Margareta Cederfelt, Moderate Party|Sweden Chrisis Pantelides, Democratic Party|Cyprus

Reach out to our team and we will be happy to connect you.



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I WANT TO JOIN. WHAT NOW?

Please get in contact with one of our recruitment team members. We will be happy to schedule a meeting in order to discuss your membership in the Open European Dialogue.

OUR RECRUITMENT TEAM IS WAITING TO HEAR FROM YOU.



CHIARA ROSSELLI

HEAD OF THE OPEN EUROPEAN DIALOGUE

APROPOS Group

+39 34 81 12 74 03
chiara@aproposgroup.org



RONITH SCHALAST

PROJECT MANAGER OF THE OPEN EUROPEAN DIALOGUE

APROPOS Group

+49 176 80 21 11 33
ronith@aproposgroup.org



TAYLOR KELLY

RECRUITMENT PARTNER FOR FRANCE & BELGIUM

German Marshall Fund of the United States

+ 33 6 49 1 77 92
tkelly@gmfus.org



FEDERICO CASTIGLIONI

RECRUITMENT PARTNER FOR ITALY, CROATIA & SLOVENIA

Istituto Affari Internazionali

+39 06 69768331
f.castiglioni@iai.it



HÉCTOR SÁNCHEZ MARGALEF

RECRUITMENT PARTNER FOR SPAIN & PORTUGAL

Barcelona Centre for International Affairs

+34 93 3026495
hsanchez@cidob.org



ELIZABETH PHOCAS

RECRUITMENT PARTNER FOR GREECE, BULGARIA & CYPRUS

Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy

+30 210 7257122
elizabeth@eliamep.gr



Changing the way policy-makers across Europe talk.



OUR STORY

In 2015, the financial crisis and the sudden influx of people seeking refuge in Europe put a strain on cross-European relations, particularly between those of Germany and Greece. Our partner organizations identified a need for more constructive exchange between policymakers to mitigate political tensions across Europe. The positive impact produced by the first political dialogue experiences designed by our partners – which brought together politicians from across Europe – highlighted a severe and pervasive gap in dialogue among Europe’s policymakers.

The crucial role played by national politicians in shaping the European debate emerged clearly. European politics was being decided as much in the capitals as it was in Brussels. Yet, the effective involvement of national parliaments in the broader European debate remains limited. At the same time, the growing reluctance of one political faction to speak openly to colleagues from across the political and ideological divide, only served to complicate matters further.

The need for better channels for meaningful communication and exchange for national and European politicians to come together and

openly discuss matters of European political relevance, was clear.

Our partner organizations, which include think tanks and foundations from across Europe, acting on their mission as non-partisan public policy organizations dedicated to promoting policy debate and cooperation, decided to join forces and launch the Mercator European Dialogue program in 2015.

This political dialogue pilot project has since established itself as Europe’s first informal dialogue platform for policymakers across countries and political parties, a permanent platform for policymakers across individual European parliaments to connect in an informal and neutral setting.

In 2021, as the platform grew and brought together new partners and supporters, it was renamed to Open European Dialogue. The project’s motto became: “We need to talk!”

That same year it received the recognition of the OECD as a global best-practice for cross-border collaboration and innovation.

Initially launched as a joint initiative between Stiftung Mercator and 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. It has since acquired the support of the King Baudouin Foundation, the Robert Bosch Stiftung and the Bertelsmann Stiftung. As of 2023 the Open European Dialogue is coordinated by the non-profit organization APROPOS, which specializes in process design methods for politics, in collaboration with its partners across Europe.

Today, 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.



OED HOUSE RULES

We invite you to join a different kind of political conversation:

FOSTER A SAFE & BRAVE SPACE

The OED is a safe space—feel free to **speak your mind**, you will not be quoted directly. The OED is a brave space—we encourage you to **take risks** and **challenge your own comfort zone**.

ADOPT A SPIRIT OF ENQUIRY

The OED invites you to adopt a spirit of enquiry and engage in more explorative thinking, **spending more time on the diagnosis of a problem**—asking yourself and others “why and how”—rather than jumping to a solution.

EMBRACE & RESPECT DIVERSITY

The OED embraces diversity and will ensure that all political perspectives are treated with respect, and we ask you to do the same. We invite you to proactively **engage with political points of view that are different** from your own and **approach controversy with civility**.

PRACTICE ACTIVE LISTENING

The OED is as much about talking as it is about listening. We ask you to make an effort to **truly listen to your colleagues rather than trying to convince them** of your point of view. Try to listen to understand rather than to counter-react or contradict.

A photograph of two people, a man on the left and a woman on the right, both smiling and pointing towards the camera. The man is wearing a light blue and white checkered button-down shirt. The woman has short blonde hair, wears glasses, a red patterned cardigan over a white blouse, and a name tag that says 'PETRA'. The background is blurred, showing some orange and green elements.

The Open European Dialogue provides policymakers with tools to better understand political challenges and perspectives in Europe.



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OUR FORMATS

ALL OUR ACTIVITIES

- ✔ CAN BE INITIATED BY ONE OR MORE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT
- ✔ ARE RESERVED TO OED MEMBERS
- ✔ RESPECT OED HOUSE RULES

IN PERSON

ANNUAL DIALOGUE

*bringing policymakers together to discuss
the big political questions of our time*

DURATION	2.5 days
PARTICIPANTS	40+
TOPIC	Big picture European political challenges
FORMAT	Ad-hoc
REGISTRATION	Necessary

The Annual Dialogue is an opportunity for policymakers from across Europe to come together across party lines and exchange perspectives on today's big-picture political challenges. This unique format allows you, as a member of parliament, to engage in peer-to-peer conversations with your colleagues and gain first-hand insights into the political realities of different member states across Europe. You will be given a chance to explore key policy challenges and best practices, informed by the insights of leading experts, and do so in a protected and trusting environment.

POLICY WORKSHOPS

digging deeper into a specific policy challenge

DURATION	1.5 days
PARTICIPANTS	10–15+
TOPIC	Pre-identified policy or political challenge
FORMAT	Flexible, usually involving a mixture of expert input and participatory exchange
REGISTRATION	Necessary

Our policy workshops bring together a selected group of policymakers with a joint interest in deepening their understanding of a specific policy or political challenge. The objective of these workshops is for participants to be able to gather information and exchange political views and best practices. The format of these workshops is flexible as each exchange is carefully designed to reflect the purpose and topic at hand. These workshops can take the form of policy briefings, scenario exercises, fact-finding missions and field-trips, or a more open-agenda format.



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ONLINE

MP OPEN CALLS

your direct line to Europe's policymakers

DURATION	60 minutes every month
PARTICIPANTS	5–10
TOPIC	Open-agenda
FORMAT	Open discussion and break-out rooms
REGISTRATION	Not necessary

Open calls are an opportunity to connect informally and on a regular basis, with other members of parliament (MPs) in the network. The OED will allow you to check in with your peers for one hour every month. We will act as hosts and facilitators, but it is the participants that will bring their own questions and topics to the table. The open-agenda format provides maximum flexibility: no registration is required, topic suggestions can be made spontaneously, and different topics can be discussed by different sub-groups of MPs as the conversation format will adapt to the number of people and topics on the call.

OED120

policymakers deep dive into a critical topic with the help of external expertise

DURATION	120 minutes
PARTICIPANTS	10–15
TOPIC	Dig deeper into a specific topic
FORMAT	Expert input and guided discussions
REGISTRATION	Necessary—limited spots available

The OED120 format allows parliamentarians to receive a concise briefing, ask questions to an expert and discuss with their colleagues a narrowly defined topic during a 120-minute video call. The OED provides professional facilitation to extract the most value out of the discussions. Policymakers get the chance to share their own perspectives with their colleagues, while having topic expertise on hand for questions and clarifications. Topics are chosen as they emerge through the network as ripe for more in-depth discussion. Additionally, members of the network, or OED researchers and experts, can suggest topics. Network members can initiate these calls, as well as volunteer their own expertise on a topic of their choosing.



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ONLINE

OED POLICY SPRINT

a focused working-group for policymakers to work together on solutions

DURATION	3–4 meetings of 90/120 minutes
PARTICIPANTS	5–10
TOPIC	Together with a group of parliamentarians, this is predefined, and a specific problem statement is identified
FORMAT	Design sprint methodology for collaborative problem-solving
REGISTRATION	Necessary, engages the participant for the whole series of meetings—limited spots available

Following the steps of the design sprint methodology, a group of committed members of parliament (MPs) tackles one topic, from problem exploration to working out a feasible way forward, with a limited number of highly focused meetings. This approach is perfectly suited for groups that have a rough idea of a specific problem area they are thoroughly invested in addressing and need a guided process through which to formulate a common and impactful response. This approach is light on expert input and relies on MPs' initiative and ongoing contribution to pull through from start to finish.

CLIMATE CHANGE

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY

NEW DYNAMIC, SUSTAINABLE
GROWTH MODEL

Your voice matters to us. Please get in touch with our team.

MIGRATION POLICY
#INTEGRATION

MIGRATION AND REFUGEES AS
AN OPPORTUNITY

REFUGEE CRISIS

JOINING FORCES IN THE OPEN EUROPEAN DIALOGUE



Stiftung Mercator is a private and independent foundation. Through its work it strives for a society characterized by openness to the world, solidarity and equal opportunities. In this context it concentrates on strengthening Europe; increasing the educational success of disadvantaged children and young people, especially those of migrant origin; driving forward climate change mitigation and promoting science and the humanities. Stiftung Mercator symbolizes the connection between academic expertise and practical project experience. One of Germany's leading foundations, it is active both nationally and internationally. Stiftung Mercator feels a strong sense of loyalty to the Ruhr region, the home of the founding family and the foundation's headquarters.



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. Since it was established in 1964, the Robert Bosch Stiftung has invested around 1.8 billion euros in charitable work.



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.



ELIAMEP is an independent, non-profit and policy-oriented research and training institute. It neither expresses, nor represents, any specific political party view. It is only devoted to the right of free and well-documented discourse. 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 APROPOS Group is a non-profit, politically neutral think tank. It operates in the field of democratic innovation and specializes in the development and implementation of process design methods for the political sphere. We believe in the impact that process design can have on improving political communication and cooperation, because we have seen the results first hand. To this end, we design and carry out meetings with policymakers, facilitate conversations, train practitioners, and publish research on political processes to advance the dialogue and collaborative capacities that will be vital for the decades of comprehensive societal changes ahead of us.



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 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. GMF also has smaller representations in Bratislava, Turin, and Stockholm.



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.



The Bertelsmann Stiftung is an independent, private operating German foundation which engages in evidence-based nonprofit activities. Each day, some 360 employees aim to strengthen society, help people achieve their full potential, and develop the systems needed to achieve those goals. The foundation's fields of activity are Democracy & Social Cohesion, Digitalization & the Common Good, Education & The Next Generation, Europe's Future, Health and Sustainable Social Market Economies. In its work on EU-affairs the Bertelsmann Stiftung advocates for a more sovereign and united Europe that helps shape the world of tomorrow based on its values. To this effect, it provides background, analysis and insights on its website globaleurope.eu.



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