



European Citizens' Panel

How to develop desirable and fair virtual worlds?

#VirtualWorldsEU

#DigitalEU

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The citizens' perspective

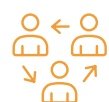
Virtual worlds bring both unprecedented **opportunities** in many sectors and **risks** that need to be addressed.

The Commission convened a Citizens' Panel to **deliberate and make recommendations** on actions to be taken by Member States, citizens and public and private stakeholders, **to guide the development of desirable and fair digital environments** in emerging virtual worlds based on the [Declaration on European Digital Rights and Principles](#).

What are the Citizens' Panels?

Citizens' Panels are now **part of the Commission's policymaking** in certain key areas, as announced by President von der Leyen on the occasion of her [State of the Union Address on 14 September 2022](#).

The Panel on virtual world gathered **140 citizens** from the **27 Member States**, **randomly selected** and **reflecting the EU diversity**, with **one third of young people aged 16-25**.



What do citizens recommend?

They called for a **broad approach** and a close collaboration across all relevant stakeholders, including academic, business and legislative actors.

The Citizens' Panel put forward **23 recommendations** based on **8 principles** that should guide the development of human-centric virtual worlds.

1 Freedom of choice

The use of Virtual Worlds is a free choice for individuals – without disadvantages for those who are not participating.

2 Sustainability

The set-up and use of Virtual Worlds is environmental-friendly.

3 Human centred

Technological development and regulation of Virtual Worlds are serving and respecting the needs, rights and expectations of users

4 Health

Physical and mental human health as a fundamental pillar for the development and use of Virtual Worlds.

5 Education & literacy

Education, awareness-raising and skills on how to use Virtual Worlds are put in the centre of Virtual Worlds' development.

6 Safety & security

European citizens need to be kept safe and secure, including the protection of data and preventing manipulation and theft.

7 Transparency

Transparent regulations are protecting people, their personal data, and psychological and physical health.

The use of data (by third parties) is transparent.

8 Inclusion

Equal accessibility for all citizens is granted – regardless of age, income, skills, technological availability, country, etc.





Citizens recommend actions, among others, to ensure:

- **Safety and security** with user-friendly data consent forms
- **Digital literacy** of citizens
- Use of **green energy** in the development process
- Better insights on the impact of virtual worlds on **health**

What's next?

The Citizens' Report from the Panel with the full set of recommendations is published together with the Commission's Communication on Web 4.0 and virtual worlds.

The outcome of the Citizens' Panel will continue to **support the overarching work of the Commission** related to **emerging virtual worlds**.

The Commission proposes a number of **actions responding to citizens' concerns**, such as:

- A **Citizen Toolbox** to help better understand how to manage their virtual identities, their virtual creations, their virtual assets and their data
- Reinforce **citizen empowerment** in virtual worlds, including for **children**
- Support **digital skills development**, particularly for women and girls
- Building a **talent pool of virtual world specialists**
- Support **research** on on people's **health and well-being**

Citizens highlight **points for further consideration** such as reinforcing personal **data security**.

The work carried out by citizens is a precious **source of inspiration and relevant input** for the years to come and will feed into its work and policy proposals related to emerging virtual worlds.