



European
Commission



European Citizens Panel
virtual worlds
Have Your Say

#VirtualWorldsEU

#DigitalEU

About this **kit**

Welcome to the European Citizens Panel on Virtual Worlds!

First of all, we would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in this process. You, along with 149 other citizens from across the European Union, are about to embark on a real adventure, a citizens' deliberation process focused on Virtual Worlds.

To help you better understand this process, we have structured this information kit into five sections:

1. **INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW GENERATION OF EUROPEAN CITIZENS' PANELS** 4
Citizens' panels are a democratic innovation that puts citizens at the centre of public policymaking. In this section, we give you a brief overview of how such processes work.
2. **THE REMIT: WHAT WILL I BE WORKING ON?** 6
The European Commission has called you together to complete a specific task: here's the remit that you are invited to fulfil.
3. **THE TOPIC: WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT VIRTUAL WORLDS?** 8
You do not need to be or become an expert to contribute meaningfully to the citizens' panel, but it is important that you know some basic information on the topic. In this section, you will learn about the main challenges and opportunities accompanying the development of virtual worlds.
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1. Introduction to the new generation of European citizens' panels

What are the European citizens' panels?

In the citizens' panels of the European Commission, randomly selected citizens from all 27 EU Member States come together to discuss key forthcoming proposals at the European level. Based on these transnational interactions, citizens make recommendations that the European Commission will take into consideration when defining its political goals and concrete policies.

In 2021-22, the European Union convened 4 panels during the Conference on the Future of Europe. There, 800 randomly selected citizens gathered in four European Citizens' Panels, each meeting for three sessions. Participants shared

- in their own language - their perspectives and ideas on the topics of economy, social justice, jobs, education, culture, youth, sports, digital transformation, EU democracy, values, security, rule of law, climate change, health, migration, and the EU's role in the world. At the end of the panels, the citizens formulated 178 recommendations, which later resulted in 49 proposals and more than 300 associated measures.

A new generation of citizens' panels

The Conference's European Panels were a ground-breaking democratic exercise at the European level, which put citizens at the centre of shaping the future of the European Union.



The citizens who participated in the Conference called for similar, more frequent opportunities to participate in European policymaking in the future. In response, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, announced a new generation of citizens' panels to consult randomly selected citizens on certain key proposals at the European level. The citizens' panels that were central to the Conference (on the Future of Europe) are now a regular feature of our democratic life, as she stated in her State of the Union address in September 2022.

The new generation of citizens' panels aims to build on the previous experiences. Three new panels were announced, which will meet for three sessions each. This time, the citizens' panels will deal with more concrete policy topics, focusing on food waste, virtual worlds, and learning mobility. The participants will be able to communicate in their own languages with each other, thanks to the help of interpreters.

How do the citizens' panels work?

Each panel is made up of 150 randomly selected citizens from all EU Member States, of which one-third are younger than 26 years, to represent the future generations of Europe.

The citizens' panel combines collaborative work in small groups (of around 12 people) with plenary work (all 150 participants together).

To carry out this work, panellists will be supported by a facilitation team. This team is made up of experts in making group work more dynamic, to get the best out of each individual and of the group as a whole. They will also provide citizens with a range of tools for collaborative work and collective decision-making.

As a panellist, it is important that you understand that this process is not intended to turn you into an expert on the topic. You will gain basic knowledge on the subject and, based on your own values and life experiences, you will be able to make recommendations.

The citizens' panel on Virtual Worlds

As you already know, you are a panellist on the Panel 2 on Virtual Worlds. Other citizens have been selected for panel 1 and 3, which deal with other topics.

In this panel, you will meet for three sessions. Two sessions will take place in person (in Brussels) and one session will be conducted virtually (online):

- **Session 1:**
24th-26th February (onsite in Brussels)
- **Session 2:** 10th-12nd March (online)
- **Session 3:**
21st-23rd April (onsite in Brussels)

2. The Remit:

What is the topic I will be working on?

We are getting more and more used to interacting with digital environments. Until now, this interaction has taken place through a screen. But a new development, broadly called “metaverse”, is soon to offer a new kind of online experience through “virtual”, “mixed” or “augmented” reality in new “Virtual Worlds”.

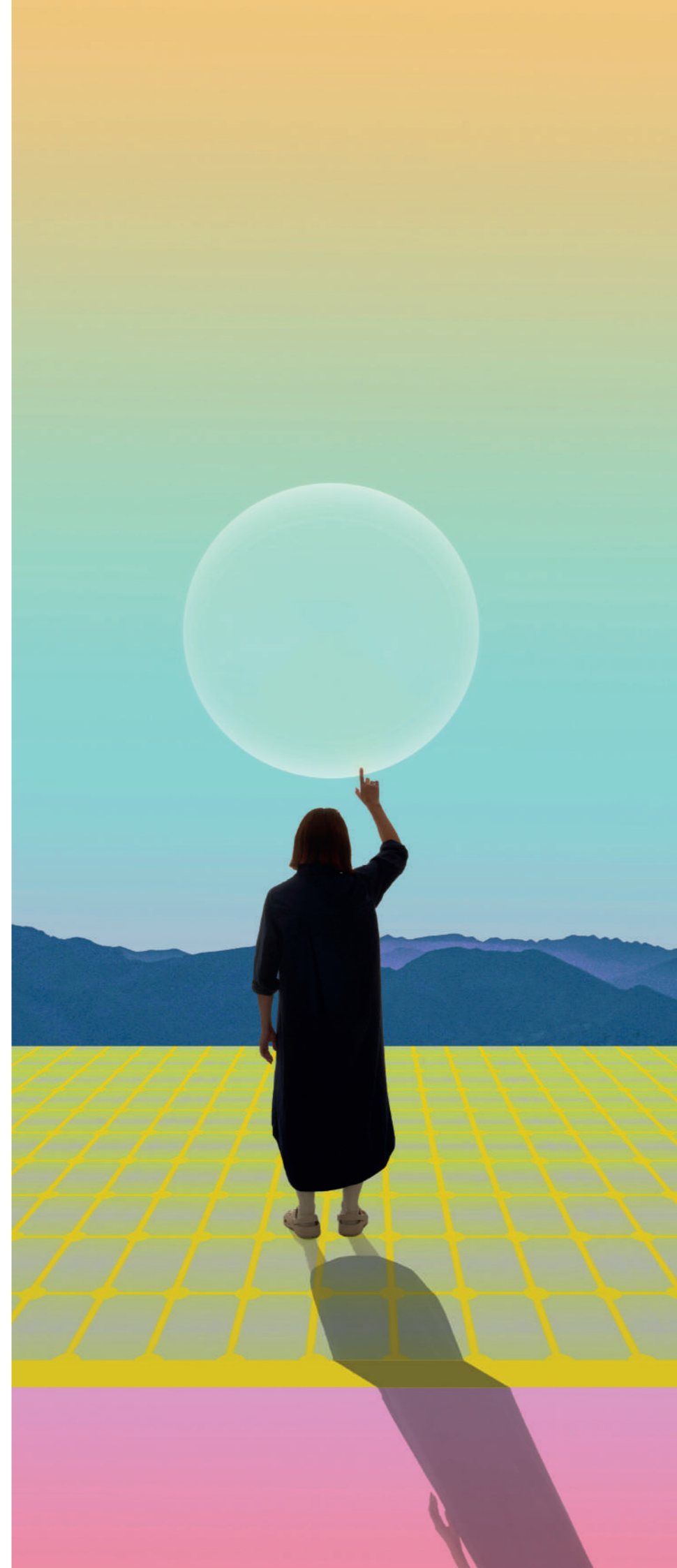
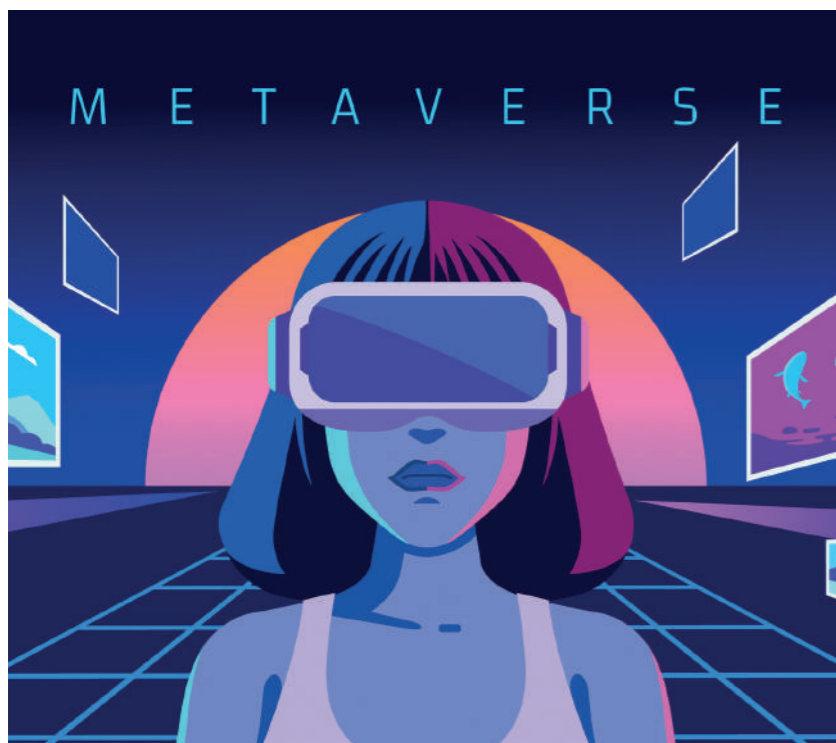
Many people believe that virtual worlds, also referred to as metaverses, might be a change comparable to the appearance of the internet and will transform the way we work and engage with each other in the future. In the last couple of years – and particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic – numerous public and private actors have been investing massively in these so-called “extended and augmented realities”, speeding up changes in our workplaces and habits. Despite this increased attention, such a transformation will not happen suddenly. Virtual Worlds will take many years to develop into a high-quality, realistic digital environment, and there is no clear picture yet of what metaverses could and should become.

The EU and its Members States are committed to harness the potential of this transformation, understand its opportunities, but also the risks and challenges it poses, while safeguarding the rights of European citizens. The European Commission has therefore decided to convene a citizens’ panel with the clear objective of inviting its participants to answer the following question:

What vision, principles, and actions should guide the development of desirable and fair virtual worlds?

In the first session, you will build a shared vision of what desirable and fair virtual worlds should be like. With the support of external speakers, you will dive deeper into understanding the topic, the context for the discussion, as well as the challenges that we are currently facing. Importantly, you will have the opportunity to experience virtual reality directly yourself, and to explore its different uses, past, present, and future, in our everyday lives.

In the second session, you will build on the shared vision from session 1 to identify, discuss and prioritise values and principles that should guide the development of virtual worlds and start exploring fields of actions to make this vision a reality. It will be crucial here to pay extra attention to certain trade-offs between principles, sectors and/or target groups and to keep in mind the different uses of virtual reality in our everyday lives. We will invite many actors of the field, whose input will be important to give you a large scope of perspectives and information on the topic. This session will take place ‘online’ on a virtual reality platform: the goal is to start formulating first ideas for recommendations on virtual worlds, while experiencing it.



In the third and final session, you will turn the ideas into concrete recommendations and develop a catalogue of preferred actions towards the development of desirable virtual worlds, through a focus on guiding principles and use cases.

Over the course of this panel, you will experience virtual reality and its different uses in daily life, and receive enough information to discuss the possible impact, benefits and trade-offs, of the metaverse and virtual worlds on our everyday lives – for work, health, education, leisure, shopping, entertainment, politics, etc. – as well as the role of key public and private players, within and outside the EU, in this transformation.

The expected outcome of the panel is a set of guiding principles and actions for the development of virtual worlds in the EU, based on your experiences, perceptions, and wishes for the future. It will take the form of recommendations addressed to the European Commission to feed into an initiative on the topic.

3. The topic: What do I need to know about metaverses?

Now that you know a bit more about the process, let's focus on the topic itself. We put together this brief section to help you enter this fascinating and vast topic. Of course, we cannot cover every aspect in a few pages, and you will receive more detailed information throughout the panel.

What are metaverses?
What is augmented reality?
What is extended reality?

The first person to introduce the term metaverse is the science fiction author Neil Stephenson, in his 1992 novel Snowcrash. Thirty years later, we now hear the words “metaverses” and “virtual worlds” more and more as they begin to spring up everywhere. However, there is no single and agreed definition about what they are! That is why it is so interesting to have you involved in the panel, because we need your help to steer the development of metaverses to make sure they are fair, safe and user-friendly for Europeans.

Currently, virtual worlds are used mostly in industries such as automotive- and aerospace, as well as online gaming and entertainment, where the senses of vision and hearing are solicited in an increasingly realistic and sophisticated digital environment. In the future, the immersive quality of virtual worlds will be improved by involving other senses like taste, smell, and touch. Further, the use of this technology will be extended to other fields of society such as education, health, learning, work, culture, etc.

In comparison to virtual worlds, the word “metaverse” usually takes a broader scope. First,

it considers how virtual worlds can be connected to one another and become a network of virtual worlds. That is, how they might behave like the Internet, in which your computer connects with other computers. Metaverses also takes into account situations in which a digital layer is added to our physical reality. Maybe you know the successful augmented reality game, Pokemon Go, where you see animated characters walking down the street via your mobile phone.

What is so special about metaverses?

Virtual worlds or metaverses are different from existing digital environments in three important ways:

1. They are more immersive

Virtual reality (VR) blends the physical world with virtual worlds, and fully immerses users in a completely different world that can trigger a strong, physical illusion that you are in a ‘real’ space with others: you do not ‘go’ to virtual worlds, you ‘step into’ them. In future virtual worlds you would be able to smell the perfume in a perfume shop for example or feel the touch of an object: that is what immersion is about – using your senses enhancing the experience. In this way, it will be possible, for example, to attend events, shop, and



work in different virtual worlds. These activities will be more instinctive and closer to our physical experiences: research has shown that augmented, mixed and virtual reality have a strong impact on our brain, emotions and even hormone levels.

2. They are more interactive

The blending of digital elements upon the physical world creates a new set of possible interactions for people. Not only for entertainment purposes, but also to work together, develop artistic creativity, teleport your avatar to another place, conduct simulations of medical interventions, cultural preservation, environmental protection or disaster prevention, and a lot more.

3. Many of them are persistent

they cannot be stopped or put on hold, existing even if you do not interact with them. They go on running without you. This makes it very different from a digital experience which starts and ends with your interaction, like Zoom calls, computer games or theatre performances for example.

In a nutshell, these experiences are like **being IN the internet** and not only ON the internet.

Who is steering this development?

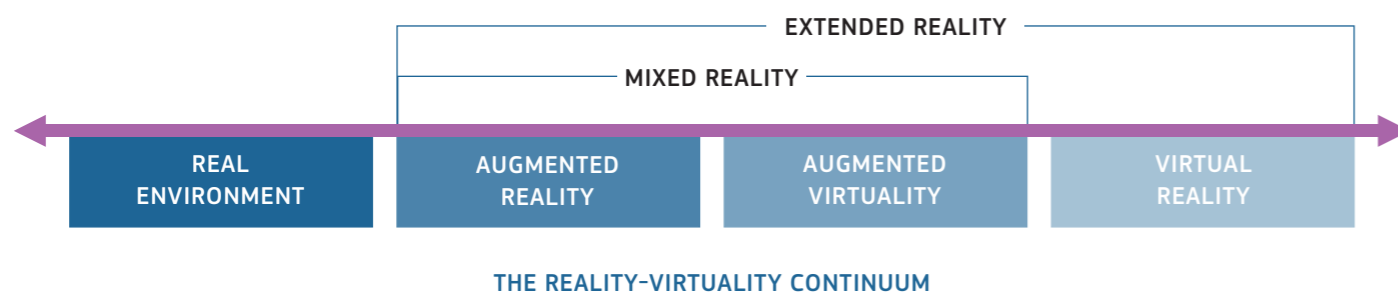
The gaming industry has been a frontrunner, and virtual reality is already widely used in the gaming world. With the global metaverse market expected to grow from roughly €36 billion in 2021 to almost €900 billions by 2030, global tech giants and the telecommunication industry

have a direct economic and strategic interest in virtual worlds, but many other industries are likely to use virtual worlds for their work, including cultural, education, and health sectors.

Companies particularly in North America and East and South East Asia – are at the cutting edge of the development of virtual worlds – aim to enjoy first-mover advantage. The EU needs to steer the development of virtual worlds to make sure they are fair, safe and user-friendly for Europeans. Europe is already a strong contender in the research and innovation of so called “middleware” and “software” with many high-tech small and medium enterprises (SMEs), as well as larger tech companies. Europe also has a competitive advantage on content with a large cultural and language diversity, alongside a wealth of skilled artists and creators who are essential for building appealing realistic virtual worlds and environments, while balancing the relation between company interest and citizen rights.

What are the potential impacts of virtual worlds on European society?

Many experts believe that virtual worlds are going to be “the next Internet”: we should not underestimate how it might transform our ways of working, learning, enjoying culture, accessing public services, and more broadly, how we engage with each other. As such, virtual worlds will have an impact on European society at large: this comes with opportunities but also a number of risks.



What benefits can we expect?

How many times did you buy clothes online and sent them back frustrated? Imagine that before ordering you can try the outfit virtually and see how it exactly fits your body shape? If you don't like the cut of the trousers, you could try another one and only order it then. This is one example of the many opportunities that virtual reality can offer. Another example are the new ways that would allow people to work across both virtual worlds and physical locations, irrespective of where they work from. The full range of opportunities that metaverses could provide for our industries, health systems, education systems, or for governments to engage with their citizens will continuously develop over time. Studies have shown that the Extended Reality sector alone could create up to 800,000 new jobs in Europe by 2025. There is also great potential for considerable time-savings, and we all need time for a better work-life balance. Virtual worlds could have the potential to further inclusion. Below are some examples taken from a recent study¹:

HEALTHCARE - Virtual worlds will help with faster and more accurate diagnoses as well as therapeutic treatments. In the Netherlands, for example, several VR applications have been used in the mental healthcare sector to provide cognitive behavioural therapy, with medical insurers covering at least part of the costs. Ahead of complex surgical interventions, VR can help surgeons prepare for the necessary procedure, enabling them to study organs' three-dimensional models.

EDUCATION - These technologies can be used to increase the efficiency of training at lower cost and producing better results in areas such as soft skills training. For example, it is used as a training tool in classrooms and enables pupils to go on virtual excursions. Foreign language learning is another area which is rapidly gaining ground in the virtual world. Using metaverses when studying has proven that memory retention increases². If you could visualise a complex assignment without being afraid of making mistakes, or even immerse yourself in a virtual world to help you focus when studying for an exam, would you be interested?

ART AND DESIGN - Users immerse in a virtual world of museums, galleries, and archives where they experience the feeling of being in an actual museum, viewing the exhibition in a realistic way. Architects also use virtual worlds to walk around inside virtual 3D buildings, gaining a realistic impression of their structure and floorplan, furniture, decorations and even how the shadows change depending on the time of day.

¹: Extended Reality: Opportunities, Success Stories and Challenges (Health, Education), which are also valid for virtual worlds

²: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10055-018-0363-2>

LOGISTICS, ENGINEERING, AND MANUFACTURING - Companies will be able to train staff all over the world and simultaneously in the practical use of tools without risk of injuries. For example, VR is an inexpensive and safe way to prepare drilling platform workers and fighter jet pilots for their high-cost, high-risk work. Companies will be able to test prototypes of production lines or complex architectural structures using a digital twin of the process to detect potential errors before switching on new features, thus reducing time and cost.

SOCIAL INCLUSION - In virtual worlds, we are free to create, live and meet others through a digital alter ego - an avatar. An avatar represents us in the digital worlds: it can be of a different gender or race, with or without disabilities, human or not. The virtual worlds are therefore said to be more inclusive than the physical or 2D digital environment. Not only can they offer people the opportunity to redefine their identity free of social and physical burdens, but they can also be powerful tools to let people experience what life in other people's positions can be: for example, in order to let people experience what life is like for Syrian refugees, the United Nations launched the VR documentary Clouds over Sidra.

SPORTS AND REHABILITATION are other areas that are important in virtual worlds. During the lockdown for COVID-19 many people joined virtual gym class, such as cycling groups where they could take part in training sessions or competitions online, while chatting with their friends. Rehabilitation has long been a research subject within virtual worlds. Being with likeminded in a virtual world while you exercise is much more motivating than exercising alone. The virtual worlds also help tracking your progress.



On top, new risks may appear because of the immersive nature of metaverses: what about the **physical and psychological consequences** of virtual relations at work, at school, and outside it? Can we get addicted to it, or lose touch with reality? More research is still needed to assess the long-term consequences of VR use on our mind and our body. An **EU-funded research project** has showed that spending too much time in virtual worlds can alter our perceptions of time, speeding it up, but also cause higher heart rates⁵. At the same time, virtual reality would lead to higher level of emotional engagement, especially compared to "2D" digital reality.

What is already in place in terms of policy?

The Digital Decade

The European Union has already taken a certain number of measures, in the field of data protection and fundamental rights, digital services and industrial policy to accompany the development of new technologies in the EU. In particular, the European Commission has set targets to build up Europe's resistance, as well as empowering businesses and people in a human-centred, sustainable and more prosperous digital future. This initiative is called **The Digital Decade 2030**, and sets up concrete targets for digital skills, the digital transformation of businesses, digital infrastructures, and the digitalisation of public services in all 27 Member States. If you would like to know more, here are some important EU legislations that are also relevant for your work:

1. The **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**, which protects individuals right to decide what happens with their own online data.
2. The **Digital Services Act (DSA)** and **Digital Markets Act (DMA)** aims to create a safer digital space where fundamental rights of users are protected (DSA) and to establish a level playing field for Europe's businesses (DMA). The DSA is one of the most recent actions taken by the European Commission: by 17 February 2023, large social platforms will have to report to the European Commission how many active users they have in the EU, and by September 2023, assess the risks their services may pose to society or face sanctions.
3. The upcoming **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Act** will aim to ensure that AI systems placed on EU markets are safe and respect existing laws on fundamental rights and EU values.

What are the potential pitfalls?

Taking all these use cases into account, as well as the immersive and intimate nature of virtual reality, virtual worlds or metaverses raise important risks to democracy with sophisticated deep-fakes in politics and echo-chambers, new physical and mental risks, as well as the risk of reinforcing ethical and **socio-economic** challenges which already exist in the 2D digital sphere, notably the digital divide and the isolation of the less tech-savvy and the less wealthy amongst us³.

Virtual worlds can also constitute a new space for illegal activities or be a grey area on **legal and ethical issues**⁴, and this comes with important risks to our fundamental human rights, such as grooming or sexual assault, abuse of children and other vulnerable people, deadly challenges, stalking and cyberbullying, defamation and disinformation, the manipulation of elections, the promoting of eating disorder habits, the use of platforms to spy on reporters, biases against a specific appearance or gender, against minorities, and cybercrime, including fraud⁵. These threats already exist in the 2D digital sphere but may become even more pronounced in metaverses.

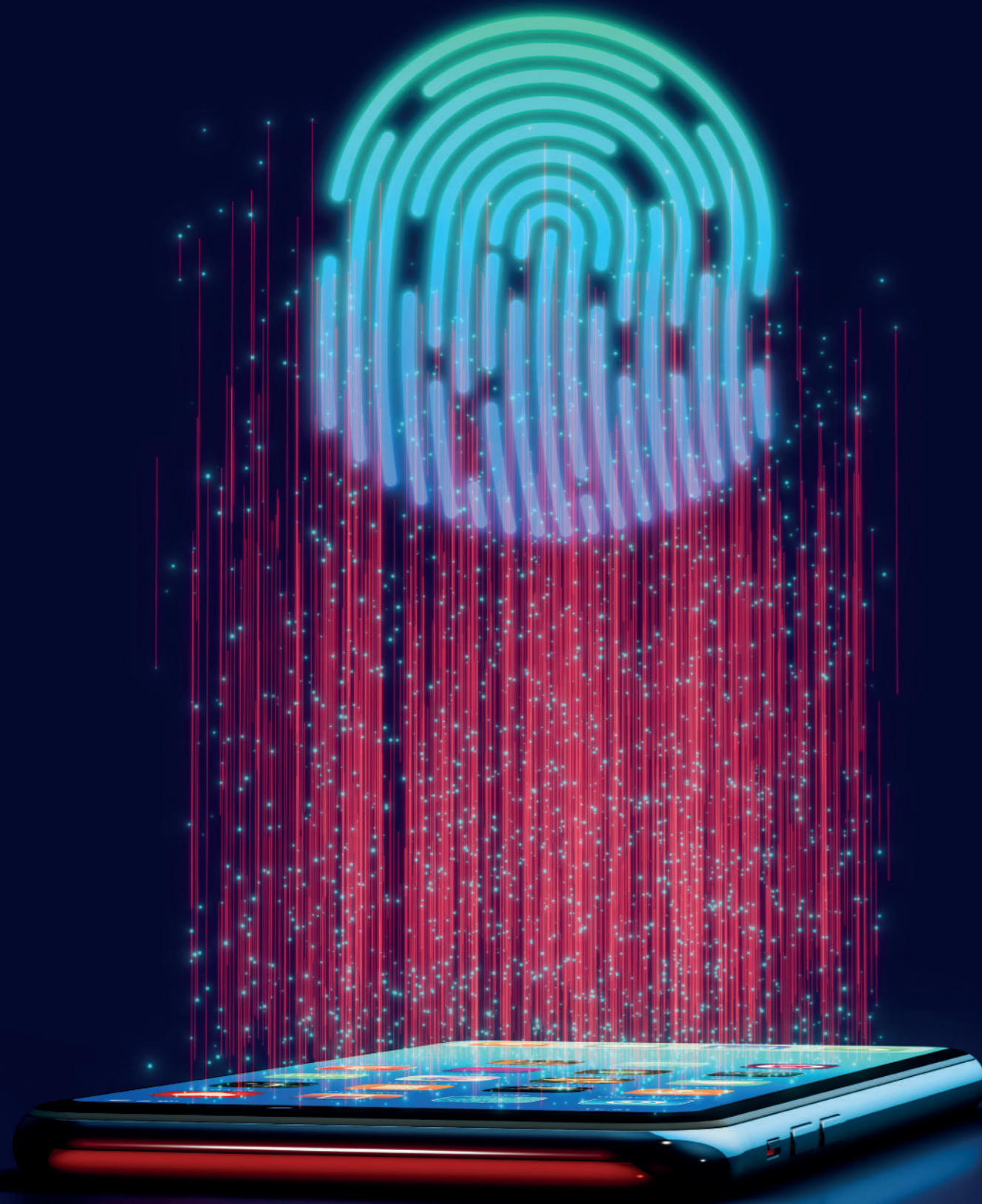
As tech giants invest massively in this new technology, we also need to be aware of the risks of **abuse of power** by a small number of major actors, who could become future gatekeepers of virtual worlds, shutting out SMEs from this emerging market. This also poses risks for the protection of our personal data, the freedom and openness of virtual worlds, but also open virtual spaces to targeted advertising that keys into a person's desires, preferences and choices on a subconscious level.

³: <https://www.rathenau.nl/en/digitalisering/responsible-vr>

⁴: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/Policing%20in%20the%20metaverse%20-%20what%20law%20enforcement%20needs%20to%20know.pdf>

⁵: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/people-technologies-infrastructure-europes-plan-thrive-thierry-breton/>

⁶: <https://virtualltimes-h2020.eu/>



The EU digital rights and principles framework

“The signature of the European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles reflects our shared goal of a digital transformation that puts people first. The rights put forward in our Declaration are guaranteed for everybody in the EU, online as they are offline. And the digital principles enshrined in the Declaration will guide us in our work on all new initiatives.”

Ursula von der Leyen,
President of the European Commission

Since December 2022, the EU is equipped with the [European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles](#)⁷. This declaration presents the EU’s commitment to a secure, safe, and sustainable digital transformation and should help guide your work during the Panel. The digital rights and principles outlined in the declaration complement existing rights and EU principles, such as those rooted in the EU treaties, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, and data protection and privacy legislation (GDPR). They provide a reference framework for Europeans on their digital rights, as well as guidance for EU Member States and for companies to reach the objectives of the [Digital Decade 2030](#). They are intended to help everyone in the EU get the most out of the digital transformation, and to promote a sustainable, human-centric vision for the digital transformation. The rights and principles are:

1. Putting people and their rights at the centre of the digital transformation
2. Supporting solidarity and inclusion
3. Ensuring freedom of choice online
4. Fostering participation in the digital public space
5. Increasing safety, security and empowerment of individuals
6. Promoting the sustainability of the digital future

What can we do?

What tools and actions are on the table?

“Our European way to foster the virtual worlds is three-fold: people, technologies and infrastructure”

Thierry Breton,
European Commissioner for the Internal Market⁸

As mentioned in President von der Leyen’s State of the Union letter of intent, virtual worlds, also referred to as metaverses, are one of the pressing challenges ahead of us, and the European Commission is determined to look at this new digital opportunity. With the existing legislations and declarations mentioned above, the EU already has strong regulatory tools for the digital space, but the development of virtual worlds prompts new questions for the EU and its Member States.

In parallel to the citizens’ panel, the European Commission has therefore decided to launch a comprehensive reflection and consultation, with industries, civil society, academia, and researchers, on the vision and business model of a European infrastructure for metaverses. Together with the outcomes of your deliberation in the citizens’ panel, the results of this consultation will feed into a non-legislative initiative planned for the second quarter of the year 2023.

What’s your role in this process?

You do not have to be an expert on virtual worlds or on the EU digital policies, and we do not expect you to know about the measures and initiatives listed above. As a member of the citizens’ panel, you will receive more information from speakers’ presentations and answers to your questions and get to experience virtual reality first-hand. You will be able to discuss EU rights and principles, their application in virtual worlds, the pros and cons of different possible use cases of virtual reality in our daily lives, and the feasibility and desirability of different measures.

The outcome of your work will be a set of preferred directions, guiding principles and recommendations to influence future EU measures on virtual worlds and to safeguard European citizens’ rights and expectations of a trustworthy, fair and open metaverses.

Your role is therefore to be curious, ask questions, engage in discussions with fellow Europeans, be open to different views and arguments, and to bring in your own experiences and perceptions of virtual reality in this strategic reflection for the EU.

⁷ : https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/europes-digital-decade-digital-targets-2030_en and https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_7683

⁸ : https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/de/STATEMENT_22_5525

4. Practical information

We are looking forward to welcoming you to the Next Generation of the European Citizens' Panels starting on Friday 24 February in Brussels, Belgium. We are pleased to send you the practical information to prepare for your trip and your attendance at the meeting.

1. PER DIEM

Per diems (an allowance to cover living expenses) of 90,00€ per conference and travelling day will be provided. The per diems are paid after participating in the meeting based on an attendance list.

2. LOGISTICS

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

You have or will receive your travel itinerary and eTicket. Should you have any further questions regarding your travel arrangements, please let us know by contacting us at info@futureu.events

TRANSFERS

Transfers upon arrival: Upon your arrival at the airport/train station, hostesses with the Next Generation of the European Citizens' Panels welcome board (poster) will welcome you and accompany you to the transfer bus. If you encounter difficulties in finding the hostesses, please call 00 32 - 478 79 68 53 or 00 32 - 478 79 68 63 between 7:00am and 9:00pm

By plane: At the airport, after picking up your luggage, please make your way to the courtesy desk available at the Arrivals Terminal where our hostesses will be expecting you.

By train: At the Midi Brussels train station, please make your way to the cafeteria Prêt à Manger where our hostesses with the Conference welcome board and roll-up will be expecting you.

Once in Brussels: From the hotels to the European Commission premises, group transfers will be organised with a shuttle bus from the hotels to the conference building. Please present yourself at the hotel main hall before the scheduled time of departure. Our

team will show you the way to the shuttle. If you prefer to reach the European Commission premises on your own, please nonetheless notify our support team before departing.

Once in Brussels: From the social event to the hotels. After the meeting, social event may be foreseen and group transfers by a shuttle bus from the European Commission premises to the venue will be organised. After the dinner, group transfers by a shuttle bus from the restaurant to the hotels will be organised.

Transfers upon departure: We will arrange the transfers back to the airport/train station for all participants from the hotel you are staying at. A notice board will indicate the departure time in the hotel lobby.

ACCOMMODATION

Our team will welcome you upon your arrival at the hotel, provide you with a printed agenda and all relevant information. A single occupancy room, with breakfast and free Wi-Fi has been booked for you. Please refer to your booking email. Kindly note that all extras (e.g. minibar, room service, telephone, hotel bar, laundry service, early check-in or late check-out etc.) are for your own account and will not be covered by the organisers. Please settle all extra expenses directly at the hotel.

IMPORTANT: Official check-in time is 15:00 and check-out time is 12:00 noon on the day of departure. Our staff will be present at the hotel to assist if needed. If you arrive earlier, the hotel will try their best according to the situation of room occupancy. Nonetheless, some waiting time may occur, and you are welcome to leave your luggage and wait at the hotel lobby.



• Contact

Our team will consist of several persons and hostesses who will be available prior and throughout the meeting. Shall you encounter any difficulties upon arrival, your flight departure time has changed, feel free to contact us via e-mail: info@futureu.events

• Interpretation

The meeting will be available in 24 languages thanks to a team of professional interpreters. Please pace yourself and avoid speaking too fast during your session.

4. ACCESS TO THE BUILDING

The meeting will take place on the premises of the European Commission in Brussels. Please refer to the agenda for more information on the exact buildings and rooms. The European Commission building is accessible with a V-pass. A V-pass e-mail will be sent to you before the event. Please don't forget to register via this e-mail to finalise the process and get your V-pass QR code. If you have not received your V-pass please contact us via e-mail: info@futureu.events. Please note that it may take at least 20 minutes to complete the security check and to arrive at the meeting room. The security will ask your V-pass and ID card.

All participants:

- are required to show a valid passport or ID card before entering the building;
- are required to undergo security controls at the entrance area;
- are advised to carry the invitation letter or any other document clearly indicating their participation (e.g. registration mail)

5. HELPDESK, INTERNET ACCESS

A help desk will be located at the entrance of the rooms. Our colleagues and the team of hostesses will assist you to find your way, to receive documents or for any additional questions, you may have. Internet can be accessed via Wi-Fi hotspots which will be shared the day of the meeting.

6. ACCESSIBILITY

The premises of the European Commission are fully accessible for people with disabilities. When registering online, please indicate your special need and our services will endeavour to welcome you as best as possible.

3. MISCELLANEOUS

• Dress code

Please bring along smart-casual clothes for the meetings, a warm jacket and a scarf for indoor and a waterproof winter coat as well warm comfortable shoes and umbrellas for outdoor. Temperatures in February will probably be around 7°C and an average low-temperature of 4°C.

• Drinking water

The tap water is safe to drink in Belgium. Bottled water or filtered water is readily available for purchase and will be offered during all meetings, meals and social events.

• Time zone

Current Time is CET - Central European Time (UTC/GMT +1 hour).

• Toursim Information

Brussels is rich in history, architecture, gastronomy, culture and so much more! If you are staying in Brussels during the weekend, do not hesitate to visit the Brussels-Capital Region website to discover all the cultural activities available during your stay.

Who is organising this **panel?**

The Virtual Worlds citizens' panel is organised by the European Commission (The Directorate-General for Communication in collaboration with the Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology) and the support of Kantar Public (main contractor) with Missions Publiques, ifok, Deliberativa, the Danish Board of Technology, and VO Europe.

The topic section was produced by the organising team with input from a Knowledge Committee that includes the following members:

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