

# TRANSĚUROPA 2017

A FESTIVAL OF ARTS, POLITICS AND CULTURE

# CON VER GENT SPA CES

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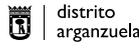
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# TRANSEUROPA 2017

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# Transeuropa 2017: Convergent spaces

**Daphne Büllsbach** is the executive director of European Alternatives and Transeuropa Festival.

Picture the moon for a moment. If we talk about fostering a politics beyond the nation state, we do not mean the nation state will be gone tomorrow. But we consider it very worthwhile to explore what lies beyond it; it is just like looking beyond the moon, it won't make the moon disappear.

Exploring the possibilities of going beyond the nation state happens at many levels and indeed we invented the nation state just a few hundred years ago. The arts, culture, but also visionary politicians have long been advocates for alliances and networking beyond nation-state. Today it goes without saying that nation state politics cannot tackle the global challenges of climate change, migration, technology, economic interdependence and social justice on its own. And yet, putting a particular country's interest first and above others has helped win elections and referenda - even if precisely those interests cannot find satisfaction within the old and increasingly ineffective national logic. Going beyond the nation state must not mean simply emphasising on the transnational level: on the contrary it can mean renewed autonomy at local level, for cities, municipalities, for citizens. These days, democracy itself seems to have turned into a farce in places like Hungary or Poland - to use examples close to home, countries priding themselves to be illiberal democracies. In a situation where liberal democracy is under such threat, what does it mean to stand up for democracy? How can we act democratically if we speak from our private niches? Have we reached a point in which we understand democracy as a system that guarantees us rights but doesn't call on us to take over responsibility - and I want to add, solidarity?

Hannah Arendt wrote no activity can become excellent if the world does not provide a proper space for its exercise. There must be more spaces for exploration, experimentation and togetherness. Not for comforting us in our own thoughts but for challenging each other to be less comfortable democrats with an understanding for the inequalities that disenfranchise us.

We, at European Alternatives, have worked to open these spaces of exchange and debate for many years, and Transeuropa has been our prime way of doing it, in a transnational manner, across Europe in now more than 30 cities. We want to converge these conversations in Madrid this year, as this city has seen an amazing process of citizens mobilisations from back in 2011 to the city hall take over by the citizens platform *Ahora Madrid* in 2015. Starting from decentralised activities in more than 11 cities on October 21st we will open Transeuropa on Oct 25th in Madrid. After two days of workshops and debates that go deeper into the issues we will end on a high note with a public conference in partnership with the Kiev Biennale: *The New Internationale, Below And Above The Nation*. The partnership with a Ukrainian cultural initiative underscores at least another element of our conception of Europe: namely that Europe cannot be bordered, and that it goes well beyond the institutional space of the European Union.

The 2017 edition of Transeuropa unfolds from three central themes, that help reflect on the levels of below, above, and beyond the nation state.

**1.- Europe as a Refuge?: Reclaiming Europe as a place of sanctuary for refugees and migrants and of human rights protection both inside and at its borders.** Solutions are often found at the local level, this is why we invited the cities of Palermo, Naples, Gdansk and Madrid and former German presidential candidate Gesine Schwan to debate the role of municipalities in offering shelter to newcomers. The Union of Street Vendors will host a workshop about migrant workers self-organisation and artists such as Oliver Ressler and the collective of 'Artists-at-Risk' will show their works and visions. We are particularly pleased to be able to showcase the powerful multi-media performance *Ildrissa* by Metromuster with Nakany Kanté and premiere the documentary 'When Paul came over the Sea' in Spain that has already won awards from film festivals in Germany, Austria, Ukraine and China.

**2.- The Commons: Furthering the thinking of a commons-based society through analysis, knowledge-sharing and exchange.** In collaboration with the European Commons Assembly, a network of Commons activists established in 2016, we discuss experiences of managing commons to advance both the processes and tools, as well as the narrative of commoning in our communities. The focus is on urban commons and public policy-making in the city halls of Spain and beyond; as the programme is mainly workshop based, a public assembly with city governors from across Europe will allow for a larger group reflection. Through several site visits around Madrid participants are able to visit local practices of commoning and engage and learn from these projects. On Saturday, Ugo Mattei together with Commoners from across the field will debate how the commons offer a political vision for a democracy beyond the nation state.

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**Transeuropa unfolds from three central themes that help reflect on the levels of below, above and beyond the nation state**

**3.- Cities of change and new municipalism: giving visibility to citizens organising in social movements trailblazing new participatory practices.** In a situation of vanishing sovereignty at nation state level, citizens have taken control over local institutions, working to transform their cities into cities of shelter, solidarity and social justice. How can we fund the cooperative city? What digital tools help us to participate and be informed citizens? How can we contribute to radical urban policy making? These are just some of the questions we will address. We will also present a collectively developed open source mapping platform of cities of change' from around Europe and introduce ways to get engaged.

There are many new dynamics at the local level which are working for political change, inside and beyond our continent. Movements from cities and municipalities, citizens' initiatives and platforms, feminist and LGBTBIQ+ collectives, are all working towards the Europe of tomorrow, to prove that the change happening can only take place through a renewed political vision occurs simultaneously below and beyond the national borders. Any change that takes place at a local level has to be connected to a European dimension, so as to consolidate the break and reconfiguration of power relations. Without that dimension, the actions stay isolated and blurred, losing symbolic power and the strength of a collective effort.

We are proud to say that many of those who are part of these political and social fights or even initiate them are coming to Madrid. We are stronger if we build, work, and unite. Heartful thanks to our partners and everyone who has contributed to this endeavour. Come along on October 25th - October 29th and make your voice heard.



# TRANSËUROPA OPEN

We are organising a series of decentralised events in different cities across Europe for the opening of the festival on Saturday, October 21st. Transeuropa aims to set a transnational, open and innovative cultural and political space, make grassroots and civic alternatives to poli-

tical institutions visible, and foster network cooperation and mutual support. It serves as a point of convergence to exchange ideas, concepts and alternatives for a Europe in turmoil. In particular, we focus on three thematics, which will be at the core of Transeuropa Open:

**The city and democracy from below** ——— **Europe as a Refuge** ——— **Urban Commons**

**Messina:** Neighbourhoods in Motion/ Participation and Urban Transformation at the Palmaria: From Dumping Site to Playground — **Maribor:** Maribor of the Globe — **Belgrade:** Towards new models of Commons in Europe — **Ludwigshafen am Rhein:** My LU-Love for Europe — **Berlin:** Our political party! Common / Critical / Crypto — **Turku:** Cha(lle)ging The Other — **Herceg Novi:** Why Waitin? — **Valencia:** Escola d'innovacio Civica / Kick off and Civic Talks — **Lousame:** Festival Transeuropa Lousame 2017 — **Amsterdam:** Transeuropa Open Amsterdam — **London:** Transeuropa Open London

# Madrid as a

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During the occupation of Puerta del Sol in Madrid in 2011, the hackers at the core of Madrid's 15M developed a platform for anyone to make political proposals. Designed in free software, the *Propongo* platform allowed users to put forward ideas which could then be voted on. The operational arrangement was pretty simple: decentralized proposals, from the bottom up. The State of Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil), where participatory budgets came to light in 1989, used part of the *Propongo* code and its philosophy for the Digital Cabinet, its star citizen participation project.

In Spain, the political class turned its back on the *Indignados*. No one was there on the other side of *Propongo*. No local, regional or state government listened to the new music coming out of the squares – and even less to the proposals. Meanwhile, collective intelligence and networking in the squares were developing sophisticated mechanisms for participation and deliberation, both online and face-to-face. The powerful technopolitics made in Spain conquered the hearts of activists all over the world. And the hearts of some foreign academics and politicians too.

In May 2015, the so-called «citizen confluences», overcoming the traditional political party formats, conquered the governments of the main cities in Spain. And part of the squares' techno political intelligence was transferred to local governments. Hacktivists, programmers, assembly and participatory process facilitators went on to work for the institutions. Pablo Soto, a historical hacker from the peer-to-peer movement and one of the Puerta del Sol regulars, was one of them. In June 2015, Soto became the head of participation of the Madrid City Council. *Ahora Madrid, Barcelona en Comú, Zaragoza en Común*, among many other political confluences, began to rev up participation in the country's main cities.

«All roads lead to Spanish cities, where they are experimenting with citizen empowerment tools like nowhere else in the world», noted Geoff Mulgan, head of Nesta in the UK. Two years after taking power in the so-called Cities of Change, participation has become one of the biggest disruptions. And hacker Soto's Madrid is the city that has gone further down this road. From the networks to the territory, and vice versa, Madrid is turning the collective dream of the occupied squares of 2011 into public policies.

## Democracy from the bottom up

Pablo Soto uses a word that the dictionary of the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language does not recognize (yet): *disintermediation*. Political disintermediation means removing intermediaries from representative politics. The aim is clear: getting citizens to make their own decisions.

The launch of *Decide Madrid*, the city participation platform running on the *Consul* free software, signaled a real revolution. On the one hand, it paved the way for democracy from the bottom up, through direct and binding mechanisms. Unlike other historical participatory budgets, the 100 million Euros devoted to *Decide Madrid* participatory budgets in 2017 are allocated according to proposals coming from below. The proposals that get the most votes, whenever technically feasible, are approved. The platform also carries a section for «citizen proposals». If a proposal gets the support of 1% of the registered Madrid citizens over the age of 16 (that is, 27.064 citizens), it gets to the final voting stage. The first such vote on citizen proposals took place on February 13-19 2016, on the Internet and in several physical places in the city. The *100% sustainable Madrid* proposal was voted by 188.665 people (89.11% of the voters). The proposal *A single ticket for public transport*, although it exceeded the City Council's area of jurisdiction, was supported by 198.905 people (93.94% of the voters) and put pressure on the Madrid Transport Consortium, where the regional government has a major stake.

*Decide Madrid* is also being used for binding urban planning consultations, such as the ones on Plaza España, the Gran Vía, and the remodeling of 11 squares in the city's suburbs. Thanks to the cultural disintermediation of the Napster software, unknown music groups have been organizing concert tours without any help from the record companies. Thanks to the disintermediation of *Decide Madrid*, a proposal by an individual citizen from the Retiro district has managed to turn the almost abandoned Daoíz y Velarde Theatre into a film library.

«The bottom-up belt which enables people to impose decisions on top-level officials is not a technological tool: it is a popular initiative mechanism. Before, the mechanism consisted of collecting signatures. Now, citizens use technology to collect them, opening up a *Change.org*, an *Oiga.me*. We have done that in Madrid (...) The *Propongo* philosophy governs most direct democracy platforms implemented in Spain by the councils of the Cities of Change», says Pablo Soto.

The *Decide Madrid* platform was not initially well received by the traditional neighbourhood associations, used to face-to-face participation and to mediating between citizens and government. In order to tackle this, a number of face-to-face deliberation spaces are being set up, such as the Local Forums (physical participation spaces in the districts), and also projects such as *If you feel like a cat* (participation for children and teenagers), or processes such as G1000, which aims at promoting collective deliberation and fostering proposals from below on the basis of a representative sample of the population, so that the participants' diversity and plurality is guaranteed.

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«The ecosystem of citizen practices and self-managed spaces has turned Madrid into an international reference of the urban commons»

# democracy lab

«The recent occupation of La Ingobernable, a Social Centre located in a building which is a City Council property, shows that civil society wants more»

Most projects are being carried out with the support of the new Laboratories of Citizen Innovation of the prestigious Medialab-Prado. The *Participa LAB* (Collective Intelligence for Democracy), the DataLab (open data) and the InciLab (Citizen Innovation Lab) are joint public/common initiatives, acting as a bridge between local government and citizens. The *Participa LAB*, which is the one working more closely on participation, is collaborating with *Decide Madrid* in a number of projects (Codat Madrid hackathons, If you feel like a cat, community lines, gamification, G1000, narrative groups...) and coordinates the *Collective Intelligence for Democracy* international call. InciLab has launched, among many other initiatives, the *Madrid Listens* project, to connect City Hall officials with citizens on concrete projects, blending disintermediation and the citizen lab philosophy.

More than 300.000 users strong, *Decide Madrid* is consolidating itself as the hegemonic space for participation in the city. It activates a variety of processes, debates, proposals, and projects. Its free software means that any city can adapt Consul to its needs, without any substantial investment, and set up a platform. From Barcelona to A Coruña, from Rome to Paris and Buenos Aires, dozens of institutions around the world have replicated the initial *Decide Madrid* core, thus setting up what Audrey Tang, Taiwan's digital minister, calls a «liquid federation of cities». Ada Colau, the mayor of Barcelona, praising the cooperative network of participation cities says: «It is very interesting that in Barcelona we have been able to carry out our first experience of digital participation, *Decidim Barcelona*, adapting Madrid's base code. Once we have had a first proposal, we have shared it with many municipalities throughout Catalonia».

## Distributed democracy

The brain as a metaphor. A map of Hamburg (Germany) as a symbol of the networked, decentralized city. Neurons and neighbourhoods connected by flows, inevitably synchronized. Both images are to be found in *Emergency*, Steven Johnson's classic book on collective intelligence processes. The city as a brain, as a whole made of decentralized nodes. The city as an open network, where any neighbourhood-node can connect with any other. Caio Vassão's concept of a distributed city rounds the edges of the city with no centre, «networked, open, fluid, flexible, adaptable, reconfigurable». A city where the neighbourhoods in the suburbs dialogue and relate to each other without the mediation of a historical center.

Madrid has kick-started a forceful decentralization policy. Distributed democracy in Madrid can be seen in how budgets are allocated, how city districts have multiplied their resources and partly manage cultural festivals (like the *Summers in the City*) and cultural projects (*Madrid District*).

At the same time, the launching of the Local Forums is a clear move to decentralize power and participation in the city. Through projects such as *Experiment District* (travelling citizen laboratories), *Imagine Madrid* (rethinking 10 territories) or the M.A.R.E.S project, Spain's capital city is redrawing its neighbourhood fabric, its economic relations, and citizen involvement in decision making. The successful Medialab-Prado's *Experiment District* project, which has already visited Villaverde, Moratalaz and Fuencarral, is in full expansion. It is about to even launch a global call, as dozens of cities around the world want to replicate it. Medialab-Prado, one of the city innovation centres, defines *Experiment District* as a set of «citizen labs for experimentation and collaborative learning in which anyone can participate». Citizen (neighbourhood) labs based on the prototyping culture, an open and collaborative way of developing projects. Citizen (neighbourhood) labs for learning and teaching, where the result is not a perfect product, but a process that can be improved in real time through the collaboration of citizens from the Madrid neighbourhoods.

## Democracy of the commons

The exuberant ecosystem of citizen practices and self-managed spaces has turned Madrid into an international reference of the urban commons. How do the commons in the city relate to local political power? Many expectations were generated when *Ahora Madrid* came to power, since *Patio Maravillas*, a well-known occupation in the city, was part of the candidacy that won the local elections. During the first year in government, the City Council carried out a policy of handing over spaces in collaboration with the Network of Citizen Spaces (REC), which groups most of Madrid's self-managed spaces. Expectations were dampened, though, for *Patio Maravillas* became a cultural tug-of-war with the Right and finally did not get a space in the city centre which the Council was ready to hand over. In many districts, however, the City Council has begun to transfer spaces to citizens, fueling the autonomy of the commons. The Self-Managed Social Centre PlayaGata (in Fuencarral) and the Social Space La Salamandra (in Moratalaz), both of them spaces handed over to citizens, have been key points for nurturing the *Experiment District* project. Madrid has also transferred to civil society different areas of the city, such as the Sueca Palace, the Almendro 3 plot, the Fruit and Vegetable Market (assigned to the neighbourhood of Arganzuela) and La Gasoli. In addition, the city has handed over several plots where citizens were farming illegal urban gardens, thus strengthening the Urban Gardens Network in Madrid.

The recent occupation of La Ingobernable, a «Metropolitan Social Centre for the construction of the urban commons» located in a building which is a City Council property, a few meters from the Prado Museum, shows that Madrid's civil society wants more. That it is not settling for the established institutional frameworks. That social centres are citizen labs, vital pieces of democracy, co-creation spaces of a living city. That the commons are tension and conflict too, not just co-management. Madrid's democracy lab feeds on citizen autonomy and at the same time on an institutional side which tries to overcome, sometimes at too slow a pace, the classic logics of representative democracy. The ironic poster hanging on a wall in a room at La Ingobernable sends this message from self-management, the commons, the citizens, to the institution: «Make Madrid great again».

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This piece was first published in openDemocracy on 10 July 2017.

Transeuropa 2017 will run workshops and trainings in MediaLab Prado (Calle de la Alameda, 15 - Madrid) from the 25th and until the 29th of October.

## THE COMMONS IN THE TIME OF MONSTERS

# How P2P Politics can change the world, one city at a time

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**Stacco Troncoso & Ann Marie Urtel**

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**Ann Marie Urtel** is part of the international core team in the Advocacy stream of the P2P Foundation.

As Gramsci said (or didn't say), «The old world is dying, and the new world struggles to be born: now is the time of monsters». After nearly 40 years of progressive neoliberalisation and social decomposition, contemporary politics has been very publicly upended by a misogynistic, xenophobic and financially privileged «new right» intent on coupling its politics of hate onto the apparatus of state power.

Amid this increasingly bleak political landscape, affinity-based networks and communities using P2P dynamics and building commons have been taking action. Small-scale innovations are paving the way for sustainable resource management and grounded social cohesion. In governance, food growing, service provision, science, education, even finance and currency, these community-enabled developments demonstrate how differently our lives could be organised. Many of these place-based efforts are being replicated worldwide through the Internet, re-seeding in the process the Commons knowledge from which they are born. This is done through commons enabling, aka P2P (peer-to-peer, person-to-person, people-to-people) technologies, which are gaining momentum as forces for constructive change. They enable small group dynamics at higher levels of complexity, and enable the reclamation of power.

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**All the municipalist platforms have their eye on the transnational dimension in order to form a network. This mirrors the practices of P2P productive communities**

With this power, people can innovate in production, open book accounting, and the stewardship of natural, cultural or digitally derived commons — but also in governance. Together, all of this forms the building blocks of a truly bottom-up system. Could all this really coalesce into something that, in the future, might be called «post-capitalism»? Only if those who identify as commoners recognise, promote, and develop these systems and increase their cultural and their political influence, while remembering that there are other players already on the field using similar means towards very different ends.

In 2017, the question is not theoretical, but hands-on practical: how do we build the new world in the shell of the old — and before the shell squeezes shut. We cannot afford to forget that financial interests will always favor extreme right wing or fascist options that safeguard their stake, and that any redistributive political options will be harshly and publicly ridiculed, or worse. With the noxious spirit of the thirties rebounding, there is not a moment to spare; patience now would be a deadly strategy. It is time to occupy the collective cultural imagination with compelling and practical political alternatives, and expose the normalisation of neoliberalism as deadly propaganda; to expose the numbing spectacle (Brexit, Trump, etc.) as yet another synthetic opioid addiction.

This is why it is time for the Commons movement to become more overtly politically active. Beyond self-organised production, care work, ecological stewardship, even beyond ethical generative markets, it is time for more effective political engagement, not only to protect the essentials of the welfare state model, but to transcend it with a radically reimagined politics that facilitates social value creation and community-organised practices. There are models for this commons-oriented political engagement in Spain's municipal movements, which the rest of this article will outline.

### The rise of the urban commons

Spain's municipalist coalitions were the result of a number of movements representing changes in cultures, mindsets and relations to power. The most notable among these is 15-M and, unlike Podemos, the coalitions can be considered its true political byproducts. Prior to the 2014-2015 electoral cycle, 15-M had also developed strong transversal relations with movements around housing, public health, and education and culture. Known as «las mareas», or «citizen's tides», these were characterised by self-organised protests and capacity building which, although inclusive of traditional actors such as labour unions and political parties, were truly multi-constituent in nature.

Today, the municipalist platforms coordinate among themselves to share resources and best practices, functioning as trans-local affinity networks. Although mainly focused on providing real world solutions to their constituencies, the coalitions share a number of notable features. One of the most refreshing is that their attitude towards political discourse is considerably more feminised, a contrast to the old guard and masculine attitudes typically found in institutional politics.

The municipalist focus on participation and radical democracy, honed through many street assemblies, has been refined into a shared «ethical code», which shapes the platforms behaviors within the institutions. The code acts as both a glue and draw for the participants, again not limited to party staff, but to all who want to feel involved. Beyond their local concerns and trans-local alliances, all the municipalist platforms have their eye on the transnational dimension in order to form a network of «Rebel Cities». This practice mirrors the locally embedded but globally networked activities of P2P productive communities.

And they lived happily ever after? Of course not: the activists-turned-political representatives face an unwaveringly hostile media environment, which exaggerates their blunders (or invents them when convenient) while burying their achievements. After four years of precarity and engaged activism, these individuals face 60+ hour workweeks while clashing against the entrenched realities of horizontalist bureaucracy, holding minority seats within electoral alliances with Social Democrats. The pluralistic nature of the citizens' coalitions have unsurprisingly led to incoherencies and gaffes and, perhaps worst of all, a noticeable abandonment of direct-action tactics and counter-power building efforts. Still, they soldier on, and the list of benefits and advances (cancellations of public contracts with multi-nationals, participatory budgeting, more gender-balanced literature and representation, increased public spending, anti-gentrification strategies, basic income pilots, direct-democracy mechanisms...) is there for all to see.

The best of the truly good news is that Spain's municipalist coalitions are not alone. Progressive cities worldwide are enabling and empowering the act of commoning. Rather than directing what the citizenry can do for itself and its environments, these «Rebel Cities» are listening to commoners' voices and creating spaces for ordinary people to roll up their sleeves and manage those matters that concern them most directly.

Beyond the city level, we now also find pan-European efforts to bring the practices of commoning to the institutions, while not losing sight of the necessary mutual recognition needed for the Commons movement to emancipate itself from markets and state, as it radically re-imagines these. In November 2016, a group of 150 commoners from all over Europe gathered in Brussels to lay out the foundations for a united and strong movement, and the European Commons Assembly was born.

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### Commons transition: building the political lexicon of social governance from below

The practices of commoning are evident in how these coalitions, Rebel Cities and transnational assemblies have formed and are articulating their governance. With a focus on transparency and citizen participation, and taking advantage of open-source P2P technologies, they prefigure many aspects of the politics of a better future. The challenge ahead lies in applying the network logics that have been so successful in Spain to recover the latent power of Occupy and 15-M and build resilient, more feminised and ethically coherent, transnational political movements.

In the same way that prefigurative strategies incorporate social and environmental priorities into their informal constitutions, without waiting for markets or state to deal with such 'externalities', the municipalist ethical code can form the kernel of a set of political guidelines to be hard-coded into commons-oriented coalition principles, bringing fresh accountability to contemporary politics.

Potential success is also about keeping it real and relatable. The old left has traditionally communicated in abstracts, which tends to create rather than solve problems. At the same time, the «new» populist left of Syriza, Podemos and Bolivarian Socialism seems satisfied making grand paternalistic promises, resorting to throwing blame rather than proposing participatory, unalienated and feasible actions. In a culture where affinity groups, self-organized through social networks and participatory communities, emerge to address the shortcomings of a decaying welfare state, people are showing that they want to have a say in how things work. They do not want to have someone paid exponentially more to decide for them. Can a Commons politics address and support this shift towards self-organisation?

The vision is to develop the emerging commons and P2P political movement at higher levels of complexity —the regional, national and transnational levels— while preserving the characteristics of local, real-place dynamism. By engaging the creativity and input of those communities most affected by political processes, commons-based practices can nurture a sense of identity that can be harnessed for effective political action. The integrative narrative of the Commons encourages citizens' direct political engagement outside the restrictive bureaucracies of the market state and economies.

Imagine a radically reconfigured and democratically accountable structure. One that, while preserving the more desirable characteristics of the Welfare State —social and public health provision and large infrastructure management and upkeep— radically democratises them. It would do away with the State's cozy symbiosis with market entities, while deconstructing its pernicious monopolies over money creation and exchange, and property and judicial rights. A second radical set of measures would prohibit the structural enforcement of inequality and the often violent repression of emancipatory alternatives. This structure would function in much the same way as foundations do in the Open Source software economy: providing the infrastructure for cooperation and the creation and upkeep of commons, but not directing the process of social value creation and distribution. In other words, it would empower and protect the practice of commoning.

This enabling metastructure —often referred to as «The Partner State»— would also take on new functions derived from already existing P2P/Commons practices. Among these, we would see a promotion of real, needs-oriented entrepreneurship, bolstered by explicit recognition and support of bottom-up productive infrastructures, such as Open Coops, mesh wireless networks or community renewables through public-Commons partnerships. It would allow commoners to repurpose or take over unused or underutilised public buildings for social ends, while giving legal recognition to the act of commoning, whether through copyleft-inspired property-law hacks,

or through a longer process of gradually institutionalising commons practices. Its grassroots democratising ethos would create new financing mechanisms and debt-free public money creation which, alongside social currencies, could fund environmentally regenerative work and the creation of new, distributed Open-source infrastructure. These would be supported by taxation schemes favouring the types of labor described above, while penalising speculation, parasitic rents and negative social and environmental externalities. The overall system has to be kept in check through a pervasive culture of participatory politics — made feasible through its attendant pedagogy — to involve a newly enfranchised citizenry in the deliberation and real time consultation of political and legislative issues and budgeting. In issues of power, the Partner State shifts to being a fluid facilitator to assist and emancipate the bottom-up counter-power that keeps it in check.

Is this narrative Utopian? No more than the «what are their demands...?» proposals of Occupy and 15-M. In fact, many of the Partner State practices described above are already being enacted by the Fearless Cities. Accusations of utopianism are used dismissively to enclose the commons of the imagination. People need courage (and encouragement) to imagine something better in human nature, other than inevitable conflict and self-interest. History, despite its observable patterns, is not deterministic. Nothing suddenly materialises from detailed concepts into fully formed realities; there was no group of wise men sitting around in 15th century Florence proclaiming: «...and we shall create Capitalism! And it will progress through creative destruction! And we shall have high frequency algorithmic trading!» or any such nonsense.

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*If we can imagine a commons-oriented future, it becomes a moral imperative to do everything in our power to bring that better future to reality*

Back in our present-day chaos, applying a Commons Transition to the field of politics entails creating a new, inclusive political narrative that harnesses the best practices of three distinct progressive trends: Openness (e.g. Pirate parties), Fairness (e.g. New Left) and Sustainability (e.g. Green parties). The optimal game plan for building a new political vision fit for the challenges of our time involves building bridges between these three trends, precisely what the municipalists have achieved and translated into political and legislative power.

This vision for a new politics must also promote other underplayed concerns such as race, gender, and reproductive justice, and radically diversifying political representation in response to increased interest in balance — at the least, being sure that the representative picture is not always and only straight, white men, specially in leadership roles. Take into account that women led the municipalist candidacies that triumphed in Barcelona and Madrid.

Taken together, these successful municipalist occupations of power structures show that the logic of the Commons, coupled with democratic, participatory relations enabled by P2P systems, can reinvigorate and instill a new sense of purpose in today's political field. If we can imagine a commons-oriented future including a commons politics, it practically becomes a moral imperative to do everything in our power to bring that better future to reality. In this fight in the time of monsters, the fight between David and Goliath, why not be David? He won after all and, after seeing what the municipalists had to overcome, perhaps so can we.

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Abridged from the original article published in [commonstransition.org](http://commonstransition.org) in June 2017.

The European Commons Assembly will be in Madrid from the 25th until the 28th of October. The program includes participative workshops on urban commons topics, joint sessions with European Alternatives on the commons in policy, and opportunities to learn about and visit local commoning initiatives in Madrid.

# THE EUROPEAN COMMONS ASSEMBLY IN MADRID FOR A RENEWED POLITICAL FORCE IN EUROPE

The crisis of the European Union begs for new, unifying and constructive narratives – alternatives to the right-wing populist and nationalist wave that gets fiercer every day. A commons approach holds the potential for a unified vision towards an alternative economy, a Europe from the bottom up, and an ecological economy and way of life. The idea of jointly administering shared resources, community and a generative economy can find resonance with a diverse range of citizens.

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**Sophie Bloemen** is a political activist based in Berlin and co-founder of the Commons Network.

**Nicole Leonard** is the coordinator of the European Commons Assembly (ECA).

A relentless focus on markets and growth has blinded us for the loss of social cohesion, rampant inequality, and the destruction of the environment. In the perceived need to quantify everything, gross domestic product is used as a measure of social wealth. The commodification of our common resources and even our online behavior can seem limitless. Yet major fault lines are starting to appear in this dominant worldview based on individualism, private ownership and an extractive relationship with nature. A novel outlook based on networks, access, and sustainability is emerging, where citizens are actively co-creating their environment.

The Commons perspective captures the change in perception regarding needs and priorities. ‘Commons’ refer to shared resources and frameworks for social relationships that are managed by a community. ‘Commons’ also stand for a worldview and ethical perspective favouring stewardship, reciprocity, and social and ecological sustainability. This outlook defines well-being and social wealth not just with narrow economic criteria like gross domestic product or companies’ success. Instead, it looks to a richer, more qualitative set of criteria that are not easily measured – including moral legitimacy, social consensus and participation, equity, resilience, and social cohesion.

Commons are not primarily a political theory but first and foremost a practice emerging from the bottom up. Everywhere people are engaged in alternative practices as part of the struggle for ecological, social, and cultural transition within their communities. All over Europe local initiatives are taking care of their direct environment, sharing and stewarding knowledge online, and claiming natural resources as our commons. These include, for instance, community wifi structures providing internet access in remote areas, co-housing initiatives ensuring affordable housing, community land trusts that explore collective forms of property, or urban commons initiatives regenerating the city for its citizens. The digital knowledge commons are a key element of an alternative economy, and online commons projects have been able to attain an impressive scale. Creative commons licenses for cultural works, for example, are now over one billion. In all these areas, the commons approach offers a new vocabulary for collective action and social justice, as well as processes for communities to govern resources themselves.

## The commons to overcome political struggles in Europe

So if commoning communities abound and cultural change is underway, what is stopping the commons from creating an alternative society? Perhaps commoners’ strengths – their localised, bottom-up stewardship of resources and strong community-oriented relationships – are also obstacles. How do we move from a loose network of atomised, emancipatory commoning initiatives to a strong network that can challenge the dominant, bankrupt worldview of individualism and economic growth at any cost?

Until now, European civil society, the NGOs and social justice networks, have not been able to unite around a broad shared agenda. Hundreds of organisations did unite in the fight against TTIP. However, in order to make progress towards another, fairer and ecological economy and society, a movement cannot be solely reactionary – it has to set the agenda and provide positive alternatives.

The emerging radical democratic initiatives that propose alternatives have mostly engaged at a national or local level. Examples are 15M in Spain, Nuit Debout in France, or the University occupation in Amsterdam. The Occupy movement was trans-local, but did not succeed in genuinely opening up the conversation in Europe. Municipalism such as in Barcelona is creating real change on the ground, providing an inspiration for cities not only in Europe but worldwide. Local struggles, forward-looking, and emancipatory projects have to be connected in order to truly change the current order. The fact is that a great deal of the laws and developments that shape our societies come from the European level and global markets. There has to be trans-local and transnational solidarity around a shared vision of an alternative society.

«Commons stand for a worldview and ethical perspective favouring stewardship, reciprocity and social and ecological sustainability»

### The European Commons Assembly arrives to Madrid

The European Commons Assembly is an effort to provide a platform for these connections and trans-local solidarity. The European Commons Assembly that took place in Brussels in November 2016 has been a case in point for the unifying potential of the commons, and a symbol of maturity of the commons movement. A myriad of over 150 commoners, activists, and social innovators from different corners of Europe came to Brussels for three days to develop new synergies, express solidarity, and to discuss European politics as well as policy proposals. In the European Parliament, Members of Parliament exchanged views with this «Commons Assembly», and the political energy generated by bringing all these people together in this context was exceptional.

The ECA continues today as a political process and diverse platform, open to anyone who shares its values and wants to contribute. ECA explores what strategies to engage in in order to nourish, protect, and extend the commons. How to develop the outward channels to affect political change, while still trying to maintain and strengthen its communities? How to build broader coalitions on the ground not bound to the left or the right, how to prevent erecting barriers with academic language and theory?

Since Brussels, the ECA has published a series of videos on commons topics, articles, and generally aimed to visibilise the unifying potential of the commons narrative. Members also examined the intersections of the commons and Social Solidarity Economy and municipalist movements, with smaller assemblies held in Athens and Barcelona. Commoners from all over Europe and beyond are joining the online community all the time and sharing their experiences, and even in the Netherlands and Finland commoners were inspired to create local commons assemblies.

ECA Madrid and the collaboration with Transeuropa 2017 provides the energy to move the process further along. It is becoming clear that the ECA needs to offer an added value beyond ideational affiliation. Assembly members will have to co-create the resources and practices that will strengthen the movement. That is why the idea of «production» figures so prominently in the discourse around this Assembly. The focus of the assembly this time will be on urban commons, taking advantage of ECAs presence in Madrid and Spain to examine strategies, failed and successful, to promote the commons politically and in public policy, including citizens in this process.

In Madrid, working groups will focus on specific themes of the commons in the city to create shareable outputs that bring these local experiences to a broader audience. This creation will nourish the toolbox of the ECA, in turn helping other efforts to support and scale commoning. This opportunity will allow initiatives to learn from and share with each other, attaining a level of technical depth and understanding that is necessary for change, deepening the European political agenda for the commons. At the same time, what is at stake goes beyond the specific themes and issues that color the commons movement.

The ECA aims to engage in conversations with other allies around Europe, and considers the political context and the commons movement as a political force that relates to conventional political power. Rather than letting citizen resentment of the current order and political backlash lead to Europe's disintegration, the European Commons Assembly builds on these on-the-ground experiences to draw hope and energy to power the commons vision and a renewed political force in Europe.

**«The ECA has been a case in point for the unifying potential of the commons, and a symbol of maturity of the commons movement»**

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The European Commons Assembly will be in Madrid from the 25th until the 28th of October. The program includes participative workshops on urban commons topics, joint sessions with European Alternatives on the commons in policy, and opportunities to learn about and visit local commoning initiatives in Madrid. There will also be time dedicated to the future of the ECA.

Read and sign the Call:  
[europeancommonsassembly.eu/sign-call/](http://europeancommonsassembly.eu/sign-call/)

Join the community, introduce yourself:  
[commonswatch@lists.p2pfoundation.net](mailto:commonswatch@lists.p2pfoundation.net)

# The cities want them in!

## REVISED COMMON EUROPEAN REFUGEE POLICY AS A CHANCE TO REVIVE THE EUROPEAN UNION

**Gesine Schwan** is a German political science professor and member of the Social Democratic Party of Germany.

The European Union desperately needs a realistic, and human rights-oriented, border and migration policy. The present situation puts the EU in a dangerous position of reliance on the Turkish President Erdogan, presumes African countries to be safe when they clearly are not, and considers North African countries as possible migration-policy partners, when they are neither coherent States, nor safe and observing of minimal human rights standards.

The general political objectives of (1) overcoming the causes of migration; (2) supporting countries close to migration origins in hosting refugees; and (3) realising the Europeanisation of the border regime, are all necessary steps. But alone, they are insufficient. The idea of «outsourcing» migration control to countries outside the EU is not realistic in the long-run. It also undermines the fundamental values of the EU. The EU's current border and migration policy, which implicitly and inevitably leads to a «Fortress» Europe scenario, is already undermining the openness of our society, and indeed will create new internal borders.

The urgent need for a sustainable value-oriented approach to migration – which in the long-run needs to be combined with a European immigration policy – has been aggravated by the inability of the EU to find a concrete solution for the integration of refugees in Europe. For many reasons, a top-down distribution is condemned to fail. Therefore, we need a bottom-up alternative, led by municipalities and cities that have an interest in voluntarily integrating refugees, for both humanitarian reasons, and for their own gains.

A number of cities and municipalities all over Europe have already declared their readiness to welcome refugees, including cities in Central Europe, be it for demographic or other reasons. What these cities need are financing options for the costs of integration and related issues. In order to stimulate as many hosts for refugees as possible, the financing should include a palpable «overhead» for the cities' own needs, in order to encourage broad social support in undertaking the long-lasting process of integration within the cities.

In the meantime, national governments, which at present are not finding a shared solution within the European Council, hold the legal decision-making power on immigration, and most of the political decision-making power on operationalising European financing. Cooperation between the State and the municipality level, therefore, needs to be strengthened and deepened. By demonstrating the possibilities for refugee integration, cities and municipalities can help their national governments fulfil their duties. This will have a positive impact on their mutual cooperation and communication.

Making a European funding tool for integrating refugees available, which cities and municipalities would be able to apply for, would realise three objectives at once:

1. Establishing a humanitarian solution for the settlement of refugees in Europe;
2. Reviving a European commitment by bottom-up citizen-led participation, and;
3. Instigating a decentralised sustainable growth initiative on a local level, to overcome unemployment.

There would, however, be certain obstacles to overcome, requiring the following steps:

- Convincing national governments that this strategy is in their interest, allowing them to fulfil their legal and moral duties and to revive their economy;
- Finding simple and uncomplicated ways for financing the integration costs for cities and municipalities. Their own contribution could be financed, for example, by a cheap EIB credit;
- Identifying ways to match the interests of refugees with welcoming municipalities in such a way that refugees are likely to stop and settle there.

The municipalities' application should be as easy as possible, whilst of course including the following minimal standards:

- A multi-stakeholder governance model, in order to gain broad support within the cities. The application should be prepared by a range of stakeholders, coming from political, business, and civil society backgrounds;
- An integration strategy for the whole municipality must be included;
- It is also necessary to have an anti-corruption strategy, and;
- A macroeconomic vision for creating jobs and sustainable growth.

**«We need to push for making available a European funding tool for integrating refugees, which cities and municipalities would be able to apply for»**

In the long-term, the European Council would need to permit the creation of a trust fund attached to the EIB, governed in such a way as to control, but also to make it easier for cities to apply for the financing of refugees and of necessary infrastructure.

In the short-term, a pilot project could be launched by a group of European cities that aim to facilitate refugee integration according to this model, and for this reason would be looking to find financial support. This could be managed within the framework of a «Union Action» as an extraordinary measure. This would allow for the testing of the viability of this strategy, and mark the beginning of a visible European «revival», which would empower citizens and strengthen their identification with the European Union thanks to participation and the sharing of common projects.

This could mark a turning point in the deepening decentralisation of the EU, avoiding a tendency towards centralisation, as well as renationalisation.

This text was first published in «Shifting Baselines of Europe», a book by European Alternatives.

Gesine Schwan will be speaking at the Political Forum of Transeuropa, on Saturday 28th of October in Matadero (Paseo de la Chopera, 14).

REBEL  
CITIES  
ARE NOT  
UTOPIA

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A CONVERSATION WITH  
LUIGI DE MAGISTRIS,  
MAYOR OF NAPLES

After Luigi De Magistris was re-elected mayor to Naples in 2016 with a crushing majority, the city remains as an example of great social participation and political innovation. Naples was the first Italian city to establish a «Department of the Commons» and the first to change the municipal statute by inserting the commons as one of the interests to be protected and recognised as the functional exercise of fundamental rights of the person. It has joined the network of 'shelter cities' welcoming refugees and is experimenting with new forms of co-decision making between citizens and institutions.

You were recently re-elected as Mayor of Naples supported by civil society lists and social movements, and without any of the main political parties backing you. Some of the activists who protested in the streets against austerity and corruption are now city councillors with you. What is the current relationship between civil society and the institutions?

This is an absolute novelty in the institutional and political panorama. The relationship between civil society, social movements, and local institutions is one under construction, where each has to preserve its autonomy while building new relations and forms of participation. There are traditional channels such as the participation of representatives of social movements or occupations in the Council. But then there is also a new way of

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*In the relationship between civil society, social movements, and local institutions each has to preserve its autonomy while building new relations and forms of participation*

working together. For instance, in discussing together the proposals for new municipal laws, in a process of co-deliberation of the regulations that govern the city. How does this happen? Through direct contact, open meetings, popular assemblies in the neighbourhoods, observatories, and by keeping a direct relation with social centres and spaces of activism and active citizenship. For instance, an important project to demolish and replace «Le Vele», an infamous social housing project dating back to the 1960s, was co-designed by the City, the University, and the autonomous neighbourhood committee. This is an open area of experimentation and more ideas and practices will come out in the coming months. Including through the use of online technology. But beyond the social network revolution, we also want to be together physically.

**Back in 2011, in a landmark referendum, 27 million Italians voted for water to be considered a 'common good' and returned to public ownership. Naples is the only one among the large cities to have followed up on this request, bringing back water management under municipal control and beginning to develop a participatory management for the company. How is the process going?**

We are very happy with this. Obviously, there are juridical, technical and financial difficulties, but we have transformed a for-profit company into a public company that is now taking on board the full cycle of water management and has increased the number of employees. We have demonstrated that participatory management can also be an economically viable solution. Now we

need to take more steps towards the participation of workers and citizens in the Board and management of the company. But we remain committed to the idea that water is a commons and we aim to be at the forefront for its participatory management at a European level.

**Speaking of the commons, Naples has a number of buildings occupied by citizens and social movements utilised for cultural, social, or solidarity initiatives. You have recently passed an innovative law identifying such spaces as social commons. Or, in other words, legitimising and legalising social occupations of unused public and private properties.**

These are not occupied but liberated spaces. There are situations where, for whatever reason, public or private

# REBEL CITIES ARE NOT UTOPIA

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owners leave buildings to decay, shutting them off from the population and creating empty zones in our cities. When groups of citizens take them over, clean them, repair them, open them up with social, sports, or cultural activities, these spaces are returned to the citizenry. They are a new commons and they should be treated as such. Not criminalised and evicted.

**Could the model of the commons, with participatory public management be expanded at national level with public companies?**

Yes, the model needs to be extended to state-controlled companies. This is, after all, what Article 41 of the Italian constitution demands, with the idea of civic uses. We have taken back this juridical instrument. Our project is nothing more than the implementation of the republican constitution. And so the same needs to happen at national level.

**The photos of Neapolitan citizens holding 'refugees welcome' signs in Naples went viral in Italy, specially since demonstrations against refugees were happening during the same days in other parts of the country. What's different in Naples? What refugee policy are you putting in place?**

Naples is a refuge city and a city of shelter. We believe solidarity and welcome policies are the best antidote against terrorism and the best way of building bridges between cultures and guaranteeing peace. In Naples, we are either all illegals or no-one is illegal. This is the history of our city, but it is also our political vision. Naples is at the vanguard of a new 'diplomacy from below' working for a Mediterranean of peace and not war – for instance we are increasingly working with North African cities. Let me tell you a story that engaged the whole citizenry of Naples. There was recently a large-scale arrival of migrants from Libya. Naples is a city with a lot of suffering and great economic difficulties: but we have had a rush for solidarity from

all citizens. They were offering not just food and clothing but also opening up their houses to host the migrants. On Christmas eve all those who arrived were hosted by and celebrated with Neapolitan families.

**The question of migration is a good example of a possible new relation between the municipal and the European dimension. Ada Colau has given momentum to a network of European cities of shelter. Gesine Schwan, amongst others, is pushing for a direct connection between cities and the European refugee relocation scheme. Can we imagine a new European role for cities, also bypassing the nation state?**

This is already a reality. I worked towards this when I was a member of the European Parliament in Brussels. As president of the Budget Committee I worked for a considerable share of EU funds to be directly assigned to cities. We need a Europe of cities, a Europe of the people, a Europe of justice and of economic equality. We

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***In Naples, we are either all illegals or no-one is illegal. This is the history of our city, but it is also our political vision***

need to push Brussels to give a greater role to cities and territories, which is a precondition for a more prosperous and democratic future. There are interesting signs emerging not only from Naples but also from Barcelona, Berlin, many cities in Eastern Europe and even London. This is the Europe that opposes that of austerity and budget constraints, walls and borders. This is what we are working for from below. And Naples is on the front line.

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# On nomadism

## A CONVERSATION WITH ROSI BRAIDOTTI

**Rosi Braidotti** is a scholar of gender studies and founding Director of the Centre for the Humanities at Utrecht University.

Over the last few years, we have seen attacks on citizens in some EU member states, deportations in others, and difficulties for citizens to access the rights they are entitled to. Brexit has highlighted the difficulties EU citizens can face in many ways, but should not be seen in isolation, with citizens facing problems in realising their right to move, and to move with their families, in many countries, from Belgium to Sweden, Germany to Romania. Rosi Braidotti has spent a life in transit, moving between cultures and languages. She has explored the notion of «nomadism», which has become the key concept for the development of an extremely rich and original research, varying from poststructuralism, to the history of feminism, to ethics. In this conversation with Sara Saleri, PhD at the University of Bologna, they talked about ethical gestures, feminism and the possibilities of a nomadic political practice.

**Sara Saleri: The idea of the nomadic subject was born as a philosophical concept, as an existential condition, as a (non structured) form of one's own identity. In recent years you have especially reflected on this concept in an ethical dimension, as what should be the basis of political action. We especially think about Transpositions, where you maintain that «a nomadic and not unitary vision of the subject, instead of impeding ethically relevant positions, constitutes a necessary precondition for the formulation of an ethics which measures up to the complexities of our time». Which are the concrete practices you think of when you talk about politics of location, of multiple becoming, of the necessity of going through differences and belongings that can also be contradictory? Which could be the figures and everyday experiences of nomadism?**

Rosi Braidotti: The project on nomadic subjects emerges from feminist philosophies, post-colonial philosophies and anti-racist philosophies, critical theory, social theory. And then it develops into an analytical tool to look at three classes of problems. First of all, the cultural mutations, which I call «the cultural cartography»: what is happening to bodies, identities, belongings, in a world that is technologically mediated, ethnically mixed, and changing very fast in all sort of ways. Secondly, there is a clearly political project: can we think other ways of being globalized, of becoming planetary, or are we stuck with this neoliberal model? Is there another way in which we can rethink our interconnections? And then, finally, the ethical issue: what are the values of subjects who are not unitary but are split, complex, nomadic?

**«We have to start from the fact that the world will never be culturally and ethnically homogenous again: that world is over»**

These three dimensions are reflected in my trilogy of books: *Nomadic Subjects* (1994, Columbia University Press) is the starting social statement, *Metamorphoses* (2002, Polity Press) deals with the cultural part, while *Transpositions* (2006, Polity Press) focuses on ethics.

In terms of practical implications, there are two clear areas in which nomadic subjectivity can be seen. First, the actual practice of flexible citizenship, which I explored in my work on Europe: a temporary, interim citizenship based on delinking ethnic origin from nationality and citizenship and then recombining them in different ways. Our European citizenship allows us to recombine nationality and ethnic origins in very unprecedented ways: in fact, we can delink citizenship from ethnicity and connect it to participation, belonging. And I think that this model of nomadic citizenship, that would be pragmatic and grounded, instead of abstract and based on nationality, is what we have to focus on.

Second, connected to this, the idea of nomadic subject allows us to have a different take on immigration: we have to stop looking at immigration as a problem and see immigration as simply the fact of globalization. We have to start from the fact that the world will never be culturally and ethnically homogenous again: that world is over. Then, we have to think about the multiple forms of belonging of subjects and map out different configurations of nomadism, different ways in which a subject can have multiple belongings, multiple ways in which ethnicity, nationality and citizenship can actually be combined, even within the same nation state.

A model of nomadic post-colonial theory would allow you to de-criminalize, depenalize, de-pathologize the problem, and also not to discuss post-colonial theory only in terms of other possible identities. The crucial thing about nomadic subject is that it is post-identitarian: nomadic is a verb, a process by which we map out multiple transformations and multiple ways of belonging, each depending on where our particular location is and how we grow. So we have to map out the alternative cartographies of the non-unitary subjects that we are, so that we can get rid of any idea that there are subjects that are completely unitary, belonging entirely to one location.

**This concept of «flexible citizenship» seems to recall the idea by Hannah Arendt of reversed human rights, which would guarantee the right to citizenship at an international level. A political citizenship in a political space, wider than the one possible within the nation state. Arendt saw a possibility of this kind of citizenship in the project of federal Europe: do you think this notion could be realised in the Europe we have, increasingly more constructed as a fortress, opposed to those who try to enter its borders? Instead, how can we imagine and how can we build a different Europe, really post-national, which would open to this kind of citizenship?**

We obviously have the Europe that we deserve. Europe is made through elections in which very few people vote. Clearly a political project that constructs a post-national Europe is not there. And Daniel Cohen Bendit, the leader of my party, the European Greens, has been forever working within the institutions, to have the political Europe on the agenda. It's a political decision if we do it or not: the institutional and legal means are in place. If you look at the work done at the European Institute in Florence by

armies of lawyers who have worked out the structure of a possible European citizenship, it is absolutely feasible and easy to delink citizenship from ethnic origins or even nationalities.

So the entire infrastructure is in place, there's no political will. And I think in the last ten years – I was talking with Luisa Passerini about this – the political project of Europe has regressed enormously, under the combined forces of the delirious nationalistic right and the equally delirious old fashioned left: I hold them both entirely responsible. A middle way that can allow to construct a Europe where – as Spinelli, Schumann and Monnet were pointing out – the European framework would actually let us bypass nationalism, would be possible to postulate citizenship on participation, on belonging, on taxation, on being there... allowing people without countries, stateless people, to be citizens. To give everyone the right to have rights, using precisely the European legal framework as an unprecedented legal framework, that would allow us to transcend the nation state. This is the greatness of this project, but it is not highlighted in the public debate.

**A keyword in all your work is «responsibility». In «Transposition», you defined ethics as a whole of «intersected forms of situated responsibility», linked to a politics of location: we have to become «other», to take the responsibilities linked not only to the roles we act, but also to the roles we can keep in memory (a memory which is intergenerational and collective). How do you think this becoming-other, becoming-multiple, can be translated in practice, beyond an increased awareness of oneself as a subject (or many subjects)? Is it a project which ends in the individuality of a subject, or do you think about it also as a collective project?**

I think we have to start from eliminating identities. We will never arrive anywhere if we take identity as a starting point. In fact the whole process of becoming is a process of abandoning identity and entering in the construction of subjectivity, subjectivity being per definition transversal, collective. This is an enormous switch because even the political movements I have known in the 70s were identitarian movements: women's movements would fight for women, gay movements would fight for gays... There is sometimes a sort of one-on-one equivalence between the grief and the remedy, what you are complaining against and what you propose as an alternative. This one-on-one equivalence has to switch, transcending the merely identitarian claim, and look at the broader issue.

This point was already made back in the 80s by poststructuralists, when there was a critique of Hegelian and Marxist identity politics. It went for a large part unheard, but if you read early Foucault, middle Deleuze, Derrida, it is clear that the only possible ethics for the global world is collectively shared, because the scale of the problems is planetary, gigantic.

**«Nomadic is a verb, a process by which we map out multiple transformations and multiple ways of belonging»**

An example for this is what people continue to call «the environmental problem» – as if it were a problem, when it is in fact the possibility of the future. It is like immigration: these issues are not problems, they are either a fact or a condition of possibility for survival. You can't address a problem today, whether it is water, or clean air, without having to take into account a common condition, planetary, almost global, and future generations. That is the clear example of the ethical shift that we need.

And of course our morality – Kantian or Judeo-Christian – is not only individualistic but it is like a contract between self and other, a negotiation: «I don't do to you what you don't do to me, etc.». A kind of capitalist driven negotiation of boundaries. No matter what neo-Kantians of today – such as Martha Nussbaum – say, that model is simply inadequate to the scale and dimension of problems we have.

We need to be able to think for future generations who cannot do anything for us. The future per definition cannot be reciprocal, so we should exit the Kantian morality «I do that for you, you do that for me»... No! You do that for the love of humanity, because if we don't do that, there is not going to be a humanity! So we have to give up the idea of reciprocity and we instead to know that we share a specificity of a certain condition. And we have to give up a certain notion which, by the year 2010, has led to an assimilation of progress with further consumption: you will consume more than we did, we consume more than our parents did, our parents consumed more than their parents did... as a consequence of that, now we are at the verge of a catastrophe, financial, environmental, demographic.

The eco-philosophical problem highlights the size of the issues we look at. When we look at war and peace, development, problems in the third world, increasing poverty in the first world ... I think either we understand we are in this together, or it's not going to work. It's not a matter of choice but of necessity, to think of collective responsibility in a non-reciprocal manner, covering humans and nonhumans. We need an ethics for our times, and not the application of moral rules that are based in an 18th century world – I'm sorry, but I don't live in that world. I don't even think we have to see it as a choice.

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This conversation is an excerpt of an interview published in May 2010 in Transeuropa Magazine. The full interview is available online.

European Alternatives is collaborating with Krytyka Polityczna and European Citizens Action Service to train citizens and activists to defend freedom of movement and fight the increasing insecurity in the rights of citizens in the EU. Trainings will take place in Transeuropa 2017. The training series is supported by the European Programme for Integration and Migration (EPIM), a collaborative initiative of the Network of European Foundations.

# EUROPE AS A REFUGE

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**Ségolène Pruvot** is the Cultural Director at European Alternatives and the manager of the Re-Build Refuge Europe Project.

Europe cannot afford to become a continent of hate. Every time hate is given some ground, any small ground, violence, death and atrocities are given ground too. And Europe cannot afford to turn a blind eye on the suffering of others. Every time a newcomer is beaten or tortured on its way to Europe, every time a person is mistreated on an expulsion flight or in an 'administrative retention' centre, every time a person is left freezing, hungry and sick at its borders, Europe and its people are betraying themselves.

They are betraying the ideal of solidarity and peace, they are putting at stakes their own future, one in which one day they may have to ask for support, security and help to those who are less fortunate or less powerful today. They denied to all the people who have left their country in the hope of a better future and a better life, to find at least a better refuge in Europe.

We believe that it is the cultural role and duty of Europe to welcome refugees properly and to allow for cultural hybridisation to happen. We believe that it is only by fully realising the potential offered by culture and arts to become welcoming and supportive place, Europe will build a resilient and creative society for its future, inside and outside its borders. We believe that those who have come to Europe at one stage or the other, with the willingness to become a part of the European project, should be welcomed and helped, rather than repelled, expelled, disrespected and mistreated.

Transeuropa Festival has been about mobility, movement, and fluxes since its start in 2007. Its first speaker was notably Zygmunt Bauman, thinker specialized on liquidity in the post-modern world. Transeuropa Festival is and has always been a statement about and for the openness of the European project. Europe is conceived as a space in which several influences mix to create something new, a political unit based on solidarity and on the willingness of common construction, to which all those who wish so have the right and the possibility to be part of.

Transeuropa Festival is built on the idea that place of birth, gender, race, and sexual orientation should never be an obstacle for someone who wishes to become a full part of a common project: Europe. The Festival is in itself made of hybrid space(s) that are spaces of creation, exchange, common construction, with people coming from all corners of Europe (and way beyond the borders of the European Union).

For Transeuropa 2017, migrants and local residents have created common cultural spaces of experience to be brought to Madrid. Within the frame of a project called Re-Build Refuge Europe, they have commonly created workshops, storytelling activities, exhibitions and performances, treating Culture and Art as concrete tools to break walls and create bridges from the ruins of xenophobia and hate speeches.

Our aim with these activities is to counteract the dominant discourses of 'migrants crisis' and 'threat' by using art, culture and innovative practices, allowing European citizens and refugees to learn from each other, as equals. We want Transeuropa to be a space of experimentation, practices and ideas that can easily be reproduced in other places and by other people; a space for inspiration, improvement and reinvention for all.

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«Europe as a Refuge» is one of the main themes of Transeuropa 2017 in Madrid.

The program of Transeuropa includes activities coming from the project «Re-Build Refuge Europe» in partnership with Perpetuum Mobile, AthenSYN, Zemos98, and Varldskulturmuseet, including open artistic exhibitions and public debates. The project is co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union.

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*It is the cultural role and duty of Europe to welcome refugees properly and to allow for cultural hybridisation to happen*

# THREE QUESTIONS

**Pınar Öğrenci** (b. 1973, Van, Turkey) is an artist, activist and writer with a background in architecture. Öğrenci uses various media in her artistic practice, including photography, video, film, performance and installation. Her work addresses subjects such as migration, war, nationalism, cultural assimilation or collective celebrations, and include stories of great courage and transformation. Her works have been exhibited widely at museums and art institutions including at the Kunst Haus Wien-Hundertwasser Museum, 2017; WKV Stuttgart, 2017; the Istanbul off-site project for Sharjah Biennial13, 2017; AR Pavilion – Athens, 2017; MAXXI Museum, Rome, 2015-6; SALT Galata, Istanbul, 2015-6; Angewandte, Vienna, 2016, De Las Fronteras Biennial, Tamaulipas, 2015; Sinop Biennial, 2014; Çanakkale Biennial, 2014 and Depo, Istanbul, 2014. She is the founder and organizer of MARSistanbul, an art initiative launched in 2010.

Feeling helpless in the face of the news of so many deaths that kept coming from southeastern Turkey in 2015, Pınar Öğrenci became engaged in an initiative called «I am walking for peace». Organized on social media in mid-December 2015, the initiative stood against the war of aggression being perpetrated by Turkish armed forces against the Kurdish people living in the south-east of the country. It demanded an end to the murder of the civilian population and called for the peace process to be restarted. Öğrenci was arrested on the December 31st 2015, when the «I am walking for peace» initiative arrived in Diyarbakır, the main city of Turkey's Kurdish area. Along with 23 peace marchers, she was detained for 4 days. The Turkish Government accuses Öğrenci of being a terrorist, which is punishable by a sentence of 18 years imprisonment. Her case started in April 2015 and is still continuing. In 2017, she was the first AR-Safe Haven Athens Resident of ARTISTS at RISK (AR), a new institution at the intersection of human rights and the arts, founded by Perpetuum Mobile (PM), dedicated to mapping the field of persecuted visual art practitioners, facilitating their safe passage from their countries of origin and hosting them at «AR-Safe Haven Residencies».

**Ivor Stodolsky and Marita Muukkone of PM (IS&MM):** What was the initiative called «I Am Walking For Peace», and how did you come to join it?

In the final week of the year 2015, thinking about the meaning of New Year's celebrations, I was feeling helpless in the face of the news of deaths continuously coming from the east [of Turkey, ed.]. Three days before New Year's eve, I saw a call made by a group which called itself 'I Am Walking for Peace' on social media. The call was issued in mid-December, and was clearly made by a group of individuals who were completely independent – they were not members of any political party. Their statement said that they would set out from Bodrum by coach, and travel through Ankara, Adana and Urfa to finally arrive in Diyarbakır [the capital of the eastern region with a predominantly Kurdish population]. A small rally would be held in every city, and a press statement would be read out. The statement also added that no slogans would be chanted – the marches were to be silent. The goal of the march was to make a call for peace, and to demand that the killing be stopped. I found this call very humane, and joined the group in Ankara.

Looking back today, it feels incredible that people from the West of the country –who did not even know each other at that point– left their secure and comfortable homes and travelled to a region where a real war was taking place, where bombs exploded in the streets every day. I can now say that I feel proud to be among those people who felt shame in the face of war, and did not refrain from expressing their opinion.

*«It feels incredible that people from the west of the country left their comfortable homes and travelled to a region where a real war was taking place»*

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# TO PINAR ÖĞRENCİ

«Migration is something that change national and international political structures, something that constantly reorganizes forms of life»

**In your recent work, you have started working with displaced artists. What is your experience as an artist working with others subject to this difficult predicament?**

Wars have a massive negative impact on the lives of everyone. In recent years, Turkey's political climate is increasingly fed by violence and oppression. As dissidents in Turkey there is great anxiety. I personally fear that a civil war is coming. As an artist, this fear has brought me closer to not only to refugees from war-torn regions, but also refugee-artists.

Having lost their house, their belongings, and the worst of all, their dreams, they share their destiny with millions of others. Syrians who had to leave their country after the war are now dispersed across many countries. I wanted to write and make art about a specific group – those who we tend the code as Arab or Syrian immigrants, those who are reduced to a desperate existence on the street or in a camp.

When I set out to prepare on a work focusing on Syrian artists living in İstanbul, my immediate thought was to have dinner together at the atelier in Osmanbey. It meant something to dine together with these five artists who were dispersed all over İstanbul, living at risk of everything changing overnight. Furthermore, artistic circles are not always so open. In any case, we were trying not to talk about the war as much as possible, but the war, with its grave reality, kept ripping our conversation to pieces.

For artists from the region I met, İstanbul, Damascus and Aleppo all resemble one another. They told me that social life in İstanbul was very much like their lives in Syria and that they felt at home – when shopping, ordering food, or walking in the streets, even though they could not speak Turkish. Similarities between the cities made life easier, although they still have difficulty finding their way into the İstanbul art community, as they are often left to communicate only with one another.

**The political significance of art lies in the promotion of a democratic dialogue between different people that can relate local experiences to global processes. What is or should be the role of art today helping to imagine new spaces to build safe places in Europe and outside Europe?**

Particularly, I think that art-production related to immigration and the experience of war is important in developing dialogue, but I think these productions should respect ethical values. I would like to give an example from my latest work in relation to this. In 2017, I produced several video works about a refugee musician from Baghdad, who now lives in Vienna. In addition to telling Ahmad's personal story – his journey from Baghdad to İstanbul, from İstanbul to Mytilene and finally to Vienna – we also organized a solidarity concert under the title 'Ahmed Needs an Oud'. Ahmd needed a new oud [a middle-eastern type of lyre, ed.] to replace the oud that he was forced to throw into the Aegean Sea when he took a smuggler's boat from Turkey to the island of Mytilene in Greece. During my solo show A Gentle Breeze Passed Over Us in Kunsthau Vienna, in which I told Ahmed's story, I also organized a

second concert called 'Ahmed Needs His Papers'. The exhibition and the concert we organized, which gave an airing to Ahmed's musical voice, was a success. Ahmed now plays with many orchestras in Austria, including the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. These orchestras have concluded a concert tour with Ahmed. He now also finally received a passport and residence permit.

As the art historian Emre Zeytinoğlu wrote about my latest works about migration, if there is such an area of knowledge as «history», one of the things it cares for the most is migration. Or in other words: None of the situations that constitute this area of knowledge could be explained without touching on the notion of migration. A historical text lets us know the results of masses moving from place to place, either openly or discreetly, or it talks about movements that took place after certain events. While all historical documents are, according to Walter Benjamin, documents of barbarianism, or as Theodor Adorno says, they are made of blood and cruelty, each and every one of them carries a story of migration.

Migration is something that change national and international political structures, something that constantly reorganizes forms of life. This has always been the case. Perhaps one of the most striking examples of this was remarked on by Fernand Braudel. While writing on the Mediterranean, he emphasized that the dynamics of those who form the culture of the region could not be explained only by those born on its shores. Those who immigrated to these shores by sailing, their children who were born later, and even those who conquered these shores were the founders of the Mediterranean way of life. As Braudel says, life is transformed into a partnership through the «constant efforts of people yesterday and today». This means that if the documents of blood, cruelty, and barbarity can be transformed into a shared civilization document, this can only be through an «endless effort».

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ARTISTS at RISK (AR) will be in Transeuropa in Matadero (Paseo de la Chopera, 14) with AR-PAVILION, an exhibition with AR-Resident artists Pinar Öğrenci and Erkan Özgen. It is curated by Marita Muukkonen and Ivor Stodolsky, the Co-founding Directors of Perpetuum Mobile (PM).



# THREE QUESTIONS TO ERKAN ÖZGEN

**Erkan Özgen** was born in Derik in Mardin province, Turkey, and graduated from the Department of Art Education, Cukurova University in 2000. His artistic path began in 1998 with a contemporary art exhibition «Young Activities» in Istanbul, and internationally with «In Den Schluchten des Balkan» (2003) exhibition curated by René Block at Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel. He has also organised workshops in Beirut, Damascus, Diyarbakir, Enshede and Helsinki. In 2005 he received the «Prix Meuly», Switzerland. He is also a teacher and a founding member of the Mesopotamian Ecology Movement. Erkan Özgen was an ARTIST-at-RISK Resident at Safe Haven Helsinki by Perpetuum Mobile (PM) and was an artist in PM's 1st AR Pavilion, Athens 2017.

**Marita Muukkonen and Ivor Stodolsky:** From 2003 to 2009, you worked with well-known figures such as René Block and Harald Szeemann, and were acclaimed for your humorous work «The Road to Tate Modern». In the following years, did you re-focus your energies? We know you became part of an ecological movement in eastern Turkey. Was this a conscious turn?

I have been continuing my artistic journey without the support of an institution or gallery over the last twenty years. For an artist, lack of opportunities is equal to being unrecognised, but I believe that risk of being unrecognised or forgotten triggers creativity and strong artistic productions. I get inspiration to produce art from the life that I live in.

The city and region that I live in has been an economic and politic target of the government. I have been negatively affected by the government practices, also for showing my resistance by participating in the Mesopotamian Ecology Movement (MEM). MEM has been active ecology movement since 2011. Unfortunately it has not developed as we planned due to political oppression and war conditions in the region. However, many things have been done and ecology councils established in many towns and cities. One of the main aims is «stopping» the ecological and societal destruction of the war in the region by creating a change to rebuild a society in peace with itself and the environment. As an artist I am part of nature. I need clean water, healthy food, and a peaceful world to survive, like all other living forms.

In the summer of 2016, you stayed at the «Artists at Risk» AR-Safe Haven Helsinki Residency with your family. Why did you apply for the residency? What was the meaning of the residency for your artistic and other projects? Can you tell us about the new video work you started to film on the island of Suomenlinna?

We were living in the «fifth season of hell» in Diyarbakir. We needed to take a breath after the destructive atmosphere of the war over the last two years. So I decided to apply to the program. In contrast to the situation in Diyarbakir, Suomenlinna was a relaxed tourist destination. I noticed some common things between these two places, however, and was inspired to make a video. The army in Diyarbakir used heavy weapons and armoured tanks. On Suomenlinna, historical cannons are located around the island, which is in fact a UNESCO heritage site. The cannons attract tourists and they often take photos around them. To me, this was very interesting, so I recorded how they behaved around the cannons. I had the chance to talk with some of those tourists. I asked them, «Why are you attracted by these cannons? Did you know that these cannons were made to kill people, and they actually killed many? These weapons are murderers. What do you feel when you touch a murderer?» I received some responses like «These were made a century ago. They are not in use any more. They're just remains.» Military tanks were used in the central neighbourhood of Diyarbakir called Sur. I wondered if UNESCO would include those in its records of world heritage too. I continued to wonder if people would take photographs around those tanks, which were used to kill hundreds of people and destroy their houses, like the cannons on the island of Suomenlinna.

You have periodically been subject to a travel-ban by the Turkish government. Why do you think they issued a personalised travel ban? You are one of 11,000 of teachers that were suspended from their jobs by the post-coup Erdogan government, but then reinstated. What are the current charges? What can be done to lift this ban?

Like many of my colleagues, I was the victim of an unjust decision and practices of the government under the state of emergency. The travel ban is/ was due to my participation in a strike organised by my union. The theme of the strike was «Stop war! Children want to go school, not to die!» Despite our anti-war stance, we were charged with supporting terrorism. The level of oppression rose dramatically.

ARTISTS at RISK (AR) will be in Transeuropa in Matadero (Paseo de la Chopera, 14) with AR-PAVILION, an exhibition with AR-Resident artists Pinar Ögrenci and Erkan Özgen. It is curated by Marita Muukkonen and Ivor Stodolsky, the Co-founding Directors of Perpetuum Mobile (PM).

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*We were living in the fifth season of hell in Diyarbakir. We needed to take a breath after the destructive atmosphere of the war over the last two years*

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## Erkan Özgen

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The video *Wonderland* is a narration by Muhammed, who used to live with his family in a small town named Kobani in northern Syria, on his story of escaping the war.



# EVERYDAY BORDERS

## A CONVERSATION WITH NAKANY KANTÉ

When Nakany Kanté gets on stage, she knows the power of her words count as much –if not more– as the music she sings. The audiovisual performance the Guinean singer has prepared with Metromuster mixes live music and poetry readings as a sung narration. The image of Nakany on stage is combined with footage filmed by Metromuster to tell the story of Idrissa Diallo, a 21-year-old who died in a hospital in Barcelona after being arrested and sent to a detention center in Zona Franca. This artistic collaboration between Nakany Kanté and Metromuster examines Europe's colonial past and the origins of its institutional racism. We speak with Nakany about music, art, and how the combination of both help to achieve social change.

**You arrived to Barcelona from Conakry (Guinea) in 2009, to start a project based on traditional African music. In 2013, you put out your first record, *Saramaya*. How was the creating process of the album, and how has your music evolved in *Naka*, your second record?**

**Nakany Kanté:** We recorded the entire first record in my house first, before we went into the studio. The working method was very intense and new to me, but I had a lot of clear ideas in my head that I wanted to express. At that time my influences came mainly from my most traditional side. It was a new and very gratifying

process for me, and it really was then when I realised all the work that comes with the production of a carefully made record, of all the steps you need to take before you have the album you want. There certainly is an evolution, and new influences, in my second record *Naka*. The writing process was different from any other process I had been a part of in the past: I wrote most of the songs on my guitar, and we shaped them with the musicians afterwards. The result is an overview of my time in Barcelona, and the influence it had on my day to day life.

**You have mentioned several times that there is always a social statement in your texts that comes from personal or very close experiences. *Bidenou*, which means «today's kids» in malinké, speaks about children living on the streets; *Djanfa* means «betrayal», and it talks about forgiving. Which are the themes you usually deal with in your songs, and what inspires you to write?**

**Nakany Kanté:** The truth is I have a strong social conscience, which is why, as you say, in my songs I speak about gender inequality, the suffering of kids on the streets, jealousy, justice, but also love. I find inspiration in my experiences and what I've seen through my life, especially in Africa. Right now I feel the need to talk about that in my songs.

**«*N'torola* (It bothers me) is a feminist song because, specially in Africa, men believe they are superior and women have a lot of burdens: going to the store, taking care of the kids, go sell... I wish things in Africa were like they are here! There, when a man says no, it means no and that's it! But there is starting to be a change of mentality. There is hope».<sup>1</sup> What are some feminist achievements happening today in Guinea?**

**Nakany Kanté:** Well, I don't think there are too many, but for example, divorce used to be unthinkable, many women had to put up with a bad husband, suffer humiliations, etc. Little by little this is changing, new generations, both men and women, are changing their mentality.

**You come to Transeuropa with *Idrissa*, a performance produced in collaboration with Metromuster that relates to his new documentary on Idrissa Diallo's life, a young man whose controversial death at a detention centre in Barcelona in 2012 has become one of the main symbols of the battle for the closing of detention centres in Spain. How do you think art, and specifically your music, can help give visibility to racism and migrants' realities?**

**Nakany Kanté:** First of all, the possibility of showing this work allows us to educate people who don't know about these realities. I do the same thing through music. To me, performing is such a great opportunity to pass on that message to people.

*«I find inspiration in my experiences and what I've seen through my life, especially in Africa»*

**Journalistic work can barely be done at migration detention centres in Spain, and many other countries in Europe. To what extent, and how have you contributed to the investigation process of Idrissa's death?**

**Nakany Kanté:** My collaboration in Idrissa's project has had different stages. First, I tried phone communication with a member of Idrissa's family through a number we had been given, but it was impossible to establish communication. Then I travelled to Guinea with Metromuster's team to try to find Idrissa's family. It was a very hard process, but fortunately very successful. It was an unforgettable experience. The truth is Metromuster is doing an incredible and absolutely necessary work.

1. Nakany Kanté in her interview for El Periodico in March 2016: <http://www.elperiodico.com/es/noticias/ocio-y-cultura/guineana-nakany-kante-apolo-disco-naka-5008531>

Nakany Kanté will perform in Transeuropa Festival, in an audiovisual and musical performance in collaboration with Metromuster, Friday October 27th at the Matadero de Madrid (Paseo de la Chopera, 14).

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**Nakany Kanté**  
performing in  
Barcelona in the  
BccN Creative  
Commons Film  
Festival.  
Photo by Rafa  
de los Arcos.

# FROM EAST TO WEST, FEMINISM IN POLITICS

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**Oana Băluță & Carmen Castro**

**Oana Băluță** is an Associate Professor on the Faculty of Journalism and Communication Studies at the University of Bucharest and member of the new Initiative Group Demos in Romania.

**Carmen Castro** holds a PhD in Economics, specialised in Policies and in birth permit systems. She reflect about it in her last book *Políticas de igualdad. Permisos por nacimiento y transformación de los roles de género*. You can follow her in @sinGENEROdUDAS and in her website [singenerodedudas.com](http://singenerodedudas.com)

What «feminising politics» means has been largely written and discussed in Spain over the past couple of years. The debate, which is still developing, has some axes that can help us understand the difficulties of introducing feminism into politics without first transforming the political institutions and movements themselves from the inside through daily feminist actions in both public and domestic spaces. The level in which women are involved and participate in political debates connects with their historical underrepresentation in the public spaces. But what is the scenario like in the other side of Europe? How are the debates around the concepts of 'feminising' or 'feminist politics' and the gender-transformative policies in countries like Romania? Oana Băluță and Carmen Castro bring some insights on the topic from two sides of Europe.

#### **What does «feminising politics» mean to you?**

**Oana Băluță:** The notion covers both descriptive and substantive gender representation. Feminising descriptive representation means increasing women's presence in decision making, while feminising substantive representation strengthens the need to develop a gender inclusive political agenda that will advance women or gender friendly public policies. These approaches should be clearly understood as two ways of feminising politics that can work hand in hand or independently. There have been wide debates concerning the topic and I do not want to add more important nuances now, just to acknowledge their presence either in the academia or political praxis. In my opinion both dimensions are important. Women's descriptive representation needs to increase in politics because women should make decisions that concern their own life and the life of their communities and countries. When women make political decisions they may also advance policies in some fields that concern especially women: gender based violence, work-life balance, sexual and reproductive rights, etc. This does not mean that only women can support these types of policies or that only these fields are important for women. I believe there is no need for me to argue how important green policies, measures to fight poverty and to increase

employment are for women. At the same time, I want to strengthen a fact grounded in the political experience of my country. When you analyse who have been the proponents of legislative changes in the field of gender violence and who has advanced the most important changes, we notice that most of them have been women MPs. The theoretical nuances and the political praxis tells us that it is an ongoing debate that needs to be understood and situated in various country contexts to better reflect on the shape it takes.

Feminising politics cannot be reduced only to formal politics, it is also to activism and community mobilisation. Activists have their own ways and strategies to support representation and the development of an inclusive agenda. To resume, I correlate feminising politics to descriptive and substantive representation, to formal and institutional politics and activism.

**Carmen Castro:** In my opinion, the concept itself refers to the result of a higher presence and participation of women in politics. Obviously, when the participation ratio gets even and the representation is increasingly gender-equal, more elements will contribute to the political debate, and practical needs associated to gender roles (and not addressed in the androcentric culture of political organizations) will be brought up. However, thinking that said process will automatically mean a transformation of politics is more a projection of the 'feminist desideratum' than an immediate possibility.

**The concept (feminisation of politics) is often misunderstood as quotas for women in political representation rather than a symbolic and cultural transformation of the nature itself of political organising (with a focus, for example, on care work as basis of the production system, on welfare, on organising practices, on language...) What are the main directions that a feminisation of politics should take?**

**Oana Băluță:** Quotas for women address descriptive representation. They are an answer to one problem: gender imbalance in politics or the descriptive masculinisation of politics. Quotas are not a miraculous instrument; they are not a panacea for each and every problem concerning women or gender or the world that we live in. If feminisation of politics means both the political inclusion of women and the inclusion of their interests/needs and perspectives, quotas per se address the first criteria.

It is reductionist to consider that quotas stand as the ultimate example for the feminisation of politics. It is an answer to one problem, and an important one if carefully implemented. Nevertheless, quotas are sometimes used as an instrument by political parties to tackle gender equality while ignoring other demands correlated to gender public policies. I will give you one example, a party may support descriptive representation, and it can embrace a conservative understanding of gender roles and identities. At the same time, it often happens that those opposing quotas focus more on the need to change gender policies, and almost not at all on the gender of representatives. A wide number of studies show the two are correlated in the sense that the gender of representatives does matter in regards to what policies are present on the agenda. We see again how challenging is the relationship between descriptive and substantive representation both on normative grounds, but also in the political life. In my opinion, both approaches that I briefly referred to fail to understand the role of quotas.

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**It is reductionist to consider that quotas stand as the ultimate example for the feminisation of politics**

Feminisation of politics should address three layers: who makes decisions, policies that are shaped, and the political praxis that should value more cooperation, participation and less the confrontational and competitive aspects of politics. The last layer is debatable since critics may argue that women can also be competitive and confrontational. Still, whether it is a feminisation of politics or not or just an outcome of more reasonability, decision makers need to also consider cooperation and solidarity as two landmarks of democracy.

**Carmen Castro:** Even though the issue of 'feminizing' politics seems to be activating a very interesting and necessary debate, I argue that for it to be more than a pose, it needs to come with real proposals to depatriarchalize the structure, politics, power, and society. To insist on the idea that by increasing the presence of women in the public sphere and assuming the 'ethics of care' in the functioning of structures we will gain the necessary potential to trigger a real change in them, is to engage on a discursive illusion.

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**In what way does feminising politics mean a step towards more justice and inclusion of other oppressed subjects and collectives?**

**Oana Băluță:** If feminising politics means more than descriptive representation and if the demands of activists become part of the formal political agenda, the answer is yes. Feminists have addressed diversity issues for a number of decades. Feminist ideas/ theoretical approaches and feminist community activism are dedicated to promoting social justice and inclusion not only of women, but also of other vulnerable persons. Think about feminists supporting green causes, or fighting poverty, or feminists that have been allies of the LGBTQ community. The unity principles of Women's March from 2017 are a good example to understand that feminism is inclusive and nowadays it visibly and publicly addresses different subjects and collectives. These principles address: LGBTQIA+ rights, workers' rights, disability rights, immigrant rights, environmental justice <https://www.womensmarch.com/principles/>. Show me another ideology or movement that is so inclusive and aware of other oppressed subjects and collectives...

**Carmen Castro:** Paritary democracy is necessary for the normalization of democracy, and for social justice. As parity increases, we widen the diversity in politics and rise the possibility of including those who are further from hegemonic masculinity, and have historically been excluded.

**«Feminising» can be a debatable term to define this change in priorities as it may be accused of implying an «essentialised» notion of female characteristics. What's your take on this?**

**Oana Băluță:** The concept of strategic essentialism was introduced in the 1980s by Gayatri Spivak. It is a political tactic that helps, for instance, minority and ethnic groups to mobilise on the basis of shared gendered, cultural or political identity. It is sometimes important from a strategic viewpoint to mobilise starting from some «essentialised» features to advance your interests and redesign the political agenda. This does not mean that those shared features define all aspects of the individuals. It is important to be aware of the fact that intersectionality, the term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, is again a very powerful and vivid concept that provoked universalism, racism, and sexism. Coming back to the essentialised perception of female characteristics, when I argue that kindergartens and crèches need to be among policy priorities or that women must have access to reproductive rights, I do not believe that women are their bodies or that gender roles are static. Women and men have different gender roles in real life (we know about gender socialisation that teaches boys and girls about «their place»). If some roles generate inequality, I think it is our responsibility to advance those policies that will either reduce or eliminate inequality. These policies also reflect a change in priorities towards a «feminised agenda». If I argue for access to safe abortion, this does not mean that giving birth is women's duty. It is a choice and when materialised, I consider it a political responsibility to make sure women have access to safe public maternities. Romania has the highest mortality rate in Europe due to cervical cancer. Policies to address the incredibly high mortality rate due to breast cancer or cervical cancer ought to be a priority. Does this mean feminising healthcare policies? It might, but the honest truth is I do not care. I only care for the development of a responsive health strategy that also includes the problems, needs and interests of women.

**Carmen Castro:** I don't think the debate should be focused in the idea of 'feminization of politics' because, despite the good intentions, there is a high risk of it being used as a ploy to distract, to reinforce the stereotypically gendered system through the symbolic value of labeling certain skills –desirable in politics– as «feminine».

We need to directly address the specific inequalities that take place within the political structure, the subtle and not-so-subtle violence mechanisms that are always present, or the playing down of feminists in politics. There has to be zero tolerance to mansplaining in left-wing organizations, to the resistance to direct the public budget to gender equality, and an eradication of femicide, with the active implication of the whole political structure. These are just some aspects of the whole process of de-patriarchalization.

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*Even though the issue of feminizing politics seems to be activating a very interesting debate, I argue that for it to be more than a pose*

**The Feminisation of politics is definitely a tenet of the change that many «rebel cities» are bringing forward throughout Europe, especially in Spain. In what way the «new municipalities» or local politics are translating or should translate the concept of feminisation of politics into practice?**

**Carmen Castro:** I firmly believe that it is necessary to insist in a change of the symbolic imaginary. Leaderships like Ada Colau's (Barcelona), Manuela Carmena (Madrid), or Mónica Oltra (País Valencià) encourage another way of making politics, closer to everyday life concerns, explicitly dealing with social care; it has to do with the advocacy of public services, such as aid for dependent people, nursery school, nursing homes, and the prevention of male violence. It is obvious that these leaderships encourage a willingness towards these issues, but they do not guarantee that the patriarchal and heteronormative structures will start questioning male privilege, developing feminist politics, or creating a real change in the order of their priorities.

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Carmen Castro will be running a workshop on «de-patriarchalization of politics» in Transeuropa.

# WHAT'S AFTER GLOBALISATION?

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**Lorenzo Marsili** is a writer, activist, and the director of *European Alternatives*.

Nation states increasingly appear as insufficient vehicles to approach the challenges brought about by technological innovation, migration, climate change, or financial flows. Locally, new regional and municipalist claims - from Wallonia to Barcelona - as well as a thriving discourse on commons and autonomy, demand a new democracy of proximity. The traditional form of the nation-state is being undone at once from above and from below.

And yet the crisis of the nation-state is matched by an equally aggressive crisis of any attempt to move beyond it, matching globalisation of the economy with a globalisation of politics. The European Union - the world's most advanced experiment in post-nationalism - is seen by many as a coercive, undemocratic space entrenching unjust economic policies. Its failure in promoting a common migration policy, common measures against multinational tax evasion or true economic solidarity is clear for

all to see. At the same time global institutions - from the G7 to the G20, passing via the IMF and the World Bank - appear stalled and split between competing interests, while a new geopolitics of global power is being drawn. The same, from the perspective of citizens and social movements, can be said of the experience of the World Social Forum and other global activist forums.

Precisely the crisis of the EU and of global governance, at a time when more and more of our challenges have a clearly European or global nature, point to the need to deeply restructure our capacity to do politics beyond borders. In the age of the crisis of both nationalism and globalisation, when the maintenance of transnational status quo is being constructed on the violations of borders, peripheral wars, and the emergence of new walls and conflicts, a renewed, progressive and inspirational vision for cross-border unity and international solidarity appears to be of highest urgency.

**«Locally, new regional and municipalist claims demand a new democracy of proximity. The traditional form of the nation-state is being undone at once from above and from below»**

Transeuropa partners with The Kyiv International - Kyiv Biennial 2017 to take this conversation head on. We will do so in a split-symposium hosted in Madrid (October 28th) and in Kyiv (November 22nd). Ukraine and the countries of the European Union share a great number of challenges and threats. Ukraine has been recently living through powerful new experiences - the enthusiasm, and the disappointment of the Maidan revolution, the shock of war, mass displacement of people, - whilst the EU has been facing waves of refugees, the shrinking of its territory after Brexit, and the rise of far-right populism and terror. The absence of ready-made patterns for dealing with these experiences, the discontent with the preexistent structures, along with a strong desire and the urgent need for change, is a conducive context for intense intellectual and creative search for a new way forwards.

What shape would a renewed international solidarity take? What kind of sensibility, conceptual structures, paths of thinking and imagination should we develop? What could be the basis for new transnational cooperation and who should be its subjects? If the nation is moribund and globalisation stalled, what's next?

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Transeuropa 2017 partners with The Kyiv International - Kyiv Biennial 2017.

Lorenzo Marsili and Vasyi Cherepanyn will be speaking in Transeuropa on Saturday October 28th in Matadero of Madrid (Paseo de la Chopera, 14) to take this conversation head on in a split-symposium hosted in Madrid and in Kyiv (November 22nd).

# WHAT EUROPE DOES UKRAINE NEED?

## A STATEMENT ON THE EUROPEAN INTERNATIONAL

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**Vasyl Cherepanyn** is a director of the Visual Culture Research Center (Kyiv, Ukraine) and member of Political Critique in Ukraine.

What Europe Does Ukraine need? Putting the question about Europe this way obviously reminds us of Freud's famous question that has never been answered: «What does a woman want?» Having «need» instead of «want» inverts the perspective – the Europe that Ukraine wants apparently differs from the Europe Ukraine really needs. Moreover, the Europe needed by Ukraine is also the one needed by Europe itself, even if its current embodiment in the form of the EU does not long for it.

First of all, the Europe that we all need today is a Europe of Enlightenment. This refers to the centrality of freedom and democracy, most of all the freedom to use one's intelligence – «Dare to know!», as Kant stated it succinctly. Challenging the traditional authorities, this principle results in secularization, so much required in times of religious fundamentalisms, and has led to the Declaration of Human Rights, the Declaration of Independence in the USA, and to the end of slavery and aristocracy.

Secondly, the Europe we need today is a Europe of modernity. This is a readiness to create utopias for social change, to search for political alternatives, the priority of equality, and anti-conservatism. Modernity also means an aesthetic revolution – the emancipation of art and its ability to capture our experience in its wholeness. Modernity, as we know from Habermas, is an unfinished project – like Europe itself, both need fulfillment and accomplishment.

**«Europe needs a Re-Union. The current model of the EU has to be renewed and expanded to deal with new global political challenges»**

Thirdly, the Europe we need is a Europe of the Spring of the Peoples – the most widespread revolutionary wave in European history, changing political leadership, increasing people's participation in governments, bringing freedom of press and the end of serfdom in Eastern Europe. Today, Europe is experiencing a new spring of the peoples – immigrants, refugees, and escapers from the warfare in Europe's south and east are coming from different sides and changing Europe onwards.

To accomplish the European project nowadays means to fulfill its most urgent need, which is establishing European citizenship. Overcoming the limits of nation-states in Europe means creating the first international democracy – the European International based on the common European citizenship.

Europe needs a Re-Union. The current model of the EU has to be renewed and expanded to deal with new global political challenges and to apply its principles and rules on the whole European continent.

The constitution of European citizenship would be the best European revolution one could ever imagine.

*Res publica est res populi.*

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Transeuropa 2017 partners with The Kyiv International – Kyiv Biennial 2017.

Lorenzo Marsili and Vasyl Cherepanyn will be speaking in Transeuropa on Saturday October 28th in Matadero of Madrid (Paseo de la Chopera, 14) to take this conversation head on in a split-symposium hosted in Madrid and in Kyiv (November 22nd).

# Shifting Baselines of Europe

NEW PERSPECTIVES BEYOND NEOLIBERALISM  
AND NATIONALISM

European Alternatives:  
Daphne Büllsbach,  
Marta Cillero,  
Lukas Stolz (eds.)

## SHIFTING BASELINES OF EUROPE

New Perspectives  
beyond Neoliberalism  
and Nationalism

[transcript] X T E X T S

What if another Europe already exists? The new book of European Alternatives follows this question and explores a Europe beyond Neoliberalism and Nationalism. Etienne Balibar opens the book, asking for «Our European incapacity». In her reply Ulrike Guérot reflects on what «Our European capacities» could be. Together they tackle the fundamental crisis underlying the European integration process, the missed opportunity to become a Union of Citizens by giving up on national sovereignty.

The publication is inspired by a meeting of 80 activists, researchers and artists from across the continent which took place in 2016. European Alternatives invited them to its biannual Campus to develop strategies for an open and democratic Europe. Many of the projects presented at the Campus are to be found in the book: from the municipal level to the level of transnational media, from technology and counter-surveillance to a concrete proposal to revive the European refugee policy.

The book proves that a shift towards a new way of thinking and doing politics is not only possible, but actually already happening.

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*With contributions  
by Etienne Balibar,  
Ulrike Guérot,  
Gesine Schwan,  
Renata Avila,  
Barbara Spinelli,  
Andreas Karitzis,  
Lorenzo Marsili,  
Jonas Staal,  
among others,  
and interviews with  
city governors from  
Madrid to Naples*

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