

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

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 *Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).)*

PROJECT	
Participant:	1 – Alternatives Européennes EA
PIC number:	941964479
Project name and acronym:	Democratic Digital Commons – DDC

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	WP2
Event name:	Online assembly 1
Type:	assemblies
In situ/online:	online
Location:	online
Date(s):	20.05.2026
Website(s) (if any):	https://euroalter.com/events/ddc-online-assembly/
Participants	
Female:	165
Male:	95
Non-binary:	43
Netherlands	16
Germany	53
Greece	18
Austria	11
Spain	30
Belgium	18
Italy	30
Bosnia	2
Czechia	13
Romania	10
Denmark	8
France	28
Poland	5
Sweden	5
Finland	3

Slovakia			2
Ireland			28
Kosovo			1
Portugal			11
Luxembourg			4
Malta			2
North Macedonia			1
Serbia			3
Slovenia			1
Total number of participants:	303	From total number of countries:	24

Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

The first online assembly of the Democratic Digital Commons (DDC), and the second assembly of the overall project following the Prague gathering, continued the transnational process of collective reflection on the future of AI, digital infrastructures, and democratic governance. Bringing together participants from across Europe and beyond, the assembly created a shared space to critically examine who owns and controls the digital world, how AI systems rely on collective resources, and what it would mean to reclaim digital infrastructures as democratic commons.

Rooted in the belief that citizens should play an active role in shaping technological systems, the assembly combined education, deliberation, imagination, and contribution. Through expert presentations, facilitated breakout groups, and collaborative exercises, participants reflected on the social, environmental, political, and economic impacts of AI while envisioning pathways towards more democratic digital futures.

Where?

The assembly took place online, allowing participants from different countries, sectors, and lived experiences to join a shared transnational space of dialogue and deliberation. The digital format enabled broad participation while also opening critical reflection on the very infrastructures and platforms through which the event itself was hosted.

When?

The assembly took place on May 20th, 2026, from 17:00 to 21:00 CEST on Zoom.

Who?

The assembly brought together a highly diverse group of participants, including citizens, artists, researchers, students, educators, consultants, activists, technologists, and members of civil society organizations. Participants joined with different levels of familiarity with AI and digital governance, contributing perspectives shaped by both professional expertise and personal experience.

The session featured contributions from three invited speakers:

- Ulises Mejias, an academic & author, who reflected on the infrastructure of data, the political economy of Big Tech, and introduced the term data colonialism.
- Sara Marcucci, founder of *AI & Planetary Justice*, who explored the socio-environmental impacts of AI systems across their full supply chains, from mineral extraction to energy consumption and electronic waste.
- Iyo Bisseck, a digital artist-activist-archivist, who proposed an Afro-feminist exploration of digital infrastructures through collective servers, archives, and relational digital spaces.

To support deliberation, the assembly mobilised a facilitation team of 15 facilitators, allowing participants to engage in smaller breakout groups of approximately 20 people each.

AGENDA Online Assembly 1: For a Democratic Digital Commons

Wednesday, 20th May 17h-21h

17:00 - 18:00 Welcome

- Assembly consultations and preparatory participation

18:00 – 18:20 Introduction

- Introduction to the Democratic Digital Commons project

- Political note on digital tools and infrastructures used during the assembly
- Overview of recording practices and participation pathways
- Introduction to on-site and future assembly opportunities

18:20 – 18:30 Icebreaker

- Interactive polls reflecting on key themes emerging from the Prague Assembly

18:30 – 19:15 The State of AI (Learn)

- Presentation by Ulises Mejias
- Presentation on AI & Planetary Justice

19:15 – 19:25 Questions & Discussion

19:25 – 19:30 Break

19:30 – 19:50 Re-Dreaming AI (Imagine)

- Artistic and political reflection by Iyo Bissek

19:50 – 20:00 Questions & Discussion

20:00 – 20:45 Breakout Groups (Deliberation & Imagination)

- Facilitated group discussions
- Collaborative Miro exercises

20:45 – 21:00 Closing (Contribute)

- Overview of the discussions
- Reflection on next steps
- Presentation of opportunities for continued participation and contribution

Preparation Phase:

The preparation process for the first online assembly focused on creating an inclusive and participatory framework capable of supporting transnational dialogue on AI and digital systems, as well as networking, communications and outreach.

European Alternatives developed a shared assembly framework building on lessons and reflections from the Prague Assembly and consortium. This framework established four interconnected pillars that would guide all future DDC assemblies:

- **Education** -> making sure all assemblies educate the participants on chosen topics regarding AI & democracy, ensuring a shared level of understanding to allow for inclusive deliberation, and also helping to address a lack of accessible digital literacy education, as per the objectives of the DDC project.
- **Deliberation** -> facilitated & scripted facilitation in breakout groups small enough that everyone can speak, with experienced facilitators who can ensure all voices are heard.
- **Imagination** -> that the events are not just critical, but also pushing citizens to be imaginative on how an ethical democratic AI could work.
- **Contribution** -> that the participants of each assembly contribute to working towards an EU with democratic AI. One such example is each assembly will contribute to the writing of the citizens charter for a democratic AI.

Participants also received a dedicated Assembly Guidebook prior to the event, distributed via email and uploaded to the DDC Discord platform. The guidebook introduced participants to the methodology and political vision of the assemblies, emphasising the participatory, transnational, artistic, and coalition-building dimensions of the DDC process.

A call for facilitators led to the selection of 15 facilitators who were trained to guide breakout discussions and support participatory engagement during the online sessions.

Opening and Shared Reflection

The assembly opened with an introduction to the Democratic Digital Commons project and a political reflection on the digital tools used throughout the event. Organisers highlighted the importance of critically engaging not only with AI systems themselves, but also with the infrastructures and platforms that mediate online participation.

Participants were also introduced to the broader vision of the DDC process: building a transnational coalition capable of bringing democratic processes to AI systems in Europe and beyond through a

series of citizen assemblies, experimentation in civic tech creation, and artistic research.

An interactive icebreaker invited participants to respond on how much they agreed with key reflections & outcomes emerging from the Prague Assembly, allowing participants to collectively reflect on themes such as digital sovereignty, privacy, environmental justice, and democratic governance. This created continuity between assemblies and will allow the statements most agreed upon to be fed into the citizens charter for a democratic AI & guide the future assemblies. An interesting point was that there was a huge range in opinion on whether AI should be used as a tool for democracy, which demonstrates the interest in the next assemblies theme of civic tech.

The State of AI

The first educational session focused on understanding the material, political, and economic realities behind AI systems and digital infrastructures.

Ulises Mejias reflected on the concept of data colonialism, exploring how digital systems extract human experience, labour, and social relations in ways comparable to historical forms of colonial extraction. He emphasized how digital infrastructures increasingly appropriate collective resources while concentrating power within a small number of corporations and geopolitical actors.

The discussion also addressed how AI systems are embedded within broader structures of capitalism, competition, and surveillance, raising questions about sovereignty, governance, and public accountability.

The presentation by Sara Marcucci on the work of AI & Planetary Justice shifted attention toward the environmental and material dimensions of AI systems. Participants explored the impacts of AI across the entire supply chain: mineral extraction, exploitative labour conditions, energy-intensive data centres, water consumption, and electronic waste. The session highlighted the need to move beyond abstract understandings of AI and instead recognize its deeply physical and planetary consequences.

Participants raised questions regarding environmental responsibility, the *AI bubble*, and the unequal global distribution of both technological benefits and harms.

Re-Dreaming AI

The second thematic session, led by Iyo Bisseck, introduced an artistic and Afro-feminist perspective on digital infrastructures and AI futures.

Through reflections on archives, collective servers, abolitionist thinking, and diasporic narratives, participants were invited to imagine digital infrastructures not as systems of extraction and control, but as relational spaces rooted in care, collective memory, and community autonomy.

The session emphasised the role of imagination and artistic practices as central components of democratic participation. Rather than treating creativity as secondary to policy discussions, the assembly positioned artistic exploration as a method for collectively envisioning alternative technological futures.

Breakout Groups: Deliberation and Collective Imagination

Following the presentations, participants divided into facilitated breakout rooms. The discussions brought together individuals from different countries, sectors and experiences, creating a rich exchange of perspectives on AI and digital infrastructures.

Facilitators guided participants through a structured & scripted process that included:

- A check-in round introducing participants and their motivations for joining
- Group reflection on concerns surrounding AI and digital systems
- Collaborative Miro exercises exploring democratic values and governance principles

Participants discussed a wide range of concerns related to AI, including:

- The use of AI in authoritarian and military contexts
- Algorithmic discrimination and systemic biases
- Concentration of economic and political power
- Automation and loss of meaningful work
- AI-generated misinformation and erosion of trust
- Psychological impacts, isolation, and emotional dependency on AI systems
- Lack of democratic oversight and accountability
- Environmental destruction linked to AI infrastructures

A recurring theme across the groups was the feeling that AI systems are currently shaped by profit-driven logics that prioritise extraction, efficiency, and control over social well-being and collective care. Several participants reflected on the need to “decolonise AI” and challenge the dominant narratives surrounding technological progress and innovation.

At the same time, discussions also explored whether more ethical and democratic forms of AI could actually exist. Participants questioned how digital infrastructures could be transformed into forms of public service, comparable to libraries or other shared commons.

Emerging Proposals and Shared Principles

Across the breakout rooms, participants collectively developed a range of proposals and principles for democratic digital futures. Key themes included:

Governance & Democratic Participation

- Citizens should play a direct role in shaping AI governance and regulation
- Governance structures must include marginalised communities and diverse forms of expertise
- AI systems should be treated as public goods rather than purely commercial products
- International and transnational governance mechanisms are needed

Digital Sovereignty & Public Infrastructure

- Digital sovereignty should be reclaimed from purely market-driven interpretations
- Public digital infrastructures and open-source systems should be strengthened
- People should maintain ownership and control over their own data
- Optionality and the right to opt out of certain systems should be preserved

Environmental & Planetary Justice

- AI systems should be evaluated across their entire lifecycle and supply chain
- Participants proposed certification labels indicating the environmental and social impacts of AI systems
- The need for local, low-tech, and frugal AI systems was emphasised
- Discussions highlighted the importance of reciprocal relationships between technology and the planet

Principles for AI Design

Participants identified several values that should guide AI systems and digital infrastructures:

- Accessibility and inclusivity
- Transparency
- Privacy and consent
- Representation and diversity
- Open-source approaches
- Harm reduction mechanisms
- Respect for labour, resources, and data sources

Participants also reflected on what should never be automated, highlighting care work, education, emotionally sensitive tasks, healthcare, and irreversible decision-making processes as areas requiring meaningful human presence and responsibility.

Participation Beyond the Assembly

Engagement throughout the assembly remained exceptionally high. Participants actively used the chat to exchange resources, readings, and references, extending the discussions beyond the formal programme.

To ensure continuity and accessibility for future participants, the following materials will be made available through the DDC Discord platform:

- Recordings of the 3 speaker presentations and project overview presentation
- Anonymous transcripts of breakout discussions
- Collective summaries of the assembly outcomes

This archive will allow participants who could not attend live to engage with the discussions, contribute comments, and continue developing ideas ahead of future assemblies.

NEXT STEPS

The reflections, proposals, and tensions emerging from the breakout discussions highlighted a strong desire for democratic governance of AI systems, greater public accountability, environmental justice, transparency, and citizen ownership over digital infrastructures and data.

In particular, participants' discussions around digital sovereignty, AI as a public good, open-source

infrastructures, democratic governance mechanisms, environmental accountability across AI supply chains, and the protection of meaningful human activities from automation will serve as key foundations for future deliberations. The principles & proposals for a democratic AI collectively identified during the assembly - including accessibility, inclusivity, transparency, privacy, reciprocity, representation, and equity - will help shape the broader political direction of the project and contribute to the drafting process of the Citizens' Charter.

The assembly also surfaced several unresolved tensions and questions that will continue to be explored throughout the DDC process. These include debates around whether ethical AI can exist within existing economic systems, how democratic governance structures can avoid reproducing exclusion and colonial dynamics, and how societies can balance technological innovation with social, environmental, and human well-being. These questions will guide the thematic design and facilitation of future assemblies, for example, there was a large disagreement on whether AI should be used as a tool for democratic practise, which will be directly addressed, expanded upon & deliberated in the next assembly on Civic Tech.

To ensure continuity across the transnational process, recordings of the expert presentations, the overview of the DDC project, the anonymous breakout group transcripts, and the collective discussion summaries will be made publicly available through the project Discord server. This archive will allow participants who were unable to attend the assembly to engage with the discussions, contribute further reflections, and continue building collectively on the ideas generated during the session.

The high level of engagement throughout the event, including participants actively sharing resources, readings, and references in the chat, demonstrated the emergence of a growing transnational community interested in shaping democratic digital futures together. These exchanges will continue informing the educational resources, methodologies, and advocacy work developed throughout the project. And additional methodologies of enriching this network are being considered, such as reading groups in-between the project assemblies.

Looking ahead, the Democratic Digital Commons process will continue connecting deliberation, artistic expression, education, and advocacy in order to build a broad coalition capable of influencing how AI and digital systems are governed in Europe and beyond.

Communication and dissemination

1. EU visibility

Publicity of the EU CERV programme's support was integrated across event materials, including the opening presentation, the website, social media communications, the guidebook, and graphic invitations.

2. Stakeholder mapping

Over 150 stakeholders, associations, experts, and relevant organizations were mapped and contacted through the consortium's networks and outreach efforts. These organisations disseminated the event and wider project activities in their networks.

3. Communications

Other dissemination activities included social media cross-posting, newsletters, direct engagement with organisations, and outreach to media outlets, including European-level publications such as The European Correspondent.

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).



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