

Annual Report

2025

ea

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1. Introduction

In 2025, **European Alternatives** (EA) consolidated its role as a leading transnational civil society organisation promoting democratic innovation, cultural transformation and civic participation across Europe.

Across the five streams of work, **IMAGINE, TRAIN, ASSEMBLE, ACT** and **LEARN**, EA delivered over 70 events, engaged more than 7000 participants and collaborated with more than 200 partner organisations across more than 30 countries. Through this work, EA expanded the scale, depth and institutional relevance of its programmes and support that it provides to the democratic ecosystem of Europe.

The year was marked by the maturation of flagship initiatives such as the Democratic Odyssey, the scaling of cultural initiatives like Transeuropa and Fluctuations, and strengthened engagement with European institutions.

EA's work continued to respond to the multiple crises that are shaping contemporary Europe. Across the continent, citizens are confronted with overlapping crises that are deeply interconnected: the direct and indirect effects of war, the rise of inequalities and authoritarian tendencies, the spread of disinformation, the intensification of climate change and growing economic precarity.

Introduction

These dynamics are reshaping not only political systems but also the ways in which individuals relate to institutions, communities and each other. Trust in democratic institutions remains fragile, while civic space is increasingly contested in several contexts. At the same time, new forms of mobilisation, solidarity and participation are resisting, often driven by grassroots actors, young people and transnational networks. **European Alternatives operates** within this tension, between democratic erosion and democratic innovation. In 2025, our work has focused on enabling citizens to move from passive observation to active participation, creating spaces where collective intelligence and deliberation can flourish.

Our programmes have combined local engagement with transnational coordination, ensuring that ideas generated in one context can travel, adapt and scale across borders. From citizens' assemblies to cultural festivals, from training programmes to policy dialogues, each initiative has contributed to building a more connected and participatory European public sphere. In 2025 there has been an increasing convergence between civil society and institutional actors. Through initiatives such as the Pact for Equality and supporting an informal group of Parliamentarians and civil society on the future of Democracy, European Alternatives has facilitated direct dialogue between citizens and European policymakers and institutions, demonstrating the potential of participatory democracy.

In this report you will find some examples of our work over the past months.

With solidarity,

The Directors of European Alternatives



2. About European Alternatives

European Alternatives is an ongoing experiment in building a transnational grassroots organisation that operates beyond national borders. Since 2007, it has sought to promote democracy, equality and culture through innovative formats that combine political action, artistic expression and civic engagement.

EA's work is structured around five interconnected streams:

- **IMAGINE**: Creating new narratives through arts and culture
- **TRAIN**: Building capacity through education and organising
- **ASSEMBLE**: Developing participatory democratic processes
- **ACT**: Advocating for systemic change
- **LEARN**: Producing and sharing knowledge

These streams are not isolated but mutually reinforcing. Projects often move participants through multiple stages, from imagination to action, creating a cycle of engagement and action learning.

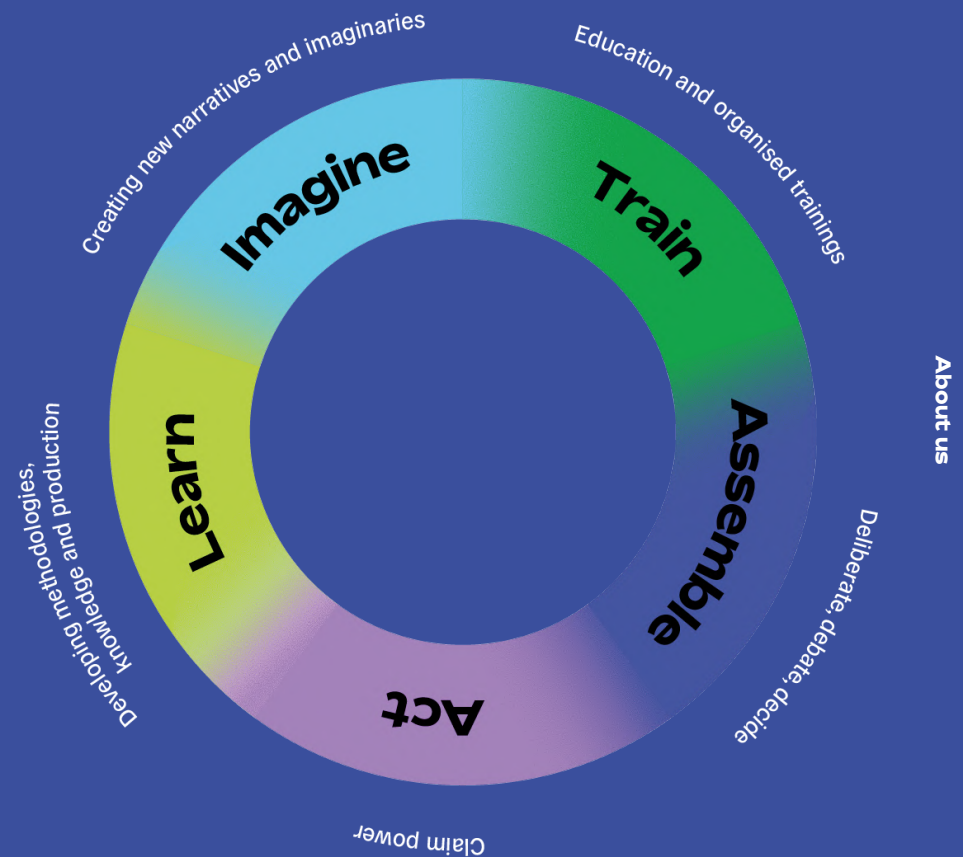
Our Approach

TRANSNATIONAL COLLABORATION: EA works across multiple countries and regions, with partnerships between organisations, institutions and communities. This enables the exchange of knowledge and scaling of impactful initiatives beyond local contexts.

PARTICIPATORY METHODOLOGIES: The organisation prioritises inclusive processes that actively involve stakeholders, particularly local communities, in the design, implementation and evaluation of its activities. This ensures that interventions reflect real needs.

INTERDISCIPLINARY PRACTICES: EA integrates expertise from diverse fields to address complex challenges in a holistic manner.

BOTTOM UP ENGAGEMENT: EA connects bottom-up perspectives with top-down decision-making and facilitates dialogue between citizens, civil society and public authorities. This strengthens representation and ensures that local insights inform policy development.



3. Governance and Structure



European Alternatives' governance model reflects its commitment to participation, transparency and accountability. Transnational Board The Board oversees the strategic direction of the organisation and ensures alignment with its mission. In 2025, it focused on strengthening institutional partnerships, ensuring financial sustainability and supporting organisational growth.



Transnational Board



Segolene Pruvot



Veronique Sehier



Ami Weickaane



Lean Alestra



Sandra Alloush



Niccolo Milanese



Lucie Matting



Ovidiu Tichindeleanu



Lorenzo Marsili



Jelena Vasiljevic



Rasha Shaaban



Jotham Sietsma



Louna Sbou

Staff Members



Irene Alonso



Marta Cillero Manzano



Garance Martin



Ophelie Masson



Billie Dibb



Niccolo Milanese



Yasmine Djidel



Viktoria Kostova



Noemi Pittala



Segolene Pruvot



Jessica Valdez



Ruxandra Stan



Csenge Schneder-Lonhart

Staff and Operation

EA's staff operates across multiple European hubs. In 2025 team capacity increased in programme delivery and communications. EA worked towards improving the coordination between hubs and monitoring and evaluation systems were strengthened.

EA's decentralised model allows for strong local anchoring while maintaining a transnational perspective. Local hubs play a key role in implementing activities and engaging communities.

4. Ecosystem and Network

Since 2007, European Alternatives has been working and networking with thousands of organisations, groups and initiatives around Europe and beyond to promote democracy, equality and culture beyond the nation-state.

European Alternatives seeks to work in reinforced ongoing collaboration with selected organisations and individuals to build convergence and civic capacity across borders. We are part of an ecosystem composed of ally organisations which have closely collaborated with us on our activities. Our network is the backbone of all our activities and play a fundamental role in achieving our mission.

EA's ecosystem is central to its impact. The organisation collaborates with a wide range of actors, including:

- 1. CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS**
- 2. UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS**
- 3. CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS**
- 4. GRASSROOTS MOVEMENTS.**

5. Our Work

ASSEMBLE: Democratic Innovation in Practice

The ASSEMBLE stream represents one of the most advanced areas of European Alternatives' work, focusing on the design and implementation of participatory democratic processes. These initiatives aim to create inclusive spaces where citizens can deliberate on complex issues, develop collective proposals and engage directly with decision-makers. At the heart of this work lies a commitment to rethinking democracy as an ongoing practice rather than a static institutional framework. Citizens' assemblies, in this context, are not only tools for consultation but laboratories for democratic innovation.

CITIDEM Assembly

The **CITIDEM Assembly** in Brussels focused on how democratic innovation can be used as a tool for advocacy. Participants explored practical strategies for influencing policy-making processes and strengthening citizens' rights. In Budapest on the occasion of the banned Budapest Pride, the Citizens Assembly for Democracy and Freedom connected issues of democracy, diversity and fundamental rights. The event brought together activists, community organisers and citizens in a context marked by repression and political violence to affirm an alternative of diversity, democracy, joy and love.

Democratic Odyssey: A Transnational Citizens' Assembly

The Democratic Odyssey is a flagship initiative that seeks to prototype a permanent European Citizens' Assembly. The 2025 cycle marked a significant step forward in both scale and ambition. Building on the kick off of the cycle in Athens in 2024, in 2025 in Florence participants gathered to explore how citizen-led solutions can respond to interconnected crises. The assembly combined plenary discussions, small group deliberations and public events, creating a dynamic environment for exchange and co-creation. In Vienna, the focus shifted towards methodology and transnational coordination. Participants from across Europe engaged in structured deliberation processes, testing facilitation techniques and decision-making models that could be scaled at the European level. The Brussels roundtable represented a key institutional milestone. Hosted within the European Parliament, it brought together citizens, policymakers and civil society representatives to discuss the future of participatory democracy in Europe. This event highlighted the growing recognition of citizens' assemblies as a legitimate and valuable complement to existing governance structures. Outcomes: Development of a Citizens' Charter Strengthened links between civil society and EU institutions Increased visibility of democratic innovation practices Beyond the Democratic Odyssey, European Alternatives organised and supported several other assemblies in 2025.

IMAGINE: Culture as a Political Tool

The IMAGINE stream reflects European Alternatives' belief that culture is not only a space of expression but also a powerful driver of political transformation. Through artistic practices, performances and cultural events, this stream seeks to challenge dominant narratives and open up new possibilities for collective imagination. In 2025, IMAGINE initiatives have increasingly blurred the boundaries between art and politics, creating hybrid spaces where audiences are not merely spectators but active participants.

Transeuropa Festival 2025 Paris

Under the theme "Margins on Fire", the Transeuropa Festival explored the role of marginality in shaping political and cultural change, especially from a feminist perspective. The festival brought together artists, activists, researchers and citizens in a programme that included performances, debates, workshops and assemblies. The choice of theme reflected a broader reflection on who is excluded from dominant narratives and how these margins can become sites of resistance and innovation.

Fluctuations Festival 2025

Fluctuations continued to develop as a transnational cultural platform, using rivers as both symbolic and physical connectors between communities. The 2025 edition spanned Strasbourg, Budapest and Paris, creating a continuous flow of activities across different contexts. The festival combined music, art installations, public discussions and community gatherings, addressing themes such as environmental justice, urban transformation and collective memory. Its open and accessible format allowed for the engagement of diverse audiences, including individuals who might not participate in formal political processes.

Between Land and Sea Palermo

European Alternatives' participation in this festival reinforced its engagement with Mediterranean perspectives. The programme explored the intersections between migration, ecology and culture, highlighting the Mediterranean as a space of both crisis and possibility. The 2025 edition of Between Land and Sea returned to Palermo as a meeting point between disciplines, stories and geographies, rooted in the Mediterranean but open to wider global perspectives. Under the theme Significato, the festival asked how meaning is created, questioned and transformed today, using the shoreline as a metaphor for unstable yet fertile ground where bodies, ecologies and narratives meet.

what we do



TRAIN: Building Capacity of activists and young people across Europe

The TRAIN stream focuses on empowering individuals and communities through education, skill building and knowledge exchange. It reflects the understanding that sustainable democratic change requires not only ideas and structures but also the capacities to organise, communicate and act. In 2025, training activities have been designed to be highly participatory, combining theoretical inputs with practical exercises and peer learning.

Transnational Summer School Vienna

The Summer School in Vienna brought together participants from diverse backgrounds, including activists, students, researchers and community organisers. Over four days, participants engaged in workshops, discussions and collaborative projects focused on migration, labour rights and transnational solidarity.

CCLabs Conference in Barcelona

The Conference on Education for Democracy provided a platform for educators, researchers and practitioners to exchange ideas and methodologies. Discussions focused on how civic education can be adapted to contemporary challenges, including digital transformation and political polarisation. The event highlighted the importance of integrating participatory practices into educational systems, ensuring that learning processes are aligned with democratic values.

ACT: Advocacy and Campaigning

The Act stream carries the demands of activists, social movements, to exert influence on decision-makers at local, national and european-level. EA strengthened its advocacy role in 2025. Several direct engagement actions were organised especially with the European Parliament (Brussels and Strasbourg):

The Future of Democracy informal intergroup engaged with MEPs of all political groups to demand for a wider comprehension of democratic rights and for concrete implementation strategy of the European Democracy Shield. European Alternatives contributed to ensuring fair and accurate visibility of migrant communities defending human rights for all. Advocating for a permanent EU citizens assembly at EU level, to ensure EU citizens are fully included in the decision-making process of their institutions. With Pact for Equality we continued to advocate for an end to discrimination in Europe and at its borders. Through advocacy actions, awareness raising and supporting strategic litigation, we are building the intersectional collective power that can challenge all forms of discrimination where they appear in laws, in society and in the public sphere.



LEARN: Knowledge production

Under the theme “Margins on Fire”, the Transeuropa Festival explored the role of marginality in shaping political and cultural change, especially from a feminist perspective. The festival brought together artists, activists, researchers and citizens in a programme that included performances, debates, workshops and assemblies. The choice of theme reflected a broader reflection on who is excluded from dominant narratives and how these margins can become sites of resistance and innovation.

Critical Change Labs

CCLABs is a three year research project to develop a new model of democratic education. With 8 university and civil society partners, European Alternatives has developed and tested this new model which is focussed on empowering young people to act for change, starts from everyday experiences of democracy, and integrates relationships with technology and the planet. The model has been tested in 18 countries, both in schools and in non-formal education institutions, and EA has launched a MOOC to train others in this method.

FIERCE

FIERCE is a three year research project to identify innovative democratic practices amongst feminist movements across Europe and analyse the strategies of the anti-gender movements. Two books on these topics were published in 2025, together with policy briefs and conferences both in the institutions in Brussels and in feminist libraries and community spaces.



6. Strategy

European Alternatives works with the conviction that a transnational renovation of our political imaginations, institutions, and actions needs to take place to correctly understand and address the different challenges that Europe is facing. Going beyond the nation-state is a condition for promoting a more democratic, equal and culturally open society, and Europe, as an idea and political space, offers a possibility for doing this. This is the vision of European Alternatives.

EA continues to pursue four strategic priorities:

- 1. INSTITUTIONALISING CITIZENS' ASSEMBLIES**
- 2. STRENGTHENING AND DIVERSIFYING CIVIL SOCIETY ECOSYSTEMS**
- 3. EXPANDING CULTURAL IMAGINARIES**
- 4. SCALING ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY**

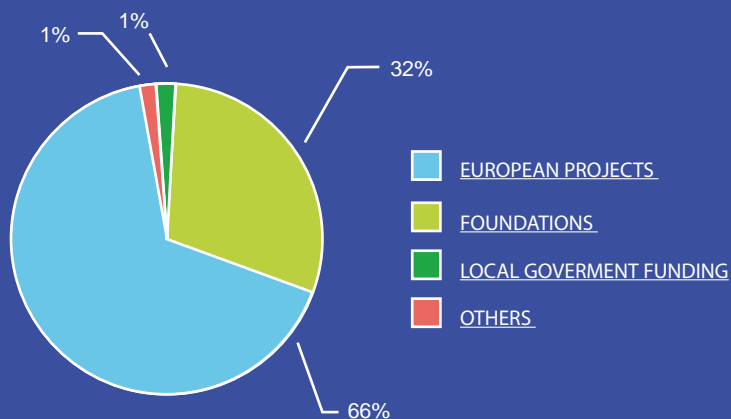


7. Finances and Supporters

European Alternatives is supported mostly by private Foundations and by EU Funds, with a marginal income coming from members' donations and from local governments grants. European Alternative's turnover in 2025 is 1,193,000 euros. Main European Grants are from the following programmes : CERV, Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, DEAR Programme

Main funders

Institutional partners: European programmes (CERV, Horizon Europe, Erasmus+) and other public funding bodies
Donors: Individual and organizational contributors
Community support: Volunteers and partners providing in-kind support and expertise
How we the funds are used:



Acknowledgment: We express our sincere appreciation to all supporters for their continued trust and valuable contribution to the implementation and development of our projects.



8. Impact

Our work in numbers. In 2025:

Over 7000 participants

Over 70 of speakers and 60 per cent of participants women or non-binary

Over 30 countries

More than 70 events

More than 400 partners

Over 100 follow up actions generated



9. Closing words

The challenges facing Europe and the planet require new forms of democracy that go beyond traditional institutional structures and national borders. They call for systems that are more participatory, more inclusive and more capable of responding to complexity, uncertainty and interdependence. European Alternatives continues to contribute to this transformation creating and sustaining spaces for imagination, participation, experimentation and collective action across borders. These spaces are infrastructures for long-term democratic renewal where ideas can be tested, alliances can be built and new practices can emerge.

In 2025, our work has shown that democratic innovation is an ongoing process already taking shape through the efforts of citizens, civil society, cultural actors and institutions. From transnational assemblies to cultural interventions, from training programmes to advocacy actions, each initiative has contributed to strengthening a European public sphere that is more connected, more open and more responsive. Looking ahead, our commitment remains grounded in a simple but demanding objective: to contribute to building, a Europe where citizens are not only represented, but actively shape the decisions that affect their lives. Through its work, EA seeks to build a Europe not just for people living in Europe, but as a contribution to a more just planet.

Imagine. Demand. Enact.

ea
euroalter.com