



EUROPEAN CITIZENS' PANEL ENERGY EFFICIENCY



Information **Kit**

About this Kit

Welcome to the European Citizens' Panels on Energy Efficiency!

First of all, thank you for agreeing to participate in this process. We hope you find it informative, interesting and enjoyable!

You are one of 150 participants randomly selected to discuss energy efficiency – a well-known topic which came to the fore during the recent energy crisis. Together, you will look into different ways we all – industry, households, communities, the public and private sector – can become more energy efficient in a realistic and impactful way. Your collective insights and conclusions will play an instrumental role, as they will be presented to EU Commissioners and will contribute to shaping EU laws and initiatives in this area.

This 'Information Kit' serves to guide you through the process. It is structured in these five sections:

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The Citizens' Panels are aiming to put citizens at the centre of public policymaking. In this section, we give you a brief overview of how the process works.
2. **THE REMIT: WHAT WILL I BE WORKING ON?** 6
The European Commission has called you together to complete a specific task: here you can find the question that you are invited to answer.
3. **THE TOPIC:
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You do not need to be an expert to take part in the Citizens' Panel. We specifically want to hear your viewpoint based on your experience and your everyday life. To get you started, we offer some basic information about energy efficiency.
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Here, we explain about the different institutions and organisations responsible for the panels and their respective roles.
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We want to make your participation as smooth as possible. This section covers your travel, accommodation, daily expenses and other practical information.



1/ The Process:

How do the European Citizens' Panels work?

In the Citizens' Panels of the European Commission, randomly selected participants from all 27 EU Member States come together to discuss key upcoming laws and other initiatives at European level. Based on your discussions with one another, you will develop recommendations that the European Commission will take into consideration in the preparation of its policies.

The Panels came about following the Conference on the Future of Europe¹ that took place in 2021-2022. Back then, 800 randomly selected citizens gathered in four European Citizens' Panels each meeting for three sessions. Participants

shared their perspectives and ideas on topics like economy, social justice, jobs, education, culture, youth, sports, digital transformation, EU democracy, values, security, rule of law, climate change, health, migration, and the EU's role in the world. At the end of the Panels, the participants put forward 178 recommendations, which later influenced the 49 proposals and more than 300 related measures resulting from the Conference. The participating citizens of the Conference called for similar, more frequent opportunities for future citizen participation in European policymaking. In response, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, announced more Citizens' Panels to consult randomly selected citizens on key EU issues.

The subsequent Panels dealt with more specific policy topics: what to do with food waste, the pros and cons of virtual worlds, and rights and opportunities to learn and study in other EU countries. The participants were able to communicate with each other in their own language, thanks to the help of interpreters.

As a panellist, you will be taking the baton from a long line of fellow Europeans citizens – this time – focussing on the topic of energy efficiency.

¹ You can find information on the Conference on the Future of Europe here: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/conference-future-europe_en



HOW DO THE CITIZENS' PANELS WORK?

Each Panel is made up of 150 randomly selected citizens, from all EU Member States and representative of EU diversity, of which one-third are younger than 26 years old, to ensure a good discussion between generations.

The Citizens' Panel combines collaborative work in small groups (of around 12 people) with plenary work (all 150 participants together). In the smaller working groups, you will have the opportunity to discuss different aspects of energy efficiency in more detail. All 150 participants will also come together in 'plenary' sessions, to hear and discuss feedback from the smaller groups. To carry out this work, panellists will be supported by a facilitation team. This team is made up of experts in supporting group work. They will help to make the group work more dynamic, to get the best out of each individual and of the group as a whole. They will also provide citizens with a range of tools for collaborative work and collective decision-making. You will also be supported by helpers on-site, who will provide practical information as well as specialists on energy efficiency who will be available to advise you as needed throughout the process.

THE CITIZENS' PANEL ON ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Along with the other 149 participants, you will meet for three sessions. Two sessions will take place in person in Brussels and one session will be online:

- **Session 1:** 23-25 February 2024 (onsite in Brussels, Belgium)
- **Session 2:** 15-17 March 2024 (online via a video conference tool)
- **Session 3:** 12-14 April 2024 (onsite in Brussels, Belgium)

2 / The Remit: What will I be working on?

The Panel discussions will focus on different aspects of energy efficiency. Particularly it will discuss how different individuals, public authorities, industry, the private sector and others can be more energy efficient in a way that makes the most impact, for instance on the climate, economy, jobs, health or on energy bills.

The Panel's final recommendations will feed into a policy initiative to be adopted by the European Commission later in 2024. The initiative is an upcoming EU Recommendation on the "Energy Efficiency First" principle, which will also be explained in the panel discussions with the support of specialists on the topic. In this context, the question that will guide your discussions during the Citizens' Panel on Energy Efficiency is:

"How can the European Union prioritise energy efficiency and bring its full benefits to citizens, public authorities and enterprises?"

IN THE FIRST SESSION, you will be introduced to the topic of energy efficiency and to what actions the European Commission is already taking in this field. Together with specialists in energy production, distribution and consumption, you will get a better understanding of what energy efficiency means in your daily life, exchanging with citizens coming from different EU countries, and of the challenges the EU faces in bringing its benefits to European society.

IN THE SECOND SESSION,

which will take place online, you will continue exchanging and discussing different ideas. This session will act as a bridge between the sessions: you will build on the knowledge and areas discussed in the first session and you will think creatively about practical solutions to prioritise energy efficiency. In other words: in this second session, you will start to formulate ideas for recommendations. These will relate to actions that everyone can take to be energy efficient, from businesses, to local communities, from public authorities to individual consumers. These could include recommendations, for instance, on how to consume less energy without sacrifices, how to define a sustainable level of energy consumption or how to improve energy planning to better use limited resources.

IN THE THIRD AND FINAL SESSION,

you will finalise your recommendations together. They will feed into a European initiative, in particular into the European Commission's upcoming one on the Energy Efficiency First principle. This means testing and consolidating your initial ideas from the second session, for example by asking yourselves if these ideas are fair for all actors of society. You will discuss if they can be useful throughout the European Union and if they meet the most important needs of the diversity of European citizens. You will also discuss concrete measures they entail to encourage a sustainable behavioural change.



3 / The Topic:

What do I need to know about energy efficiency?

Now that you know a bit more about the process, let's focus on the topic itself. We put together this brief section to help you better understand the issue of energy efficiency. Of course, we cannot cover every aspect in a few pages. We have selected knowledge that we think will be useful to you as a member of the Citizens' Panel, and you will receive more detailed information throughout the event.

We hope this section gives you insights that will help you to make sense of the presentations and to contribute to the Panel's discussions and activities. This can only be a first entry point. Rest assured that you will receive more detailed information on energy efficiency throughout the panel and that you can ask your questions once the sessions have begun.

1. UNDERSTANDING ENERGY EFFICIENCY

A familiar concept may be that of “**energy saving**”. Saving energy means avoiding wasteful uses of energy. The less energy we use, the less we need to produce. In practical terms, this means to turn down the heater or turn off the lights when we do not need it. Energy saving is the most direct way to **use less energy and avoid waste**.

But what is “**energy efficiency**”? It means **using less energy to perform the same task**, to get the same result, the same service. For example, energy efficiency in relation to insulating a house means using less energy for heating and cooling while maintaining the same thermal comfort. Another example: Driving a more efficient car that uses less fuel but has the same speed and performance.

In general, there are two ways of improving energy efficiency: (1) using a more efficient technology or production

process, for example, driving a more fuel efficient car or replacing an old fridge with an energy efficient one, and² changing one's behaviour, for example, to turn down the heater or turn off the lights when we do not need it.

Understanding the whole energy system

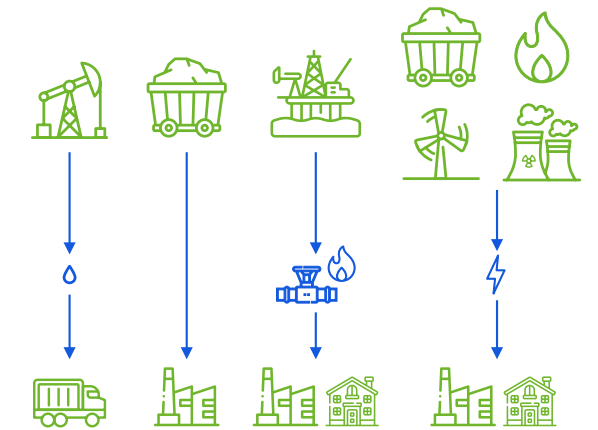
However, becoming more energy efficient is not only about which technologies we apply or about our behaviour. Energy needs to be produced and distributed before we can use it. So, to be more energy efficient in the society, we also need to think about the **whole energy system** and how to plan it. The energy system contains three components: energy production, energy distribution and energy consumption.

Explaining the Energy Efficiency First (EE1st) principle

Energy Efficiency First is a **guiding principle that prioritises energy efficiency over more costly alternatives** to the benefit of citizens, public authorities and enterprises. Or to put it differently: the EE1st principle aims at putting an equal footing on **supply side** and **demand side investments**. This means that when making energy planning or investment decisions, all dimensions of energy efficiency shall be considered: including production and consumption. The aim is to make sure that those actions are beneficial or more cost-effective

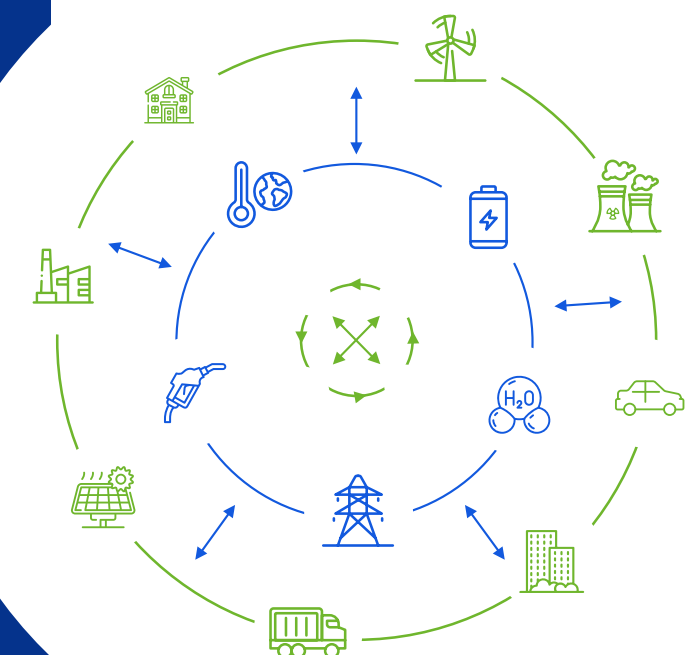
THE ENERGY SYSTEM TODAY

Linear and wasteful flows of energy, in one direction only



FUTURE EU INTEGRATED ENERGY SYSTEM

Energy flows between users and producers, reducing wasted resources and money



• Energy Production

Energy can be produced by different sources. These sources are fossil (coal, gas, oil), nuclear, or renewable (wind, solar, water, biomass). For example, coal can be burned to produce electricity or heat, and oil or bio fuels used for mobility. This is also referred to as “supply side”.

• Energy Distribution

Energy needs to be transported from the producer to the consumer so it can be used. Energy distribution requires an infrastructure consisting of grids for electricity, pipelines for oil and gas or heat distribution networks.

• Energy Consumption

Energy is consumed in various ways: powering appliances, driving cars, producing goods or materials, heating buildings. Consumers of energy include citizens, public authorities or enterprises. This is called the “demand side”.

To improve the whole energy system and promote energy efficiency across Member States, the European Commission has set out to reinforce the “Energy Efficiency First” principle.

² You can find the publication in different languages here: https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-systems/integration/eu-strategy-energy-system-integration_en?e-trans=hg&etransnolive=1

than other measures. In practice, the EE1st principle wants to achieve energy efficiency in production, distribution and consumption of energy by **considering different alternatives** among various possible measures throughout the whole European Union. Here is one example of the application of this principle in planning decisions: instead of increasing heat production and the capacity of the heat distribution network, the government decides to initiate a large-scale programme to refurbish buildings. Better insulated homes require less heat, which means that less energy needs to be produced and distributed. Applying the EE1st principle means factoring in other options than increasing the volume or production.

With EE1st, all choices are considered, **weighing the costs and benefits**, and opting for the best alternative that brings the **greatest benefit** to society as a whole, because energy efficiency provides for cost-optimal choices.

2. THE POLITICAL CONTEXT OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY FIRST AT EU LEVEL

Energy efficiency represents a key element when it comes to how the energy transition can unfold. It has the potential to address the failures and shortcomings of the current architecture of the energy sector, **reducing the costs for society** and ensuring the most sustainable result of the energy transition. All energy-using sectors, like buildings, transport or industry, can play the role of **“active consumers”** and EE1st will ensure that this active role of consumers is used to its full potential to maximise efficiency of the energy system and eliminate any form of energy wasting. Energy efficiency is central to the energy transition and is part of the goal to make the European Union **carbon-neutral by 2050**. Carbon neutral means that carbon emissions are cut down to near zero to reduce the harmful effects of climate change.

A large part of EU carbon emissions is linked to energy use in the EU. Reducing energy consumption through energy efficiency is therefore a necessary step. Energy efficiency, thus, plays a **key role** within the EU energy and climate policies and in their implementation in the EU Member States. Placing energy efficiency at the heart of our society is a logical step to **reduce energy consumption, optimise energy flows and eliminate costly energy wasting**, while preserving the same comfort, services, freedom.

To this end, the European Union puts the ‘Energy Efficiency First’ principle (EE1st) as a guiding principle of the energy transition. This principle is regulated in the **Energy Efficiency Directive**. A directive is a legal act of the European Union that sets out a goal that EU countries must achieve.³ However, it is up to the individual countries themselves to devise their own laws on how to reach these goals. The Energy Efficiency Directive of 2023⁴ gives Energy Efficiency First a **stronger role in policy making, planning and investment decisions**.

3. WHAT BENEFITS CAN WE EXPECT FROM PROMOTING ENERGY EFFICIENCY?

As mentioned before, energy efficiency is vital in cutting down carbon emissions, something that is especially true in power production. The fewer greenhouse gases are emitted through energy production, e.g. in coal power plants, the better the EU can fight climate change. But energy efficiency has a lot more effects. These wider benefits are good for individuals and the society. **Energy efficiency reduces energy bills** and related costs for the citizens and companies – who need to spend less money on energy. But energy efficiency is also financially beneficial for national and local governments. It lowers the overall system cost by requiring less investment in energy production and distribution. It thus helps to **reduce public expenses** allowing for a better allocation of public budgets. Energy efficiency also **improves business competitiveness** on two levels. Companies can sell innovative energy efficiency technologies or services. Further, energy efficient enterprises have a comparative advantage over competitors which have higher energy costs.

Energy usage does not only emit carbon dioxide but also other harmful emissions, such as particulate matter. These are microscopic particles in the air that can penetrate deep into the lungs and are harmful to health. Reducing energy usage therefore also **improves people’s health** through better air quality. EU Members States import most of their fuel sources from other countries. Reducing energy use thus lowers these fuel imports. This will increase the **resilience of our economy** as well as the **security of our energy supply**. This is particularly important in times of crisis or war, as recent events have shown.

Lastly, improved energy efficiency offers skilled jobs and training opportunities. The development and implementation of new energy efficiency technologies require a high level of skills. A better-trained workforce means **higher paid jobs and better job opportunities**.

³ Types of EU legislation: https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/law/types-legislation_en

⁴ Energy Efficiency Directive: https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-efficiency/energy-efficiency-targets-directive-and-rules/energy-efficiency-directive_en



Also, research has shown that energy efficiency gains are often diminished by a change in consumer behaviour or production processes. Improvements in efficiency often lead to cost reductions that provide the possibility to buy more of the improved product or use the product differently. For example, gains in more efficient engines can lead to bigger and heavier cars or drivers commuting longer or more frequently. This is called the **“rebound effect”**.

Moreover, **regulatory barriers** can impact progress and uptake of energy efficiency measures in the EU. It can include outdated legislation, inconsistency and/or lack of harmonization across EU Member States, complex administrative requirements, inadequate incentives (for example targeting fossil fuels). Efforts to overcome these barriers involve a combination of legislative reforms, adequate financial incentives and collaboration among EU Member States.

5. WHAT CAN BE DONE AT EU LEVEL? WHAT ARE LEVERAGES FOR CITIZENS?

To tackle the aforementioned barriers, a variety of policy measures have been taken by the EU. The upcoming recommendation mentioned above will include sector-specific guidelines on the application of the Energy Efficiency First principle.

Every year, the Commission adopts its **annual work programme** setting out the list of the most important actions it will take in the year ahead. The work programme informs the public and the other institutions of our political commitments to present new initiatives, withdraw pending proposals and review existing EU legislation. Your work will feed into the 2024 Work Programme. Citizens can act in various ways to improve energy efficiency. They can first start with reflecting on their own energy consumption behaviour. They can become more informed and knowledgeable. But on a political level, citizens can demand decision-makers to introduce or improve regulation that enhances energy efficiency and energy planning. Though it depends on different national contexts, these measures could include information and awareness raising campaigns, trainings, audits, providing financial incentives, prohibitions, investments in infrastructure such as public transport or supporting community initiatives. To prioritise energy efficiency in planning processes, the EU can set the **policy framework for Member States** to implement the Energy Efficiency First principle – and citizens should have a say in formulating this framework.

4. WHAT CAN HINDER ENERGY EFFICIENCY?

So, if energy efficiency is so beneficial to society and individuals, why is it not more advanced? What are the barriers to becoming more energy efficient?

First, there is a **lack of information**. Energy efficiency has only recently become a popular topic of public discussion. Many citizens, enterprises and public authorities are not aware of its benefits. This also extends to an information shortage about energy efficiency opportunities and investments.

Switching to more energy efficient technologies often requires **upfront investments**. The cost of such investment can be quite high. Often consumers and enterprises lack funding for more efficient technologies or goods even though such investment might be economically beneficial in the long run.

Another barrier to greater efficiency can lie in different beneficiaries, also called **“split incentives”**. Sometimes the person who invests in energy efficiency does not directly benefit from the investment. For example, if an owner renovates his or her building or buys a new heating system, only the tenant benefits from the lower energy bills. Investing in energy efficiency not only requires funding but also the workforce to implement the measures.

Though some EU Member States are more affected than others, there is **generally a shortage of skilled workers**, especially for building renovations. But there are also non-economic barriers that have to do with our behaviour patterns: People – as consumers, in enterprises or in public authorities – tend to have a preference for the status quo. If something has worked in the past, then why change it?

4 / Who is organising this panel?

The Citizens' Panel on Energy Efficiency is organised by the European Commission (The Directorate-General for Communication and the Directorate-General for Energy) with the support of ifok (main contractor), Missions Publiques, BeenThereDoneThat, Waterbear, Scope, Harris Interactive, Le Terrain, and VO Europe.

The Panel discussions will be guided and advised by a dedicated "Knowledge Committee", the members of which are:

Arianna VITALI ROSCINI

(Secretary General, The Coalition for Energy Savings, Italy)

Camille DEFARD

(Head of the Jacques Delors Energy Centre, France)

Claire ROUMET

(EU Policy and Strategic Partnerships, Energy Cities, France)

Goda PERLAVICIUTE

(Associate Professor for Public Acceptability of Sustainable Transitions, University of Groningen, Lithuania)

Wyste GORTER

(Junior Researcher for Environmental Psychology, University of Groningen, The Netherlands)

Jan ROSENOW

(Director of European programmes, Regulatory Assistance Project (RAP), Germany)

Reinhard SIX

(Independent Consultant, Expert on energy efficiency financing, Germany)

Yves MARIGNAC

(Energy Expert and Senior Advisor, Association négaWatt, France)

Claudia CANEVARI

(Head of Unit, Unit of Energy Efficiency: Policy and Financing, Directorate-General for Energy, European Commission)



5 / Practical information

We look forward to welcoming you to the European Citizens' Panels on Energy Efficiency starting on Friday 23 February in Brussels, Belgium. Please see below some practical information to prepare for your trip and your participation in the meetings. As a reminder:

Two sessions will take place in person (in Brussels) and one session will be conducted virtually (online):

- **Session 1**
23-25 February 2024
(onsite in Brussels, Belgium)
- **Session 2**
15-17 March 2024 (online)
- **Session 3**
12-14 April 2024
(onsite in Brussels, Belgium)

1. EXPENSES

A compensation fee of EUR 90.00 per conference and travelling day will be provided. The compensation fees are paid after the sessions and participation is confirmed on a list of attendance.

2. LOGISTICS

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

You have received, or will receive, your travel itinerary and e-Ticket. Should you have any further questions regarding your travel arrangements, please let us know by contacting us at info@futureu.events or by calling +32 460 22 40 27.

Transfers upon arrival: Upon your arrival at the airport/train station, you will be welcomed by staff of the European Citizens' Panels carrying a welcome board or poster, who will accompany you to the transfer bus. If you encounter difficulties in finding the staff, please call +32 460 22 40 27.

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

By train: At Brussels Midi train station, please make your way to the Prêt à Manger café where our staff will be waiting by the welcome board/poster.

At the hotel: Bus transfers will be organised from your hotel to the European Commission premises, where the Panels will take place. Please present yourself at the hotel main hall before the scheduled time of departure. Our team will show you the way to the shuttle. If you prefer to reach the European Commission premises on your own, please notify our support team before departing.

Once in Brussels: If social events like dinners take place after the meetings, then group transfers by a shuttle bus will be organised from the European Commission premises to the venue of the social event. Afterwards, group transfers by a shuttle bus will be arranged from the venue to your hotel. You are of course free to explore the city after the social event and make your way back to the hotel independently.

Transfers upon departure: We will arrange the transfers from your hotel to the departure airport/train station. The departure time will be indicated on a notice board in the hotel lobby.

ACCOMMODATION

Our team will welcome you on arrival at the hotel. A single room, with breakfast and free Wi-Fi has been booked for you. Please refer to your booking confirmation sent by email. Kindly note that you will be responsible for covering the cost of all extras (e.g. minibar, room service, telephone, hotel bar, laundry service, early check-in or late check-out etc.) and will not be covered by the organisers. Please settle all extra expenses directly at the hotel before your departure.

3. MISCELLANEOUS

• Dress code

Please bring smart-casual clothes for the meetings, a warm jacket and a scarf and a waterproof winter coat as well warm comfortable shoes and umbrellas for outdoor. Temperatures will probably be around 7°C and slightly higher in April, but do come prepared for changeable Belgian weather!.

• Drinking water

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

• Time zone

Current Time is CET - Central European Time (UTC/GMT +1 hour and UTC+2 as from 31 March).

• Tourism Information

Brussels has a rich history, architecture, gastronomy, culture and so much more! Feel free to consult the Brussels-Capital Region website to discover all the cultural activities on offer during your stay.

• Contact

Our team will be available before and during the meetings. If you encounter any difficulties upon arrival, or if your flight details have changed, please contact us via e-mail: info@futureu.events.

• Interpretation

The meeting will be available in 24 languages thanks to a team of professional interpreters. To help them, please speak clearly and avoid speaking too fast during your session.

4. ACCESS TO THE BUILDING

The first and last Panel weekend will take place on the premises of the European Commission in Brussels. Please refer to the agenda for more information on the exact buildings and rooms. The European Commission building is accessible with a visitor's pass ("V-pass"). A "V-pass" will be sent to you via e-mail before the event. Please don't forget to register via this e-mail to finalise the process and get your V-pass QR code. If you have not received your V-pass before the event, please contact us via e-mail: info@futureu.events

Please note that it may take at least 20 minutes to complete the security check on arrival at the European Commission building. Please have your V-pass, ID card or passport ready as security personnel will ask to see them.

All participants:

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

5. HELPDESK, INTERNET ACCESS

A helpdesk will be located at the entrance of the meetings rooms. Our staff will assist you and respond to any questions you may have. Internet can be accessed via Wi-Fi hotspots. The passwords will be shared on the day of the meeting.

6. ACCESSIBILITY

The premises of the European Commission are fully accessible for people with disabilities. When registering online, please indicate any special needs and dietary requirements.



