

Short report Amsterdam workshop, Voice of Europeans

2-3 June 2019, Lloyd Hotel

On 2nd June, all participants gathered at the Lloyd hotel for a joint dinner to get to know each other in an informal setting. The conversation starter cards that were provided helped the conversation along. The dinner was also useful for giving us the opportunity to start early on 3rd June, so at 9am we kicked off the program with two welcome speeches and a warm up exercise. In a session of 'across the line', participants reacted to statements by standing left or right of a line in the middle of the room, also giving insights on where people stood on topics of membership.

Led by Marcella Heijboer, the day proceeded in three parts, focussing on attracting new members, engaging & retaining membership and working with civil society respectively. All participants prepared examples of successful tools and strategies, which were openly shared in the 'party report' sessions. Examples ranged from a step-by-step guide for excising members on how to sign up new members to the party, to organising summer camps and getting involved with civil society by assisting animal shelters.

In a more theoretical intermezzo, Josef Lentsch provided food for thought based on his research into creating new centrist political parties. He highlighted the differences between 'old' parties and 'new' parties, discussed megatrends in politics and the different levels of participation of members and public in a party.

The interactivity of the sessions we found to be a useful format for involvement and making sure all participants bring something to the workshop. This ensured our aim of providing participants with a platform to share their own best practices and taking home those of other parties. Feedback of participants showed the method of working was appreciated. Internally, as the main point of improvement we see the length of the day. In the final session energy went down a little, which is something to take into account for the second workshop in Warsaw.

