

Commons Watch Full Report



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Acknowledgment

These notes have been taken all along over the course of the first three days meeting of Commons Watch which took place in La Bergerie, Villarceaux, France, between the 18th and the 20th of May 2016.

Except for typing mistakes and the presentation round on day 1, none of these notes have been re-written following the sessions. As exhaustive as this transcript was intended to be, some of the information it contains thus only reflect in an imperfect or truncated manner the actually enunciated statements and discussions – hence the “(?)” signs, which account for missing elements.

We apologize for these approximations.

Having outlined these limits, this report is still intended to serve as a reminder of the reflexions and main debate topics that unfolded during this first Commons Watch meeting. It thus represents a rough material to reflect upon and perhaps to keep as a documentation landmark for the movement's own history.

The author of the report

The author of this report, Léa Eynaud, is a PhD student in sociology at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris and in environmental science at the Université Libre de Bruxelles working on the notion of the commons in relation to urban sustainability transition. Léa's attendance of the Commons Watch meeting as well as the composition of the following report relate to her methodological approach, which can be described as mainly inductive. The ambition of her dissertation is to account for what happens on the ground and for what counts in the eyes of the people involved. Such an approach entails understanding the history and the development of the commons movement as an exploratory process. It means taking the back and fourths, the negotiations as well as the concrete supports of action as significant elements as to what it actually means to give shape to the concept of the commons in a given context. Her engagement on the field thus translates into intensive note-taking (provided, of course, that information is not presented as confidential by the persons involved).

Summary

Acknowledgment.....	2
The author of the report.....	2
Participants list.....	5
Day 1: 18/05/16.....	6
Sketch of the circle.....	6
Welcome and introduction.....	6
Presentation round.....	7
Commons events post-it session.....	11
Result table.....	13
World café.....	16
Question n°1: "What does a commonswatch network make possible? (what do we expect/hope)".....	17
Question n°2: "How would a commonswatch network support and nourish my local work? (what is the added value)".....	18
Question n°3: "How can a commonswatch network affect policy across Europe and EU institutions?".....	19
Wrap up session.....	20
Day 2: 19/05/16.....	22
Sketch of the circle.....	22
Introduction, program of the day.....	22
Commons inspiration round.....	22
Questions game.....	23
Open space session to co-create the Commons Agenda.....	25
Introduction.....	25
Round A.....	26
Round B.....	29
Feedback session.....	33
Call version 1, 1:11 pm.....	34
Clarity walk and following discussion.....	35
Group session follow-up.....	37
Call version 2, 6pm.....	39
Group poster presentation.....	40
Post-it feedback session.....	42
Collaborative writing sprint.....	44
Question n°1: "What is from your perspective the reason for being of this network?".....	45
Question n°2: "How can this network support and nourish pro-commons policy in Europe?".....	46
Question n°3: "In your perspective, what are the network's priorities?".....	47
Day 3: 20/05/16.....	49
Introduction, program of the day.....	49
Wake-up games.....	49
Assembly of the commons.....	49
Introduction.....	49
Group work, ideas and suggestions.....	50
Poster presentations.....	52
Collective editing of the call.....	54
Introduction.....	54
Group work.....	54

Call version 3, 12:34 pm.....	57
Performative reading.....	58
Next steps.....	59

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Day 1: 18/05/16

15h06: session starts just after lunch. In the middle of the room is a circle of chairs and a large poster lies in the middle, where E wrote: "what becomes possible if we build the foundation for a strong, responsive European network around the commons and pro-commons policy?" there are 25 of us, all the chairs are taken except for 1.

Sketch of the circle

Sophie (SB)	B	Teodor (T)	David (Da)	Matt	Dimitris (Di)	Vasilis (Va)	Roberta (Ro)
Stefan (S)							Dimi (Dimi)
Vitalie (Vit)							Carmen (C)
Agnieszka (Agn)							Daphne
Lucas (L)							Elizabeth (E)
Hanne							Fred Sultan (FS)
Ina (I)							Gaëlle (G)
Melanie (Mel)							Fanny (F)
Teresa (T)		Denis (D)				Léa	Ruby (Ru)

Welcome and introduction

FS: I am Frederic, from Paris and I am co-organizer of this meeting. Here is a building owned by the FPH.

E: Léa is gonna take notes and record so if this is a pb for someone please let her know and she can switch off.

FS: we are all here for commonswatch, we don't know what it is yet but we are all here to figure it out; we are all here as private people, not as organizations and we are all here to know what we want to do for Europe in the future regarding the commons. We will leave in this end hopefully with some ideas or guidelines for the future. It is really a work in progress. Welcome (applauds). And finally I have to introduce E, she is the only one not from Europe. She is from an organization, Percolab, to help us organize the meeting. Also we are four people who organized the meeting in the first place: Nicole, David, Sophie and Gaëlle: the discussion started with us all together and then we contacted the people of the network connected action for the commons. Thank you all for doing this.

E: so hello; I am Elizabeth, I am one of the 11 people of Percolab, I was imported from Canada because the other were quit busy so I brought maple sirup for breakfast (laughs).

D: so you ll make pancakes (laughs)

E: so this is a co-design process, we will be working with emergence. This is the plan for today but it will be working with building blocks so that we can change the program. So the point is that in

this end every single individual goes out with knowing this is where we are going, this is where I am going and so on. So as Fred said, we are here for commonswatch but this may change over the course of the days: I like the name, but it may change. (she takes the poster and reads it): it is a big long but that is our start of question. The objective is not to refine this question but if it is the case, then good as well. But first let's know who is in the circle. You are gonna have to find a person you don't know and have a conversation with them – I am sure David knows everyone (smiles, he says no with the head). You will have to ask them who they are, what organization they are from and what is their link to the commons. In the end you will have to introduce them. Then we will have some talk and an international café, then you will go to your room, then there will be supper and finally if someone is interested, I will organize a story telling session on your experiences on the commons.

(end of the break)

Presentation round

E: ok so Léa is taking notes and if you want to join her you are welcome to, otherwise it is fine. So I am E, I am from Percolab which is transitioning to a new model and we are namely working around the commons as a main pillar. Ok so now you can start introducing someone and when you are being presented you can just let it go, even if it is not exactly what you are doing. Whoever feels like starting can, and then it will go to the left.

[exact transcript out of an audio record from there]

Agnieszka: I talked with **Dimitris** from Greece; Dimitris is organizing a festival about the commons. The idea of the festival is to show different ways of doing the commons, different views. And the festival... there is the festival each year: there was last year and two years ago and this year it is still in process.

Vitalie: I will introduce **Stefan**; he is from Germany, and he is part of the commons institute initiative. It is, as I understood, it is a group of friends and cooperators who are very enthusiastic about the commons. They attended the summer school of the commons and they decided that it was worth to find a nice way to continue...

Stefan: we didn't trust the circle because we started the conversation before (smiles). So I will introduce **Vitalie**; he is from Moldova. And he works for Oberlicht, which sounds very German (laughs) – in German it means a small window – it is the same meaning in uh... (laughs) what is it? Moldovian, roman? And he works with an association of young artists, that's the name of it: Oberlicht, and they use art as their main tool to get... to do what they do, by using art. And they try to connect and reconnect the people and the communities that are around the public spaces, and engage with the communities, the associations and also the administration of the city.

Sophie B: Ok I will introduce **Teodor** from Zagreb, who is here with many different hats: he is part of the right to the city movement Zagreb; he is also on the board of the institute for political ecology, which is a think-tank where they do applied research to uh... help... civil society navigate in the institutional landscape. And he is also engaged with the center for independent culture in Zagreb to develop specific partnerships and he is also part of the culture to commons group which is part of this hub for the commons we talked about before.

Teodor: so I will introduce **Sophie**. Sophie Bloemen is Dutch but working and living in Berlin; she is from the commons network, a Brussels and Berlin-based organization. They mainly deal with policy and EU level and some local level around each of the commons. They do paper writing and

try to infiltrate the issues and themes around property rights and stuff like that into policy agendas – commons perspective on this – into policy agenda at these different levels.

David: yes, I'd like to present **Ruby**. Ruby on a personal level represent the cultural commons because she was born in Canada, she is Dutch and she is living in Finland and she's lived in Bresil, and I don't know... other places; so she is that kind of mix. And her commons commitment is in – among others – is committing in the Helsinki local currency, time-sharing. And she has a very interesting concept of a time tax: of taking a little of the time people take in their sharing of time where doing work and that time would be devoted to community needs and needs for taking care of the commons and social needs. So I think it is a very interesting project and she is also involved in an international environmental development organization which is concerned about the natural global commons. Is that ok? (laughs, yes)

Matt: So I would like to introduce **Melanie**. Extremely interesting 5 minutes conversation with her. She is an academic working for the LSE in London and somewhere in Paris that I didn't quite take note of. Her research is on the commons, she's been looking at open data, open science, open access for publications... and advocacy in the public domain.

Dimitris: I will introduce **Agnieszka**. Agnieszka is from Poland; she works for an organization called – I remember the translation – for policy critic. They do very interesting work in trying to network and match-make different organizations, different teams, different activists, into working more. From my understanding this has to do with many different aspects of the commons – not just one. She works currently, she is a journalist, and she works also for website for publications around her work.

Vasilis: So I will introduce **Gaëlle**. She lives in Paris, she is a sociologist and an activist working on intellectual property issues, patents and copyrights. Currently she is focusing more on medicines and rights secrets for European derivatives – she will tell us more about that. And they see that commons are an alternative in what they do – what she does, actually. And she is connected with different groups worldwide and tries to facilitate what they actually want to do. Yeah, more or less that's it.

Roberta: I talked with **Léa**. She is a sociologist and uh... like me a PhD candidate on Commons. At the EHES – the high school of social sciences in Paris. And her research is about how the commons are implemented between researchers and practitioners. So it is very interesting for us, also because we are a lot of people who are researchers and practitioners or activists.

Dimi: I had the pleasure of a tête-à-tête with **Ina**. She is from Germany but spent the last decade in Marseilles where she is part of les têtes de l'art. They are looking to engage people and empower them to create, to make art. They do workshops, they do public events, they have an open channel where everybody can just walk up and say hey I want to do a TV show or a movie and they actually teach the people how to do this: give them the tools, walk them into the project and empower them to create what they always wanted to create. And the goal is that once the people have leant it they can then pass it on and help other people to create.

Carmen: So I am going to introduce **Teresa**. Teresa is coming from the southern part of Portugal – not top south but mid-south. She is a property lawyer and she is working with creative commons in Portugal, which I found very interesting, because not many of us are in that field. And besides her work in Creative Commons Portugal she is also so to say lobbying in the EU for different intellectual property... it is called Communia. And yes... that's more or less it. But I think we still

need more time to... exchange more information, because it was very interesting conversation.

Daphne: I met Fanny, for the first time. **Fanny** is Dutch but she lives in Spain in an Eco-village. And that's also the network she is working in: it's the Global Eco-village Network. She works in the European Eco-village network and it is actually quite an interesting network bringing together different Eco-villages with different types of status. Then you become a member of the association; they have around 100 members. And also outside of the EU: territory of Palestine. And her connection to the commons is to find out here. (laughs) no we talked about our connections and we found out that our connections are not especially on the commons but it is probably connected in many ways. The global Eco-village network is of course related through land and through land ownership and also participatory processes and this kind of things. But it is the first time she attends a meeting on the commons.

Frédéric: Ok so I will introduce **Denis** from AITEC. He is French, he is coming from Paris and he is involved in the association AITEC that is mostly an organization of experts of different fields. And now AITEC is mostly involved in the struggle against the international free-trade agreements, like TTIP or others, you know them. And the link with the commons is probably mostly through the right to the city. And AITEC was or is involved in the process of re-municipalization of water services for example. But it is not now the main activity because these organizations have not all the means needed for that. Hope it is good!

Gaëlle: So I had the pleasure to meet **Vasilis**. Vasilis is from Greece. He is an urbanist, he is also working for the Peer-to-Peer Foundation which is doing advocacy and research on the commons. And their objective is to help people, organizations and the states to transition towards commons-based society.

Fanny: So I talked with **Daphne**. Daphne is from Germany, she lives in Berlin; and she's working for a European network which is called European Alternatives. They have several offices in Rome, Berlin and London if I remember right. And it is a network that was created about 10 years ago because they felt that Europe was disintegrating, that's the word you used I think. Countries were nationalizing so they have... well, trans-national projects on different topics, which were democracy, equality and culture. And the connection to the commons was... well this is also her first time to the commons meeting and what I found very interesting is that you said "we want to see Europe as a common good". And this maybe coming out of our networking session.

Ruby: so I had the pleasure for the first time to speak with **David**. But so yes, US and Spanish, and hum... but then what happened was that as I guess with a lot of great people they are actually more interested in finding out what is the other person talking about: so like wait, what did you say, and why, and so (smiles) so actually I feel like a lot was left unsaid from David's side but you all know about the many ways in which David has been involved with the commons in a large variety of fields – I think I can leave it there. (laughs)

Léa: so I spoke with **Roberta**, who is also PhD student in Urban Planning but a lawyer by training. And she uh... if I am right, she is working on the right to the city in Turino – that's her case study – but she is also in touch with a laboratory which is based in Bologna (Labgov and Labsus) and the commons is the way for her to bring urban planning and rights together.

Denis: this is **Frederic** who is member of VECAM and the French network Remix the Commons which is a network of organizations. He is involved in the commons since 2009 with the preparation of the commons declaration at the world social forum of Belem. And then he also prepared the

Rio+20 – the COP initiative. And he is mostly doing two kinds of things about the commons: one is that he organizes documentation about legal and political impacts and project initiatives about the commons; and he tries to help organizing networks like this one about pushing forward the commons on the agenda.

Teresa: so I am presenting **Carmen** from Spain. More precisely from Madrid, though she used to live in Malaga for many years and moved five years ago to Madrid. She works with this collective called Platoniq and they were from free culture and they run a crowd-funding platform where they makes it mandatory for promoters to release some of the outcomes of their projects and their local licenses – it can be GPL, CC licenses etc. And they leave it for them to decide what to release, they don't have to release everything on local license, but that's one of the requirements. And one thing that the collective is... they work with museums etc. she has an academic background in journalism and I think that's it. And I am looking forward to more conversations because she is from Spain and we have this historical rivalry with Spain (laughs).

Melanie: I had the pleasure to discuss with **Matt**, over here, who came from Oxford by bike, by boat and by bike (laughs, impressed comments). And Matt's work is in the Institute for Solidarity Commons, as a software engineer. And the purpose of this institute is to promote the concept of solidarity economics within the UK – so there are a series of I think ten criterias to describe solidarity economics and you mentioned and I wrote down three of them: democracy, sustainable respect, the environment and uh... And your task more precisely in this institute is to develop a decentralized platform to host open-data which can describe successful initiatives of solidarity economics. So I hope that was accurate. (laughs)

Ina: so I got to know **Dimi**. Dimi is originally from Bulgaria, Sophia, but he is living in Brussels now. And he's been involved very much in the digital commons as he told; about like how to collect knowledge and how to share it by digital tools. And he was interested in the project of Wikipedia and as a former activist he has been defending Wikipedia quite a lot and then they said hey, hey! Don't you want to defend Wikipedia for us so he is now lobbying for Wikimedia (laughs) so it was very interesting to know how you can go from being an activist to a lobbyist – but I don't even know really what lobbyists do so I guess we would have to talk a little bit more. So he said he has been working with these digital tools quite a lot but he would like to go back again now to the physical commons.

Hanne: Ok so I have the pleasure to present **Lucas**. He is from Spain, Seville. He is part of Zemos98, and it is actually a festival for short fiction movies – starting with the idea we want to know more about it so we share them. And after 16 years the festival stopped but they continued with different projects and now they have three research topics that they have touched upon until now. One was migration, the other was non-formal education and so the third one was the commons. Actually at this moment they have a double track in which they work on media production – so like new visions of production and so on, so it could be interesting to see how that goes. And then they are also working on participatory processes. So they are talking to councils like in Madrid or Seville in order to open up a bit the territorial culture – culture as a commons maybe you can say but that's maybe an interpretation.

Lucas: She is **Hanne**, she is from Commons Josaphat which is a neighborhood in Brussels and they want to turn the neighborhood into a sustainable project, into a commons neighborhood. It is a collective of citizens; it has been working for the last three years and they want to turn the ideas related to commons into practice. It started like an open call for ideas with collective proposals and she thinks it is kind of a transferable experience that you can't copy paste. And there are in the

lobbying parts of the project in relation to architecture plans, co-housing projects etc. And they are now in the discussion with the government, with the municipal government, to make like a schematic master-plan, which may appear by the end of this year.

E: thank you. So every person here is representing either one or many organizations so I am sure that every single person who is here is also connected to all kinds of other really interesting organizations, networks, events, projects, initiatives and so on. So in a moment, what I will invite you to do it to take a little stack of post-it and we are just going to do a quiet individual little brain storming.

[end of exact transcript]

Commons events post-it session

E: ok so now we will hand over post-its and if you have in mind an event or something to come that might be of interest for the commons, or even many of them, write them down.

(break, silent). Now you will be in groups of 2 to 4 and discuss these events together and then answer the questions (on a poster): What? When? Where? Where can I get more infos? And see what are the events we really want to share in the circle together in the end. 12 minutes.

(I go with Stefan and Denis)

Stefan: fall meeting in October on the Commons Institute and in July the 2nd there is a commons festival in Berlin but it is separate from the organization where I am – it is not organized by the Commons Institute although some people from there are involved; it will be interesting for the people to know what is happening in Germany. I guess people organizing it are mainly from the digital scene and it is organized at ELOK which is a hackerspace. It will be mainly local so I don't know if this will interest people here. Then there is the next meeting of the Commons Institute. As a legal entity we have to report (the CI) to the court what we do so what we do is we organize first a formal meeting in the spring where we pick a topic and discuss it and then a more informal, open meeting in October. The fall meeting could be interesting for people here, last time we had a person from Finland. In terms of European networking I am not sure whether it is the most relevant but yes.

D: we will try to connect local alternatives with the struggle against T-TIP with so social movements, unions etc.

S: I think two years ago the commons were really on the forefront of the Degrowth conference in Leipzig but this time I don't know.

Léa: Degrowth conference in Budapest and FSM Montreal

D: I guess other people will talk about it but we should put them still because they are quite important. But the FSM in Montreal has been quite debated in my organization because people say it will be the end of the world social forum and of the movement because it is the first one in the north, it hasn't been so well organized, will be small and also mainly francophone; but we will see.

Oh and I also forgot the COP22 in Marrakesh.

And also the Quito conferences by UN Habitat.

(back to the group)

E: so we will go on until 7 unless anyone has an objection. So you see here on the panel there is an "event, groups, projects/ networks" board so eventually everything will be stuck there, up on the wall but for the moment we will already name them in the circle, one by one, until everything has been named.

Daphne: an artistic and mapping project that maps solidarity initiatives

FS: this is a sheet with different initiatives and projects

G: community meeting land trust in Brussels

F: GEN conference in Spain in July, GEN global Eco-village network
 Ru: next month here the solidarity economy in Europe RIPESS annual meeting
 D: start of a network between local networks and TTIP counter movements
 T: ?
 Mel: right to repair of the circular economy
 Ina: launch of the connected action for the commons website in the days to come
 Hanna: collaborative project to design a park as a commons
 Lucas: Split conference in Croatia about cooperatives for ethical financing
 Agnieszka: commons in the city conference and workshops about the commons
 Vitalie: commons assembly in the European parliament
 S: our group did not know exactly at which level we should focus but the next meeting of our small organization (Commons Institute) in October could be a good moment to get to meet us and speak with us
 Teodor: European cultural foundation for the commons (?)
 David: the American treaty is a treaty for blind people to share books
 Matt: open 2016 platform
 Dimitris: solidarity economy (?)
 Vasilis; san napolo (?)
 Dimi: a catalog for the commons
 FS: atlas of the charter of the European commons
 Carmen: three days gathering organized by platonic about a topic related to the commons to receive a grand for a year
 Daphne: transform festival (?) in Spain on the practice and experience of rebel cities in Spain.
 Moi: degrowth conference
 T: copyright conference (?)
 Mel: open refugee university; it was not the project I wanted to present but there are some online and offline initiatives to educate refugees in turkey.
 I: kitchen in the run which represent refugees (?)
 D: policy paper by the commons network on copyright policy and internet
 Matt: transfo project; entirely self-reflective.
 Dimitris: (?)
 Carmen: seminar for foundations, municipalities and different institutions
 F: Ecolise, overarching network of grassroots organizations in europe based in brussels and on perma-culture, transition towns and so on.
 T: Artisana repository in relation to the commons, copyright and stuff.
 Mel: june in Barcelona, giphi general meeting and at the same time the meeting of net commons.eu
 D: first meeting for restarting a local currency (?) eraclius
 Matt: first gathering of the UK solidarity economy
 Dimitris: open source (?)
 Carmen: meta, an open call for cultural projects impacting in or starting from the bask country in Spain; funding from the government. It is kind of local but I am sharing it because it is nice to see how different things can impact the commons
 Matt: global event on (?)
 Dimitris: CommonsLab for open source software and hardware.
 E: we will be recording, harvesting all these events and anyway they will be put up on the wall.

Result table

What	Where	When	More info
Degrowth Conference	Budapest	August 30-September 3, 2016	Budapest.degrowth.org
Local authorities and civil society against TPIP promoting local alternatives and a fair economy	Grenoble	End of 2016	Ttipfreezones.eu
World Social Forum, Commons Space	Montreal	August 9-14	Fsm2016.org
Rewilding Europe: European organization working for a wilder Europe with large natural areas which are “rewilded” but managed			https://www.rewildingeurope.com/
Ecolise: Overarching network of grassroots organizations as permaculture, Transition towns and GEN; Focus on policy, binding forces of different movements, etc.	Based in Brussels		
Right to repair: etwork on the circular economy NGO			http://ifixit.org/right
; community Netcommons: EU project community wireliess networks, sustainability, Guiti meeting	Barcelona	June 17, 2016	
Kilon: Open refugee univesity			
Repository of open-licensed plays, dramatic works, dance	Portugal	End of 2016	Creative Commons Portugal
Best case scenario for copyright project (on parity, education, freedom of ... and quotations)	Amsterdam Brussels	July (?) September	Communiaassociation.org
Keep copyright out of the classroom: project to create a network of organizations working with education that would be interested in advocacy/lobby work related with exceptions and limitations for educational purposes			Communiaassociation.org
Kitchen on the run: cooking events bringing refugees and local together in a mobile kitchen	Germany, Netherlands, Sweden	March-July, 2016	Kitchenontherun.org
Connection action for the commons website launch	Online	Soon!	ECF website
Build the City manifesto: best	Online PDF		ECF website: build the city

practice cases. Advocate for culture and the commons in urban agenda	version		manifesto
Idea Camp 2017: Open call for ideas. Topic: Moving communities: 50 disruptive ideas gathering and crosspollinating	Barcelona	June 2016 (call) March 2017 (event)	Hosted by Platoniq Funding by the ECF culturalfoundation.eu youcoop.org
Public parc strategy for Bulgarian city designing a collaborative process to design a commons			
Cooperation for ethical financing: conference : collecting capital to fund an ethical bank	Croatia, Spain, Italy	June 2016	Coop57.coop
Commons Assembly: European parliament	Brussels	November 16, 2016	Sophie, David, Fred
Commons in the City Conference	Chisinay, Moldova	September 2016	
CLT Brussels: Community land trust, collaborative housing development and territory ownership			Look up CLT Bruxelles
GEN-EU Conference: 20 th birthday of the global ecovillage network	Arterra Bisimodu, Artieda, Navarra, Spain	4-8 July, 2016	Geneuropeconference2016.org
Festival de la friche			
Festival temps des communs			
Recup' Kitchen			
Mode d'emploi	Bruxelles, Belgique		
Espace possibles			
Self-City			
CREA'CIT			
Monastery Library digitization			
META! Local Matchfunding call in Spain for cultural projects starting in/impacting the region of Guipuzkoa, Basque Country	Online	Now!	Guteo.org
Seminar on matchfunding and distribution of budgeting: foundations, municipalities and public institutions meeting on flexible budgeting, participatory funding and matchfunding	Barcelona	November 2016	Guteo.org @goteofunding youcoop.org
The Dome Project: about commoning and solidarity initiatives in Greece and beyond	Athens		Martha Bonzioun thedomeproject.net
Transeuropa festival : on neo-municipalism and practices of	Madrid	Autumn 2017	Euroalter.com

civic participation from recently “rebel cities” elected in Spain and translate this experience to other places/cities			
Open source circular economy days	Global	June 9 - 13	Oscedays.org
Marakesh treaty for blind: EU has not ratified, knowledge commons for sharing books			Euroblind.eu
European cultural foundation, connected action for the commons: prospect to continue opening the network	Amsterdam and Europe	2015, 2016, 2017	Directly to ECF or different hubs
Commons Institute fall meeting: connect to german-speaking commoners?	Germany, to be determined	1 – 3 October 2016	Contact Stefan
Berlin Commons Sommerfest	Berlin, ELOK	2 July	Www.sommerfest.dieweltdercommons.de
Commons Assembly: a UN conference, bottom up for commons network + support	Brussels	16 November 2016	Commonsnetwork.eu
First meeting for restarting a local currency and exchange network	Heraklion	June 2016	Ask Dimitris
Policy Opportunities for Commons on Copyright, Innovation, Science, urban policy and internet		Paper out in October 2016	Commonsnetwork.eu
UNFCCC COP22	Marrakesh, Morocco	7-18 Nov 2016	Www.unfccc.int >> got to „UNFCCC Process and Meetings
UN HABITAT III	Quito, Ecuador	17-20 Oct	Www.habitat3.org
Atlas of charters of the urban commons (Catalogue of legal instruments for the urban commons; reglementi de beni communi, Turin)			
Sarantaporo = community wireless network	Thessaly, Greece		Www.sarantaporo.gr
Open source donation box	Heraklion, Greece		http://wiki.commonslab.gr/w/Donation_box
Festival for solidarity and cooperative economy	Athens, Greece	June 2016	Www.festival4sce.org
Commons lab, a social coop	Heraklion, Crete, Greece		http://commonslab.gr
The TRANSFORMAP project, mapping solidarity economy, the commons, etc.; self reflective project, sociologists and ethnomethodologists involved			Www.transformap.co discourse.trasnformap.co

First gathering of UK solidarity economy network	Tba, UK	Tba	Www.solidarityeconomics.org
En-oiko festival, festival of handcrafters and small bio-producers	Heraklion, Crete, Greece	24-26 Jun	http://enoiko.community
New EU copyright law: new rights for publishers and rightsholders; exceptions for data mining, disabilities and panorama; google tax; neighbouring rights		Sep 2016	Www.communia.eu
Open 2016 – event for alternative platforms to uber, airbnb, etc.	Tba, UK	tba	
Social and cultural space „OGNIWO“	Krakow, Poland		
VCRC (Gallery)	Kiev, Ukraine		
Multifunctional mobile platform (project)	Studio Basap, Romania		
Currency as commons (time-tax)	Finland		
RIPESSE Europe general assembly, European solidarity economy network	La Bergerie de Villarceaux, France	June 2016	Www.ripess.eu
Chamber of commons			
Digital single market strategy; guidelines, regulations			

World café

E: Is anybody here familiar with the world café? It is a methodology which we will be using about the next hour. 3 realms of conversations: we have these spaces to slow down and share ideas. Until now we have been mainly sharing where we are from but now it will be more theoretical, a kind of "what if" way of thinking, and then in the next days it will be where do we go. So basically we will be in groups of four, on the sheets of paper record your ideas, make sure that everyone grabs a marker and put all their ideas on the paper. At the end of the 17 minutes on a given topic, 3 people of the four will move to another table. The one who stays keeps in mind the memory of the conversation and will be able to brief the others afterward. Then we will gather again and not so much do a summary of what has been said but more what we can take out of it. Different people do the world café in different ways but we will go with the lighter route: the guidelines are :

1- listen with attention

2- speak with intention

3 - look for patterns, insights, connections

4 - draw, doodle and take notes (all is written on a poster she shows)

the person who stays stays only one time and each time is another question.

So question number 1 - keep in mind that now we are naming it commonswatch but it doesn't have to stay so:

Question n°1: "What does a commonswatch network make possible? (what do we expect/ hope)"

(I go in a group with Fred, Fanny, Teodor:)

FS: to facilitate solidarity between collectives and activists in the same fields but also in different fields

T: what do you mean with solidarity

FS: sharing knowledge, experience. If you are involved in promoting policy for open access to culture, how can people access knowledge

T: so access to knowledge about commons

FS: not just commons but also all the policies, how can we converge in a strategic association between the different groups.

T: but the activity would be easy access and contact, to have information on what is happening. It could be that we have networks, different resources developed through different projects and get them together. But I don't know what we see as a success because influencing copyright issues is not easy but about coops it might be easier. For example in Croatia if you get unemployed you can get subsidies from the state because they treat it as a business. I don't know at the European level what would be the hopes and expectations in terms of exercising influence. Although it could be that we don't campaign together but give resources to others who want to campaign. But basically if we answer this question we say what commonswatch can be.

FS: I am also thinking of organizations which do not call themselves as commons. I am now thinking of associations to re-built areas they are not always naming themselves as common space but so the question is how to reach them, connect with them – there are many people here having to do with the right to the city for example.

T: the problem is do we want to facilitate between them or get them all into one movement, and this I am not sure it is easy. I would say we don't have capacity to do this, we should be realistic, it would be too big. For me it would be commonswatch is too connoted in terms of transparency initiatives; we as NGOs are watching the state and how it deals with the police and in that sense I am not sure whether the commons should be this new advocating stuff.

F: I just wrote addressing and raising awareness. Addressing issues to the public, I think it can be a big role

T: but to which public? Because there is no European general public. No news channel at European level that people actually watch so it is not general public at Europe scale in that sense, public domain does not exist in that sense.

FS: do you mean there should be a shared culture on this topic at this level?

F: I don't get it. No I was thinking journalists could be interested in this matter and address these issues, land grabbing in eastern Europe for example

T: of course but there are no European media

F: no but it does not mean for everybody

T: ah ok, you don't mean the general public in Europe

F: no, that's not what I mean, indeed

T: this is administrative stuff, and it is important, but you cannot raise the awareness of the European general public. What we can do is to target some international media to push and make this thing be known.

F: it is not only the whole people in Europe but journalists, people in the administration. So do we have the capacity to influence this particular kind of people or do we want to change the narratives of the people and this is not exactly the same. In one case it is about pushing certain knowledge, information, in the other it is about pushing a common culture and narrative. I agree with you that there is no European level, the only European level is the European parliament and the

administration

T: I didn't say there is no European level but there is no general European public.

FS: my concern is that I think we don't need just new lobby to work at European level but we need also to connect different fields and initiatives to have an important mass.

T: so we can agree that it is not about influencing politics at the European level

FS: not only

T: but we cannot do everything so it would be mainly about mapping

FS: yes

(end of session)

E: Next question:

Question n°2: "How would a commonswatch network support and nourish my local work? (what is the added value)"

(in a group with Melanie, Dimitris, Gaëlle)

Dimitris: personally I am expecting to get collaborative experience on collaborative tools and processes. For everything that we put the commons in.

M: like exchange best practices?

G: or legal tools

D: yes, exactly. Because I think we have a great pool of ideas at the European level so to build from that. And then at a less personal level, how influencing policy and so on how can it become helpful to concrete projects, and by concrete I don't mean a festival but more for example a tool to address a need, something to help make a better life for someone, like a house for a refugee, not like philosophy. Even contacts: a solidarity network.

M: ah so advocacy, lobby

G: well clearly network like that could be very cool, a network that can be activated.

D: and even feedbacks. It would be great to get some feedbacks for example on a proposal I submitted recently on smart cities to have feedbacks from people working on this on a wiki for example.

M: I don't have more to say.

G: it is mainly just so many small things that don't sound that important but mainly promote alternative movement.

Léa: find a common narrative between different groups

G: substantiate, give more substance to it because sometimes when politicians talk about it it is very vague, abstract

D: how are they gonna care about the environment in a more general way if you don't care about the commons. You cannot isolate one thing from the whole and I think this is why commons are important. One aspect of the previous question is that commons give us a dictionary: so that if people are coming from Eco-villages and I come from the digital background we can communicate.

G: having a systematic view is what we tried for a long time but here it is about sharing pictures of the diversity of what commons mean for them.

M: yes so not trying to extract the grail from where it does not exist.

D: through this interdisciplinarity

Moi: does the concept for you have to relate to a resource

D: no

M: so what does it relate to then?

D: knowledge...
M: this is a resource
D: ah ok I was thinking natural; but ok so then anything can be a resource
M: ah, tangible resource
D: yes
(end of session)

Gaëlle does the summary of the last question's talk to Stefan and Dimi.

G: to substantiate the commons concept so that people see how it can help them.

E: Third question:

Question n°3: "How can a commonswatch network affect policy across Europe and EU institutions?"

(group with Dimi, Gaëlle, Stefan)

Dimi: a lot of the challenges are on a local level but a lot of people have no idea where to start. So if we had recommendations with ten things that municipalities need to have to do a commons policy

G: yes we did that in France with the réseau and it was a really good tool I guess. How would you call it?

D: recommendation tool.

S: but didn't we talk at the European level?

D: yes so let's just call it a common set of recommendations for policy at different levels. But I think the municipal level is very important

G: national also. National, municipal, EU

D: yes, these are the three levels we have. And also to have an idea of what we will do in the next months, like a calendar

G: do you mean as the events we evoked before?

D: no I mean like it would be difficult for all of us to do everything but say like ok for December, for a specific event, we need to have something prepared

G: so build an agenda of opportunities?

D: or an issue calendar. Make out future windows of opportunity.

G: again at different levels

D: yes

S: I think in terms of having an effect on these levels it is where it becomes difficult

G: I think it is too bad to concentrate at EU level because now a lot is happening at municipal level, and also many people doing things not as EU initiatives but as European initiatives so really putting EU politics into question

S: but I think the EU level is the one where you can have the most opportunity and the most affect but it is the most difficult to reach

D: so like knowing that for example the Germans are doing this and that so like monitoring and sharing what is happening. So that would be something else, more like the passive side: sharing what is going on; then there is the more theoretical level: what do we want; and then it is the more active part: what we actually do at the different levels.

G: it is going to be probably harder to highlight the windows of opportunity at these different levels but at the same time if we reach the EU level it will enhance the visibility of the commons as a narrative the most.

D: communication is basically bringing the positive aspect of the commons, using the things that we want to happen, the things that are happening and the things we try to do.

G: so to create a pan-European narrative
 S: there is a difference between the different levels for the sets of recommendations in terms of approach, although they could be worked on together (the EU, national, and municipality).
 G: before we tried to develop a systemic thinking of the commons, it lead to endless discussions but didn't work so I guess it is about building and connecting bricks.
 D: I am happy with our thing
 S: we just need to address the how to! (smiles)
 D: yes but this you can enact through the recommendations
 S: and so if you had to draw some, what would you put?
 D: I guess we would need another event like this to answer this question. Actually recommendations would be good during elections to send to candidates.
 (back to the circle)

Wrap up session

E: ok time to wrap it up. You have each a card, try to reflect in silence about one point about one thing that is bugging you. Try to be concise. But for example in the other table there was someone saying: I think there is a problem with this question. So we had the three questions, and the question is what is your feeling of what you're leaving with today. If possible, one idea on your index card and then when you are ready we come back in the circle – in silence.

[on my card: "I would have found it interesting to know and reflect on what people understand by commons"; As we are coming back in the circle, there is the book by Bollier/Helfrich, Patterns of commoning, on each seat].

E: small technicalities, rooms are written at the entrance, breakfast will be served tomorrow from 8 to 9, start at 9:15 and yes you have to read the book that you got offered by tomorrow (laughs). And for tonight if you want to share stories or just listen to them, you are more than welcome

Dimitris: under commons licenses (laughs)

E: so to end today, we are leaving with lots of ideas unsettled but that is find, we will let these ideas flow, you will have a wine and that's ok, we will go back to that tomorrow, but so for now, we will go through what you felt like, read your card, whoever wants to share it.

Dimitris: how to engage in policy making

Do we need new network or a place for exchange between existing networks

D: ?

Agnieszka: how to engage many, many initiatives from community gardens to others into the network

T: sustainability: how do we make it work

C: it is about resources, money: we lack time and human resources for a network of this size

Vasilis: use the experience to not do the same mistakes

S: how to relate the local and the EU level

I: do we need to speak the same voice, use the same narrative or is there a risk to loose something of our diversity

Matt: instead of how should we affect policy, what policy do we need to affect

M: make the commons into a more accessible language

G: I am pretty convinced that we can connect the different bricks that we represent in the network and give it a concrete existence at EU but through concrete activity and existence

Hanna: how to get the space, especially governmentality-wise, to go into action

FS: my concern is to about how to distribute and centralize the process

Ruby: how can we be locally organized for the commons and how does it feed the commons idea

Denis: about some of the people who want to share resources and those who want to have a

common strategy: how to bring these two together?

E: last call... ok so thank you everybody. Super at 8 and then story-telling'sh at 9'ish.

FS: yes so we bought these books published in September so yes, this is for you.

(end of the notes for day 1)

Day 2: 19/05/16:

Start 9:15

A new person arrived in the meantime yesterday evening: Anne-Catherine (AC)

Sketch of the circle

Daphne	Gaëlle	David (Da)	Lucas	Carmen	Dimitris (Di)	Vitalie (Vit)
Dimi						SB
Agnieszka (A)						Matt
Fanny						Denis
Roberta						Elizabeth (E)
Ina						Fred Sultan (FS)
Mel						Stefan
Teresa						Hanne
Anne-Catherine (AC)	Teodor				Moi	Ruby (Ru)

Introduction, program of the day

E: today will be about deepening our understanding so we will be keeping it open still for a little bit, and then we are gonna close it up. So this is a framework in facilitation: that people tend to close very fast the ideas floating in the room because they freak out while for good ideas to develop very well one actually has to let them unfold for a while, even if it is a groan zone and it is kind of uncomfortable. But then patterns start to emerge and we get to a point of convergence and ideas crystallize, become much clearer. You may have already reached this point. You may feel a little grumpy this morning (looks at D, laughs) it could be that you are in the groan zone, but that's ok. This morning we are gonna do the questions workshop, then a workshop to co-create the agenda. So we will have a long time to go deeper into the questions. Then lunch at 1 and then clarity walk, if it doesn't rain and then this afternoon we will spend a little bit of time on the assembly in November. And the idea is to come up tonight with a draft and if we have time this afternoon we might collect a little bit the priorities of action, but if we have no time it's ok, we'll do it tomorrow. So to start: outside of your experience of the commons, can you think of a commons somewhere that inspires you somewhere in the world. Something that is not in your own region, and not in the kind of work you do. Like I don't know the penguins for example. So we will go into groups of 3.

Commons inspiration round

(Agnieszka, Teodor and Léa)

A: for me it's education, I guess in my region it is obvious that people has access to school but when I think about commons I think of it because it is related to the whole discussion about public services, privatization etc.

T: most of the things that exist in our region, in our environments. Chain of local food production and exchange. But do we have to think of a very specific thing right?

A: no. And it doesn't exist in Croatia?

T: not really. We have cooperatives but we don't still have ethical banks. It is cooperatives that establish banks, so it is functional crediting systems for sustainable development for housing and food production so this is a... but I am not sure they are gonna get the money because the national bank is quite conservative so I am not sure they are gonna get the money.

Moi: experiences where collectives of people overtook dying industries and firms to create cooperatives and keep on producing at the local level, like in Greece or Argentina.

A: we have examples of social cooperatives such as one for water, but cooperatives recognized by the law, they have a special status.

(back in the circle)

E: so we are not gonna go around the circle but we will take a few examples.

(silence)

G: she raised the re-appropriation of plants by workers in Argentina and other examples, so I found it very interesting

Dimi: the water wars in Bolivia to not re-appropriate but retake the water in front of commercialization, as a basic right

David: self organized activities (?)

SB: education as a commons, also important in south America

Ruby: you were talking about the struggles against massive corporations and in India people standing for ages against this

Mel: my two fellow of the group who are men reported on the role of women and identified the problem of inequalities among genders, so this question of the role of women against the patriarchy

Questions game

E: so now question. Einstein said something like if I had 50 minutes to answer a specific question I would spend most of the time refining the question. That's what we are gonna do now. You're gonna write what is a question you have that you want to refine with the others. So you will do this in silence and it will be your first draft.

(time's up)

E: there are three rules to the question game. Anyone in the center has the right to speak, anyone who is not hasn't: which is a polite way to say don't speak. People are gonna name the questions, people who want to engage to this question come in the circle and asks a question and so on. So for five minutes we do this question ping pong. It may be hard for the person in the hard seat but they will get two question jokers. Some of the things we can do is have a response disguised as a question, with a question mark somewhere in there, because it is sometimes very hard not to answer. And we are gonna do this three times. Ok so you are ready to do it?

SB: yes (she almost seats on the joker papers, laughs)

E: you can ask your questions and take off. But be in a listening mood.

SB: my question is how can we be connected and share resources in a way that requires little resources or time?

Matt (drops something): why is it important that we require low resources and time?
 SB: why do people have little time?
 T: in a network with so much variety, how can we work with little resources?
 SB: what is it that we want to do?
 Hanne: what is the scale of what we want to do?
 SB: what is a reasonable ambition to have?
 T: how can we push the EU level to include the commons?
 SB: what would be needed for that?
 T: policy paper to influence the commission?
 SB: what is the way to influence the EU?
 M: how to not influence only the members of parliament and so on who are not already on our side?
 SB: what is the link with local politics (?)
 E: how can the meeting give energy and resources and not only feel like it is taken away?
 SB: how can we design an infrastructure that helps us go beyond that?
 Mel: how can we design a network and infrastructure that doesn't feel like yet another project with deadline but gives joy and energy?
 SB
 Dimitris:
 E: that's five minutes, good job! (laughs, applause). Who's next?

Dimi: ok me. So my question is how to transform the commons from a discussion to an everyday practice?
 E: what does it mean to be a commoner?
 Dimi: joker (laughs)
 Dimitris: how do we change our current structures and system in order to help us commoning more
 Dimi: how do we force them to that
 T: do we need more campaigns, awareness action?
 Dimi: why restrict our field of action and not expand it?
 T: why is it so difficult to reach people?
 Dimi: why is it that people don't care?
 T: do they know what we are discussing about?
 Dimi: joker
 T: is there a way to make our language more simple?
 Dimi: do we want it or is it that we should?
 SB: do we need other people to spread our message?
 Dimi: why do you think that we are not this kind of people?
 SB: like law people?
 Dimi:
 SB: is there not something else to focus on?
 Dimi: no joker (laughs)
 E: how do I explain the commons for my mother so that it pertains to her
 Dimi: to my child
 E: to myself so that it speaks to my values
 Dimi:
 C: have you ever asked people in your family...
 Dimi/ have you? (laughs)
 D: if the commons belong to everyone and no one, guided by sustainability and so on, then is commoning a verb or alone a noun?
 Dimi: why or and not and? Why not a noun, an adjective and a practice?
 E: ok, ok, time's up! (laughs) ok so one last spot.

(David reads the card of his neighbor) (laughs)

Hanne: are the commons a way to change the system we have right now or is it an alternative?

Dimitris: why are you thinking in terms of system and not way of living?

H:

Dimitris: is it about making the system better or life better?

H: doesn't making the system better make life better?

Vasilis: can we not start from scratch?

H: what does it mean start from scratch?

V: do we need first to have the planet destroyed?

H: what are the alternatives to destruction?

G:

H: is there not a more constructive approach

G: can the commons help us develop a space for the people to organize a city better?

H: is it the main focus to create a space or the commons?

G: is there no risk that if the commons are just local initiatives we miss a bigger goal

Ruby: are we building a movement for the commons

H

G: are we gonna spread the commons

H: how do we do that?

G: if we want to spread the commons, isn't the best way to show what they do instead of preaching the commons?

H: isn't it important to do both at the same time?

R: so should we not make the movement more visible as we think of a commonswatch?

E: time's up (applause). So now turn your paper over and if you have a new version, after having heard all that, please write it down; it could be a completely different question, it could be an iteration of the same question, as you like.

(people write; E prepares poster)

E: so before we move on, did your questions evolve? What is your experience?

(silence)

SB: it was fun

(laughs)

E: it is supposed to not just be fun though (smiles); we do this also with groups of more people and a friend of mine even did it with her ex-husband, and also with some elected members and they really, really struggle but it is a very good exercise.

Dimi: if I was gonna do it again I would prohibit questions in how cause it is difficult to go further with.

Open space session to co-create the Commons Agenda

Introduction

E: so we will move on with the open space. Has anyone done that before?

SB: it is a participatory process to make a collective agenda

E: so essentially yes, it is a way of co-producing an agenda. It is quite an old technology. It can be used in small groups or the whole conference. I find it a good way if somebody is at the end of a conference oh! We didn't talk about this: then it is your responsibility if something gets on the agenda. So we will do two rounds of 45 min. And essentially there are four ways you can participate. So you think something is important, like some tool to keep in touch after the meeting ,

then the host has to make sure it will be discussed. The beaver is keen on something and wants to concentrate on it. The bee is the one which is interested in everything and so it can cross-pollinate, go from there to there. The butterfly is the one who will go to FS and talk about the FSM or something on the side: that's really ok in an open forum. And also: if you feel like you don't belong somewhere, you're not bringing energy, you are not interested: you don't have to stay, you can just leave, you don't have to explain yourself or anything. Your deliverable is something concrete that comes out of it: a concrete idea, a priority, whatever you feel is important, you bring to the table. Some of the common questions I get asked is: what if I propose something and no one comes? Well don't worry about it, maybe it is just not important to others, but you can also then just take the time for yourself then, if this is important to you. The other question is what if I propose a topic and after 10 minutes it falls down: well then you can just take yourself somewhere else. So I open it: we have ten slots in total. A is for the first round, B the second.

AC: so we just pick a sheet?

E: yes. And you can just read it aloud when you're done.

(AC takes one, SB too; fanny as well; Gaëlle; and Ruby)

E: so is anybody ready?

AC: let's lobby Brussels? I am number 3

E: and where do you want it to be? You get to decide.

AC: here

SB's paper read by Vasilis: what technology do we need?

E: ok so 5 over there

T: including technologies etc? Platforms?

SB: yes

G: a template of recommendations for policy makers, like a set of recommendations that we would develop based on our own activities, actions that we undertake in our daily work

AC: ok so it is a bit similar to lobby

G: no because it is not especially EU

AC: but it is complementary

FS: so we need some bees

Ruby: to develop our call: what is it that we are calling for?

T: so principles basically

E: ok so that's number 4

F: what would a utopian commoners world look like?

E: ok, number 1.

Round A

(Table 4, call: Teodor, David, Stefan, Teresa, Ruby, moi, Vasilis, Dimitris, FS):

Stefan: what is a call for you, something to call others?

R: our call is what brought us here, but in a way it also becomes the movement, it becomes a visible call of course for others here

David: so a call could be basic principles. The traditional three pillars: participatory governance, ecological sustainability and social equity. Does someone have something to add?

Dimitris: I would add concrete need and to differentiate from current consumption

D: yes principles are more general

R: this is not talking about what commons are about but saying where we want to go to

D: I guess commons are increasingly enclosed and destroyed or deteriorated, turned into capital.

R: and at the same time we want to make it something positive for people

Dimitris: show-casting

T: that's what we do in the digital commons

R: telling that there is so much commoning all around and that we are calling for these experiences to come and go together

D: the basic principles, the needs, and what is it that we want

Dimitris: maybe start with why is it that we are doing that; what drives me is social inequalities and ecological problems

T: what we want is also access to knowledge. I think we can make it more concrete

D: I think we are demanding the abundance of the knowledge commons, abundance and access.

S: it is always hard to cluster them: we have the natural, knowledge, urban, digital commons, but do we need these classifications?

Dimitris: no I don't think we do. Or if it could be shown on the showcases, but not on the why I guess. (he writes it somewhere else).

(someone has come, David explains about her)

D: she is part of one of the best projects for me which is R-urban in Paris which for me combines most of the best indicators.

R: if we want to talk movement building we need to make a call everyone can identify to so maybe less about showcases than about showing diversity

Dimitris: a proposal is maybe the best way to go with

R: but is it not a call

D: I understand that it is more of our general call; it doesn't have to go into much details. It can go into some examples but...

R: yes

FS: maybe a part of expressing some principles we could have as a call how people will... what do people engage with in this space, and what will they win. Could we consider it as a commons as well, so not just a list of principles but also how can we participate to it.

R: yes.

D: I would end up with like a call, a few sentences like we call on all Europe to do like that. I think what would be wonderful would be to draft something short, maximum one page

R: and is it something that comes out of here or is it gonna be circulating?

D: we will see what happens

Teodor: but sometimes it doesn't happen because people are too ambitious and then they cannot engage with time and resources

T: in the next round we could go for how do we go further with this

T: my point is do we want to achieve a given goal, like overcome capitalism or something

D: I don't think we are going that far, just to have a few principles and just see how it goes like commoning is a verb more than a noun, something like that. It is not an organization, it is a call, no one knows what will happen in the future

T: we will decide something tomorrow and it is coming fast so I guess we have to close something

D: this is just a piece of paper that could be a call.

T: yes but it shouldn't be too open otherwise someone else will decide on it

R: I agree but...

T: I have experience when people are too general wanting everything it often goes against some concrete tasks

D: but I guess this is not what we are trying to do, but just to draw some general principals.

FS: I think it is important to open this discussion. If what we are doing is a goal

D: a call!

FS: sorry, it is my English. But I think part of the issue of a goal is also who do we want to have with us, which social movements and so on, how do we manage the mobilization around it so I think it is not just about principles

D: yes but then we will never come to writing the call

T: but what is our call is what is our mission, what is our basic attitude, towards other commoners, towards the whole world. But for me this is process but we are part of it and we want to influence what comes out of it so it is not just spontaneous. So just to know that there are dynamics and we are influencing that dynamics so my idea would be to be more realistic

R: ok but I think we have something more that is needs

T: yes but it is not just about the needs of humankind but that of the people who join here

R: yes, yes, this is what we mean, the needs coming out of the commons experiences coming out of the call

S: a few years ago doing a school on commoning in Germany we had a whole group about how to address the needs of housing, the needs of food: all the basic needs, so that's different from the needs of a network.

D: I don't think that would be part of the call to address these larger needs, but the call would be about telling that the commons are destroyed.

S: yes but just to make it clear, I see a big difference between the needs of a network and the needs...

T: yes but what would be the work of a network besides addressing these needs? It is not only about naming the problems and making comparisons but it is also about

R: there are certain issues in my group where I come from that we are facing and it would be great to see better how these needs could be fulfilled by the commons

T: yes, that's something practical

D: you're talking about the value added by this network I think one is sharing knowledge, one is ...

R: this is not part of the call

T: of course, it is just because you are seeing it as much bigger, the call should address what people are looking for. We are talking about different words, I want this call to be more concrete, that's all.

D: i don't think it is necessary. Others are working about it, there is no problem with overlap.

T: I think in a second round we could do something more concrete and here just ask ourselves, who are we addressing?

S: is it an invitation to join us or is it a thing to tell people what they should do?

D: it could be a call to action, and maybe also to participate in a commons assembly. We could say we have a meeting in Brussels in November and we would like to have people coming together and make showcase, and bring people together, at European level. (Dimitris left) like it is a call for action.

S: a wake up call

R: I am not sure this will work. I think it will be invitation for process, and the rest will come after because this is a call for a movement that is not there yet. It is our call to come together but also to people to join us.

T: it is like a reason of being

T: but this defines a certain method. Generally speaking we can cover in a page all the challenges but our call is not to save the planet but to build certain tools to those who want to save the planet

D: ok so it is a tools for commoners!

T: ok so a network to share...

D: Best practices? Technologies? Ideas?

T: and for me the commoning ways of doing it would be to have everybody all the time that we don't make a matrix of all the peer to peer, this would be a next step, but just a tool to help each other.

D: ok so the call is to create a stable sustainable mechanism for initiatives.

T: a step further would be we go further than just saying we need to bring people together but we need to develop tools, not for our networks, but to be transferred to other networks.

D: it is not identity driven but by concrete underground needs and we don't know what they will

be.

R: what are the needs that will be coming out of that is a thing, but first the call should be there for people to see that they are concerned by this. If there are actors who would like to see what is it that we are doing with the commons

S: the principles of commoning are what David said before but the needs I would say look, in Spain, Greece and so on people are organizing these needs and so the idea after would be to build a network. And so I would say it is indeed finding out new tools to make these initiatives visible as a same struggle and not just another umbrella network for already existing network

R:

T: you are too systemic (smiles)

R: omg

T: I guess why is not only these problems, but also our problems, how we are not effective, how we are not enough connected etc. So how we don't do this good enough, and how we could do it better.

R: this should be the need of a network, I am still stuck there. Cause our needs as commoners basically are... the needs of the commons

T: for me the most... sometimes disguise is that we don't change ourselves, we do this in a manner that is not commoning – it is project based, some kind of structures, different boxes of networks and entities. For example how do we relate to donors? If we just take and allocate their money then we didn't do anything in terms of commoning in terms of their budgets.

FS: I agree with that and I think it could be enlarged to other things. How could we deal with the process itself as a commons? With moderation and so on

T: yes we have to think of ourselves as a political process indeed, because commons always entail a political process

FS: if I think of nuit debout for example...

R: ...

E: it is 11:30 right now. You'll have time to finish your conversation. We have five slots available for the second round, so you can put in your ideas for the second round. And then we will self-organize for the second part and that of the first part we will put up on the wall.

FS: could we add in the three pillars "decentralized participation"

T: democratic governance

FS: yes, but it is more precise than that. Auto-gestion in French. Self-management but no... Or just radical democracy

R: yes, this is good.

T: can we stay?

R: yes, we can (smiles)

T: maybe first an introduction about what are the commons and then

S: or maybe first the why, what people do with this, from there you derive the principals and then you call on the people to join.

Round B

(end of the break, I continue with the group drafting the call)

D: I guess it is better not to address the theoretical debate on the commons because it is a hot potato. And we have so many people like Léa working on the commons on a theoretical level

R: yes it almost feel like most of the time there are more researchers than practitioners and also

when the researchers come and speak it is like they have the expertise and it is terrible for the grassroots movements

D: and I am also choked by the lack of examples, the Teatro Valle and so on, like there are no other example. And plus when you get down closer you realize it is very romanticized. That's why we are talking all the time about Columbia, places very far away. And if we are looking at the commons at a level of indicators, there are some good example, there is one right now, this is a commons.

R: I like the idea of Silke Helfrich about them being like crystals being linked.

D: but I am concerned about the fact that there is so much intellectual debate about the commons that people do not see anymore what is made as a commons.

R: yes but in the south it is not that, it is really anchored in everyday life.

D: there is all these seed banks, seed movements and so on, but the examples in Europe there are not so much example, only in the intangible commons

R: I agree with you, we have more researchers in the time bank than people in it

D: what do you think of the economy of the common good by Christian Feber (?): I am saying it is part of the ecology of the commons good movement because it is trying to say that the main idea of companies is rootedness in a community but they are not theoretical, they have a very practical way of measuring it. It is kind of like how they pain the walls and so on. I think it is not really around us because it is mainly about small scale enterprises I was first against it as too reformist but actually it may be useful because it has concrete indicators.

S: I don't know I am quite critical; system critics is not in the end doing much about the capitalist system.

D: I am not really defending it but still it goes far beyond corporate responsibility and pushing forward ecological criterias for circular economy at the local level so it is not a corporate ecological whitewash so I wouldn't take it away.

R: have you heard of "take back the economy"; it is by an author who is also a feminist and she is very good, also about expanding the commons.

D: Donna there she has developed quite interesting tools to understand communities and so on, I think they are tremendous. In Spain the Spanish architects don't think in such a systemic way as she or they does in this project.

R: so this is "take back the economy" (shows it on her computer)

D: is she doing stuff in England now?

R: no it is in Australia

S: is the session running?

T: maybe we should start. On two computers maybe?

S: I guess we have to keep it in blocks so that we can work on them as such.

T: I think we can work on one document.

(around the table are Ruby, David, Stefan, Teresa, Vasili, and Roberta is just standing).

(Stefan has his computer, R does too; she opened a pad)

D: so I think we need one or two sentences on "why".

R: we had notes on why before, so I copy what we said before...

(S and V are together on a computer, T and R on hers, D in the middle)

D: should I write? (he takes S's computer) so we are concerned, no I don't like that word

S: write and then we will change it

E: you have 15 min left

D: you'll give us more time

E: no I won't

(D has taken his computer out, he is now typing on it)

(R is typing what S wrote on the poster during the break regarding a structure)

(they give each others the address of the pad and write in silence)

SB arrives: can we join your call? No one answers because Dimi just arrived and D talks about him having been worried that he didn't come this morning; SB eventually seats down newt to D; T and R are on R's computer, Roberta standing behind; V and S are on S's; SB asks again "can I join? Bring my computer?" S: oh you don't even have to; SB: yes but to get the pad; she goes look for it; (two by two, people write in silence).

I ask other people how to access the pad: I have to enter this address:
<https://titanpad.com/commonswatchcall>

T: is this the call of the network or of this organization; is it calling for more commoners or just for this gathering.

SB: if you are too specific you risk taking it away from where it is. I guess it is good if people can interact with it in different ways

(Carmen arrived, along with Matt; she has her computer and connects to the pad)

Matt: maybe people should write down their names so that we know who it is (silence, people keep on working; FS is standing, V joined as well).

D: maybe start with...

SB: maybe we should think about attractiveness of document

T: maybe also about Why the commons, maybe we should address this

D: people around Europe

SB: are working with the commons

(silence, people type)

R: should we do something like say we need a common imagining for struggling (?)

D: yes, that's good. I said we can imagine another future, and we can take the future into our hands

E: two minutes left

S: it is something that there are many people who have kind of discovered a new vision or paradigm.

D: so there are many people

SB: creating... we have totally lost sense of being together (?)

(silence)

D: do people agree with the idea that the commons is a space that is neither dominated by the state nor the market, is that a basic principle everyone can agree on? I am not saying there is not the state or the market, just that it is not dominated

S: what is the word opposite to beyond

D: yes I have a problem with beyond, it is a very Hegelian vision of history and I think this is not the way it works, things are much messier

Matt: it implies an order

R: yes but we are indeed imagining something new.

(silence)

SB: commons and commoning have been part of the different civilizations around the world. They have respect for our environment... our understanding of practice...

D: dominated doesn't mean there is not gonna be the state or the market, it just mean they are not gonna be dominating

SB: I wouldn't start with that though, I would start with practice

D: ok

E: a good news for this group of intense workers we will take 20 more minutes, do a short coming together before lunch and then go back to it in the circle after. You guys are so intense that no one even just leaves their eyes from the computer (she laughs)

(silence)

D: thousands of us... no, a multitude. Maybe this is a little bit of an exaggeration... a diverse...

(silence)

D: ok I don't know. For the why I have actually put the examples as well...

R: should it be something that euh...

D: much of our shared commons have been commodified... what happened to them..?

Matt: they have been stolen

S: privatized

D: privatized, commodified... theoretically some of the private things are still commons. I like stolen

Matt: or deprived, that's how it feels to me

D: it's basically been stolen by the private or by the state

T: taken

S: I like deprived

Matt: Deprived is more the passive view than stolen

D: where were you born?

Matt: south west London

R: when people say privatized people say they are the ones that are getting rapidly privatized, so not only stress that we are being deprived of them because they are being privatized but also that we have lost sense of it

D: do you all agree with this: "of communities that cannot be reduced to atomized individuals" but that we see them as part of community

T: they cannot be reduced to an opposition of consumers

R: I would put peoples instead of communities

S: like indigenous peoples it sounds

R: no, people, people

D: I think one of the main critics of the commons is communitarianism

SB: no it's not; there is a reference to broader values always

D:

Matt: yes having a community, an entity having (?)

D: are you talking about a community? Because we are connected. We wouldn't even talk if we were not in communities

S: if it is the word of community it is maybe (?)

D: so we take out economic you mean?

S: no I mean action and initiatives are not on the same level

D: ok so we say multitude of community based initiatives

T: no but this is not true, I think we should say we are a non profit

D: yes but I think one thing about the (?)

SB: what about civil society initiatives? It would be a common term to be

D: no but the commons is not WWF and so on

S: I think if we have the European level in mind, we could put citizens

D: no because it refers to parts of a community, so that's good. Citizens and community initiatives. Even the scientists doing open science and open data, people in the academic world... (speaks to Matt)

(D reads what he wrote)

E: two minutes; we'll have another session this afternoon.

SB: I think consumers resonates to more people

R: what about that it hasn't been present all the time and that we are not mere consumers

D: ok so we reject the idea that we can be treated as mere consumers, no?

SB: what I wrote kind of follows that

Matt: we are all consumers but it is the overemphasis on that

D: that we are primarily.

SB: we've never been primarily consumers, it's only in the recent years

(D reads what he wrote)

D: I totally agree but I feel like it is a bit theoretical, I think we can go in more... as opposed to an intrinsic part

R: or... (she reads, pointing the computer)

D: I don't think it's obvious, It is obvious to us but...

(C seems to work on something else, doesn't interact)

D: it cannot be too theoretical, no one knows that

SB: that we are not only consumers is not obvious so I guess

D: yes but Sophie the dominant view in the outer world there...

SB: yes but there is no

D: I think it is too complicated to explain here

S: I have some problem with the listing of the different commons because there is something that is always going to be missing. Maybe we could insert that all this commoning: what is it about, what is the course of it; like reconnecting with nature...

D: so we have deprived most of our commons that is an imperative need (FS has come and follows, standing behind him) for our physical, social and cultural... (Hanne approaches as well)

E: ding ding ding! It is time to go back to the circle (no one moves)

D: ok anyways. This is the idea... (all are absorbed in the screens; Matt not looking at Lucas's screen the whole time because he doesn't really orient it in his direction).

Matt leaves, FS says it is time to leave

E: if you don't go in the circle you won't have lunch (she laughs)

S: this is a basic need (smiles)

(D and R are the last to leave)

D: esta bien, no? Tenemos que saber de lo que estamos hablando.

Feedback session

(We move back to the circle)

E: ok so some of us are hungry so everybody back in the circle! So we are gonna change the plan this afternoon because a group is doing collective writing so that is already done, however we will take two minutes afterward to bring back what we have done and share it. So that each group can get feedbacks very fast. We will do it written so that we don't get into deep conversations. We will have one or two conversations to deepen and we see after the feedback session what it is that we need to work on collectively. And then we will see where we go before we will go have supper.

D: someone new just arrived, I don't think she has been introduced

Doina: Yes I I have been for the last ten years realizing the urban commons at the AAA, the project is called R-urban and we have built this grassroots initiative and we had a huge conflict with the new right wing municipality, which is a process of how to defend the commons and also expand it

E: so now in three words or less, what are you keeping out of the session?

D: we are literally on the same page (R laughs)

H: dream and to connect

F: exchange, create and vision

E: ok so we will do around the circle, pressure on you Matt

M: feeling the pressure (laughs)

FS: strategisation

S: leaving the groan zone

R:

Moi: a concrete step taken

Teodor: advance or die

Dimi: thanks for caring
AC: food for thoughts and action
T: drafting, principles, organized
Mel: less intellectual, more
I: great diversity and cool development
Roberta: synthesis and analysis
Agnieszka: we don't need another network
G: concrete proposal emerging
Daphne:
Lucas: setting rules for preparation
C: resources related to time
Dimitris: participation, design and action
V:
SB: things becoming clear.
E: let's eat. Come back here let's say at 2:30.

Call version 1, 1:11 pm

WHY

Ecological destruction

Social inequality and exclusion

A diverse, multitude of citizen and community initiatives are working to regenerate our urban, rural, scientific and digital commons, [At the heart of all these acts of "commoning" are the social relationships.] and are (People around Europe) envisioning a future that is not dominated by market forces nor the state. A future that is guided by democratic participation, social equity and environmental sustainability. We reject the idea that we can be primarily considered as mere individual consumers instead - we have always lived embedded in social relations, as part of a larger whole within social and ecological systems.

We are very concerned about the increasing enclosure and destruction of our natural, cultural and urban commons that is causing wide human suffering and severe ecological decline. Stark social inequality and exclusion along with climate change are threatening our very future. We have been deprived by much of our shared commons that is an imperative need for our physical, social and cultural well-being.

No commons without our experiences of commoning :

Showcasing/Experiences

We are different peoples, organisation and movements with manifold experiences of commoning around and getting access to our commons:

- repositories of scientific publications and research data that can be accessed by all
 - repositories of educational resources that can be used and reused by all
 - open source software and hardware that can be built upon
 - a growing number of music, images and other creative works that can be enjoyed by all
 - Community Supported Agriculture
- open governance, access to medicines...

In our diversity we are united by common Principles :

- democratic participation management and governance, radical democracy
- Ecological sustainability
- Social equity

Needs of the Commons

The management of the Commons demands a redistribution of power. To effectively address the issues around the commons, there is the need to establish a horizontal relation of power. In order to get to that objective, it is

important to set a network which lets the information exchange be fluid. Connecting experiences far away will set a common agenda of reactions about the enclosure of the commons. Addressing policy makers about the commons practices implies the building of a strong political subject.

Needs of the commoning actors joining the network

Our needs will be manifold. Our aim is to create a network/watch catering to the needs of all of us individuals, actors, movement joining this call. They can be :

information exchange, resources and funding, addressing policies and participate in lawmaking processes, campaigning better; gaining more visibility

So our network could be building different tools as webpage, system of communication

Call

Yellow: David

Ruby: purple

Sophie: green

Stefan: blue

(lunch break)

Clarity walk and following discussion

(back to the circle)

E: ok so we are gonna do clarity walk and the idea is that you walk with 3 to 4 people and try to come up with some elements that you think give you energy in terms of being in a network; what makes you want or don't want to open your emails and participate. Try to team up with people with different backgrounds, either geographically, or doing different things.

FS: so about the document I gave you, if you don't want to complete them it is your responsibility, but if you do it won't be controlled or anything.

T: as a lawyer I guess if the hostel wants us to complete it we kind of have to

FS: yes I invite you to but I will not constrain you to

[we leave]

(return to the circle, 16:13pm):

E: ok so I invite anybody to come in the middle, seize the wooden stick and tell whatever they took out of the clarity walk

David: greater lack of clarity has come after the walk. Someone said instead of having an assembly of the commons we should have a chamber of the commons because it sounds more local. How many people for the assembly, how many for the chamber? Assembly wins!

(silence)

E: silence is ok

Mel: today someone raised the question how do we manage to not loose time during the organization of the network and I answered how do we realize that we can gain friends and time. And during the walk I talked with Sophie and I realized that I am very glad that I got to know someone in the network that I really love, so I am very grateful; so thank you.

T: I think it was a good idea to be here. It is maybe not a huge thing but I think it is interesting. I am not sure we really know what we want to do with this network. Some people want to do some lobbying, others don't. From my perspective not everyone has to be involved with this, but just the network could provide for visibility. And another idea that could be interesting is that of the resources. When they start, some people don't have resources so the network could maybe provide

resources, maybe infrastructures, maybe some kind of support, so maybe this is something that we could agree that it is something that we could all need and that would be easy to reach. Apart from that: we are coming from critical commons and one of the things that I learned from this network is that you can't do something without money, so it is also something we need to understand: do we need people to be there and if yet, how do we manage to get funding.

F: we had a discussion about the challenges that a network brings when it is formalized because we have the feeling that it is now an informal network and if we want to make it formal then how do we do that. A consequence can be that you lose the active participation of the people who run the network (?)

FS: I have two points: I think for me the first objective is about solidarity: how can we be, act in solidarity with the people involved with the commons in the field; how can we work and get involved together, I think it should be one of the most important points. And I think it should orient our agenda. And the second point: it has appeared in my mind the following question: could we be the assembly? In the sense that it would be more ourselves than the event. And in this sense I am more for the assembly than for the chambers because I think this is a political issue.

SB: you mean an assembly in terms of not conceptualizing it as commonswatch but as an assembly of people

FS: my point is could it be more a process than an event.

G: I was thinking what is it that I have in the networks that I have and I realized that what we are doing with is quite different because I have networks where I can work with people on very different topics, and I do have networks with representativity, and here I think it is something different and I think I agree with FS that it is more about solidarity, a network that we can activate. And what I would like to have for me when I leave is some kind of concrete project to make the effort go further. Some kind of concrete projects which don't require a lot of inputs but are useful and shape the kind of relationships that we want to have.

SB: I think I am getting more clarity from this conversation than from the walk but I don't think it is a network where I would be looking for some kind of concrete expertise on a particular issue but that it is more about something loose, about coming together and being solidary to each other.

G: and another thing is what I am interested with this group is that on many topic on which I don't work is to have entry points with people working on these questions. Cause I really see the added value of being able to showing us all together. And this is what I am missing right now on many aspects where I am working theoretically.

C: I agree with all of what you said.

Doïna: I came late in the discussion but to express my superficial feeling is that a meeting like this is also a form of mapping and it might not become a network as such immediately but I think in the end we might plan the next step. I found good the exercise to go and walk. In our table it was about how to enlarge our network.

E: I take my facilitation hat for a minute. If you ask a person about what is art of hosting some people will say these are speaking techniques and so on. Actually I realized the more I study it the most I realize that it does not really exist. It is a share of assumptions. The first would be that the world is in crisis. The third is that dialogue and dialogical matters is the way to achieve that and... this being said is how people connect to art of hosting is through internet for example, others use the facebook page etc. It is used in the Scottish parliament, in all these different places and it is almost energy based in case anyone does complexity theory, so the idea that energy flows and that... but in any case I think it is a very good example.... and it is also open source, not action based. It is not one more thing I have to do but something that nourishes me.

D: one of the issues which I think are very important across Europe is financing. For example Doïnia had 30 friends to back up the money she got from the EU. In Spain they reached agreements that they would get matching funds if EU money is not enough through crowd-funding but there is no way this could work at European level. It works in Spain because they have relations to the

policy level but it thus raises the question of what do we do and how can we push further the funding to support the commons.

Dimitris: it is difficult for the grassroots to gain financing. If you choose to have to legal entity for example you can get no funding. So definitely finding possible solutions for this, finding small projects, small teams and so on, either by making policy-making or by hacking the system – maybe we could think about bypassing the law.

T: imagine we have a partnership for some project, but we only have one legal entity. We get a funding for an entity...

Group session follow-up

E: we are officially in the groan zone. What I suggest is that we have done the sessions earlier and we are going to report back what we think is the golden nugget that we can bring to the circle. So we will take half an hour, go to your groups, think of the golden nugget and then we will report on it and then take a break.

(Back in the group: around the table are Ruby, David, Lucas, Teresa, Stefan)

T: we are not going to be able to finish this now are we?

D: no

R:

D: I think E will bring this back to the group for everyone to work on it. Because now it is just a mess

R: no...

D: why is it called the golden nugget (laughs)

D: oh this is nice, we are getting more and more theoretical: at the heart of commoning are relationships. (smiles) It is kind of nice. Can we give form to some of the other ones. Ok this showcases, the examples, what are the examples. Most of them are immaterial, intangible commons

T: oh sorry, these are my examples

D: what are commons showcases... so you put urban... community energy owned by communities, you know like in Germany. Most of them are community owned, right? ok... what are... because we...

R: you take this there... (shows it on the screen to T)

D: community land trusts, do you agree with that. And also co-housing.

S: it is not just about co-housing it is also about property, they take it out of the market.

D: I would also put the Eco-villages, they are good examples of the commons. Do you know the difference between co-housing and cooperative housing, cause it is different. Could we put these two together?

T:

D: maybe we could say open access and open data, just to get in these words

T: but that's policy

D: yes ok you're right, I am just being... I think it is not free and open source software, it is just open source, otherwise we get messed up.

T: we can say... I don't know. This is the commons: music, images, etc...

(silence, everyone in front of their computers except T and R sharing)

D: public governance; everything that is owned by the government should be made open and accessible; I'll put open government.

T: open policy

D: I think something that is going on all over Europe is

D: water as a common good
R: water as a commons
S: I wouldn't put it like that
R: struggles around water as a commons
D: water governed or self-managed as a commons. Water democratically governed as a commons
T: water infrastructure
R: but you don't think water as a commons like currency as a commons for example, cause there is the whole field of complementary currencies as commons.
D: health, knowledge and technology as a commons. no. How can we put that?
T: public domain...
D: public knowledge, health, knowledge as a commons. There is also the problem that anything that is paid with public money should go back to the commons.
R: this serves as examples, it helps people identify with the process, it doesn't have to be exhaustive, it is just about...
D: I think we have enough, people will come up with more... Next thing. The management of the commons demands a redistribution of power: is it just power? I think this is kind of abstract.
S: my idea was not about needs but how can we think and organize to meet our basic daily needs, like food, shelter, education, healthcare, care. So how to commonize these things and how to be able to meet them in a way.
R: could these things not be part of the call and then ask what these experiences in a sense are all about.
S: when I think in the logic of this call the next step is that these examples show that it is possible to address these needs and so the problem we have is to address this knowledge
D: i like the last sentence. I would say the building of strong political actors.
S: it has to be a story in the end, we are telling a story.
D: I like this last sentence. Because it is not just about our needs
R: our needs whilst upholding the commons
S: it is not the needs, it is the basic needs.
R: to meet a range of our daily needs
D: I wouldn't say our, I guess we have to think globally, in Europe we should actually reduce our needs, because there is already not enough for everybody if you think of people in the south... I like the first sentence. No I would say: to have – this is my opinion – to have a good life in a commons based way
L: what do you mean by good life?
R: buen vivir, ubuntu
D: I mean a happy, long life. I would take out the two questions
S: maybe put a parenthesis around it
R: what about organizing our lives in a commons-based way
S: are these examples showing a good life?
R: maybe just organize our daily life in a commons based way
(D is typing)
D: what about this? I don't know... blabla.
E: five more minutes. I feel like I could give you five hours and you would still be like: nooo
R: organizing our lives to
D: to promote a commons-based way of living for social justice and happy ever after
S: I would say it is not only based on the commons
D: but really for me the commons cannot be separated from the common good; I know it is controversial but this is how I see it. I think the people and the nature this is common good.
T: but common good is different from a good life.
L: common good is the good of the majority

D: for me the common good is not negotiable; would you kill people because the majority wants it? I think there are certain things which are previous than negotiation; so it is not a matter of politics.

L: ok so the preservation of life for example

D: exactly, for me this is the prime principle, but we are getting philosophical, sorry.

T: going back to the call....

D: the thing at the end is too concrete for a call. Has the call been written yet? Therefore we...

S: I think I like the idea of Frederic of the assembly as a process

D: so we call for an ongoing process, we need an adjective: participative...

R: what were those things under principles that we took away, I think we could mention them here...

(people are back typing)

D: a generative (he laughs) I am being a little bit flowery. A caring, generative... not collaborative... what is linked together but is not the same things? I am sick of the word initiatives. Caring, generative, collective...

E: I am gathering everybody back

D: ok project, I just don't know how to put it. Reclaiming...

(silence)

R: and then the assembly event is the next step or?

S: it doesn't have to be...

R: ok so we call this a...

D: ok is this saved already?

S: yes, but you can export it from here...

D: I think the list of experiences is too long

T: yes...

D: I like working with you guys, you are great

R: yes, great exercise, we are learning a lot

Call version 2, 6pm

ASSEMBLY OF THE COMMONS PERMANENT CALL

A diverse, multitude of citizen and community initiatives are working to regenerate our urban, rural, scientific and digital commons, and are envisioning a future that is not dominated by market forces nor the state. A future that is guided by democratic participation, social equity and environmental sustainability. At the heart of all these acts of "commoning" are the social relationships. We reject the idea that we can be primarily considered as mere individual consumers instead - we have always lived embedded in social relations, as part of a larger whole within social and ecological systems.

We are very concerned about the increasing enclosure and destruction of our natural, cultural and urban commons that is causing wide human suffering and severe ecological decline. Stark social inequality and exclusion along with climate change are threatening our very future. We have been deprived by much of our shared commons that is an imperative need for our physical, social and cultural well-being.

No commons without our experiences of commoning :

We have manyfold experiences of commoning around and getting access to our commons:

- Community-based and owned renewal energy projects.
- Community land, housing trusts and urban commons.
- Eco-villages and co-housing.
- Repositories of scientific publications, research data and educational resources that can be accessed, used and reused by all.

- Free and open source software and hardware.
- A growing number of free-licensed music, images and other creative works and content.
- Community-supported agriculture.
- Public-sector information, which is dedicated to the public domain or released under an open license.
- Water as a commons.
- Complementary community currencies
- Health knowledge and technology that is not protected by exclusive rights.
- Public-funded research that reverts back into commons.

These examples show that it is possible to organize our lives in a commons based and regenerative way for greater fairness and social justice.

Needs of the Commons

The management of the Commons demands a redistribution of power, caring for basic needs and a constant horizontal participatory process. To effectively attach the issues around the commons, there is the need to establish a horizontal relation of power. In order to get to that objective, it is important to set a network which lets the information exchange be fluid. Connecting experiences far away will set a common agenda of reactions about the enclosure of the commons. **Addressing policy makers about commons practices implies the building of strong political actors in favour of the commons.**

Needs of the commoning actors joining the network

The individuals, practitioners, communities, initiatives and organizations joining the network have expressed the following needs:

- To stand in solidarity around our diverse struggles for our commons
- To exchange experiences, case studies and other information
- To get resources and funding to support their activities
- To get support to address new policies around the commons and participate in lawmaking processes
- To scale up, gain visibility and campaign better

Call

Therefore, we call for an ongoing participatory, inclusive process across Europe for the building and the maintenance of a Commons Assembly, for a vibrant web of caring, regenerative collective projects for reclaiming the European Commons for people and our natural/social ecosystems.

Group poster presentation

(back in the circle, the posters are placed on the floor, in the center)

E: so everyone has a pile of post-it and can get a marker. So we do an open space and trust ourselves and the group to figure out what is important for this project. I don't know if I should call it a chamber, a network... the thingy!

T: an assembly!

(smiles)

E: we have all been to meeting where groups present and in the end you are exhausted so we are gonna put a time on it of two minutes for each group to get across the gold nugget. After each we will take a minute of silence and you write the number and if you have feedbacks or critics you just take a post it and if it is constructive you can then put it on that poster. So two minutes to present, no logical order so whoever feels ready to go...

SB: this group is about what technology we need to nourish the network or the assembly or whatever it is. So basically, there is fund-raising and communication technology. Communication technology has an inter communication element, and communication to the exterior. So we need a mailing list, probably hosted by the P2P, an inner pad and a wiki where we can share information a little bit more. And then level C for collaborative work could be Lumio. And there are digital and

non-digital but also visuals

E: time's up

SB: just one last point: this helps make the thing more concrete

V: fund-raising technology would be the next step.

E: ok so now one minute for your reactions to note on your pads.

(silence)

Dimitris: so this is a discussion about projects that are commons and we talked about not being too intellectual, more hands-on stuff and then we started to map out some of the commons areas. But I think the golden nugget is to think about the commons and how can we include this diversification.

E: ok so one minute, this was B2.

(silence)

CA: so this is A3: let's lobby Brussels! It is important to reach policy makers. We could have policy papers to send to parliament members and people at the commission. Use the electoral agenda and have informers within the parliament to know about amendments and stuff. There are other lobbies with more resources but the good news is that there are means in the EU institutions which we can use.

E: ok so feedbacks for A3.

G: so this is the idea of producing recommendations. We can all produce recommendations based on our work. The idea is to provide a pattern of concrete actions that already exist as lobby tools and also the idea is that by putting together all the bricks together we are drawing a nice picture of what a commons society is. Example such as the use of software to... Schönau in Germany to build renewable energy and so on: so concrete recommendations to be used. And then to go to concrete policy orientation we can be resources to provide responses and then put pressure of your deputies and so on so it requires a digital tool, like a nice wiki to collect but also search ideas and reach out people. And we can develop public tools, but we can. And it requires collaboration, digital networks.

E: ok so this was A2.

Matt: keep dreaming, have fun, make music, and we had a great time, an active networking in the moment and one of the plans we had to present it to you is that

E: well do it

H: we would like you to join us in a collaborative process to present it together. So you will be atoms

F: so I am gonna shout a number and a part of your body and you will have to join them together. And those who don't are out. So four heads. (laughs) three butts. (laughs) seven elbows. Fifteen shoulders.

E: ok so now one minute of silent feedback (laughs)

Doina: B5: we thought we have to find a name for the network and this has to be visible and protect the diversity, so that we can keep on working on the issues that matter to us.

Teodor: maybe it is a network, maybe it is an alliance; and depending on that we will have to bring new actors. Also the analogy with universe. And we should think is it worth it to create another network or to build bridges with existing networks. But as a result we should also get mechanisms, like Erasmus for the commons for example.

E: ok so the last group I give you four minutes

Teresa: so we organized some kind of a structure for a call: first an introduction asking why, what

are the principles for the commons: ecology, sustainability, social justice. Then we showcase some examples of outcomes of projects already happening like in the digital commons, then on the urban commons: community land, housing trust etc. And afterward we would address the needs of the commons and the needs of the commons, which is something we are struggling with. But I think this is something we have to discuss further: get support to participate in policy-making, scale up, etc. And finally the call, I will read: "...". and there is a pad, we can give you the address so that we can continue that later of tomorrow.

(everyone goes and stick their post-its, then read those of others; Ruby and Teresa type those for the call on the pad)

Post-it feedback session

A1: Utopian Commoners World: What does a utopian commoners world look like

(heart)

utopianist making = opportunist clustering?

Music as a commons

Please share your vision (written/visual) but digitally shareable

The game at the core!

If we're not having fun, this is not my revolution

Improvise = quality

Fun!

How to dream... in the real world?

So good!

A2: Template of recommendations for policy makers (local, national, EU) based on the diversity of actions we (as an hydra) undertake in our daily work.

Sounds nice the tool box

Recommendations as "rule" or "guidelines"?

Cool design of the presentation of a tool-box for recommendations

working over the principles of open-source

(heart)

So useful!

Recommendations as part of a positive agenda, or as a reaction to a specific law proposal/policy?

Who is drafting, checking, presenting them (i.e. the recommendations)?

Bricks (heart)

Recommendations – very good! But who gets to speak in a conclusive manner about an issue/demand? For instance: time bank should be treated in policy, as volunteer work, or community currency?

Policy watch relate to/use concrete examples in current policy actions

Great! Building repository of how commons-based society would look like is needed

Who is the "architect" that build bricks into a solid structure (curator recomm.)

A3: Let's "lobby" Brussels!

In which capacity should we lobby Brussels? (network, thinktank, only the members of the network?)

Hot to get not only regulations but also concrete, long-term mechanisms? (Erasmus of the commons)

Should we have a person in Brussels permanently (to lobby for the commons)?
I agree that we need both lobby in Brussels and action on the ground. But, can the network do both?
Which resources?
How do you make policy drafting open, bottom-up and relevant?
A time scale for this lobbying process?
Follow our contacts/already existing paths
How can we come up with a group that will represent the network at the EU parliament?
Evidence-based: show best practices
Do not forget Europe is bigger than EU

A4: What is our call? Elements, what we about / B4: Drafting the “call”

<https://titanpad.com/commonswatchcall>

Feedback incorporated into the pad

Could we have (if it is not in the call) culture as a commons?

Is it more like a manifesto/message? joint message

is this then an invitation to the commons assembly in november?

And then ?

what are the commons? need for some definitions.

audience target, the public (call to join) and policymakers but through the public.

How bold statement help us be more influential

call for assembly to do what? The what needs to be clear in the call.

Is there a timeframe?

Make sure to connect to A5 group for outreach of the call.

collaborative drafting pad open to the public?

are we planning to approach existing communities only or the wider public?

I think we could separate some elements, like manifesto part and more specific parts.

A call that should also work as a manifesto.

A5: What technology do we need?

See Google drive

B1: How to popularize AND institutionalize the “commons”?

B2: Designing the process

See Google drive

Who? How?

Examples of successful decision-making processes?

What would the ideal size of the network so that it can be both effective and representative?

Maintain and include diversity

What does this concretely imply?

Let's share via google group info about who we missed

How relate to practice – especially very local actors

Keeping the process of activity thinking about the common open? (institutionally, epistemologically)

Mapping can be connected to A2

Yes for mapping commons? How to do it? Crowdsourced?

B3: How to make it sustainable?

B5: Enlarge this network: How to get other commoners in the boat

Erasmus of the commons – exchange students!

Agree with the idea of set goals at the beginning

We need a network to generate concrete ideas but also feed ideas information

The agenda-driven process makes sense and also the bridging between network think? How do we call that?

Immediate mechanism working hashtagging projects (EU guests) #commons

I like the exchange program

agenda-based network planning

Collaborative writing sprint

E: ok so now you should have received 9 sheets of paper, and grab a marker. So one of the challenges when there is so much diversity in the room and a lot of different interpretations and new answers is how do you get that all in the center. So we are gonna do a first half of a collaborative writing sprint. And then we will see if we can go further on that tomorrow. The instructions are as follows. We are gonna do three rounds of questions; I ask questions, you write 3 words, 1 word pro sheet. And after each one we keep time to look around the room. And then we will see how we want to go further with it. Ok . And I am using the word network for now. We will do this in silent, and for each question, answer with your very own subjective perspective. So first:

Question n°1: “What is from your perspective the reason for being of this network?”

Word cloud of collected answers¹



Discussion

F: what does France stand formation

E: is that a question?

F: no just a reaction of surprise

Teodor: and what does euro commons stand for?

D: it is a slogan, as opposed to European...

SB: I think conquest is a bit strong

D: I have a problem with internationalize, for me it is not transnational, they are above and beyond the nations, but that's my point of view

Dimi: I don't get the euro commons, it sounds like a term made by the institutions (laughs)

C: it is like the euro-vision of the commons (laughs)

SB: actually I like France, because it is specific, it is not abstract

¹ Via <http://www.wordclouds.com/>

Question n°2: “How can this network support and nourish pro-commons policy in Europe?”

(E takes the papers and places new ones in front of the people)

Word cloud of collected answers



Discussion

E: any questions, anything you need clarify

Dimi: why David

Agnieszka: because when I think about it I think David is the one who could use this knowledge

E: any other question?

Doina: I think we are all David

D: and what means infiltrate

F: I guess it is more efficient to become a policy maker to be able to gain influence from the inside

D: why blackmailing?

L: it's effective (laughs)

T: why proof of conceptions

Dimi: make the proof that the theoretical ideas work in the real world, that it is not just a concept

R: Fred you have the bottom up right, and I was thinking that it raises the question how are we going to the process where there is clarity about what it is that we are demanding

E: any objections to any word

Dimi: not sure about blackmail

Dimitris: I disagree (laughs)

Question n°3: “In your perspective, what are the network's priorities?”

Word cloud of collected answers



Discussion

E: back to your seats. Any questions?

Doina: about check

C: if you are a user of what's app you know whether the person read the message, received it and so on. So the idea that we agree on participating with each other not just we say yes, i ll be there and then actually not

F: get physical?

Dimi: I guess less theoretical, more in the real world

D: slogan

R: can I add something. What you said, commonswatch is it how it came out, the idea that it would be looking out at what is happening

D: no it was a joke

E: ok so we move on. One last word. (people take the sheets) so: what is your suggestion for a name, how do you want to name this thingy? (silence) Ok so we each name it

Dimitris: commoners

SB: EU chamber of commons and EU assembly of the commons

F: common people then party or playground

Matt: party people (laughs)

Matt: the home of commons

Doina: diverse commons alliance

Dimi: I didn't come up with anything so I write "coccinelle" as a mascot (laughs)

Hanne: I wrote down commons (laughs)

Ruby: same as Sophie

Teodor: Commons exchange Platform

CA: we the commons or global commons alliance

Mel: Erasmus for the commons for two reasons: first it was the preferred idea on the posters and also it is the most famous European

I: convergence

David: creative commons we can use as a trademark, Teresa gave me permission, so CC

T: no, it cannot be

Dimi: the commons movement

FS: 4CE force for "for commons in Europe"

G:

Daphne: chamber of commons

L: the commons busters (?) (laughs)

C: the invisible committee of the commons also because we were not sure that establishing

E: ok so the good news is that we don't have to do a process of voting right now.

G: and also before you leave please mark at the entrance next to your name how many people you knew before you came

(end of my notes for day 2)

Day 3: 20/05/16:

Introduction, program of the day

Start 9:30 am:

E: so just a few different things; one is we started the discussion yesterday on the documentation so just make sure that we get all the work done yesterday documented. A photo would be ok but typing it would be even better. Then Lucas will be doing a video.

L: yes we are going to record on one side an invitation to the assembly of the commons and also say one sentence of the manifesto of the commons which we will work on today

D: and whatever you want to say you can tell in your own language

E: so we finish at 1 o'clock today

FS: and the shuttles will leave at 3.

E: so Frederic has the control of the departure list. For those staying tonight if you have any intolerance let the people here know. So today! We said by day three we should know where we are going so we are gonna have a session on the assembly; then we will have the statement the group was working on yesterday and so we will be doing a collective editing process with each working on different parts. So that's the plan for today.

Wake-up games

E: I thought I would wake you up today with a little game: it is a technique of improvisational theater. So you have to start from a place of yes. So for example if Dimi says this is a glass of water (shows a pen) if I say no he can't really build on that while if I say yes and I can turn it into wine then he can go further with this. So this is what we are gonna do as a little warm up exercise. I am gonna ask you to stand up. So find a partner and we count to three each saying a number one after the other. Then you replace 1 by clapping hands, and then 2 by jumping and 3 by a twisty movement.

(we do it)

E: then whatever I say the other person says yes and goes on and so on.

(we do it)

E: and now we do the yes and thing but in relation to the commons and you go: what I like about your idea is... and you can go as wild and crazy as you like.

(we do it)

E: back in circle. So what did you come up with?

R: we talked about our assembly/ chamber.

T: we were starting a discussion to get rid of the selfish gene and property thing.

Assembly of the commons

Introduction

E: so thank you. Now we are gonna talk about the assembly of the commons. Sophie and David I give you five minutes to talk about it.

SB: ok so the idea is to have another way of... of course there are chambers of the commons at the local level but the idea would be now to have one for European citizens at the European parliament. There is a commons inter-group already and these are already working with us trying to have a commons discussion on a joint day for talking about the commons within the parliament. The idea will be to have a chance to come up with an agenda but beyond the physical meeting it would be the idea to address the issues of why is it that we need something like that, what does it say about

Europe, why are the commons needed and so on. Now we really want it to be an open process to see what an agenda should be, who should come and so on. The parliamentary are allowed to bring in some people and then the visitors can enter, get their travels paid and so on. And until now we already have permission for 50 people.

D: and next week Dimi and I will have a meeting with all the left and green groups so the first thing we want to tell them is you have the right to be silent, because the thing happening most of the time in the parliament is a group speaking the whole time and people get bored to death. So the idea is that we would like to have an idea of your ideas of how to make it dynamic, visible and so on for it not to be yet another event of what I call political tourism.

SB: so we have to think of being creative so as to use this space to be participatory and dynamic.

E: so it is our opportunity now to come up with an agenda. So we will do an activity in groups to co-pollinate and collective intelligence. So you take five minutes each to think of that in silence and then we will gather up.

F: I am leaving so thank you all and it was a real pleasure to meet you all, I hope we will have a chance to keep in contact.

E: yes, there will be an e-mail list indeed. So for the exercise now, the five keywords are: format, process, agenda, before/ after, media outreach.

D: if we want to fill the room quickly, we can just ask the industrial lobbies (he laughs). So we are talking about an agenda for 4h. I give you an idea to stimulate the conversation for example Agnieszka presents her project with photos and so on and then someone explains how a support by the EU could help, like in relation to the urban commons, the digital commons, the Eco-villages and so on.

E: David you have the right to be silent (she laughs). So we take 5 min of quiet reflexion and then we will go into groups

(silence; David wants to ask her a question)

E: in a moment you are gonna partner up with somebody and then listen to each others' ideas, and it will be important to take notes of the others' persons' idea because we will then present them afterward in the circle like we presented each other at the beginning. And you can go anywhere in space to anyone you want.

Group work, ideas and suggestions

(group with Dimi, Ruby, Ina and Léa)

I: so the idea is to continue to work on the call and use it as an invitation and we will spread it in our own networks, and it is both a call to participate to the assembly and a call for ongoing participation in the network. And we could then in the assembly use a skim, like a big image reading "commons" in the middle and then we would map the different areas of the commons on the poster.

Dimi: and could it be a participatory process for the parliament members also to map them

I: yes and after the assembly we would develop the call.

R: and on the poster you would have for example local currencies as a commons, water as a commons and so on.

R: ok so now Ina's. There would be workshops mixing elected members and people from the network and working together in a participatory process.

I: another idea for the assembly is not working by workshop but set a huge role play on participatory governance to make people really experience what it is to participate, hands-on.

Dimi: alright so we had the idea to have a world café or something similar, so we will set up a tombola so that elected members will be assigned to a group with some commoners and they will be asked then in these group to come up with a collective solution and so it would make them see what the participatory process of the commons is about without having to explain it to them.

Léa: so Dimi's idea was to share personal stories to make a lasting impression like for someone from an Eco-village to for example bring eggs from the farm so that the elected members bring it home and to tell them bake a good omelet with this egg for your kids and so they will remember it and it becomes more concrete than just explaining things in a very abstract manner like on PowerPoint or something like this.

I: maybe we should do something about the refugees because the commons could be a good way of addressing the issue

Dimi: if you want to frame it as a commons issue yes, but do you have an example of a commons initiative dealing with this?

I: yes I gave one example yesterday, kitchen on the run

Dimi: the other inter-groups are on things like gender or such things so this inter-group is seen as a bit minor so if we show that anyone out of the inter-group can take something concrete out of this vent addressing the problems they deal with, so if we have concrete things about urban commons, concrete things about refugees, concrete things about the internet and so on, then it would be great. Because indeed it shouldn't be like another of these political touristic tours.

I: yes but I think we should really think how we can bring some people in the meeting who are final benefitors of the commons. I think we should have some young people, handicapped people... r/ REFUGEE people...

i/ YES SHOW THAT very different people, not only well-educated people

R: yes, not only an elite

I: yes but thus we should be working to be able to bring these people

R: yes, I think it is a good idea but somehow also people who come in there they should be believing in this, so thqt they can really support the cause.

I: that means somebody should be in charge of the selection process

Dimi: the call is very important but there are some people who are great but would not answer to a call so I think we should combine a call with a head-hunting from our own process because if you know people who do great stuff

R: yes but it should be people who can actively relate to the whole thing because otherwise it is going to be a fail

Dimi: yes, I agree.

I: do we need to wrap up now?

E: 6 more minutes

(R starts a poster)

I: I really like the issue solving idea.

Dimi: and the issues to solve should be random. It should be problems that commons people already had

I: or have

Dimi: yes, exactly, and they can solve it together. Cause the other idea would be to have a panel, and people present and so on but this would be a little bit...

I: yes... and so how long should we plan on for them to discuss?

Dimi: it should really not be too long, like we've done here, 15 minutes for example and then 5 to present.

I: we have different possibilities, either we have presentations on topics or we do mixed groups

Léa: and maybe stage the tombola which assigns people together in a nice way

R: and then have to come up with answers to concrete problem and demonstrate the commons way of solving problems.

Dimi: so co-development.

I: and should we bring the idea of bringing some people directly concerned with the commons

Dimi: ok so take concerned people in? What should I write?

I: I don't know. I don't want to say final beneficiaries

R: people right on spot.
Dimi: so assure diverse participation
R: inclusive, is that a way to say?
I: I understand well what a call it but...
R: invitation to organize the process
I: but we already said that it was an ongoing process. And should we also add that we should spread the call in our networks?

Poster presentations

E: ok so we are going to take two minutes per group and then we will keep trace of the posters. And just focus on the main ideas that came out of the groups. And then move on to the next thing. Ok so who's starting.

G: I can. So we focused a lot on before the assembly with the idea of a process for people to get involved: a call for people to contribute to the process in a participatory manner online: agenda, format, selection of the participants; we should have a lot of transparency on that. The idea is when you launch the call there is always a treasure: meet the visible hand of the commons as opposed to the invisible hand of the market: this as a way to raise media attention. PM would seat but the assembly would be dedicated to develop a model for the people to have a space to meet, negotiate, confront and express their idea and so to interact in a different way with representatives. So really use the space of the parliament. And use streaming also, so hack the resources when we are there.

Doina: so we worked on the format and the agenda. So on the format we had the idea that all have to be mixed and those who will speak will seat in the room. We thought we would have name cards and maybe also emotional breaks, like speed-dating sessions, non-verbal communication like color cards. And so we need a holistic approach so to present the diversity of the commons and align commons agenda and EU agenda and see where the EU agenda can be also informed. And also highlight the good practices of the commons.

Daphne: so we thought also what can we do before and after; so starting with before we could do a crazy thing of doing a stand a bit like occupying the house of the chamber of commerce; dressed as smart people we enter and then simultaneously we create a video. And we should have an international call for a logo. And we should have an example of the things that have happened in the last years with destruction of the commons and this we could do in a way close to theater for example, a bit like in this idea of the "yes" exercise for example.

Matt: it also needs meticulous preparation for the elected members because we want to make the greatest impression.

Our group: call for an assembly would have to start from collecting means and ideas about what this assembly could look like. Then we would use this circle of solidarity economy map but in the case use it to represent the different areas of the commons, this could be an inspiring visual aid.

I: then we thought it would be important to have mixed groups and people would address a concrete issue together with the MP in small groups organized through a tombola. And we would also like to bring in the final beneficiaries.

R: and we also address the question of do we have the responsibility to use this pace also for addressing the question of the refugees.

C: as far as invitations go, we want to make sure that they know names of people of every country so that each s represented. And it should be emotional, tangible so that they really get it. It shouldn't be a set of different talks but a bit with a script. And then very tangible and concrete example so that

policy makers will be able to support the commons afterward. Then regarding the process before and after: having parallel local smaller assemblies in our cities. Regarding the content, we suggested one topic which would be access to EU funding because many of us can't apply because you have to be big. How to match crowd-funding with these EU funding-funds. And be clear that the return of EU projects that have been publicly funded are open access, the technologies and the outcomes.

SB: so we thought in terms of before we need to have a committee and it would be great if people could volunteer now. Also one thing we could do is to develop an idea for structure that would help: how could we have different stake-holders and so develop a proposal for that so that people can discuss it on site. Then there is a meeting for the commons in September in Paris. We discussed also finance: which kind of funding we should ask MP to propose to finance our work. What instruments we could work out to sustain our work and Erasmus for the commons. And as side events we would invite other organizations.

Mel: and on site people could prepare a poster so that the room is less naked and people can walk around and have a look; also an example of MP peeing in bottles to see how much pesticides they have inside, so just like this to attract media attention we could have each commoner adopt a MP and teach them about the commons. Thorough different practices

E: like drink public water (smiles)

SB: and have a meeting only for commoners, have some joint demands, discuss the framework and so on. And then on side we will voice these demands.

E: thank you everybody. Léa and David have been taking notes. We are gonna collect all these documents and give them all to David

SB: and also if you want to write it it would be very useful.

E: if you would like to participate to this, you write on this post-it who you are and what kind of involvement you would be ready to show: it could be just forward in your networks, or just send good vibes, that would be ok too.

V: is there a specific time-frame?

SB: I mean, uh... It just kind of starts now. We just got the information that they agree in having people in, which is important for it to be real.

Dimitris: regarding level of involvement it would be good to know what we decide to do. If the process is not open I would be out, if it is for example a closed group which decides on the agenda.

D: so the agenda the MP wanted it months ago so we said no we first want to consult the groups

SB: we want to keep it as open as possible.

FS: I think we need to get deeper in the governance process; perhaps it is not only now but we have to take into account the agenda but we have also to be able to discuss about the governance of this process.

G: I know what they tell you and want but we have to be firm; we have enough already to get them exited but I think a lot of people would want to have an open process to build the agenda so I think we should refuse to give a definite agenda now. Most people who are gonna come are weak, the European parliament is weak, so it should be clear that there is not much we can get out of this event, so I don't want to go there expecting anything from them; which doesn't mean that we couldn't in this end have them become good advocates and so on but we shouldn't have too high expectations

R: I agree this would be more about movement building. Does someone know what is in the air, like do some people know about Diem for example or something?

Teodor: if we don't have a clear method then how do we open up is the question. We didn't come to the formulation of who we are so for me it is hard to do a methodological thing if we don't know what we are. So we should be open but the real openness of the group demands some methodological tools. But we have to discuss there what are the rules to discuss it further. The whole time we were opening which was funny but we didn't close anything yet so I am not sure

why we should be at the European parliament if we are not making points to the European parliament. Otherwise for the sake of the commons we could be somewhere else.

SB: for me I don't think we will have an amendment the next day of course, what we are gonna do is make a political point and maybe have some media attention but it is also about movement building and so if we make the commitments

D: I think we should open a wiki

SB: yes and it was first an idea from discussing with D and Michel Bauwens, in Paris and also in Chicago, so it was a little bit floating in the air.

D: I see two demands a bit contradictory: on the one hand it needs to be very meticulously prepared and on the other hand it needs to be open and spontaneous, participatory and so on. You do a little bit of that in the European parliament and it is already subversive: for example you can't put things up on the walls; if you're invited you have to do a two hours official tour in the parliament and so on. So I agree we shouldn't expect too much but it is symbolic, it is supposed to be the democratic center, maybe it is not, but the whole structure is not responding to democracy and participation and so the way we do this is very important: the color skim, the catering, the food has to be commons kind of food, the inspiration, the emotions, these things you rarely see in the European parliament, and these whole things I would like to see.

Collective editing of the call

Introduction

E: so fill your post-its if you feel like it, but you don't have to, you can just put a big question mark. So we have 3 things left to do and it is 11:46. so yesterday people wrote a call and so today we will do some collective editing. There are five sections, so we will do five circles. At the back there are the feedbacks which were posted in the end. So you can shift it, improve it and so on for 15 minutes. Then you will have time to go to another paragraph and can improve it a bit, then a third one and bring a lighter touch. So in the end we will have 5 paragraphs and each will have dealt with 3 of them. We have constraints for this exercise (she shows a poster where they are written): it should be in one paragraph, 3 to 5 sentences, simple and accessible language, jargon-free, Grandma-grand-dad "get it"

S: for us it wasn't meant to be the call for coming to Brussels

SB: yes, more like a manifesto

R: yes

E: yes ok so have a "yes and" attitude and it's going to short but let's get it work. So who wants paragraph one.

T: it is the introduction kind of.

E: paragraph 2. 3. 4. 5.

Group work

(people gather around tables; there are posters for each paragraph)

T to me: I think you should go to number 1, it is the most complex

(I thus go to table n°1; there is SB, Matt, Daphne, Teodor and Agnieszka)

SB: we should use commons as little as possible I would say.

Matt: maybe what are the key points and how can we unpack them

SB: we should try to have a political level. I think the beginning is all these things happening at all these different levels.

A: and this is reaction of the market and the state? Right, because people don't trust the market

SB: well because everything has been dominated by the state but so the idea is that there could be

another domain where we generate our own food etc. And this area is more kind of a... maybe centuries ago it existed but now it is being dominated.

T: shouldn't we address the EU

M: not specific to the EU

T: but the state shouldn't be put on the same level as the market because it could be one of the main supporter of the commons.

A: what I understand from this is that there are some activities where people build their own space because it doesn't really exist. And the question is do we want to build this space or tell to the state that they should think about it and protect it.

M: it is just an introduction in terms of what to do next and how the state should be involved

SB: yes, it is more of a joint statement

T: yes but it is important what words you use

A: it is the first sentences, so if you say market fucked up, state fucked up

T: so if you say it is dominated it is

David (who just arrived): true! We have to have some definition; I guess people politicians use it for anything so my feeling is that we have to stake a territory otherwise we leave it ambiguous. It doesn't mean that we want to do without the market

SB: well then maybe it is not clear, it doesn't matter what it is supposed to mean, it is just that probably it needs to be reformulated.

D: we are not talking about public control. But maybe it is too theoretical.

T: no it is just we are using the state with no contextualization so I think it is a too big statement to make. Then it could sound like

D: no ok but I write it so I am not going to defend it, I am leaving.

T: in the introductory paragraph you need to give a hint of everything that you are gonna say.

M: I disagree.

SB: the idea was to say it is not only about common goods but about practices. So that's where they came up with the examples, that's the way it first worked.

M: it needs to be much, much simpler, what is it that we want to say

A: I guess it is that some people don't find their own space in the market anymore, nor in the state, and so they are building their own space, I guess this is what we should be saying here.

SB: so let's write something like that. Should I bring my computer? Because writing on the paper makes it a bit odd, right? (she takes her computer because otherwise no one else has one)

A: let's think about it as a manifesto

T: should we say that it is a growing number of people?

M: say the vast majority of people. We started with ...

E: time's up, I am inviting you to join another group

M: we've literally just started

E: well then you don't have to move, you can also stay.

M: can we clarify what the idea is, what is going on now; and as a reaction to something...

SB: something different than the market or the state

A: people don't find the activities on the market and the state...

D: I don't think we should make up this picture, I wouldn't use the word space because it is abstract

SB: I agree it could be framed better. Take out "forces"? And also say people are doing different activities and what unites these people... and then there is a concern as well that is leading these people to unite. And we start with the concern and maybe we should actually start with opportunities in the first sentence.

T: so we are talking that there are many people in the same situation and maybe market forces we put it first and since they are unhappy they do stuff. But I think we don't just have to mention market forces. Say that they are unhappy about the marketization. And also we have to specify the problem of the state: is it too weak, too strong, not democratic enough: for me we should specify;

like for example it doesn't answer the needs of the citizens anymore

SB: we don't have to be too negative and say "never" but maybe "not always"

D: but maybe not start with something negative and instead start with the fact that it is not dominated, maybe there is a better way to frame IT; I think it is good to start with that but more as a way of envisioning.

M: so can we flesh out, do you have an idea of what comes on the bricks, very loosely?

T: why people are unhappy, why what they are doing is important.

SB: so as they are unhappy they are taking the law in their own hands. But this sounds a bit brutal

M: no not in English, it doesn't seem brutal, it can be gentle. So should I start writing? (M has the computer)

T: I hope there will be this pad access so that we can go back to it.

(FS comes by)

(M types in silence, the others joke a bit around)

SB: envisioning a different future.

M: visualizing a different future

SB: an alternative future! Future is always alternative though. A bright future! A just future?

E: 5 minutes.

SB: to the interest of citizens, or of all citizens. Or of people. We are taking the law in our own hands

A: now it sounds like a manifesto!

M: I like it but it might be a bit...

SB: this is an historical reference, but it might be too much.

A: Through these activities these people produce these relations...

M: ok so...

A: this is not the individual, this is the social.

M: unless you reinvigorate...

SB: you can skip scientific.

M: so... but the word commons do we want to introduce it at this point, isn't it...

SB: shared resources

M: shared resources! (FS takes a chair to look at what is happening on the computer screen, SB also looks at the screen above his shoulder, the others follow by reading the printed version of the text that E previously put on each table)

A: I like that they are no individual consumers but society. They change from individual consumers to society (D just arrived and look at the screen above M's shoulders M). Ok so through initiatives to reinvigorate (he reads)

D: I would say merely, because they are also individual consumers, whether you like it or not.

M: (reads)

SB: social relations, social practices; embedded in social relations or is that too abstract.

D: the problem is our institutions treat us like that, we are not that, I like my cat and my dog, the problem is that the institutions treat us like that.

A: this is how the law looks like and it really have

D: but what we are doing with the commons is to do patterns to make it visible and make the institutions and the law agree with this. There are lots of ways... often they just treat the people as consumers, economic actors and they speak about efficiency but this is not reality, when I go to a teacher meeting at school for my kid and so on, so it is not that the people are changing

M: I think people are changing

D: no but in their perception, because I don't think they have ever been just consumers.

M: so perceiving their role as consumers

E: 30 seconds and then back into the circle

(time's up)

A: maybe this is the moment where we could use the word commons, like all these practices of sharing resources is what we call commons
 FS: not only sharing
 D: ok the social practices of sharing and preserving resources
 M: the social fabric... which we call commoning.
 M: so should I just say this is what we call commons?
 A: yeah
 E: ok let's go
 SB: and it has to do with the privatization of our resources
 M: so we could just say the increasing enclosure is causing...
 SB: and that's it, and we don't even have to say all this.
 M: ok so I just copy that and stick it there

Call version 3, 12:34 pm

ASSEMBLY OF THE COMMONS PERMANENT CALL

Many people are engaging in citizen and community initiatives and envisioning an alternative future. As market and state do not always cater for the interests of people, we are taking the law into our own hands. Through initiatives to regenerate urban, rural and digital shared resources, people are changing from playing the role of being merely individual consumers into members of social groups (needs work!)

The social practice of sharing and preserving resources creates the fabric of society. This is what we call commoning. The increasing enclosure and destruction of our natural, cultural and urban commons that is causing wide human suffering and severe ecological decline.

A diverse, multitude of citizen and community initiatives are working to regenerate our urban, rural, scientific and digital commons, and are envisioning a future that is not dominated by market forces nor the state. A future that is guided by democratic participation, social equity and environmental sustainability. At the heart of all these acts of "commoning" are the social relationships. We reject the idea that we can be primarily considered as mere individual consumers instead - we have always lived embedded in social relations, as part of a larger whole within social and ecological systems.

We are very concerned about the stark social inequality and exclusion along with climate change are threatening our very future. We have been deprived by much of our shared commons that is an imperative need for our physical, social and cultural well-being.

No commons without our experiences of commoning :

We have manyfold experiences of commoning around and getting access to our commons:

- Community-based and owned renewable energy projects.
- Community land, housing trusts and urban commons.
- Eco-villages and co-housing.
- Repositories of scientific publications, research data and educational resources that can be accessed, used and reused by all.
- Free and open source software and hardware.
- A growing number of free-licensed music, images and other creative works and content.
- Community-supported agriculture.
- Public-sector information, which is dedicated to the public domain or released under an open license.
- Water as a commons.
- Complementary community currencies
- Health knowledge and technology that is not protected by exclusive rights.
- Public-funded research that reverts back into commons.

These examples show that it is possible to organize our lives in a commons based and regenerative way for greater fairness and social justice.

Needs of the Commons

The management of the Commons demands a redistribution of power, caring for basic needs and a constant horizontal participatory process. To effectively attach the issues around the commons, there is the need to establish a horizontal relation of power. In order to get to that objective, it is important to set a network which lets the information exchange be fluid. Connecting experiences far away will set a common agenda of reactions about the enclosure of the commons. **Addressing policy makers about commons practices implies the building of strong political actors in favour of the commons.**

Needs of the commoning actors everyone joining the network

So far, we (individuals, communities, initiatives and organizations) have expressed the following needs:

- to stand in solidarity around our diverse struggles for the commons,
- to exchange experiences, case studies and other information,
- to develop and govern resources in an open, participatory and inclusive manner (funding, infrastructures...) to support our activities,
- to develop policies to preserve the commons and commoners and participate in lawmaking processes,
- to strengthen, gain visibility and campaign better

The identification of our needs will be ongoing throughout the process.

Call

Therefore, we call for an ongoing participatory, inclusive process across Europe for the building and the maintenance of a Commons Assembly, for a vibrant web of caring, regenerative collective projects for reclaiming the European Commons for people and our natural/social ecosystems.

POST-ITS :

Could we have (if it is not in the call) culture as a commons?

Is it more like a manifesto/message? joint message

is this then an invitation to the commons assembly in november?

And then ?

what are the commons? need for some definitions.

audience target, the public (call to join) and policymakers but through the public.

How bold statement help us be more influential

call for assembly to do what? The what needs to be clear in the call.

Is there a timeframe?

Make sure to connect to A5 group for outreach of the call.

collaborative drafting pad open to the public?

are we planning to approach existing communities only or the wider public?

I think we could separate some elements, like manifesto part and more specific parts.

A call that should also work as a manifesto.

Performative reading

E: time to come. This is version 2. Before we get started we will do a performative reading and I will be reading paragraph 5 because no one wanted to work on it. who would like to work on version 3 after the meeting?: R, Sophie, Teresa, Vitalie, Stefan.

Dimitris; what is the purpose of this text

D: to make a call that we are a group of people who want to start this movement

E: ok so paragraph 5 (she reads)

I: make three sentences out of this

SB: so it is meant for people uniting

E: so we are going to do a reading performance of all paragraphs and then leave it here.

SB: paragraph 1

E: ok no remarks, discussion, we just read it through, it is a draft, so we just read it to the end.

SB: (she reads)

T: paragraph 2 (she reads) (written on a poster)

(people show it is very good)

G: (paragraph 3) (she reads) (also on a poster, with bullet points)

C: paragraph 4 (she reads on the pad)

E: paragraph 5 (she reads). Ok there will be an online version 2 will be available. Everybody could have the link to the pad and go back to it.

C: right now some paragraphs are edited on the pad, and some others are off-line.

Next steps

E: we have one last thing to do together before we say goodbye. Yesterday we generated the agenda, developed ten topics and from there we presented, got feedbacks and now what do we do with all this. Now it is 12:46. I would like you to go back and there are two things I would like you to think about for yourself now: one what are the next steps – be as clear as possible, and the second thing is what are the next step for you, individually. Then we will come back and share this.

L: and we also need to do a video but maybe it doesn't make sense to read the manifesto like this so just if some people want to say why it is important for commoners to come to the assembly please come to me

(end)

E: ok so just a little recall of what we have been doing. This has been an event but also an opportunity to work together. It was interesting for example to see the number of people each one knows because we are going to be able to leave knowing quite a few people. So now it will be around what is the next step, what is it that I need, where do I need help. If your commitment is just I support it it is cool, it is absolutely ok, if it is about you creating a foundation and giving a lot of money, perfect, so anything between these will be perfect.

Dimitris: working on a wiki tool and try to do something translated in Greek. Try and facilitate before Brussels, try to do something locally in Heraclion, these three things, concrete: visibility, through tools, and an event.

S: the most concrete next step will be version three of the call and maybe some concrete step beyond the event on November and if we publish the call I think we need a tool for people to join the initiative and participate to it. So this is the help I need: this digital feedback tool.

V: my friend from the P2P foundation we can host a mailing list in our server, bad news is we need a name for the list: we need to clarify whether it will be an open mailing list and if people should ask for permission to access it or not: I think it should be open. Also we should use a wiki by the P2P foundation, but we should decide what kind of wiki it would be. I think with the help of Dimitri.

Mel: my goal for the near future is to continue to do advocacy in my daily academic world. The idea with lobbying Brussels is to be both pro-active and do research to promote the commons, so we already have to projects in this area. And to be pro-active: draft policy papers and so on, for this I need space and help but I guess I can find that in the network.

M: following on less serious work, we decided to form a "dream tank" so I could be involved in that and what would come out of it I don't know but this would be the idea of making the common space a dream.

Dimi: work with David on the organization of the event and try to bluff given that we dn't want to give them an agenda.

G: next step on the project: the toolbox and the bricks I think with Teresa we have a concrete project: the next step is to find the digital tool to allow us to do what we need so we have already started to speak about that with the digital group and once the call is online I would keep on working on organizing the assembly of the commons in Brussels.

T: can we ask questions

E: no, after lunch

R: for me continue with the call then disseminate that, maybe in the social forum and so on. Could there be a way people can give feedbacks and then a report for commons.fi

Léa: work on a report and share my notes in a readable form

T: be part of the working group, report to communia, knowing what this network is about and clarify and understand how to participate further.

D: the best things in life are not always very clear, they can be very fuzzy but I feel very energized of just being with you so it is never for nothing, I think we all have to go further together. If anyone is in Brussels next week please come along, it is an open process. Next step we have to nail it down: everything cannot be measured with tea-spoons, life is messy and kind of dirty but if we have a great attitude I think we will make it work.

AC: I feel very energized to; being in the parliament I am more than happy to help; draft invitations, collect names of people to invite, logistics and so on. And keep ourselves informed so that you can react to the political agenda.

Doina: is it a network not a network, how large could it be and so on and I had an enlightenment: maybe just accepting that we are a network that is there to address many problems. I think I can spread the call to citizens, academics and others I am in contact with. I could be available for feedbacks and I would certainly contribute with issues on the commons through my further research.

I: I need some time first to slow down and take some distance to really figure out how we can be involved. But I think we can link the network connected action for the commons to what has been done now and then I feel attracted to the dream tank so I would like to be a part of this and also to the organization of the Assembly, but I don't know how yet.

H: so first I would be part of the dream tank and then open it up in a more popular way maybe; I am also attracted to the proactive approach. And also we as an organization are in Brussels so probably we can help on site. I am also very interested in version 3 so I don't know if I can contribute to that. I am happy to be part of this network, we as an organization feel the need to have the support of other commons initiatives so I think this network is very important for this reason.

Roberta: I have to feedback my local organization in Italy so I will report back to them and put them in contact with you because I think it is important not to be detached but in proximity with us – not like the European parliament. This is why it is important Léa that there is a report because it is a way of sharing, creating a commons, being transparent. Work with Gaëlle on tools. Co-create the agenda in a very intense way.

A: we are gonna follow the preparation to the assembly and for sure when there is more information share it in our networks and then spread the manifesto in the region. I think it is important because in our region the commons are still not a topic so this is very interesting for me to think about it how it is necessary to join this discussion in Poland about the commons and this not only at the level of sharing experience with others but also in coming together.

Teodor: what we can do is to carry this discussion in eastern Europe; this could be used as a step to move it further, so I see that as our contribution to this discussion. Also we will host a conference on commons in the city and otherwise it would be to help organize the meeting in september or continue the discussion at the local level. For me the discussion is still very foreign in these terms. We need a way to take the local discussion in the local discussion.

D: I think there will be people interested in this discussion on my side. We can make a link to Diem25. It is very known, I don't know their position on the commons, I don't know if they have

one, but that would be a thing. Otherwise we have a campus at the end of August where there will be people from these networks. And otherwise I am really interested in doing some kind of original occupation work, occupying places, I can't do this alone so if someone is interested.

SB: so for me it would also be some kind of digestion because we came up with a lot of new ideas; keep thinking of this process of watch movement, how we can be inclusive, what kind of digital tools we can create or use, see what projects could be helped using the tools and so on. And try to co-create the agenda.

Vasili: work with foundations; there is a next month meeting with several foundations with the possibility of participatory funding. And this process is the result of different dynamics but this is bottom-up approach to build new strategic plans with more dynamic approach to self-governing of the movement. So I would need help in terms of people to join this process. So it is more of an initiating process, not the widest process, but it will end up in an open-process.

FS: I have similar needs because for me the next step will be to report to the foundation and the partner in a way where they are part of the process and not only funders and so I think my concern is I need help on that on how to report because it is not clear, the budget was not on the table and I think it is important to have an open process on that. And the second thing is to invite people to join the commons assembly, involve more people and organizations in the process at large

C: first I will report to my team, participate in the manifesto, contribute in the content for the assembly and also suggest names; then write about the starting of the network, probably for the website of the connected action for the commons; and help I need was for the mailing list so thank you; and finally for the future: my expectation in the first place was very low because the call was not specific so I am leaving quite happy.

L: so first I would like to thank you and what would help most would be the production of a low budget movie, we could spread the call into Spanish networks and in any case we would need a commons communication team, I guess I can't do it on my own.

E: before we go eat, I just ask everybody to stand up

rounds of thanks: one to three words

At the end, thanks and round of applause to E and FS for organizing, Léa for typing.

D ends up by saying: the commons revolution can wait, but lunch is getting cold.

(end).