

## The future of Europe from a regional perspective: expert debate on the REGIOPARL research project in the Parliament of Andalucía

On December 17, 2019, the team the international research project REGIOPARL | Regional Parliaments Lab held a workshop in the Parliament of Andalucía. REGIOPARL analyzes the role of regional parliaments in the European Union (EU) and invites regional parliamentarians to discuss the future development of the EU from their perspective. The workshop in the Parliament of Andalucía was part of a series of events organized by REGIOPARL, a project dealing with the future of Europe and the EU, in the context of which the project team constituted by team members from Donau-Universität Krems and the European Democracy Lab in Berlin consult several regional parliaments of Europe.

"With our events in regional parliaments, we want to create an innovative space where parliamentarians can contribute their own ideas to the future of Europe," explains Dr. Sarah Meyer, political scientist at Donau-Universität Krems and head of the research project. In the public debate on the future of the EU, the perspective of regional political actors is only marginally being taken into account. However, regional actors and delegates play an important role in connecting the EU with its citizens and therefore should be heard in any debate about the development of the EU.

In the Parliament of Andalucía, parliamentarians described their perspectives on the future of Europe. "It is a difficult time to integrate Europe, but even though it is going slow it is still going forward", said one of the delegates. In the discussion among the delegates, there was a broad consensus that it is important not to leave citizens behind by speeding up the process of integration. Many referred to the current nationalist backlashes across EU member states. The deputies also discussed the role of borders in Europe and the distribution of powers between the political levels.

The project team took away many learnings from the discussion held in the Parliament of Andalucía. "It was impressive to see how the the future of Europe is an important concern for the participating MPs – across all parties. The discussion was very enthusiastic and the participants overcame everyday political differences," said Prof. Elisabeth Donath of the Department of European Policy and Democracy Research of the Donau-Universität Krems. At its next stop in Belgium, the REGIOPARL team wants to capture another regional view on the future of the EU. A total of 15 regional parliaments will be visited in seven EU member states in this innovative research project.