Note from the editors

Since we started work on this book, a political earthquake has shaken the world. Coming from the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, the shockwaves have reached Europe as well. However we judge these events, they make the title of this book seem even more up-to-date than in the late summer of 2016, when the idea to this publication first came up in the aftermath of European Alternatives' Campus "Shifting Baselines" [1]. Having gathered 80 activists, researchers and artists from across the continent to develop strategies for an open and democratic Europe, we felt something essential to any political undertaking: optimism. By meeting other engaged citizens from within and outside Europe and getting to know projects from Poland to Portugal, we could see that there are alternatives already changing Europe. Struck by the remarkable and resourceful strength of the actors and thinkers of our network, we wanted to make these ideas accessible to a wider audience. We hope this book can amplify the optimism we felt when we met them.

In our effort to shift Europe in a direction that we can define as forward, radically democratic, commons-based and catering to the needs

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1 | The concept of shifting baselines has originally been developed in climate change research and later also adopted into social sciences analysis by the social psychologist Harald Welzer. The reference point is Daniel Pauly's study: *Anecdotes and the shifting baseline syndrome of fisheries* in Trends in Ecology and Evolution 10 (1995) about attitudes to climate change by fishermen. Pauly explains how humans tend to be unimpressed by environmental changes because they do not perceive long-term changes in their entirety but only in relation to conditions they themselves have witnessed. In his study some fishermen fail to identify the 'baseline' population size of fish in the ocean and hence operate from a shifted baseline.

of all, we gave this book the title and the structure of the Campus (Cities, Media, Alliances) because we see in these thematics a strong need and potential for political leverage.

The phenomenon of shifting baselines means that the fundamental norms by which we judge what is acceptable are changing.[2] They do so in a paradoxical way: on the one hand there is a lot of noise about the 'populist age', on the other hand, when it comes to the treatment of people fleeing war, to social security and solidarity, to what a good economic model is, what democracy and privacy mean, the shift is happening often gradually and going unnoticed. And in each of these areas there has been a shift, too often to the right, too often a race to the bottom. It would be fatal though, and also an incomplete analysis, to leave the picture like that. In the shadow of the big headlines, all over the continent, it is European citizens that every day keep the idea for a Europe for all alive through practicing it.

By taking already existing alternatives into consideration and combining them with contributions of distinguished and well-known authors, we try to present a positive and pragmatic transnational left position. The ideas here are largely born out of the practice and experience of activists from throughout the continent. We also think that policy recommendations can and should be drawn from the thoughts and projects presented here, against the general fatalism and political depression. This book shows that we do have alternatives and aims to reach not only researchers, activists and students already participating in politics, but also those that feel uncomfortable with the status quo but are not yet aware of the alternatives already under development. We want to open the often narrow discourse on the future of Europe and criticise the false dichotomy between nationalism on the one hand and a neoliberal version of Europe on the other. We still believe in a third option: A Europe made by and for its citizens. After all, "Shifting Baselines" leaves open in which direction the shift will happen.

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2 | Also the concept of the 'Overton Window' could be evoked here as a helpful concept that refers to a framework of what ideas are seen as acceptable, in this case in a public policy context. See Nathan J. Russel (2006): An Introduction to the Overton Window of Political Possibilities, published at https://www.mackinac.org/7504.

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Notes before reading

We decided to use essays and interviews for the content of this book. The team of editors formulated the questions for a number of interviews, while others were carried out by external contributors. External interviews are presented as conversations between two or more people, whose names are indicated at the start of the article. There are some pieces that have been published before in other outlets and for different purposes. The reader can find a note at the beginning of these texts acknowledging this.

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