

THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR CIVILIZATION IN 2040

SUMMARY OF THE PILOT WORKSHOP (BERLIN - 20-21 NOVEMBER 2025)

2023-2026
18 PARTNERS



CONTEXT

EYE OF EUROPE OBJECTIVES

- Strengthen the integration of foresight practices into Research and Innovation (R&I) EU policy-making
- Support the Futures4Europe platform in nurturing an influential R&I foresight community

PILOT WORKSHOPS SERIES

- Address key topics relevant to the European Research Area (ERA)
- Experiment with innovative foresight methodologies and diverse groups of participants

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Current knowledge systems are shaped by hierarchical, instrumental and market-driven logics that prioritize control, efficiency and authority, often marginalizing diverse and experiential forms of knowing. This creates growing tensions around trust, truth, inclusion and the purpose of knowledge in society.

The workshop highlighted that these challenges are not merely technical, but deeply political, ethical and cultural, raising fundamental questions about who defines knowledge, for whom, and to what end.

Across all groups, a shared future vision emerged: a shift from knowledge as a static possession toward knowledge as a relational, co-created and dynamic process. In this paradigm, knowledge is grounded in plurality, shared stewardship and collective well-being, rather than competition and ownership.

This transformation implies rethinking how knowledge is valued, produced and applied, moving toward participatory, regenerative and inclusive knowledge ecosystems that embrace uncertainty, foster collaboration and align with long-term societal and planetary flourishing.

WORKSHOP METHODOLOGY

1.

UNPACKING THE TROUBLES OF KNOWLEDGE

At the beginning of the workshop, participants were asked to identify and map the dominant tensions and “troubles” related to their perceptions on the current status of knowledge.

DYNAMIC POLARITIES

Having knowledge	↔	Doing knowledge
Traditional science system	↔	New forms of knowledge
Knowledge as absolute truth	↔	Knowledge as uncertain and fluid
Market-driven knowledge	↔	Knowledge for well-being
Elitist knowledge	↔	Co-creation of knowledge

2. THE CAUSAL LAYERED ANALYSIS ICEBERG

The workshop adopted the causal layered analysis (CLA), a methodology used to unpack complex issues, dominant narratives and present images of the future by exploring them across four interconnected levels of depth, moving from surface-level symptoms to deep cultural narratives.

1 LITANY

Headlines, trends, visible issues
"What is happening?"

2 SYSTEMS / STRUCTURES

Institutions, policies, technologies
"What is causing it?"

3 WORLDVIEWS / PARADIGMS

Values, beliefs, ideologies
"Why do we think this way?"

4 METAPHORS / MYTHS (DEEP LAYER)

Narratives, symbols, collective imaginaries
"What deep stories shape our thinking?"

DECONSTRUCTING
THE PRESENT

RECONSTRUCTING
THE FUTURE

3. KNOWLEDGE IN 2040

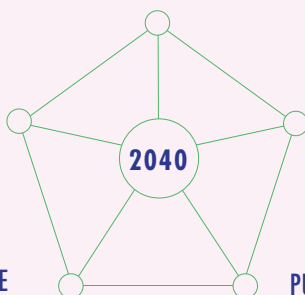
After critically exploring and unpacking current troubles of knowledge, participants developed new metaphors and were asked to imagine, based on these, what knowledge might look like in a preferred future in 2040.

PRODUCTION & OWNERSHIP

I am the River, The River is me & Mycelium
Relational, Co-created, Collaborative, Collective, Interconnected

EPISTEMIC QUALITIES

(Jazz) Symphony
& Knowledge is a verb
Plural, Situated, Contextual,
Reflexive, Uncertain



VALUES & GOVERNANCE

The Soup of knowledge
Shared, Stewarded, Open,
Equitable, Commons-based

SYSTEMS & PRACTICE

Ting
Participatory, Inclusive,
Transdisciplinary,
Holistic, Integrated

PURPOSE & IMPACT

Symbiotic Cross-Pollination
Regenerative, Sustainable,
Well-being-oriented,
Purpose-driven, Transformative

READ
THE WORKSHOP
REPORT

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