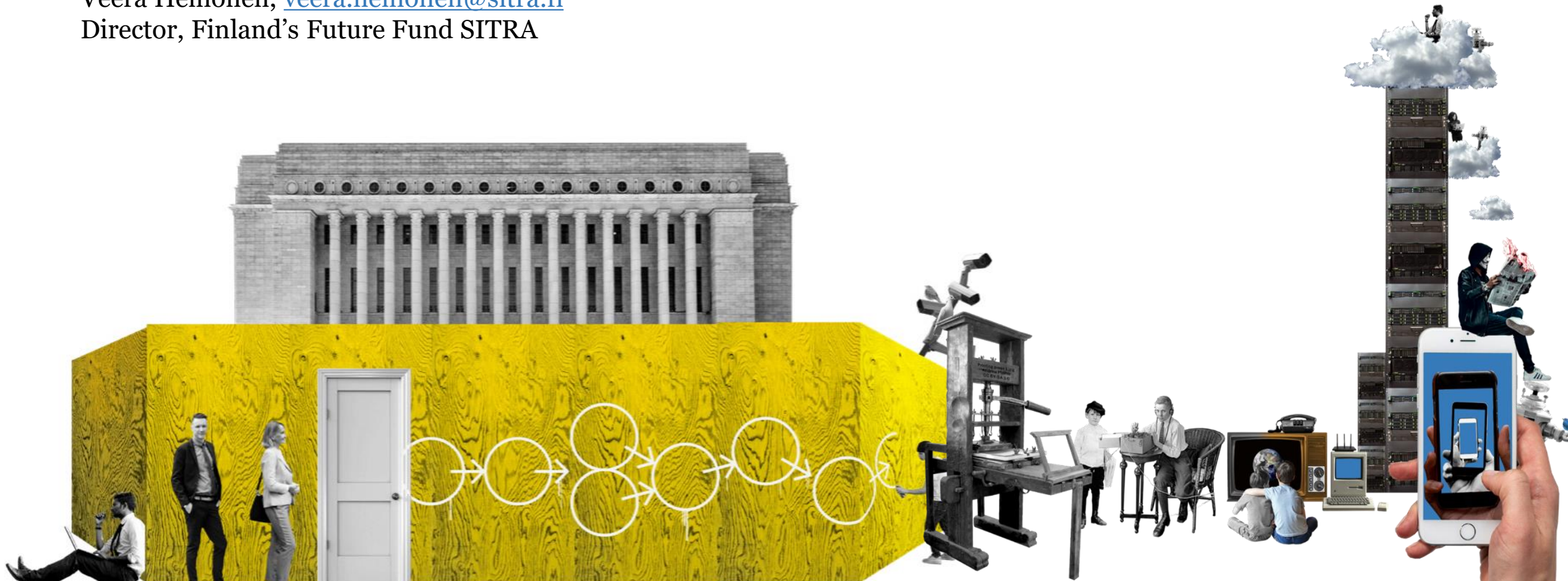


# An open, participatory and deliberative legislative process

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# Transparency and citizen participation in EU policymaking in Finland

- Finland's EU decision-making process is considered progressive.
- But EU topics are most often addressed behind closed doors by government bodies and parliamentary committees instead of through open plenary debates.
- Finland's EU legislative process would benefit from wider public participation and early-stage policy influencing.

## Suggestions for development:

1. **Public and expert consultations** ought to be organised on EU legislation that is of high national relevance.
2. National working documents related to EU topics should be **openly published** on the government websites
3. **A general communication channel** (eg. Legislative train in EU) should be established to facilitate public monitoring of EU legislative processes.
4. The deployment of **a common process identifier** for each matter that is addressed would enable data to be combined.

# **Finland's EU legislative process & policy influencing**

## **1. EU-legislative procedures lack openness in Finland, thus citizen participation is limited**

- Openness in the process & documentation

## **2. Finland is reactive, rather than proactive**

- Focus on towards influencing the drafting phase of legal initiatives and shaping the EU agenda in general

## **3. The role of parliament in advance influencing is unclear**

- The government and parliament should jointly agree on priorities for the task of advance influencing

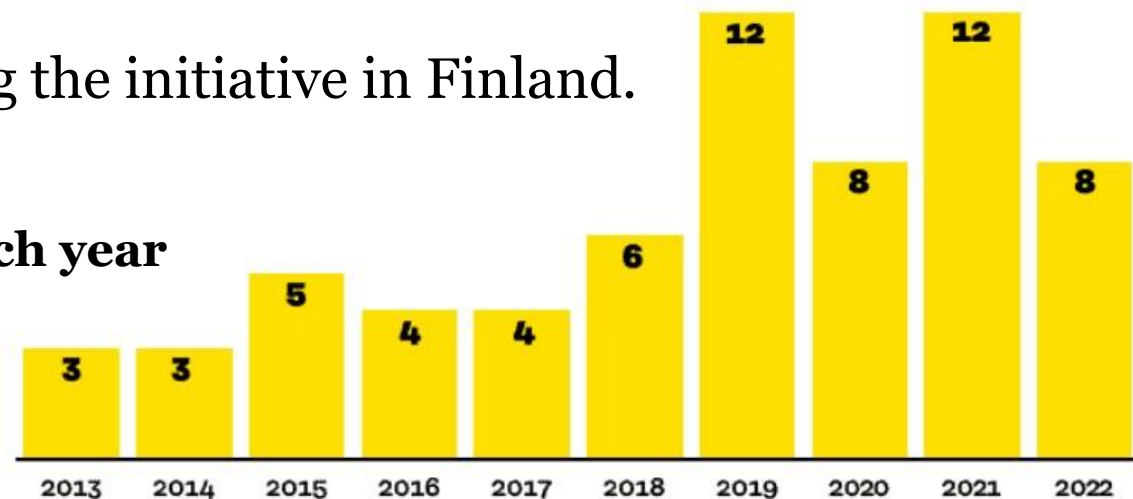
## **4. Data on the EU legislative process is not utilised to improve the process**

- Process data must be made accessible and consolidated to facilitate citizen participation and process management

# Democratic innovation: Citizen initiative

- The citizen initiative has been used in the Finnish parliament since 2013.
- In 10 years, Finns have made a total of 1,425 citizens' initiatives, of which 65 have collected more than 50,000 signatures and thus progressed to the parliament.
- The citizens' initiative has increased the equality of political participation by mobilizing **especially young age groups**.
- In Finland, it is not possible to know in advance when the citizens' initiative will be processed and answered, because the processing of initiatives is completely at the discretion of the parliament.
- There are no deadlines for processing the initiative in Finland.

**The number of citizens' initiatives each year**



# **Suggestions for development for Finnish Citizen initiative process**

- Decision-making should be produced within a six-month deadline.
- Transparency and dialogue should be increased in committee proceedings so that initiatives do not bogged into legal formalities.
- The follow-up of citizens' initiatives must be made easier and user-friendliness and interaction with the initiators and parliamentary committees must be increased
- The age limit for citizens' initiative should be lowered to 15 or 16 years.
- New democratic innovations are needed; for example the discussion initiatives, citizen councils (as part of the work of the parliamentary committees)



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