

## Overview

G. Education, Dissemination, Strategy, and Technology Transfer

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### Speaker

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### **How to involve students – and citizens - in strategic developments in materials science: the case study of a “court for the future generations”**

#### Abstract

The “court for the future generations” is an original format of event developed by the French media “Usbek & Rica”. In a scenarized way, real witnesses, or experts, testifying in the interest of the future generations, are questioned by a “fake” court composed of an attorney, a prosecutor and the president of the court. The jury, ultimately ruling, is picked by a lottery system in the audience. Tens of such events have already been organized in France, to explore topics of concern for current and future generations. For its relevance to communicate with a large audience (civil society, students, professionals), and the possibility to address, in a short time and in a light and humoristic manner, many facets of the addressed question, this format has been selected to organize an event around the future of materials science for scientists, students and civil society (40%, 40% and 20% of an audience of about 350 people, respectively). The question selected was “should we keep inventing materials?”.

Indeed, orientations in materials development, as in many other scientific fields, have been mostly following decisions and fundings decided by governmental institutions, industries, and of course researchers. However, they obey not only scientific and financial principles, but also, among others, ethical and ecological ones. Recently, materials are at the forefront of ecological concerns: although increased recycling and circularity is called for, research seems to remain focused on overcoming its own limits by continuously inventing always-more-complex materials for specific applications, consuming more energy, away from circularity. Is this race for high-tech materials a requirement to build tomorrow’s society, or should we now focus on sobriety? Should we keep inventing materials? To answer this questions, 4 witnesses from the industry (head of SafranTech), academia (Professor at UC Louvain), and specialists in the history of materials science (Emeritus professor) and in its future (SciFi writer), were invited. Many topics, including the motivations behind materials developments, future trends, and suggestions for increased democracy in strategic choices were covered. The debate was carried on by two PhD students in the role of the attorney and the prosecutor.

In this presentation, the context and the format “court for the future generations” will be presented, before to discuss this specific event: the witnesses, the court, the arguments, including all the preparation steps. At last, the practical organization will be rationalized, to end with the dissemination and the future steps of this project.