

Draft METHODOLOGY 23.01.2020

Purpose:

The purpose of the Europe's Peoples' Forum project, which will lead up to the Conference on the Future of Europe, is to engage all citizens, including those who perceive themselves as socially, economically, or politically marginalised, into a common European public sphere of European policy-making and values. This is foreseen to happen by first reaching citizens at the local and regional levels and allowing every citizen a say on which thematic challenges that should be addressed in the Conference. At national level deliberative discussions shall develop and prioritise European visions for each of the thematic challenges, while the policy solutions shall be developed and agreed at the European thematic Agora before being presented to the Conference Plenary and the three EU-institutions as part of the policy-making for the future of Europe.

A second purpose is to lay the ground for future mechanisms that institutionalise citizens' participation in EU decision making by fostering deliberation between citizens at local and European level and respond to the citizens' needs and priorities.

Approach:

Based on a systematic, representative and European approach, the project will allow all 450 million citizens to engage in prioritising the Conference themes and through thematic European Forums to prepare policy proposals that address these themes to be discussed at the Conference Plenary.

A stimulated variety of regional and national media, civil society, and independent debates will encourage a high level of citizens' participation at all levels in the online phase. Some will only be reached by mobile phones and possible uneven participation by different demographic groups will be balanced by letting the responses be weighted according to demographic criteria. The online platform should be designed to accommodate discussions moderated by recognised national partners or in the future to be used for model policy-making in the at educational institutions and similar places.

Civil society organisations, social partners, local and regional authorities will encourage citizens to participate online in prioritising the policy themes, whereas deliberative and demographically representative thematic forums at regional, and national will develop and prioritise visions for each policy theme. With the help of experts clustering these inputs Agora at European level will develop citizens' policy proposals that correspond to the agreed themes of the citizens' forums and and seek to reach the agreed visions with solutions that are European of character.

The final deliberations and development of policy proposals will take place at European level in thematic forums and be supported by independent experts.

The Citizens' Dialogues prepared by the European Commission that are due to take place at local, regional and national level should ideally be qualified by being based on the ideas and questions from demographically representative deliberations that address the chosen policy themes.

The Europe's Peoples' Forum project is designed in such a way that it may be scaled up to become a permanent mechanism to ensure citizens' engagement in EU policymaking on issues that influence their everyday life.

Organisational structures

Steering Committee:

A Steering Committee will be established for this project, based on the wishes from the EP, the EC and the Council, respectively and, we suggest, including representatives from the Europe's Peoples' Forum/Danish Board of Technology, CoR and EESC.

With respect to detailed methodology and the processing of data and content, Europe's Peoples' Forum is alone and independently responsible. On other issues as agreed the Steering Committee will be responsible for the overall process.

Research Validation Panel

The Research Validation Panel has 7-9 members that are not selected by DBT or EPF but formally appointed by European associations of universities, researchers, think tanks, experts, local authorities, employees and employers and similar institutions. It is a key to ensure that the Research Validation Panel has a formal non-political and independent appointment of its members because the panel decides on issues of significant importance to the credibility of the whole process.

The purpose of the Research Validation Panel is to:

- Select independent short-term experts recruited through competitive recruitment
- Assess whether the background analyses for policy proposals are sufficient and valid and whether the inputs from citizens' online and face2face consultations are thoroughly reflected in the proposals.
- Assess whether the questions used in the consultations are without bias.
- Review the story board for the videos of each of the ten challenges



- Etc.

Methodological Advisory Group

The Methodological Advisory Board has members invited by the Europe's Peoples' Forum/Danish Board of Technology among a number of individuals with expertise in citizens participation in local, national and international participatory processes.

The Methodological Advisory Board will review and advise on the further detailing of the methodology for Europe's Peoples' Forum. Eventually the Methodological Advisory Group could be asked to carrying a monitoring function for the project implementation, while an independent evaluation should be carried out under separate budget.

Phase 1 – Identification and training of national partners, validation of methodology

1. The identification and validation of additional national partners in every member state is meant to strengthen diversity and reach. A balance among partners in every member state is sought on the axes of left/right policies and on strengthened national/federal decision making as well as indicators for capacity and reach for every institution. The **national partners** will consist of CSOs, youth organisations and professional interest organisations as in the EESC¹ that can stimulate and contribute to local and national discussions and facilitate that their members and networks participate online. Secondly, it could include local authorities through their national associations writing to their citizens with recommendations to participate as well as the national offices of the EP and EC. Guidelines will be prepared for all national partner organisations.
2. One **technical partner** in each member state will ensure a systematic and professionally based participation and moderation of the representative regional or national forums of citizens and will later in the process be prepared to review and give feedback on proposals.

To become a technical partner with the Europe's Peoples' Forum, the organization should have the following qualities:

- Credibility among policy makers and citizens and full independence from political parties, social groups, and other stakeholders with particular interests related to future structures and policies for the European Union.
 - Have the professional skills necessary to perform a national citizen participation process in a fair and methodologically consistent manner – online as well as face2face.
 - Based on non-profit – meaning that there are no owners who profit from any kind of overhead from external funding. However, such overhead may stay in the institution to support other non-profit activities.
 - A reputation as serious, professional, trust-worthy and effective organization
 - The Danish Board of Technology approves the quality of each national technical partner according to the above criteria.
3. Meeting for Partner organisations – Spring 2020 around 9 May – with discussion and validation of methodology as well as training in methodology and implementation including

¹ Labor unions, industrial and farmers associations, etc.

introduction to the online platforms. Participation: 3-4 participants from each country on average plus European partner organisations – CSOs, CoR, EESC, EPLO, EP, EC.

Phase 2 – National online debate – preparation and implementation

4. **Preparation:** The EC, the EP and the Council have suggested different policy issues to deal with during the Conference on the Future of Europe. Depending on the formulation of the priorities that are agreed among the 3 institutions, the citizens should be asked to prioritise three challenges among these policy issues
5. Independent experts selected by the Research Validation Panel upon agreed Terms of Reference will produce **descriptions of the challenges** with all their inbuilt conflicting interests between different parts of member states and society. In principle, half a page and up to five pages of background information and 5 quantitative questions on different approaches to solve each challenge are developed. Further, a handful of general questions for each thematic challenge is prepared for the later face2face discussions. The documents aim at local partners (instigating discussions in the public), technical partners (moderating the regional and national forum and later in some MS also the European thematic forums) and questions are available for citizens, youth groups and school classes that would be interested. The background documents and the questions that have been formulated by independent experts are reviewed by the Research Validation Panel.
6. Through a **partnership with regional public broadcasters** (for example Circom Regional) different videos from all parts of EU will illustrate the perceptions of the relevance and importance of these ten challenges in their particular regions and member states. The videos will be available both on the EPF platform in local language and for the public discussions that CSOs and others might have arranged. Probably also the regional public broadcasters will distribute many of them. The background structure for the programmes will be reviewed by the Research Validation Panel, but the editorial responsibility lies with the broadcasters.
7. A **communication and outreach strategy** is developed with a version for all Europe and a version for member-state level with individual action plans proposed for every country. The communication and outreach strategy should emphasize the European dimension of the citizens involvement and the themes discussed. The strategy should begin being implemented well in advance of the foreseen online debate.
8. Before the regional and national forums **three weeks of local online debate** open to all 450 million EU-citizens should take place in every country. and will be encouraged to participate online by local EPF-partner organisations, local authorities, and national EP- and EC-offices. Citizens cannot include elected politicians, senior government representatives, professional representatives of lobbies/political organisations and NGOs. The NGOs and interest organisations will be offered to present their opinion on the quantitative questions on their own website and to be used by the citizens through a link from the EPF online platform before the citizens alone express their priorities. The challenge online is to attract and keep citizens who are weak in reading and prefer pictures. In 5 member states more than 20 % of the population does not have internet. Some of these could be reached through smart phones. In order to reach also people who do not use Internet, a combination of TV-programmes, communication and feedback possibilities through traditional mobile phones should allow everybody to participate. Discussions are currently going on to establish cooperation with other organisations specialised in attractive online user interfaces.

9. During these three weeks, everybody in the country has a possibility to **vote online among the policy themes put forward by the EU institutions and choose what** the citizens see as the **3 most challenging thematic issues** in relation to the Future of Europe (exact rules will be defined when the EU knows the themes). Within each of 3 challenges chosen by the participant he/she also answers the **5 quantitative questions on different approaches to solve the challenge**. This will also help in framing the discussions of the regional and national Forums. All parts of the population are encouraged to take part and particular emphasis is given to attract marginalised groups. The answers will be given **weight according to the demographic structure** of each member state. By the end every participant will online register with name and a few demographic data – as age and sex, education, work-situation, place of living etc. Carefulness is encouraged that citizens watch how the different themes are looked at from other parts of Europe. The exact order should be developed – either to allow the citizen to choose other information sources online before “voting” between different policy issues – or to encourage that information is taken in through media and the platform before prioritising. Important to ensure that we can avoid systematic fraud so people do participate more than once.

Phase 3 – Collection of online data

10. Every citizen who participates in the online debate on the national language platform has registered with name and demographic data as age, sex, education, work-situation and place of living. The citizen will confirm that the EPF may keep these data until the end of 2022. The citizen will further choose the three challenges that he/she finds most important among a list of ten European challenges. For each of these three challenges that he/she finds most important the citizen will choose among five different approaches the one he/she finds most important.
11. The EPF computer at Danish Board of Technology is directly connected to each of the 27 national platforms. Based on the demographic profiles of participants – (European Parliament defined them as geography, gender, age, socio-economic background and/or level of education) - the EPF will by pressing a button collect all the number of votes on different challenges in order to identify the top 3 challenges. If different demographic profiles select different top 3 challenges, the EPF will give the responses from each profile a weight that reflects the numbers of such profiles in the demographic data from Eurostat and the statistical offices in each member-state. The most frequently suggested approaches to deal with the three challenges will also be balanced against the actual demographic data.

Phase 4 – Preparation of Regional or National Forums and of Citizens Dialogue

12. The **videos exchanged** between the participating member states concerning the top challenges that the citizens chose online will also be used in the preparation of national forums and possibly also in regional forums within each member state. The goal is simply to show the different perceptions across Europe in order to give the local forums a broader European perspective on the development of visions in each national forum.
13. **Training material** is developed and prepared for distribution to the national technical partners who will **moderate the national forums** in order to secure that the development of visions in each forum will happen through the same processes and methods. The training material is developed by the Danish Board of Technology. Europe's Peoples' Forum and its independent experts will prepare the technical background with a variety of multiple visions that could be or might not be suggested by the citizens. This is not to influence the results of



the Forum, but to give the moderators a reasonable minimal insight into possible approaches to the top challenges that were chosen online.

14. **Training material** is developed to the national technical partners who will moderate the national **Citizens Dialogues**.
15. 2 days **training seminar** at European level will take place for the technical partners.

Phase 5 – National Forum and Citizens Dialogue

16. A **national forum of 100-200 demographically representative** citizens are chosen from those registered online in each of the 27 member states. They are brought together for one or two weekends to discuss the top challenges chosen online and by the European institutions and offer their visions by answering five open debate questions about how to solve these European challenges. A detailed manual will be developed for this event and in principle one could make a model with 3 regional forums taking place online and face2face, before the visions were presented at a national forum. It is a question about funding and a bit also time.
17. **On the first day** of the national forum NGOs and interest organisations are invited in the morning to present their views on how to solve the EU's top thematic challenges. Following these organisations independent experts from each theme should make a brief introduction and stay in the room to answer questions and help the citizens. In the afternoon the citizens will be left alone with the moderator and the experts to begin discussing visions for the challenges. **On the second day** the discussion will end by noon with 2 agreed visions for each of the thematic open questions. The discussions will take place in local languages and the 10 visions later translated into English for the online platform. A combination of thematic work groups and plenary is used.
18. **Citizens Dialogue** will take place in the afternoon of the second day of the national forums. In each Citizens Dialogue the demographically representative citizens will present their visions and ask questions to the high-ranking EU-representatives. The Citizens Dialogue will be an open meeting, but the first part of the Citizens Dialogue meeting will be dedicated to the questions and visions from the national forum's participants.
19. The answers given through the Citizens Dialogue will be considered by the representative citizens and possible adjustments of the agreed visions will take place, before the end of each national forum. In principle it will be possible that other organisations are responsible for the session of the Citizens Initiatives. Depending on the size of country, **3-10 citizens from each national forum will take part in the subsequent European level forums**.

Phase 6 – Clustering of visions from the 27 countries

20. **Independent thematic experts** are recruited competitively for short-term positions and will work across all phases. A meeting between the experts will take place. It is foreseen that the experts each know about one of the chosen thematic challenges, about the special and controversial political issues in relation to EU and the possible different factors that can be some of the obstacles for finding a solution.
21. The thematic experts will **cluster the citizens' visions** within the agreed themes in order to simplify the subsequent formulation of policy proposals. To ensure accountability and



influence the visions proposed from the 27 different national forums will be tagged so it is possible for citizens online to follow and comment on the clusters as well as the policy proposals that their visions are used for.

Phase 7 – Outline of policy proposals and pressure test

22. Based on a summary of the received quantitative priorities and the documented and argued clustering of visions from the 27 national forums the thematic experts develop these inputs into a **first argued outline of 2-5 policy proposals within each theme**.
23. To **pressure test** the outlined proposals the 27 **national moderators** are invited to give their feedback to help safeguard that the online quantitative priorities and visions from the citizens forums are reflected in the outlined proposals.
24. Further, the **outlined policy proposals are placed on the online platform** and sent to all those who participated in the national online platforms and in the national forums in the earlier phases. This allows them to comment on the link between the proposals and the quantitative priorities and visions. If comments from citizens require additional analyses the experts will do this.
25. Finally, the **Research Validation Panel** will review if each policy proposal seems to reflect the results of the online process and the national forums and whether the analyses behind each policy proposal is coherent and sufficient for a quality policy proposal.

Phase 8 – Thematic European Forums

26. 4 to 6 thematic **European Forums will take place** with 2-300 representatively selected participants that speak either English/French or German speaking citizens' representatives that were chosen from the 27 national forums will together with the thematic experts meet for 3-4 days to discuss the first outlined policy proposals made by independent experts for each of the thematic challenges and to further discuss and agree on further analyses and writing of the outlined policy proposals. If needed the experts help by carrying out additional legal, economic or social analyses in order to ensure genuine and comprehensive policy proposals that together reflect the diversity from the 27 countries.
27. It should be considered among those who took part in the initial online process to invite young people to form a separate **Europe's Youth's Forum** and in parallel with the representative forum to build separate youth policy proposals for each of the selected themes. This could take place in cooperation with existing European youth organisations including new networks and continue online until a second and final Europe's Youth Forum.
28. The **Research Validation Panel** reviews the outlined draft policy proposals to ensure that the citizens' online choices and face2face visions have been reflected in the outlined proposals and that all analyses are genuinely carried out.
29. 4 to 6 final **European Forums** with the same participants will meet and finalise **two different versions of policy proposals** for each of the thematic challenges. This will happen through a combination of group and plenary discussions.

30. The thematic European Forums are all live streamed, and the citizens can give their online comments.

Phase 9 – Selection and ranking of policy proposals

31. **2-5 versions of policy proposals for each of the thematic challenges** are put on the **online platform**. The explanation of the consequences of and the analyses behind the two versions are also on the platform. They are translated into all necessary languages and online debates are encouraged. Comments in English are invited from citizens and from partner organisations.
32. A **Europe wide online voting** on the two different proposals for each of the 4-6 themes is carried out among all registered participants and defined to take account of any demographic imbalances when concluding about the final results. As many citizens as possible must vote to ensure credibility. The policy proposals within each challenge are ranked according to the votes they receive.

Phase 10 – Presentation to the thematic Conference Plenaries on the Future of Europe

33. The **citizens' preferred policy proposal** within each of the thematic challenges is the one that is presented to the Conference Plenary on the Future of Europe. The three policy proposals will be given layout, translation and power points to make them presentable.
34. With some delay the citizens' proposal will be presented to the relevant **thematic Conference Plenary**. The thematic conference plenaries could be constituted by representatives from the three European institutions (EP, EC and European Council), mayors from big, small, provincial and capital cities, representatives from the 27 member states' parliaments, European Social Partners and representatives from the thematic Europe's Peoples' Forums to present and defend the policy proposals they have developed.
35. Besides the citizens' proposals for the thematic Conference Plenaries the **political groups** should be invited to prepare an analysis of each of the citizens' proposals and the Commission should further for each thematic proposal from the citizens make an analysis and an argued conclusion on whether to turn the proposal into law. EP could also invite Committee of Regions and EESC to prepare their comments and proposals for the conference.
36. During each of the thematic Conference Plenaries one or two choices to do should be clearly presented online and allow those of the 450 million citizens who registered online to vote about the choices. This would allow a **two-way stream between citizens** and the conference. Further, live streaming of the conferences should allow all citizens to communicate their opinions via Twitter on a screen in the conference hall.
37. Each of the 4-6 thematic Conference Plenaries will discuss and tentatively agree on a common **future EU policy** for the different thematic challenges
38. It is essential for the success of citizens participation in the policy-making process that their policy proposals are seriously considered and analysed by the EP and the EC. It would also be logic and helpful if participating **citizens from the European Forum are invited to**

present their policy proposals as part of the agenda for the Conference on the Future of Europe

