

## Draft METHODOLOGY 16.01.2020

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the Europe's Peoples' Forum project, which will lead up to the Conference on the Future of Europe, is to reach the local, regional, and national levels and give each citizen a say on which thematic issues that EU should deal with and deliberative preparation of proposals for EU policy making. By doing this, the project aims to engage all citizens, including those who perceive themselves as socially, economically, or politically marginalised, into a common European public sphere of European policies and values.

A second purpose is to deliberate and decide on EU level policies that respond to citizens' needs and priorities and to lay the ground for future mechanisms that institutionalise citizen participation in EU decision making procedures.

### **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.

Media, civil society, and independent debates will encourage a high level of citizens' participation at the local, regional, and national levels in the online phase and the response will be weighted according to demographic criteria. The online platform may be designed to accommodate discussions and the common development of policy proposals by young people as a group or as students at their education institutions.

Civil society organisations, social partners, local and regional authorities will encourage the citizens to participate online, whereas deliberative and demographically representative thematic forums at regional, national and European level will develop citizens' policy proposals that correspond to the agreed themes of the citizens' forums and of the conference plenaries and 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 to take place at local, regional and national level will 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 so it may be scaled up to become a permanent mechanism to ensure citizens' engagement in EU's 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 probably 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. In 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 appointed by European associations of universities, researchers, think tanks, experts, local authorities, employees and employers and similar institutions.

The purpose of the Research Validation Panel is as follows:

- Selection of independent short-term experts recruited through competitive recruitment
- Background documents and questions related to the challenges
- Review of story board for the videos of each of the ten challenges
- Etc.

### ***Methodological Advisory Board***

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.



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

1. Identification and validation of additional national partners in every member state to strengthen diversity and reach. The **national partners** will consist of CSOs, youth organisations and professional interest organisations as in the EESC<sup>1</sup> that can stimulate and contribute to local and national discussions and facilitate that their members and networks participate online. Secondly, it could be considered to include local authorities through their national associations to write their citizens with recommendation to participate as well as the national offices of the EP. Guidelines will be prepared for all national partner organisations.
2. One neutral **technical partner** in each member state country 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 can approve the quality of each national technical partner
3. Meeting for Partner organisations – Spring 2020 – with discussion and validation of methodology as well as training in methodology and implementation including introduction to the online platforms. Participation: 3-4 participants from each country on average plus European partner organisations – CSOs, CoR, EESC, EPLO, EP, EC.

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## Phase 2 – National online debate – preparation and implementation

4. **Preparation:** Description of e.g. 10 thematic potential European challenges that citizens through EPF must suggest solutions for. The 10 thematic potential challenges are determined by the Conference of Presidents of the EP and what they regard as the challenges that mostly need policy solutions. But the ten challenges should also be reflected among the citizens' top 15 priorities as indicated in a bigger-than-ever Eurobarometer survey conducted by the Public Opinion Monitoring Unit
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 one 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

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<sup>1</sup> Labor unions, industrial and farmers associations, etc.

thematic challenge is prepared for the later face2face discussions. The documents aim at local partners (instigating discussions in the public), technical partners (moderating the national forum) 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) 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. Citizens cannot include elected politicians, senior government representatives, professional representatives of lobbies/political organisations/NGOs but will be encouraged to participate online by local EPF-partner organisations, local authorities, and national EP-offices. 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.
9. During these three weeks, everybody in the country has a possibility online to **vote among ten possibilities** what the citizens see as the **3 most challenging thematic issues** in relation to the Future of Europe. Every participant will online register with name and a few demographic data – as age and sex, education, work-situation, place of living etc. 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 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.

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### Phase 3 – Collection of online data

10. Every citizen who participates in the online debate on the national language platform will register with name and demographic data as age, sex, education, work-situation and place of living. The citizen will confirm that 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 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 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.

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### Phase 3 – 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.

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### Phase 4 – National Forum and Citizens Dialogue

16. A **national forum of 100 demographically representative** citizens chosen from those registered online in each of the 27 member states are brought together for a weekend to discuss the three top challenges chosen online 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. In the afternoon the citizens will be left alone with the moderator and 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.
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 Citizen Dialogue will be considered by the representative citizens and possible adjustments of the agreed visions will take place, before by the end of each national forum. Depending on the size of country, the participants will elect **2-5 citizens' representatives** to take part in the subsequent **European level forums**.

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#### Phase 4 – 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.

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#### Phase 5 – Outline of policy proposals and pressure test

22. Based on a summary of the received quantitative priorities and the clustered visions from the 27 national forums the thematic experts develop these inputs into a **first outline of 2 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.

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#### Phase 6 – Thematic European Forums

26. 4 to 6 thematic **European Forums** with 1-200 English/French/German speaking citizens' representatives that were elected at 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.

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## Phase 7 – Selection and ranging of policy proposals

31. **2 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.

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## Phase 8 – 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
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