



## *SUMMARY REPORT*

The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) is currently reflecting on how to establish a permanent and structured mechanism of citizens' consultations. To prepare for this new model, the CoR organised a two-day workshop on 25-26 June 2019 with 20 colleagues from the EU institutions and experts from regional/local governments, think-tanks and foundations working on the subject. It provided concrete inputs and fed into further consideration on developing guidelines for the permanent mechanism.

The workshop was introduced by Karl-Heinz Lambertz, President of the CoR, and Antonio Longo, President of the Citizens' Rights Movement, member of the EESC. The CoR President called for "citizens' consultations to be permanent, held together with those closest to citizens: regions and cities" and emphasised that they "should not stop and start around elections". Antonio Longo highlighted that both the CoR and EESC should "launch reflections and feed a process that could really help bring the EU closer to the citizens through a longer-term strategy and a feedback mechanism".

The experts then split into three working groups, discussing in details three critical issues:

- 1) How can we imagine a better, more representative outreach to citizens?
- 2) How can we imagine defining topics that are at the same time of local and European interest?
- 3) How can we engineer a follow-up to the ideas and recommendations that may stem from citizens' dialogues and consultations?

The key points of discussion and conclusions emerging from each group are presented below.

- **Selection of participants:** As indicated in the draft guidelines prepared by the CoR, the selection of citizens participating in consultations should be as inclusive as possible, ensuring diversity, representativeness and transparency. Online tools are a good means of reaching out, and should be combined with physical ways of exchanges. Consultations should be goal-oriented and have simple and clear guidelines, with a view to ensure commitment and ownership of the debate among selected participants. Various channels and networks can be used to encourage people to register and reach out beyond the usual suspects (local/regional press and TV, celebrities, companies, libraries, local ambassadors, etc.).
- **Selection of topic(s):** It should be linked to the competence of the institution running the consultation exercise and its ability to act on the topic(s) based on the consultation's outcomes. The approach to be used depends on the topic(s) of the consultation:

- Bottom-up: the agenda is set by the citizens willing to discuss a specific topic (e.g. infrastructure);
- Top-down: for broader topics, the selection of topics and the agenda are set by the organisers;
- Mixed approach: for general topics which require policy inputs from the local and regional level (e.g. migration, climate change).

One or several "wild cards" should be offered to participants to freely choose their topic(s). In any case, the scope should be precise enough to achieve concrete outcomes, still allowing flexibility to broaden the discussions if requested by participants.

Some of the key factors identified for a successful organisation include: citizens' empowerment, helping them to understand the importance of participation; capacity-building among politicians to underline the added value of citizens' engagement for representative democracy; making the best of multi-level governance, ensuring that the results of discussions at regional/local level are fed into the EU level.

- **Follow-up:** All the experts were convinced that coordination on citizens' dialogues and consultations among the EU institutions and bodies should be enhanced during the 2019-2024 term of office. This would require a political leadership, resources, qualified people, as well as a 'cultural change' favoring experimentation with deliberative democracy tools as developed at local level. In this respect, a task force could be established, composed of representatives of EU institutions and bodies, as well as national, regional and local governments, the latter including 'participation champions' to enhance the attractiveness and policy-learning throughout the process. The experts also proposed to create a knowledge management system at EU level and to seek for support from the EU budget for citizens' participation as of 2021.

On the second day of the workshop, experts split into two working groups, focusing on

- (1) inter-institutional cooperation, and
- (2) key success factors.

The main results from the debates are presented below.

- **Inter-institutional cooperation:** The experts proposed concrete ways how EU institutions could work together: setting up a task force or steering committee; drafting a joint paper about citizens' participation; committing to build on experiments and integrating them under a single flag; etc. In terms of timing, EU institutions could aim at committing resources as of 2020, with the objective to make citizens' consultations a part of the inter-institutional working cycle by 2024. One of the main challenges is to demonstrate the added-value of participatory processes. Communication is thus crucial and could, for instance, include the development of a repository/toolkit of best practices, to build a community of practitioners, and to refer to citizens' input when drafting legislation.
- **Key success factors:** The experts identified, inter alia, the following elements as crucial for the success of the process:
  - financial resources, such as EU-funding for projects on participatory democracy;
  - capacity-building and awareness-raising among citizens;
  - generating enthusiasm and commitment, showing the added value of consultations and their impact;
  - making the best use of existing networks and multi-level governance;
  - supporting the development of a community of practice, including EU institutions and civil society.

Seen from the point of view of the CoR, the next steps of the process are:

- During the EU Regions Week (7-10 October 2019), two sessions will be about citizens' consultations and the new permanent and structured mechanism developed by the CoR (information, state of play and possible training);
- One of the topics of the next EuroPCom (7-8 November 2019) is "citizen engagement", and two sessions will focus specifically on the issue of citizens' consultations.

In parallel, the CoR is preparing a publication of good practices of citizens' engagement at local, regional, national and pan-European level, which will be published in October 2019 for the EU Regions Week sessions.

# ***ANNEX I: AGENDA***

***25 JUNE 2019 – DAY 1 – BUILDING OUR VISION***

**12:40 - 13:00:** Registration (visitor stickers to be collected at CoR Reception)

**13:00 - 14:00:** Lunch (walking buffet style served at ATRIUM 6 - 6<sup>th</sup> floor)

## **14:00 - 14:20: Introduction: the way forward on European Citizens' Consultations**

*Karl-Heinz Lambertz*, President of the European Committee of the Regions

*Antonio Longo*, President of the Citizens' Rights Movement, member of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

## **14:20 - 15:00: Presentation of the objectives, methodology and process of the workshop**

*Florence Ranson & Stephen Boucher*, moderators

## **15:00 - 16:30: Building our vision**

- Experts split into three working groups. Each group elaborates one of the below topics:

**WHO?** - How to select citizens, construct the assembly and make it statistically representative of the city/region where it takes place? How to prepare participants? Which tools can be used?

**WHAT?** - Which topics should citizens talk about, and how should these topics be selected (top-down, bottom-up)? Should there be only one topic or several topics for discussion? What should be the process, and how long should it last?

**SO WHAT?** - How to give feedback to participants and keep them informed? How to follow-up? How to incorporate the results in the decision-making/policy-making process?

- The groups consolidate their findings according to the following structure for further discussion:

(i) Commenting on proposals (draft guidelines) from the CoR (30 min);

(ii) Identifying challenges (30 min);

(iii) Proposing solutions (30 min).

## **16:30 - 16:45: Coffee break**

## **16:45 - 17:30: Harvesting**

Each group will present its main findings; restitution of the outcome in plenary format

**26 JUNE 2019 – DAY 2 – HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN?**

**8:40 - 9:00:** Registration (visitor stickers to be collected at CoR Reception)

**9:00 - 10:30: How to make it happen?**

Experts split into working groups. Each group elaborates one of the below topics by using the same method as on day 1:

***INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION:*** How should this be organised at EU level? How to ensure cooperation between EU institutions? (communication actions, process, methodology, etc.)

***KEY SUCCESS FACTORS:*** What ingredients and steps are necessary to make this happen (e.g. training, communication activities, media outreach, etc.)?

***JOKER CARD QUESTION:*** Participants may propose another topic that they would like to discuss.

**10.30 - 10.45: Coffee break**

**10.45 - 11.30: Harvesting**

Each group will present its main findings; restitution of the outcome in plenary format

**11.30 - 12.30: Conclusions and closing**

Key take-away messages and commitment from participants; next steps for the CoR

**12.30 - 13.30: Light lunch**

## ***ANNEX II: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS***

### **MODERATORS:**

**Florence Ranson**, Founder of *REDComms*

**Stephen Boucher**, Founder of *Dreamocracy - Collective Intelligence for the Common Good*

### **EXPERTS:**

**Sari Aalto-Matturi**, Executive Director of MIELI Mental Health Finland, member of Advisory Board on Civil Society Policy (KANE)

**Ari Brodach**, Head of Participatory Budgeting Department, *Participatory Budget in Paris*

**Nathalie Breyse**, Digital Officer Consultant, Comm – Web Communications, EP

**Pierluigi Brombo**, Head of Unit, Relations with Organised Civil Society and Forward Studies, EESC

**Samantha Chaitkin**, Network Manager, Open Government Network for Europe

**Tremeur Denigot**, Director of Communications at CIVICO Europa, *We Europeans*

**Doreen Grove**, Head of Open Government, Scottish Government

**Dominik Hierlemann**, Head of Democracy and Participation in Europe, Bertelsmann Foundation

**David Mair**, Head of Unit Knowledge for Geographic Coordination, Joint Research Centre, EC

**Bent Nørby Bonde**, Secretary-General of the *European People's Forum*

**Noelle O'Connell**, Executive Director, *European Movement Ireland*

**Joachim Ott**, Head of Citizens' Dialogues Unit, DG COMM, EC

**Alexandros Parassidis**, Representative of the Government of Baden-Württemberg

**Ângela Guimarães Pereira**, Team Leader Knowledge for Policy, Joint Research Centre, EC

**Alice Pignacca**, Citizens' Dialogue Unit, Directorate-General for Communication, EC

**Borja Prieto Ursúa**, Head of Institutional Extension at Madrid City Council, *Decide Madrid*

**Barbara Silhan**, Youth Outreach Unit, Directorate General for Communication, EP

**Corina Stratulat**, Head of European Politics and Institutions Programme, European Policy Centre

**Nicola Vathauer**, Communications director, EURO CITIES

**Anthony Zacharzewski**, Founder of *The Democratic Society*

### **COR PARTICIPANTS:**

**Andrea Bodova**, acting Head of Unit, Events unit, Directorate for Communication

**Martin Gosset**, Campaign Manager, Events unit, Directorate for Communication

**Marie-Pierre Jouglain**, Communication Officer, Cabinet of the Secretary-General

**Wolfgang Petzold**, Deputy Director, Directorate for Communication

**Benedetta Pricolo**, Administrator, Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs (CIVEX)

**Stefan Bäckman**, Events unit

**Paolo Ciampaglione**, Events unit

**Adrienn Nagy**, Events unit

**Yasmine Lassoued**, CIVEX commission