

VEP: VEP

Participating in a virtual European Parliament

The concept of using the internet to encourage EU citizens to participate in the European Parliament is rapidly growing. Now attempts are being made to draw the younger generation into the debate via the technologies they use on a daily basis.

The Virtual European Parliament (VEP) project, which runs from early 2008 to the end of 2009, aims to integrate young citizens into the decision-making process of the European Parliament.

The project team hopes to attract a minimum of 600 young participants from three regions: Lulea in the far north of Sweden, Barcelona in Spain and Flanders in Belgium.

The participants, many of whom are expected to be university students, will be able to access information on the Parliamentary agenda via the VEP portal, which the project partners are creating.

Voting via mobile phone

Using the latest Web 2.0 technologies, participants will be able to exchange ideas with others in real time, collaboratively write reports on specific topics, and be asked for their opinions via mobile voting and surveying.

Web 2.0 technologies enhance creativity, information sharing and collaboration among users and underpin social networking sites like MySpace and Facebook.

An international support office set up by the project will act as moderator and control the quality of all VEP activities. The staff will also ensure that activities in the VEP are synchronised with the activities of the real European Parliament and that they follow the decision-making process.

In June 2008, the project partners were in the process of creating a system called the 'Virtual European Parliament Framework'. The system consists of Web 2.0-based technology and a mobile community services platform. The framework will be used for voting, surveying participants' views, and enabling mobile access to VEP activities.

Feedback to refine portal

During the course of the trial, the project will gather feedback from participants on an ongoing basis regarding both the technologies they use, and the added value they feel they get from the VEP framework and activities. This information will be used to refine the portal and the virtual activities as the project progresses.

The ultimate aim is to create a virtual public room for a debate between citizens and decision-makers, specifically Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), several of whom will be directly involved with the project.

Conferencing goes mega

The project will employ some of the latest technologies and techniques, including the use of video-conferencing software. The software allows the holding of video-conferencing sessions featuring between 100 and 400 participants.

Web 2.0 technology, including blogging, wikis, tagging, interactive features, and content gathering, will be important features of the website. The project team will also use mobile technology linked to the rest of the software tools to allow the young participants full access via their mobile phones.

How the project will be received remains to be seen, but it could be a step in the right direction to get young people more interested and involved in the EU political process.



Project ID card

- Funded under: [eParticipation](#)
- Total cost: €0.95m
- EU contribution: €0.71m
- Project reference: EP-07-01-039
- Execution: From 01/01/2008 to 31/12/2009
- Project status: Closed
- Contract type: eParticipation EPART

Links

- [Virtual European Parliament](#)
- [European Commission eParticipation website](#)

Contact information

DE COLVENAER Mark
Keppische Steenweg 297/3
B-3500 Hasselt
Belgium
Tel. +32 476 460859
Fax. +32 11 717 889
E-mail: mark.decolvenaer@staff.i-city.be

Participants

Coordinator: I-CITY VZW, BELGIUM

Participating partners:

Organisation	Country
I-CITY VZW	BELGIUM
KATHOLIEKE HOGESCHOOL MECHELEN VZW	BELGIUM
UNIVERSITAT POLITECNICA DE CATALUNYA	SPAIN
FUNDACIO PRIVADA I2CAT, INTERNET I INNOVACIO DIGITAL A CATALUNYA	SPAIN
LULEA TEKNISKA UNIVERSITET	SWEDEN

Last update: 16/10/2008

See this factsheet online:

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/apps/projects/factsheet/index.cfm?project_ref=EP-07-01-039



European Commission - Information Society and Media

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society