

**Project: "Horizon EU"**  
**European citizenship: a horizontal development**

(June 2014)

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A project presented in the context of the "Europe for Citizens" programme call for tenders  
Submission date: 1 June / Duration of the project: 12 months max.

**1 - The aims, organisers and originality of the project**

**1.1. The project's aims**

The overall aim of this project is to familiarise participating citizens (and all those who discover the project) with the ways and means ensuring that their voice is heard in Europe by adopting a bottom-up approach.

The project draws its inspiration from the oft-repeated observation that ordinary citizens feel increasingly distant from the EU, due partly to their limited competence (the principle of subsidiarity) and to their geographical distance from "Brussels". Yet it is extremely ironic that this feeling prevails since new technologies are available. They allow people to retrieve all the information they possibly need regarding the European institutions' activities and to get in touch with their representatives more easily than in the past. In this context, it is more than ever necessary to hold debates and meetings on the EU with European citizens in an effort to discover their views on major European issues, to convey their concerns and recommendations to European decision-makers, and also to apprise them of the means and tools available to intervene directly.

If these debates are to be effective, they need to be organised with a simple observation in mind: rather than delivering vertical and often counterproductive messages to Europeans, we need to involve them more directly in the management of the project in order to develop their competence and responsibility as EU citizens. To achieve this, we need first and foremost to promote an approach taking its cue from the bottom in order to prepare and implement the project. This inclusive approach will prompt the Europeans involved to exercise their citizenship in a horizontal manner, while providing citizens aware of the project with an example of civic involvement which can inspire them since it comes from Europeans with whom they can identify.

Thus, the project will pursue two complementary aims:

- sounding out European citizens on the EU about some major issues (core issues);
- bolstering their ability to voice their expectations and recommendations on a regular basis using available tools and means (form issues).

## 1.2. An original project taking its cue from citizens' experience

The project is based on the Notre Europe - Jacques Delors Institute's extensive experience in citizens' affairs, which was highlighted by Jacques Delors himself when he chose the name "Notre Europe", meaning our Europe, in an effort to reaffirm the need for the construction of Europe close to citizens.

For example, NE-IJD founded the first pan-European deliberative poll entitled Tomorrow's Europe (2004-2005) and the debate on the lessons to be learnt from participatory experiences, launched the "Etats généraux de l'Europe" which is a general forum where the EU is debated (since 2007), and organised numerous "citizens' dialogues" in France and in Europe...

This set of experiences influenced the main features of the following project:

- **The need to use a scientific methodology:** it is not sufficient to simply put together as many European citizens as possible, selected randomly, and to ask them to debate among themselves or with EU players. It is necessary to adopt a quality approach based on scientific criteria for both the selection of the participants and the debates and their summary.
- **The crucial issue of the target audience:** the haphazard organisation of large "citizen forums" on the EU leads to a considerable selection bias. It ends up forming groups of regulars and of people passionate about the construction of Europe, or even public affairs, sometimes along with a handful of critics; yet it is absolutely imperative to take one's cue for talking about Europe from exchanges among Europeans, and that is difficult to achieve in forums held in one or the other country, forums in which an overwhelming majority of the audience tends to be composed with nationals.
- **The adequate mobilisation of the citizens gathered:** it is often counterproductive to ask directly the citizens gathered to discuss on Europe what solutions or recommendations they would like to submit to the decision-makers. Voicing such thoughts demands prior training and dialogue, which should initially focus on their perceptions and then identify issues of priority to them.
- **The significance of the distribution of the project's results:** a great importance must be given to the summary of the opinions and recommendations put forward by the citizens in order to ensure that they are released to Europe's decision-makers but also to the general public; it is also crucial to ensure that projects enjoy the broadest audience possible among people so that it can sensitize the citizens not directly involved.

## 1.3. - A project organised by key players

**Management:** Notre Europe - Jacques Delors Institute, a think-tank whose areas of research include the relationship between the European Union and its citizens and which run the initiatives mentioned above. For the implementation of this project, the Institute has gathered three categories of partners as described below.

**Management partner, to design the project and conduct the discussions in Stages 1 and 2:** OPTEM, which was in charge of quality surveys conducted by the European Commission from the 1980s to the 2000s and with active members in every EU member states with "European Qualitative Network" consisting of the following partners:

**Germany: Echanges Marktforschung (Cologne) et PSYMA (Nuremberg)**

**Austria: Karmasin Motivforschung (Vienna)**

**Belgium: EADC Yellow Window (Antwerp)**

**Bulgaria: Alpha Research (Sofia)**

Cyprus: Synovate Cyprus (Nicosia)

**Czech Republic : Mareco (Prague)**

Denmark: Analyse Danmark (Frederiksberg)

**Estonia: Saar Poll (Tallinn)**

Finland: Otantatutkimus Oy (Helsinki)

**France: Optem (Gambais)**

**Greece: Focus Bari (Athens)**

**Hungary: PSYMA (Budapest)**

**Irland: Behaviour and Attitudes (Dublin)**

**Italy: Periscope (Milan)**

**Latvia: Latvian Facts (Riga)**

Lituania: Baltic Surveys (Vilnius)

Luxembourg: Quest (Luxembourg)

**Malta: Misco International (La Valette)**

**Netherlands: True Research (Amsterdam)**

**Poland: BSM (Warsaw)**

Portugal: Consulmark (Lisbonne)

**Romania: Data Media (Bucarest)**

Slovakia: Pymareco (Bratislava)

Slovenia (et Croatia): RM Plus (Maribor)

**Spain: PSYMA (Madrid et Barcelona)**

**Sweden: Kommunikera (Stockholm)**

**United-Kingdom: Andrew Irving Marketing Research (London)**

The network also counts members in the Turkish side of Cyprus, in Turkey and in EFTA countries associated to some EU policies (Norway, Island, Switzerland - Liechtenstein is covered by our Austrian partner). It has also correspondents in the other candidate countries and potential candidate countries to the European Union.

**Financial and editorial partners to design and fund the project:** foundations and actors involved in active citizenship (see below): Fondation Evens (Belgium), Fondation Charles Leopold Mayer (Switzerland), Fondation Hippocrène (France), Allianz Kulturstiftung (Germany) and La Macif (France).

**Events partners to complement the implementation of the project** (participation and mobilisation for public events in Stages 2 and 3, dissemination of the summaries, etc.): actors and NGOs specialised in popular education and citizen involvement, including Europuls (Romania), Centro di studi sul federalismo (Italy), Demos Europa (Poland), Diktyo (Greece), European Movement International (Belgium), CIDOB (Spain).

**Media partners:** to be defined.

A **steering committee** comprising all of the partners will be set up

## **2 - A Project in Three Stages**

Considerations above have prompted us to devise a project whose implementation rests on three cumulative stages.

## Stage 1 - Access

### Developing one's civic competence in a horizontal mode

#### Month 1 > Month 6

The development of civic competences in relation to the EU can powerfully urge European citizens to actively participate in the public debate on Europe. To be effective, this development of civic competences must be fostered in a horizontal mode, in other words based on relationships established between European citizens of same level, rather than in a vertical mode - citizen-Brussels or member state-Brussels.

This horizontal approach will be based on the identification of representative groups of about 8 citizens, thanks to our Management partner OPTEM, taken from the following 18 member states

- France,
- Germany,
- United-Kingdom,
- Spain,
- Sweden,
- The Netherland,
- Austria,
- Ireland,
- Greece,
- Italy,
- Poland,
- Czech Republic,
- Hungary,
- Estonia,
- Latvia,
- Cyprus,
- Bulgaria,
- Romania.

These countries are also representative of the EU. France, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom and Spain are both representing old and large member states in their diversity, with the driving Franco-German tandem, Italy which is an economic power in difficulty, the Eurosceptic United-Kingdom and Spain which is under a program. Medium and prosperous countries are represented by Sweden, Austria and the Netherlands. Ireland is a medium country which has been roughly hit by the crisis, but which begins to recover. Greece represents medium countries in great difficulty. Poland is there as a large country which joined the EU recently, as Czech Republic and Hungary which are furthermore Eurosceptic. Estonia and Latvia stand for Baltic countries which have feared the EU for long, but which are now opening up more and more. Cyprus embodies the insular South. Lastly, Romania and Bulgaria are the last countries entered in the EU; and if the former was rather pro-European but is now drifting away slowly, the later experiences the opposite process.

In the end, 144 citizens will be directly involved in the first stage of the project.

The horizontal approach will also be implemented in two phases, first through discussions among citizens from a same country ("national discussions"), and subsequently by giving the observations and recommendations formulated by the other countries' citizens to all of the groups ("European contacts").

### 1.1. "National Discussions" (Month 1 > Month 3)

- Group discussions will be conducted :
  - In the introductory phase, about form issues, with a first question: "How can you be heard at the European level?"; if necessary, with a mid-phase relaunch: "What should be done to allow you to have a greater say in European affairs?";
  - In a second phase, about core issues, with the question: "On which issues would you like to be heard by the EU?".
- At the end of the discussions, each group will designate three members to represent them in the second and third stages of the project, which suppose their availability to travel to Brussels for two days and to further discuss later their experience in public meetings in their own country.
- The partners will provide summaries and send them to NE-IJD for the production of an overall summary assessing the level of knowledge concerning access to the EU, recommendations to improve that access, and points of convergence and divergence regarding opinions about the EU. The national and overall summaries will be submitted to the European Commission.

**See Appendix 1: Discussion guide "Horizon EU" (p9)**

### 1.2. "European Contacts" (Month 4 > Month 6)

- The institutes that have conducted the group discussions will provide simplified national summaries with a translation into citizens' mother tongues; the summaries will be distributed to all of the citizen groups involved so that they can be apprised of the positions and expressions used by citizens from other countries related to a common issue.
- The overall summary produced by NE-IJD will be translated and distributed to the citizens of the national discussion groups.
- In addition, national summaries presenting the means of access to the EU for the countries involved will be distributed. The highlight will be put on new technologies: institutional and media websites and blogs, e-mail addresses of European and national parliamentarians, ministries and regional authorities, websites and electronic contact information for "local contact points" (EDIC, EDC, Team Europe), European "civic" social networks and so on.

- Diffusion of the national and overall summaries to European citizens through the creation of a Facebook page entitled "European Horizon" and a Twitter account to take advantage of the "horizontal" impact of diffusion through social network. The page and the account will gradually host all of the elements (texts, videos, sound, etc.) necessary to relay the inputs from the citizens mobilised, to advertise public meetings, to gather comments and reactions from interested internet users and so on; and it will enable to extend the debate and the formulation of recommendations far beyond the duration of the project proper.

## Stage 2 - Exchanges

### Exercising its civic competences in a European framework

#### Month 7 > Month 8

Three representatives from each national group, that is 54 citizens, will be invited to Brussels to exercise their civic competences actively : the first day ("European Discussions") will be devoted to an exchange amongst them, once again in a horizontal mode, so that they can get to know each other and forge a group dynamic; the second day ("European Debates") will be devoted to a direct exchange with a number of representatives of the European institutions, attended by a broader audience (partner-intermediaries and the public).

#### 2.1. "European Discussions" (Day 1)

- Discussions with two representatives of each group set up in Phase 1 (or 54 people) under the lead of the OPTEM director.

**1<sup>st</sup> discussion** about core issues on the basis of a question such as: "What messages would you like to address to the representatives of the European institutions you are meeting?". On this basis, the group of citizens will draft a list of themes and issues that they will address the following day.

**2<sup>nd</sup> discussion** about for issues on the basis of a question such as: "Out of all the possible means of access to the EU, which one do you consider to be the most effective?" This, followed if necessary by a relaunch like: "What tools should be favoured to allow the Europeans to participate more effectively?". The presentation notes from these discussions will be revised regarding the opinion of the citizens gathered.

- OPTEM director will produce a summary of the discussions.
- In parallel, individual statements (video and/or sound) will be taken from the involved citizens regarding access to the EU and the lessons learnt from this experience, including recommendations.

#### 2.2. "European Debates" (Day 2)

- A series of debates will be held with representatives of European institutions (Commission, European Parliament, Council, European Council, ECB, EESC, etc.) so that the group of

citizens can voice their expectations and recommendations themselves while acquiring a more accurate perception of the various powers and interests represented in Brussels.

- Secondly, the debates will be opened to the audience, composed of representatives of our event partners, meaning associations, NGOs and opinion multipliers from European civil society, so as to multiply the impact of this participatory experience (or from 150 to 200 additional participants). These debates with the European institutions will also be broadcast in streaming so as to expand even more the audience involved (the videos will be put on line on social networks later on).
- NE-IJD will write a summary of the discussions.

### **Stage 3 - Involvement**

#### **Encouraging Europe's citizens to develop and to exercise their competence**

#### **Month 9 > Month 12**

The third stage will be geared to use the earlier observations and recommendations voiced by the citizens, but also to highlight the example of citizens' direct involvement, in an attempt to stimulate active European citizenship. It will be implemented via parallel steps towards the two actors involved in the dialogue, the European and national institutions ("Institutional Recommendations") on the one hand, and the public ("Citizens' Suggestions") on the other hand.

#### **3.1. "Institutional Recommendations"**

The following documents will be sent to the European Commission, the European and national institutions represented in the European debates in Stage 2 as well as all the European and national actors involved:

- Summaries of the European discussions and debates of Stage 2.
- A note from NE-IJD summarising all of the impressions and recommendations formulated by the citizens during their national and European groups discussions regarding access to the EU on the one hand, and the EU's decisions and guidelines on the other hand.
- A note from NE-IJD summarising the lessons learnt from the project and formulating suggestions to the European and national institutions to encourage active European citizenship.

More direct contacts between project managers and institutional authorities involved (in particular the European Commission and Parliament) will be organised on that basis.

### 3.2. "Citizens' Incentives"

Highlighting the participants' inputs will persuade a larger number of citizens to play a more active role in the European public debate. Furthermore, the use of non-institutional carriers will make it easier to reach a broader and non-expert audience.

- **Diffusion of the project and its results** (national and overall summaries, etc.) on the Facebook page and the Twitter account.
- The citizens' **individual inputs** gathered in Stage 2 will be distributed to the citizens who took part in Stage 1 and via the websites and networks of the partners (and of course via the dedicated Facebook page and Twitter account).
- **Public debates and meetings** will be organised with volunteer citizens speak about their experiences (at least one meeting in each of the fifteen countries involved in Stage 1, but also in the other thirteen). On the occasion of these debates, the revised presentation notes listing all of the means of access to the EU on a country-by-country basis, highlighting electronic access means, will be distributed.



**APPENDIX 1: DISCUSSION GUIDE “HORIZON EU”**

**QUALITATIVE STUDY ON CITIZENS' INVOLVEMENT  
IN THE EUROPEAN UNION**  
(November 2013)

**RESEARCH INSTRUCTIONS**

**GENERAL SET UP**

This study covers 18 of the EU Member States (larger and smaller, to the North, West, East and South of the continent, older and more recent Member States, countries with different levels of economic development, countries traditionally more or less euro favourable or euroreluctant...).

It is based on one group discussion in each of the countries involved.

Each group should comprise 8 to 9 respondents, 3 of whom will be selected for a 2-day meeting in Brussels next Spring.

The programme of that event will include discussions between citizens of the different Member States who will be able to compare their own views with those from the other countries.

They will also be given the opportunity to meet with various EU officials (e.g. Members of the European Parliament, representatives from the European Commission, experts of European affairs, etc.), in the aim both of getting better acquainted with how the EU works and what it does, to express their views and their wishes/demands as citizens and to discuss these matters with these officials.

The recruited respondents should thus agree in advance to participate in that event should they be the ones selected (the selection process will see to it that differing respondent profiles and differing opinions voiced in the group discussions are represented in Brussels).

Travel, accomodation, meals and other expenses will be paid for by the organisers.  
Translation will be provided all through.

## RECRUITMENT CRITERIA

The groups should comprise 8 to 9 respondents, whose composition should be as follows:

- By sex: 4-5 women and 4-5 men.
- By age: balanced composition between 3 age categories between 20 and 60 years (ideal distribution: 3 aged 20-34; 3 aged 35-49; 2-3 aged 50-60).
- By social level: 4-5 mid-low level (typically 2 manual workers; 2-3 non managerial office employees) and 4-5 mid-high level (typically 2-3 middle management / professionals working as salaried employees in either the public or the private sector; 1 higher level executive or member of a liberal profession; 1 shop owner or self-employed craftsman).

NB: the criterion to be used is profession of the head of household rather than that of the respondent (although of course they can be the same person; but you may also recruit a non-working housewives whose husband / partner fits with the profession criterion).

In the case of someone who is retired or otherwise no longer part of the active population, his / her earlier profession is the criterion to be used.

It can be seen that we exclude extreme situations (either very prosperous or very underprivileged).

- According to political preference, please see to it that your group composition is reasonably balanced in comparison with the average population of your country.

The way of getting that assurance can vary between different countries and is left to each partner's appreciation (it could be a screening question asking to rate between 0 and 10 one's own perceived proximity with the x main political parties - just taking one example).

- Professions (or earlier professions) excluded: marketing and opinion research, marketing, advertising / corporate communication, journalism, and of course politics.

## **DISCUSSION TOPICS**

The discussion guide is finalized; it is available in both English and French language versions.

The main objective of the study is to understand how the average Europeans represented in the groups could become better informed about EU affairs and could become more involved as citizens.

The first introductory discussion themes should thus be kept rather short.

We suggest the following (approximate) distribution of the 90 minutes of discussion between the 6 Themes:

Theme 1: 10 min

Theme 2: 10 min

Theme 3: 15-20 min

Theme 4: 10-15 min

Theme 5: 15 min

Theme 6: 25 min

## **REPORT STRUCTURE**

All country reports should have the same structure.

OPTEM will design a template to be communicated to all partners following the first group discussions.

**QUALITATIVE STUDY ON CITIZENS' INVOLVEMENT  
IN THE EUROPEAN UNION**  
(November 2013)

**DISCUSSION GUIDE**

(INTRODUCTION: Ask each participant to introduce him(her)self with a few words, by saying who he(she) is and what he(she) does, etc.)

**THEME 1**

We are here together today to talk about the European Union.  
Could you please tell me what first comes to your mind about the EU ?

- Spontaneous reactions
- Probe:
  - Nature of topics spontaneously mentioned about the EU
  - Positive and negative aspects related to the EU
  - Degree of initial interest and involvement of the respondents in EU related issues

**THEME 2**

Now, regarding what you know and what you think about the EU: where does that come from ?  
From what sources do you get information or do you hear opinions about the EU - taking the word "sources" in the widest sense, ranging from official information sources to informal conversations with friends or other people... ?

- Spontaneous reactions
- Probe:
  - Degree of diversity of the sources mentioned
  - Nature of (information) inputs from each one
  - Interest / credibility of each one

### THEME 3

Let us now discuss more specifically the future of the European Union and questions you may ask yourselves in that respect.

There are probably certain aspects which you regard as important and you would like to know and understand better as regards the way the EU works and the directions it takes - as you may not get all the information you would like to get from the sources you have mentioned earlier.

What aspects would you particularly wish to know more about ?

- Spontaneous reactions

- Probe:

- General impressions of having a good or a poor degree of knowledge / understanding of these issues
- Perception of major challenges for the EU in the coming years
- Expressions by respondents of a need for better knowledge and understanding - on what subjects more particularly ? In what is the information currently available on these subjects not satisfactory ?

### THEME 4

As a citizen, you should be able to give your opinion and to have your voice heard as regards future directions of the European Union - whether to approve or to disapprove such or such a direction, or for any other reason..

How can you do that today ?

- Spontaneous reactions

- Probe:

- Perceived ease / difficulty to express oneself and to have one's voice heard on EU related issues - by what means ?
- Perceived reasons why it is difficult
- Specific subjects on which respondents would particularly wish to give their opinion and to be listened to as citizens; expectations in that respect.

### THEME 5

One may think of various means by which European citizens like us could have their voice heard. Let me propose to try and think of any possible means, just letting our imagination run, without giving up an idea even if we do not know for the moment how it could be implemented in practice.

What could we imagine ?

- Spontaneous reactions

- Stimulate the group's' creativity by encouraging respondents to "jump" from one idea to another

## THEME 6

I am now going to submit to you various ideas that have been put forward, of means that could be put in place to allow citizens to have their voice better heard on EU related issues. I will ask you what you think of each one.

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- Make the respondents react to each proposition in turn, asking them about their degree of interest for each one and reasons thereof

A- An information service on the functioning of the EU and EU policies, comprising an information office open for the public in every large city, a web site, and a service quickly answering any questions asked by telephone, mail or email.

B- Debates to be organised in major media between average citizens and experts of EU issues on the directions taken by the EU.

C- Opinion polls on the EU organised regularly in the whole of Europe, allowing citizens to know both what their fellow countrymen and what the citizens of the other countries think.

D- The possibility, given several times per year, to meet with your Members of the European Parliament or other EU politicians in the vicinity of where you live.

E- Consultations through the Internet organised by the European Commission whenever major decisions have to be taken in the EU, open to all citizens.

F- Similar consultations, organised by our national government.

G- An interactive service using the Internet and social networks, to collect on a permanent basis citizens' views, wishes or criticisms on directions taken by the EU.

H- Information campaigns to be developed much more actively than in past years, in order to encourage citizens to involve themselves in the debates that are to take place and to take part in the coming election of Members of the European Parliament next Spring.

Thank you again for coming to participate in this discussion.

If other ideas cross your mind following the discussion, do not hesitate to let us know (Communicate a relevant email address which the respondents can use for that purpose)