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Title: European capacities for citizen deliberation and participation for the Green Deal

Collective level action

Specific Challenge

All areas of the Green Deal, from climate action to zero pollution, require citizens' active support at all stages of the transitions. Workable solutions, accepted and taken-up at scale, can only be found through the active participation of all concerned. This is particularly the case of complex issues with diverging views or interests at stake, such as the rural-urban gap, attitudes to the bio-economy, water management, the choice of energy sources, etc. Such issues can best be addressed through participatory processes involving citizens from different cross-sections of society across Europe. The Conference on the Future of Europe has further heightened awareness of the need for participatory processes and raised expectations in this respect. Strong expectations of citizen participation have also been raised in the context of Horizon Europe preparation, in particular for Horizon Europe Missions, which will be highly relevant to the Green Deal.

Such processes may include a large spectrum of co-creation activities and events based on dialogue and information exchange. Modalities of participatory processes differ according to goals and expected outcomes, from harnessing diversity of knowledge, expectations and views in order to improve knowledge quality and enrich the inputs to policy discussions; up to creating 'mini-publics' in order to extend the arenas of public discussion and improve the representativeness of policy decisions.

Participatory processes in general and citizen deliberation in particular, require different levels of expertise, as well as upfront clarification of ethical and methodological principles and a clear commitment on the side of institutions about the processes' outcomes. Successful experiences have been led at European, national and local levels, which would gain to be expanded, structured and scaled. Moreover, such actions should be accompanied by comparative research and feedback to ensure continuous monitoring, evaluation and learning.

Scope

This topic covers citizen deliberation and participation. Projects retained will establish transnational networks of experts, researchers, practitioners and relevant civil society organisations specialised on deliberative democracy and civic participation across Europe, including professionals in the field of public engagement. Experts on gender equality and climate justice should also be included. They will share good practice, tools and resources and implement participatory and deliberation processes on priority issues in order to deliver on the Green Deal, both at the level of local communities and at wider scale. They should establish connection across the diverse participation and deliberation processes across regions and countries up to the European level. They should build on already existing networks, experience and tools, notably stemming from EU-funded projects such as the RRI Tools platform.

Provision will be made for [x] deliberative processes, each of them implemented in an average of [y] Member States or associated countries and complemented by a European online multilingual deliberative platform. Specific topics for deliberation will be co-decided with the EC services involved in implementing the Green Deal. They will support major EU actions where public participation is key, including but not limited to Horizon Europe Missions, in close cooperation with the respective mission boards, and other R&I initiatives.

A balanced overall coverage of EU and associated countries will be sought. Vulnerable and marginalised categories of the population, minorities and various age groups, including both youth and the elder generation, as well as both urban and rural areas, will be considered and included. Gender balance will be ensured and gendered issues will receive specific consideration.

National and local governments and administrations will be closely associated, including, to the extent possible, links with existing debates and participatory processes at their levels. Clear channels for the take-up of participatory outcomes in decision making processes will be sought at local, national and/or EU levels and feedback to citizens will be ensured.

Participatory experts will design methodologies for each individual exercise, relying on comparative analysis of international best practice and involving people or groups concerned. Depending on specific objectives, they may either ensure consistency across Member States for transnational comparability, or select a range of different methodologies to compare their effectiveness.

An advisory board will ensure the robustness, ethical and inclusive character of the planned deliberative processes and vet the methodologies and conditions of implementation of each individual exercise.

Research teams on participatory and deliberation processes will study each individual exercise, assess and compare their results across the Member States and provide feedback and recommendations.

Coordination and cooperation will be expected between funded projects under this topic and others of this area, since deliberation and participation are important factors for behaviour change and are closely related to citizen engagement and activism. This may encompass limiting features such as the advisory board to a single one to advise and ensure consistency across the projects, and/or the online platform to a single one to maximise its reach and impact.

Expected Impact

Projects under this topic will enable collective design and ownership of Green Deal objectives and means, engagement and change through citizen participation and deliberation processes. Consortia should choose a basket of indicators to measure the impact of their work. For example, they are expected to contribute to one or several of the Sustainable Development Goals¹.

Specific impacts include:

- Feeling of ownership and engagement through citizen deliberation and participation across Europe
- Enhanced involvement of citizens in the implementation of the European Green Deal and of the future Horizon Europe missions.
- Stronger trust in policy and science institutions among citizens on Green Deal issues.
- Long-term commitment and buy-in from a broad spectre of social groups across Europe to support the Green Deal targets in the long term and to engage in co-creation and co-implementation of transition pathways.

Action type: RIA

¹ <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>