



CIVISTI

**Collaborative project on Blue Sky Research on Emerging Issues
Affecting European S&T**



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Preface

The CIVISTI project is based on the concept that ordinary citizens have a valid contribution to make to the process of defining scientific research agendas. The project aims to develop and pilot a feasible and cost-effective process of citizen engagement through a series of consultations.

The project is financed by the European commission and involves seven different European countries (Denmark, Belgium, Malta, Hungary, Finland, Bulgaria and Austria).

The first consultation session in Malta was held on 13-14 June 2009, following a public call for citizens interested in participating in the process. The objective of this session was to develop and articulate a set of ten optimistic visions for the future, representing the concerns and aspirations of the ordinary citizen.

Similar consultations were held independently in each of the seven participating countries. In June 2010 the visions from each of these seven countries were presented at a workshop of international experts, who were asked to evaluate the visions and determine how best to turn them into actionable research priorities. The result was a list of thirty recommendations spanning a broad spectrum of topics from optimisation of urban space to worldwide collaboration on space travel.

On the 2nd of October 2010, the Maltese citizens panel reconvened to validate the recommendations derived from the Maltese visions, and to prioritise the recommendations prepared during the expert workshop.

Our gratitude and appreciation is extended to the Maltese citizens who participated in the consultation sessions, and who dedicated their time and energy to the success of this project.

1. Introduction

The second CIVISTI citizen consultation in Malta was held on Saturday the 2nd of October 2010. All citizens who participated in the first CIVISTI consultation were invited to attend, and were sent an information package with reading material so that they could prepare themselves for the second consultation.

For a variety of reasons, only nine out of the original group of 25 individuals could attend the session. A number of individuals had left the country, others had to work or were busy during the weekend.

As a result of the limited participation, the gender balance of the original group was lost with only one female participant in the second consultation. However, the group still included a good representation in terms of age and educational level of participants.

The project external evaluator, Alexander Kesselring from ZSI (Centre for Social Innovation) in Austria, was present for the Maltese consultation session and conducted a survey at the end of the event using the standard questionnaire used in all partner countries.

The Programme for the day is included as an appendix to this report.



2. Validation of Recommendations

2.1 Objective

During the first consultation session held in June 2009, the Maltese panel had defined ten visions for the future. Three of these visions were selected by the international expert panel in June 2010 and converted into actionable recommendations.

In this session the citizens were asked to evaluate the recommendations and assess the extent to which these were faithful to the original visions.

This chapter explains the process of the validation exercise and the results of this part of the consultation.

2.2 Visions and Recommendations

The three recommendations and related Maltese visions are reproduced below:

Recommendation 28. Worldwide collaboration on space technology.

The recommendation was based on Vision 60: Outer space exploration for future solution.

Summary of the recommendation

Encourage the establishment of a well-funded international collaboration project in the area of space travel and development of life-support on other planets. The ultimate ambitious objective is to develop the means to support human life on other planets.

Summary of the vision

Space travel and exploration may provide solutions to some of the gravest problems facing mankind, such as population explosion. Other planets might provide a new reserve of resources. It may be possible to communicate with intelligent life on other planets.

Recommendation 29. Project to explore global governance.

The recommendation was based on Vision 63: A brighter future – or just a dream?

Summary of the recommendation

Explore conditions for trans-national governance working for global justice and peace. Start looking at EU institutions in the first phase.

Summary of the vision

Poverty, conflict and injustice have been a challenge for mankind since the beginning of time, and it is sad to see that the more powerful nations are not sensitive enough to this. Existing and new technology can be leveraged to reduce hardship and improve the standard of living in general. We imagine a society living a more peaceful and less hectic lifestyle, in harmony with nature and with the environment.

Recommendation 30. Stimulate research on human-machine interfaces.

The recommendation was based on Vision 69: Natural access to ICT services everywhere!

Summary of the recommendation

Natural access to ICT services by all natural human communication channels and brain interface. First of all, unstructured data (gestures, video, language) should be pre-processed and then passed to the brain via brain interfaces that stimulate the interpretation of the original information, but do not replace it.

Summary of the vision

Technology has reached the point where it is generally possible to access information on the move. However, it is still necessary to make use of a device and screen (laptop, smartphone, etc.) to request and view the required information and services. The next step is to enhance the device so that it can be controlled by natural speech, and so that it can provide the requested information in auditory (in the case of text) or visual format (in the case of mages) without the user having to look at a screen. Furthermore, the access device should be miniaturised so that it can be worn or so that it can communicate directly with the brain.

2.3 Validation Process

The workshop participants were split into two groups, and each group was asked to review and discuss the three sets of visions and recommendations, one set at a time. The recommendations were to be assessed according to the three criteria listed below.

Following the group discussion, each participant filled in a form and assigned a score between 5 (highest) and 1 (lowest) for each criterion. Participants were requested to substantiate their score with comments.

The criteria and related scoring guidelines are as follows:

- **Faithfulness:** the degree to which the recommendation reflects the vision on which it is based (5=bullseye, 4=reflects strongly, 3=partly reflects, 2=reflects weakly, 1=does not reflect at all);
- **Effectiveness:** the degree to which the recommendation will contribute to the realisation of the vision (5=most important instrument, 4=one of important instruments, 3=may or may not be important, 2=will not contribute, 1=counter-productive);
- **Desirability:** the degree to which the recommendation is desirable (5=highly desirable, 4=partly desirable, 3=neutral, 2=partly undesirable, 1=undesirable).

2.4 Validation Results

Recommendation 28. Worldwide collaboration on space technology.

Faithfulness

This recommendation generated a lot of discussion, although this was related more to the wording of the original vision than to the actual recommendation. Some found the recommendation faithful to the vision, while most found it to be only partly so.



One participant remarked that the recommendation reflects only part of the vision, but this was a positive thing since the vision was too far-fetched to be credible.

Effectiveness

There was general agreement that the recommendation may or may not contribute to the realisation of the vision. However, this is not because the recommendation is not appropriate, but rather because some of the ideas mentioned in the vision (colonising other planets, resources from other planets) were so ambitious as to be almost unachievable.

Desirability

While most of the participants were in favour of the recommendation in principle, all agreed that it would be such an expensive undertaking that it would not be possible to justify allocating the required resources to such a project. It could not be considered as a high priority, since there are many more urgent areas where money needs to be invested. Some ventured that there is not enough knowledge about space to make it feasible to undertake such a project. One participant commented that if it was likely that the earth would become uninhabitable in the near future, then the recommendation could be considered a priority.

The table below summarises the allocation of scores by the different participants:

Score	5	4	3	2	1
Faithfulness	2	3	4	-	-
Effectiveness	1	1	7	-	-
Desirability	-	2	3	1	3

Recommendation 29. Project to explore global governance.

Faithfulness

There was unanimous agreement that the recommendation faithfully reflected the original vision. However, there were concerns that the recommendation was vague, and a more detailed and specific recommendation should have been articulated by the experts. Also, the original vision was expressed from a more emotional perspective.

Effectiveness

The group concluded that this recommendation is one of the most important actions required to

realize the vision, while expressing an appreciation of the difficulties of implementing the recommendation. Existing supranational organizations such as the United Nations have not always been able to act in an effective manner. The group suggested that the recommendation should have included specific recommendations such as, for example, youth exchange programmes which could serve to reduce prejudice and improve tolerance between different cultures.

Desirability

All participants agreed with the concept of transnational governance, while highlighting the importance of maintaining existing cultural diversity. It was agreed that a gradual approach should be taken, starting with regions having a similar culture and outlook. It was remarked that strengthening international cooperation is critical and that we cannot continue living without some sort of effective global governance.

The table below summarises the allocation of scores by the different participants:

Score	5	4	3	2	1
Faithfulness	2	6	-	1	-
Effectiveness	5	4	-	-	-
Desirability	7	2	-	-	-



Recommendation 30. Stimulate research on human-machine interfaces.

Faithfulness

Many of the participants expressed difficulty in finding a meaningful interpretation of the recommendation due to the use of the phrase ‘natural access to ICT services’, and could not understand what the word ‘natural’ meant in this context. Several remarked that the recommendation should have been worded more carefully. In spite of this, it was generally



agreed that the vision and the recommendations are quite similar in concept, although the recommendation is more limited in scope than the vision.

Effectiveness

Possibly because the recommendation was worded in a way which left it open to interpretation, there was an element of disagreement amongst the participants regarding effectiveness. Some felt that the proposed technology has already been implemented in some industries. Others maintained that the recommendation was too ambitious, and felt that communicating with the brain through natural impulse is a very far-fetched notion.

One individual maintained that there were better ways of implementing the vision, rather than what was specified in the recommendation.

Desirability

Most of the participants believe that the recommendation it is highly desirable and will lead to significant benefits for society in general. The technology could have very positive implications for those with special needs, and one participant went so far as to say that its use should be restricted to such cases.

However, many of the participants also expressed a fear that such technology could easily be misused and there were implications regarding privacy issues, and freedom of thought. It could open the way for manipulation in the way humans perceive reality. The phrase ‘unstructured data should be pre-processed and then passed to the brain’ caused particular concern.

The table below summarises the allocation of scores by the different participants:

Score	5	4	3	2	1
Faithfulness	-	5	2	2	-
Effectiveness	4	2	2	-	1
Desirability	4	3	1	1	

3. Prioritisation of Recommendations

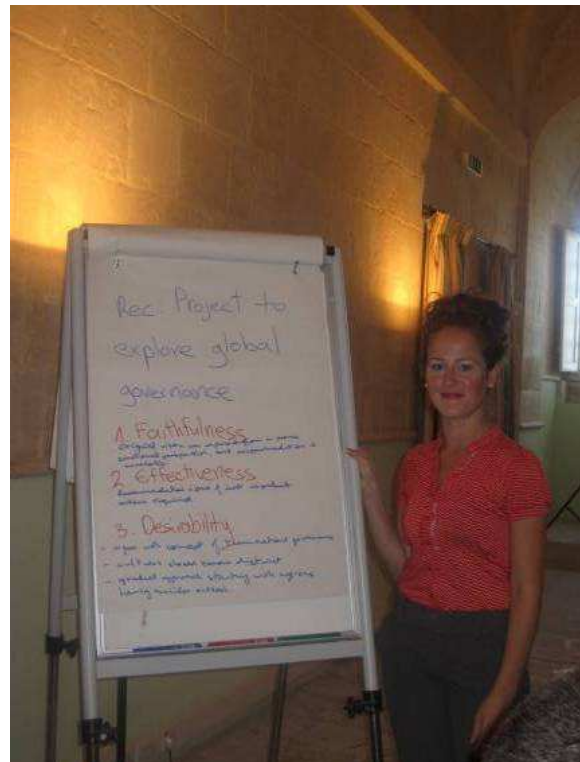
3.1 Objective

The objective of this part of the consultation session was to perform a prioritisation exercise on the 30 recommendations prepared by the international expert group. In order to safeguard against national bias, participants were not allowed to vote for the recommendations based on the three Maltese visions, leaving 27 recommendations to be prioritised.

3.2 Prioritisation Process

The facilitator briefly presented the 27 recommendations, following which participants were given some time to read their handouts which included a summary of each recommendation. The participants were each asked to deliberate privately and select their top seven recommendations.

For the prioritisation process, voting sheets displaying the 27 recommendations were distributed along the length of one table. Each participant was handed seven stickers to be used for voting for his or her seven preferred recommendations by putting a sticker against the recommendation.



3.3 Results

The results of the prioritisation exercise are presented below:

Recommendations		Votes
5	Foresight and research to explore sustainable options of decentralized energy production systems and the resolution of energy related conflicts	7
9	Optimization of urban space: towards dense European eco-cities	6
18	Promote technical and social innovations that can enhance people's access to and use of public transportation	6
12	Increase direct democracy through e-voting	5
20	Select or develop plants and techniques for areas with extreme climate conditions	5
2	Tools for disabled people	4
24	Go and re-appropriate countryside!	4
7	Stimulate research to expand/augment the human sensory capabilities	3
11	Research to overcome the tension between the use of highly complex materials in products and their recyclability	3
27	Encourage alumni work in corporate governance	3
1	Humanistic research to explore what dignity during the dying process means to contemporary Europeans	2
4	Plug and play communication: development of standards for smart gadgets	2
10	From CAP to European Agricultural policy: back to a gardening tradition	2
19	Develop avatars that are able to act as a remote physical representation of myself	2
22	Foster the use of biorefineries*	2
23	Project for Finnish best practices to be disseminated and used in other countries	2
25	European Integrated Policies of Sharing Work	2
8	Enhance the ethical reflection on science based organic and "bionic" production	1
16	Innovative participatory structures	1
17	Social innovations for aging societies are needed	1
3	European TV – unity in diversity. A permanent lab for experimentation on building and expressing identity (IdenTVLab)	0
6	A 'Platform of the future of work' at a local, regional and global level should be considered within upcoming calls of the SSH program*	0
13	Recognition policy	0
14	Develop Sofia into an eco-model for European capitals	0
15	Agreements with farmers organizations on avoiding antibiotics and hormones	0
21	Policies towards immigrants and refugees appreciation	0
26	Develop effective urban infrastructures supporting a multigenerational lifestyle	0

3.4 Plenary Discussion

After the votes were counted, the top five recommendations were presented to the participants and a discussion was held.

One of the participants questioned why citizens could not vote for recommendations based on the visions of their own country, however most of the other participants said that they agreed with this approach.

There was general consensus regarding **Recommendation 5** (Foresight and research to explore sustainable options of decentralised energy production systems). One participant expressed his satisfaction that this obtained top spot since he believes there is a pressing need for increased research on non-fossil fuel energy production.

There was some controversy regarding **Recommendation 9** (Optimization of urban space – towards dense European eco-cities) with some saying that this is important in the light of increasing population, and others opposing it on the basis that standardisation could result in loss of creativity.

Regarding **Recommendation 18** (Promote technical and social innovations that can enhance people's access to and use of public transportation) none were opposed to this since it is an important subject in the local context.

Some participants questioned the validity of **Recommendation 12** (Increased direct democracy through e-voting) on the basis that such systems already exist. Those in favour explained that the recommendation went far beyond what was available at present and proposed a system of widespread consultation on a variety of issues.

There was some discussion regarding **Recommendation 20** (Select or develop plants and techniques for areas with extreme climate conditions). Most considered this of crucial importance given the threat of climate change and the negative impact this might have on food production. On the other hand, one participant said he was fundamentally opposed to genetically modified organisms (GMO) and was therefore unable to support this proposal.

Annex A. Programme for the second citizen consultation meeting

**Saturday 2nd October 2010
Villa Bighi, Kalkara**

9.30 – 10.00	Arrival and coffee
10.0 – 10.20	Welcome and update <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What happened since our last meeting – expert/stakeholder workshop, assessment of visions, formulation of recommendations taking into account• Introduction to the purpose of this meeting.
10.20 – 11.00	Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation of the expert-stakeholder workshop• Presentation of the programme by facilitator• Questions
11.00 – 12.30	Validation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation of the 3 recommendations developed from the selected Maltese visions• Validation of these recommendations
12.30 – 13.00	Presentation of validations
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch
14.00 – 16.30	Prioritisation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prioritisation of the 30 recommendations of CIVISTI project: which recommendations do citizens find most important for their future?
16.30 – 17.00	Presentation and review of the results <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation and review of the results• Information on the further process.