

CIVISTI

Citizen Visions on Science, Technology and Innovation.

*What kind of **problems** will Europe need to solve in the future? What are the **societal characteristics** we wish Europe to have in the future? What kind of **goals** should we set for the development of the European community? These and many more questions will be tackled at 2 citizens consultations in 7 different European countries during the Civisti project.*

Project description

The Civisti project will give citizens from 7 different European countries (Denmark, Austria, Flanders/Belgium, Finland, Malta, Bulgaria, Hungary) an opportunity to define and communicate their visions of the future and transform these into relevant long-term science, technology and innovation issues.

The goal of the project

The CIVISTI project is based upon the idea that **the process of defining relevant and proactive research agendas could in many respects gain from consultation of citizens.**

Our societies are changing rapidly as a consequence of globalisation, new technologies, multi-cultural societies, media developments, environmental and climate challenges, new energy futures, increasing welfare and consumption, etc. Developments, which all involve an interface between science, technology and society. Linked to these developments, issues arise about societal management of the involved needs and uncertainties – for society as well as for the individual. The citizens are the carriers of the concerns and expectations to the future, and with the right facilitating methods, such concerns and expectations can be collected and transformed into relevant research agendas.

In short, CIVISTI will

- Produce a list of new and emerging issues for European S&T
- Produce a set of policy options of relevance to future European framework programmes
- Base these products upon a novel process of citizen participation in seven member states, supported by the analytical capacity of experts and stakeholders.

Method

CIVISTI will set up citizen panels in seven European countries and uncover their visions, wishes and concerns for the future through a process of deliberation, informed by introduction material and expert and stakeholder input. Deliberations will be organized around a set of questions structured by two equally important perspectives:

1. What kind of challenges do citizens expect from the future, and what kind of research is needed to meet those challenges (explorative perspective)?
2. What kind of visions and wishes for the future should guide the European research agenda (normative perspective)?

Possible questions in the process could be:

- What kind of **problems** will Europe need to solve in the future
- What would be the most important but yet uncovered **needs** in terms of services and goods?
- What kind of **conflicts** will dominate in the future – on macro as well as on micro level?
- How will social **coherence** be challenged or stimulated in the future?
- What will be the main challenges for social, economic and environmental **sustainability** in the long run?
- Which kinds of '**readiness**' does our European community need to build up?
- Which specific **strengths and opportunities** will/should Europe have in the future?
- What are the **societal characteristics** we wish Europe to have in the future?
- What kind of **goals** should we set for the development of the European community?

Why European citizen consultation?

Citizen consultation adds to other forms of analysis in several unique ways:

- Citizens carry a democratic credibility into the analysis, which is intuitively acknowledged by political decision-makers.
- The knowledgebase becomes more relevant, when the scientific approaches are supplemented with daily life experience and 'tacit knowledge'
- Citizens are independent of the direct interests often involved in science and technology issues, which adds to the credibility of the process, and makes a more objective analysis possible.
- Citizen consultation often leads to results, which are recognised as potentially socially robust. The citizen includes the societal 'frictions' in their considerations, which makes them relevant in proactive policy-making.
- The complexity of the issue is most often embraced very well through citizen consultation processes, which may be explained by the fact that the citizens tend to look at the issue from the context viewpoint – instead of the other way around.
- Citizens can play a role comparable to the jury in the courtroom – in order to convince them, the actors will have to put forward their arguments, which adds to the transparency of the analytical process.
- Citizen consultation broadens the knowledgebase and makes the

Objectives of CIVISTI

The results of CIVISTI will be directly related to the objectives of the Blue Sky Research call within the FP7 Science in Society Programme.

First, the project will make a long-term **view into the needs, concerns and visions** of and to the future. Citizens in seven European member states, who will be prompted in a structured way to consider different aspects of the future, will make these visions. The prompting of the citizens will encourage views on the future, which are new or not generally recognised as policy issues. The visions

will in themselves be a result, since they will represent trends of relevance to S&T in the future.

Secondly, a process involving experts and stakeholders will use an analytical model to extract the new S&T agendas from the visions of the citizens. The R&D issues will relate to scientific disciplines and technological development, and/or complex trans-disciplinary challenges. This will result in **an overview of potential new areas for S&T, including an overview of policy options.**

Thirdly, the citizens will be consulted again to validate and prioritise the new S&T agendas and policy options. The result will be **a set of S&T issues and recommendations, which the citizens find most important for their future, and which can directly be fed into the processes of defining FP8.**

Fourth, CIVISTI will contribute to the **expansion of the European foresight capacity.** The aspect of citizen consultation is expected to attract attention from scientific areas – such as policy sciences, study of democracy, ethics and philosophy – who has not yet been generally aware of the developments in foresight. The results of CIVISTI, including the methodological approach and experience, will be actively disseminated to the scientific community as well as to the relevant policy-making institutions, which will support the attention towards forward looking studies.

Fifth, **a new concept for citizen participation on long-term foresight will be established in CIVISTI.** This highly innovative methodological approach will be characterised by being very cost-effective – as compared to existing experience of cross-European citizen participation. Potentially, the method will make it possible to execute citizen consultations across all member states at a price, which has not yet been inside reach. An important reason for this is the innovative use of an on-line Content Coordination Tool, which binds the activities together across nations and across the project phases.

Sixth, CIVISTI will **include new researchers** into forward-looking studies by including partners and participants, who are new or have limited experience with foresight and foresight-like activities, including an SME in the area of opinion analysis. These partners will gain experience into methodological set-up of forward-looking studies as well as into the coordinated execution of such activities at a trans-national level.

Presentation of the project

The CIVISTI project is **aimed at S&T policies at the European level.**

A **policy workshop** will be arranged at the end of the project (January 2011) to give opportunities for the potential users of the results to discuss the results, conclusions and policy options made by CIVISTI. The workshop is specifically aimed at policy-makers in S&T planning in Europe, including the European Parliament (STOA and ITRE), and will take place in Brussels.

Project organisation

The project consortium has 7 partners from 7 different European countries and is co-ordinated by the Danish Board of Technology (DBT)

Partners:

Denmark	Teknologiraadet – The Danish Board of Technology	DBT	www.tekno.dk
Finland	National Consumer Research Centre	NCRC	www.kuluttajatutkimuskeskus.fi/?l=en
Belgium	Vlaams Instituut voor Wetenschappelijk en Technologisch Aspectenonderzoek	viWTA	www.viwta.be/
Malta	Malta Council for Science and Technology	MCST	www.mcst.org.mt/
Bulgaria	Applied Research and Communication Fund	ARC Fund	www.arcfund.net/index.php
Hungary	Medián Opinion and Market Research Institute	Median	www.median.hu
Austria	Austrian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Technology Assessment	OeAW-ITA	www.oeaw.ac.at/ita/

Time schedule

May-June 2009 (16/5/09 -28/6/09):	First national Citizen Consultations
March 2010 (23/3/10-26/3/10):	Expert/Stakeholder workshop
October 2010 (1/10/10-24/10/10): Consultations	Second national Citizen
January 2011 (24-26/1/11):	Policy workshop, Brussels