



Cross-European Project under the European Commission's Seventh Framework Programme for European Research



Citizen visions catalogue – Flanders (Belgium)

**Visions developed on the 16th and 17th of May 2009
Flemish Parliament, Brussels**



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Preface

During the weekend of 16-17 May 2009, the Institute Society and Technology of the Flemish Parliament organized the first citizen panel within the framework of the trans-European CIVISTI project.

The CIVISTI project resulted from the idea that citizen consultations are valuable tools to identify new relevant research topics. By listening to citizen's concerns and expectations for future developments in the fields of science, technology and innovation, policy makers are given the opportunity to match the European research agenda to emerging issues among the public.

The CIVISTI project is financed by the European commission and involves seven different European countries (Denmark, Flanders (Belgium), Malta, Hungary, Finland, Bulgaria and Austria). In each country, the citizen panel is prompted in a structured way to develop their own visions and concerns for the future. These visions will be combined with corresponding visions from citizen panels in the 6 other countries and evaluated by a group of experts and stakeholders from the perspective of the European research programme. By analyzing these citizen suggestions, the expert panel will identify potential new research areas in science and technology.

In the Autumn of 2010, the citizen panels will reassemble to comment and validate the conclusions of the experts. Here after, the project results will be handed over to the European commission at the turn of the year 2010/2011.

A total of 21 Flemish citizens volunteered to share their visions and fears with regards to the future. This catalogue presents the outcome of the citizen panel unedited.

We would like to thank the participants, whose input is of great importance for the success of the CIVISTI project, for their enthusiasm and cooperation.

Institute Society and Technology

CIVISTI project

Objectives

The CIVISTI project will make a long-term view into the needs, concerns and visions of European citizens towards the future and translate that view into potential relevant research topics in the field of science and technology.

By using an innovative concept for citizen consultation backed by technical insights of experts and stakeholders, the CIVISTI project will generate:

- a list of potential topics for European science and technology in a 30-40 year perspective
- suggestions for EU's future framework programmes

and hereby stimulate the dialogue between citizens, experts and policy makers.

Citizen panels

During the citizen consultation weekend, the citizen panel was stimulated to uncover their own wishes, visions and concerns for the future in relation to family, society as a whole or Europe. The visions generated during the CIVISTI citizen consultations all express how the citizens imagine the world to be within 30 or 40 years. In the scope of the CIVISTI project, a vision is not a prediction of the future, but an image or idea of a desired future. A vision can be based upon hopes and dreams but also on concerns and fears in relation to threats that we do not wish to see fulfilled.

Methodology

The Institute Society and Technology was responsible for the design of a CIVISTI magazine in which various opinions and perspectives on the future were presented. The writing of the magazine was done by Maya Van Leemput, and based on horizon scanning reports and interviews with experts and stakeholders. The CIVISTI magazine was translated into the different languages of the seven member states involved in the project and sent to the participants prior to the citizen panels. By doing so, all citizens were provided with a common knowledge base for the consultation. The citizens were also stimulated to screen papers and magazines for articles covering all sorts of topics on future science and technology.

During the citizen consultation, the participants were guided in a stepwise approach towards the formulation of their own visions on the future. First, by looking back at technological developments in history, the citizen panel was made aware of the velocity by which technological changes occur. This was followed by a brainstorm session on changes that could develop between now and 35 years later. Additional information material was supplemented by movies, books and magazines. The citizens were motivated to formulate their hopes and nightmares on the status of society and Europe in 35-40 years. Each group then voted for their most important vision and discussed the content, the benefits and drawbacks of that vision. The eight visions were gathered into a citizen visions catalogue.

All deliberations were organized around a set of questions covering the following two perspectives:

- what kind of challenges do citizens expect from the future and what kind of research is need to meet these?
- what kind of visions and wishes for the future must guide the European research agenda?

By organizing the citizen panels in a standardized manner, results from the different national panels can be compared. During May and June 2009, all partners held their first citizen consultation and gathered the visions into a catalogue. These citizen vision catalogues will be translated and collected in a shared vision catalogue.

Why European citizen consultations?

Citizen participation may add several qualities to future-oriented policy analysis:

- the addition of daily experience and “hidden knowledge” to scientific approaches widens the knowledge base
- citizens provide a more objective analysis of science and technology issues, independent of direct economic interests
- by implementing experiences from work and everyday life into their opinions on future needs in the areas of science and technology, citizens consultations provide socially robust results
- citizen consultations contribute to the transparency of the policy-making process

Flemish CIVISTI citizen panel

Recruitment

For the selection of the Flemish citizen panel, the Institute Society and Technology consulted the online research bureau Ivox, specialised in mark research and panel services to recruit the citizens. A random selection of 7000 citizens between the ages of 18 and 75, residing all over Flanders, received a letter containing information about the CIVISTI project and the terms of participation. From the 7000 invitees, 50 citizens wished to participate. From this pool of interested citizens, 25 citizens were selected assuring the panel's diversity with regard to age, gender, education and occupation. Unfortunately, 4 of them cancelled their participation at the day of the citizen consultation, leaving no time to replace them.

Composition

Name	Gender	Age	City/Village
Sandra Jansen	F	22	Peer
Daisy Kusseneers	F	24	Hoboken
Marijke Dewitte	F	24	Wellen
Sven Van Der Cruyssen	M	26	Laarne
Tom Laperre	M	29	Stekene
Nancy Hellemans	F	41	Hemiksem
Patrick Smeulders	M	42	Sint Job in 't Goor
Rika Seynaeve	F	42	Zwevegem
Nico Laridon	M	47	Vlissegem
Ruud van den Esker	M	47	Houthalen
Rudi Adriaensen	M	49	Schoten
Carina Steylaerts	F	49	Lier
Danielle Brepoels	F	56	Bilzen
Vicky Bohor	F	58	Gent
Heidi Verbeeck	F	60	Kapellen
Guy Dumont	M	62	Zwalm
Nicole Brehmen	F	63	Tienen
Jozef De Schepper	M	68	Gent
Marie-Louise Vandenbergh	F	75	Hasselt
Guido Wolff	M	56	Mariakerke
Glenn Gorrebeeck	M	34	Kontich
Dirk Vander Eeckt	M	37	Buizingen
Daniel Schrijvers	M	52	Berchem
Gwendoline Dubbeldam	F	42	Antwerpen
Paul De Lauw	M	58	Hoboken

Unfortunately, Nicole Brehmen had to cancel due to illness. Gwendoline Dubbeldam, Carina Steylaerts and Nancy Hellemans cancelled too for unknown reasons.

Staff of the Institute Society and Technology

Els van den Cruyce
Lieve Van Damme
Lanckriet Anouk
Robby Berloznik

Facilitators

Pantopicon

- Michaël Van Lieshout
- Nicole Rijkens-Klomp

Visions of the citizens

Vision 1: Smart society (digitizing world, smart environment)

Description

Some examples of what a smart environment can consist of are *on demand* cars, refrigerators which let you know when something is finished and has to be reordered, etc. Or think of a bracelet with a chip that contains all your personal data (ID card, social security information, ...) but also allows you to pay, to surf on the internet, that interacts with radio and television and connects with all the support you need from teachers, social assistant, psychologist, doctors... You can use your bracelet to order something, to fill the bath while you're still at work or in your car, to start preparing your meal or to put on the lights by the time that you will come home.

This basic equipment is affordable. For privacy reasons, everybody has an individual password, but the access to the smart environment can also be controlled on the basis of a fingerprint or iris scan.

The bracelet has solar cells to charge its battery.

Cloths have chips integrated that measure the heartbeat and monitor the respiration, in order to prevent the family doctor of possible problems

Impression of a typical day according to this vision:

The wake-up lamp goes on, the coffee-maker starts and the lights switch on. The wardrobe proposes a selection of clothes in accordance with the weather forecast. The car automatically brings you to the programmed location. In your company, the warehouseman doesn't actually drive the forklift truck but uses a PC to store all the goods in the right place. When you come back home, the bath is filled. The lights in the living room switch on. While you bath the children, a program is started to cook dinner. Everything is automatically taken out of the fridge and warmed up.

Benefits and positive rewards of this vision:

By bringing more user comfort, the smart environment creates more leisure time and provides more support. A life without stress will be the result!

Negative repercussions of this future:

If all the products making the smart environment are different, it becomes difficult to gear them to one another. Standards become inevitable. The cost of it can also be an obstacle. Safety is important. The system must be protected against hackers and viruses. Another inconvenient is our growing dependence of technology.

We see that realising this vision will probably require:

- Political initiatives
- Research funds
- Information exchange between research groups
- New legislation and regulation on safety and privacy
- Achieve affordability, taking into account the production cost
- Initiatives of the industry
- Development of sustainable material
- Fast introduction of new technologies in order to come to practical appliances

Vision 2: Endless energy (independence of fossil fuels. Local and environmentally friendly production of energy).

Description

Every home has its own energy production, making use of solar cells, a wind turbine or maybe even the home trainer. The solar heat is stored in an underground water tank and used for the heating of the house. Every housing unit is independent and provides for its own energy supply, in an environmentally friendly way.

New-built dwellings, public housing included, are entirely recyclable and have a mandatory integrated energy supply, environmentally friendly and safe. Cars are electric and their batteries are charged at home.

This all results in clean air.

Available for everybody. Granting of the necessary credits.

Benefits and positive rewards of this vision:

- Independence, no more wars for oil
- Employment
- Good for our environment and health
- Safety
- No more energy bills

Negative repercussions of this future:

- Cost
- More sources better than only one
- Opposition of multinationals

We see that realising this vision will probably require:

- Research into new sources of energy, including the less evident ideas, such as electricity from living plants.
- More communication on the possibilities, promotion campaigns to convince the public of the necessity
- New legislation replacing for instance the current building grants for renovation by a subsidies scheme for new self supporting houses
- Mass production to reduce the cost
- Demolishing old, uninhabited buildings

Vision 3: Grey is okay in senior city

Description

Medical progress enables people to grow older in good health. They still make an active contribution and enjoy life. Senior citizens remain independent and fit, mentally as well as physically. As a matter of fact, they will not be called senior citizens anymore, but “plussers”. These plussers are active people who relax when they feel like doing so. They prefer personal contacts at the expense of technology.

Quite often, plussers are handymen and willing to help. That means they place themselves in the service of the younger generations. They look after the children of the neighbourhood: their own great-grandchildren and those of their friends. They volunteer as teachers and housemasters in schools.

Senior city offers all the recreation facilities they need. There are sports and wellness centres, green spaces. There is plenty of time and opportunity to take a siesta in wellness rooms and anti-ageing machines. There are contacts between several senior cities.

Plussers don't receive a pension but their stay in senior city is free.

Benefits and positive rewards of this vision:

- Everybody is and remains in good health
- There is more contact between generations and their communication is of a better quality

Negative repercussions of this future:

Older people who are unable to live independently run the risk of becoming back numbers

We see that realising this vision will probably require:

- Infrastructure
- A strong part to be played by council and government
- Planning and coordination
- High quality social cooperation

Vision 4: Simplification. Easier structures 2040 (less laws and rules)

Description

Parliaments and governments no longer exist as they stand in 2009. Every political level, from the regional to the European, has its technical committees to design solutions and submit them to their citizens. IT solutions for instance enable the citizens to exercise a direct, democratic supervision. Participation and involvement of the citizens is organized in a more direct manner and by electronic means (Facebook, sms, ...). A democratically elected council installs and organizes the technical committees.

Law and rules are simple and consistent. There is a lot of cross-border collaboration (traffic, agriculture, environment, defence, ...), sometimes regionally, sometimes globally, according to the matter in question. A tangible example could be the same speed limit on all the motorways throughout Europe.

“Simplicity is not the characteristic of the beginner. It is the hard fought for mark of the master”
(Godfried Bomans, Dutch writer)

Benefits and positive rewards of this vision:

Uniformity

Negative repercussions of this future:

A lot of thinking needs to be done on the functioning of the democratically elected council. The changeover to the society, outlined in this vision, will be radical. Opinions in different countries might diverge.

We see that realising this vision will probably require:

- A consensus has to be reached about how to realize this vision
- Self-interest must be replaced by supranational deliberation
- Step by step approach

Vision 5: H₂O² (Water purification for drinking water to meet the deficiencies)

Description

This vision starts from the concern that the rush for water might sooner or later become the new gold rush, for a world-wide water shortage is not inconceivable. Water is an indispensable resource of all kinds of life. It is a matter of life and death. Water is a basic need.

Hence the vision:

H₂O²

AQUA SQUARED

Anti Dehydration

New technologies that allow us to make more drinking water by purifying it can anticipate a dangerous lack of this valuable resource: water purification for drinking water.

At the same time new water will be made: multiplication of water. One litre becomes two litre and so on.

Water will be present in hyperconcentrations and reconstituted on demand and according to the needs. Water will also be improved by adding vitamins and so on, according to the local needs, also in third world countries.

Benefits and positive rewards of this vision:

Water becomes a cheap resource, available for everybody.

Everybody can drink it without feeling guilty.

Negative repercussions of this future:

Maybe a surplus of water will arise, in the wrong place

We see that realising this vision will probably require:

- Feasibility studies
- Quality control and control of the amounts of water
- Technology
- The time should be ripe for it, political will
- Capital (public/private). AquasquareD quoted on the stock exchange
- Sustainable approach

Vision 6: Where there's a will, there's work (Employment for all. A vision about the balance between work and private life, voluntary work and full employment).

Description

There is work for everybody, also because of a better distribution of work. Henceforth, years of service are split up into working hours. People perform a number of working hours, according to their own preferences and family situation, so as to eventually increase the chance for all to find a job. Motivation and (re)training are taken care of. People get what they deserve.

Voluntary work will also be partially paid (e.g. by offering a good insurance, reimbursement of travelling expenses, ...). That makes volunteers feel more recognized and appreciated. People who stay at home to look after their children will have a fixed wage as well.

Factories still exist but they are organized in a different way. People can work longer and in a more flexible way.

Benefits and positive rewards of this vision:

- More family time
- The freedom to plan your work at your own discretion
- More people have a job

Negative repercussions of this future:

- People who cannot work must be given chances to do something else
- People who do not want to work, do not earn as much as people who do
- There is only the basis wage, no premiums

We see that realising this vision will probably require:

- Persuasiveness
- Encouraging employment
- Help for single parents, in order to allow them to both have a part time job and take care of their children
- Timetables as desired
- Budget

Vision 7: Unlimited communication

Description

Anybody can communicate with anybody else.

People are connected to one another. Simultaneous interpretation (subtitles or dubbing) is available.

On top of the existing languages, there is also one uniform language for all.

The chaotic internet is gone. It is now a structured and well-organized system, centrally managed and ruled by a clear-cut legislation.

Apart from its physical identity, every person also has a digital ID. This ID also encompasses information about applications, medical files, ...

Working environments become more and more virtual. Lots of people work at home or in office building with digital walls. They communicate with their colleagues who appear on the wall-integrated displays.

Benefits and positive rewards of this vision:

- Uniformity
- Unlimited communication

Negative repercussions of this future:

- Identity theft. The risk of a stolen digital identity. Who controls and administers the digital identities?
- The digital gap
- The inconvenience of one uniform language: dialects become obsolete and are lost. They have to be saved in some systematic way.

We see that realising this vision will probably require:

- One uniform language.
- A direct means of communication with the authorities, free and user-friendly
- The internet must be replaced by a new, structured and regulated network
- Legislation with regard to the digital identity: privacy, security
- The construction of an infrastructure, in view of future modifications

Vision 8: Make me human! (A dream about health and wellness, technology and ethics)

Description

Technology is strongly focused on health, with research into genetics, stem cells, cloning, etc. There is more and more interest for rare medical disorders. The ethical aspects of medical technology as well are taken into account. Technology is not a threat for the freedom of choice or the personality of the individual, e.g. cyborg, bionic eye or ear. Every person keeps its influence, control and freedom of choice.

Physicians take more responsibility in ethical matters, such as termination of life, which takes place in accordance to well-considered and well-founded procedures. Quality of life predominates.

There is not only interest for medical matters but for quality of life in general, e.g. smart clothes, high quality food, time to enjoy culture and nature in a pleasing environment.

Technology will also be used to increase and improve human contact, e.g. Skype and the cuddly robot.

Benefits and positive rewards of this vision:

Health and quality of life

Negative repercussions of this future:

The cuddly robot is a good thing to use in hospitals, to comfort sick children, but there is also the danger that human contacts and contacts among the children will fade away.

We see that realising this vision will probably require:

Investments in a natural production process of food, respectful to plants and animals.

Further developments

After translation of all the national vision catalogues, all visions will be combined into a shared CIVISTI catalogue. Within this catalogue, the visions from the seven countries will be grouped according to common themes. All visions of the seven the member states will be compared to one another, to verify if there are any significant differences between the visions of the national panels.

In October 2009, an overview of all visions gathered in the seven member states will be presented to the Flemish citizen panel.

In April 2010, the citizen visions will be discussed and assessed in an international workshop with experts and other stakeholders. This expert workshop will prioritise the visions according to which of them are more suited for a new European research agenda.

In October 2010, the seven citizen panels will reconvene for the second citizen consultation. Here, citizens will discuss the experts' suggestions and recommendations and decide whether or not they can accept their being delivered to the European Commission as results from CIVISTI.

In January 2011, the CIVISTI results will be presented and handed over to policy-makers during a workshop by the Institute Society and Technology in Brussels. Later on, the Flemish citizen panel will gather for an informal event in which the citizens are informed about the reception of the results by the European commission.

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TEKNOLOGI-RÅDET

