

*Dear guests, colleagues and dear friends, it is my great pleasure to warmly welcome you on behalf of the Institute for Electronic Participation and National network of NGOs for an inclusive information society at the international conference HOW CAN CITIZEN'S CROWDSOURCING FOSTER DEMOCRACY IN EUROPE!*

*Especially, I would like to welcome our dear guest from the EU members states and partners of the European Citizens Crowdsourcing project. Many of them travelled long distances to join us here in Ljubljana.*

*Today, many people in Europe are asking themselves whether there is a future for the European Union. Are we Europeans able to share and live common principles of human rights, solidarity and peace? On daily basis we are witnessing increasing scepticism and distrust into institutions of EU. Many people in Europe are becoming alienated from values of trust, transparency and inclusion which have been often neglected by the EU institutions themselves. On the other hand, we are living in a digital age of growing connectivity, information abundance and digital opportunities for education, community development and democratic participation.*

*Therefore, the main purpose of today's conference, which is financially supported by the Europe for Citizens programme, is to discuss different aspects of citizens crowdsourcing for politics and policy at the national and the European Union level, to present crowdsourcing cases and initiatives, to brainstorm a framework for an EU level pilot of crowdsourcing on the future of Europe and to network actors of crowdsourcing as a method of e-participation.*

*Conclusions and results from the conference, which is the first in line of similar events that will take place in United Kingdom, Netherlands, Greece, Finland, France, Latvia and Belgium will be used for creating an open access on-line repository on citizens crowdsourcing practices and knowledge and to prepare policy recommendation on how to implement EU wide citizens crowdsourcing initiative on the Future of Europe. Therefore, precious time, energy and knowledge that will be shared today among conference participants, is going to be used with care and responsibility for the purpose of serving the public interest and to improve the quality of life of people in Europe.*

*Therefore, I am very pleased to see so many of you here today. Thank you very much!*