



European Citizens Crowdsourcing project
(EUCROWD)

www.inepa.si/eucrowd

EUCROWD EVENT SUMMARY REPORT

How can citizen's crowdsourcing foster democracy in Europe?

(Ljubljana, Slovenia)

Simon Delakorda, M. Sc., Institute for Electronic Participation

www.inepa.si/english

Alexandros Tzoumas and Despoina Chalvatzi, Science For You

www.scify.gr/site/en/

Ljubljana, 28 April 2017

TABLE OF CONTENT

SECTION 1: DESCRIPTION OF EVENT.....	3
I. Information about event.....	3
II. Description of event.....	3
III. Citizens involvement and target groups presence.....	4
SECTION 2: DISCUSSION ON CROWDSORCING IN THE EU POLICY-MAKING.....	5
IV. General considerations on using crowdsourcing in politics.....	5
V. Policies that could be crowdsourced at EU level in relation to the future of Europe.....	7
VI. Relevant e-participation examples for a crowdsourcing pilot at the EU level.....	8
VII. Policy-making phase in which would crowdsourcing take place.....	10
SECTION 3: EVALUATION OF EVENT.....	11
VIII. Extent to which event has increased participant's understanding of the EU.....	11
IX. Extend to which event has improved participants awareness about using crowdsourcing for e-participation in EU policy making-process.....	11
Appendix 1: Event Agenda.....	12
Appendix 2: Photos.....	14

SECTION 1: DESCRIPTION OF EVENT

I. Information about event

Venue	Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel, Ljubljana, Slovenia
Start date	Wednesday 26 October 2016
End date	Wednesday 26 October 2016
Title of event	"How can citizen's crowdsourcing foster democracy in Europe?"
Type of event	International conference and workshop
No. of participants	43
No. of involved countries	10
Web site	www.inepa.si/eucrowd/2016/10/26/eucrowd-conference-ljubljana
Event report	www.inepa.si/eucrowd/2016/11/17/report-eucrowd-event-ljubljana

II. Description of event

The EUCROWD event in Ljubljana combined panel discussion with experts, cases presentations from different countries of the European Union, facilitated workshops and informal networking meeting.

Event started with opening remarks from Simon Delakorda, director of the Institute for Electronic Participation. He welcomed conference participants by introducing the EUCROWD project and highlighting main topics of the conference. Then the key note presentation followed from Elisa Lironi, Digital Democracy Manager at European Citizen Action Service, presenting crowdsourcing policy framework in the EU.

After introducing the crowdsourcing topic in policy-making at the EU level, panel discussion »Will citizen's crowdsourcing bring back our democracy?« with five experts followed. The panel explored the current state of political democracy at the EU level (dropping voters turnout at the European elections, low level of trust in the EU, widespread mentality »my voice does not counts in the EU« etc.). After assessing the situation with the EU democracy, the panel focused on potentials of crowdsourcing for strengthening citizens participation at the EU level decision-making from societal, technological and political perspective. The panel concluded with sharing opinions from conference audience on possibility of creating the EU level pilot of crowdsourcing on the Future of Europe.

The experts participating in the panel were: Žiga Turk, professor at the University of Ljubljana, former Secretary General of the Reflection Group on the Future of Europe, Assya Kavrakova, director of the European Citizen Action Service from Belgium, Millicent Ragnhild Scott, director of operations at the Democratic Society from United Kingdom, Yvette Jeuken, project leader at the Stichting Netwerk Democratie from Netherlands and Blaž Golob, Chairman of the GoForeSight Institute from Slovenia.

Following experts panel, five examples of citizens crowdsourcing in politics and policy-making from countries in the European Union were presented. The national presentations were delivered

by Nicolas Patte, *Démocratie Ouverte, Parlement et citoyens* (France), Annija Emersone, *ManaBalss.lv, ManaBalss.lv* (Latvia), Vesna Avguštinčič & Tadej Kurent, Municipality of Maribor, *Let's Improve Maribor* (Slovenia), Alexandros Tzoumas, Science for You, *DemocracIT* (Greece), Simon Ivanšek, XLAB, *Trusted, Citizen – LEA collaboration over Social Networks* (Slovenia) and Petra Cilenšek, Regional NGO hub for Central Slovenia, *Smart Voice* (Slovenia).

Speakers were asked to focus on a problem that their crowdsourcing case is addressing, how it works (how many citizens are participating), what are democratic impact / effects, what challenges the case is facing, what are future plans with the case and what are useful lessons from the national or local cases for future citizens crowdsourcing at the EU level. Speakers were encouraged to link their presentations to immigration, economic crisis and the future of Europe topics.

After lunch break two facilitated workshop focused on how can citizen's crowdsourcing pilot could be developed for the purpose of supporting debate on the future of Europe. Conference participants split in two working groups. The first working group using Slovenian language addressed crowdsourcing topics, process, rules, incentive, skills and usability. The second working group using English language focused on crowdsourcing tools and platforms. Both working groups presented main findings and recommendations which are included in this report.

The conference concluded with a networking event of Slovenian crowdsourcing community hosted by Blaž Golob, Slovenian Patron for the Crowd Dialog Europe 2016.

Videos of opening remarks, key note, discussion panel and cases presentations described in this section are available at <http://www.inepa.si/eucrowd/2016/10/26/eucrowd-conference-ljubljana/>.

III. Citizens involvement during event and target groups presence

Participants contributed their opinions and comments during facilitated Q&A time which followed key note presentation, panel discussion and cases presentation according to the conference programme. Workshop sessions enabled participants to engage into face-to-face discussions how could citizen's crowdsourcing pilot support debate on the future of Europe. Both working groups were facilitated by project partner organisations. One working group was in Slovene language and another in English. Participants also exchanged information about the event on Twitter. An overview of Twitter activity is available at <https://twitter.com/i/moments/856409537598943232>.

Event was attended by people from non-governmental organisations (e.g. Slovenian Federation of Pensioners' Associations, Network of NGOs for the Inclusive Information Society, Regional NGO hub for Central Slovenia), government institutions (Information Society Directorate, Ministry of Public Administration), EU institutions (European Parliament Information Office in Slovenia), academia (University of Ljubljana), local municipalities (City Municipality of Maribor), Slovenian Press Agency, IT and start-up companies, experts, activists and every-day citizens.

SECTION 2: DISCUSSION ON CROWDSORCING IN THE EU POLICY-MAKING

This section describes main findings and conclusions provided by participants at EUCROWD workshops in Ljubljana. Participants discussed the following topics:

- What is »Crowdsourcing« and »Debate for the future of Europe« all about,
- Basic conditions and requirements for using crowdsourcing as e-participation method,
- Most suitable topics to be crowdsourced at EU level in relation to the future of Europe,
- When in policy-making would the crowdsourcing take place,
- Current practices and available tools of policy making and crowdsourcing,
- Problems and issues with existing tools for crowdsourcing,
- Criteria for selecting crowdsourcing tool for the purpose of the pilot at the EU level.

During workshops participants had the opportunity to discuss and reflect on the presented topics and write down their ideas/opinions. The outcomes of the workshop are described in the following section.

IV. General considerations on using crowdsourcing as (e-)participation method in politics and policy-making

➤ Framing crowdsourcing concept in general

For the purpose of the workshop, crowdsourcing was defined as a specific sourcing model in which organizations use contributions from Internet users to obtain needed services or ideas. Crowdsourcing is when work comes from an undefined public.

Crowdsourcing can provide the following advantages: lower costs, speed, quality, scalability and diversity.

On the side of disadvantages of crowdsourcing, the following two were identified: management costs and time needed to collect and process all the data. As a result, product / output quality may be affected.

Participation in crowdsourcing is lead by two kinds of motivations. Intrinsic one can involve fun, enjoyment, community contribution and helping to solve a problem. Extrinsic one can involve monetary payment, gaining skills and rewards.

The following examples of crowdsourcing were identified: [Amazon Mechanical Turk](#), [Crowdsite](#), [Wikipedia](#), [Spotify](#), [Crowdvoting](#), [Crowdfunding](#) and [Be my eyes](#).

➤ Basic conditions and requirements for using crowdsourcing as e-participation method

A) Adequate infrastructure and equipment (e-accessibility)

- stable and fast internet,
- internet access,
- access to personal computers (e.g. one-stop e-points for elderly),
- smart phones (there is a lack of smartphones tailored to the needs of elderly in Slovenia),
- financial subsidies for purchasing supporting IT equipment (e.g. digital keyboard for blind

people).

B) Digital skills (e-inclusion)

- Internet logic is often hard to understand by elderly people (e.g. on-line registration, passwords),
- fear of using computer because something will broke,
- understanding security of Internet technology (trust in privacy protection and confidence in digital signatures),
- adjusted on-line communication for people with special needs (e.g. blind people).

In addition, the following requirements were identified: civic engagement, knowledge of public affairs, trust for the political system and participation in influencing the law-maker and the decision-making process.

If above mentioned conditions are not meet, there is a risk that people will inefficiently spent time and energy while using digital technologies and consequently lose motivation to e-participate in crowdsourcing.

➤ **General expectations about crowdsourcing platform**

- easy to understand platform with simple content and users guidelines,
- availability in Slovene language,
- following Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) for people with disabilities as a standard for public web sites,
- there should be adequate financial resources for crowdsourcing platform development in order to meet WCAG standards,
- platform should be smart phone friendly,
- civic user testing group should be involved into developing of the platform (user friendly platform),
- avoid lighting effects on the platform,
- enable simple design which will balance expectations from both advanced (young people) and basic internet users,
- follow »less is more« principle,
- multilingual platform enabling automated content translation in order to overcome linguistics imbalance between smaller and bigger nations.

➤ **Motivation for taking part in crowdsourcing**

- crowdsourcing as a binding instrument (when registered participants invest their time and knowledge, the results of the process must be binding for decision-makers),
- individual participants should also initiate and lead the process (the role of initiator is an important one),
- legitimacy of the process must be recognized also in the event of a small number of participants taking part in crowdsourcing,
- assurance that initiator of crowdsourcing is going to provide feedback to participants.

➤ **Dissemination of crowdsourcing platform**

- adopting similar disseminating approach as for European Citizens Initiative platform (adding ECI web link to different public and government web sites).

Additional comment:
How do we motivate youth to take part in crowdsourcing?

V. Policies that could be crowdsourced at EU level in relation to the future of Europe

The following types of topic were identified by workshop participants as most suitable to be crowdsourced at the EU level:

A) Topics of institutional and political relevance

- issues that are subject of popular referendums,
- issues that are important from the view point of public opinion (e.g. Eurobarometer),
- issues submitted / proposed by official institutions.

Issues important from the view point of public opinion: EU identity and citizenship, migration, danger of EU falling apart, rising populism / skepticism, changing demography / ageing population and youth unemployment.

Issues submitted by official institutions: increased border control regulation, managing the refugee crisis, political collaboration, financial dependency and managing the economic crisis ([European Commission Priorities](#)).

B) Topics without limitations – bottom up (everyone can propose a topic)

- Could digital skills training help solve Europe's jobs crisis?
- Europe's education system failing to equip young graduates with the right skills for the 21st Century? With youth unemployment so high across the continent, could teaching digital skills help empower entrepreneurs and create jobs? What digital skills are essential to new businesses if they thrive?
- Should intensive animal farming be banned?
- Bring citizens closer to policy makers
- Advice on your work, life and travel in the EU
- NGO, find funding through EU
- Free movement of citizens through EU
- Helping migrants and their families overcome problems when moving within the EU
- Financial dependency, political collaboration and should Europe be that centralized?

Example of debating European topics on-line: [Debatingeurope.eu](#).

Additional comments:

Crowdsourcing topics should avoid being exploited for populist gains. They should not be in collision with human rights. Balancing openness and relevance (not too closed and not too open

platform enabling bottom-up and top down agenda setting). Transparency of the topics is also important.

VI. E-participation examples relevant for a crowdsourcing pilot at the EU level

There are many tools and related technologies currently available on-line for crowdsourcing and policy making. Workshops participants shared information on different e-participation tools, reflected on problems and issues with these tools and provided criteria than should be taken into account when selecting (creating) crowdsourcing tool for the purpose of a crowdsourcing pilot at the EU level.

➤ Online platforms/applications

- E-mails / e-forms: [UK Public Consultation site](#) and [Slovenian Gov E-democracy site](#)
- Forums: [Greek OpenGov portal](#) for open consultations and [USA public consultation portal](#)
- Crowdsourcing ideas: [Aha.io](#) and [Uservoice](#)
- MindMaps: [Mindmeister](#) and [others](#)
- Social Websites: Facebook groups, Twitter hashtags and [Elgg \(social networking engine\)](#)
- Polls: [Polls everywhere](#), [CMS Plugins](#), [Discourse](#), [Google questionnaires](#) and [Survey monkey](#)
- Structured questionnaires: [EUSurvey](#)
- Rising awareness tools: [Avaaz](#) and [Thunderclap](#)
- Specific web tools: [YouChoose](#)

There are different e-tools currently in use in policy making such as:

- Issue Identification (Blogging like tools, "Post your story", Discussion forums)
- Policy formulation (Structured questionnaires, Budget allocation tools, Voting on ideas)
- Decision making (emails, forum like tools, specific forms with general remarks)

➤ Advanced tools for crowdsourcing

- Annotation Tools: [Hypothesis](#) and [others](#).
- Crawlers: argument mining¹, opinion collection, hashtags and social posts ([Scrapy](#) and [Nomad](#))
- Natural language processing algorithms: clustering of comments, visualizations (word clouds, [graphs](#)) and sentiment analysis
- [Gamification](#): points, badges, reputation levels, progress bars, learnboards and making the process feel like a game
- Custom tools: [Democracit](#)

➤ Problems and issues with existing tools for crowdsourcing

1. Security concerns
2. Lack of verification of users

1 Also ("argumentation mining" is a relatively new challenge in corpus-based discourse analysis that involves automatically identifying argumentative structures within discourse, e.g., the premises, conclusion, and argumentation scheme of each argument, as well as argument-subargument and argument-counterargument relationships between pairs of arguments in the document. To date, researchers have investigated methods for argument mining in areas such as legal documents, on-line debates, product reviews, academic literature, user comments on proposed regulations, newspaper articles and court cases, as well as in dialogical domain.

3. Lack of communication between participants (tools don't allow discussion)
4. Lack of political willingness to make these tools work as effective as possible
5. Lack of impact measurement metrics
6. Users don't get informed about whether/how their contribution had an impact
7. Most of these tools are not institutionalized
8. Lack of participation incentives
9. Complexity with policy making itself reduces participation
 - too large textual input
 - too complex to participate
 - users don't understand how it can affect their life
10. Lack of education activities that can help users understand what the consultation or "agenda" is all about
11. Lack of user based design
 - more people should be involved in the designing of these tools
 - adaptive tools
12. Diversity of people is not taken into account.
13. Lack of vision /direction where agenda setting processes can be based upon

➤ **Criteria for selecting crowdsourcing tools**

Workshop participants discussed the following criteria and questions than should be taken into account when selecting a crowdsourcing tool.

1. The phase of the policy making process that crowdsourcing tool should cover:
 - a. Issue identification
 - b. Policy formulation
 - c. Decision making
 - d. Implementation
 - e. Evaluation
2. The civic engagement dimension that crowdsourcing tool should enable:
 - a. Knowledge of public affairs
 - b. Trust for the political system
 - c. Participation in influencing the government and the decision-making process
3. The target groups that crowdsourcing tool should involve:
 - a. The demographics and technographics (age group, familiarity with online applications etc.) should be taken into account
 - b. Will the tool be used at the local / national or EU level?

4. The accessibility of the crowdsourcing tool:

- a. Does it support many languages?
- b. Is it compliant with accessibility directives?
- c. Is it inclusive for minorities?

5. How user friendly the crowdsourcing tool is:

- a. Is it easy to understand?
- b. Is it fast to use?

6. The »time« criteria is related to how much time we have available in order to setup and run the crowdsourcing tool. Questions that may affect our decision:

- a. Do we have a strict time schedule?
- b. How much time do we need to gather the results from the citizens?
- c. How much time do we need to analyse the results?
- d. How much time do we have to install and configure these tools?

7. The »cost« criteria is related with the budget we have available in order to setup and run the crowdsourcing tool. Questions that may affect our decision:

- a. What is the cost of these tools?
- b. What is the cost to analyse the results?

VII. Policy-making / consultation phase in which the crowdsourcing would take place

In general, different phase of consultation process should be crowdsourced such as:

- Issue identification (this phase includes problem identification and quantification).
- Policy formulation
- Decision making
- Implementation
- Evaluation

➤ Additional remarks regarding crowdsourcing process

- crowdsourcing topics should be organized according to categories,
- enabling registration of users in a way that enable verification of their identity while preserving their privacy (one option would be using European digital signature),
- digital identity registration will make platform looking more serious and relevant to decision-makers,
- transparency of the crowdsourcing process is important,
- no time constraints for topic that are not subjected to formal procedures time limits,
- feeding opinions and results from face to face events into on-line crowdsourcing process,
- informing participants about the process, time frame and how they can contribute,
- information to participants about the status of crowdsourcing process,
- enabling individuals to initiate, lead and promote the process (similar to [Parlement et citoyens](#) in France and [ManaBalss.lv](#) in Latvia),
- facilitation of the crowdsourcing process must be enabled,
- crowdsourcing process should enable deliberation,
- feedback information and arguments to participants which contributions were accepted and which were not after the crowdsourcing process is concluded.

SECTION 3: EVALUATION OF EVENT

This section summarizes evaluation of event provided by organizer Institute for Electronic Participation. Assessment is based on content presented to participants during event, discussion topics listened by attending audience and workshops results.

VIII. Extent to which event has increased participant's understanding of the EU

Event agenda focused on informing, sharing experiences, discussing and collecting ideas on further development of democratic engagement at the European Union level. Key note by Elisa Lironi from European Citizen Action Service presented current issues relating to political democracy and citizens participation at the EU level. International discussion among experts in the field and the conference audience addressed various challenges for the future of democracy in the European Union such as information bubbles, fake news, politics as usual, elitism, inefficiency etc. Workshops encouraged participants to discuss EU level policy-making and policy topics in light of using crowdsourcing as an e-participation method.

IX. Extent to which has event improved participants awareness about the possibilities of using crowdsourcing as an innovative channel of e-participation in EU policy making-process

Key note presentation from Elisa Lironi introduced e-participation tools available to citizens at the EU level (European Citizens' Initiative, Online EU Public Consultations and Petitions to the European Parliament) as well e-participation projects co-funded by the EU. The presentation also explained crowdsourcing concept in policy-making and initial results from the European Citizen Action Service study on crowdsourcing. The panel discussion among experts and the audience highlighted several topics relating to crowdsourcing such as active European citizenship, functioning European public sphere and strong civil society. As a part of workshop discussions participants explored possibilities and challenges of creating an on-line platform for crowdsourcing on the future of Europe.

Report submitted by Simon Delakorda on 28 April 2017 in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Appendix 1: Event Agenda



EUCROWD international conference

HOW CAN CITIZEN'S CROWDSOURCING FOSTER DEMOCRACY IN EUROPE?

Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 26 October 2016

The aim of the conference is to discuss different aspects of citizens crowdsourcing for politics and policy at the national and 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.

PROGRAMME:

8.30 – 9.00 **Registration**

9.00 – 9.05 **Opening remarks**

Simon Delakorda, Director, Institute for Electronic Participation (INePA)

9.05 – 9.20 **Key note presentation: Crowdsourcing policy framework in the EU**

Elisa Lironi, Digital Democracy Manager, European Citizen Action Service

9.20 – 10.45 **Panel discussion: Will citizen's crowdsourcing bring back our democracy?**

- Žiga Turk, Professor, University of Ljubljana, former Secretary General of the Relection Group on the Future of Europe
- Assya Kavrakova, Director, European Citizen Action Service
- Millicent Ragnhild Scott, Director of Operations, Democratic Society, UK
- Yvette Jeuken, Project Leader, Stichting Netwerk Democratie, Netherlands
- Blaž Golob, Chairman, GoForeSight Institut, Slovenia

Moderator: Simon Delakorda, Director, Institute for Electronic Participation

10.45 – 11.00 **Break**

11.00 – 13.00 **Cases presentations: Citizen's crowdsourcing in politics and policy-making**

- Nicolas Patte, Démocratie Ouverte: *Parlement et citoyens* (France)
- Annija Emersone, ManaBalss.lv: *ManaBalss.lv* (Latvia)
- City Municipality of Maribor: *Let's Improve Maribor* (Slovenia)
- Alexandros Tzoumas, Science for You: *DemocracIT* (Greece)
- Simon Ivanšek, XLAB: Trusted, Citizen – LEA collaboration over Social Networks (Slovenia)
- Petra Cilenšek, Regional NGO hub for Central Slovenia: *Smart Voice* (Slovenia)

13.00 – 14.00 **Lunch break**

14.00 – 16.00 **Facilitated workshop: How can citizen's crowdsourcing support debate on the Future of Europe?**

- Working group 1 (framework and society): Crowdsourcing topics, process, rules, incentive, skills and usability (Slovenian language)
- Working group 2 (technology): Crowdsourcing tools and platforms (English language)

16.00 – 16.30 **Concluding remarks: working groups reports and recommendations**

16.30 – 17.30 **Follow up event: Slovenian crowdsourcing community meeting**

- Hosted by Blaž Golob, Slovenian Patron for the Crowd Dialog Europe 2016

The EUCROWD conference in Ljubljana is organized by [Institute for Electronic Participation](http://www.inepa.si) with the financial support of the [Europe for Citizens programme](http://www.inepa.si) of the European Union as a part of the European Citizens Crowdsourcing project www.inepa.si/eucrowd.



Sofinancirano iz
programa Evropske
unije „Evropa za
državljanke“.



Event agenda is published at EUCROWD project web site
<http://www.inepa.si/eucrowd/2016/10/01/how-can-citizens-crowdsourcing-foster-democracy-in-europe/>.

Appendix 2: Photos



Event photos are published at EUCROWD project web site

<http://www.inepa.si/eucrowd/2016/10/26/eucrowd-conference-ljubljana/>