



EUCROWD

International Conference

**Co-construire la politique avec les citoyens
pour améliorer la démocratie en Europe**

20 JUIN 2017

PALAIS DU LUXEMBOURG, PARIS, FRANCE



European Citizens Crowdsourcing project (EUCROWD)

<http://www.inepa.si/eucrowd/>

EUCROWD Conference

*Co-build politics with citizens to
foster democracy in Europe*

Paris, June 20, 2017

Organized by : Parlement & Citoyens

<https://parlement-et-citoyens.fr/>



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I. Presentation of the event

A. Participant's file - Program

PROGRAM

- 9:00** Reception
- 9:30 Opening and presentation
Clara Boudehen, Parliament & Citizens
Elisa Lironi, European Citizen Action Service (ECAS)
- 9:45 Symposium: Crowdsourcing and policy makers, experiences and visions of elected officials on citizen participation**
- Joël Labbé**, Senator of Morbihan, **Henri Cabanel**, Senator of Hérault, **Cécile Sornin**, Deputy Mayor of Mulhouse, in charge of participatory democracy, **Christine Hennion**, MP.
- 11:15** Pause
- 11:45** Panel: Crowdsourcing and civil society, towards a renewed collective intelligence
- Pascale Ribes**, vice-president of the Association of Paralysés de France, **Thierry Cadart**, national secretary of the CFDT, **Dominique Gillier**, vice-president of the Social and Environmental Economic Council, **Sébastien Moreau**, Paris 2024.
- 13:00** Lunch Break
- 14:30** Workshops : the challenge of engaging remote audiences
- Economy & Territories: access to digital (45') 
 - Sociology & Culture: the use of digital (45') 
 - European diversities, local issues (1h30) 
- 16:30** Pause
- 17:00** Restitution and closure

B. Information about the event

Place	Luxembourg Palace, 26 and 46 rue de Vaugirard, Paris
Date	June 20, 2017
Name	Co-build politics with citizens to foster democracy in Europe
Site de l'organisateur	http://www.inepa.si/eucrowd/
Site de l'évènement	https://parlement-et-citoyens.fr/events/co-construire-la-politique-avec-les-citoyens-pour-ameliorer-la-democratie-en-europe

C. Participants to the event

Total of participants : 70

Details :

Participants	Men	Women	< 30 yo	30< >65 yo	> 65 yo
Numbers*	30	40	21	31	1

* NB : 17 persons have decided to not communicate their age.

Overall representing 7 countries: Germany (1), Belgium (2), Canada (1), France (63), Greece (1), Slovenia (1), USA (1)

Associations and companies represented at the event : Voxe.org, Make.org, Empreintes citoyennes, l'Association des Paralysés de France, Res Publica, Démocratie Ouverte, The Democratic Society, SNCF Réseau, Mairie de Paris.

Parlement & Citoyens

Since 2013, the NGO Parliament & Citizens has been enabling citizens to write the law in full transparency with parliamentarians through its digital platform. It has three objectives: to reinforce the effectiveness of public policies, the legitimacy of the laws produced and the confidence of the citizens towards the political actors.

In 2017, the association can count on a community of nearly 35,000 citizens and 30 MPs and senators, and a multi-party board of directors that guarantees the independence of its approach.

Parliament & Citizens is one of eight Eucrowd partners whose initiative has been identified by the Commission. The association organizes this conference in France.

II. Towards a renewed collective intelligence: a case of crowdsourcing in public action and in civil society

A. Political will in the face of the current democratic crisis

After a presentation of the day orchestrated by Elsa Lironi of the European Citizen Action Service association and Cyril Lage, President of Parliament & Citizens, the participants were able to follow the conference "Crowdsourcing and policy makers, experiences and visions of elected officials on citizen participation".

Alongside Clara Boudehen, who facilitated this session, Senators Joël Labbé and Henri Cabanel, Deputy Mayor Mulhouse Cécile Sornin and MP Christine Hennion spoke about and encouraged citizen participation mechanisms. Through their experiences and political will, these elected officials work daily to make the participation and transparency of major political principles.

All agree on the observation: the distrust of citizens vis-à-vis the political system and political actors. Citizens are interested in politics but are wary of the way it is organized. It is important to change the method and enter a participative dynamic. Senator Henri Cabanel discusses the influence of democratic innovations between European countries and in particular referendums citizens in Switzerland. The democratic question is a major issue in Europe and according to Senator Joel Labbé: "Europe will live only if there is a European conscience, and this awareness will go through participatory democracy".

Digital tools are considered essential to accompany this new democratic process and participate in its dissemination. Christine Hennion, for example, has spent her entire career in digital expertise, while Joël Labbé conducted a digital consultation on the "Biodiversity Law", where 10,000 citizens and organizations were able to enrich the initial text. Cecile Sornin, in the city of Mulhouse, Alsace, gives the possibility to citizens who can not move to participate in the public decision process via a digital platform that is reserved for them. Lastly, Henri Cabanel chaired a report to Parliament entitled Representative, Participative and Parity Democracy, which highlights the new democratic possibilities via digital tools.

- [The report chaired by Sen. Henri Cabanel](#) (in French)

B. How to diversify audiences and encourage participation?

These political actors seek to co-build their decisions on a daily basis but sometimes encounter some difficulties. For example, they should avoid creating forums for debate that always attract the same people. There is, among these actors, a search for diversification of the public so as not to create a participation that relies solely on the use of digital.

The need to reconcile face-to-face meetings with digital tools was emphasized to achieve greater citizen participation. For example, Cécile Sornin puts forward the advice of young people, and the councils of seniors who are in place in Mulhouse. Digital technology only accompanies participatory activity on the territory. New forms of mobilization are also experienced in public places, such as the legislative theater. Scenes are played in public with spectators who can propose laws. This elected representative stresses that it takes time to achieve these kinds of initiatives and that the "digital revolution" will only happen gradually.

A question was also raised during the interaction with conference participants: can only digital participation increase the gap between those who vote and those who no longer go to the polls?

Henri Cabanel recalls the "digital divide" that affects rural areas of the territory: "We must have connections between citizens, not just digital connections". He sees a certain complementarity between the tools to arrive at a more global participation. A better articulation of participatory mechanisms on the territories would promote this democratic impetus. Joël Labbé wants to continue to "give importance to the physical meeting", he asks elected officials to "take the time to listen to citizens".

C. For a co-built civil society

The consultation was then honored during the round table entitled "Crowdsourcing and civil society, towards a renewed collective intelligence". Pascale Ribes, vice president of the Association of Paralysis of France, Thierry Cadart, national secretary of the CFTD, Dominique Gillier, vice-president of the Social and Environmental Economic Council (CESE) and finally Sébastien Moreau, representative of the candidacy of Paris for the Games Olympics of 2024, exchanged around their participative experiences. In their respective organizations, these civil society actors favored debate and dialogue in order to change their structure.

- According to Pascal Ribes, "we all have a part of the solution to the problems we encounter". It must be part of a pro-active approach, and truly integrate the contributions of the platform to the final decision and program of the association. This program has been developed by citizens and organizations to reach solutions that benefit the greatest number. The vice-president of the association considers that we must get out of the passivity and now

choose collectively what is the vision of solidarity of the APF. It also emphasizes the method used, such as bridging workshops that allowed people to participate when they would not have done so initially.

- Thierry Cadart, national secretary of the CFDT union, explains why they chose to carry out an internal consultation. The initial objective was to change the organization and adapt it to the evolution of the wage system. There was the desire to involve in this project all levels of the organization to involve each member of the union. The methodology follows that provided by Cap Collectif to create debate and allow voting. The relay workshops were very important as well, since they present favorable arguments and unfavorable arguments for any problem. The CFDT is proud to have counted on the contributions of nearly 1500 members and will write the resolution before opening a new platform to discuss it.

- Dominique Gillier is the vice-president of the CESE, the "third chamber" of the Republic that represents organized civil society. The CESE has two main types of missions: it informs the public decision by producing opinions and participates in the evaluation of public policies. This council already has experience in participatory practices: in 2013 it published an opinion on a petition on education for sustainable development. Advisory groups on certain opinions have been set up, but recently citizen participation has been developed with several digital platform projects, in particular on the impact of digital on work and on the issue of extreme poverty. There is also the citizen petition, which allows 500,000 French citizens to take the matter to the CESE. This citizen petition will be reviewed and a watch on the petitioner sites will allow the CESE to seize itself.

- Sébastien Moreau shares the experience of the consultation as part of France's bid for the 2024 Olympic Games. The partnership dimension of the platform is highlighted because it allows to collect doubts and questions from all citizens who wish give their opinion, without exception. This totally open and inclusive consultation was followed by meetings throughout the French territory, including consultation meetings in Ile-de-France, which brought together 6,000 participants. The format of the relay workshops allowed a large and efficient participation according to Sébastien Moreau.

III. How to integrate remote audiences into the crowdsourcing participatory process?

After the break, afternoon workshops sought to understand how to complement and enhance the participation of "remote" audiences. The exchanges were rich and constructive between the different associations and companies such as Voxe.org, Accropolis, Make.org, The Democratic Society, the Paralyzed People's Association of France, Empreintes citoyennes, Res Publica, SNCF Réseau, or even Démocratie Ouverte.

- **Voxe.org** is a neutral, non-partisan initiative that allows citizens to discern

- information, discuss politics more calmly and engage more easily in public life.*
- **Accropolis** is an innovative video channel that decrypts French political news.
 - **Make.org** is an independent and non-partisan platform whose purpose is to catalyze the ideas of citizens to implement the actions that will shape the society of tomorrow.
 - **The Democratic Society** works for a steady improvement of democracy by creating opportunities for citizens who wish to participate and by supporting initiatives that integrate them into public decision-making processes.
 - **The Paralyzed People's Association of France** is mobilized to defend the rights and support people with disabilities and their loved ones on a daily basis.
 - **Empreintes citoyennes** is an association that works for active citizenship, values civic engagement and promotes dialogue with citizens.
 - **Res Publica** is a company that provides consultancy strategy and engineering consultation to make public participation processes useful and effective.
 - **SNCF Réseau** is a public, industrial and commercial establishment which groups together all the services in charge of railway infrastructures, and which represents the sole owner and manager of the network.
 - **Démocratie Ouverte** is an independent citizen organization that acts to network and support democratic innovators, enable citizens to make their voices heard, and test new ways of doing politics.

A. What are the obstacles to citizen participation?

Obstacles specific to the participatory process

- There is an obstacle that can be described as cultural: there is no culture of participation in France, especially at the national level. Citizens are not sufficiently "trained" in participation processes.
- Another obstacle might be the lack of legitimacy felt by the public. Citizens may not understand why they are consulted and do not feel they can participate. Many people do not think they are "enough experts" to make their voices heard.
- Regarding expertise, we note that the knowledge required can prevent certain initiatives. The consultation, by its concrete nature, is sectoral and can raise fears by the degree of expertise that it assumes.
- Finally, the cost of entry is high in the ecosystem of the participation. For example, the functioning of institutions and local authorities, the methodologies used by the different consultation bodies, the language elements may represent a barrier to participation. In addition, this requires time, energy and motivation to grasp the issues of a consultation.

Obstacles related to how we present and organize participation

- The first obstacle identified is interest in the question. There is often a problem in the way of asking the question. Citizens need to be concerned about the issue: if we do not explain to them that it concerns them, they will not take part in decisions.
- Elected officials sometimes confuse "information" and "consultation", which creates a sense of uselessness among citizens. The project must be able to develop around new citizens' contributions and not be pre-established. Political will must accompany all citizen participation.
- There is the feeling that audiences are the same at every consultation. We can note the examples of Empreintes citoyennes and Res Publica since they bring together mostly elderly and quite committed people. The mobilization of young people is delicate.
- Lack of follow-up may hinder participation. There are several steps to follow and without which one can not maintain a regularity in the participative process. Example of a successful consultation in Roubaix, in the north of France where there was a highly trained minority to animate the consultation but also and above all, a social permanence that allowed people to go there regularly. "Regularity frees speech."

Digital obstacles

- With digital, empathy is missing: wanting to understand what the other person says is easier in the classroom. In terms of infrastructures, 13% of the population is not digitized in France and especially young people. We must also look for classic tools to reach them because the digital tool quickly finds certain limits.
- There is a need to use the appropriate communication media for targeted audiences. Take the example of the association Voix.org which organized a "tour de France", to collect the proposals of young people during the presidential campaign. The members present informed us of the following observation: an important communication strategy was conducted on Twitter, but young people use little Twitter or only for professional purposes. This idea of communication via Twitter had been defined in Paris but the reality on the ground contradicted it. We now know a multitude of digital platforms with uses specific to each platform.
- During an experiment of an associative bar with the implementation of several projects, a reluctance to the digital could be identified. In the collection of contacts, more than a third of people give their phone number but do not give their mail because they do not use it. To reach the public it is advisable to allow physical appointments.
- Do digital platforms have features that can drive citizens away from participation?

Some are just not used to trading in this way, not used to developing their thinking in this form unaccustomed to debating the public thing either. It should also return to more simple and accessible content. For example, the term "contributions" can become a drag because it implies the need to develop a certain argument.

B. Solutions to respond to the lack of participation

Pedagogy and communication at the heart of participation

- Pedagogy and communication are essential: there is a need for training and explanation on the issues raised by the consultation. The explanation of the project goes hand in hand with the collaborative platform. Consulting is important but telling the story of the project is important. You have to create a desire, a participative dynamic.
- Make the issue an inclusive issue. It must be as wide as possible to search all audiences and to leave the strength of ideas to citizens. For example, Facebook can be used to go beyond generations and social classes. Make.org is not intended to be representative of French society but wishes above all to mobilize goodwill via issues that are dear to them.
- For the association Empreintes Citoyennes, the goal is to create a participative culture through the levers of popular education and public awareness. They created a citizen-active platform so that the public authorities can rely on the citizens who work the most in the territory.

Mobilize and give back to participate

- Use opinion relay to spread messages: associations can carry out pedagogical work that will not be heard in the same way as if it is done by the state or local authorities.
- A way must be found to include elites and experts in this process of serving the public interest. They should not be excluded from the process, they are very important but must serve the common good.
- We must set up a follow-up of the process and return the results to show what the real impact of the proposals made by the citizens has been. To participate is not only to receive ideas, it is also to know how to give them back and to explain why they are retained or not.

Digital technology helps citizen participation

- SNCF Réseau highlights digital, which, even if it excludes older people overall, remains the simplest tool to reach a wider audience. It makes it easier to pick up people who are far away. An example of an interesting initiative is to bring digital technology

directly to the public, with face-to-face workshops using the tool (the experience of SNCF Réseau with a simple iPad so that the inhabitants of a district can visualize the future soundproof walls in their garden, it was a success).

- Create spaces for participation that allow all audiences to participate: we must remove barriers such as disability, child care, etc. Example of the digital agora in Nanterre which offers day care to allow parents to participate in participatory budget debates.

C. The objectives of citizen participation

- Enrich decisions (Res Publica), improve the effectiveness of public policies (Parliament & Citizens)
- Allow the diversity of points of view without seeking a mass membership or exact representativeness
- Create an awakening of consciences and restore faith in democracy (Empreintes citoyennes)
- So that citizens can put on the agenda their cherished concerns, to see what are the important themes for the public (such as animal protection not very well represented in the media or public debate but it is ultimately a rather expensive topic for the French) (Make.org)
- Make a "state of affairs" of the situations a priori, and not have to solve problems once they have taken place. Digital makes it possible to materialize the strength of ideas (SNCF Réseau)

D. European Diversities, local issues

The workshop was divided into three debates around the following questions:

- Would you participate if the European Union (EU) uses crowdsourcing for public decisions?
- Which platforms should be used?
- What timeframe should be favored?

Would you participate if the European Union (EU) uses crowdsourcing for public decisions?

- Currently, the EU does not have any tool to consult citizens ahead of a public decision. EU citizens are usually consulted in a top-down approach.
- EU citizens attending the session are willing to be involved and consulted in a EU crowdsourcing approach.

- All the fields of EU policies should be considered. They are all of interest to these citizens. Even when the competence is national (e.g. education), it can be of interest to EU citizens to get a say, for example, to strengthen education exchanges among European countries. Climate change and environment were mentioned too as topics to consider for crowdsourcing.
- A step-by- step approach should be adopted. A pilot phase should be proposed but with an ambition of not limiting the crowdsourcing approach to just one or few topics seen as “acceptable” by the decision-makers. Such a constraint could feed a lack of trust towards the EU decision-making process and suspicion.
- A warning about languages was given. As it is key to ensure offering the opportunity to as many citizens as possible to participate. This matter is fundamental. The website of the EU Commission provides many public policies documents in English even in pages in other languages such as French, while according to Eurostat itself, only 20% of 25-64 year-old EU citizens consider their level as “proficient” in the “Foreign language stated as the best-known in the country.”
- The Eurobarometer can be used as a mean of information to get a sense of EU citizens’ views on priorities and pick the topic/s for the pilot project. Terrorism ranks on top now. Participants were mostly of the view that democracy is about expressing opinions. To make the exercise useful and limit spoilers, the question is key and should quite specific. It should not be about broad topics/questions.

b) Which platforms should be used?

- The meaning, the end goals and the process should be clearly explained to citizens ahead of launching the crowdsourcing event. Transparency is fundamental to the success of the process and to build confidence.
- Collective and mass intelligence can be found when the focus is on smaller issues than global issues. Large participation is not a guarantee of success. The number of participants should therefore not be considered as a criterion of success.
- The platform should be digital, free and easily accessible. The method is key to have an impact.
- Some questions raised by the participants remain unanswered: how to mobilise non-politicised, non-digitalised people? How to make it relevant to people from different countries and different languages?

- The importance of confidence-building was highlighted. Crowdsourcing requires mechanisms based on confidence and transparency principles. Crowdsourcing helps to strengthen those principles too. To do so, the involvement of key officials and political figures is fundamental. Trust towards the EU will return (or happen) with clearer and understandable decision-making processes involving citizens directly. Citizens need concrete and short-shot decisions with direct impact (e.g. roaming). Crowdsourcing should not be used as an excuse for less public action.
- Crowdsourcing requires trust to be successful. Trust is like love, there is no love but only proofs of love. Crowdsourcing works better with people seeking an electoral mandate. It requires a certain level of personalization of politics. In the EU case, the commissioners are not elected and the EU Parliament has no legal initiative power. In France, local representatives are more trusted than Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), and MEPs than EU Commissioners. The EU Commission representative is hardly known in France and absent from major political and public debates about EU topics in France. This situation contributes to a lack of understanding of the European decision-making process that is complex and dark to the mind of most French citizens. MEPs could be involved to be the faces of the process and collect EU citizens' views. This might require some trainings of MEPs to develop some skills.
- Crowdsourcing should be based on argument and not on the number of people who participate in the process. Quality versus Quantity. The quality of the argument should make the difference instead of the number of people supporting it. It is an argument of power versus the power of the argument. All lobbying groups can close their offices in Brussels and focus on writing quality argument on the platform. Like in the PopVox approach with the United States of America's Congress, lobbying groups could be registered and the arguments they support marked publicly and accordingly.
- The platform should show to the citizens where the crowdsourcing phase stands in the whole decision-making process. The crowdsourcing exercise can be used at the beginning of a process, in the middle or as a process on its own. The visibility of process and information should be maximum. An argumentative tree can be used to explain easily these processes and where the arguments proposed by citizens stand in the process.
- The platform should work with a two-stage level of consultation. First: collect arguments and secondly: a public debate with random citizens involved in the platform, MEPs and eventually Commissioners.

c) What timeframe should be favored?

- Citizens want to be involved in proposing topics and offer solutions to proposed topics.
- The Parlements et Citoyens' consultation takes two months. It requires another month before to explain the stakes and the process and another one, after for arbitration.
- The process for a pilot crowdsourcing exercise needs to be quite fast, a couple of months, otherwise citizens will not adhere to the process. Obviously, translation is an issue and add time and it is understandable.
- A key issue in crowdsourcing is to focus on "losers" of a public decision and target them on how they can be compensated.
- The European Commission should liaise with national Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to work faster in the member states.

IV. Evaluation and impacts of the conference

A. Pictures of the conference



Symposium: Crowdsourcing and policy makers, experiences and visions of elected officials



Panel: Crowdsourcing and civil society, towards a renewed collective intelligence



Workshop 1: How to improve the participation of "distant audiences"



Workshop 2: How to improve the participation of "distant publics"?

B. In The News

<http://www.courrierdesmaires.fr/70024/oui-aux-civic-techs-a-condition-de-ne-pas-delaissier-le-bistrot-du-village/>

C. Our Blog Communication

<https://parlement-et-citoyens.fr/blog/eucrowd-conference-de-paris>

D. Replies to the questionnaires

We collected 44 responses to the questionnaires at the end of the event. We classified them in the following order:

- Age and sex of respondents

Respondants	Men	Women	< 30 yo	30< >65 yo	> 65 yo
Numbers	19	25	18	21	5

- Do you consider yourself in any of the following situations

Situation	Yes	No
Socially vulnerable	2	42
Ethnic minority	0	44
Little informed	7	37
Living in a rural area	4	40
In economic difficulty	7	37
Person with special needs	2	42
Invalidity	2	42
Unemployed	3	41

- Did the conference allow you to deepen your knowledge of the European Union?

No	A little	Yes	Totally
8	21	13	2

- Did the conference make you aware of crowdsourcing's contribution as an innovative tool for online participation in the European policy-making process?

No	A little	Yes	Totally
5	13	17	9

Questionnaire transmitted during the conference:



EUCROWD anonymous questionnaire (in French)

Socio-demographic characteristics and knowledge of the European Union of the participants of the conference

- 1) Age

< 30	30 - 65	65 >
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- 2) Sex

Male	Female
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- 3) Do you consider yourself in any of the following situations:

Socially vulnerable	Ethnic minority
Uninformed	Living in rural areas
In economic difficulty	Person with specific needs
Invalidity	Unemployed

Others (specify) :

4) Did the conference allow you to deepen your knowledge of the European Union?

No A little Yes Totally

5) Did the conference make you aware of crowdsourcing's contribution as an innovative tool for online participation in the European policy-making process?

No A little Yes Totally

Thank you for taking a few moments to complete this questionnaire. These anonymous data are reserved solely for the use of the European Commission.