EUCROWD

European Citizens Crowdsourcing project

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EUCROWD EVENT REPORT

Open Democracy in Practice: Crowdsourcing

(Helsinki, Finland)

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www.avoinministerio.fi

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SECTION 1: DESCRIPTION OF EVENT

I. Information about event

Venue	Europe Hall, Malminkatu 16, 00100 Helsinki, Finland
Start date	Wednesday 11th October 2017
End date	Wednesday 11th October 2017
Title of event	»Open Democracy in Practice: Crowdsourcing«
Type of event	International conference-type workshop
No. of participants	47
No. of countries involved	7
Web site	https://www.eventbrite.com/e/open-democracy-in-practice-crowdsourcing-tickets-37594997650#
Event report	www.inepa.si/eucrowd/2018/02/28/report-eucrowd-event-helsinki/

II. Description of event

The event was facilitated by two professional facilitators who introduced the EUCROWD project and the rationale for the event. Right from the beginning, they encouraged the audience to participate along the day. The program started with two keynote speakers who presented their cases. First speaker was a Legislation Counsellor at the Ministry of Justice and second a senior business and technology advisor who had developed a novel data-driven crowdsourcing method for Tekniikan Akateemiset (TEK), a Finnish labor union. After the keynotes, the chairperson of Open Ministry presented an insight to the current situation of the openness of Finnish democracy.

The program continued with a facilitated experts' panel discussion. The experts represented Open Ministry, University of Turku, Sitra, Finnish think tank and Praxis, an Estonian research centre. The experts' opinions were divided about whether they saw crowdsourcing best fit to support representative democracy in limited purposes or rather if it was going to renew the existing system in a more profound way in the future.

Following the mid-day lunch break, afternoon started with the workshop session. The participants divided into seven groups, which were hosted by special guest hosts, who first presented their own experiences on crowdsourcing. After that, the groups discussed the questions provided by the project about the suitable policy areas, phase of policy process and tools for crowdsourcing. There were two circa 40 minute rounds of workshops which were jointly drawn together by the guest hosts.

In the end the organizers reminded the audience about the purpose of the workshop and the ECAS' case study and welcomed to attend Open Ministry's future activities. As the official part ended, the organizers thanked all the participants and opened the unofficial networking part of the event.

III. Citizens involvement during event and target groups presence

Citizens were involved in several ways. There was a idea wall in the lobby for the citizens to express their thoughts about crowdsourcing, alike the example set by DemSoc in the London event. Right in the beginning of the official program, the facilitators held a few minute participative part where they instructed the guests to introduce themselves to each other and tell about their experiences and expectations regarding crowdsourcing and the event.

In addition, citizens could ask questions and express their opinions throughout the program. Online, people discussed in Twitter with hashtag #eucrowd. Twitter moment from Helsinki event is available at https://twitter.com/i/moments/972413536906416128.

All of the target groups, young students, middle-aged, mostly professionals and seniors, pensioners were present. The middle group was the biggest and the younger and older were a little less represented. There were a little more men than women attending. Geographically both Finland and Europe were presented well, the distance between the place of residence from the northernmost and southernmost guest were over 3000 kilometres.

Many different stakeholders were attending. There were participants from government ministries, research organizations, universities, applied universities, researchers and students, municipal organizations, European union organizations, civil society organizations, companies and independent entrepreneurs.

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

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

Conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned from discussions and workshops.
Generally, participants saw great democratic potential with crowdsourcing. Usually, most of them felt that the earlier the stage in the policy process, the better. However, according to some, crowdsourcing could be also used in implementing phase.

Majority of the participants saw that crowdsourcing has potential to replace the shortcomings of representational democracy. On the other hand, a few experts disagreed and stated that the role of crowdsourcing will and should remain complementary to representative decision-making, as the responsibility, representativeness and quality of decisions may be compromised otherwise.

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

Generally, participants thought that a good topic for crowdsourcing is one that has a relation to the citizens' personal lives and is considered as an important and interesting topic.

One of the workshop groups pointed out that it's important to crowdsource big and important questions and make difficult topics more approachable. Another suggestion stated that it would be feasible to start with understandable topics.

According to a few participants, basically any policy field are suitable for crowdsourcing, as long as that will not breach basic rights.

To name individual topics that rose up in the discussion, participants suggested climate change, vehicle taxes, refugee policy, emission regulations, urban planning and genomic citizenship.

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

The keynote speakers and guest workshop hosts presented altogether nine cases and/or tools.

The first keynote speaker, Counsellor of Legislation, Jyrki Jauhiainen presented experiences in Ministry of Justice. They have organized a few crowdsourcing projects, with part of them connected to each other. Jauhiainen stressed the importance of problem identification which was the first phase and actually its own crowdsourcing campaign related to Limited Liability Housing Companies Act. In latter stages, they crowdsourced ideas and suggestions for both soft regulation as in guides for communication practices in housing companies and on the other hand for revising the respective law. They had used a commercial platform called IdeaScale and for branding purposes built an own web site on top of it. The result had worked well, reaching thousands of stakeholders, that can be regarded as outstanding result in Finland.

Second keynote speaker, senior advisor Petri Takala, representing Gofore and TEK, introduced a

novel method for crowdsourcing. The new approach is to collectively set the questions and collect answers to them as quantified value data from all the stakeholders. Using the data, simple statistics and mathematical formulas, the data shows what people agree and disagree on. That helps to point out which issues require more attention and which ones can be regarded unproblematic. The tools used in Takala's experiments were simply pen, paper and a spreadsheet program.

In addition to the keynote speakers, there were seven guest workshop hosts that presented their own cases (See Appendix 1). In city of Hämeenlinna, citizens were involved in urban planning via a public competition. Playing popular city simulation game "Cities Skylines", citizens were asked to propose how to plan two new neighbourhoods in city of Hämeenlinna.

Ehta Raha, an small NGO, presented their method and platform for crowdfunding for collaborative economy.

Pentaleap, a startup company, presented an app they are developing, called "Electorate". The aim is to make participating as easy as swiping left or right on mobile phones for the public.

National Institute of Health and Welfare presented Opasnet, a wiki-platform and a method called "shared understanding" to address complex decision-making situations.

Natural Resources Institute Finland presented how they are using citizen observations as knowledge base for decision-making in wildlife management using their own custom-built web site.

Estonian Cooperation Assembly presented a crowdsourcing case for renewing the pension system on their own platform rahvaalgatus.ee.

According to discussion, general considerations for the technological platform to be used for crowdsourcing on EU level were as follows. The platform should be scalable and be capable of receiving lots of contributions. It should be easily accessible and informative. Users should have the possibility for simple prioritising for example by up and down voting.

One viewpoint stated that it is more important to design the crowdsourcing process well and educate the participants to use whichever technology is chosen in the required way.

Another group suggested that instead of building new technology, the approach should be that EU should go where people already are and take advantage of existing technology.

As a last note in the joint workshop wrap-up conversation, a participant noted that their group had felt that the essential question is that how does the tool actually help people solve the actual problem and how does it support face-to-face meetings, collaboration and self-organisation.

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

There was a strong agreement that crowdsourcing should take place in an early stage of the policy process. Instead of simply answering agenda setting, the consensus held that crowdsourcing should take place when the questions are framed. It was seen that it would prevent locking to 'yes or no' setting. In practice, there should be opportunity for crowdsourcing both before and after the agenda setting. Participants saw that it could help widen the discussion and comprehend the big picture.

Crowdsourcing was also seen as a valuable way to raise citizen awarness on certain issues.

In addition to policymaking, participants suggested using crowdsourcing for policy implementation and evaluation as well.

One group suggested that there is a need for EU level vision and strategy for crowdsouring as a way for creating a new model for democracy. It could be helpful if there was own dedicated EU funding category for the purpose.

SECTION 3: EVALUATION OF EVENT

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

According to the answers to anonymous sociodemographc questionnaire, two thirds of the participants felt that the event had increased their understanding slightly and one third felt that the event had increased their understanding very or extremely [much].

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

According to the answers to anonymous socio-demographic questionnaire, one thirds of the participants felt that the event had improved their awareness slightly and two thirds felt that it had improved very or extremely [much].

Report submitted by Raimo Muurinen on February 9th 2018 in Tampere, Finland.

Appendix 1: Event Agenda

9.30 Morning coffee

10.00 Opening words
- Welcome, facilitators **Saara-Sisko Jäämies** & **Aira Ranta**
- Open Democracy in Finland, **Joonas Pekkanen**, chairman, Open Ministry

10.15 Case presentations
- Soft spot for regulation: crowdsourcing from beginning on issue identification, **Jyrki Jauhiainen**, Counsellor of Legislation, Ministry of Justice
- Making data driven decisions based on personal values, case Tekniikan Akateemiset. **Petri Takala**, senior advisor, digital business & government, Gofore & TEK

11.15 Facilitated Experts Panel Discussion
Possibilities and challenges for crowdsourcing in European, national and local levels.
- **Maija Jäske**, doctoral candidate, University of Turku
- **Joonas Pekkanen,** Open Ministry
- **Hannu-Pekka Ikäheimo**, foresight specialist, Sitra
- **Hille Hinsberg**, civil society & governance expert, Research centre Praxis (Estonia)

11.45 Lunch break

12.30 Workshop
Workshop hosts share their experiences in crowdsourcing. Learning from these cases is contributed to drafting European level crowdsourcing pilot.
- Gamified urban planning, **Juuso Heinisuo** & **Niklas Lähteenmäki,** City of Hämeenlinna
- Crowdfunding for Collaborative economy, **Kimmo Hokkanen**& **Tanja Korvenmaa,** Ehta Raha
- Possibilities for Crowdsourcing for Genomic Citizenship, **Heikki Saxén,** The Finnish Institute of Bioethics
- Electorate, The civic engagement app. Influence the decisions of your life, **Karri-Pekka Korolainen** & **Juha Repo**, Pentaleap oy
- Shared understanding for well-informed decision-making, **Jouni Tuomisto**, National Institute for Health and Welfare THL
- Citizen observations as knowledge base for decision-making in wildlife management, **Jani Pellikka**, Natural Resources Institute Finland
- Estonian People's Assembly on the Future of Ageing, crowdsourcing process for renewing the pension system built on the citizen initiatives platform rahvaalgatus.ee, **Teele Pehk**, foundation Estonian Cooperation Assembly

14.00 Workshop conclusion
Presenting workshop discussion and drawing conclusions.

14.30 Ending of program
Free to stay for refreshments, snacks and especially for getting to know awesome new people!

15.30 Closing the venue

Appendix 2: Photos

EUCROWD Helsinki morning, introducing to the person next to you.

(Photo by Raimo Muurinen)

Joonas Pekkanen, chairperson of Open Ministry, welcoming the participants and presenting insight to the situation of the openness of democracy in Finland.

(Photo by Raimo Muurinen)

Facilitated experts panel discussion. Joonas Pekkanen (left), Hannu-Pekka Ikäheimo, Hille Hinsberg and Maija Jäske. Aira Ranta as facilitator.

(Photo by Sonja-Maria Ignatius)

Workshop on sharing experiences in crowdsourcing and contributing to drafting European level crowdsourcing pilot.

(Photo by Raimo Muurinen)