EUCROWD

European Citizens Crowdsourcing project

(EUCROWD)

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EUCROWD EVENT REPORT

Crowdsourcing EU legislation: Taking Decisions With Citizens and Not For Them!

(Digital Democracy Day 2018, Brussels, Belgium)

European Citizen Action Service (ECAS)

http://ecas.org/

Brussels 27 February 2018

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SECTION 1: DESCRIPTION OF EVENT

I. Information about event

Venue	BIP, Rue Royale 2-4, 1000 Brussels
Start date	Tuesday 27 February 2018
End date	Tuesday 27 February 2018
Title of event	Crowdsourcing EU legislation: Taking Decisions With Citizens and Not For Them! (Digital Democracy Day 2018)
Type of event	Conference
No. of participants	71 (out of the 153 participants registered due to a general strike in Belgium)
No. of countries involved	20
Web site	http://ecas.org/event-report-digital-democracy-day-2017-2/
Event report	www.inepa.si/eucrowd/2018/03/20/report-eucrowd-event-brussels/

II. Description of event

The EUCROWD event in Brussels represented the closing conference of the project. The partners were invited to share their national experiences and ECAS presented a possible crowdsourcing pilot at EU level based on the national cases. The event was divided into two parts, each of them with a different panel.

The first panel discussed the 'Let's crowdsource! – Lessons learned from citizens at the national level' topic. Each speaker presented a national crowdsourcing platform, explaining how they work and the possibility using them at EU level. The presentations were followed by a session of questions where the speakers and the participants interacted and discussed a variety of topics related to crowdsourcing.

The second panel discussed the 'Building our future together! – Towards a crowdsourcing pilot at the EU level' topic. Here, ECAS presented the results of the project and the crowdsourcing pilot at EU level based on citizens' ideas. The other speakers discussed the potential and challenges of a crowdsourcing pilot at EU level and expressed their opinions on the right platform to be used. Some of them considered the use of a single EU level platform as limiting and not an efficient way to reach citizens because of language barriers and the technical nature of the subject chosen.

Moreover, according to the experts, crowdsourcing should be used as a complementary tool in order to guarantee a better participative democracy. In the last part of the event, there were questions asked to the panel and the discussions continued during the lunch break.

III. Citizens involvement during event and target groups presence

Throughout the event, the participants had the opportunity to actively engage in the discussions. During both sessions, they participated with questions to the speakers, which continued during the

coffee break and then at the end during the lunch break.

The participants included: students, NGOs, experts, entrepreneurs, European institutional representatives, academics, young people, etc.

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

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

The event organised by ECAS in Brussels was the final conference of the EUCROWD project, and was meant to present to EU stakeholders the results of the national reports:

• Citizenship, education, constitutional issues, environment and health are among the most interesting issues citizens would like to be consulted on;

• Crowdsourcing experiments could lead to better results if implemented in the first stages of the policy process because citizens' ideas are better collected at the beginning of the policy cycle;

• National platforms represent online tools that citizens can easily access in their own language, but an EU platform would be a better solution if the final goal is to carry out a crowdsourcing experiment at EU level on a specific topic.

The proposal for an EU crowdsourcing pilot elaborated by ECAS on the basis of the information collected during the project was the presentation of a pilot on 'air quality':

• Considering that 'environment' and 'health' are both competences of the EU and concern citizens' daily lives, a crowdsourcing experiment at EU level should be carried out on a subject able to encompass those two topics, hence 'air quality';

• With regard to the best timeframe in which the crowdsourcing exercise should take place, it was found that citizens' ideas should be collected during the first two stages of the policy process (Identification and Policy Formulation), asking citizens to first identify the problems they face in their daily lives because of air quality and then suggest how decision-makers should tackle those problems at EU level;

• A crowdsourcing pilot at EU level should collect ideas through a single EU platform which is open-source, multilingual, user-friendly, transparent, and includes different e-participation functions.

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

In the seven national events, a variety of areas of public concern emerged. Among the most interesting issues citizens would like to be consulted on are: citizenship, education, constitutional issues, the environment and health.

Crowdsourcing experiments could lead to better results if implemented in the first stages of the policy process because citizens' ideas are better collected at the beginning of the policy cycle. National platforms represent online tools that citizens can easily access in their own language, but an EU platform would be a better solution if the final goal is to carry out a crowdsourcing experiment at EU level on a specific topic.

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

In the first panel, the speakers presented their national platforms, underlining the strong points and presenting the challenges for the future. Platforms such as ManaBalss, Parlement & Citoyens, Netwerk Democratie, SciFY and CitizenLab are good examples of an efficient use of e-participation tools and their experience can be valuable for a future crowdsourcing platform.

All the speakers agreed that crowdsourcing is a suitable tool for engaging citizens to actively participate in the democratic life and the successful national platforms gave a good example of this approach. They all agreed on the creation of a single crowdsourcing platform at EU level. The majority said that the platform should only be specifically for the EU, while some said that it would be better to harmonise the national platforms with the EU one.

The general conclusion was that the single EU platform should be created including certain characteristics, such as being open-source, multilingual, user-friendly, transparent, and includes different e-participation functions

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

The findings of the project showed that crowdsourcing could lead to better results if implemented in the first stages of the policy process. During these phases, citizens' ideas are better collected. The earlier the consultation process begins, the more efficient and inclusive citizen participation will be. But it is also important to keep citizens informed during the entire process and give an evaluation at the end of it.

SECTION 3: EVALUATION OF EVENT

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

Most participants were EU stakeholders, hence they had a strong knowledge of the EU to start with. However, most of them mentioned in the evaluation questionnaire that, after the event, they felt that they knew more about the EU regarding e-participation tools and national platforms.

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 statistics of the evaluation questionnaire that participants were asked to fill in, 89% said that they felt they knew more about tools helping citizens' e-participation.

Also, 80% stated that they felt they knew more about how a citizen can participate in the shaping of policies and that they knew more about when a citizen can participate in the shaping of policies.

Report submitted by Elisa Lironi on 28 February 2018 in Brussels, Belgium.

Appendix 1: Event Agenda

9.00 – 9.30   Registration

9.30 – 9.45   Keynote Speech

- **Gilles Pelayo,** Head of Unit, Europe for Citizens Programme, European Commission

9.45 – 11.15   Panel 1: Let's Crowdsource! - Lessons Learned From Citizens at the National Level

Moderator: **Simon Delakorda**, Executive Director, Institute for Electronic Participation (INePA), Slovenia

- **Imants Breidaks**, Director, ManaBalss, Latvia
- **Nicolas Patte**, Parlement & Citoyens, France
- **Alexandros Tzoumas**, Technical Manager, Science For You (SciFY), Greece
- **Josien Pieterse**, Netwerk Democratie, Netherlands

11:15 – 11:30   Coffee break

11:30 – 12:50   Panel 2: Building Our Future Together! - Towards a Crowdsourcing Pilot at the EU Level

Moderator: **Assya Kavrakova**, Executive Director, ECAS

- **Elisa Lironi**, Digital Democracy Manager, ECAS
- **Anthony Zacharzewski**, Director, Democratic Society
- **Serge Novaretti,** Policy and Programme Manager, DG CONNECT, European Commission
- **Wietse Van Ransbeeck**, Co-Founder, CitizenLab
- **Stefan Schaefers**, Head of European Affairs, King Baudouin Foundation
- **Rasmus Øjvind Nielsen,** Researcher**,** Danish Board of Technology Foundation

12.50 – 13.00 Concluding remarks

13:00 – 14:00   Lunch

Appendix 2: Photos

https://www.facebook.com/pg/ecas.europe/photos/?tab=album&album_id=2036557583028174