Enhancing public trust in the European Project - Bridging the gap between promises and delivery in Digital Democracy

Presentation by Elisa Lironi

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Potential and Challenges of E-Participation in the European Union

STUDY ALERT

POLICY DEPARTMENT ON CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

June 2016

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
DG INTERNAL POLICIES

New publications available online

AFCO

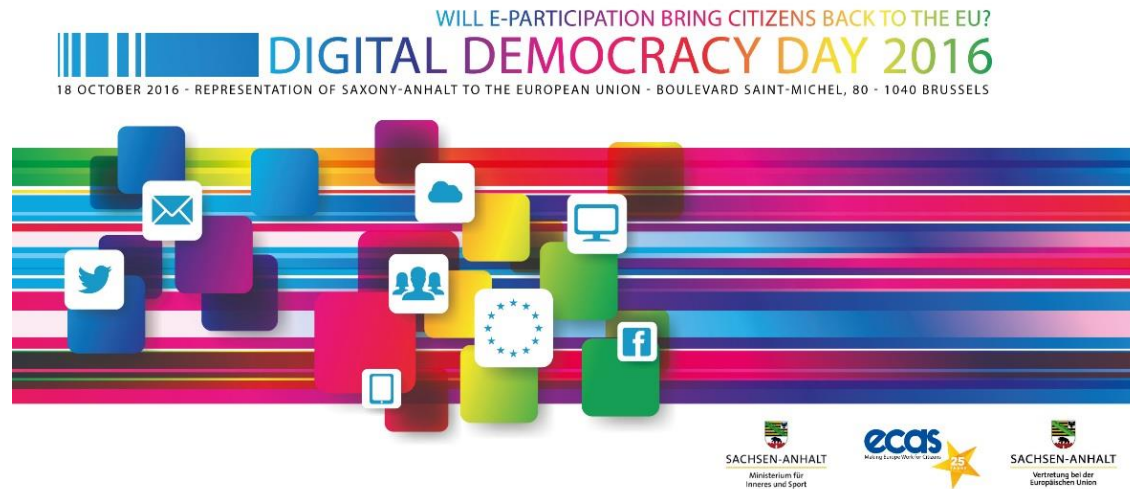**Potential and Challenges of E-Participation in the European Union**

Study

This study was commissioned and supervised by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the AFCO Committee. European countries have started exploring e-participation as a way to regain citizens' trust and revitalise European democracy by developing a more responsive, transparent and participatory decision-making process. The main objectives of the study are to identify best practices in EU Member States, describe e-participation tools and initiatives at the EU level, and explain the benefits and challenges of e-participation.

Link to the full study (.pdf)

What is Digital Democracy?

★ Digital Democracy (or eDemocracy) refers to the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to support democratic decision-making in order to enhance democratic institutions and democratic processes.

★ It relates to the online activities of governments (administration, representatives, political parties) and citizens.

WILL E-PARTICIPATION BRING CITIZENS BACK TO THE EU?
DIGITAL DEMOCRACY DAY 2016
18 OCTOBER 2016 - REPRESENTATION OF SAXONY-ANHALT TO THE EUROPEAN UNION - BOULEVARD SAINT-MICHEL, 80 - 1040 BRUSSELS

⭐ Three aspects of E-Democracy

E-Government

E-Transparency

G → **C**
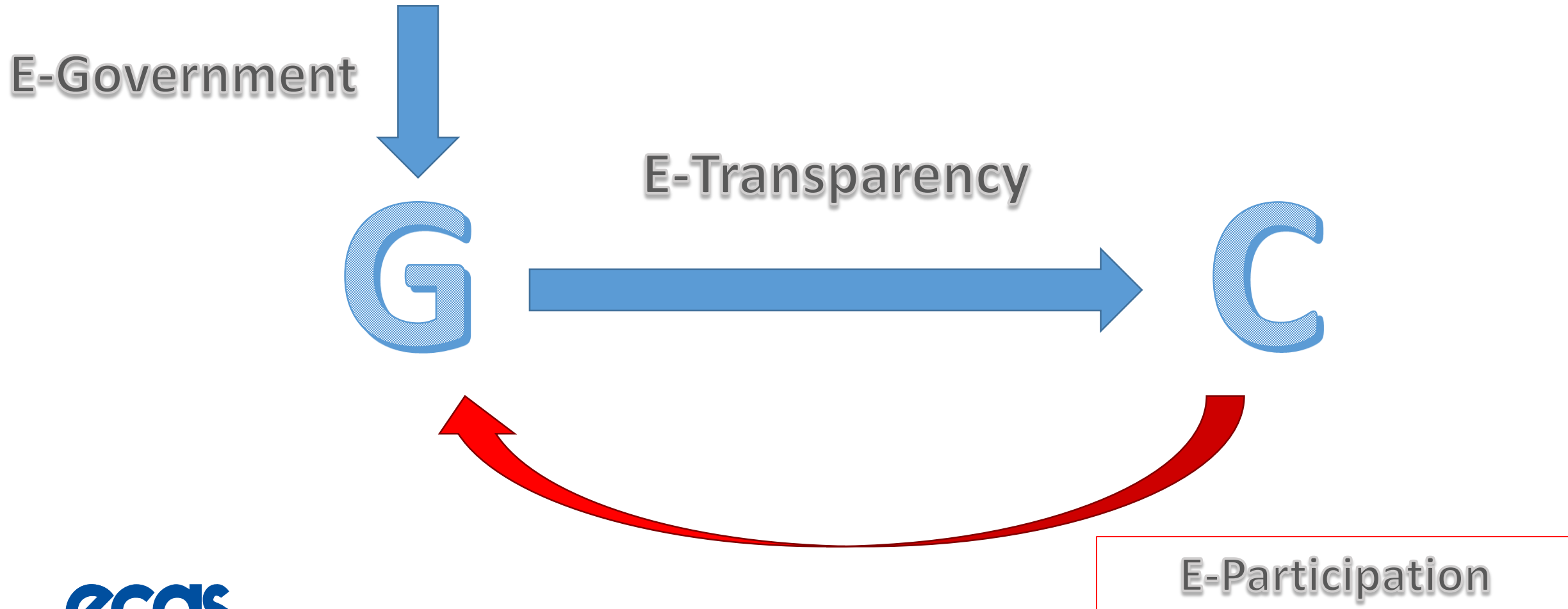
E-Participation

Digital Democracy is <u>NOT</u> meant to replace traditional forms of representative democracy, but rather to complement them by adding <u>elements</u> of citizen empowerment and more direct participation.

Young People and Technology

Case 1: Constitutional reform in Iceland

★ Step 1: 1000 citizens in a National Forum to explain the values they would want to see in the Icelandic Constitution

★ Step 2: 25 citizens in the Constitutional Council to produce a draft constitution to be passed in the Parliament; Openness by social media.

★ Step 3: Non-binding referendum, 49% turnout

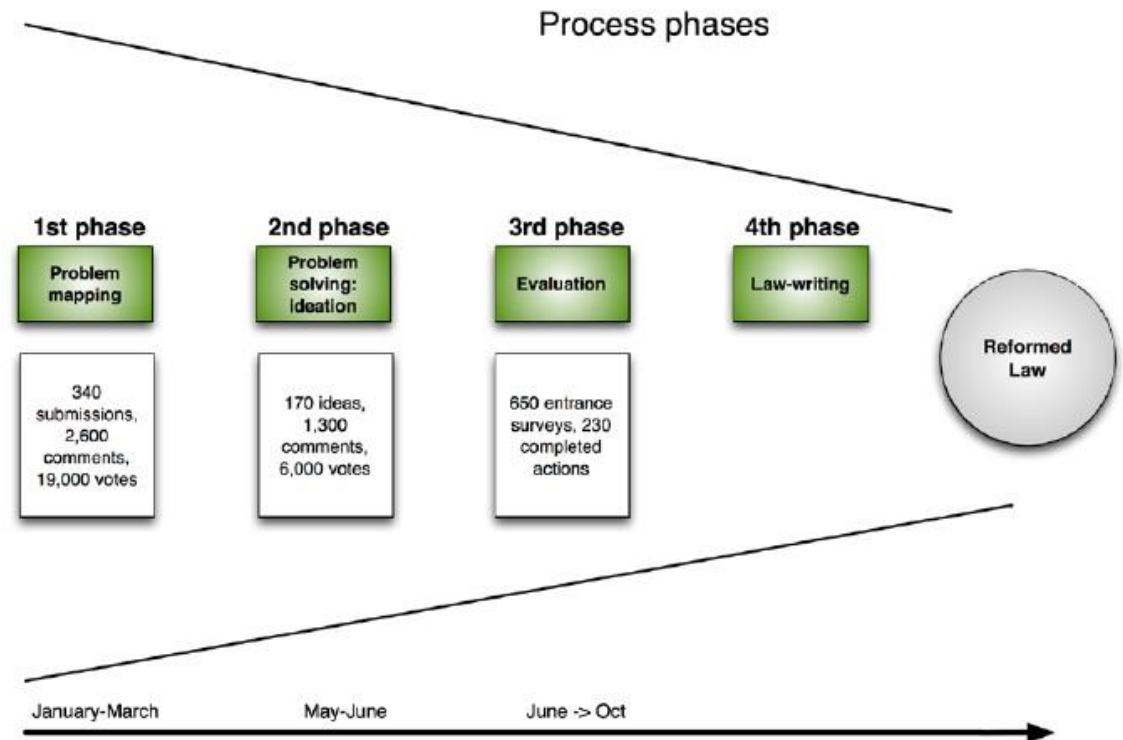Ultimately stalled in the Parliament!

Case 2: Open Ministry in Finland

★ Step 1: Finnish Parliament adopted the New Citizens' Initiative Act (50 000 signatures in six months would lead to a discussion in Parliament)

★ Step 2: Open Ministry was launched

★ Example: Off-Road Traffic Act

Never completed!

Process phases

1st phase	2nd phase	3rd phase	4th phase
Problem mapping	Problem solving: Ideation	Evaluation	Law-writing
340 submissions, 2,600 comments, 19,000 votes	170 ideas, 1,300 comments, 6,000 votes	650 entrance surveys, 230 completed actions	

Reformed Law

| January-March | May-June | June -> Oct | |

Case 3: European Citizens' Initiative

Summary of the ECI	
Proposed and submitted	66
Refused registration	20
Registered	46 (14 withdrawn, 20 insufficient signatures, 9 currently open, 3 successful)
Successful with min. 1 million signatures	3

0 ECIs have led to a legislative proposal!

EU E-Participation Tools

★European Citizens' Initiative

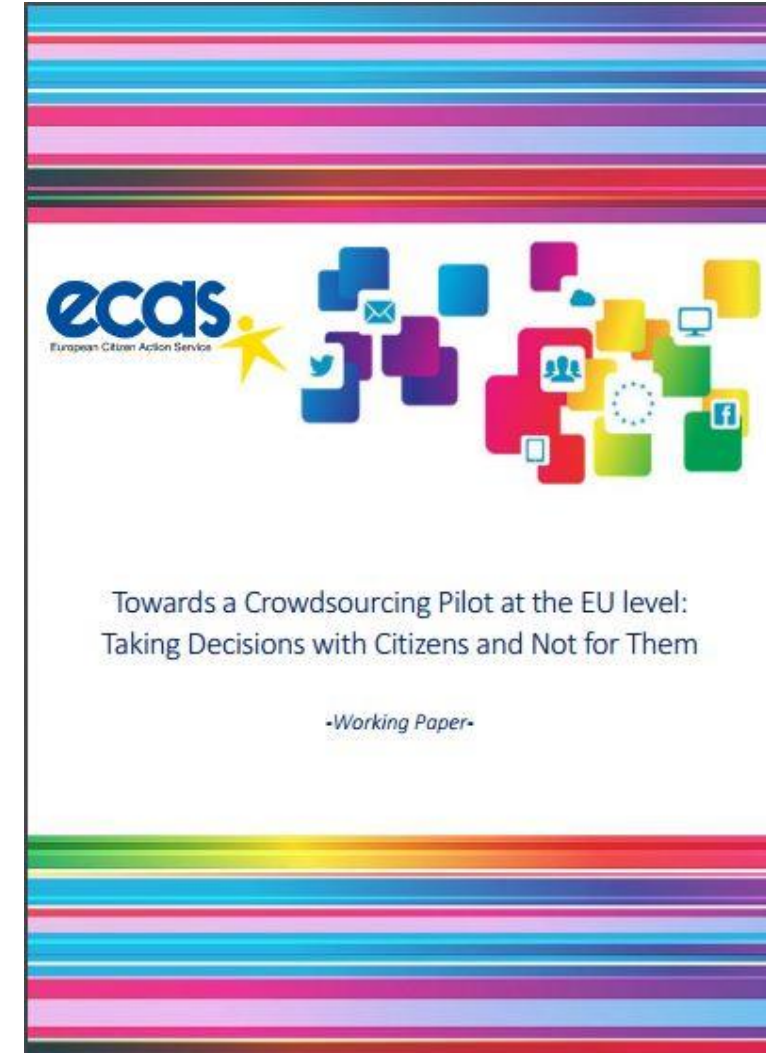★Online EU Public Consultations

★Petitions to the European Parliament

Additional Ways:

★Projects Co-Funded by the EU ex Puzzled by Policy, DEEP-linking Youth

★Futurium, DG CONNECT

★MEPs and E-Participation

Digital Democracy (2015 – 2020)
- Crowdsourcing Legislation -

★ Study – analysis of 27 examples of crowdsourcing legislation against a set of objectives to define a pilot at EU level.

★ EUCROWD project – verifying findings through national events and focus groups.

★ Facilitate a network of interested organisations and stakeholders in the Member States to multiply efforts and increase the impact of digital democracy in the EU.

★ Launch a pilot on crowdsourced legislation at EU level.

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European Citizen Action Service

Towards a Crowdsourcing Pilot at the EU level:
Taking Decisions with Citizens and Not for Them

-Working Paper-

27 Cases of Crowdsourcing – *Work in Progress*

Objectives	Considered Successful	Unsuccessful	No Data
Enhanced citizens participation in policy-making	23	0	4
Ensured full representativeness	11	5	11
Engaged youth	11	2	14
Ensured a learning process	16	0	11
Ensured innovative ideas for policy-making based on the 'wisdom of the crowd'	23	1	3
Increased political legitimacy/trust	20	0	7
Kept citizens' faith in the crowdsourcing method to enhance democracy	18	1	8

The Case for a Crowdsourcing Pilot at EU level

Problem

62% of Europeans believe their voice does not count in the EU.

41% of EU citizens want to influence decision-making directly.

Needs

Effective mechanisms for engaging citizens (including youth, non-formalised and/or non-mainstream civic groups) in the process of co-producing decisions for Europe.

Strategy

Apply the crowdsourcing method as a complementary tool to expand the number of contributors to EU policy-making, remove potential barriers to participaiton and "engage the unengaged" throughout Europe.

Assumptions

- Political 'Window of Opportunity'

- Experience and lessons learnt

- National partners

- EU level alliances

- Potential for engaging youth and the 'unengaged'

Best Practice Research

- A deliberative tool: all contributions publicly available in real-time

- 'Wisdom of the crowd' – hidden expertise revealed

- Strong learning curve

- Increased legitimacy

Influential Factors

- Committed decision-makers

- Informed selection of the subject

- Civil Society support infrastructure (to ensure citizens' awareness and diversity)

Crowdsourcing – A way to enhance public trust?

What I learned	To be discussed
EU citizens want more influence on decision-making	Would citizens participate more if they had other ways to influence decision-making?
Limits of EU e-participation tools (ECI, consultations…?)	Would crowdsourcing be a good method to involve citizens in EU decision-making?
The 'wisdom of the crowd' can lead to innovative ideas	In which EU policy field could this wisdom be applied? (emotions+reason)

Thank you!

elisa.lironi@ecas.org

@ElisaLironi

ecas.org