



Barriers to citizen engagement

Results from PROSO citizen panels and expert workshop

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19.06.2017, Brussels



Horizon 2020

» Structure of the WP

Oct/Nov 2016
**First National
Citizen Panel
Meetings**

1-2 Dec 2016
**Expert
workshop
in Sofia,
Bulgaria**

Feb 2017
**Second
National Citizen
Panel Meetings**

June 2017
**Multi-Actor
Conference**



- » Citizens see the small number of participants in engagement formats as being insufficient to legitimately represent societal perspectives and achieve impact.



- 1) Missing perspectives (such as disadvantaged groups, local perspectives, etc.), thus a potential for skewed results;
 - 2) The results might not be considered valid due to the lack of representativeness, thus, the impact of the engagement would be rather limited.
- » Challenges in recruitment:
 - Citizens might fear they lack knowledge or deliberative skills
 - lack of sufficient resources, thus, inviting those who are “easy to reach”.

- » Citizens lack interest in scientific issues, especially in the early stages of development of a particular technology.
- » Timing of engagement – important to incorporate citizens’ views early on in the development of a particular technology.
- » Engaging citizens in the later stages of R&I processes - citizens might lose interest (engagement serves as “alibi” and a “box ticking exercise” to legitimise decisions)
- » Challenges of early engagement:
 - Citizens don’t see the relevance of the subject to their own lives.
 - Lack of public debate and media attention to the respective scientific areas.

» Citizens feel unprepared and/or insufficiently knowledgeable to participate in engagement activities on R&I topics.



» Why?

- Higher cognitive abilities required.
 - Fearful attitude towards scientific issues and taking part in scientific discussions.
- » When citizens are given a more active role and agency in the engagement processes and play a part in producing R&I outcomes, engagement becomes more meaningful to them.

- » Citizens mistrust the intents of engagement procedures

- » The framing power of engagement organisers
- » Mistrust towards the intents of engagement procedures
 - Manipulated or incomplete information provided by experts
 - Engagement with a commercial end
 - “box-ticking exercise”
- » Cultural specifics
- » The role of communication

- » Citizens do not trust that their results will have an impact on R&I decision-making processes
- » Lack of linkage of engagement activities to R&I decision-making processes
- » Practitioners' incapacity to demonstrate substantial impacts resulting from engagement

» Thank you!



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PROSO is financed by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme, under Grant Agreement no 665947 and runs from January 2016 to February 2018.