



THE EUCOMMET PROJECT

Representation and Deliberation
REDIRECT General Meeting
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UNIVERSITÀ
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1240

DIPARTIMENTO DI
SCIENZE SOCIALI,
POLITICHE E COGNITIVE
— DISPOC



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 959234

1. The Project



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Our Goals

MAKE DELIBERATION WORK

embedding deliberative practices in **European countries at all levels** (local, national, European)

DELIBERATION FOR DEMOCRACY

explore how deliberation & participation can help

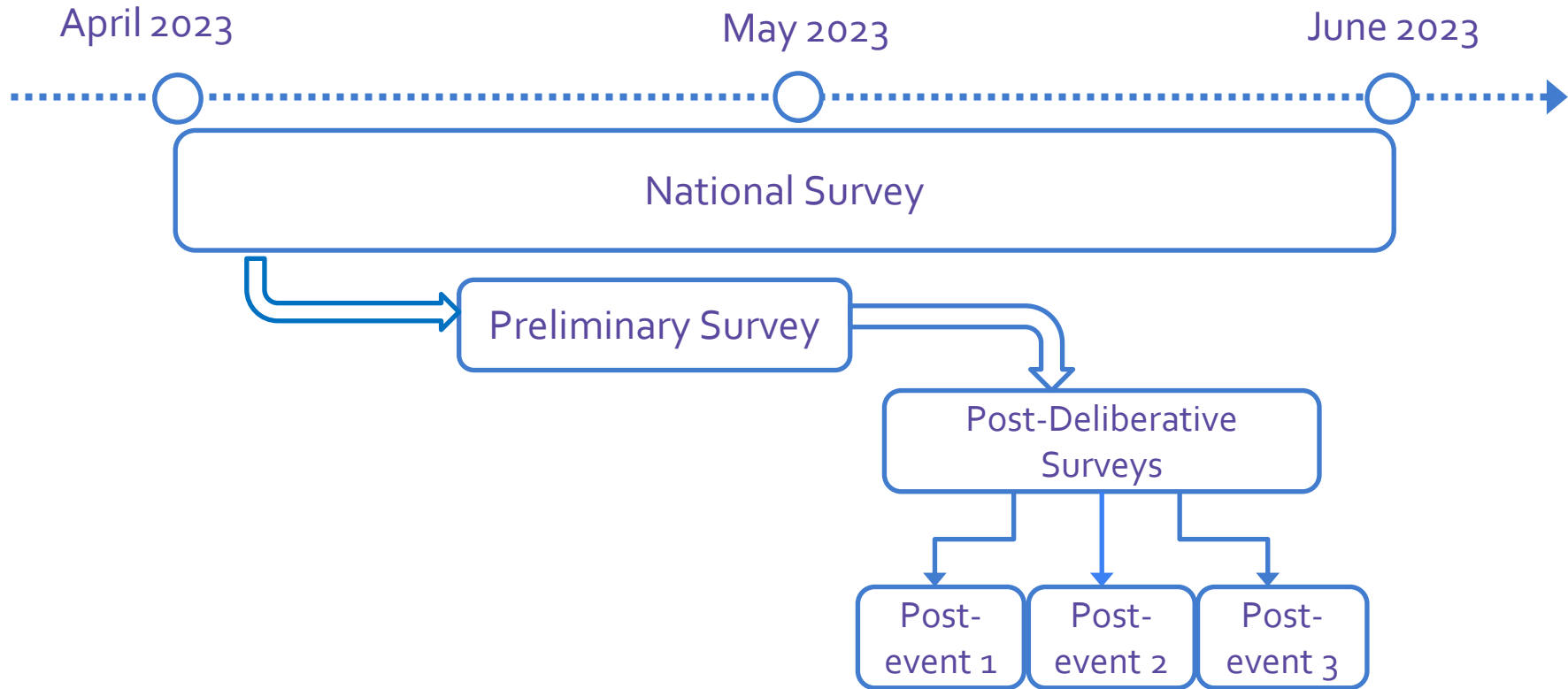
- *reduce **polarisation***
- *strengthen **European identity***
- *encourage **inclusiveness***
- *foster citizens' **reflectivity***
- *narrow the **representative gap** between policymakers and citizens*

INNOVATE ON DELIBERATION

developing a **platform for online deliberation** conceived as a set of participatory spaces and *flexible, interactive, easy-to-use, and scalable up tools* for deliberative events

2. The Experiment

Overlap in timing and subjects



The EUCOMMEET Deliberative Experiment

- For 9 days between May and June 2023 participants were asked to engage in the following activities:
 - 2 video-conferences (1.5 hours each)
 - 1 plenary event (50 minutes)
 - a text-based forum (for at least 15 minutes per day over 6 days when the forum is open).
- One could access the online platform where the event took place from different devices (computer, tablet, smartphone)

The EUCOMMEET Deliberative Experiment

- Three types of event:
 - Discussing the problem of sustainability at the “local” (city), “national”, and “European” levels
 - They were assigned to different groups of varying heterogeneity with respect to the opinions on protecting the environment (though the assignment was also the result of a match between opinions and time availability)
 - Groups they were assigned also varied depending on the type of moderation (either human or automated)

Records from the debates

EuComMeet
mini-publics

Synchronous debates
(Local and national
levels)



Videos +
transcripts in original
language (word files)

(some missing videos →
facilitators' reports)

Asynchronous forum
(National and European
levels)



Csv file with forum's chats

Synchronous EU plenary
(European level)



Csv file with forum's chats

3.

The Outputs



RESULTS



Main experiment | data release

QUANTITATIVE DATA

- Elite survey in 6 countries
- National mass survey in 5 countries
- Experiments surveys (pre-post) in 5 countries
- Statistics on participation

QUALITATIVE DATA

- Transcriptions of Sync and Async. Sessions
- Reports by facilitators and observers
- Focus groups and in-depth interviews with participants

EUCOMMEET PLATFORM





EuComMeet
DELIBERATIVE SPACES FOR DEMOCRACY

4. Challenges and Lessons Learned



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MAIN CHALLENGES

- PARTICIPATION
- DESIGN
- PLATFORM
- RESULTS





MAIN CHALLENGES: PARTICIPATION



What if we give a party and nobody comes?

People does not want to participate and when they do, they drop off quickly.

CASES ANALYSED- CHARACTERISTICS

		Participants		Non-participants	Representative sample of the population
	FORMAT	Overall sample*	Taking part in all deliberative activities/rounds		
EuroPolis	IN-PERSON	348	348	2,715	1,321
e-Voice	VIRTUAL	484	239	2,128	21,193
EuComMeet	VIRTUAL	653	306	2,704 (+ 7,388**)	17,855

* For online events, this includes those who attended only one or part of the scheduled sessions.

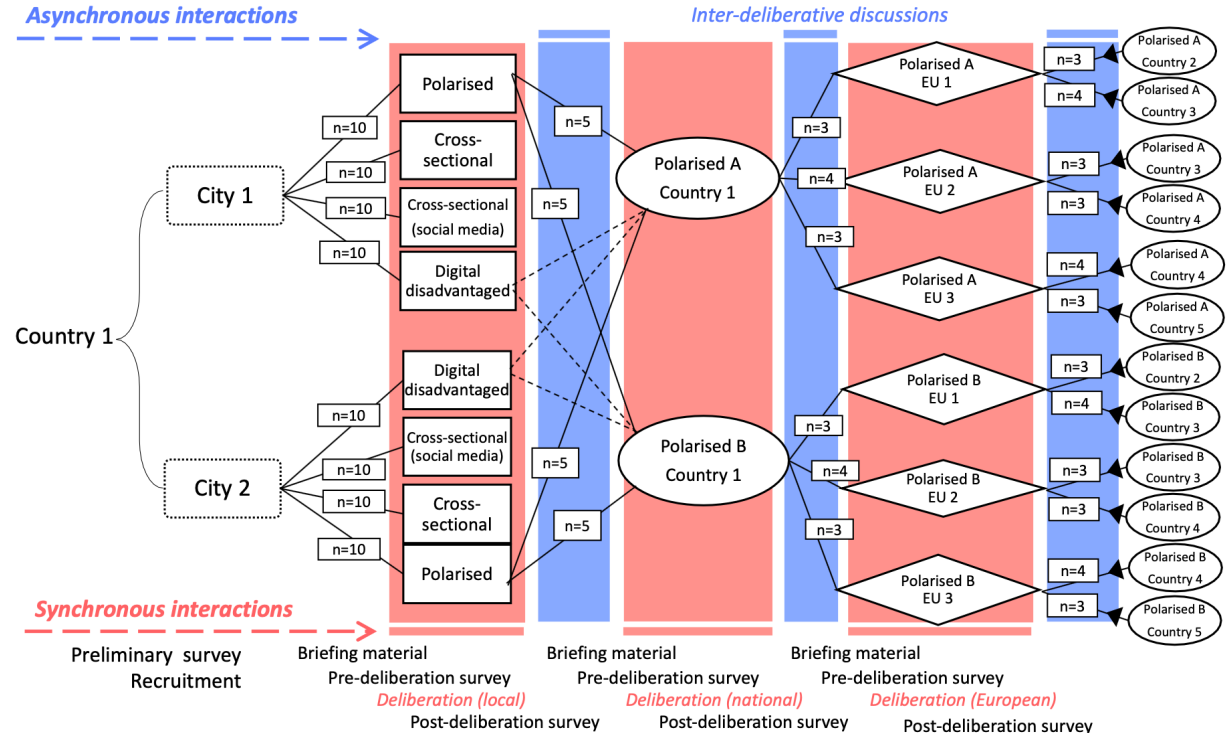
** Those who declined the invitation to take part in the event since the beginning. Only a limited set of socio-demographic variables is available.



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MAIN CHALLENGES: DESIGN

- Too many variables to work with.
- Alternating between asynchronous and synchronous sessions proved effective;
- However, during asynchronous exchanges, participants tended to focus on topics of personal interest rather than the assigned discussion themes.





MAIN CHALLENGES: PLATFORM



- The platform is open source and it is improved regularly
- Interdisciplinarity is not easy: complexity of interactions between social scientists, computer scientists and computational linguists.
- Technological developments progress at a faster pace than our ability to put them at work.





MAIN CHALLENGES: RESULTS



- The policy-makers' paradox: while policy-makers have limited confidence in citizens' ability to deliberate, they place high expectations on mini-publics.
- Cross-country differences were greater and more influential than initially expected.
- There was a wide range of participant backgrounds (e.g., people living in remote areas or with disabilities), although most were already engaged with climate issues
- Rich and diversified set of attitudinal and behavioral data
- Possibility of combining organic and designed data (visual and textual information in combination with attitudinal data).



WHAT'S NEXT? FUTURE CHALLENGES

- Multilingual deliberation deserve more attention and more opportunities are opening thanks to AI
- Compatibility between frontier's hedge technology and GDPR requirements
- How can automated tools support facilitation and what relationships with the human organisational team?
- What exactly do citizens expect in order to be satisfied with impact? What makes citizens satisfied of the experience?
- What is more relevant for decision makers: how decisions are taken, or which decisions are taken?
- Fine tuning the trade off between flexibility and usability of tools and platforms



THANKS FOR THE ATTENTION

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