

ESTONIAN CITIZENS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE EU REPORT OF A QUALITATIVE STUDY IN ESTONIA

SarrPoll

This Synthesis presents the results of a group discussion held in Tallinn on 7 December 2013 on the subject of citizens' involvement in the European Union. It is part of a wider citizenship project managed by Notre Europe – Jacques Delors Institute, with the support of national partners of the European Qualitative Network coordinated by OPTEM, on behalf of the European Commission.

Introduction

This report presents the results of a group discussion held in Tallinn on 7 December 2013 on the subject of citizens' involvement in the European Union.

It is the Estonian section of a pan-European qualitative study involving 18 of the member states.

In each country the study was carried out by the national partner of the European qualitative network coordinated by optem: in Estonia by sarrpoll.

This study forms a part of a wider citizenship project managed by Notre Europe – Jacques Delors institute on behalf of the European commission.

BOX 1 ► Composition of the group of respondents

Gender	Age
Women: 5	20-34 years: 3
Men: 4	35-49 years: 3
	50-60 years: 2

Social class

Lower-middle social class: 4 (professions of head of household: truck driver in a local social centre, ventilation fitter, cook in a canteen, salesperson in a publishing house)

Higher-middle class: 5 (professions of head of household: project manager in a translation agency, directress of a local post office, leader of a regional boy scouts (young eagles) section in Estonian defense league, sales directress of a cosmetic brand in Estonia, freelance consultant in labour law and liquidation of companies).

Political opinion

The respondents were also recruited so that diverse political opinions were represented in the group.

1. Initial thoughts about the European Union

1.1. Spontaneous associations with the European Union

Participants were invited to list the **mental associations, images, and perceptions that first came to mind** regarding the European Union (EU).

- Firstly the (far away) **institutional aspect** of EU was mentioned – “big buildings in Brussels”, “Brussels itself” – shaping an image of a big colossal dehumanised mechanism: ‘them’.
- Secondly, **close to home positive manifestations of EU**: repair of Tallinn- põlva motorway with the aid of EU – what ‘they’ have done for ‘us’.
- Thirdly the **link Estonians (‘us’) have with EU (‘them’)** emerged: Estonian members of European parliament (MEP), especially the name of one of them Indrek Tarand. It was explained that these are the Estonian MEPs who raise questions, important to Estonians, in EU.
- After, some **negative connotations** surfaced, though they were not widely shared among the participants:
 - 45 million euro fine for excessive sugar stocks,
 - Possible new fine for Estonia for exceeding milk quota with 5-6% this year,
 - Baltic farmers protest against inequality of the EU’s common agricultural policy (an old soviet-era tractor was sent to Brussels).
- Finally, **popular topics in the press at the moment**: migration to sepa starting from 1 February, cross-border money transfers, and the common currency, euro, that Latvia was to adopt in several weeks after focus group discussion, were mentioned.

It is interesting to note that a **manifest difference between 'us', Estonia and Estonians, and 'them', EU**, could be observed among the participants of the focus group. This opposition softened in the course of the group discussion, but remained observable until the end, especially among certain participants (mainly lower-middle social class).

1.2. Positive and negative aspects relating to the European Union

When probed further on **positive connotations**, free movement and better quality of life were mentioned:

- **Travelling:** made easier, no visas, no queues to cross borders, medical help abroad, no need to change money.
- **Studying and working abroad:** even though there are no formal obstacles to go and work and live and study in other European countries, which was perceived as something very positive, several participants stressed that they themselves would not use this opportunity because of their strong connection to Estonia and Estonians. Some participants strongly expressed how living abroad would be out of question for them (mostly lower-middle social class, different ages). One young participant (higher-middle social class) admitted, on the contrary, that she has even searched for a job in Brussels.
- **Feeling as European citizen** when visiting non-European countries: realisation of the difference in quality of life. To be noted that for most of the participants comparison with other countries was the only moment when they felt as European citizens. One young participant felt positively European also through Greece's bailout as it made her feel safe about Estonia's future as well, assuring her that no matter what no member is left alone.
- **Also** cross-border projects and EU grants to repair and construct infrastructure and to boost development were mentioned. These grants help us catch up with the "normal world", explained one middle-aged participant.

When further questioned on more **negative aspects related to EU**, excessive regulations and standardization, Greek problematic and payments to EU were stated:

- **Overregulation** of certain fields to the extent that it is seen as "foolishness that drives from boredom of deputies in EU". Notion that important

topics, that really could make a difference, are set to background to deal with nonsense.

- **Standardization** of member states, unwillingness to take into account cultural, historical and geographical differences while working out new legislations and regulations.
- **Greece and Italy** and countries alike with irresponsible budgetary policies force careful Estonians and Scandinavians to pay more. That doesn't feel just to everybody. Two participants (older, lower-middle social class) considered **Estonia's contribution to esm too big because it's paid** at the expense of Estonians' well-being.
- **Fear** that even though today we receive from EU more than we give, that will change one day, and **Estonia will have to start to pay much more than it gets**. Several participants didn't see that as a positive thing while several others stayed more optimistic and believed that when that day comes, Estonia will have also the means to help others, less fortunate members, unselfishly.

The overall image of EU tended to be rather **positive**, several participants even stating that it has ameliorated during past years. *"I have no negative opinion about EU, in fact my opinion is turning more and more positive"*, declared one young guy (lower-middle social class). One older participant (also lower-middle social class) mentioned that before Estonia became a member of EU, she was against the integration, but now, having become in direct contact with EU (by travelling, media, grants), she has changed her opinion, and is happy Estonia is one of 28 member states, though still remaining critical about some aspects of it.

In order to sooth the mentioned negative aspects participants explained that the **Estonian government is also to blame in EU's negative image**. Notably for two reasons:

- **Local officials too keen to apply all the EU regulations indisputably, letter by letter**, leaving no room for flexibility. They accused Estonian officials of interpreting directives more severely than needed, visits and observations in old member states had confirmed that. "The only ones who comply with all the EU regulations and laws are the Estonians!" Ironically summed it up one young male participant.
- **The government's selection of laws** to adopt is misleading the public opinion about EU work, giving an impression that EU only deals with

"stupid" regulations and unnecessary topics at the expense of important issues like people and their well-being, diminution of inequalities, poverty, equal salaries for women and men, etc.

Degree of interest and involvement in EU related issues were both rather moderate among the participants.

- **Interest:** participants stated to have no particular interest in EU related issues; they more consume what is given to them through daily news. Info runs through the background; their interest stops at keeping themselves informed of the most current affairs by headlines. They themselves search rarely, rather never, info themselves. It can happen only if there is a necessity, never just for interest.
- **Involvement:** European topics and everyday life seem two completely separate things for them. Some see being **European as opposite to being Estonian**; for others one doesn't exclude the other. As already mentioned above, they mostly feel involvement - feeling European - when comparing themselves with others while travelling, but while at work or living their everyday life they don't tend to consider themselves Europeans, at least they don't think about it and therefore they don't have great involvement in European issues as well. The only time they feel their involvement in everyday things is when they go to vote.
- **Two people** mentioned, though, that they feel the **involvement** in their everyday life, as one has to deal with European labour law directives at his work and the other interacts daily with various European clients at work. She felt also that as European laws protect her in her everyday life, she is involved.
- **Others** expressed here and throughout the focus group discussion that they **don't feel like their voice matters** "like a small drop in a wide ocean", even Estonia's voice, ensemble, was not believed to have much influence and power, therefore their sense of involvement was less important.

2. Sources of information and knowledge on the EU

People gathered in the groups were requested to name **sources** from what they get **information about the EU**.

- **Traditional information channels:** television, notably it's' news and debate shows, and

newspapers and their online versions. Radio was not mentioned.

- **New information channels:** social media, notably Facebook, and comments on online news sites.
- **Informal channels:** family and friends. Latter strongly related to social media as a lot of communication on that level has moved to internet.
- **Other channels:** EU related websites like epso and EU homepage, EU legislation system with what one participant is forced to interact daily at work
- **Authorities and opinion leaders:** people who are believed to have deeper knowledge, not just opinions, of EU related topics.

Participants tended to get their **information simultaneously from different sources**, mainly traditional information channels like television (mostly), newspapers and their online websites. Online newspapers and especially their comments seemed to be a very common way to get comparative information: in order to form one's own opinion on a matter, people tended to compare the info, given with the comments added to the news story, with the info of official news.

The degree of diversity of the sources seemed to depend on age group and social class

- Older participants seemed to be satisfied with fewer sources (mainly TV and newspapers).
- Higher-middle class workers seemed to use a wider range of sources to get their information and shape their opinion (social media, news sites in different languages).

Having mostly stated, as mentioned above, to have no particular interest in EU related issues, participants, expectedly, couldn't either specify any difference in the nature of information obtained by these channels. They consume what they stumble on (often without further analysis) and follow current top headlines.

Television was stated as **the most trustworthy** and writing press as **the least trustworthy channel**.

- **Television** was the most credible source of information for most (especially aged) participants. Differentiation between national channel etv and commercial channels (tv3, kanal2) was made, expressing strong trust towards the former's news and debate shows and little trust towards the latter's mostly entertainment oriented shows and news. It is important to note that etv is

entirely a governmentally funded public channel, that has no right to show any commercials, has a responsibility to develop educational and culture oriented programmes and be socially and culturally responsible.

- One participant explained that trust in information obtained by television, also depends on the nature of information: concerning EU one could trust (e) TV news 100%, as one can be sure that the channel has access to good sources on the matter; whereas news concerning the wider world should be consumed with caution, as access to initial sources is less obvious.
- To illustrate the trust and influence, one participant explained how he had changed his opinion on the necessity to help Greece to becoming in favour of helping by following debates on the subject on TV and written media.
- **Printed press**, on the other hand, was widely criticized for its politically biased articles and its tendency to create scandals, exaggerate and manipulate with facts in order to sell better; and therefore was seen as the least trustworthy source of information.

One younger participant admitted that she doesn't trust media at all and stressed, with one other young participant, that they can only talk about their opinions on matters concerning EU, they wouldn't call it knowledge what they get from media, as all info is mediated by someone, therefore presented with selection of facts and charged with their own interpretations of the matter; therefore it's false to talk about **knowledge - opinions** would be a more proper term.

One could notice a **slight trend in media trust within the focus group**: the younger the participant the more sceptical he/she tended to be towards media in general and the more he/she tended to use different sources for information: social media, cross-border communication, active internet search, friends and family, comparison of info in different languages. Television and newspapers were of secondary rank.

3. Questions regarding the future of the EU

Concerning the future of EU, participants were invited to **name aspects they wished to know more about**.

Interest in **EU motives in general and their development plans for next 10 years** was expressed. Following questions were posed:

- Where does EU see itself in 10 years? Is it headed towards a unitary state? Will Estonians stay independent?
- How will national budgets be put together? To what extent will EU control Estonian budget in 10 years? Will Estonia be forced to get approval for its budget from EU in the future?

Common agreement in the group was that they don't even think that European officials in Brussels know the answers to these questions, especially considering that new elections are approaching and current trends could consequently radically change. Therefore they **don't even expect to get answers to their questions**, though they would like to.

Further, participants were asked to name **principal challenges EU will have to face in the future**.

- As EU mostly associated to the participants with far-away issues or questionable regulations, the "real future challenges" for participants, like unemployment, quality and cost of life, and low salaries, were uniquely considered as national matters, which Estonian government has currently sacrificed in order to please EU and deal with 'their' problems. Again, very clear distinction between 'us' the Estonian people and 'them' the EU.
- When probed further to name major challenges facing EU, it took them long to answer. One participant expressed that in his opinion there are **no major challenges** - the only challenge is to **continue the same way**. Questioned still a bit further, two issues were mentioned:
- **Necessity to decide/agree on the essence of EU**: what is the unifying force between the countries? Do we need a unifying European identity? Are we a family or just allies? Do we need EU for protection from Russian military power or fear of Chinese economic power or for something more emotional? How better integrate member states?
- **Greek debt. and its' influence on EU**: will they ever pay back? How? When? How will EU force certain mainly south-European countries

to adopt austerity and prevent future Greece-like bailouts? How will EU manage to sooth the differences between Scandinavian and south-European countries in these issues?

Participants considered themselves to be **poorly informed** about matters concerning future development plans and current discussion topics. They considered themselves **more** or less **informed** about already voted issues and new legislation, but found themselves on complete dark side concerning future trends and on-going discussions in European parliament and European commission.

Reasons for such lack of information were seen both on **internal and on external level**:

- Surprisingly it was **laziness**, not lack of interest in the matter, which was mentioned while interrogated about not searching for such information on its own. Participants found it very important to be informed about current and future trends and politics in EU. They admitted that they are just too lazy to make the effort.
- **The Estonian republic** was also held responsible as participants considered that it should be the state that distributes such information about EU to its citizens.
- *"some of such decisions are made in secret meetings, as is common in politics, therefore simple citizens won't have access to such information"*, was pronounced by one participant, and not argued against by the others.

Participants **didn't seem to be too concerned about future challenges facing EU** because they didn't feel any power to change anything and because more urgent/important problems are facing Estonians in the near future. As difficulties and problems come as secondary. EU is not 'us' for participants; therefore 'our' (Estonians') problems are not the same as 'their' (EU') problems, which further means that 'their' problems and challenges are less important and don't worry us very much, especially when 'our' problems and challenges are so big at the moment. Still they would like to be more informed about EU ('their') future plans and politics as it will also concern Estonians ('us') in the end.

4. Current means of expression of citizens' views

When asked to describe how they feel their voice **can be heard** on matters concerning EU, participants gave spontaneously **two main possibilities**, depending on the nature of the reason to express themselves:

- **Through Estonian MEPS**: if it was an individual problem or a question of personal interest, they would send an email to one of Estonians' MEPS. Indrek Tarand was singled out as somebody they believe would react.
- **Get to the traditional media**: if it was a collective problem or a wish to express one's opinion on how things should be done, they would try to get media attention.
- Among some **ways to get media** attention three possibilities were mentioned spontaneously:
 - Public meetings with slogans
 - Open letter to all media channels
 - Opinion article in a newspaper

Other spontaneously mentioned **ways** were:

- One participant found that the only way to have one's voice heard is to have acquaintances working in European parliament or to "know somebody who knows somebody who knows somebody" there, as otherwise nobody would take interest and listen to a simple Estonian. One needs **to have connections to make his/her voice heard**.
- Set up one's own **candidature for European parliament elections**. This option none of the participants would ever choose themselves though.
- When probed, **European parliament elections** and **Estonian government officials** also seemed relevant ways to express their opinion.

It is important to note that **participants**, while asked to name ways of expression spontaneously, were **divided in two**:

- **Those who could easily name several ways to express themselves** (mainly younger and of upper-middle social class) if they had the need or if they had something very important to say. They hadn't had anything so important to say so far.
- **Those who thought that there is no point to say anything** (mainly older lower-middle social class) because nobody will be interested in a simple person's opinion and problems. This sentiment of distance and alienation of power and

Europe was expressed very strongly by one participant, who didn't even consider that European parliament elections offer her an opportunity to have her voice heard because of Estonia's small number of MEPs, who have no power to make their voice heard in EU. Estonia is just too small and insignificant for that.

All the participants considered having interesting/important things (on wide European scale) to say as a main reason for one to make an effort to get one's voice heard in Europe. Simpler expressions of opinion, like reason to speak up, came secondary, if at all. Therefore none of the participants had ever felt any special need to make above mentioned efforts to get their voice through concerning some EU matter.

So one could conclude that the four principal reasons for Estonians to stay passive are (according to the results of this focus group):

- **Personal motivation:** related to either lack of interest or feeling of powerlessness.
- **Strong personal censor:** they feel that they haven't had anything so important, "smart", and interesting to say.
- **National characteristics:** "Estonians are too shy" to express their opinion publicly, which can be confirmed by participants' uneasiness to express their opinion also during this focus group discussion between 9 strangers.
- **Lack of know-how:** Estonians don't master street protest techniques; they don't really know how to effectively organize them. Even though acta protests as a positive example was mentioned, participants agreed that Estonians still have a lot to learn about this form of expression.

5. Perceptions of new ways for citizens to get their voice heard

When asked to name various **means by which European citizens could have their voice heard**, two observations were made by the participants:

- First was an assumption that one needs to **get masses behind the idea**. One voice will have no impact in Europe.
- Secondly **the way to express has to be a bit crazy and absurd** to draw attention: usual methods like demonstrations and pickets won't work any more efficiently enough **to draw the attention of foreign media**. All participants seemed to have a stubborn assumption that the only way

to get one's voice heard is with the help of media, doing it on a big pan-European scale.

Through difficulties participants came up with **some concrete examples**:

- Protest song festivals (reference to Estonian singing revolution);
- Setting oneself on fire on the main square: even though that was immediately evaluated as ineffective and was more mentioned as a joke;
- Melting snow with blow-dryers: an absurd crazy thing to do that could get media coverage;
- Facebook groups/events to advocate for one idea and gather interested people around it.

It was believed to be easier to find enough support to one's ideas when **crossing borders** and social media could be of help there. Participants recognized that there isn't enough pan-European thinking right now, but it could be a future trend.

Pan-European support groups and pressure groups to support or advocate against different EU policies, for example on Facebook or other social networking sites, could be a future trend. Estonia itself is too small to advocate on its own and too small – only 1.3 million habitants – to find enough supporters behind one idea. It becomes more obvious why participants feel that to speak out, one must have something very interesting and important to say, because one should be able to assemble majority of Estonian citizens behind one's idea to have a minimal critical mass to get any attention in Europe: 1% of population (13000 supporters) could make no difference, even though very difficult to assemble.

6. Assessment of several propositions for improving citizens' involvement

A. an information service on the functioning of the EU and EU policies, comprising an information office open for the public in every large city, a web site, and a service quickly answering any questions asked by telephone, mail or email would be welcomed by the focus group participants.

Only two participants said that they would have no interest in such services because they have no need and interest to search for such information. On the other hand **two other participants** expressed **high interest** in an information service like that as it could help to save time. **The**

others thought it necessary and useful to have such central information service even though they didn't estimate to have high interest to use it right now because one could never know when one will need some information concerning functioning of the EU and EU policies.

B. debates to be organised in major media between average citizens and experts of EU issues on the directions taken by the EU as one of the means of getting citizens voice better heard met less interest among the participants.

The group was a bit divided: one part (mostly higher-middle class) tended to find it completely useless because, in their opinion, the outcome of such debates would be just noise, discussion would be pointless, and the overall atmosphere would not be professional enough. The other part of the group found it still a bit interesting – in a way that this could help to bring these “high-browed” experts back to the ground and make them notice the real problems people have.

C. opinion polls on the EU organised regularly in the whole of Europe, allowing citizens to know both what their fellow countrymen and what the citizens of the other countries think got a very positive reaction by the participants. They thought it to be very positive that also their opinion is regularly asked.

The **necessity to make the results public** was mentioned. Participants were clearly not at all aware that such surveys already exist and that all data is open to public on internet.

D. the possibility, given several times per year, to meet with the members of the European parliament or other EU politicians in the vicinity of where they live also received very positive reaction. Especially older participants seemed to appreciate the idea, some even asking: *“strange that this kind of meetings doesn't exist already?”*

It was believed that **this kind of meetings could make people more interested in EU matters** as well because a possibility to talk with somebody direct from the source, which knows and has a power to influence decisions, could attract people.

E. consultations through the internet organised by the European commission whenever major decisions have to be taken in the EU, open to

all citizens seemed to the participants like a normal course of things – how things should be done. If they would actually be interested and motivated enough to participate themselves in these consultations was not expressed so clearly but **the interest to have at least this opportunity was high.**

F. similar consultations, organised by their national government got exactly the same reaction, with some participants stating that there the interest and necessity to have such consultations is even more important.

G. an interactive service using the internet and social networks, to collect on a permanent basis citizens' views, wishes or criticisms on directions taken by the EU was also **widely praised.** Participants saw it as a very good channel to express one's own personal opinion, without the need to gather a critical mass of supporters behind that idea before communicating it.

When probed about their personal interest to use such medium of expression, some were hesitant fearing that maybe they would have nothing intelligent to say. Others seemed more enthusiastic. Some possible problems concerning interactive services and social networks were brought forward, though:

- How to organize filtering and moderate all that comment flow? Participants were afraid that this kind of interactive channels could quickly become like a wall of public toilet, as online news sites have demonstrated with their commentaries.
- Still not everybody would have access to such medium of expression: people who don't have everyday access to internet and elderly people who don't know how to use computers (very well).

H. information campaigns to be developed much more actively than in past years, in order to encourage citizens to involve themselves in the debates that are to take place and to take part in the coming election of members of the European parliament next spring was considered very useful and important because people are not aware of all the possibilities right know.

The general idea was that **if people knew how to express their opinion and were better informed about EU politics and affairs, they would also be more interested to actively participate.** Right now most of the information tends to be lost in communication because, as

one participant put it: *"everyday life is so rapid and intense that there is not much time left over after completing the tasks. It's easy to miss the small campaigns that appear 2-3 times in media."* Participants found it important to create campaigns to encourage citizens to participate and to raise awareness about the ways to do it.

One suggestion was made:

- To make campaigns also in social media that would activate friend to friend campaigning, as this is less expensive and more effective to raise awareness. Participants mentioned friends and family as an important filtering device for news concerning EU: news that would have otherwise slipped one's attention was brought to his attention through friends and family.

To conclude, **in order to make the participants of this group discussion more active EU citizens, one should keep in mind:**

- Low level of interest and passive behaviour is reversible; participants expressed a lot of potential interest in EU related matters, when questioned about it.
- EU institutions and their processes should be brought closer to participants, in order to close the gap between 'us' and 'them'.
- More info should be distributed already before decisions are made: the awareness of decisions made in EU was estimated quite good among the participants; what they lacked was knowledge of decisions yet to be made, laws yet to be voted etc.
- Alienation from power, feeling of insignificance on European and local levels is a topic to deal with because participants' lack of interest and passivity was strongly correlated with their sentiment of importance. Feeling that simple people, if massively united, could change the course of things, could make a huge difference. At the moment several participants didn't even believe that their MEPs could make any difference in EU, not to speak of simple people, united or not.

APPENDIX - DISCUSSION GUIDE

Kvalitatiivne uuring kodanike kaasatusest euroopa liidus (detsember 2013)

Vestluse kava

Sissejuhatus

Uuringu tutvustus (meetod, vestluse „reeglid“, kestus umbes 1,5 tundi, kaamera, anonüümsus)

Palun tutvustage end mõne sõnaga: kes te olete, kui vana, millega igapäevaselt tegelete jne.

Teema 1 – esmased seosed euroopa liiduga (10 min)

Me oleme täna tulnud siia selleks, et rääkida pisut euroopa liidust. Mis teile euroopa liiduga seoses kõige esimesena meenub?
Teemade olemus, mida mainitakse spontaanselt seoses euroopa liiduga
Mis teile täpsemalt meenub?
Miks teile euroopa liit just sellega seostub?
Euroopa liiduga seotud positiivsed ja negatiivsed aspektid
Mida te arvate eesti kuulumisest euroopa liitu?
Mis teile euroopa liiduga seoses positiivsena meelde tuleb?
Aga mis negatiivsena meelde tuleb?
Kuidas teie suhtumine euroopa liitu on pärast eesti liitumist muutunud?
Osalejate omapoolse huvi ja kaasatuse tase euroopa liiduga seotud küsimustes
Kuivõrd te tunnete huvi euroopa liiduga seotud küsimuste vastu?
Milliste küsimuste vastu te huvi tunnete? Miks just nende vastu?
Kuivõrd te tunnete, et olete osa euroopa liidust?
Millistes olukordades te seda tunnete?
Kas te olete kuidagi kaasatud euroopa liidu tegevusse?
Kui jah, siis kuidas?
Kui ei, siis mis põhjusel?

Teema 2 – infoallikad (10 min)

Kui võtta arvesse kõike seda, mida te teate ja arvate euroopa liidust, siis kust need teadmised ja arvamused pärinevad? Millistest allikatest te saate informatsiooni või kuulete arvamusi euroopa liidu kohta? Palun mõelge sõnale "allikad" kõige laiemas tähenduses, alates ametlikest informatsioonikanalitest ja lõpetades eraviisiliste vestlustega sõprade või teiste inimestega. Kirjutada kõik infoallikad enda jaoks üles.

Mainitud allikate mitmekesisuse tase
Millised on peamised allikad, kust te
euroopa liidu kohta infot saate?
Millistest allikatest te olete veel infot saanud?
Kas teie teadmised ja arvamused tuginevad
üldjuhul ühele konkreetsele allikale või
pärinevad paljudest erinevatest allikatest?
Igast allikast saadava informatsiooni laad
Millist infot te olete sellest allikast saanud? Mis
teemasid ja valdkondi see info puudutab?
Huvi ja usaldusväärsus iga allika puhul
Kui usaldusväärseks te seda infoallikat peate?
Kui huvitav sellest allikast saadav info teie jaoks on?
Millisest allikast saab euroopa liiduga seotud
küsimuste kohta kõige usaldusväärsemat infot?
Aga millisest allikast pärinev info tundub
teie jaoks kõige huvitavam?

Teema 3 – huvipakkuvad teemad (15-20 min)

Arutlegem nüüd pisut täpsemalt euroopa liidu tuleviku
üle ja nende küsimuste üle, mis teil võivad antud teemaga
seoses tekkida. Ilmselt on olemas teatud teemad, mida te
peate oluliseks, mille kohta te sooviksite rohkem teada
ja mida te sooviksite paremini mõista seoses sellega,
mis moel euroopa liit toimib ja millises suunas liigub.
Alati aga ei pruugi te saada kogu soovitud informatsiooni
nendest allikatest, mida te eelnevalt mainisite.
Millised on need peamised teemad, mille kohta
te sooviksite rohkem teada saada?
Üldised muljed, kas teadmised ja arusaamine
antud küsimustes on piisavad
Kuidas teile tundub, kas teil on piisavalt infot euroopa
liidu toimimise ja arengusuundade kohta?
Kui ei, siis mis põhjusel teil ei ole seda piisavalt?
Kuivõrd te olete seda infot püüdnud leida?
Euroopa liidu ees järgnevatel aastatel seisvate
suurimate väljakutsete tajumine
Millised on suurimad väljakutsed, millega euroopa liit
järgnevatel aastatel silmitsi seisab? Teisisõnu, millised
on probleemid, mis tuleb lähiaastatel lahendada?
Miks te just neid kõige suuremateks
väljakutseteks/probleemideks peate?
Kui hästi te olete neist väljakutsetest informeeritud?
Osalejate mõtted seoses vajadusega paremate
teadmiste/arusaamise järele – millistel teemadel
täpsemalt? Mis osas ei ole praegu saadaolev
informatsioon neil teemadel rahuldav?
Kui oluline see teie arvates on, et euroopa liidu
kodanikele oleks kättesaadav info euroopa
liidu toimimise ja arengusuundade kohta?
Millised on need teemad, mille kohta
praegu ei ole piisavalt infot?
Mis on praegu kättesaadava info puudujäägid?

Teema 4 – võimalus arvamust avaldada (10-15 min)

Kodanikena peaks teil kõigil olema võimalus avaldada oma
arvamust euroopa liidu tulevaste arengusuundade kohta
ning teha neil teemadel oma hää l kuuldavaks – ükskõik,
kas selle eesmärgiks on ühe või teise arengusuuna heaks
kiitmine, maha laitmine või hoopis mõni muu põhjus.
Kuidas te saate tänasel päeval euroopa liidu
arengusuundade kohta arvamust avaldada?
Idee väljendamise ja oma hääle kuuldavaks
tegemise tajutav lihtsus/keerulisus euroopa
liiduga seotud küsimustes – mil viisil?;
tajutavad põhjused, miks see on keeruline
Kui lihtne või keeruline hetkel on euroopa
liiduga seotud küsimustes oma ideid väljendada
ja oma hää l kuuldavaks teha?
Mis põhjusel see on keeruline? Kas leidub veel mingeid
asjaolusid, mis arvamuse avaldamist raskendavad?
Mil viisil on võimalik oma arvamust avaldada?
Milliste vahendite või meetoditega veel?
Kui ei mainita, siis küsida eraldi: euroopa parlamendi
valimised, siinse valitsuse informeerimine, avalikud
protestiaktatsioonid, arvamusküsitlused jms
Kuidas tuleb oma arvamust avaldada, et euroopa
liit seda ka kuulda võtaks? Mis paneb euroopa
liitu arvestama kodanike arvamusega?
Milliste küsimuste puhul võetakse kodanikke kõige rohkem
kuulda? Ja milliste küsimuste puhul kõige vähem?
Konkreetsed teemad, mille osas osalejad sooviksid
eriti oma arvamust avaldada ning kodanikena
kuuldud saada; selles osas esinevad ootused
Millised on peamised euroopa liiduga seotud teemad,
mille kohta te sooviksite arvamust avaldada?
Mille põhjal te saate aru, kas teid kui kodanikku
on euroopa liidus kuulda võetud?

Teema 5 – arvamuse avaldamise viisid (15 min)

Kindlasti on võimalik välja mõelda mitmesuguseid viise,
vahendeid ja meetodeid, mille abil euroopa kodanikud,
nagu meie, saaksid oma hää l kuuldavaks teha. Ma
teen ettepaneku, et püüaksime mõelda kõigi selliste
võimalike vahendite või meetodite peale. Laseme oma
fantaasial lihtsalt vabalt lennata, jätmata kõrvale
ühtegi ideed, isegi kui me praegusel hetkel ei tea,
kuidas seda oleks võimalik praktikas rakendada.
Õhuta gruppi olema loominguline, julgustades
osalejaid "hüppama" ühelt mõttelt teisele.
Milliseid ideid meil tekib? Mida on
võimalik veel ette kujutada?
Kuidas seda ideed oleks võimalik veel edasi arendada?
Millised arvamuse avaldamise viisid, meetodid
ja vahendid veel mõttesse tulevad?
Kui te sooviksite euroopa liidu poliitikas mingit
muudatust, siis kuhu või kelle poole te pöörduksite?

**Kui ei osata ideid välja pakkuda, siis küsida:
Kuidas eesti riigi tasandil saab oma arvamust avaldada?
Kas sellised arvamuse avaldamise viisid
võiksid toimida ka euroopa liidu tasandil?
Kui ei, siis mis põhjusel ei toimiks?**

**Teema 6 – hinnangud erinevatele vahenditele/meetoditele
(25 min)**

Ma esitan teile nüüd erinevaid ideid, mida on välja pakutud kui vahendeid või meetodeid, mida oleks võimalik kasutusele võtta, et võimaldada kodanikel euroopa liiduga seotud küsimustes oma häält paremini kuuldavaks teha. Palun öelge, mida te neist igaühe kohta arvate.

Küsida iga ettepaneku kohta eraldi:

Kui suur on teie huvi selle võimaluse kasutamise vastu?

Mis põhjusel te olete/ei ole sellest huvitatud?

A. infoteenus euroopa liidu toimimise ja euroopa liidu poliitika kohta, mis hõlmab avalikku infobürood kõigis suurtes linnades, veebilehekülge ning kiiresti vastamist neile küsimustele, mis on esitatud telefoni, kirja või e-kirja teel.

B. suurtes meediakanalites toimuvad arutelud tavalistele kodanikele ning euroopa liidu ekspertide vahel, mille teemaks on euroopa liidu poolt võetud suunad.

C. regulaarselt kõikjal euroopas toimuvad euroopa liidu teemalised arvamusküsitlused, mis annavad kodanikele võimaluse teada saada nii oma kaasmaalaste kui muude riikide kodanike arvamusi.

D. mõnel korral aastas pakutav võimalus kohtuda oma kodukoha lähedal oma euroopa parlamendi saadikute või teiste euroopa liidu poliitikutega.

E. interneti teel toimuv ja kõigile kodanikele avatud konsulteerimine, mida korraldab euroopa komisjon iga kord, kui euroopa liidus on tarvis vastu võtta suuri otsuseid.

F. samalaadne konsulteerimine, mida korraldab eesti vabariigi valitsus.

G. interaktiivne teenus internetis ja sotsiaalvõrgustikes, mis kogub alaliselt kodanike arvamusi, soovet ja kriitikat seoses euroopa liidu poolt võetud suundadega.

H. teavituskampaaniad, mida viiakse läbi palju aktiivsemalt kui viimastel aastatel, selleks, et julgustada kodanikke osalema toimuma hakkavates aruteludes ning võtma osa järgmisel kevadel aset leidvatest europarlamenti valimistest.

Suur tänu, et tulite arutelu osalema. Kui teil tuleb pärast meie vestlust veel uusi ideid, siis andke meile neist kindlasti teada. Ma annan teile saar polli visiitkaardi, kus on kirjas meie e-posti aadress.

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