



Digital Democratic Empowerment and Mobilisation for a Stronger EU (DigiDEM) – EVENTS

Applicable to the Strand 2 – Measure 2.2 "Networks of Towns"

Measure 2.3 "Civil Society Projects"

Strand 1 – "European Remembrance"

Preparatory activities (if applicable): The DigiDEM Kick-off Meeting involved 11 participants from Belgium, Estonia, Montenegro, Bulgaria, The Netherlands and Germany.

Location / Dates: 8 September 2021 (online)

Short description: The DigiDEM kick-off meeting was held by ECAS in September 2021 to launch the project activities and to prepare the consortium for its implementation. The DigiDEM kick-off activities consisted of a thorough presentation of the project's objectives and tasks, mainly the running of the crowdsourcing on air quality in 4 European cities in 4 Phases (problem identification, problem solving, idea selection, policy formulation (Nov 2022-Jan 2023), and the organisation of events around it. Linked to these two main goals, the partners also worked on the way to evaluate the results of the crowdsourcing – EGA presented the methodology of the Assessment Framework for E-Participation and the Social Listening Guidelines to gather feedback and reach the partners' approval. In the meantime, ProInfo developed a specific communications strategy for the one-year crowdsourcing on air quality to focus on three main aspects: 1. Project communication: promoting the project's objectives, activities and results 2. Operational communication: to foster citizen participation and decision makers' engagement during the crowdsourcing; 3. Internal communication of the consortium.

Events:

16 events have been carried out within this project:

Event 1

Participation: The event involved 18 citizens from Belgium, 1 from Greece and 1 from Bulgaria.

Location / Dates: The event took place online on 23 November 2021

Short description: ECAS organised the launch event of the DigiDEM project to explore how Crowdsourcing can be used to gather citizens' ideas and proposals on 'air quality' in Europe. ECAS presented the big transnational Crowdsourcing activity that would take place in 2022 and involve different European countries and cities, including Brussels, Belgium. Through technological platforms citizens throughout Europe would identify problems with air quality in their cities, elaborate proposals for solutions, select the top priorities for action and formulate conclusions on how to improve local, national and European environmental policies. In the first part of the event, experts discussed the topic 'From People Power to Climate Action: Can Democracy Improve the Environment?' and second part was focused on the crowdsourcing on air quality presented by ECAS. Participants and speakers were policy-makers, civic tech developers, educators, participatory democracy experts, CSOs and interested citizens.

Since the participation was low for several reasons, ECAS held an additional event:

Participation: The event involved 45 citizens from Belgium.

Location/Dates: The event took place on 26 April 2022 in Brussels.

Short Description: ECAS held a DigiDEM event for young students aged 14-18 years old at the Montgomery School in Brussels to present the project and have an interactive workshop for them to contribute to the crowdsourcing on air quality.



The objective was to explain to young people the different forms of participation and how they can be active in their local life. ECAS presented the problems with air quality received from the first phase of the crowdsourcing and in groups, the students brainstormed on the solutions they would like policy-makers to propose to those problems. There was also space for general reflections on how they would like their city improved and if they find participating in democracy challenging.

Event 2

Participation: The event involved 30 citizens from Montenegro, 4 from Bosnia and 3 from Albania.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Podgorica on 26 November 2021

Short description: In the preparation of the first national event held in Podgorica, Civic Alliance invited stakeholders to join its event mainly to learn more about the DigiDEM crowdsourcing the next year and prepare its support for the four phases of the platform. The event gathered participants from various organisations as well as decision makers to discuss the matter of air pollution and air quality in Podgorica and Montenegro. The speakers at the first national event were two MPs and members of Green Parliamentary Group - Ms Božena Jelušić and Ms Dragica Sekulić, as well as Nataša Kovačević from SEE Bankwatch Network. The event was started with presentation of DigiDEM and its activities, as well as the phases of the platform on air quality. The MPs discussed about the ways of contributing from their positions as decision makers to environmental protection. They highlighted the main polluters in Montenegro, but also stressed the need to increase the financial capacity and improve people's awareness in order to efficiently reduce air pollution. Nataša Kovačević from CEE Bankwatch Network presented the air pollution situation, the challenges in measuring air quality and how to adopt new measures for future improvement.

Event 3

Participation: The event involved 22 citizens from Germany, 1 from Belgium, 1 from the USA, 1 from Bulgaria and 2 from Austria.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Berlin on 29 November 2021

Short description: Democracy International organised a launch event on 29 November 2021 to present the DigiDEM project to the general public. However, the event could only take place online due to the Covid-19 restrictions in Berlin, Germany at that time. The aim of the event was to inform other organisations from Germany, mainly Berlin, about the upcoming crowdsourcing on air quality in 2022 and to have them as supporters throughout the campaign. Participants were from the fields of citizen participation, direct democracy, digital democracy, environmental and climate protection as well as potential participants for the crowdsourcing project were invited.

Youtube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIXYZwOpFO0>

Event 4

Participation: The event involved 9 citizens from the city of Maastricht in The Netherlands

Location / Dates: The event took place online on 16 December 2021

Short description: The aim of the event was to bring people who are actively involved in the climate together with democratic innovators. The goal was to think together about how we can mobilise society to arrive at a widely supported climate approach. It was a creative session in which participants looked what they could learn from each other and strengthen each others' efforts in participatory democracy processes, especially linked to environmental issues.



The event showed concrete examples on the intersection of democracy and climate and announced the launch from January 2022 of the European crowdsourcing initiative under DigiDEM, in which EU citizens will be able to identify air quality problems and think about solutions. Participants had an interest in innovative methods of digital citizen engagement and/or networking potential in the field of climate concern and air quality.

<https://netdem.nl/nl/events/event/meetup-democratie-klimaat/>

Since the participation was low for several reasons, Netwerk Democratie presented DigiDEM at an additional event.

Participation: The event involved 22 citizens from The Netherlands.

Location/Date: The event took place on 20 April 2022 in Amsterdam.

Short description: Netwerk Democratie is a formal Europe Direct Center. In the Netherlands there are multiple local Europe Direct Centres, which all use their expertise to build a bridge between the EU and citizens. In April 2022, Netwerk Democratie presented the crowdsourcing initiative to all other Dutch Europe Direct Centres at a physical Network Meeting. The present organisations showed interest in DigiDEM and agreed to promote the different crowdsourcing phases via their communication channels.

Participants consisted of representatives of all Europe Direct Centers in The Netherlands, representatives of European Commission's Representation in the Netherlands.

Event 5

Participation: The event involved 22 citizens from the city of Amsterdam in The Netherlands

Location / Dates: The event took place in Amsterdam on 26 May 2022.

Short description: The Parliament of the Future invited young people to share their opinion on the future of Europe. The project consisted of four workshops of 2.5 hours each and the goal in each session was for the participants to formulate policy propositions for a better future of Europe. In the fourth and final session the participants presented their policy propositions to policy makers of both the municipality and the European Commission.

In Workshop 3 on the theme 'Democratic Innovation' Netwerk Democratie explained the DigiDem project on Air Quality more in-depth to specifically 11 participants. They discussed the problem of air quality and proposed several solutions that were added to the platform.

Participants consisted of young people interested in democratic engagement.

Event 6

Participation: The event involved 14 citizens from the city of Amsterdam in The Netherlands.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Amsterdam on 21 November 2022

Short description: Netwerk Democratie organised its final project event in two parts – in November 2022 and the other in February 2023. The first one was a democratic dinner for clean air in Amsterdam. The event took place in A-Lab, a living lab for creative and socially relevant organisations in Amsterdam-North. The objective was to share the preliminary outcomes of the DigiDEM crowdsourcing project with relevant national and local stakeholders. The format of a dinner was chosen to have a 'festive' presentation of the results, combined with a proper in-depth table discussion about the outcomes of the project. The participants were national policy makers, researchers and citizens. There was a very positive response on the policy proposals from citizens on air quality and the participants debated on how EU and local regulations must go hand in hand. This discussion was fruitful and there was much interest in sharing the results with other colleagues and partner organizations.



Event 7

Participation: The event involved 46 citizens from Estonia, 1 from The Netherlands, 1 from Malta, 2 from Latvia, 1 from Belgium, 2 from Greece, 1 from Germany, 1 from Montenegro, 1 from Slovenia, 1 from Iceland, 1 from Portugal and 1 from Austria.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Tallinn on 18 January 2023

Short description: EGA organised the workshop “How to boost co-creative policymaking?” at Arhitektuurikeskus in Tallinn. The format of event was hybrid with some international presenters and participants online and most of the participants on-site.

The on-site participants were Estonian academics from Tartu University, Tallinn University, TalTech, representatives from governmental institutions (The State Chancellery, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice, etc.), local authorities, NGOs and active citizens who have experience on organizing/taking part in crowdsourcing initiatives. The aim of the workshop was:

1. To inspire public institutions to practice e-participation/co-creation in a meaningful way.
2. To introduce our tool to assess the impact of e-participation and discuss how it can be used in development, evaluation, and analysis of e-participation initiatives.
3. To discuss the role of crowdsourcing and co-creation in policymaking.

EGA presented the e-participation assessment framework and discussed with the stakeholders how it can be used in development, evaluation, and analysis of e-participation initiatives.

Event 8

Participation: The event involved 17 citizens from the city of Amsterdam in The Netherlands.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Amsterdam on 1 February 2023

Short description: The event in February 2023 organised by Netwerk Democratie, was the second part of their final DigiDEM event. The event called ‘Crowdsourcing: Hoe zetten we collectieve wijsheid om in beleid?’ was an event for local stakeholders and policy makers. Netwerk Democratie started off by presenting the conclusions of the DigiDEM project and the lessons learned from it. The second presentation was made by a representative of Hollandse Luchten (Dutch Skies) - a platform for citizen scientists measuring air quality with open source sensors. The next part of the event was interaction with the audience where the participants were invited to discuss the main question of the event in smaller groups (e.g. How can we turn the wisdom of the crowd into policy?). The event collected a good amount of positive feedback about the DigiDEM project and took place in De Waag, an institute operating in the interface between technology and society situated in the center of Amsterdam.

Event 9

Participation: The event involved 55 citizens from Germany and 1 from Spain.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Berlin on 6 February 2023

Short description: The event took place at Haus der Demokratie und Menschenrechte in Berlin and cooperation with the multipliers Mehr Demokratie Berlin and Bürgerbegehren Klimaschutz. This final advocacy event was held to present the project results to citizens, policy-makers and other experts and to create a community of stakeholders to continue to implement and advocate for the use of ICT to ensure inclusive and collaborative decision-making process based on shared knowledge and networking. Democracy International presented the lessons learnt and the recommendations coming from its experience with crowdsourcing on the topic of air quality in Berlin and the challenges around participatory democracy in general.

The event was streamed live on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lar6OwdDt78>
(Total 158 views)



Co-funded by the
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Event 10

Participation: The event involved 88 citizens: 26 from Belgium, 3 from Estonia, 8 from Bulgaria, 6 from Germany, 5 from Greece, 3 from France, 5 from Italy, 4 from Montenegro, 1 from The Netherlands, 3 from Portugal, 2 from the UK, 2 from Slovenia, 5 from Hungary, 1 from Ukraine, 4 from Latvia, 2 from Serbia, 1 from Iceland, 2 from Spain, 1 from Sweden, 1 from Finland, 1 from Ireland, 1 from Belorussia and 1 from Austria.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Brussels on 14 February 2023

Short description: ECAS organised this final DigiDEM event in Brussels to showcase how, together with its partners, it crowdsourced the ideas of thousands of citizens from European cities on how to improve air. The event called “Love is in the Air! Improving Air Quality in Europe through Citizen Action” presented the main problems with air quality identified by citizens in their cities, their proposals for solutions and top priorities for environmental action on local, national and European level. The event started by welcoming Gilles Pelayo Head of Unit, EACEA, European Commission to give an introduction of the EC’s priorities on engaging citizens in policy-making and Minister Alain Maron to explain his upcoming environmental and democratic plans for Brussels. ECAS handed over to him the citizens’ top priorities for the improvement of air quality that resulted from the DigiDEM project.

The introductory speeches were followed by two panels with experts – first to discuss specifically about air quality issues in Brussels and what the next steps are to have citizens’ recommendations become a reality and second, to focus on the lessons learned on ensuring more collaborative decision-making processes with citizens.

More details and video: <https://ecas.org/event/love-is-in-the-air/>

Event 11

Participation: The event involved 27 citizens from Montenegro, 4 from Bosnia, 5 from Albania and 1 from the Roma community.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Ulcinj on 18 February 2023

Short description: Civic Alliance organised the final national event in February 2023 to showcase the main results of the project, as well as the policy proposals on air quality that would be presented to the European Parliament and EU Commission. The speakers at the final event were Aleksandar Dragičević, Civil and Ecological Activist and Nataša Kovačević from CEE Bankwatch Network. The event focused on three main topics. First, the activities that civil society and activists implemented to contribute to the reduction of air pollution; second, the mechanisms that can be used from national level to improve air quality; and, finally, they presented what citizens can concretely do in order to support in making air quality better for all.

Event 12

Participation: The event involved 41 citizens from the city of Burgas in Bulgaria.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Burgas on 28 February 2023

Short description: ProInfo organised a one-day workshop for the DiGiDEM project in Burgas, Bulgaria, where the crowdsourcing on air quality had been carried out in 2022 (under the DigiDEM’s sister project CODE Europe).

The event had the purpose of promoting the crowdsourcing results, and handing over the policy suggestions made by the citizens to the local authorities. The one-day workshop was also a part of the knowledge sharing mechanism of DigiDEM and brought together citizen engagement campaigners and communications specialists to discuss the challenges and best practice in promoting crowdsourcing activities on air quality.



The objective was to promote the project lessons learnt and to support the community of stakeholders to continue to implement and advocate for the use of ICT to ensure inclusive and collaborative decision-making process based on shared knowledge and networking. The event was co-hosted by the Burgas University Prof. Dr. Assen Zlatarov, one of the official partners of ProInfo in the implementation of the project. 41 people from a variety of backgrounds – campaigners, journalists, students, environmental scientists, and representatives of local government took part in the event.

Event 13, 14, 15, 16

The DigiDEM project funded 4 additional ‘events’ which were the 4 crowdsourcing campaigns that took place in Brussels, Berlin, Amsterdam and Podgorica from January 2022 to January 2023.

The crowdsourcing took place in four phases:

1. Phase ‘Problem Mapping’ – citizens identified problems related to air quality that they encounter in their daily life.
2. Phase ‘Problem Solving’ – collecting citizens’ solutions to the ‘air quality’ problems they have mapped in Phase 1.
3. Phase ‘Ideas Selection’ – evaluating the solutions proposed in Phase 2.
4. Phase ‘Policy Formulation’ - giving recommendations to a future national and EU policy.

ECAS, Network Democratie, Civic Alliance and Democracy International mobilised citizens to contribute to all phases and give their concrete proposals on how to tackle air pollution in Europe.

Brussels had 315 citizens actively contributing to its crowdsourcing platforms;
Amsterdam had 118 citizens actively contributing to its crowdsourcing platforms;
Podgorica had 339 citizens actively contributing to its crowdsourcing platforms;
Berlin had 471 citizens actively contributing to its crowdsourcing platforms.

The partners have also used the Assessment Framework to evaluate their crowdsourcing experience and to discuss about the lessons learnt and possible recommendations for implementing transnational crowdsourcing especially at the EU level.