



EUROPE IN DEBATE

A DIALOGUE AMONG ORDINARY CITIZENS, EXPERTS AND POLITICIANS

“ What roles for rural areas in tomorrow’s Europe ? ”

Regional and European perspectives from the European Citizens’ Panel initiative



Complete results

2006-2007

www.citizenspanel.eu



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	3
Why the European Citizens' Panel on the future of the rural world?	4
• European Citizens' Panel : what are we talking about ?	4
• A subject and a method that demand attention	5
• Rural issues in Europe	6
• Europe needs citizen participation	7
The process	8
• A two stage process : from regions to Europe	8
- Regional basis ...	8
- ... to build a solid European point of view	11
• Principles and steps	12
- Recruiting: a panel as a cross-section of society	12
- Learning: understanding rural issues	15
- Deliberation: developing perspectives	16
Thematic outcomes	17
• Transversal analysis of the regional reports	17
• European citizens' Opinion	20
Process related outcomes	28
Citizens address their elected representatives	29
• Regional authorities involved	29
• European authorities also listening	31
Evaluation of the European stage of the process	34
Issues and prospects for the future	34
They did it	36
• Panellist citizens	36
• Partners and key people	38
Early stages and financing	41
 List of annexes (available on the DVD-Rom attached to the present document) Complete list available on p. 42	42
Annex 1	Complete list of recommendations, concerns and visions formulated by the panellists during the final pan-European deliberative session
Annex 2	Reports of the eight regional citizens' panels
Annex 3	Transversal analysis of the regional reports
Annex 4	Information documents on rural issues written for the panellists under the supervision of several experts on rural questions
Annex 5	Profile of the panellist citizens participating in the final pan-European deliberative session
Annex 6	External evaluation of the final pan-European deliberative session
Annex 7	Summary report of the European Citizens' Panel
Annex 8	First lessons from the European Citizens' Panel on the role of rural areas in tomorrow's Europe Conclusions of the Conference to launch the European Citizens' Panel
Annex 9	Partners of the initiative : complete details Motivations of the partner foundations
Annex 10	Videos of the European Citizens' Panel

This publication, with all its annexes, may be downloaded at www.citizenspanel.eu in English, French and German. A printed copy is available on demand.

The main authors of this document are the panellist citizens who participated both in the regional panels and in the final pan-European session. The various contributions of the rapporteurs, producers and interveners have been assembled under the coordination of the Foundation for Future Generations.

Information and contact

Foundation for Future Generations
Rue des Brasseurs, 182
5000 Namur
Belgium
www.FoundationFutureGenerations.org

Managing Editor:
Benoît DERENNE,
Rue des Brasseurs, 182
5000 Namur – Belgium
Layout: Adréline

D-2007-8490-14
ISBN : 978-2-930275-26-0

 December 2007
European Citizens' Panel
Some rights reserved
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0>
Printed on recycled paper
Photographs:
© European Citizens' Panel

|| F O R E W O R D

Starting from citizens to imagine and design Europe and European policies: that is the dream shared by all the partners in the adventure which the European Citizens' Panel has been.

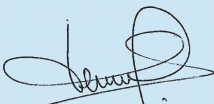
At the end of this adventure, and on reading the following citizens' Opinion on the future of rural Europe, several ideas come out:

- We must **once again make Europe the result of a shared dream**. Dare to decentralize and dare to innovate, and this, singularly, in the face of the concrete issues represented by the reform of sensitive policies such as the CAP: starting from rurality rather than from agriculture, and starting from the needs of a mostly urban European society.
- We must **learn to devise policies together which will produce both unity and diversity**: a modern challenge for Europe. Throughout the work, the accent is on the diversity of situations and the necessity of having nevertheless a common project.
- The European Citizens' Panel introduces a new order of legitimacy into European governance: **legitimacy through process**. Starting with citizens chosen at random and inventing a rigorous process to develop a collective point of view of European citizens on the future of their rural areas, and thus to create the embryo of a "community of destiny".
- The **vision of Europe** which emerges from the work of the citizens differs profoundly from current European policies, such as those affecting rurality. Also, the division of responsibilities between levels of governance and among institutions does not interest citizens. They **expect an obligation of results from the regional, national and European political and administrative apparatus** and not only an obligation of means.

You can find these few conclusions, and many others, through the numerous documents produced at the regional and European levels in connection with this European Citizens' Panel.

The member foundations of the Steering Committee would like to offer their special thanks to these ordinary citizens for completing their voluntary mission with a sense of responsibilities, open-mindedness and determination which must be admired. They have confirmed something that many citizens' panels have already demonstrated over some twenty years: the immense capacity for mobilisation of citizens who have been given a chance to speak in the public interest.

Finally, we would like to join them in wishing you good reading and also in formulating the wish that this extraordinary citizens' adventure will be the beginning of a long period of learning, to nourish the future of Europe – our Europe !



Benoît DERENNE

CHAIR OF THE STEERING
COMMITTEE FOR THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS' PANEL
DIRECTOR OF THE FOUNDATION
FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS



Pierre CALAME

DIRECTOR-GENERAL
OF THE CHARLES-LÉOPOLD
MAYER FOUNDATION

WHY THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS' PANEL ON THE FUTURE OF THE RURAL WORLD?



The 87 panellist citizens of the pan-European session

EUROPEAN CITIZENS' PANEL: WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

The European Citizens' Panel on the roles of rural spaces in tomorrow's Europe is a pilot initiative. Its aim: to encourage a contribution from European citizens to the discussions on the public policies which affect rural areas.

This is achieved in two major steps:

- Through the implementation of eight panels at the regional level, in ten regions from 8 Member States and one neighbouring country (Switzerland);
- Via the organisation of a panel at the European level in which citizens delegated by the regional panels share their views and define their common policy priorities.

At the regional level, the panels, made up of citizens selected at random but in general representative of the diversity of the populations concerned, discussed rural questions and formulated recommendations for the attention of the relevant regional public authorities. This considerable work was supported by the provision of wide ranging and balanced information, supplied at the request of the citizens by witnesses and experts, and by professional facilitation of the citizens' debates and deliberations.

At the European level, 87 citizens from the regional panels met in Belgium for three days to discuss and debate - each in their own language - a large range of European challenges

to do with the role which rural spaces will be expected to play in tomorrow's Europe. The analyses and propositions formulated by the citizens at the regional level served to guide this European level dialogue.

On 2 April 2007, on completion of their discussions, the panellists issued 24 recommendations, accompanied by their concerns and their visions for rural territories in Europe, addressing these to high representatives of the principal European institutions. These have entered into a dialogue with the citizens, something to be considered a starting point rather than a conclusion.

The present publication sets out the complete results of the European Citizens' Panel, also explaining the process which made these results possible.

" Citizens have their own legitimacy, which does not contradict that of organised civil society or elected representatives " .

François Auguste,
Vice-President delegated
to participatory democracy,
Regional Council
Rhône-Alpes

A SUBJECT AND A METHOD THAT DEMAND ATTENTION

Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy that is at a stand-still. A glaringly obviously structural inability on the part of the European Union to involve its citizens in building its policies, lending credence to the notion of a remote Europe. A fragmented European policy, with each direction pursuing its own agenda.

The European Citizens' Panel on the future of rural areas is not THE answer to these three challenges central to the crisis in Europe, but it is certainly a decisive step in the right direction.

Firstly, by virtue of the chosen **theme**: no longer agriculture alone, but agriculture within the wider issue of rural areas which is indeed a subject of interest to all Europe's citizens. Secondly, by virtue of the **method**. There was a need to show that **citizens picked at random** from all sections of the population could formulate pertinent recommendations on these complex issues. It was also time to show that despite the formidable obstacle of language and despite the very different situations in one country compared to another, Europe's citizens are able to engage in dialogue on subjects of common interest. This was the formidable twofold challenge taken up at the initiative of a group of European foundations, subsequently joined by about 40 partners and representing regional and European public authorities and institutions with experience of participatory processes.

There was a need to innovate and get it all up and running, to compare some methods and invent others. In this way a two-tier citizens' panel took shape: a regional level with

■ WHY THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS' PANEL ON THE FUTURE OF THE RURAL WORLD?

eight panels – including two cross-border panels – in 10 European regions, and a European level that brought together 87 citizens from the eight regional panels in Brussels on 30, 31 March and 1 April 2007.

The European Citizens' Panel illustrates a new governance approach, which involves intertwining of various decision levels. The local dimension and the European dimension do not intersect; they combine. Linked to this intertwining of governance levels is the intertwining of citizenship levels, as it is referred to during debates: each of us is a citizen of our own place, region, country, Europe and beyond, the whole planet. This idea is splendidly expressed by the fact that every regional panel has its own value but the resulting representatives have also built a common standpoint.

RURAL ISSUES IN EUROPE

Rural spaces cover 90% of the European territory, with more than half of the population of the continent living there. They provide food, jobs and a space for leisure and cultural activities. They also represent a reservoir of biodiversity and natural resources like water, fresh air and renewable energy. Altogether, they constitute an essential element in Europe's heritage.

However, all European countries today are confronted with various problems in their rural areas, and at the same time are affected by a large number of European policies. First of all, of course, there is the agricultural and rural policy, which represents nearly half of the EU's budget, but there are also policies which affect regional development, social questions, transport, energy, the environment, the management of territory, education and culture. In all these areas, the panel provides points of view from citizens, which can enrich the work of both regional and European institutions.

Although the agricultural and rural policy framework has already been decided for the period 2007-2013, supplementary reforms seem inevitable in the fairly near future. Will citizens be involved in these? For the initiators of the European Citizens' Panel, it is not a question of yet another debate regarding the future of the rural areas. Contrary to the dead end discussions held for two decades about the reform of the common agricultural policy, the Panel wants to substitute a new way of discussing which favours the current expectations of the European society towards rural areas: by bringing to the table all users

of the territory, all citizens affected directly or indirectly, and not just the farmers or those living in the country. Upstream from the elaboration of policies, the opinions of the citizens' panels integrate this change of perspective and define in a sense the specifications of these new debate focus points starting from questions of employment, daily life, food, educational and « governance ».

EUROPE NEEDS CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The effects of European policies are felt directly in the everyday life of Europeans. However, the same citizens have the impression of exercising little influence on the decision-making mechanisms, and they perceive the decision-makers as far away from them.

Moreover, while the different peoples of Europe are confronted with the same challenges, public opinion is still largely national in character. The diversity of opinions concerning European challenges, with the variety of viewpoints it represents, represents a major resource which should be taken into account, thus transcending national interests.

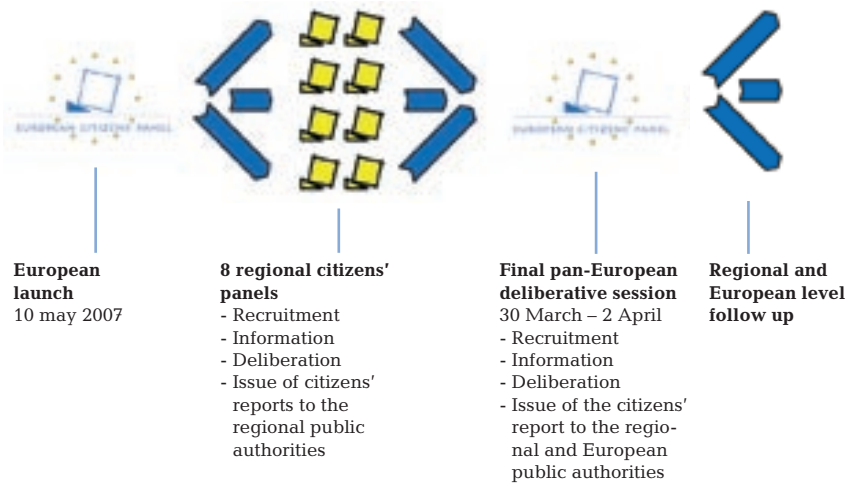
This is why the European Citizens' Panel sees direct, transnational dialogue as a vital tool for European integration and for the creation of a European space for public debate. This is a crucial factor for the process of enlargement of the EU and the development of a democratic European entity, which should combine the well established routines of representative democracy with a rich new element of participatory and deliberative democracy. Furthermore, this dialogue also constitutes a step towards a European policies based on mutual recognition, rather than a «harmonisation» of cultural differences.

For all these reasons, the contribution of the Citizens' Panel is not limited to the future well-being of rural Europe. It is also an attempt to demonstrate the potential of an innovative process of participation, a source of potential applications in other major questions, and something that could revitalise the contemporary governance of European questions.



THE PROCESS

A TWO STAGE PROCESS : FROM REGIONS TO EUROPE



REGIONAL BASIS...

One of the original features of the European Citizens' Panel is its regional basis, at the beginning of a two stage process. Why? There is no *homo europeanus*, and no abstract European identity. We were all born somewhere, and are anchored in one or more familiar contexts. Rather than starting directly at the national or European level, the regional level was selected to examine



8 citizens' panels, including 2 cross-border panels, covering 10 regions in 9 countries



The panellists of the Rhône-Alpes region (France) and the Carpathians (Hungary-Slovakia cross-border panel) at work

the perception that citizens see European factors in their concrete experience. Then, a European perspective articulating the regional contributions was constructed, as a contribution to an authentic European public debate: because the true challenge running through the whole of this project is the desire to widen deliberations with the experience of individuals as a starting point..

The initiative involved eight panels in ten regions of Europe, including two ambitious cross-border panels in Northern Ireland / Republic of Ireland and the Carpathians (Hungary/Slovakia). The other six regional citizens' panels were organised in Bavaria (Germany), Cumbria-Durham (United Kingdom), Flevoland (Netherlands), Rhône-Alpes (France), St Gallen (Switzerland) and Wallonia (Belgium)..

Each of these eight regional panels, while adapting itself to the local constraints and contexts, followed a common methodological basis, according to which it was important to optimise the time devoted to the panel by the participants, and at the same time to construct a group cohesion based on dialogue and on taking the best of the enormous potential of citizens as far as knowledge complementary to that of the experts is concerned. All the regional panels issued their results to the relevant regional authorities.



The citizens of the cross-border panel in Republic of Ireland-Northern Ireland

TWO CROSS-BORDER CITIZENS' PANELS

Citizens overcome their differences and formulate joint recommendations in Ireland and Northern Ireland, and in the Hungarian and Slovak Carpathians.

Two of the eight regional citizens' panels involved panellist citizens from cross-border regions. These were the Hungarian-Slovak cross-border panel in the Carpathian region, and the cross-border panel in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The gamble that a common agreement among "foreign" citizens could arise in the recommendations to be transmitted to their respective authorities paid off in both cases. "The identification of similar problems and challenges by the panellists and the selection of common priorities demonstrated that their similarities were stronger than their differences," reports Mrs Laura Dittel, Slovak director at the Carpathian Foundation in charge of the cross-border panel. This panel has "contributed to the process of convergence between the two countries through the opinions and contributions of ordinary citizens, which brings a new element to the approaches developed by the decision-makers of the two countries".

The method of the citizens' panel was also a source of inspiration for the future of the regions concerned, thanks to "engagement by citizens, deliberation and mutual confidence building".

The difficulties, however, were real and observing citizens working together showed that "the differences between (Slovak and Hungarian) approaches were real and visible".

As for the Irish side, this reaction from a citizen is eloquent: "We were apprehensive at the beginning, not knowing what to expect, because we were from opposite sides of the

border and from different traditions. Now when we meet, that is all in the background. We have common cause on issues like health, education, agriculture and disability, for which we seek solutions ”.

... TO BUILD A SOLID EUROPEAN POINT OF VIEW

After the regional level, 87 delegate citizens from the 10 European regions participating in the initiative worked together, in six languages, during the final pan-European deliberative session. These citizens did not come as representatives of their regions, but rather as individuals, with their own knowledge and life experience and their own engagement in relation to the future of rural Europe.

During the short period of time they spent together, the panellists exchanged numerous elements of information and opinion concerning their cultural horizons, and shared their concerns as well as the visions for the rural territories of Europe. They tended to look at the routes which the public authorities could take. The participants compared their views and developed a common report on their perceptions of the future for rural areas in tomorrow's Europe, which includes 24 recommendations.

This European citizens' Opinion was publicly addressed to the relevant European -and regional - authorities from the offices of the EU's Committee of Regions.



During the European meeting, each regional delegation of citizens presents, both visually and orally, the results of the work carried out over the last ten months

THE THREE DAYS OF THE FINAL PAN-EUROPEAN DELIBERATIVE SESSION

The final pan-European deliberative session began with the **declaration of the results of the regional panels**, and the identification, by means of a vote, of the **main themes** on which the participants wished to work.

Then, alternating with the plenary sessions, the citizens broke up into eight transnational working groups, each provided with technical assistance from a mixture of facilitators, rapporteurs, interpreters and computer file archivists.

On the basis of the main themes, they identified their **concerns** to do with well-being in rural areas; and then, for these same themes, the citizens expressed their **visions for the future**. At this moment of reflection, experts provided supplementary information to the panellists in the form of responses to their questions.

Finally, the citizens formulated 24 **recommendations**, which they then classified in order of importance, so as **to prepare them for publication**.



[Find out more >>> Annex 7](#)

[Summary Report of the European Citizens' Panel](#)

PRINCIPLES AND STEPS

The mechanism of regional panels typically includes the following stages: constitution of the panel, information and dialogue with experts and witnesses, deliberations among the panellists and construction of an Opinion, followed by the presentation and distribution of this Opinion.

RECRUITING: A PANEL AS A CROSS-SECTION OF SOCIETY

One of the principles for a citizens' panel is to form a "microcosm" of the society. There is no aim at perfect statistical representativity (which would be an illusion anyway with such a small sample). What is sought is the

" Exchanging views with the youth and benefiting from the experiences of the older generation makes this citizens' panel an unique event! "

A panellist from St Gallen



Panellists of all ages, here in the Hungary-Slovakia cross-border panel

maximum diversity in life experience and, on that basis, in points of view on the subjects that come up.

337 citizens from the 10 participating regions responded to the appeal of the organisers. Their origins were highly diverse in terms of age, background, socio-professional category, level of education and geographic origin (rural or urban).

The basic principle for the recruitment of the citizens was random selection (from telephone directories and electoral lists), with some adaptations according to the contexts and constraints in each region. University teams and opinion polling institutes contributed to the process.

The majority of the citizens were not active in any political party, civil society organisation or other group for the defence of a cause or interest.

- [Find out more](#) >>> [Annex 5](#)
Profile of panellist citizens participating in the final pan-European deliberative session
- >>> [Annex 2](#)
Reports of the eight regional citizens' panels
- >>> [Annex 3.1](#)
Transversal analysis of the regional reports

" It is good that normal citizens are being asked "

A panellist from Bavaria

DISTRIBUTION OF ROLES

Panellist citizens

The panellist citizens form the European Citizens' Panel. Within their respective regional panels, they take part in debates and construct opinions and recommendations, which they pass on to the public authorities. Some of them participate in the final pan-European and deliberative session.

Facilitators

The facilitators make sure that all the panellist citizens can express themselves, from the most talkative to the most timid. With the aid of specialised techniques, they moderate the debates and ensure that these lead to concrete results within the available time.

Rapporteurs

At the regional level, the rapporteurs transcribe the ideas expressed by the citizens in a written report which is subject to their approval and which they may amend. At the European level, a principal rapporteur assembles the declarations of the panellists. Rapporteurs are also present in each sub-group, assisted by archivists who supervise encoding into computer formats. A unique and standardised numbering system for the written declarations of the citizens guarantees coherence among them, and helps when it comes to translation and computer encoding.

Resource-persons

Experts or witnesses from university, administrative, political, civil society, or business environments provide the citizens with their perspectives in the most accessible manner possible during sessions which are often open to the public. They are therefore a resource for the panellists in formulating their opinion.

Sounding board for the European Infopack

Made up of 10 personalities (scientists, civil servants and actors working on the ground) with complementary competencies, who play an active role in the field of rural development, both nationally and internationally, this scientific committee guarantees that the information collected in the European Infopack is correct and impartial. The Infopack is provided to the panellist citizens.

Producers

The European producer is responsible for constituting and steering the base of partners for the initiative, and for seeking financing at the European level. It is assisted by the European coordinator, who supervises the operational execution of the European-level activities.

The regional producers are responsible for constituting and steering the regional citizens' panels. Together with the European producer and the European coordinator, they define the common basis for the regional panels and contribute to the planning for the European citizens' deliberation.

Steering committee

It is made up by the foundations pioneering the initiative and the Network of European Foundations for Innovative Cooperation (NEF). At the European level, it heads the initiative from the financial and budgetary points of view, and follows its development and its impact.

Partners forum

Open to all partners of the initiative, public and private, regional and European, this has been a place for dialogue and mutual education concerning the overall progress and expectations of the European citizens' panel.

Details of all the persons and associations cited above are set out at the end of the publication in the section " They did it " .

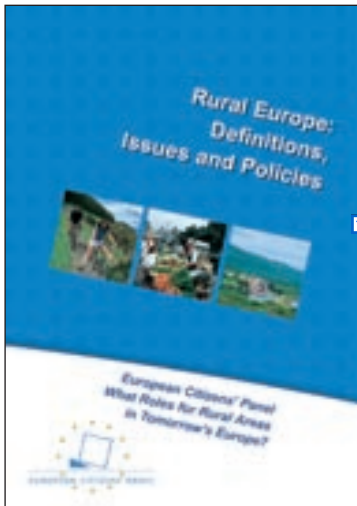


Panellists from Cumbria-Durham (United Kingdom) and Wallonia (Belgium, in the Walloon Parliament) questioning experts

LEARNING : UNDERSTANDING RURAL ISSUES

At the regional level, the panellist citizens generally started their work by sharing their own experiences of rural areas, after which they defined some main themes. They then called and questioned as balanced a set as possible of «resource persons « (see box on left page). In certain cases, an «Infopack» or educational file covering a specific region was prepared for them, with the contribution of a panel of experts. These dossiers explain the issues without taking a position. On request from the citizens, some site visits also took place in certain panels. At the European level, most of these ingredients were repeated :

sharing of experience and the definition of main themes, meetings with experts to answer questions from the citizens, and provision of a European Infopack covering the definitions, issues and policies for rural Europe, considered by various stakeholders as a European reference document for public information on this theme.



[Find out more >>> Annex 4](#)

[Regional and European Infopacks](#)

European Infopack: the issues for rural Europe

" I have left behind my preconceived ideas about the rural world. "

A panellist from Rhône-Alpes

DELIBERATION : DEVELOPING PERSPECTIVES

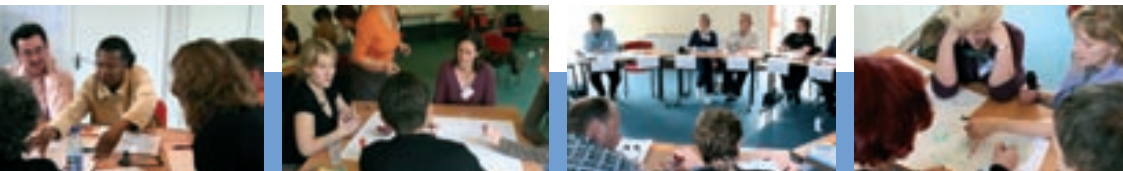
Time for deliberation is essential. It is a question of allowing the panellist citizens time to give attentive consideration to the various aspects of the question being addressed and formed their own judgment, this in the course of a dialogue which respects everyone's opinions. Therefore, the debates were moderated by professional facilitators. Their role was to moderate discussions and allow each participant to express him- or herself while respecting the others, to observe strict impartiality, to use various documentary and visual aids to encourage expression, to maintain a sustained rhythm of work, and to guide the exchanges to concrete solutions, while encouraging the most timid citizens.

" Everybody is taken into account "

A panellist from Ireland

Facilitation of the deliberations rested on a great diversity of formats for dialogue. Within the regional panels, one could observe an expert use of group interaction methods (analysis of situations, search for consensus, voting, etc) and of varied techniques for reflection (discussions in small groups, presentations and debates in a large group, questions to experts, drama, etc). At the European level, transnational and bilingual working groups (with up to four different regions represented in a single small group) alternated with plenary sessions in six languages, with all discussions supported by simultaneous interpreting.

The minutes from the working groups were available in six languages only a few hours after each half day of work was completed, thanks in particular to a computing tool for multi-lingual cross-referencing of the declarations of the citizens (OutilCarto). Voting for the final ordering of the recommendations by priority could therefore take place with written support materials in the language of each of the participants, only a few hours after the end of the last workshops.



Citizen-panellists working in small, bilingual, groups (from 3 to 4 regions/group)

TRANSVERSAL ANALYSIS OF THE REGIONAL REPORTS

Eight regional panels produced the same number of citizens' Opinions on the future of the rural areas. Although the form of these varies among the different panels, it can be seen that there were convergences in the points raised, at the social, economic, environmental and governmental levels.

The evolution of rural areas

The last two decades have seen rural areas change their appearance, and the regional reports do not fail to make reference to this phenomenon. The restructuring of the agricultural sector and the corollary of this, the reduction in the number of farms, concerned a number of the panellists, as did the flight of enterprises and capital towards the towns. Unemployment was pointed out, and several panels proposed to deal with this by means of a diversification of economic and agricultural activities. Ideas? Encouraging local products, production of renewable energy, etc.

Changes were also felt at the level of the growth, decline or stability of the population, but in very different manners according to the region. In Wallonia, pannelist citizens talk about



Varied working methods for the panellists of Flevoland (The Netherlands)

" rurbanisation " (urbanisation of rural areas); in the region of Cumbria and Durham, about a declining spiral that has been caused *inter alia* by the demographic developments and the lack of affordable housing. The panellists from the Carpathians invoked the isolation of villages and the absence of services, factors which push the younger generation to the city, while those from Flevoland found this need for independence and discovery normal for young people, and hope to attract these back to the countryside later on in life.

European society is also evolving when it comes to ways of living, and the regional reports underline the growing attention given to the link between the quality of life and the durable management of environmental resources. In this connection, the panels from St Gallen and

Rhône-Alpes mentioned tourism and the risks of "invasion" this creates as an element that needs to be managed..

Finally, the regional panels appointed to the developments in demand affecting rural areas, characterised not only by a slide in many regions towards a "post-agricultural" countryside, but also by new efforts by consumers: tourism, second homes, recreational activities, etc. The Irish cross-border panel also noted the tension between environmentalists seeking to prevent building in certain areas which are already saturated, and rural communities needing new housing.

Perception of the future

If the task of the regional panels was to connect the question "What roles for rural areas in tomorrow's Europe?" to their own areas, this implies that citizens do not think only about the current situation in the countryside, but that they also think in the longer term. Thus the visions of the future issued by the panellists led them to define some recommendations, looking at future years. This approach is seen to be crucial to transcending the limits imposed by circumstances, which influence the current management of these areas.

Of the various manners in which the panels envisaged the future, five principal perspectives may be separated out. Firstly the citizens recognised a new rural-urban relationship as a key element, made up of exchange and economic, social and environmental investment in the countryside. After that, stress was placed on respecting the various groups living and working in rural areas and the need to listen to all of them, whether they are marked out by youth or by ethnic diversity. Thirdly, the regional reports see growing economic development in the future, based on institutional support, and engagement by the private sector, and citizen involvement. This development would for example affect small and medium-sized enterprises, the quality of local products, and even education. The fourth perspective is the importance that the panellists (especially those from the Carpathians and Ireland) gave to a new geography for Europe and to cross-border cooperation in various fields, from agriculture to tourism and not forgetting the environment. Finally, the regional reports envisage a future supported by citizen participation to complement representative democracy.



Work in sub-groups within the regional panels of Carpathians (Hungary-Slovakia), Rhône-Alpes (France), St Gallen (Switzerland) and Wallonia (Belgium)

*" Everything is connected,
not separate "*

**A panellist from
Rhône-Alpes**

How to apply the recommendations?

The reports of the regional panels indicate that the recommendations issued by the citizens need to be supported by governments at the municipal, regional and national levels, as well as by the EU. While the reports do not always stipulate precisely the type of public action expected, there are still four principal manners in which support can be given.

Financially first of all, by punishing infractions against the fixed rules by fines, and by providing subsidies and exemptions from tax to initiatives to be encouraged, such as energy-saving, for example. On several occasions, nevertheless, the panels recalled the need not to provide the wrong kind of subsidies, which could lead to the creation of imbalances.

The support of the authorities could also be exercised at the legislative or normative levels, by promulgating rules to control whatever is defined as obligatory or as prohibited. A theme that very frequently came up in this connection in the regional reports was environmental regulation. Conversely, certain existing rules were seen as impeding rural development, and it was suggested that these should be made more flexible. This is the case for example in the area of the creation of enterprises or the diversification of farming activities.

The public sector could also involve itself in different ways, through direct participation: by providing services (like cross-border health care), infrastructure (for transport for example) or by launching public-private partnerships.

Finally there is an important coordinating role to be played among the various actors in a single sector: strategic planning, and decentralised, flexible decision-making, horizontal and vertical links, etc. The reports put the accent on cooperation among administrations and companies, etc., which should, according to them, intensify.

 [Find out more >>> Annex 3 - Transversal analysis of the regional reports](#)
[Annex 2 - Reports of the eight regional citizens' panels](#)



EUROPEAN CITIZENS' OPINION

This section draws together the key concerns, visions and recommendations of the European Citizens' Panel in regard to the 10 priority themes that have emerged from its dialogue. The voting preferences of citizens against each recommendation are displayed.

YOUTH. Citizens identified the following concerns: the need to strengthen opportunity for young people in rural areas, more youth education, retaining young people in rural areas and encouraging them to return to rural areas, listening to young people and their needs, giving support to their selfinitiated project ideas, improved bus services especially late evening services and free travel for those under 18 years of age.



The vision content of the working groups on youth includes young people in rural areas having the same opportunity as those in urban areas, more youth associations and youth groups with improved leisure time activities, better apprenticeship opportunities and a climate in which young people are listened-to.

The recommendations of the Citizens' Panel are:

The EU should divert some funding from agriculture to invest in infrastructure (e.g. sports facilities, education, services) that will make rural areas as attractive as cities to young people (n=20*)¹.

Children and young people must be involved in the decision-making of all EU projects. This should be done through policy standards and good practice guidelines on participation with children and young people, for example youth forums. The EU should support this by giving funding to make this happen (n=18).

EDUCATION. Citizens identified the following concerns: the need for educational opportunity for all sections of society, in both urban and rural settings, with particular attention being given to young people, the elderly, minorities and the disabled, the availability of multiple levels of educational provision, training including internships, and maintaining local schools.



The vision content under this heading relates to access to education and training being enjoyed by all age groups, education and training standards harmonised across Europe, entrepreneurship knowledge as part of the curriculum and students from disadvantaged backgrounds being able to more easily enter higher education.

The recommendations of the Citizens' Panel are:

Everybody should receive education according to their own specific skills and needs, ensuring that nobody's rights for education are impaired and that, based on surveys on professions / vocations in shortage, an appropriate training programme is developed and delivered to learners without age, ethnic, or financial limitations (n=36).

All children should start to learn a common foreign language in the 3rd class (primary school) at the latest (n=30).

Our recommendation is to use existing EU funding programmes e.g. INTERREG / ERDF to enable regional education structures to learn from each other on best practice so as to adopt an educational system that will achieve our vision of lifelong learning in rural areas (n=26).

We want a quality education system that is demand-oriented, affordable and accessible to all that demand it. EU regulations should promote apprenticeships and vocational jobs (n=25).

The EU should complement state funding of educational institutions in order to ensure free access and local availability (n=17).

TRANSPORT. Citizens identified the following concerns: the lack of affordable and adequate public transport (both bus and train based) in rural areas, not least its availability for young people, the elderly and the disabled, along with the need to recognise its contribution to saving energy and reducing pollution. Citizens commented on the challenge of extending the European road network to more peripheral areas in order to enhance accessibility.



¹ total number of votes cast for this recommendation

The visions for transport in rural areas make reference to the presence of affordable and environmental friendly services with a reduction in road traffic, the acceptance of car free Sundays, greater appreciation for intermodal movement (for example, in regard to freight) and greater coordination among all modes of transport.

The recommendations of the Citizens' Panel are:

Policy for integrated rural public transport, as an essential part of any rural development policy (n=30).

Encourage road hauliers to use other means of transport such as combined rail and road transport and inland navigation (freight intransit to be boarded on trains as, for example, in Switzerland) (n=26)

CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENT. Citizens identified the following concerns: the need



to preserve rural character including the retention of agricultural land, avoiding the build-up of dormitory villages, preventing the expansion of cities into rural areas, having long term commitments to sustainable land planning, limiting the general development of housing and industry in the countryside while making provision for farmers and their families, enforcing environmental regulations and retaining the peace and ambience of rural space. Additionally, citizens asked that politicians should support sustainable energy sources and the greater use of recycling practices.

The visioning work under this theme relates to sustainable forestry policies, sustainable housing development, environmentally clean transport including 'green cars', independent and renewable energy production (for example, in schools), a healthy flora and fauna, a healthy agricultural industry and a situation where new roads go around natural areas rather than through them.

The recommendation of the Citizens' Panel is:

The number of kilometres/miles on all products reaching consumers should be clearly labelled on those products (n=15).

ENTERPRISE AND EMPLOYMENT. Citizens identified the following concerns: unacceptable levels of unemployment and the lack of investment in rural areas for enterprise creation, the need to grow small and medium sized businesses including craft based activities, encourage the presence of a diversity of professions in order to maintain rural regions, and have less bureaucracy for businesses to deal with. Tourism was perceived as an economic opportunity, not least job creation, with particular attention being given to eco-tourism.



The visioning process under this heading recognises that, in the future, funds for Research and Development are more easily accessible by rural entrepreneurs and that there is less bureaucracy and simpler application forms. Moreover, new economic activity respects the environment, logistics that support enterprise offer quality access, and spatial relationships between industry and wildlife, natural areas, leisure areas and housing are well managed by planning controls.

The recommendations of the Citizens' Panel are:

Small and medium-size business entrepreneurship support at start up. Less taxes and fees and easier access to funding sources for rural entrepreneurs (ie. less bureaucracy) (n=22).

In order to organise industrial / corporate activities in rural areas in an environmentally-friendly way, all companies / industries have to commit themselves in writing to abide by an environmental plan with a view to compliance with EU regulations (n=22).

PARTICIPATION. Citizens identified the following concerns: the difficulty of having rural interests listened to and the need to generate opportunities for citizen engagement on priority topics, which could include greater use of citizen surveys and citizen panels. Concern was expressed about the lack of funding to the community and voluntary sectors which in turn is leading to difficulties for community based decision-making and services. Furthermore, citizens expressed the view that decentralisation and devolution could bring politics closer to citizens and that more thinking must be given to how best the relationship between territorial scales and citizenship can be fostered.



In their vision for the future of rural areas the Citizens' Panel working groups see the gap between politicians and citizens as being filled by much greater volunteerism across Europe and with real influence being in the hands of citizens through referenda, forums, panels and blogs. Politicians will take equal interest in their voters before and after elections.

The recommendations of the Citizens' Panel are:

Establish a bottom-up system for EU funds allocation, control and feedback through committees made up of impartial citizens who would influence the distribution and use of received funds (n=70).

We propose that the Citizens' Panel continues to be an accepted stakeholder on propositions to the European Commission regarding the future of our rural areas with immediate effect (to start on Monday 2nd April 2007 !) (n=21).

Politicians have to be interested in voters not only before elections, but also, afterwards (n=6).

AGRICULTURE. Citizens identified the following concerns: the uncertain future for agricultural production and the need to return to a human scale agriculture that is environmentally friendly and linked to the production of healthy (possibly organic) foods. Citizens articulated the need for more jobs related to the farming sector, perhaps in agri-tourism, and expressed support for a landscape based mode of production that could produce high quality food with a good productivity performance.



The visioning by this work group relates to fair prices for farmers and consumers, along with much more information for consumers related to choices being made.

The recommendations of the Citizens' Panel are:

The Citizens' Panel strongly recommends that EU policy makers develop fair trade within rural Europe and a clear European labelling system by symbol and word that is universally recognised (n=50).

Redirection of funds towards regional organic producers (including renewable energy resources, construction material, insulation) by means of EU directives (n=34).

We want by 2012 an agriculture that is honest, environmentally friendly and affordable and that guarantees quality food for everyone. This can, for example, be encouraged through tax breaks and lobbying, but also through a better balance in the distribution of funds, not just to agriculture but also to all rural needs (n=20).

HEALTH. Citizens identified the following concerns: the inadequacy of health services in rural areas regarding accessibility to hospital care, management decisions not being patient-centred, lengthy waiting lists, the need for nearer on-call doctor services and support for hospice and other caring services in rural areas. Additionally, the view was expressed that society must have quality and healthy food and thus support should be offered to farmers and through education channels about the importance of these matters.



In setting out a vision for health matters in rural areas, the citizens' panel working group on this topic has articulated an active European policy for health which involves the citizens. Four elements are identified: easy access to healthcare and treatments for everyone which are free for the poorer and close to home; the need to address the power of the large pharmaceutical companies and to limit the high prices charged for drugs; giving favour to international research and the availability of international treatment; and supporting prevention and treatment campaigns to combat international sickness and health problems such as obesity, avian flu, AIDS, and smoking.

The recommendations of the Citizens' Panel are:

We recommend equity of access to healthcare and sharing of health resources across all EU borders (n=23).

We recommend having a European, organized, concerted and fair approach in the struggle against public health issues, for example, obesity, prevention campaigns, promoting the production, distribution, consumption of healthy food, promoting access to healthy life and sport, and helping the poorest countries implement the same means of prevention and treatment (n=22).

FUNDING. Citizens expressed concern that the EU must invest more into its constituent regions and that, more generally, social benefit systems require assessment in regard to which agencies control funding and deliver support.



The visioning activity under this heading sees balance between urban and rural areas, clearer rules on distributional responsibilities and which industries are eligible for support, more transparency on disbursements and more attention being given to the family and family relations by the EU.

The recommendations of the Citizens' Panel are:

All under 18s and disabled people should have free public transport in Europe by 2012 to and from rural areas to improve social networking and educational opportunities (n=36).

Set a common basic minimum wage throughout European countries (n=19).

We advise that part of the EU financing for agriculture is transferred to enable other economic players to operate in rural areas (n=5).

INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT. Citizens identified the following concerns in regard to some of the core elements of this priority theme: the need to preserve the viability of rural areas through a combination of measures related to youth, employment, services, energy, environment and agriculture. The issue of housing was commented on by citizens in relation to it being too expensive for local first time buyers and competition from the second homes market. Citizens were also concerned about the relative lack of services in rural areas, especially healthcare and the need for a greater and sensitive police presence.

The visioning activity related to this heading focuses on the sustainability and identity of rural areas in 2020 which will have rediscovered the value of everyone belonging there, where people live in harmony with their environment, where people are close to services and employment, and where a diversity of agriculture is practised. Moreover, energy and agriculture will be inter-related, for example through biomass production, and more use will be being made of wind, solar and water resources.

The recommendation of the Citizens' Panel is:

The European policy for the coming years must denote that the territorial identity of rural areas be retained, under the responsibility of the inhabitants. But in so doing we must also keep in mind agriculture, services, employment, healthcare, education and all environmental aspects. These points must be regionally evaluated every five years (n=44).

 [Find out more >>> Annex 1](#)

[Complete list of the recommendations, concerns and visions formulated by the panellists during the final pan-European deliberative session](#)

CONVERGING REGIONAL AND EUROPEAN RESULTS

A comparison of the conclusions reached by the regional panels is particularly instructive. It shows that, for European citizens in 2007, Europe's rural policy is no longer primarily a matter of agriculture. What is important to them is for political and administrative representatives from local to regional level to be able to jointly draw up and implement global and coherent territorial policies ranging from employment to services, and from education to tourism, so that the European countryside can be diverse, vital and prosperous. All in all, this presented a considerable challenge for the public authorities, which are so often divided, into different levels of competence and different administrative sectors. The vision that emerged in Brussels on 30, 31 March and 1 April 2007 traces the major lines of what could be described as a humanist and democratic Europe.

A humanist Europe that is rethinking its development logic to put an end to the concentration of activities and services in the towns and which, at the same time, is rethinking its agriculture in harmony with the environment. A democratic Europe in which citizens would be able, as they did on the panel, to express their wishes in terms of public action.

In their recommendations, the citizen panellists detailed certain elements of this vision. They stressed the need for traceability not only of product origin but also of trade circuits and public action. In this respect, they fixed an appointment with the policy-makers, already asking whether their voices would be heard and taken into account. They repeated that no sectoral policy can have any meaning in itself and that all policy, starting with policy on rural areas, must reflect Europe's overall objectives, first among which are youth, employment and the environment.

This is a very different conception of drawing up, implementing and evaluating public policy that is now taking shape.



PROCESS RELATED OUTCOMES

The value-added of the European Citizens' Panel is complex. It in fact produces:

- **A decision-making tool.** The regional and European Opinions, original and reasoned, clarify the priorities and the points of view of previously informed citizens. They can be seen as complementing reports from administrations, experts and stakeholders, and the opinion polls, on questions usually left to the experts alone. It is a particularly appropriate tool for complex and controversial questions.

- **A public space allowing citizens to make their points of view known, informed by those of experts and stakeholders, so as to make a contribution to the public debate.** Firstly, this demands an effort from the experts and stakeholders to " translate " the issues into comprehensible terms. Then, through the realisation of information tools appropriate for exchanges with non-expert citizens. Finally the Opinion of the citizens is widely distributed to the public authorities but also to the stakeholders and the general public, both at regional and European levels.

" This has changed my way of being a citizen; I've taken my voter's card again. "

A panellist from Rhône-Alpes

- **A contribution to mutual understanding between citizens and political decision makers.** In particular, the citizens learned about the complex world of public decision-making, while the decision makers entered into a more didactic relationship with citizens as far as their choices and decisions are concerned.

- **A working method** among the citizens of Europe, which crosses cultural and linguistic borders and **which can be adapted** to other important and complex questions. The panel demonstrates that a contribution from citizens to the public debate on rural questions at the European level is not just possible, but also desirable. The two-stage process, regional then European, has been positively assessed considering citizens' satisfaction , political commitments which it has generated and the richness of the reports produced.

" I feel more European because of being involved into the process "

A panellist from Cumbria-Durham

CITIZENS ADDRESS THEIR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

REGIONAL AUTHORITIES INVOLVED

The different panels have relationships, both formal and informal, with their respective regional and national authorities. For the majority of the regional panels, the decision-makers in question were involved upstream of the process: they finance, support and undertake, even before the selection of the panellist citizens, to listen to the results and to take their recommendations into account; and they may participate in a steering committee. In regions such as Rhône-Alpes, St Gallen, Flevoland, Bavaria or Wallonia, the panel was even financed by the Ministry in charge of rural affairs or by the regional authorities in general. This mechanism facilitated the subsequent setting up of meetings between citizens and the authorities, to respond to questions and exchange information.

One of the key stages in the process, both at the regional and European level, is the official, public and usually personal delivery of the citizens' report to decision-makers. In the majority of the regions, this was followed by an exchange between the citizens and the authorities, in the course of which the latter often remarked, with surprise mixed with satisfaction, on the high quality of the Opinions issued by the panellists.

So much so that in **Wallonia**, the Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development, Tourism and the Environment undertook in the presence of the panellists to meet them again one year after the presentation of the panel's report, so as to report back on what the Walloon government would have done concerning their recommendations. Also, in the province of **Flevoland**, the Executive of the province and the representative of the Minister of Agriculture express their intention to invite the panellists back at the end of 2008. They also expressed the idea that some of the recommendations might be completely applicable.

In the canton of **St Gallen**, the Executive which had financed the regional citizens' panel announced that it would use the report from September 2007 in its new strategy for the rural areas of the canton. In **Bavaria**, it was the Ministry of the Economy, Infrastructure, Transport



The youngest and the oldest citizens of Bavaria (Germany) present their report to the Minister of Economic Affairs, Infrastructure, Transport and Technology

CITIZENS ADDRESS THEIR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

and Technology which received the Opinion of the citizens. He declared that the results of the Panel would be included in the Plan of Action for the development of rural areas which was recently decided by Cabinet, and that the rich contents of the citizens' report would be examined in depth by the Ministry.

Concretely, the **Irish** cross-border panel made progress possible on two points which it had identified. In the health field, access to the nearest clinic will from now on be possible even for people living on the other side of the border. Moreover, the government has taken measures to impede the illegal dumping of toxic waste, which used to be achieved by crossing the border.

" I hope this will have an impact, we'll be listened to and taken in consideration "

A panellist from Bavaria

In **Rhône-Alpes**, the Vice-President of the Regional Council issued three concrete propositions, namely to associate the Panel with the preparation of the deliberations on organic

agriculture as well as with the next steps in the regional conference on agriculture, and finally to form a group of analysts to take part in the follow up of the implementation of certain of the Panel's recommendations. Both in Rhône-Alpes and in Wallonia, the panellists were also given an official hearing by regional parliamentary deputies.

In **Cumbria and Durham** as well as for the panel from the **Carpathians** in Hungary and Slovakia, only the local authorities were really engaged towards the citizens, the regional authorities remaining very much in the background. It is interesting to note that in these countries, the competencies of the regional authorities are relatively limited.

These few examples show, when taken together, a desire on the part of the regional authorities involved to take the recommendations of the panellists seriously. This does not necessarily involve actual execution of the recommendations: deliberative democracy does not replace representative democracy, but rather complements it, with elected representatives retaining their freedom of decision-making. They nevertheless benefit from an informed and well-argued citizens' Opinion.

Beyond the decision-makers, other parties with an interest in rural questions were kept informed of the process and its results, as well as the general public, through newspapers, radio and television.



Citizens from the Walloon panel (Belgium) present their report to the Minister in charge of Agriculture, Rural Development, Environment and Tourism (to the right, right hand photograph) as well as other regional authorities at the Walloon Parliament

EUROPEAN AUTHORITIES ALSO LISTENING

Most of the European authorities were not expecting the results of the European Citizens' Panel, a pilot initiative some way off the beaten track. They did not commission the operation nor take the lead in funding it.

Nevertheless, they came in numbers and at the highest level to listen to the citizens on 2 April 2007, at the EU Committee of the Regions. The simultaneous presence of high representatives of the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee and the EU Presidency to listen to and discuss with ordinary citizens on the basis of work by the latter is sufficiently rare to deserve underlining.

Agriculture and Rural Development Commissioner [Mariann Fischer Boel](#), who also represented Regional Policy Commissioner Danuta Hübner and Education and Culture Commissioner Ján Figel, declared that: " the Commission will take the results of this citizens' consultation very seriously, in terms of content and method " .

For Committee of the Regions President [Michel Delebarre](#), " the originality of the process and of its results is to be stressed " . He took particular note of the recommendations on labelling products to indicate the distance travelled and on evaluating every five years the implementation of European policies concerning the identity of rural areas, to be carried out in association with the population and at regional level.

The Vice President of the European Parliament Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, [Janusz Wojciechowski](#), stressed the need to initiate such a debate and perhaps to involve the European Parliament more directly in this kind of dialogue.

[Dirk Ahner](#), Director General of DG Agriculture and [Wladyslaw Piskorz](#), its Head of Unit for Innovative Actions, said that they were " looking forward to hearing the suggestions of citizens ", that they were " carefully taking notes about the preferences of the European



The Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, the President of the Committee of the Regions and the Vice President of the European Parliament Agriculture Committee respond to the citizen panellists.

CITIZENS ADDRESS THEIR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

Citizens' Panel " and that " it would certainly be used in the design, and vision of future regional policy " .

Lotz Jörg, the official representative for Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection from the German Presidency of the Union was impressed by the " enormous amount of energy " developed by citizens. He thanked them for the " specific proposals they put forward " and made connections with the Leader Programme which enables involvement at the grass-roots level.

" After realising this pilot initiative of the Citizens' Panel, it is imperative for citizens and institutions to develop together a means of keeping citizens informed of the use made of their recommendations and of involving them in the follow-up process ", stated **Pierre Mairesse**, Director for Citizenship at the DG Education and Culture.

Indeed, the citizens expressed forcefully and on repeated occasions a demand to know how the results obtained together on the rural issue as well as the method adopted by the " European Citizens' Panel " could be used at European level in the future.

They feared that " decision-makers might to take on board the things they agree with or the things they already have policies for ". As one citizen concluded " It is important that we are not forgotten about " .

" The coming months will be devoted to the wide dissemination and presentation of the recommendations formulated by this first European Citizens' Panel on the future of rural areas within the various European bodies, as well as to connect learning from this initiative with others such as the European Citizens Consultation ", stressed **Benoît Derenne**, Director of the Foundation for Future Generations and co-initiator of the European Citizens' Panel, speaking on behalf of the partner foundations.



Stephen Pittam, Trust Secretary of the J. Rowntree Charitable Trust, (right) chaired the dialogue between citizens and decision-makers, assisted by Niall Fitzduff, Chair of the ECP facilitation team (left)



Michel Delebarre, President of the Committee of the Regions, engages in an enthusiastic discussion of citizens' recommendations



Lotz Jörg represented the German Presidency (right) and Frank Van Oorschot represented the European Economic and Social Committee (left)



Pierre Calame, General Director of the Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation, concludes on the innovation, legitimacy, possibilities and limitations of the ECP process and on the discrepancies between citizens' recommendations and current European policies.

Pierre Calame, General Director of the Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation – also an initiator of this initiative – stressed the importance of placing such an approach in the context of new European governance. “ As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, it is a new citizens' way of building Europe that is now taking shape, ” he said on closing this exceptional meeting.



The shoe on the other foot: citizen delegates sit on stage and discuss rural policies with high ranking EU representatives - more than a symbol



Mariann Fischer Boel, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development (at the top of the image and on the screen), attentive to the recommendations issued by the Panel

|| EVALUATION OF THE EUROPEAN STAGE OF THE PROCESS

An external evaluation was carried out by Dialogik, a German institution attached to the University of Stuttgart.

This evaluation principally covers the final deliberative session of the European Citizens' Panel. Its principal conclusions are that the major objectives of the initiative were achieved: feasibility of such a consultation on such a complex subject is possible at the European level and provides useful results. The panellist citizens were in an overwhelming majority satisfied with their role in the process and their interest for European policies has increased. The regions/Europe coupling is evaluated positively, including when considering political commitments and the financial framework. The division of the financial effort among several organisations should facilitate the replication of such initiatives by keeping them independent of a single funder.



[Find out more >>> Annex 6](#)
[External evaluation of the final pan-European deliberative session](#)

The evaluation also points out some gaps, notably in the organisation and precise clarification of roles among different intervening parties, without that this compromises the usefulness of the process nor the validity of its results.

|| ISSUES AND PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

TOGETHER WITH THE CITIZENS, REFORM LARGE STRUCTURAL UNION POLICIES, AMONG THEM THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY (CAP)

Europe has to be concrete. So that European citizens appropriate common policies - in this case the Common Agricultural policy and other policies with an impact on rural areas - they have to perceive the concrete implications on their everyday life.

The basic original aspect of the European Citizens' Panel is the inversion of the terms of the debate. In fact, most often, the appropriation of European policies by ordinary citizens consists of wanting to provide them with an explanation. What is asserted here is that it is necessary to take the opposite direction: **taking the citizens' concrete concerns** regarding rural areas, to build « bottom up » common policies capable of answering their expectations with regard to the management of territories, food, agriculture, etc.

For the panellist citizens on the panel and for all the partners in this pilot European process, these **regional and European recommendations** must be considered **as a significant contribution in the process of the community policy reforms which have an impact on the rural areas.**

Every European citizen would potentially be called to contribute to the definition of the European policies. A process which allows common citizens to build an informed opinion about the challenges of society must notably include:

- A random selection assuring a variety of ages, genders and socio-economic profiles;
- Interactive training: the citizens develop an opinion during a debate with a range balanced among the points of views of experts, key informants and politicians;
- Deliberations: the citizens discuss together and then take a collective position.

The articulation between local (regional within the framework of the European Citizens' Panel) and European deliberations is fundamental:

- The local level represents the frame of experience, relatively familiar and relevant to the implementation of European policies. It allows the citizens to appropriate the challenges;
- Connections between the local and European levels must be developed, from the concrete concerns of the citizens to the European challenges: sharing the local results in the flexible but comparable formats; European deliberation where each can express themselves in their language.

The future of the European processes of participation involving common citizens will be determined by the answers which will be given to the following questions.

Will the European institutions envisage citizens' deliberative panels as a decision-making tool, in addition to the polls and expert reports? Under what conditions can this tool result in a structured dialogue between European authorities and citizens? What type of follow-up will the authorities be ready to give to these citizen standpoints? What roles will the public authorities, partnership organisations and foundations have in the development of this type of process? What measures are foreseen in order to avoid diluting the seriousness of the selection criteria, impartiality and quality of the deliberative process?

It was necessary to create the movement, to launch this initiative, to concretely demonstrate the possibility of such a processes. Although it can always be improved, the European Citizens' Panel demonstrates the **vast potential of this method of involving common citizens** in complex and non-consensual political questions, and thus, on the European scale, **in the reforms to come from major structural policies.**



PANELLIST CITIZENS

Bavaria, Germany

Christine ALLERT, Karolina BACHFISCHER, Helga BALG, Michael BAYREUTHER, Annegret BIERMANN, Siegfried BINDER, Elisabeth DIANI, Manfred EBERL, Thomas EHLICH, Herbert ERNSTBERGER, Christoph HÄUSLER, Anette HERZOG, Michaela HOFMEISTER, Herbert HORN, Achim JANKE, Michael JENDRUSCH, Sebastian KÖRBER, Katharina KRIESEL, Elfriede KÜSPERT, Anneliese LENHARD, Werner LEUSCHNER, Christl LINZMAIER, Claudia LUNOW, Christoph MAIER, Christian PESTER, Edeltraud PLEIL, Ernst RAITHEL, Alois RICKAUER, Sylvia RINGARD, Dagmar ROTHE, Galina SCHAMPEISOV, Eveline SCHMIDT, Rita SCHMIDT, Matthias SCHNURRBUSCH, Birgit SCHÖNBERGER, Otto STRAUB, Danny TAUBERT, Otto THEISS, Helmut THOMA, Miro VIDOSEVIC, Dominik VOGEL, Monika VOIGT, Tobias VOLK, Gerda WALBERT, Annemarie WEBER, Andreas WEISS, Maria WISGRILL, Yvonne WITTMANN, Alexander ZIERER

Flevoland, Netherlands

Wouter AMERSFOORT, Lisan BEIJER-STURKENBOOM, Agnes DE WIT, Mieke DE WIT-RADEMAKER, Michiel DOEZE-JAGER, Nenia HONINGH, Olga KRIJTENBERG-VROLIJK, Joan LISAND, Harold STOEVELAAR, Bettie TIJSSSELING, Bram TOUW, Clarisse VAN DER WOUDE-MAN, Piet VERHAGEN, Roy ZUIVERLOON

Cumbria and Durham, United Kingdom

Laura AGAR, Daniel AMOS, Alex ASKEW, Carly FRETTER, Rebecca HARTLEY, Debra HARTLEY, Julia HUGHES, Sinead LIVINGSTON, Scott LOWTHER, Margaret METCALFE, Bahadur NAJAK, Aleem NAJAK, Bill NICHOLSON, Ruth OPIE, Megan PALMER, Charlotte SCOTT, Joshua SERCOMBE, Jamie STEFFERT, Sue SUTCLIFFE, Joe THOMAS, Dean TINKLER, Peter TURNBULL, Tim VASS, Leah YOUNG

Border regions of Hungary and Slovakia

Tamás ARANYOSI, Akos ÁRTIM, Jozef BALINT, Gábor BALLA, Adriena BARANOVÁ, Jánosné BARNÁ, Ladislav BARTOK, Jánosné BÁTRY BERTALAN, Andrásné BORZA, Ferenc BŰR, Attila CSIRSZKI, Beatrix CSORBA, Priska DANČOVÁ, Peter DUNKA, Jenőné GANYI, Gabriella GÁSPÁRNÉ MATA, Dana GOČOVÁ, Agnes HEGEDŰSNÉ KEREKES, Jozef HLADÍK, Helena HLADÍKOVÁ, Béla HORVÁT, István HUNYADI, Alžbeta IGNÁTOVÁ, István JAKAB, Margita KAPUTOVÁ, Ján KISS, István KISS, Jánosné KISS, János KOCSISCSÁK, Józsefné KÖKÉNY, Eva KÖNYOVÁ, Péterné KORDA, József KORDA, Edgár KÓTAI, Károly KOVÁCS, Miklós KOVÁCS, Gerg Péter KOVÁCS, János KOZSUREK, Eva KRIVDOVÁ, László KUNDRÁK, Csaba LAKATOS, Lukás LASLOFI, Anikó LÁSZLOFIOVÁ, Renáta LENGYEL, Nándor LENGYEL ZSOLT, Jozef MAJANČÍK, Štefan MAJANČÍK, Vincéné MANZEL, Gyula MOGYORÓ, Erika MOLNÁR, Mária MORAVANSKÁ, Peter NAGY, Katalin NAGY, Agnes NAGYNÉ SZARKA, Istvánné PANKÓ, László PAZAR, Lajos PETŐ, Béla PETRÓ, Pálné RIGETI, Gejza RIGO, Ferencné RUHA, Ladislav RYBÁR, Mária SABOVÁ, František ŠKAPINEC, Klaudia ŠKAPINECOVÁ, Anton SLOTÁK, Jozef STROPKO, Gizela ŠUSTEROVÁ, Judit SZAKÁCZKI, Štefan SZASZÁK, András SZEMÁN, Ferenc SZŰCS, Sándorné SZUHAI, Alexander TAKÁCS, Marta TAROVÁ, András TIRK, Vincent TÓTH, Ferenc TÓTH, Csaba TÓTH, Ivetta TÓTHOVÁ, Angela TÓTHOVÁ, László TRÉZSI, Alena UJCOVÁ, Zsuzsanna VÉCSEYNÉ FEDOR, Tiborné VÉGH, Edit VI-GÓCZKI

Border regions of Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland

Sara ANDERSON, Marion BRADY, Josie BRADY, Anne CASEY, Eugene CASSIDY, Teresa DALY, Gabrielle DALY, Mary DEVLIN, Susan DUNNE, Maria FITZSIMONS, Margaret FOX, Phyllis GRAHAM, Heather HALL, Fiona HOEY, Maureen KELLY, Nora MALONE, Josephine MCCUSKER, Larry MCDERMOTT, Mary MCENEANEY, Anne MCGOVERN, Margaret MCKINNEY, Geraldine MCLAUGHLIN, Michael MCMAHON, Gerry MURPHY, Jim NOLAN, Fr Sean NOLAN, Mary O'DONNELL, Mearns POLLOCK, Joe SHIELDS, Barney TRAYNOR, Una WATTERSON, Lily WEIR

Rhône-Alpes, France

Gilbert BERNARD, Laurence BERNE, Eloi BIANCO, Roger BOCHU, Bathilde BON-NAL, Hélène CHAUVIN, Charles CHOURAQUI, Simone DALEX, Monique DALLEY, Clément DODANE, Catherine DUMOULIN, Romain FOURIS, Dominique GEAY, Suzanne GRAND, Agnès GUIGON, Anne-Laure GUILLAUD-LAUZANNE, Chantal GUINDON, Isabelle HENRY, Suzanne JOSEPH, Myriam LANJUIN, Nathalie LEONHARD, Jacques LERNOULD, Richard LIGEROT, Patrick MAHAMOU, Martine MAX, Liliane MEA, Sarah MENDEZ, Stéphanie MOREAU, Philippe PENICAUD, Jean-Pierre PEYRONNET, Jocelyne REYNAUD, Jacques ROCHE, Alain SANCHEZ, Pascal SAVARIN, Colette SONZOGNI, Alexandra STABLEAUX, Michel THOLLET, Roland VOIRON

St Gallen, Switzerland

Jakob ABDERHALDEN, Heidrun ALDER, Rahel ALTMANN, Christa BARTLOME, Martha BAUR, Angeline BEDOLLA, Andrea BIRKHÖLZER, Peter BOLLACK, Heinz BOLLHALDER, Walter BRANDER-KÜNG, Clara BRUNNER, Heidi BUFF-SCHWEIZER, Elisabeth BURKART, Christof DEUTSCH, Alfons FALK, Martin FEURER, Fritz FORRER, Maja FRISCHKNECHT, Stefan FURGLER, Alice GIGER, Jean-Pierre GILLIERON, Andreas GÖTTE, Heinrich GÜTTINGER, Leo HÄRZ, Bruno HAUSER, Ruth HOBI, Liliane HOLLNSTEIN, Kathrin HUBER, Martin KAISER, Nelly KNAUS, Elsbeth KOBELT, Katharina KOLLER, Urs KRAPF, Hans KÜNZLI, Christian LAICH, Hildegard LENDI, Robert LIENHARD, Ruth LOOSER, Ibolya MAKRAI, Dieter MINDER, Markus NEF, Yvonne NEF, Ruedi REICH, Balz ROHRER, Michael ROTH-LOOSER, Felix RÜEGG, Gertrud SCHERRER, Jakob SCHERRER, Nicole SCHERRER, Margrith SCHNYDER, Martin Lothar SCHULLERUS, Beatrix STAUB-HAUSER, Josef THOMA, Beat VON DER CRONE, Sepp WIETLISBACH, Eduard WINNER, Hans Peter ZIMMERLI

Wallonia, Belgium

Sylvie ALLOO, Yvette BARTHEL, Pasquale BIANCHI, Cyrille BIERMANS, Olivier BRISBOIS, Véronique BURTON, Martine CARBONNELLE, Jacqueline CLAUSSE, Jean-Jacques DE BOCK, Roger DECHÈNE, Jacques DECOEN, Marc DECOSTER, Nathalie DEHAUT, Joëlle DEKKERS, Juliette DELLA BELLA, Philippe DELALEU, Vincent DIERICKX, Roger KERCKHOFS, Rita KNAEPEN, Henri KOZIEL, Xavier LEBICHOT, Joël LECOMTE, Sophie MATHY, Josephina MATOS, Yolande MERTENS, Vincent MOENS, Marianne MOUREAUX, Jean-Pierre MURAT, Nadine NICOLAS, Amélie NYSSSEN, Grégory ONKELINX, Claire POULAIN, Fabian RESTIAUX, Marie-Paule SCHREUER, Claudine SPELEERS, Laurent TONGLET.

(in italics: the panellist citizens who also participated in the final pan-European deliberative session)



Find out more >>> [Annex 5](#)

[Profile of the panellist citizens participating in the final pan-European deliberative session.](#)

PARTNERS AND KEY PEOPLE

The European Citizens' Panel was made possible thanks to the creation of a large, complex and innovative partnership:

- In the absence of sufficient lines of financing from the Commission, independent foundations took the initiative and provided the majority of the financing for the European part of the initiative, this being complemented by the Commission (DG Education and Culture) and the EU Committee of the Regions.
- Some regional and national public authorities engaged themselves politically and provided the bulk of the financing for the regional part of the initiative.
- Some institutions experienced in the organisation of participatory processes designed the common methodological basis together, while allowing flexibility in taking regional specifics into account.

Regional producers

- **Bavaria, Germany et St Gallen, Switzerland:** Hilmar STURM, Christian WEILMEIER (Gesellschaft für Bürgergutachten - Society for Citizens' Reports), with the collaboration of the Technical University of Munich
- **Cumbria and Durham, North of England, United Kingdom:** Tom WAKEFORD (University of Newcastle, PEALS unit - Policy Ethics And Life Sciences, Right 2B Heard), Peter BRYANT (Right 2B Heard), with the collaboration of the International Institute for Environment and Development
- **Flevoland, Netherlands:** Dave HUITEMA, Corinne CORNELISSE, Mishka STUIP, Susan VAN 'T KLOOSTER, Leontien BOS, Marleen VAN DE KERKHOF (Institute for Environmental Studies - IVM, Free University of Amsterdam)
- **Cross-border panel between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland:** Niall FITZDUFF, Gwen LANIGAN (North South Rural Voice)
- **Cross-border panel between Hungary and Slovakia:** János LUKÁCS, Laura DITTEL, Hajnal LEKENY, Beáta CSOMÓS, Miriam BRASKOVÁ, Ákos MÉSZÁROS (Carpathian Foundation)
- **Rhône-Alpes, France:** Betty NGUYEN (Eurodébat), Sophie EBERMEYER, Mélanie SEVIN (Économie & Humanisme)
- **Wallonia, Belgium:** Sandrino HOLVOET (Foundation for Future Generations), Daniel BURNOTTE, Xavier DELMON (Tr@me)

European Producer: Benoît DERENNE, Tanguy VANLOQUEREN ; with complementary support of Dorothée MARÉCHAL for the follow-up (Foundation for Future Generations - FFG)

European Co-ordinator: Jean-Pierre VERCRUYSSSE, Florence GÉRARD, Géraldine GALVAING, Thomas CHULLIKAL, ÉRIC DE BORCHGRAVE ; with complementary support of among others Wendy JONES, Christine CHARLIER, Eveline DURIEUX, Monique BRAEM (AEIDL)

European Facilitators: Niall FITZDUFF (UK, Chair of the facilitation team), Peter BRYANT (UK), Gareth HARPER (UK), István KOSZTOLÁNYI (Hungary), Karolína MIKOVÁ (Slovakia), Frans SOETERBROEK (The Netherlands), Hilmar STURM (Germany), Laurent TURNEER (Belgium), Christian WEILMEIER (Germany).

European Rapporteurs

Rapporteurs: Michael MURRAY (Lead Rapporteur, Queens University Belfast, UK), Liz CHARLES (UK), Xavier DELMON (Belgium), Laura DITTEL (Slovakia), Dave HUITEMA (The Netherlands), Hajnal LEKENY (Hungary), Betty NGUYEN (France), Mishka STUIP (The Netherlands), Rita ZWINGLI (Switzerland)

OutilCarto Assistants: Vincent CALAME (France), Matthieu CALAME (France), Youri LANOIT (Belgium), Krisztina MATKOVICS (Hungary), Dominique MORIS (Belgium), David SANGWA (Belgium), Maxim-Shen QIU (Luxemburg), Bilal SOUILEM (Belgium), Sarah VANDENBROUCKE (Belgium), Quentin WATTHEZ (Belgium), Martina ZITKOVA (Slovakia)

For the final pan-European deliberative session, complementary logistical support from Sandrino HOLVOET, Anne HUMBLET, Marie VANDERVEKEN (Foundation for Future Generations) and accompaniment for British young people by Catherine PURVIS and Lynn WILLIAMS.

Partner foundations at the European level: Bernheim Foundation (Belgium), Carnegie UK Trust, Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation (France / Switzerland), Evens Foundation (France/Belgium/Poland), Fondation de France (France), Foundation for Future Generations (Belgium), Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (United Kingdom) and King Baudouin Foundation (Belgium), in partnership with the Network of European Foundations for Innovative Cooperation (NEF).

Regional and national public authorities and independent organisations supporting the regional panels:

- **Bavaria, Germany:** Bavarian Ministry of the Economy, Infrastructure, Transport and Technology
- **St Gallen, Switzerland:** Office of the Regional Development of St Gallen Canton, Construction Department
- **Cumbria and Durham, North of England, United Kingdom:** Cumbria County Council, Durham County Council, Young Cumbria

- **Flevoland, Netherlands:** Province of Flevoland, Ministry of the Interior and for relations with the Kingdom, Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality
- **Cross-border panel between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland:** Department of Agriculture and Rural Development of Northern Ireland, Border Action under the Peace II European programme, Department of Community, Rural and Gaelic Affairs (Republic of Ireland), National Development Plan (NDP), Rural Development Programme, Pobal, Combat Poverty Agency, Carnegie UK Trust, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, Queens University, Belfast
- **Cross-border panel between the Carpathians in Hungary and Slovakia:** Bódva Valley micro-region council and Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
- **Rhône-Alpes, France:** Regional Council Rhône-Alpes
- **Wallonia, Belgium:** Walloon Ministry for Agriculture, Rural Life, Environment and Tourism, General Directorate for Agriculture

European public authorities supporting the European part of the process : European Commission (General Directorate for Education and Culture) and EU Committee of the Regions.



Most of the organisers

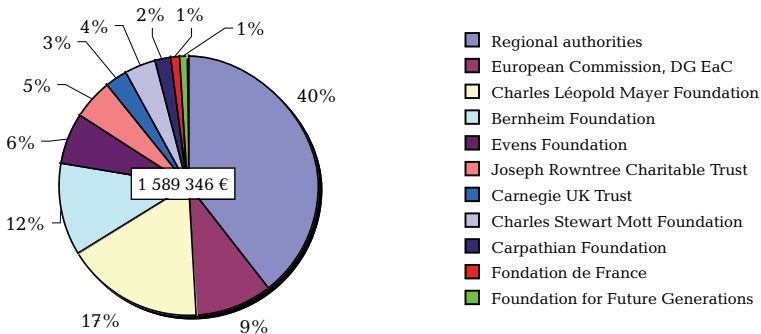
EARLY STAGES AND FINANCING

The European Citizens' Panel was made possible due to the strong involvement of hundreds of citizens and more than forty partners: regional and European public authorities, foundations and organisations with experience in the management of participatory processes. It is innovative with regard to its process, related governance scales, cultural and linguistic challenges, and the vast methodological, political and financial partnership involved.

The implementation of such an enterprise, officially launched on May 10th, 2006 with the support of the EU Committee of the Regions, is the result of a shared dream that required time. In 2003, the Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation (FPH) and the Foundation for Future Generations took the joint initiative to explore its feasibility. The former, the FPH, had already organized a lengthy dialogue process about the CAP reform. Once concluded, it had reached the conclusion that, as we are heading towards a mainly urban Europe, it was necessary to reconstitute the structuring policies arising from current issues (food, rural areas and not only agriculture). It was also involved in questions of governance and brought the essential financial means needed for the preparatory phase. The other one, the Foundation for Future Generations, animated by the conviction that sustainable development implies the support of the citizens, had a concrete experience in the innovative participative processes.

Joined by a number of foundations, the initiative reaches its critical mass of partners and political and financial commitments at the end of 2005 (see graph below). Every regional panel assembled its own consortium of political, financial and methodological partners, which constitutes one of the original aspects of the process. The whole initiative and its European dynamic would not have been possible without the considerable investment of each regional partner.


European Citizens' Panel, 2006-2007 budget (production and implementation)



The necessary means for the realization of the global process, in 10 regions and at the European level (2006-2007), near 1,600,000 €. The regional public authorities contributed 40% of the total, in addition to 9% from the European Commission (DG Education and Culture). The remaining 51% was contributed by 9 foundations, in association with the Network of European Foundations (NEF).

Given the initiative's innovative character, its development also required a long phase of preparations (2003-2005): feasibility study, global design, and assembly of the methodological, financial and political partnerships. The costs of this preparatory phase were taken care of entirely by two pioneer foundations, the Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation (260,000 €) and the Bernheim Foundation (37,280€).

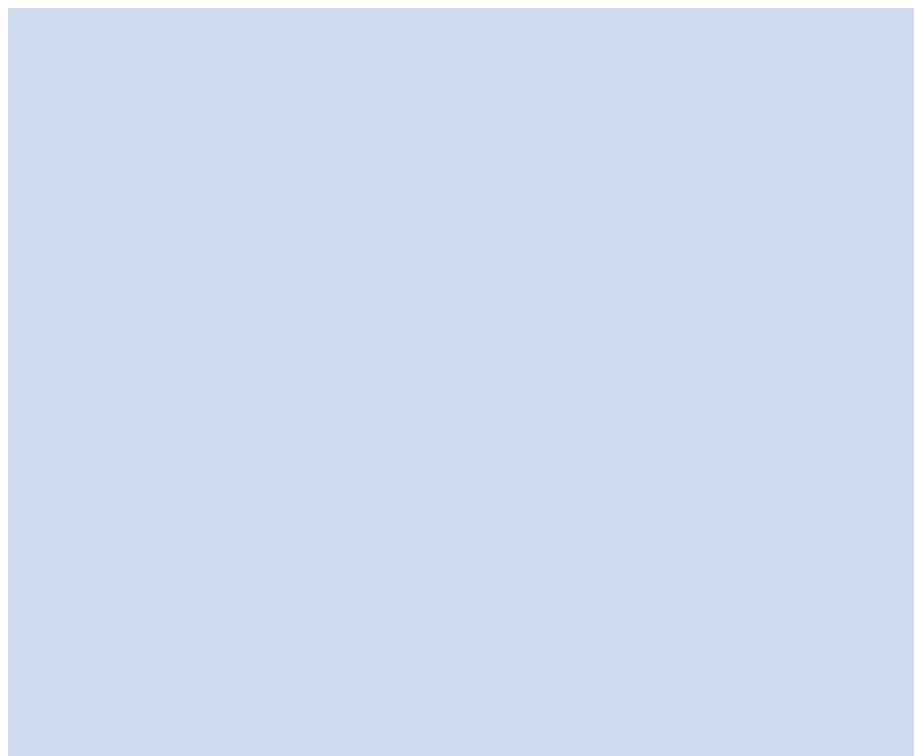


 All the annexes are available on the DVD-Rom attached to the present document and at www.citizenspanel.eu as separate documents, detached from this publication (in parenthesis, the available languages).

- Annex 1 Complete list of the recommendations, concerns and visions formulated by the panellists during the final pan-European deliberative session (German, English, French, Hungarian, Dutch, Slovak)
- Annex 2 Reports of the eight regional citizens' panels
By chronological order of their presentation to the public authorities :
 - 2.1 Republic of Ireland/Northern Ireland (English)
 - 2.2 Rhône-Alpes, France (French, English)
 - 2.3 Wallonia, Belgium (French)
 - 2.4 St Gallen, Switzerland (German)
 - 2.5 Carpathians in Hungary/Slovakia (Slovak, English)
 - 2.6 Flevoland, Netherlands (Dutch)
 - 2.7 Cumbria-Durham, United Kingdom (English)
 - 2.8 Bavaria, Germany (German)
- Annex 3 Transversal analysis of the regional reports
 - 3.1 *European Citizens' Panel initiative. A contents analysis of the regional reports*, by Michael MURRAY, Queens University Belfast (English)
 - 3.2 *Action publique et développement rural : que veulent les citoyens ? Commentaire des attentes exprimées dans les rapports régionaux du Panel de Citoyens Européen*, by Matthieu CALAME, Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation (French-English)
- Annex 4 Information documents on rural issues written for the panellists under the supervision of several experts on rural questions :
 - 4.1 European Infopack : *Rural Europe: definitions, issues and policies* (German, English, French, Hungarian, Dutch, Slovak)
 - 4.2 Rhône-Alpes Infopack (French)
 - 4.3 Wallonie Infopack : *Nos campagnes, demain en Europe ? Éléments pour un débat citoyen* (French)
 - 4.4 *European perspectives on the issues raised by regional citizens panels*, by John BRYDEN, University of Aberdeen (German, English, French, Hungarian, Dutch, Slovak)
- Annex 5 Profile of the panellist citizens participating in the final pan-European deliberative session (English)
- Annex 6 External evaluation of the final pan-European deliberative session
 - 6.1 Summary Report (German, English, French, Hungarian, Dutch, Slovak)
 - 6.2 Detailed Report (English)
- Annex 7 Summary Report of the European Citizens' Panel
 - 7.1 Version of 2 April 2007, as issued to the European institutions (German, English, French, Hungarian, Dutch, Slovak)
 - 7.2 Expanded version, including notably minutes of the presentation of the recommendations to the European institutions and of the subsequent debates (English, French)
- Annex 8
 - 8.1 *First lessons from the European Citizens' Panel on the role of rural areas in tomorrow's Europe*, by Pierre CALAME, Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation, 2 April 2007 (French, English)
 - 8.2 *Conclusions of the Conference to launch the European Citizens' Panel*, by Pierre CALAME, Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation, 10 May 2006 (French, English)
- Annex 9
 - 9.1 Partners of the initiative: complete details
 - 9.2 Motivations of the partner foundations (English, French)
- Annex 10 Videos of the European Citizens' Panel
 - 10.1 Video of the European Citizens' Panel (English, French, German)
 - 10.2 Video of the Rhône-Alpes regional panel
 - 10.3 Video of the Republic of Ireland/ Northern Ireland regional panel
 - 10.4 Video of the Wallonia regional panel
 - 10.5 Video of the Cumbria-Durham regional panel

The website www.citizenspanel.eu presents the whole initiative in 6 languages (German, English, French, Hungarian, Dutch, Slovak).





Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy that is at a stand- still. A glaringly obviously structural inability on the part of the European Union to involve its citizens in building its policies, lending credence to the notion of a remote Europe. A fragmented European policy, with each direction pursuing its own agenda.

The European Citizens' Panel on the future of rural areas is not THE answer to these three challenges which constitute the crisis in Europe, but it is certainly a decisive step in the right direction. The panel worked, in two stages, between May 2006 and April 2007.

First stage: 337 citizens selected at random, gathered in eight regional panels covering ten regions of Europe, informed by a balanced group of experts and witnesses, assisted by a team of facilitators, rapporteurs, etc., debating the future of rural areas.

Second stage: 87 participants from the eight regional panels putting their thoughts together in one pan-European session.

Among the results: eight regional reports issued by the citizens to their respective regional authorities and 24 recommendations issued in a joint report presented by the panellists to the European bodies.

This publication is a report on an ambitious pilot initiative seeking to associate citizens with the future of Europe. There was a need to innovate and get it all up and running, to compare existing methods, and invent new ones. But above all, this experience has confirmed something that many citizens' panels have already demonstrated over some twenty years: the immense capacity for mobilisation of citizens who are given the chance to have their say in the service of the public good.

