

# ENGAGING CITIZENS & CIVIL SOCIETY TO MAXIMISE SOCIETAL IMPACT IN EU RESEARCH & INNOVATION





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# SUMMARY

There is wide recognition that engagement of civil society organisations and citizens has been suboptimal in defining research and innovation (R&I) priorities in Horizon 2020 and in previous EU Research Framework Programmes. Given the increasing importance of communicating, connecting and engaging with European citizens and civil society on the definition of research priorities, this brief proposes a two-pronged approach, which engages citizens and civil society in defining the next EU Research Framework Programme's (FP9) structure and missions ahead of the Commission proposal.

Firstly, we propose a number of Citizens Conventions, an innovative process of decision making to co-create FP9's missions with society. Within this process, citizens are trusted to apprehend complex topics and to propose missions corresponding to societal challenges that respond to the current and future needs of society.

Secondly, we propose the creation of a Civil Society High Level Group on maximising the societal impact of R&I. By definition, the priorities of the societal challenges pillar of Horizon 2020 should be defined in large part by society, yet in practice there is very little involvement of civil society. Through more inclusive and participative governance structures, EU research programmes can address the multi-faceted aspects of major societal challenges and offer solutions that provide concrete societal benefits.

Both Citizens Conventions and the Civil Society High Level Group should be put in place before the European Commission releases its proposal in May 2018 in order to feed into the FP9 design process.

Neither proposal is a one shot process: both should continuously inform and be engaged during the implementation of FP9.







# INTRODUCTION

“Citizens and civil society engagement” and “impact” are key topics in the definition of the next EU Research Framework Programme (FP9). Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) represented 6,6% (FP6) and 5,8% (FP7) of all recipient institutions involved in the Framework Programmes and usually do not occupy a central role in the projects. Dedicated mechanisms where effective and meaningful engagement of civil society and citizens is made possible are not part of the current research and innovation (R&I) governance infrastructure.

On top of the EU institutions who are defining the programme, experts and stakeholders who are regularly consulted and advise the EU in defining R&I priorities are usually limited to industry, researchers and academics, who - as main recipients - often have a direct interest in FP funds. While these types of engagement are said to reinforce the objectives of excellence in science and industrial leadership (Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 of Horizon 2020), very few societal actors are engaged to define R&I priorities and monitor implementation of the third pillar on societal challenges. This leads to a deficit in the societal impact of the programme.

*“The structure of Horizon 2020 captures three dimensions. One is research driven, another is industry driven, and the third one is societal driven. Partnerships and modalities have been established to address the first two, but so far not much has happened in the third area. While several other partnerships claim to address societal challenges, the practical level activities mostly rely on the approaches used in the first two dimensions. In order to truly address societal challenges, new types of society led partnership instruments should be considered”. Technopolis report, June 2017, commissioned by the Estonian Presidency.*

*“One of Horizon 2020’s novelties was its three pillar structure corresponding to who sets the agenda: the*

*scientific community for excellent science, industry for industrial leadership, and society for addressing societal challenges” Lamy report, July 2017.*

*“No evidence yet of noticeable socio-economic impacts on the health system or health benefits for patients”, in IMI as “the potential or actual socio-economic impacts of projects had rarely been at the forefront of the minds of those involved in the projects”. Innovative Medicines Initiative Socio Economic Impact Assessment, May 2016. (IMI is funded under the Societal Challenge Pillar of Horizon 2020)*

In the current political context, it is increasingly important to communicate, connect and engage with European citizens and civil society on the definition of research priorities. FP9 presents a major opportunity to adopt a new way forward.

Involvement of society needs to take place as far upstream in the process as possible, to avoid the potential negative impact of research on society

and ensure engagement amounts to more than mere tokenism. This brief proposes a two-pronged approach, which engages citizens and civil society in defining FP9's structure and missions, and monitoring implementation and societal impact of the next FP.

# CITIZENS CONVENTION

## A new Decision-Making Process for Research and Innovation Issues

### It will consist of:

- **Citizens Conventions**, elaborating the missions of the future research framework programme.
- A **Civil Society High Level Group** on Maximising R&I Societal Impact, working on civil society's research priorities, CSO inclusion, expected societal impacts and strategic planning of future EU research work programmes.

*“Engage the public and all levels of government with research that affects them. Look for possibilities to co-design and co-implement solutions to societal challenges, based on science and innovation.”*

Estonian Presidency of the EU - Tallinn Call for Action 2017:  
Research and innovation matter for the future of Europe

In response to current discussions on citizen engagement in defining R&I priorities, we propose an innovative process of decision making to co-create FP9's missions<sup>1</sup>.

The Citizens Convention model is based on an analysis of dozens of participatory democratic processes launched worldwide in the last 40 years. The Citizens Convention is a participatory process aimed at involving citizens in political decision making on R&I issues.

### It includes three phases:

1. Training (during which a randomly selected group of citizens studies the relevant themes);
2. Dialogue with experts (during which the citizens question each other and a pool of experts on the various themes);
3. Joint conclusions (where citizens reach either a consensus or a main position also taking into account minority positions).

This method is based on the idea that a randomly selected group of citizens is able to apprehend complex topics, without being overly influenced by local or immediate interests, and propose solutions that respond to the current and future needs of society. The legitimacy of the process is similar to that of a court jury, where a randomly selected group of citizens are, in some countries, trusted with very serious matters (sometimes of life and death). It is therefore important that the results of the Citizens Convention are binding and fully taken into account by the decision making authority in question.



## Why are Citizens Conventions relevant for FP9?

- A Citizens Convention is a democratic mechanism that helps institutions make choices and take decisions that are also relevant for the greater public good. It does so by identifying societal needs using knowledge and insight drawn directly from citizens.
- If we want to put citizens in the driving seat<sup>2</sup>, their role cannot be reduced to participating in public consultations or being passive recipients of information. Citizens Conventions would make the EU's commitment to citizen engagement authentic and ensure it is not reduced to top-down communication.
- Technological innovation can create challenges and dilemmas for society that cannot be solved by elected officials alone: the insights of citizens are also needed to address these complex challenges.
- Each stakeholder's point of view is taken into consideration throughout the Convention (the views of the set of diverse experts and European civil servants are taken into account through panel hearings, the public and advisory groups through position papers provided to the panel). All available knowledge is mobilised and silos between scientific disciplines are reduced, ensuring plurality of expertise, interdisciplinarity, and increased access to data.
- It increases trust in R&I by involving citizens as early as possible and sincerely taking into account their insights and recommendations.

# How would a Citizens Convention work in the European context?

1

The European Commission first defines the criteria for FP9 missions.

2. A single Citizens Convention<sup>3</sup> would not be sufficient to define all the missions, they would have to be organised around specific societal challenges, allowing also for linkages across challenges.

a. **OPTION 1:** There could either be one Citizens Convention for each of the seven societal challenges as identified in Horizon 2020<sup>4</sup>. This would give the opportunity to easily select experts and to write a set of missions -the characteristics and number of which is defined by the Commission in step 1 above- for each societal challenge.

b. **OPTION 2:** Another option is to organise three Citizens Conventions, one for each category of societal challenges:

- Health and Food (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> H2020 societal challenges);

- Environment & Climate (3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> H2020 societal challenges);
- Society (6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> H2020 societal challenges).

The citizens panel will not go in depth on scientific and technical considerations but will offer a societal perspective. Linkages across societal challenges will also be addressed.

3. The EU establishes an **Organising Committee** in charge of the Citizens Conventions. The Organising Committee is composed of an equal number of EU civil servants and specialists in participatory processes (academics, NGO representatives, etc.) to ensure a diversity of profiles.

4. The Organising Committee appoints a **Steering Committee** for each Citizens Convention in charge of the Training Programme, along with an external provider in charge of the random selection of citizens for the panel.



## 5. Selection of **Citizens** in two rounds:

**1<sup>st</sup> round:** Pools of citizens are selected randomly from national electoral lists of Member States, according to their demographic weight. For instance, the selection could be based on the national allocation of European Parliament seats, which would lead to a total number of 751 selected citizens (6 to 96 per European Union Member State). This large number allows leeway for potential inability to participate in the process (lack of time, or interest etc..). It is crucial to preserve the random nature of the selection process and not issue calls for participation, as this runs the risk of only reaching citizens who already have a certain level of access to EU communication channels or already have some stake in EU policies. National authorities are responsible for the random selection of citizens drawn from the electoral lists. At last, citizens who have a direct interest (professionals, activists, etc.) in the subject are excluded.

**2<sup>nd</sup> round:** Among the pre-selected citizens (751 in the example above), 15 citizens are randomly selected for each Citizens Convention (105 or 45 in total depending on the number of Citizens Conventions). This selection is adjusted to balance gender, age, places of residence (urban vs rural areas), linguistic and socio-economic profiles to increase the diversity of views.

**N.B.** Citizens cannot be paid to participate in the process but they get subsistence fees.

6. The **Training Programme**<sup>6</sup> must provide citizens with the necessary information to adopt an informed position on the question before them. The training should offer a genuine plurality of opinions and disciplines related to the question put to the Citizens Panel. The consensus building objective of the Training Programme ensures a diversity of views with no particular orientation.

The Steering Committee must select external speakers who have submitted clear and coherent position papers. These **Position Papers** are presented as free and voluntary written contributions based on observations, proposals, advice or opinions relevant to the topic of the convention. Outcomes of advisory groups and public consultations will also be presented by the European Commission services as Position Papers. The first part of the Training Programme – **Initial Training** – will focus on the role of citizens in a democracy, the importance of research and innovation and the concept of missions. The second part – **Secondary Training** – will propose an analysis of societal challenges like: health, food, environment and peace but also the interactions of those different topics.

7. After the training, a **Public Debate**<sup>6</sup> (one per Citizens Convention) is organised by the Citizens Panel. Each Public Debate is conducted and led by the Citizens Panel. The Panel selects the speakers and has the opportunity to interview them and confront different ideas in order to form their opinion.

8. The Panel will then deliberate behind closed doors in the presence of a Facilitator with the aim of writing **recommendations** for action. The Facilitator is the only direct interlocutor of the Citizens Panel and does not take a position on the topic of the debate. Their role is to ensure that each participant can express advice or points of view.

9. The European Commission validates the missions as recommended by the different Citizens Panels. If the recommendations are not taken into account, it must publicly explain the reasons behind such a decision.

It works and  
it's worth it

Thanks to the very clear protocol and the real responsibility given to the selected citizens, the citizens conventions result in original decisions, respectful of the general interest. Several past experiments have clearly demonstrated this exceptional democratic phenomenon<sup>7</sup>.

# Not a one-shot process!

Citizens conventions should be used throughout FP9, to further define research priorities under each mission or societal challenge (depending on how the new structure of FP9 looks) and the individual Work Programmes.

# Proposed Schedule to define FP9's Missions

## December 2017:

## Constitution of the Organising Committee and Steering Committee

## January 2018:

## Selection of the Citizens Panel

## February-March 2018:

## Training, debate and publication of recommendations

## May 2018:

## Presentation to the EU



# CIVIL SOCIETY HIGH LEVEL GROUP ON MAXIMISING R&I SOCIETAL IMPACT

Civil society refers to the wide array of nongovernmental, not-for-profit and voluntary organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of members (or others) based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. Civil society includes nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), community groups, faith-

based organizations, foundations and advocacy groups. Distinctions among four types of CSOs will be made<sup>8</sup> : citizen-oriented CSOs (CSO1), society-oriented/publically funded CSOs (CSO2), society-oriented/business-funded CSOs (CSO3) and business-oriented CSOs (CSO4).

## Network Analysis of Civil Society Organisations' participation in the EU Framework Programmes - European Commission, December 2016

*“CSOs follow neither the logic of academia (characterised by excellence in scientific disciplines) nor the logic of business (shaped by competitiveness and profit). Instead, their logic focuses on solving societal problems, either as mission-driven CSOs, by influencing policy making, or as service-oriented CSOs, by improving the situation of their primary target group.”*

*“Apart from participating in coordination and support actions, other options for involving CSOs could be in agenda-setting, proposal evaluation and dissemination of results.”*

*“If European research and innovation policy wants to safeguard its legitimacy vis-à-vis European citizens, an independent third pillar, focusing on the grand societal challenges, is vital... The globally agreed Sustainable Development Goals could serve as an orientation and avoid that agenda setting is driven by interest groups. In order to bring people closer to research and research closer to people, arenas for knowledge co-creation and innovation need to be designed into which a broad variety of stakeholders should be involved.”*

# Why a Civil Society High Level Group?

Thanks to the “Science With and For Society” (SWAFS) transversal pillar, a huge number of innovative solutions aimed at CSOs’ involvement in science have been developed and studied. It is now time to integrate these good practices into the next framework for EU research. For example, involving non governmental organisations through participatory research is a straightforward way for EU-funded science to get closer to the needs of the people.

The third pillar of Horizon 2020, “Societal Challenges”, is intended to focus on societal impact and to target citizens and civil society.

By definition, its priorities should be defined in large part by society. However, in practice there is little to no involvement of civil society in setting the agenda or monitoring the implementation of Pillar 3. Without the robust involvement of civil society, the objectives of this Pillar run the risk of being co-opted by the other objectives of Horizon 2020, excellent science and industrial leadership.

Furthermore, while Pillars 1 and 2 have a tendency towards selectiveness and exclusivity, a robust Pillar 3 can serve to balance this tendency. It can go beyond the success indicators of scientific publications and the acquisition of patents through innovative technologies by which the impact of Pillars 1 and 2 are measured. Through inclusive and participative governance structures, Pillar 3 can instead address the multi-faceted aspects of major societal challenges and offer solutions that provide tangible and concrete societal benefits for citizens and people worldwide.





# Objectives

The Civil Society High Level group should be set up ahead of the FP9 negotiation process. Once FP9 is adopted, the group will be transformed into an FP9 Advisory Group of Experts to continue to inform the implementation of FP9.

## The role of the Civil Society High Level group would be to:

- Compile information and define society's research priorities under the different societal challenges or missions (depending on FP9's future architecture).
- Help identify cross-sectoral priorities (links between food, energy, climate, health).
- Help create impact pathways to monitor and document societal impact of FPs.
- Oversee implementation of Pillar 3 against a benchmark of societal impact.
- Define an agenda for meaningful civil society inclusion in FP9.
- Help mainstream Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) into all components of the FP.
- Participate in the strategic planning of the individual work programmes.

# Membership

An EU Civil Society High level group would include 30 members from European-based civil society organisations with proven track records and experience in fields identified as relevant to societal challenges. Members will be Type C organisations as defined by the EC's rules on expert groups, limited to civil society organisations only, and excluding CSO4 (see definition above). It will also include 10 members of former or current "Science with and for society" projects or National Contact Points.

## Selection

Members must be selected through public calls for applications. Members should rotate. Members should receive compensation for their participation. Recruitment and activities of members should be robustly monitored to ensure inclusion, broad representation, transparency and accountability, and avoid possible entrenchment of vested interests.

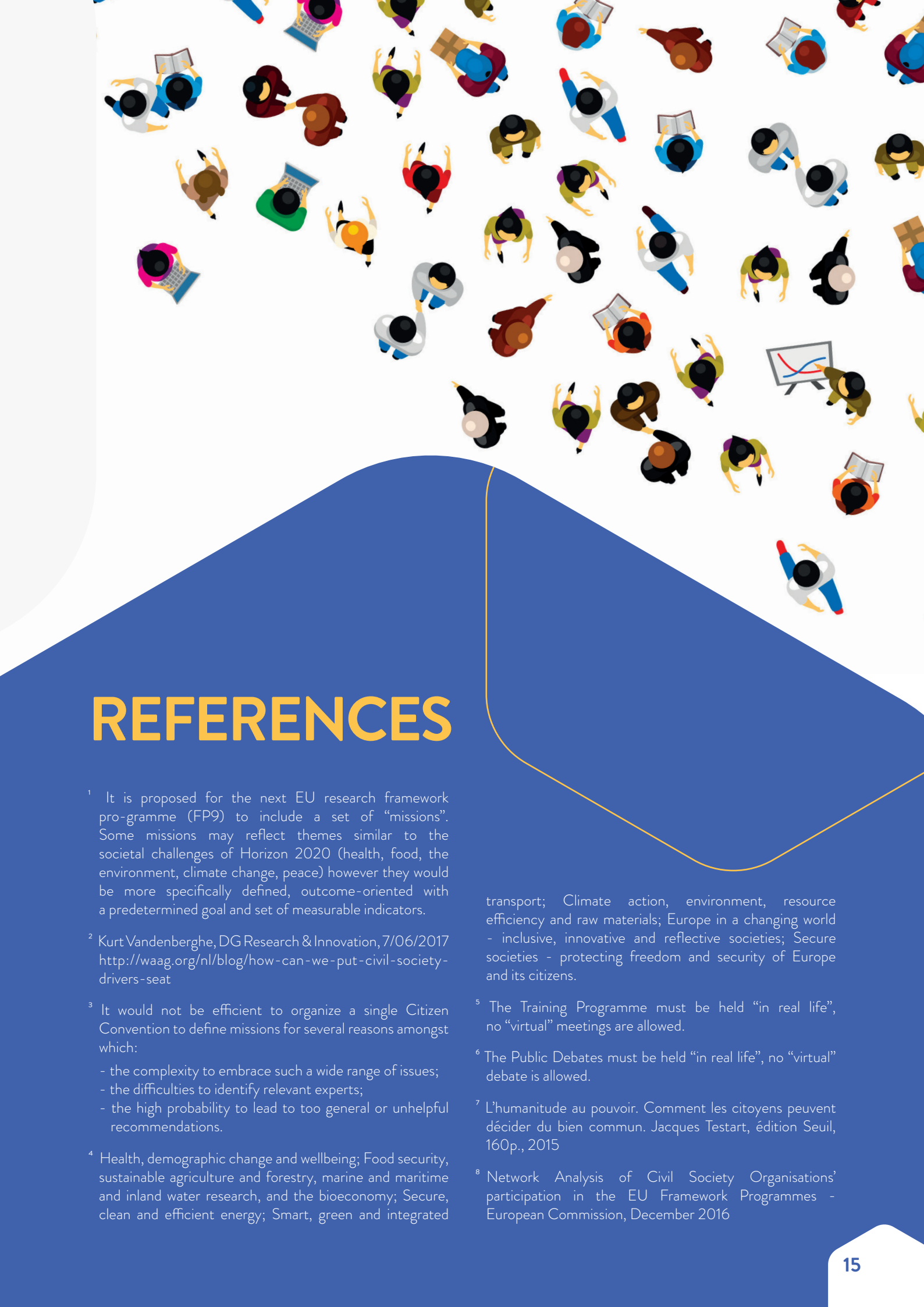
## Not a one-shot process!

The work of the Civil Society High Level group should continue, in different forms, under a new FP9 Civil Society Advisory Group of Experts on Maximising Societal Impact.

# SUMMARY TABLE

|        | CITIZENS CONVENTION                                                                                               | CIVIL SOCIETY HIGH LEVEL GROUP ON MAXIMISING R&I SOCIETAL IMPACT                                                                                |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Who ?  | 15 citizens x the number of Citizens Conventions (3 to 7 according to the two different scenario suggested above) | 30 civil society organisations<br>10 members of former/current Swafs projects                                                                   |
| What ? | Defining the missions                                                                                             | Defining FP9 priorities with highest societal impact, proposing ways for CSO inclusion and monitoring of implementation towards societal impact |
| When ? | Before the adoption of FP9<br>Can be replicated for the definition of individual Work Programmes                  | Before the adoption of FP9 as a High Level Group<br>Further to the adoption of FP9 as an Advisory Group                                         |





# REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> It is proposed for the next EU research framework programme (FP9) to include a set of “missions”. Some missions may reflect themes similar to the societal challenges of Horizon 2020 (health, food, the environment, climate change, peace) however they would be more specifically defined, outcome-oriented with a predetermined goal and set of measurable indicators.

<sup>2</sup> Kurt Vandenberghe, DG Research & Innovation, 7/06/2017 <http://waag.org/nl/blog/how-can-we-put-civil-society-drivers-seat>

<sup>3</sup> It would not be efficient to organize a single Citizen Convention to define missions for several reasons amongst which:

- the complexity to embrace such a wide range of issues;
- the difficulties to identify relevant experts;
- the high probability to lead to too general or unhelpful recommendations.

<sup>4</sup> Health, demographic change and wellbeing; Food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine and maritime and inland water research, and the bioeconomy; Secure, clean and efficient energy; Smart, green and integrated

transport; Climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials; Europe in a changing world - inclusive, innovative and reflective societies; Secure societies - protecting freedom and security of Europe and its citizens.

<sup>5</sup> The Training Programme must be held “in real life”, no “virtual” meetings are allowed.

<sup>6</sup> The Public Debates must be held “in real life”, no “virtual” debate is allowed.

<sup>7</sup> L’humanité au pouvoir. Comment les citoyens peuvent décider du bien commun. Jacques Testart, édition Seuil, 160p., 2015

<sup>8</sup> Network Analysis of Civil Society Organisations’ participation in the EU Framework Programmes - European Commission, December 2016

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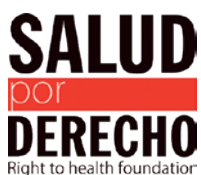
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