

Deliverable 3.4

Public



RAISE

(Raising Citizens and Stakeholders Awareness, Acceptance and Use of New Regional and Urban Sustainability Approaches in Europe)

Contract No. 003989

Work Package 3: **Exploitation and Impact of the Citizens' Conference**

Deliverable 3.4: Impact Assessment of the Citizens' Conference Results on Relevant Target Groups

Authors: Gerald Berger (ICCR, Vienna) &
Tadeusz Zoltowski (FEWN, Jablonna/Warsaw)

Date: 31 January 2006

Project funded by the European Commission, 6th Framework Programme for Research, Sub-priority 1.1.6.3 'Global Change and Ecosystems', Specific Support Action

Table of Contents

1	THE CONTEXT	3
2	OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH.....	7
3	THE PROCEDURES OF THE CITIZENS' CONFERENCE PROCESS.....	9
3.1	THE SELECTION PROCESS	9
3.2	THE CITIZENS' CONFERENCE PROCESS: THE PREPARATORY MEETINGS.....	10
3.3	REFLECTION ON THE PREPARATORY MEETINGS	11
3.4	THE CITIZENS' DECLARATION	13
3.5	THE PRESENTATION OF THE CITIZENS' DECLARATION	14
4	OPINIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF POLICY-MAKERS, STAKEHOLDERS AND CITIZENS	17
4.1	POLICY-MAKERS AND STAKEHOLDERS	17
4.1.1	<i>Face-to-face interviews.....</i>	<i>17</i>
4.1.2	<i>Interviews via Email</i>	<i>21</i>
4.2	CITIZENS.....	25
4.2.1	<i>General opinion on the process of the citizens' conference</i>	<i>26</i>
4.2.2	<i>Personal issues after having taken part in the citizens' conference</i>	<i>31</i>
5	CONCLUSIONS.....	35
ANNEX	39
	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS WITH STAKEHOLDERS	39
	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWS VIA EMAIL	40
	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CITIZEN INTERVIEWS VIA EMAIL	41

1 The Context

Citizen participation in policy-making is of major importance for modern democracies. The failure to involve citizens in decisions which affect their daily lives contributes to the growing dissatisfaction with the European Union and political institutions more generally. This phenomenon can be witnessed across all EU Member States. The RAISE Citizens' Conference set a sign in the opposite direction. It provided a select number of citizens with the opportunity to evaluate and test the acceptability and usability of the research outcomes of the "City of Tomorrow and Culture Heritage" Key Action of the 5th RTD Framework Programme. Therefore, the RAISE Citizens' Conference established a 'public space' for European citizens to discuss possible options for a better quality of life in urban areas stemming from EU research on urban sustainability.

The notion of 'public space' is important for a strong democracy. 'Public space' is used to refer to the scope of interaction among citizens as well as the interaction between policy-makers, experts and citizens found in democratic societies.¹ In modern industrial societies, the model of representative democracy is most commonly used for democratic decision-making and public policy-making. This model of democracy is based on the representation of the public will by elected (party) politicians who take up the responsibility for policy decisions. Whatever the form of how democracy is organised in practice (whether direct or representative), it is important to have a 'strong democracy' which is based on a deeper involvement of and better interaction between citizens in decision-making processes. Therefore, the aim of a citizens' conference process should not be to create a new model of democracy, but rather to find means and 'spaces' to advance the current model and institutions of democracy by a stronger inclusion of citizens in decision and/or assessment processes.

In the context of RAISE, another important dimension is the governance of European research and science and the role of research in society. In a society which is characterised by ever increasing opportunities and challenges associated with new science and technology, a growing interest and attention to the relationships between research, society and democracy emerges. This also includes questions regarding the increase of equity and democracy in the 'knowledge society'. The European Research Area, which was announced in 2000, was established not only to boost the European science and technology base across and beyond national borders, but also to establish a closer link between science and society. Referring to previously made experiences of bringing together researchers, policy-makers, civil society representatives and citizens in deliberations about socio-technological issues, former Research Commissioner Philippe Busquin called for more systematic, European-wide forms of dialogue, also including

¹ For a more detailed overview of 'public space' in Europe, see Giorgi, L (ed) (2004) *The European Public Space Observatory: Assembling Information that allows the Monitoring of the European Public Space*, EUROPUB Project, www.iccr-interantional.org/europub.

citizens, in order to engage not only in scientific discourse but also, and equally, in a broader public debate.² Thus, there is increasing attention paid to the social embedding of scientific work and results. This can be seen in the context of a wider trend in contemporary politics which has seen the science-society relationship gaining a central place in policy- and decision-making processes in the form of enquiries, debates and decisions about ethical and social repercussions of scientific and technical developments.

Therefore, as pointed out in a recent report of a European Commission workshop on science and society, "what is clear (...) is a consistent pressure away from minimal 'instrumental' tinkering with established procedures for policy 'consultation' and public reassurance – and towards more 'substantive' commitments to genuine stakeholders involvement and citizen participation".³ More public engagement on the side of research as a form of governance is now of growing relevance. Examples of the different concrete approaches to public engagement are: consensus conferences, participatory modelling, citizen's panels, etc. As defined in the report, 'public engagement' is about "including a diversity of knowledge and experience in order to inform more robust long term choices".⁴

In the European Commission workshop on science and society, some shared momentum among the participants emerged which can be summarised in a single concept that arose repeatedly during the discussions: **'co-operative research'** which refers to a form of research process that involves both researchers and non-researchers in close cooperative engagement. As defined in the report, "co-operative research (...) requires constant attention to 'trans-disciplinary' engagement with stakeholders and public constituencies in order to explore the driving aims and purposes, the alternative orientations, and the wider social and environmental implications of research and innovation".⁵ The imperatives for the general adoption of a 'co-operative research' position in wider science governance can take a number of forms. They arise from an increasing understanding of mutual co-dependence in society of different interests and values. In the report from the science and society workshop it is argued that "this leads on to an enhanced willingness on the part of all actors in the science governance process to recognise the value of different forms of knowledge held by others".⁶ Therefore, 'co-operative research' sets out to foster participation, inclusion, engagement, deliberation and negotiation, "towards the overall aim of what might be referred to as a more effective

² Joss, S & Bellucci, S (2002) "Participatory Technology Assessment in Europe: Introducing the EUROPTA Research Project", in Joss, S & Bellucci, S (eds) *Participatory Technology Assessment: European Perspectives*, Centre for the Study of Democracy, University of Westminster, pp. 3-11.

³ "From Science and Society to Science in Society", Report of a European Commission Workshop, science and Society Unit, Directorate C2, DG Research and Technology Development, Brussels, 24-25 November 2005, p.4 (Rapporteur: Andy Stirling, SPRU, University of Sussex)

⁴ Ibid. p. 5

⁵ Ibid. p. 31

⁶ Ibid. p. 31.

general social process for the 'co-building' of knowledge".⁷ The RAISE citizens' conference process, with its objective to evaluate the acceptance and usability of research outcomes, is one possible form of such a co-operative research approach.

It is also important to mention that the citizens' conference process, as it was organised in the RAISE project, is the first of its kind on a European level involving 26 citizens from 26 different European countries to discuss about research results and possible policy choices. However, the format of a consensus conference, citizens' panel, citizens' juries, scenario workshop, voting conferences, focus group or Delphi forecast, which all involve to some degree the participation of citizens, have been organised on various political levels and policy fields.

One important example of stakeholder and citizen involvement in policy and decision processes is 'participatory technology assessment' (pTA) which refers to the class of methods and procedures of assessing socio-technical issues. Generally, the aim of pTA is to consider and evaluate scientific-technical issues beyond their purely scientific, technical and economic aspects – as is the case in the classical technology assessment – to include wider social, ethical and political aspects. Thus, the purpose of actor participation is "to utilise the various contextual perspectives and experience of those involved for the assessment process. An additional aim of pTA can be to open the assessment up to the public sphere, in order both to make the assessment procedure more transparent and to encourage wider public debate and social learning".⁸

As is the case with pTA, a citizens' conference process can pragmatically be identified as a means of improving and facilitating decision-making. The complexity and diversity of modern societies render it impossible for political institutions to have all the necessary knowledge that is required for decision-making. Moreover, those who take the decisions may not be those who are mostly affected by them. Following this line of argument, the inclusion of citizens in participatory assessment procedures, like the RAISE citizens' conference, creates a number of positive elements:⁹

- in order to support political decision-making that is well informed and that takes into account the whole spectrum of the problem, the knowledge from those affected is required;

⁷ Ibid. p. 31.

⁸ Joss, S & Bellucci, S (2002) "Participatory Technology Assessment in Europe: Introducing the EUROPTA Research Project", in Joss, S & Bellucci, S (eds) *Participatory Technology Assessment: European Perspectives*, Centre for the Study of Democracy, University of Westminster, p. 6.

⁹ Ibid, p. 21.

- the interests and values of those affected, as well as the inequalities in everyday life for actors to make their views heard, need to be taken into account if decision-making should be more legitimate and acceptance of decisions taken should be raised; and
- participation creates an arena where conflicting claims can be reconciled, and where new solutions can be developed and deliberated upon.

However, whatever model of democracy one refers to, the question of legitimacy of decisions remains high on the agenda. And here it must be argued that the participants of citizens' conferences, pTA, consensus conferences, etc, are not representative of the entire population, nor are they representative of all relevant civil society actors. However, in the context of a citizens' conference process, this representativeness is not necessarily required. Such a process offers the chance to gain qualitative and in-depths opinions from citizens and, thus, contributes to the discourse going on in society and a particular policy field. And the results of such a citizen participation process can offer a lot of insights and knowledge which may lead to more informed decision-making.

2 Objectives and Approach

The main objective of this deliverable is to give an overview of possible impacts of a citizens' conference process as a form of participatory assessment, particularly for the outcomes of EU research projects. More specifically, the deliverable will identify procedural issues for the organisation of citizens' involvement in the assessment and acceptability of results from research on urban and regional sustainability issues, potential impacts of such a process as well as the opinions of various stakeholder groups (policy-makers, experts, NGO representatives) and the citizens themselves.

In the RAISE project, a citizens' conference process was organised by involving 26 randomly selected European citizens (one from each EU Member State, plus Romania) in the assessment and acceptability of results stemming from research projects that were funded under the European Commission's 5th RTD Framework Programme, Key Action on "City of Tomorrow and Cultural Heritage". The outcomes of the citizens' conference process, which took the form of a citizens' declaration, reflect the common opinion of these 26 European citizens.

In the context of the RAISE project, the term 'impact' refers to the expectations and possible implementation of participatory assessment arrangements, like the citizens' conference process, and how they can make a difference in terms of the involvement of citizens and the quality of decision-making processes for urban and regional sustainable development. Furthermore, it is important to reflect upon the possible uptake of this participatory model in decision-making or assessment processes on the various political levels (European, national, regional and local). The implicit expectation is that decision-making with participatory assessment processes may lead to more informed decisions than would otherwise have been the case. In the context of urban sustainable development issues, this means the integration of citizens' knowledge and expert knowledge in order to reflect upon policy options for integrated sustainable solutions (involving economic, social and environmental considerations).

The main assumption of RAISE is that the combination of scientific knowledge produced by researchers and experts through EU funded research projects with the everyday life knowledge of non-expert citizens will produce more awareness of the urban sustainable development issues, future challenges in society and valuable options for policy-makers, researchers, experts and the citizens. Especially in the context of complex problems, which are likely to emerge in urban sustainable development, the combination of scientific expert knowledge and local knowledge of citizens may offer some important contributions for possible solutions. Additionally, the awareness raising of lay citizens about complex issues and problems will oblige researches and experts to clarify their assumptions, approaches and outcomes and to avoid a too technical jargon.

Therefore, the aim of RAISE in 'raising awareness' about EU funded research was twofold: First, to make the involved citizens more aware of the research objectives and outcomes as well as their possible impacts on their daily lives. Second, to make politicians, researchers, experts and other institutionalised stakeholders more aware of what the selected 26 citizens think about the research results and what suggestions they give for the potential translation of these results into concrete policies through the "Citizens' Declaration" that was drafted by the citizens themselves.

The format of a citizens' conference used in RAISE should be transferable to other policy areas and must not be restricted to the acceptance and usability of research outcomes on sustainability. There may be other policy fields and decision processes which could potentially gain from a citizens' conference process. Furthermore, a citizens' conference may not be restricted to policies with a European dimension: it can be also applied at the national, regional or local levels to support citizen input into policy decisions.

3 The Procedures of the Citizens' Conference Process

3.1 The Selection Process

The process of selecting participants from all EU Member States (plus Romania) to the RAISE Citizens' Conference was organised by the RAISE project consortium. Application forms were sent out to several city networks, cities, citizens' organisations as well as NGOs with the request to forward these to their members. In total, the project team received more than 570 applications which is, taking into account the time and budget constraints of the project, a relatively high number. It must be noted, however, that the applications were unevenly distributed across the Member States. The highest number of applications was received from Italy (65 applications), the lowest number from Lithuania (2 applications). In order to have a more evenly spread number of applications from all Member States, it would be necessary to establish national contact points (institutions or individual persons) that can foster the distribution of the information material and application forms in the individual countries.

Participation to the RAISE Citizens' Conference was restricted to 26 persons, non-experts in urban and regional sustainable development. The selection process was based on quantitative (age, gender, occupation, education, etc) and qualitative (three open questions in the application form) criteria. The low number of possible participants in the citizens' conference process meant that the group could not be representative of European citizens across countries and social strata in the statistical sense. Nevertheless, an attempt was made to select participants from different professional and socio-economic backgrounds. This was achieved only to a certain extent: the citizens represented different professions but had all a comparatively high educational background and a secure economic basis. We think that this has to do mainly with three aspects: First, the application forms were sent out electronically via email or could be filled out on the RAISE internet homepage. This means that a bias towards citizens which have easy access to a computer in their work or at home was built into the selection process. Second, eligibility for participation was tied to a solid knowledge of the English language. Third, the theme of EU research and policy-making as such is more likely to attract people with a higher educational background or active in professions that directly or indirectly relate to this topic. These, in turn, are persons that are more likely to be interested in the European integration project, even if not necessarily in favour. This was evident in the answers to the open questions of the application forms and could also be observed during the introductory session at the beginning of the preparatory meetings.

The motives of the citizens to take part in the citizens' conference process were manifold: many expressed a genuine interest in European politics and policies; others stated that they were primarily motivated by the prospect of deliberating with fellow European

citizens on matters of general public interest; some were attracted by the opportunity to visit three major European cities over a short period of time. The principal characteristic of the participants was, however, curiosity coupled with a strong commitment to learning from deliberation with others and contributing to the citizens' conference process. This was facilitated by the overall good proficiency in English and socialising with each other was an easy task for the whole group.

In general, the aim of the selection process for the RAISE citizens' conference was not to have individual citizens as being representative of their country or of the whole EU population. Although there was a conscious attempt to involve citizens from different professional and socio-economic backgrounds, the main purpose was to have a randomly selected group of citizens as non-experts in the particular field of concern – urban sustainable development – that deliberates about the potential application of certain results stemming from EU funded research.

3.2 The Citizens' Conference Process: The Preparatory Meetings

The general idea of a citizens' conference is that citizens come together to deliberate on an issue of common (public) concern in order to produce a common output. In the case of the RAISE project, the common output is the Citizens' Declaration. Producing a common output necessitates reaching some kind of consensus or compromise among the participants. This cannot happen without discussions and interactions among the citizens.

From the beginning of the three preparatory meetings during September and October 2005 – that took place in Vienna, Rome and Brussels respectively – there was a strong demand from the group of citizens for discussion among each other. This deliberative set-up is an important factor for a citizens' conference process: citizens should have the feeling and trust that they themselves 'drive' the agenda and not alone 'abide' to rules established by externals. An important success factor for a citizens' conference is that the latter represents a democratic process. Therefore, a citizens' conference process should allow extensive time for discussions in sub-groups and also at the panel level.

A citizens' conference process is extremely demanding. Participants – who, on average, are not experts of the particular field they deliberate – are expected to concentrate during the conference while receiving a lot of new information. Therefore, they should be given the time and space to process this information. The format of the RAISE Citizens' Conference entailed three preparatory meetings which lasted two days each. The moderator – a consortium member of the RAISE team – tried to allocate as much time as possible to discussion and deliberation.

The role of the moderator in any citizens' conference process is of great importance. The moderator must ensure that the time plan is kept but also that everyone has adequate time to express their views, that the discussions are not dominated by one single participant, that even those not keen to talk are encouraged to do so, etc. An important success factor for a citizens' conference is that a sentiment of trust is established between the participants and the moderator. However, it does not have to be the moderator who always answers the questions posed by the participants. It is usual in citizens' conferences to call in experts. Both the moderator and the experts should be adequately prepared, keeping in mind how important it is to communicate things in a user-friendly way to the citizens. This means to use short and everyday language, i.e. avoiding jargon as much as possible. Whenever certain specific terms – e.g. stakeholder, governance – are introduced, they should be explained. It should not be assumed that citizens know these expert terms.

During the preparatory meetings, the citizens could consult several experts in order to receive more detailed information on certain aspects of their work. At each meeting, experts gave a short presentation about their practical work. Thereafter, the citizens were able to ask specific questions or receive background information on issues of their interest. One could observe that the interaction with the experts were of great value for the citizens. The interaction with experts enabled citizens to obtain both in-depth information about certain aspects of urban sustainable development and practical examples of sustainable development policy-making. The citizens could reflect upon and compare the presented case studies with the situation in their own cities and their own life experiences.

The process of drafting the Citizens' Declaration, the main outcome of the citizens' conference process, started during the last preparatory meeting in Brussels in October 2005. The citizens were given the time, space and also the help of consortium members of the project to develop a format, concept and a first outline of the Declaration. The citizens were split into four groups, according to the four topics they were working on: urban governance, sustainable transport, sustainable built environment and cultural heritage. Two groups could already develop a draft version of their part, the other two remained at more preliminary stages. It was decided that the four groups would continue their work on the Declaration via email and the citizens' area, a discussion forum that has been established on the RAISE project homepage.

3.3 Reflection on the Preparatory Meetings

The citizens' conference process provided the participants the opportunity to create their 'own learning space' for interaction and deliberation. In what follows, we outline some of the main lessons that emerged out of this learning space:

The citizens objected to the view of sustainability as an 'add-on' element to policies in reaction to citizens' concerns. They expressed several times that sustainable development is a valuable concept that should be the basis for decisions and integrated approaches from the onset of policy planning.

Urban sustainable development involves several components, some of which are specialized and technology-oriented. The RAISE Citizens' Conference revealed that the challenges of urban sustainable development need to be operationalized within multidisciplinary networks which cooperate and interact not only with each other, but also with research organizations, innovation support institutions, relevant financial institutions and regional/local government bodies.

The interaction of the citizens with public authorities from different government levels revealed the need for science-based policy approaches towards urban sustainable development. Such an approach could help public authorities to focus on 'knowledge for action' as basis for policy-making. The experience with urban sustainable development suggests the further development of an integrated approach in policy-making, based on sound scientific knowledge in order to develop coherent urban development strategies and to propose advanced technology-oriented solutions.

While deliberating the issue of urban sustainable development, the citizens expressed the need to reflect intellectually, emotionally and socially upon sustainable development and policy processes in order to fully understand the concept and its meaning in practice. The citizens expressed several negative experiences they made in relation to what they refer to as rapid economic growth and social modernization. This is an important aspect which refers to the Lisbon Strategy of the European Union and the need to establish the European Single Market. The citizens expressed their wish to consolidate the objective of economic growth with the need to solve social problems in Europe.

The objectives of the Lisbon Strategy were often raised during the deliberations of the citizens' conference. The citizens, while working intensively on the Citizens' Declaration, experienced the importance of striking the right balance between urban development, environmental protection and the Lisbon objectives of growth and job creation. It was the aim of the citizens to draft the text of the Citizens' Declaration with awareness of the policy issues emerging from the Lisbon Strategy.

The citizens' expressed the view that the link between EU-funded research projects on urban sustainable development and the dissemination of their outcomes is not satisfactory. They also identified not sufficient impact of research outcomes in urban areas and the improvement of the quality of life in cities. Therefore, the question emerged as to the relation between research projects and their potential impact on the ground. How can potentially important research outcomes influence urban policy-making? The

complex inter-relationship between research funding, research outcomes, policy-making, different societal interests and implementation is clearly a matter of high priority. A further discussion of this issues is necessary, also in order to show how research efforts can inform policy decisions. A 'knowledge for action' approach should be further explored.

During the preparatory meetings of the citizens conference, a constantly growing learning process among the citizens could be observed. After initial problems of making themselves familiar with the topic and process of a citizens' conference, the participants developed a dynamic role in the process. Therefore, a citizens' conference process can trigger a learning process among the participating citizens regarding the concept of sustainable development, the outcomes of EU funded research projects as well as the complexities of policy-making in an urban context.

It could be observed that during the citizens' conference process, the citizens felt increasingly like experts, imitating an expert's way of working towards problem solution. Perhaps this is the case because of the following reasons: First, the citizens learned important insights about technological/process related issues in the different policy fields (transport, urban governance, environment, cultural heritage). As a result, they felt increasingly more self-confident in expressing detailed sector-oriented opinions. Second, the citizens – perhaps also sub-consciously – tried to imagine the experts' task and to become equal partners in the process. Therefore, involving citizens in policy-making processes can increase their competencies on the topics of concern as well as their self-confidence towards participation in decision processes.

Overall, the citizens had a difficult task during the citizens' conference process: They had to accommodate to a new format of deliberation; make themselves familiar with a challenging and complex thematic; and find ways to communicate, discuss and summarise their views in a single document, the Citizens' Declaration.

3.4 The Citizens' Declaration

During October and November 2005, the 26 citizens drafted the "Citizens' Declaration on the City of Tomorrow". They could draw extensively on the material they were supplied with by the RAISE project consortium and the external experts in the three preparatory meetings (documents, presentations, etc).

In the end, they wrote a thirteen pages document which summarized their deliberations on the acceptability and usability of the research outcomes on the Key Action "City of

Tomorrow and Cultural Heritage". The full version of the Citizens' Declaration can be downloaded at the project homepage: www.raise-eu.org.

The citizens structured the Citizens' Declaration along four topics:

- Urban governance,
- Sustainable transport,
- Sustainable built environment, and
- Cultural heritage.

Education became a fifth topic and was considered as fundamental to the success of the other topics.

From the process of writing up the Declaration, one can conclude that the collaboration among the team members of the four teams, which were built on the above mentioned topics, was very intense. All teams tried to communicate via email and the RAISE citizens area on the project homepage. There was also exchange between the four individual groups. Moreover, they selected one citizen to come up with a draft preamble which was then discussed and finally agreed upon by all the citizens.

3.5 The Presentation of the Citizens' Declaration

The "Citizens' Declaration on the City of Tomorrow" was presented at the European Commission and the European Parliament on 5 December 2005.

It was the aim of the project consortium and the group of citizens to have comprehensive participation from policy-makers from different political levels (especially EU, national and local/city level) and stakeholders.

First, a selection process of potential participants was organised in September and October 2005. Invitations for the presentation event were sent via email to members and representatives of the following institutions/organisations:

- European Commission;

- European Parliament (in collaboration with the Intergroup Urban:Logement);
- Committee of the Regions;
- European Economic and Social Committee;
- European City Networks (e.g. EUROCITIES, ICLEI, POLIS);
- Individual European Cities;
- European Urban Knowledge Network;
- Various Stakeholder groups (e.g. European Council of Town Planners, International Association of Public Transport, European Federation for Transport and Environment, European Environmental Bureau, European Construction Industry Federation, etc); and
- Ministries from individual Member States.

The Citizens' Declaration was presented in two different settings. In the morning, the Declaration was presented at the European Commission (Charlemagne Building). In total, about 20 policy-makers and stakeholders attended this session. Eric Ponthieu (European Commission, DG Research) gave an introductory note. After the introduction to the RAISE project by the project coordinator, Carlo Sessa (ISIS, Rome), the Declaration was presented by the citizens themselves. Most of the citizens were involved in the presentation of the Declaration, divided into four groups according to the topics that were chosen in the Declaration. After the presentation, the external participants discussed with the citizens the issues that were raised in the Declaration.

In the afternoon, the citizens presented the Declaration at the European Parliament building in Brussels. In total, about 40 policy-makers and stakeholders participated in this session, but almost none from the European Parliament (MEPs). An introduction was given by Jean Marie Beaupuy (Chair of the Intergroup Urban:Lodgement of the European Parliament) and Pierre Valette (European Commission, DG Research). After the introduction, the citizens again presented the Declaration themselves. A discussion followed with a number of questions and suggestions from the audience.

Generally, there were several hints from EU officials and stakeholders that choosing Monday morning and afternoon for a presentation at the European Parliament was not a good option as most MEPs only arrive in Brussels on Monday evening. Therefore, another weekday would have been better to increase the chance of attendance of MEPs and maybe more participation in general.

It is of special importance to note that in each session, before the citizens presented the Declaration, a 20-minute video about the citizens' conference process was displayed to the audience. This video had the intention to show the process of the preparation of the Declaration throughout the three preparatory meetings. Through the video, the audience had the possibility to get a sense of how the Declaration was developed and how the citizens interacted with each other during the preparatory meetings.

In between the two presentations, a press conference was organized at the European Parliament. The citizens selected among them four representatives to talk to the journalists. The aim of the press conference was to have media coverage of the citizens' conference process. Although the European Commission and the European Parliament collaborated in the distribution of a press release and an invitation to journalists, only three journalists attended the press conference.

4 Opinions and Perceptions of Policy-makers, Stakeholders and Citizens

During January and February 2006, the RAISE consortium assessed the opinions and perceptions of various policy-makers and stakeholders working on the European level as well as of the group of citizens that participated in the citizens' conference process.

4.1 Policy-makers and Stakeholders

The selection of policy-makers and stakeholders was made according to their position at the institutional level. In total, partners of the RAISE consortium undertook three face-to-face interviews with Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) based on an interview guideline (attached in the Annex). Additionally, and due to budget and time constraints, an interview questionnaire was sent out to a group of seven policy-makers and stakeholders.

4.1.1 Face-to-face interviews

The face-to-face interviews with three MEPs took place at the European Parliament in Brussels between 24-27 January 2006. The names of the MEPs remain confidential. At the beginning of each of the three interviews, the interview partners – who did not attend the presentation of the Citizens' Declaration in Brussels – were comprehensibly briefed by the consortium partner who undertook the interviews about the RAISE project and its objectives, the citizens' conference process, the drafting of the Citizens' Declaration as well as about the presentation events on 5 December 2005.

General conclusions

The interview partners expressed their interest in the idea of a stronger participation of European citizens in the process of policy creation and implementation. They also acknowledged the intention of the RAISE project to include one citizen from each of the Member States, including Romania.

However, there was some reservation with regard to the extent that the "average European citizen" – even properly selected – is able to understand the role and content of research being carried out at the European level. Research outcomes in sustainable development, especially when involving technologically advanced issues of urban

development, are not easy to understand by non-experts even if they are presented by a project team and experts. The interview partners argued that the opinions of citizens are mainly based on their emotional approach to particular urban development problems. Therefore, the problem may emerge of a mismatch between scientifically elaborated suggestions and emotional responses from the citizens.

The interview partners also reflected upon the representativeness of the selected citizens. The argument came up that the selection process should be characterised by well-defined groups of citizens from which then the participants should be selected. This they believe would be a better approach for selecting citizens for a citizens' conference process. Additionally, the interview partners stressed that the citizens' conference process should not be mixed with the idea of a public opinion survey process. The citizens' conference process only reflects the opinion of the selected citizens whereas the public opinions survey has the potential of providing a representative view of the population, depending of course on the number of persons interviewed.

The interview partners were very interested in the practical details of the process applied in the citizens' conference. They agreed that well-planned consecutive steps in this process are necessary to organise effective citizens' conferences. The division of the citizen's conference into preparatory meetings, dedicated to selected topics and problems, is seen as an important step. The interview partners emphasized the need to see citizens' conferences as learning processes and a means for knowledge transfer among EU Member States, regions and local communities. Therefore, it would be essential to translate the results and suggestions given in the Citizens' Declaration into concrete actions.

The interview partners identified the process, which was started by the RAISE project, as a contribution to the process of modern day policy-making. A citizens' conference process can add important insights about the public perception of policy issues in democratic decision-making in various policy fields at the EU level. Two of the interview partners expressed the view that a citizens' conference process could play a complementary role beside representative democratic mechanisms and might be seen as an instrument influencing efficiency and supporting policy-making in the European Union. One of the interview partners was strongly opposed to this idea and questioned the approach of constructing some sort of direct democratic element into the current representative democratic institutions. Such an approach could be used as a 'political card' in debates between Community institutions during policy-making processes.

Individual arguments from the three MEPs

MEP 1

The first interview partner said that he was not informed about the RAISE project by the European Parliament offices. After being provided with an overview of the project and the citizens' conference process material, the interview partner expressed some excitement about the idea of a citizens' participation model in the form of a citizens' conference as complementary mechanisms in representative democracies in Europe.

Although the general opinion of this interview partner was very positive, he suggested some procedural considerations which should be taken into account if a citizens' conference process were to be further taken up in Community activities. In his opinion, a citizens' conference process should be undertaken with participants being allowed to speak in their native language or that translations should be offered in order to avoid possible self-restrictions when the citizens present their opinions, misunderstandings, generalisation of final results and further comments. Furthermore, the interview partner claimed that the number of applications to select a representative group of 'average citizens' in such projects should be increased to a level from 3,000 to 5,000 per country.

Moreover, the interview partner argued that the number of countries involved in the citizens' conference process are facing a wide range of problems (economical, political, social, environmental, structural) and are at different stages of economic growth/prosperity. This could to some degree undermine the value of the Citizens' Declaration as people argue from different backgrounds and circumstances.

However, the interview partner acknowledged that the RAISE citizens' conference process was a first pioneering step of involving lay citizens in deliberations of policy options.

Another suggestion of this interview partner concerned the selection of policy fields where a citizens' conference process could be applied to. The interview partner argued that such a process should not be applied to 'trivial' fields where there is less confrontation of opinions (e.g. the need to improve environment conditions), but rather to policy fields where the decision-making process would need strong compromises and trade-offs (e.g. the Community budget). He suggested the following fields for a possible application of a citizens' conference process: the Common Agricultural Policy, TEN infrastructure, science and technological development. Furthermore, the involvement of citizens in the implementation of the sustainable development concept could be valuable, too.

The interview partner proposed to inform other Community institutions about the organisation and procedural aspects as well as the content achieved through the citizens' conference. There should be some discussion of the RAISE citizens' conference process in the European Commission as well as in the European Parliament. The interview partner said he would be keen to arrange a meeting of three to four Commissioners (including Ms Margot Wallström, the Commissioner responsible for communication policy) with representatives of the RAISE consortium to discuss the usefulness of the approach for governance in the EU.

MEP 2

The second interview partner from the European Parliament also expressed his interest in the results of the RAISE citizens' conference process and considered it as "a valuable source of information about citizens' opinions on soft policy issues in the European Union".

The interview partner said that in his opinion, the most promising policy areas for the application of the citizen's conference format could be issues related to EU social policy and here more specifically, migration and emigration issues. Particularly, the issue of intra-Community migration and emigration could be tackled by the citizen's conference format.

Similar to the opinion of the first interview partner, the main concern of this interview partner was the selection process of citizens taking part in the citizens' conference process. The interview partner argued that the techniques of multivariate (weighted) random selection of citizens from a sample gathered through advertising is not appropriate, and is not sufficiently representative for all 26 countries. The number of applications should be larger, and citizens should rather be selected in a non-random way, for instance from a wide range of social communities across each EU Member State.

MEP 3

The third interview partner from the European Parliament was more reserved towards the citizens' conference process but stressed that it is an interesting sociological experiment of raising citizens' awareness and acceptance of new regional and urban approaches in Europe.

The interview partner argued that the selection process for the citizens' conference was carried out against verified methodologies which are normally used in the public opinion

surveys. He said that the final opinion of 26 citizens has nevertheless substantial value, but does not express the opinion of the whole EU population. Therefore, public opinion polls would bring better results, like the ones which are undertaken by the Eurobarometer surveys. Additionally, analyses of policy fields need to be undertaken by competent research institutions.

Furthermore, the interview partner claimed that the citizens' conference process, even though set out as being rigorously democratic, faces the danger of becoming an expression of the opinions of experts rather than the opinion of the citizens through the application of a moderator.

The interview partner's main concern, though, was the selection process of citizens. The interviewee expressed doubt about the quality of the a selection process applied in RAISE and recommended a fully random selection from a wide range of social communities across each EU Member State. Only through such a process, meaningful results can emerge.

Overall, the third interview partner compared the RAISE citizens' conference approach as a way of replacing competencies given to the EU institutions in the process of policy making. The interview partner stressed that a citizens' conference process – however interesting in terms of results – can only be used on marginal policy issues. He expressed the concern that a citizens' conference process could be used as an "artificial argumentation tool" in political debates between the European Commission and the European Parliament where, in a situation of a conflict between the institutions, the "doubtful results" of a citizens' conference are used as a support decision mechanism. The EU has decided to apply mechanisms of representative democracy as the core principle of decision-making in the European Parliament and all other approaches coming from ancient direct democracy should be avoided.

Therefore, the interview partner concluded that when a citizens' process is planned again on the EU level, it should only be applied to soft policy issues and politically non-sensitive issues. However, it should never be used as an instrument replacing and evading current policy-making procedures in the European Union.

4.1.2 Interviews via Email

A number of stakeholder interviews were compiled via email. The interview questionnaire (which can be found in the Annex to this deliverable) were sent to seven stakeholders, namely representatives from the European Commission, the European Network of Cities and Regions for the Social Economy, the International Association of Public Transport

(UITP), the Architects' Council of Europe (ACE), the European Construction Industry Federation (FIEC), Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), and the Network of Major European Cities (EUROCITIES). The representatives of the first five stakeholder institutions were attending the presentation of the Citizens' Declaration either at the European Commission or European Parliament on 5 December 2005. They were selected for an interview because they provided important inputs in the presentation event and/or showed particular interest in the organisation and outcomes of the citizens' conference process. The representatives of the last two organisations did not take part in the presentation, however, were considered as important stakeholders with a potential interest in citizens' conference processes.

In January 2006, emails with the questionnaire were sent out to the seven stakeholder representatives. As by the first given deadline only one filled out questionnaire was returned to the RAISE team, a reminder was sent out in early February 2006. In total, three filled out questionnaires were received from representatives of the following institutions:

- European Construction Industry Federation (FIEC) (*Interview partner 1*, received 30 January 2006),
- European Commission, DG Education and Culture (*Interview partner 2*, received 8 February 2006); and
- the Architects' Council of Europe (ACE) (*Interview partner 3*, received 10 February 2006).

These three stakeholders took part in the presentation of the Citizens' Declaration in Brussels on 5 December 2005. It must be noted that the answers of the stakeholders listed above reflect their personal opinions and reflections about the citizens' conference process. They do not represent the official opinion of their institutions.

What follows is a summary of the answers that were received from the three stakeholder representatives on the topics of the process of the citizens' conference, the application of the conference format on research outcomes, and the potential application of the citizens' conference in other policy fields or political debates.

Summary of interviews made via email

Process

The stakeholders had a positive impression of the presentation of the Citizens' Declaration in Brussels on 5 December 2005. They think it was a good idea to present the Declaration at the European Commission and the European Parliament. Interview partner 2 argued: "It gave the impression of a very well organised event. The participating citizens were outspoken and could formulate their opinions well."

However, two of the stakeholders criticise the form of how the Declaration was presented by the citizens. Although the 'scenography' was experienced as lively, it sometimes appeared to them as artificial with a lack of spontaneity. Interview partner 2 said: "It was well orchestrated and looked more like a school exercise when the teacher asks the best students to recite replies to well rehearsed questions." This stakeholder also sensed a complaint from the citizens about this form of presentation, in a way that they have been lectured by the RAISE project team in the preparation of the event. From the video that was shown during the presentation event, however, it appeared for the stakeholder that there was enough room for the citizens to express their views and contribute their individual ideas to the drafting of the declaration.

The conclusions and suggestions of the Citizens' Declaration were seen by all three stakeholders as very useful. The representative from the construction industry argued that the conclusions were not particularly useful for their specific sector, however, useful in the sense that the Declaration presents the statements of 'end-users' which are notoriously hard to find in this sector. The representative of the European Commission mentioned that the conclusions of the Declaration include the most important aspects of today's urban problems. Particularly important for DG Education and Culture are the suggestions that are related to issues of governance and citizens' participation in community life.

Research

The three stakeholders see the citizens' conference process as an appropriate way to evaluate the acceptability and usability of research outcomes of EU funded projects. They point to the positive aspects of involving citizens in an assessment procedure which is normally dominated by experts, specialists or anonymous evaluation. Interview partner 1 mentioned that the success must be viewed with regard to the opinion of 'end-users'. Interview partner 3 argued that a citizens' conference "gives a fresh and interesting view from a panel of citizens even though people will always criticise the selection procedure

of any such panel. It allows to bring up interests and concerns that do not necessarily emerge in such 'truth' from field work by specialists and anonymous analysis".

Furthermore, the stakeholders hold the opinion that the citizens' conference process as developed in the RAISE project could, in general, be applied to the development and/or evaluation of other research programmes of the European Commission. Although they could not mention any specific programmes that would particularly benefit from a citizens' conference format, they argued that especially programmes that affect end-users would be most appropriate. The representative from the European Commission argued that there would be "no limits in terms of particular programmes".

All three stakeholders think that many of the suggestions made in the Citizens' Declaration should be taken up by the European Commission, the European Parliament or other institutions, either at the Member States, national or local level. To make the suggestions of the citizens effective, it would be necessary however to have more publicity in, for example, TV programmes, European Voice or local media. Two other suggestions by the stakeholders are noteworthy: Interview partner 3 suggested a report by the Commission with clear recommendations for policy-making and concrete actions, and to give some suggestions for the elaboration of accompanying measures for future programmes. Interview partner 2 suggested the setting up of working groups or committees of interested policy-makers and citizens on the European and national level to discuss the suggestion made in the Citizens' Declaration.

Policy Fields/Political Debates

The three stakeholders have a positive view regarding the application of the citizens' conference process to policy fields, other than research policy, and to political debates in general. For instance, interview partner 3 argued that the citizens' conference format could be applied to environmental, culture or regional/urban policies.

However, there are also some reservations regarding a more general use of citizens' conferences. Interview partner 3 argued that the application of citizens' conferences to more general political debates depends on "how it can be organised in such a way that the lack of fully legitimate 'representativity' of the panel(s), by nature, is not an obstacle". Interview partner 1 argued that, although citizens' conferences could have a positive impact on policy decision processes, they should be applied rather selective otherwise "Europe will be in danger of setting yet another bandwagon rolling which may call into question its inherent value to all the other citizens". Furthermore, the same stakeholder argues that maybe not all European citizens may be in favour of such a process: "[The citizens' conference] might be perceived as yet another 'Economic and Social Committee' which essentially has its origin as a French-style institution and [this] is certainly not admired by all European citizens".

The stakeholders also identified some preconditions they consider as important so that a citizens' conference process could be applied to specific policy fields or political debates. For interview partner 2, the will to act together on the part of the citizens and the will to listen on the side of the decision-makers are necessary preconditions that a citizens' conference process may have some practical implications. Interview partner 3 mentioned the definition of precise and commonly agreed criteria in the process as important preconditions.

On the topic of how a citizens' conference could contribute to the decision-making process in a specific policy field or political debate, interview partner 2 argued that the most important contribution is feedback to the decision-makers. More specifically, the stakeholder refers to "better public policies, sense of ownership, closing the gap between citizens and decision-makers, strengthening citizens' participation in the decision-making process and thus enhancing democracy in general".

Interview partner 2 also claimed that the citizens' conference process could be applied to policy fields and political debates not only on the European level, but also on the national, regional and local levels.

4.2 Citizens

The 26 citizens that participated in the citizens' conference process of the RAISE project were also interviewed in order to collect their opinions on the organisation and procedural issues of the citizens' conference format.

In December 2005, after the drafting and presentation of the Citizens' Declaration, a questionnaire was sent out via email to all the 26 citizens (which can be found in the Annex). During January and February 2006, the project team received 19 filled out questionnaires from the citizens of the following countries: Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden and the UK.

What follows is a summary of the responses the RAISE project team received from the citizens which took part in the citizens' conference process.

4.2.1 General opinion on the process of the citizens' conference

General impressions

The general feeling of the citizens is that the citizens' conference process was a new and exciting way to discuss about and being involved in European policies. The citizens think that the citizens' conference was "a fantastic experience" (Denmark), "an extremely exciting, novel experience" (Germany), "a brilliant idea" (Greece), "very inspiring and very educational" (Latvia), "a very good initiative" (Netherlands), and a process which was "stimulating, thought-provoking, enjoyable, collaborative, constructive and positive" (UK).

What was striking for many of the citizens was that 26 people from 26 different countries and various backgrounds were able – within a comparatively short period of time – to work together, exchange their daily-life experiences and finally reach an agreement in the form of the Citizens' Declaration. There was a "European spirit" emerging between the citizens throughout the preparatory meetings and the final presentation event. The collaboration among the citizens was seen as very enjoyable and enriching. This feeling of being a community of selected European citizens could also be felt by the RAISE consortium. It was a mutual feeling among the citizens that they became friends. Therefore, the selection of the citizens, as one of them put it, was an "excellent choice (...) everybody was A-quality stuff – and this helped us immensely to achieve our goals" (Greece).

Many citizens, though, found it rather difficult at the beginning to find a clear understanding of what was concretely expected from them in the citizen' conference process. On the one hand, people found it difficult to identify a clear target of the citizens' conference. Some citizens "could not follow and find the track the organisers were leading us to, the why, what for and when [was unclear]" (Poland), and would have needed "a better overview of where we were going, and how we were supposed to get there" (Sweden). On the other hand, there was some frustration because of the high expectations and the enormous task that was lying ahead of the 26 citizens. These issues could be solved to some degree as the RAISE project team increased its efforts to explain thoroughly the objectives of the citizens' conference and prepared background material on the subjects of concern for the citizens.

Some citizens (Malta, Latvia) also had the feeling that there was not enough time allocated to the whole citizens' conference process in order to better understand the programme, review the research projects and their results more intensively. Therefore, they recommend to plan more time for a citizens' conference process in the future.

There is also some uncertainty and a kind of 'uneasiness' about what will become of the outcomes and suggestions of the Citizens' Declaration. Some citizens have "a strange feeling (...) about the outcome of the conference. It's very good to raise our voice, but will people actually remember the results of our work when making decisions in the future" (Germany)? Another citizen mentioned that "RAISE cannot guarantee that these 26 people will pass the word, and even if they do, what's the impact" (Portugal)?. Thus, a certain scepticism remains for the citizens about the practical implications of their work in the citizens' conference.

Nevertheless, most citizens provide a positive conclusion for the experiences they made during the citizens' conference process. As one citizen argued, "I believe that Europe, in general, should capitalise on these very important outcomes which actually enclose a multiplying effect guaranteeing success in bridging the gap between the citizens and administration at any level" (Cyprus).

Preparatory meetings

The experiences of the citizens during the three preparatory meetings were very different and individual. Nevertheless, there were some common issues that emerged in the interviews:

As mentioned above, some citizens found the beginning of the citizens' conference, i.e. the first preparatory meeting in Vienna, rather difficult and chaotic. It was difficult for them to get a clear picture of what was felt to be a very complex topic (sustainable development) with which most of them were not familiar with. One citizen felt that "the objectives of the citizens' role were not outlined properly at the beginning" (Czech Republic). It was also mentioned that this initial difficulties were solved with a "rebellion" (Spain) from the citizens which asked for a clearer presentation of the objectives and expectations for the whole process. Also, the presentation skills of some of the experts who presented case studies to the citizens were found by some citizens as not adequate.

Many citizens were positively surprised by the good collaboration among them and how much they were alike in very different ways. Most of them believe that this is due to the good selection process undertaken by the RAISE project team which selected, in the view of the citizens, "those people who really cared and wanted to change something" (Czech Republic). The citizens found that most everyone was actively engaging in the work to be done during the preparatory meetings, there was good team building and a consensus orientation for developing a common document (the Citizens' Declaration) as well as a willingness to contribute their thoughts during the preparation of the Declaration via email.

For some citizens, the difference in the language used and experiences between the citizens and the researchers/policy-makers was very striking. There was a common feeling that this gap between the different stakeholders needs to be filled. A citizens' conference could be a tool for an improved communication and understanding between the different stakeholders. As one citizen put it, "one of the most striking issues for me was the initial distance between the 'Brussels jargon' and the everyday language and comprehension among the European citizens. The EU should absolutely work on that, bridging the gap between technocrats and their targets, the people" (Greece).

Of course, there were also 'softer' issues which struck the citizens: meeting other Europeans and the intercultural communication as well as moving from one city to the next for the preparatory meetings (Vienna, Rome, Brussels).

Presentation of the Citizens' Declaration in Brussels

The presentation of the Citizens' Declaration at the European Commission (in the morning) and the European Parliament (in the afternoon), with a press conference in-between, on 5 December 2005 in Brussels was a very exciting and emotional event for the citizens. These are the issues that emerged from the interviews:

The citizens were quite happy about the way the Citizens' Declaration was presented by themselves and about the courage they showed in doing so. One citizen said, "I think the group managed to convey the substance of the declaration very well" (Malta). Some citizens were astonished by the "degree of closeness and involvement which had developed between the people" (UK) and the "courage of [the citizens] to overcome their stage fever and speak in front of the general public" (Hungary).

Most citizens were disappointed, however, about the low participation of MEPs and other official policy-makers during the presentation at the European Commission and the European Parliament. Some highlighted that the lack of MEP attendance in the presentation was due to the selection of Monday as presentation day which was "really, really unfortunate (...) it was frustrating and disappointing to find out that nothing much is really happening in these institutions on Monday" (Czech Republic). Another citizen was more critical about the work of the RAISE consortium and noted that "dissemination and information might have been insufficient" (France). Again, another citizen was more disappointed, saying that "as easily predictable, a group of one person per country was interesting to no one" (Portugal).

Nevertheless, the citizens found the participation and interest of many stakeholder representatives from agencies, lobby groups and NGOs as encouraging and also thought that these people contributed interesting ideas during the discussions and appreciated

the work of the citizens. One citizen summarised what seems to be the opinion of the most of them, namely that there was "[a] lack of interest from the people in power, [but] appreciation from people that are involved in the subject" (Italy).

Some citizens met individual country representatives during or after the presentation at the European Parliament and were not particularly impressed: One citizen remarked about a country representative, "[he] was not really interested in our work, but only how he could profit from it himself" (Czech Republic). Another citizens said, "I am stilly very angry by the indifference shown by the (...) MEPs. This people are only concerned about their salaries." (Greece)

Another highlight for some people was the press conference that was organized in-between the two presentation sessions. Again, a low turnout of participants, this time journalists, was the downside. The excitement of the citizens was, therefore, decreased. Some citizens found the low attendance of journalists understandable – "this is normal for minor events" (Malta) – others think that this low participation decreased the possibility of a more widespread presentation of the Declaration.

Finally, many citizens were disappointed that there was no proper final event for their group after the presentation events. Some citizens had to leave early, during the presentation at the European Parliament, others left immediately after the event. Only some stayed overnight. As the citizens felt they had become a group of friends, this quick end of the citizens' conference process was found as inappropriate. They felt "grief for having to leave my friends without a proper goodbye" (Greece) and think that "an extra evening in Brussels would have given us a chance to talk about the impressions gained during the day [of presentations] and take the time to say goodbye" (Hungary). Therefore, it is not only important to have a good organisation of the preparatory meetings and the presentation events in a citizens' conference process, but also a proper ending which allows the participants to share their impressions and experiences made during the whole process.

Usefulness of the citizens' conference for the evaluation of research outcomes

Most citizens think that a citizens' conference process is very useful for the evaluation of acceptability and usability of research outcomes. What concerned the citizens most was the democratic element of such a citizens' conference format and that "research results would have a better chance to be accepted by the population" (Italy) or that the results would have "more impact and weight" (Latvia) if such a process were to be applied more extensively. Many arguments were made in the context of a more democratic process if citizens are involved and that an arena for the exchange of opinions is created. The citizens argued that "the politicians and the administration of the EU really need to hear the voice of the citizens" (Denmark), "politicians, lobbyists and bureaucrats get some

'fresh air' by being presented with lay people's views on topics [and] talking some common sense into them" (Germany) or "citizen participation is an undeniable part and parcel of democracy" (Netherlands). Regarding the creation of a 'public space', one citizen argued that "with a citizens' conference you create an arena where researchers, politicians and citizens can meet. One of the things in the Declaration that I think is the most important one is the lack of communication between citizens and those making the decisions that concern the daily lives of the citizens" (Sweden).

There were also, however, some critical remarks about the citizens' conference process. They concern, first, the selection of only one citizen per country which one citizen found not representative regarding the many different opinions of people (Portugal). The second issue raised was the complexity of the topic (urban sustainability) which was found by some citizens as too complex and technically sophisticated to be evaluated by the citizens in any real sense (Austria, Lithuania). Therefore, they suggested to concentrate on one very concrete topic.

One citizen argued that the general usefulness of a citizens' conference process depends on the response of policy-makers and stakeholders of the outcomes and suggestions formulated in the Citizens' Declaration: "The loop must be closed, so that not only researchers but the policy-makers behind them understand the significance of the findings, and act on them." (UK)

The citizens also think that a citizens' conference process can be applied to other research areas as well. They, again, mention that the most valuable issue of a citizens' conference process is the involvement of lay citizens in the decision-making process, because "not only experts, but also the citizens' voice is very important" (Latvia). One citizen argued that an important aspect would be to apply a citizens' conference process in a research field which is very concrete for people, therefore, "the evaluation process should be localised" (Lithuania).

Application of the citizens' conference process to other policy fields and political levels

The citizens think that the citizens' conference process can be applied to other policy areas and the various political levels (European, national, regional and local). When the process is adopted or modified to a specific topic of concern and/or a particular political level then the citizens conference process could be especially useful. Many citizens, again, relate this to democratic decision-making issues, as this is "the only way people will be interested in the EU processes [when] they are convinced that everything has to do with their everyday life and their future" (Greece) and "it could raise the civic participation in and trust of these policies" (Lithuania).

There are also some concrete policy fields the citizens have in mind where a citizens' conference process could be applied. These are some of their suggestions: culture, education, agriculture, environment, transport, energy, infrastructure, urban planning, housing, regional and local development.

Some critical arguments were also included in the responses from the citizens. One citizen argued that the problem with a more extensive use of a citizens' conference process is how to convince lay citizens to take part in this process and that the participation is useful and worthwhile (Romania). Another citizen remarked that the citizens' conference process is not really a new concept as similar processes are already in place, like the Agenda 21 initiatives on the local level (Portugal).

4.2.2 Personal issues after having taken part in the citizens' conference

Are they the same citizens as before the citizens' conference process?

Most citizens claimed that after the citizens' conference process they felt more European or were more aware of European issues. Moreover, some citizens feel that the citizens' conference has changed their life in a more profound way.

It is most striking to notice the change that the citizens noticed for themselves and their relation to the European Union. They feel "more informed and connected" (Netherlands), "like an EU citizen after the conference" (Cyprus), "more involved about what is going on and concerned about the developments in the EU" (Italy), "[the] difference on how I see the EU and how I feel as an EU citizen now" (Latvia), "far more 'at home' as a member of the European Community than I have felt in the past" (UK). Additionally, some argue that they are now more interested in the subjects and policy fields that were discussed in the citizens' conference: "I've changed my attitude towards the subjects involved. I'm interested in knowing what happens in the fields of cultural heritage, built environment, transport and governance." (Italy).

Some citizens clearly express the feeling that their 'EU citizenship' was increased. One citizen mentioned that "my EU citizenship has been strengthened. (...) There is a common spirit that links us. (...) Europe is something very important, the most important political project (...) although some European politicians do not care about that" (Spain). Another citizens very vividly described what being a European citizen now means: "(...) being a citizen was more on a theoretical level for me. I knew I was one, but the only way I actually noticed it was that I could choose the EU line at the airport. That has changed now, a lot. For every meeting, I have started to feel more and more an actual citizen, I have felt more and more an active part of the EU." (Sweden).

However, the rather negative perception the citizens have for the EU institutions did not change through the citizens' conference process. As one citizen pointed out, "my view of the EU bureaucracy has not improved" (Germany). One citizen argued that "at times, it confirmed the feeling I had before the project, that the Commission officials do feel like caught inside a huge structure" (Malta). This view of the citizens can in parts be explained by the low participation and interest of policy-makers and EU officials in the Citizens' Declaration at the presentation in Brussels.

How do they now see European research?

After the citizens' conference, most citizens feel that they know now more about and have a better understanding of European research. They feel now more knowledgeable about the objectives of EU research and its general approach. Many citizens were, however, concerned that they were not aware of the outcomes of many EU research projects before and think that these outcomes "should be more publicised, because the vast majority of the European citizens are unaware of their purpose and results" (Greece) and that "the good [research] results are not applied enough" (Latvia).

The citizens also cared very much about what research will be funded and what will happen with the results. They argue that "the research is at the moment rather inaccessible" (Sweden) and ask "how much of it is/will be really useful for citizens and how much of it is produced in order to use EU money for worthless experiments" (Lithuania), because citizens are mostly interested in "[research] results which improve their lives" (Romania). Therefore, the citizens very much value research that has potentially a direct influence on or can directly improve their living conditions: "The measurable results of the research should be provided to show the benefits for the citizens' daily life, working conditions, the time spent to reach their working place, healthier and safer solutions, welfare" (Hungary), or "research regarding less pollution, more citizens involvement, etc." (Denmark).

What were some unexpected issues emerging from the citizens' conference process?

There were several unexpected experiences that the citizens made during the citizens' conference process. They were either personal or related to the topic of concern.

On a personal level, most citizens feel that a friendship developed between all of them during the citizens' conference. This is what the citizens said: "I now have friends all over Europe with which I can exchange views and ideas" (Cyprus), "a lot new friends" (Denmark), "friendship... and the feeling that I am a member of the RAISE family" (Hungary), "I never felt such a strong feeling of collaboration before" (Lithuania), "the

warmth and friendship of persons from various European countries" (Netherlands). Therefore, some sense of 'togetherness', of being a special group, and of having a shared set of values developed over the course of the citizens' conference process.

On the other hand, the citizens feel they learned more about sustainable development issues and are now also more knowledgeable about policy issues on a European level. They feel being aware "of the importance of sustainable development for other policy fields" (Austria), and gaining "a good knowledge of the 'City of Tomorrow and Cultural Heritage' thematic area which I was definitely not familiar with before" (Malta).

Generally, there was a feeling among the citizens that something special and unique happened during the citizens' conference process. One citizen summarised it as such: "The energy generated by the group was so strong that I think it hit almost everybody in a way which they didn't expect. I learned a lot about myself, about some potentials and abilities I had no idea of possessing before." (Czech Republic)

What did the citizens' conference process change for the citizens personally?

Several issues of how the citizens' conference process affected the participants were already mentioned above. From all the answers received from the citizens it is fair to say that they were personally and emotionally very affected by the process. Some other interesting issues that emerged were the following:

- Being more aware of the European dimension of research and policies (Austria);
- Giving more value to citizen participation, bottom-up approaches and democratic values (Cyprus) ;
- Increased knowledge about the problems of other cities and countries (Denmark);
- Taking part in local policy (Hungary);
- Joining urban and environmental NGOs (Portugal);
- Changing university studies and enrolling for courses for ecology and sustainable development (Sweden).

Would they participate again in a similar citizens' conference process?

The vast majority of the citizens would again participate in a similar citizens' conference process. In terms of intensity of participation, most citizens mentioned that this would be

dependent on the job situation and also their family situation. Most say that they could contribute with the same intensity as was the case in RAISE, more specifically they could be involved in a similar process approximately 1-3 days per month.

5 Conclusions

The following conclusions of the RAISE citizens' conference process can be drawn:

- **Providing a “public space”:** Citizen participation in policy-making is of major importance in modern democracies. The failure to involve citizens in decisions which affect their daily lives contributes to the dissatisfaction with political decisions and institutions on all political levels. Therefore, whatever the form with which democracy is organised in practice (in the European Union it is representative democracy), a strong democracy with the provision of a 'public space' is important for modern societies. A 'public space' refers to the scope of interaction among citizens as well as the interaction between policy-makers, experts and citizens. The RAISE citizens' conference process is understood as one example of such a 'public space'. Generally, a citizens' conference should not be understood as a new model of democracy but a 'space' to advance the current model and institutions of democracy by a stronger inclusion of citizens' in decision and/or assessment processes. The implicit expectation is that decision-making with participatory assessment procedures – like citizens' conferences – may lead to more informed decisions and increases their acceptance than would otherwise be the case.
- **Fostering the “co-operative research” concept:** The increasing role of research in the so-called 'knowledge society' also raises questions about equity and democracy. As a recent report by the European Commission has shown¹⁰, there is increasing pressure upon research policy and research projects to involve stakeholders and citizens more comprehensively. The aim is to include the diversity of knowledge and experience for research and its possible application in the 'knowledge society'. This would lead to 'co-operative research' as a form of the research process which involves researchers and non-researchers in close cooperation. The RAISE citizens' conference process is an example of such a co-operative research approach.
- **Triggering citizens' learning:** As could be observed during the preparatory meetings and the drafting of the Citizens' Declaration, a citizens' conference process can trigger a learning process among the participating citizens with regard to the topics of concern and the whole policy- and decision-making. Therefore, involving citizens in policy-making processes can increase their

¹⁰ "From Science and Society to Science in Society", Report of a European Commission Workshop, Science and Society Unit, Directorate C2, DG Research and Technology Development, Brussels, 24-25 November 2005 (Rapporteur: Andy Stirling, SPRU, University of Sussex)

competencies on these topics as well as their self-confidence towards participation in decision processes.

- **Deliberative vs representative democracy:** There was some disagreement among the policy-makers, stakeholders and citizens interviewed for this report regarding the value of a citizens' conference process for policy decision-making and assessment processes. Especially representatives from the European Parliament were sceptical about a citizens' conference format as a contribution to strong democracy. They regard a citizens' conference as a potential co-decision mechanism beside the current EU institutions and believe this to be a possible danger for representative democracy. This scepticism can be explained by the limited powers of the European Parliament compared to the other EU institutions, which could be further limited by the official application of a citizens' conference, and their self-awareness of being the sole representative of the EU citizens. On the contrary, the other stakeholders and the citizens were very much in favour of a citizens' conference format
 - as an arena for a better collaboration between policy-makers, stakeholder experts and citizens in policy decisions,
 - the possibility of more in-depth and, therefore, better understanding of policies by the citizens,
 - the contribution of local and everyday knowledge by the citizens, and
 - a higher degree of acceptance of policy decisions by the citizens if they are involved in a decision process.

- **Ensuring the right time and resources for citizens participation:** The preparation and organisation of a citizens' conference process involves important issues which need to be taken into account very early in the planning stage. Of particular importance are the selection process of citizens, the set-up of the preparatory meetings as well as the presentation of the outcomes of the citizens' conference process. One main issues to be taken into account is the time and budget allocated for the citizens' conference process. Additionally, it is important to organise a final event for the citizens after the conference process in order to give them the opportunity to reflect upon the experiences made during the process.

- **Citizens conferences can lead to a more robust decision-making process:** The selection process of citizens for a citizens' conference process is of particular relevance to its success and the possible application of its results. For the RAISE citizens' conference, one citizen per EU Member States (plus a citizen from

Romania) was randomly selected from the more than 570 applications received. The suggestions and conclusions of the Citizens' Declaration reflect the opinions and perceptions of these 26 citizens only and are, therefore, neither representative for their country of origin nor for the 'average European citizen'. Nevertheless, the random selection of 26 European citizens allowed to have a more comprehensive, qualitative and in-depth evaluation of a complex policy topic (urban sustainable development) than would have been the case with a questionnaire survey. Therefore, it is not adequate to compare a citizens' conference process with a quantitative statistical survey as they serve different purposes. The former offers the chance to gain qualitative and in-depth opinions from citizens and, thus, contributes to the discourses going on in a society or a policy field. The aim is, therefore, not to be representative, but to offer opinions and insights from lay citizens that have the potential to lead to more robust decision-making processes. "Robustness" in this context means that the decisions based on the politicians' and experts' judgement are confronted in a critical discussion with the citizens' knowledge, and the result is a shared understanding of the decision and its possible consequences. The usefulness of citizens' judgement in a free exchange of ideas and critical discussion has been acknowledged by Karl Popper as follows: "To find out whether our ideas are sound, we need other people to them out".¹¹

- **The citizen conference could become a systematic approach to policy evaluation:** There is agreement – especially among the stakeholders and citizens, however, less so among the representatives of the European Parliament – that a citizens' conference format can be applied to other policy fields than research policy, to general political debates as well as on the various political levels (European, national, regional and local). As citizens can especially contribute local knowledge and everyday life experiences, an application at the local or city level seems of particular potential.
- **How to ensure a follow-up to the Citizens Declaration?** A particularly interesting issue is the question what will happen with the suggestions given by the 26 citizens in the Citizens' Declaration? Citizens and stakeholders share the opinion that the real value of a citizens' conference process cannot be restricted to the process of deliberation among citizens and between citizens and stakeholders alone, but must include the application of the suggestions and conclusions made by the citizens into concrete measures. Therefore, it will be necessary for the European Commission, that has commissioned this citizens' conference process, to think about a way how the outcomes of this process can be included in the further work on research policy/funding and if or how a citizens' conference format can be added to other current decision and/or assessment

¹¹ Karl Popper, *On Freedom*, in K. Popper, *All Life is Problem Solving*, Routledge, London, 1999, pag. 87.

procedures. Therefore, RAISE consortium members will meet the Commissioner for Regional Policy, Ms Danuta Hübner, on 19 April 2006, to discuss the RAISE approach, the outcomes achieved by the project as well as potential applications of the citizens' conference format on the European level.

- **The stakeholders appreciate a genuine “end-users” point of view:** The stakeholders found the outcomes of the citizens' conference process formulated in the Citizens' Declaration useful. Although not always specifically useful for certain sectors, the stakeholders claimed that the contribution of the view of citizens as 'end-users' is important. They value particularly the 'fresh air' of citizen' opinions as well as their specific form of knowledge in the policy assessment process.
- **The citizens felt themselves involved but uncertain about the follow-up:** For the citizens, the citizens' conference was a new and exiting process in which they felt involved in EU research and policy choices. This means that citizens were not only participating in a new format of participatory assessment but they also gained new insights into EU research policy, research results, different stakeholder interests, and policy processes. They, nevertheless, raised some criticism regarding the content and organisation of the preparatory meetings, the low participation of policy-makers during the presentation events in Brussels, the complexity of the topic they were concerned with as well as with the uncertainty of what will happen with their Citizens' Declaration. However, a vast majority of them would participate again in a citizens' conference process.

Annex

Interview questions for the face-to-face interviews with stakeholders

1. What is your general opinion with regard to new modes of governance in Europe and the implementation dynamism; if we assume political steering involves both public and private actors in the non-hierarchical imposition?
2. What is your opinion about a tool of benchmarking applied in assessing organisations, policies, strategies and programmes. Could you imagine citizens' participation in such processes?
3. What can citizens contribute to the research and policy processes in the European Union?
4. To what extent does the issue of sustainable development need a public debate?
5. Do you think that a citizens' conference process is an appropriate way to evaluate the acceptability and usability of research outcomes, for example of the "City of Tomorrow" programme?
6. Could the citizens' conference process be applied to the development and/or evaluation of other research Community programmes? If yes, which research programmes do you consider as appropriate?
7. How useful are the conclusions of the Citizens' Declaration for the acceptability and usability of research in the area of urban governance / transport / built environment / cultural heritage?
8. Do you think that a citizens' conference process could be applied in other policy fields? For example creation of Community budget, use of Community transfers, Common Agricultural Policy etc. If yes, in which policy areas could a citizens' conference process be applied?
9. Could the citizens' conference process also be applied to political debates?
10. What are the preconditions that a citizens' conference process could be applied in a specific policy field or political debates?
11. What could a citizens' conference process contribute to the decision-making process in a specific policy field or for general political debates?

Interview questions for the stakeholders interviews via email

1. What were your general impressions of the presentation of the Citizens' Declaration in Brussels on 5 December 2005?
2. How useful do you find the conclusions of the Citizens' Declaration (according to your particular field of interest)?
3. Do you think that a citizens' conference process is an appropriate way to evaluate the acceptability and usability of research outcomes of the "City of Tomorrow" programme?
4. Could the citizens' conference process be applied to the development and/or evaluation of other research programmes of the European Commission? If yes, which research programmes do you consider as appropriate?
5. Do you think that the suggestions made in the RAISE Citizens' Declaration should be taken up by the European Commission, the European Parliament or any other institutions at the European, Member State or local level? If yes, what would be a necessary follow-up action?
6. Do you think that a citizens' conference process could be applied in other policy fields? If yes, in which policy areas could a citizens' conference process be applied?
7. Could the citizens' conference process also be applied to more general political debates?
8. What are the preconditions that a citizens' conference process could be applied in a specific policy field or political debates?
9. What could a citizens' conference process contribute to the decision-making process in a specific policy field or for general political debates?
10. Could a citizens' conference process be applied in specific policy fields or political debates not only on the European level, but also on the national, regional and local levels? What level would be the most appropriate for a citizens' conference process?

Interview questions for the citizen interviews via email

1. Please summarise your general impressions of the RAISE Citizens' Conference process in a few sentences?
2. How would you describe your experiences made during the three preparatory meetings? What were the three most striking issues that emerged during these meetings?
3. How would you describe your experiences made during the presentation of the Citizens' Declaration at the European Commission and the European Parliament? What were the three most striking issues that emerged during that day?
4. How useful do you think is the use of a Citizens' Conference for the evaluation of the acceptability and usability of research outcomes of the "City of Tomorrow" research programme? Could the same process be applied to other research areas?
5. Do you think that the RAISE Citizens' Conference process could also be applied to other policy fields than research policy? If yes, in which policy areas could a citizens' conference process be applied and on what political level (European, national, regional, local)?
6. Are you the same EU citizen than before the Citizens' Conference?
7. Do you look at Europe/European research the same way than before the Citizens' Conference?
8. What did you get out from the Citizens' Conference process that you did not expect before?
9. What did the RAISE Citizens' Conference process change for you personally?
10. Would you participate again in a similar Citizens' Conference process? If yes, with what intensity would you be able to participate?