



Public Engagement Innovations for Horizon 2020

Public forum on mobility and transportation



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The PE2020 Project

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The PE2020 project

PE2020 will identify, analyse and refine innovative public engagement (PE) tools and instruments for dynamic governance in the field of Science in Society (SiS). PE2020 analyses the PE tools and instruments through a systemic and contextual perspective, and contributes to the potential and transferability of new governance innovations. PE2020 will create new knowledge of the status quo and trends in the field of public engagement in science, refine innovative PE tools and instruments and propose new ones.

The project will do this by (1) further developing a conceptual model that provides a systemic perspective of the dynamics of public and stakeholder engagement; (2) creating an updated inventory of current and prospective European PE innovations; (3) context-tailoring and piloting best practice PE processes related to the grand challenges of the Horizon 2020 and (4) developing an accessible net-based PE design toolkit that helps identify, evaluate and successfully transfer innovative PE practices among European countries.

New tools and instruments for public and societal engagement are necessary to boost the quality, capacity and legitimacy of European STI governance and to solve the looming problems related to the grand societal challenges of the Horizon 2020. In order to ensure practical relevance, the project will work through intensive co-operation between researchers and science policy actors. PE2020 will expand the capacity of European and national science policy actors to integrate better societal engagement by providing an easy access to new PE tools and instruments, to be included in the requirements and implementation of research in Horizon 2020 and beyond.

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1 Introduction

The pilot project “Dialogue Workshop on mobility and transportation” was developed with the intent of testing a public engagement (PE) approach in connection to one of the grand societal challenges considered by Horizon 2020, i.e. the fourth challenge “Smart, green and integrated transport”.

The rationale of the pilot, in particular, was that of putting PE at the very centre of the debate on mobility and transportation in a given local context so as to improve the development and management of transportation, with special reference to the involvement of citizens, CSOs and stakeholders in orienting research programmes and policy design.

For different reasons (see below), it was decided to carry out the pilot project in Naples, focusing it on the organisation of an initiative of public dialogue aimed at discussing about the present and potential role of PE and participatory mechanisms in the mobility sector.

2 Methods

2.1 Objectives of the pilot project

The objectives of the pilot were:

- To activate a dialogue among them on the use of PE in the above mentioned field, with special reference to the relationships between researchers and research institutions, on the one side, and citizens and CSOs, on the other side;
- To give an opportunity for the key stakeholders in the field of transportation and mobility in Naples to establish stable contacts and interactions so as to create a permanent cooperation platform;
- To draw out of the dialogue experience useful information and recommendations on obstacles and development perspectives of PE in the mobility sector in Naples.

2.2 Method of the pilot project

In methodological terms, the pilot project can be categorised as follows:

- a prevalently bottom-up initiative since it was intended to mobilise the public and stakeholders on the research on mobility and transportation at the local level;
- a prevalently upstream initiative, being it focused on the contribution of stakeholders and citizens in orienting research programmes and policies on mobility and transportation;
- an initiative based on a stakeholders’ dialogue mechanism.



It is to stress that – as we will see below – the pilot has been designed as a process, including different steps, both before the event of the Dialogue Workshop (aiming to prepare it in substantive terms) and after it (aiming to share its results among participants).

2.3 Context of the pilot

2.3.1 The partner

The Dialogue Workshop was carried out in the framework of a 4-day initiative of public communication and debates on S&T (*Futuro Remoto*) held in Naples on October 15 – 18 2015 and was organized in partnership with IDIS – Città della Scienza, a research centre based in Naples.

IDIS is one of the most important science centre in Italy, developing different initiatives in public communication, public engagement and support to innovation. IDIS provided a strong support to the pilot, in different ways:

- Providing precious information about the situation of transportation and mobility in Naples and the key stakeholders in this sector;
- Providing a favourable institutional context, i.e., a 4-day initiative of public communication and debates fully devoted to science, partially carried out in one of the most famous square in Naples (Plebiscito Square, see the pictures below) and partially in venues offered by university and research institutions;
- Directly favouring the contact with some of the stakeholders;
- Disseminating information on the initiative;
- Providing the venue for the Dialogue Workshop.

Some pictures of FuturoRemoto at Plebiscito Square





2.3.2 Preparation and planning

As we said above, the key idea was that of promoting a public debate on mobility and transportation in a given Italian area. After a short analysis of the situation in mobility and transportation in Italy, Naples was selected as the target area because of some specific favourable contextual factors:

- It is one of the broadest (more than 4 million inhabitants) and densest (2,672 inhabitants/sq,km) metropolitan areas in Italy;
- Transportation is one of the most relevant issues in the public debate, both at local and, sometimes, national level;
- Naples is characterised by a broad concentration of research institutes and universities working on transportation-related issues;
- In Naples, some interesting PE experiences have been carried out in the past in the concerned sector, even though in a very discontinuous ways;
- Finally, many civil society organisations (CSOs) are active in the area of Naples on mobility, transportation and environmental issues, in some cases providing specific services (e.g., car-sharing, bike-sharing, etc.).

In a preliminary phase, all these elements have been discussed with experts in this field and with IDIS-Città della Scienza, which provided a support in the pilot project designing the phase.

2.4 Realisation of the pilot

The pilot project, as said above, was development through a process including the steps described in the following paragraphs.

2.4.1 Designing of the pilot project

A set of activities was conducted from February to April 2015 to define contents and methods of the pilot project. In particular, a set of meetings and exchange were made with IDIS to identify the institutional context of the project (FuturoRemoto) and to single out the key stakeholders. A first



round of contacts were established with different stakeholders in order to propose the initiative. Then, a first draft of the pilot project design was drafted on April.

2.4.2 Preparatory phase

Afterwards, the preparatory phase started up. During this phase (April-June 2015) a set of contacts have been established with different NGOs, university research institutions and local actors in order to involve them as local promoters of the initiative. Around 15 different organisations have been contacted overall. The original idea was that of convening them in a preliminary meeting to be held in September 2015 in order to define the contents of the Dialogue Workshop, to be briefly presented in the Discussion Outline.

While a large interest on the initiative was recorded, many difficulties have been met in finding a date suitable for everyone in which organising the preliminary meeting. It was therefore decided to change the approach, organising a set of interviews with some of the key stakeholders. Such interviews were aimed at collecting useful information and opinions on three main issues:

- the main problems of mobility and transportation in Naples;
- past experiences and present state of PE in this sector;
- future perspective, i.e., how to better integrate PE and participatory mechanisms in mobility and transportation research and policies.

Overall, 5 in-depth interviews have been conducted, which – together with some data and information drawn out of the literature – provided the basis for drafting the Discussion Outline of the Dialogue Workshop.

In the Discussion Outline, 5 main problematic issues were identified:

- The lack of continuity in applying PE mechanisms in mobility and transportation in Naples, even though relevant initiatives have been carried out in the past;
- The presence of many factors hindering the interactions among the key stakeholders on mobility and transportation in Naples;
- The limited trust of citizens towards participatory mechanisms in decision-making processes;
- The technological inertia, i.e., the limited orientation of the private sector (especially the big companies) to invest in innovative solutions;
- The limited participation of citizens and stakeholders in the development, implementation and technological development of research programmes on mobility and transportation.

Meanwhile, for favouring the interaction among the participants in the workshop, it was also decided to invite as keynote speakers:

- Yvonne Meier- Bukowiecki, Deputy Manager of the Department of Traffic and Space of Zurich Municipality (where many initiatives of PE in the mobility sector have been conducted);



- Ennio Cascetta and Armando Carteni, of the Federico II University Department of Civil Engineering, who were both involved (especially Cascetta) in a large PE programme in connection to the development of new underground and surface lines in Naples.

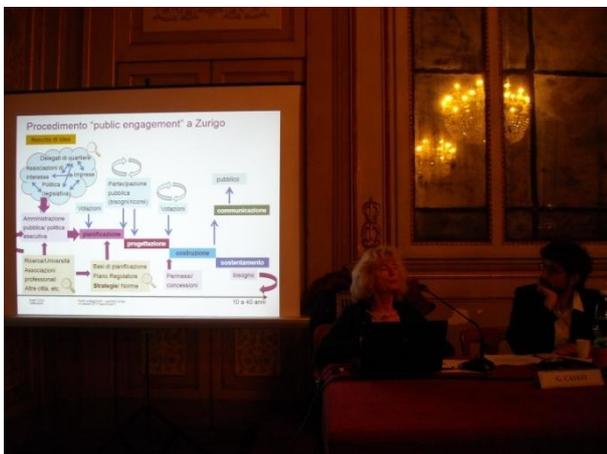
Starting from half September, a strong dissemination activity was carried out, through which around more than 100 concerned stakeholders have been personally invited to participate while around 300 other institutions and individuals were included in the mailing list.

2.4.3 Implementation phase

The Dialogue Workshop was entitled “Research, Mobility and Public Engagement” and was held in Naples on October 16th 2015 at the Italian Institute for the Philosophical Studies, Via Monte di Dio 14.

The Workshop included an introduction by Luciano d’Andrea (LSC), the two keynote speeches respectively by Yvonne Meier-Bukowiecki and Armando Carteni, and the presentation of the Discussion Outline by Giovanni Caiati (LSC). Then the Dialogue exercise was held, under the coordination of Luciano d’Andrea. The different issues and positions emerging from the discussion were singled out, so as to orienting the discussion on the most critical ones. Finally, a short summary of the key emerging point was provided.

Overall, more than 30 people, representing research institutions, transportation utilities, CSOs and private companies (some of the of non profit nature) participated in the event. The discussion lasted more than 2 hours and half.



2.4.4 Follow-up phase

In this phase, a document has been drafted summarising the contents of the Dialogue Workshop. The document followed the same scheme adopted for the Discussion Outline and was therefore organised in five sections:

- Weight of and continuity in PE activities;
- Interaction among the key stakeholders on mobility and transportation;



- Citizens' orientation towards PE;
- Innovation and public participation in the mobility sector;
- Participatory processes and the role of scientific research.

A final session provided a set of recommendations for promoting the use of PE mechanisms in the mobility sector in Naples.

The document was sent to all the participants in the Dialogue Workshop and other stakeholders, together with the list of all the participants and their email address, so as to favour future contacts.

3 Results of the pilot

3.1. Impact

The impact of the pilot can be only assessed in terms of “subjective impact”, i.e., the level of agreement and satisfaction expressed by the participants in the pilot project through their feedbacks and interviews. In fact, the “objective impacts” of the pilot (i.e., the actual changes it has produced) can be evaluated only after a long lapse of time from the delivery of an action and requires specific procedures.

On the basis of the feedbacks get during the pilot, the following issues can be highlighted.

- Different participants observed that the pilot convened for the first time many stakeholders in the mobility sector in the same room. This has been considered a very important impact, since the sector is made up of many networks which are usually unconnected with each other. For example, researchers are in connection with local authorities but very few of them are in connection with CSOs. In turn, CSOs are sometimes supported by local authorities but have very poor relations with the private sector. Even the interaction among the various public entities involved with mobility issues, such as municipalities, the Province of Naples, and the public transportation utilities, is extremely difficult. The initiative was therefore viewed as an effective attempt to cope with the extreme fragmentation of the sector in Naples.
- Another interesting element is that PE and participatory mechanisms had never been the subject of a public debate, even though there have been some interesting PE experiences on mobility in Naples. In some cases, participants expressed this point observing that – for different reasons – there is no time and space for players to reflect about what they are doing to favour participation and what can be do for improving participation. PE, in this sense, could be a support for increasing the level of self-reflexivity and awareness about citizens' participation in the sector. It was also appreciated the choice of focusing the workshop on PE since such a choice allowed also symbolically to show how participation is a real priority when mobility issues are concerned.
- Many participants noticed that the Dialogue Workshop was promoted by an external player (LSC) with external funds (those of the EC). According to some of them, the initiative was successful just because it was promoted by an external player, not involved in the local dynamics (and conflicts) and capable to express a novel point of view on public participation in Naples in the mobility sector. A university professor stressed that organising initiatives such the Dialogue Workshop requires expertise and skills which are little available at the local level. Hence the need to promote locally the growth of a community of experts and professionals able to support researchers and policy makers in promoting PE strategies in



the mobility sector. One participant complained that an initiative like the Dialogue Workshop had not been organised by the local authorities or at least with their direct support, since they should be responsible for enhancing public participation.

- Another aspect of the Dialogue Workshop particularly appreciated was the presentation made by Yvonne Meier- Bukowiecki about the use of PE mechanisms in the context of mobility in Zurich. According to some participants, such a presentation was helpful to give a realistic and not ideological picture, not only of what it is possible to do with PE but also of the many resistances and obstacles to PE. Also Yvonne Meier-Bukowiecki, in turn, expressed her interest in comparing her own experience with others’.
- Another question was that of the costs of PE. Actually, notwithstanding participation is formally considered a key aspect in mobility policies, investments to promote PE initiatives are very limited. Policy makers and public administrators do not have a “public engagement culture” driving them to seriously consider PE as a building block of mobility policies (like occurred in Zurich) and pushing them to invest on it. Also in research institutions, a very limited sensitiveness towards the role of public engagement was reported. In this framework, promoting a project centred on PE was considered important also for its symbolic value.
- Finally, during the Workshop, different proposals were made about the possible use that PE may play in the mobility sector in Naples, including:
 - building up a common platform allowing the many players to keep constantly in contact with the others – thus creating a sort of “community” – and to get all the relevant information on what is going on in the area of Naples for what concerns mobility and transportation;
 - brokering different kinds of knowledge (technical and scientific knowledge, legal knowledge, administrative knowledge, social knowledge, etc.) so as to favour an exchange and an interaction among them;
 - feeding the trust of citizens towards participatory mechanisms (which, for different reasons, particularly low in Italy and in Naples as well);
 - providing all the stakeholders with a reliable picture of the available technological options (i.e., those which are actually environmentally sustainable, economically feasible and socially acceptable), favouring an evidence-based decision making process.

3.2. Feedback received

The great majority of feedbacks on the initiative has been very positive, by the partner (IDIS-Città della Scienza), the interviewers, the participants and the keynote speakers (Meier-Bukowiecki and Carteni). The main elements justifying the positive assessment have been summarised in the previous section.

Some participants observed that a longer action should have been necessary in order to create solid conditions for an open dialogue, so as to progressively involve the key local actors as promoters of PE strategies in the sector.

3.3. Advantages

It is difficult to identify the real advantages deriving from the pilot project carried out in Naples. However, the feedbacks provided by the participants allow to highlight some advantages, including

- Putting for the first time the question of PE and participation in the field of mobility in the forefront;



- Allowing many stakeholders concerned with mobility and transportation in Naples to actually interact;
- Raising awareness about obstacles and opportunities for PE in the sector;
- Favouring a connection between research institutions and civil society in the sector in order to create the condition for an upstream engagement of citizens in research programme;
- Providing participants with a novel picture of the state-of-the-art of PE in mobility and transportation in Naples;
- Offering the possibility to all the participants to express their own opinions;
- Drawing from the debate recommendations for the future development of PE in the sector.

3.4. Obstacles

Three main obstacles have been met in the design and implementation of the pilot project.

The first obstacle was the limited time available for people to participate in the development process of the pilot. Just establishing the first contacts with potential local partners was extremely difficult. Moreover, as we said above, a preliminary workshop with a “core group” of promoters was initially planned, but it was impossible to carry out because of the time constraints impeding the potential participants to actually participate. More in general, from the interviews made with some of them, a strong orientation to see (correctly or not) public engagement as a time-consuming activity also emerged. This amplified the perception that participating in the pilot development process was requiring a strong personal commitment.

The second obstacle was the difficulty to keep the focus of the Dialogue Workshop on the issue of the application of PE in the domain of mobility in Naples. Not rarely, participants used the opportunity of the workshop to complain for choices of technical or political nature made by the public administrations (for example, the track of the new underground line). In other cases, participants used the opportunity to speak for promoting their own activity, institution or company. In order to contrast such a tendency, a big effort was required on the part of the coordinator of the workshop to keep the debate focused on issues related to public engagement.

The third obstacle was the lack of local actors able to take on and further develop the outputs of the pilot project. In fact, in the course of the Dialogue Workshop, the idea to establish a common platform was launched to ensure a continuous and long-term interaction among key players. However, it has been difficult so far to identify institutions interested in promoting the platform and in investing in it. This problem is mainly due to, on the one side, the already mentioned fragmentation of the sector and, on the other side, the lack of an authoritative local administration able to play a coordination role in the public dialogue on mobility.

4. Grand challenges addressed

As we said above, the grand challenge addressed is the challenge fourth “Smart, green and integrated transport”.

