CIMULACT

Citizens as co-creators of responsible research agendas for a sustainable future

This policy brief is developed as part of the CIMULACT project and presents summaries of 6 of the directions for future research which resulted from the CIMULACT consultation processes, as well as policy recommendations pertaining to each topic, which were developed by project partners and other relevant experts in the pursuit of addressing visions, elaborated by European citizens.

INTRODUCTION

Aiming to contribute to addressing the call for a closer connection between EU-funded research and societal needs, the CIMULACT project embarked on an extensive participatory initiative, including citizens, experts, policy makers and other stakeholders from across Europe. Numerous face-to-face meetings and a large-scale online consultation were implemented in 30 European countries to develop directions for future research, which are based on citizens' visions and aspirations for the future.

In the policy brief you can find summaries of 6 research directions developed within CIMULACT. The examples described here aim to demonstrate the relevance of citizen engagement in research agenda setting pertaining to the different Grand Societal Challenges (GSCs) and do not reflect the prioritisation of the topics by stakeholders at the different stages of the project. **To see all directions for future research and their rating, please visit the project's website at http://www.cimulact.eu.**

CITIZEN-BASED DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

"I am empowered to lead my changes"
GSC1 Health, demographic change and well-being

"Education is not age-based or result dependent (…) Access to these resources is unlimited throughout a person's life (…). Every person has the right to be educated in a way that allows them to reach a full potential"

Citizens' vision (UK)

Uncertainty is rising due to a rapidly changing living and working environment and there is a shift of risks and responsibilities from the state and employer to (vulnerable) individuals. Today´s life-job-education pathways do not address the need of acquiring new skills and knowledge for having a fulfilled life. Citizens need technical, social, individual skills and an entrepreneurial mind-set to stay competitive in the labour market and be able to adapt to a changing environment.

→ New mechanisms are required for individuals to cope with the challenges posed by globalisation and the development of new technologies. Shifting risks and responsibilities to individuals might deepen this problem. Today's structures (state, businesses, families, etc.) do not ensure that citizens are prepared to face the new challenges. **Communities may be worth to consider** as a way to acknowledge and address the needs of individuals so they are not left behind.

→ **Solutions oriented towards the older generation's adaptation** to fast changing environment are needed.

"Good quality food for all"
GSC2 Food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine and maritime and water research, and the bio-economy

> "Nutrition is governed by laws that make it organic, sustainable and accessible to all."
> Citizens' vision (IT)

Accessibility to good and healthy food is not equally available to all. Socio-economic factors, pricing, education, culture and location may limit access to quality food and related dietary habits. Unequal access to food has a strong local and global impact in both urban and rural areas. This is expected to become even worse in a changing climate. This inequality is challenging public health as well as social and economic cohesion. Food poverty and food wastage are also pressing challenges in the EU. Consumers often receive conflicting and contradictory information about healthy diets and nutritional value.

→ A **European legal framework** needs to be developed which encourages the redistribution/ donation of food, prevents food loss, avoids waste and provides more access to food for the less privileged. **Benchmarking among EU member states** and research would contribute to the creation of a supporting legal framework, which should be co-created with the help of the affected stakeholders (including citizens).
→ **Public private partnerships** need to be facilitated and business models developed that improve access to food, based on the "quadruple helix approach" (citizens, governments, education, industry).
→ It is important to give healthy and sustainable food products increased **visibility at points of sale**.
→ **User-friendly quality food labelling** with clear and understandable information regarding nutritional value, sustainability and provenance should be available throughout Europe.
→ **Urban policies, new city designs and buildings that make more space** (roofs, balconies, yards, cellars, etc.) available **to food-related practices**, including communal cooking and eating spaces, urban and vertical farming, should be scaled up and approached in a more integrated and systemic

manner at city level. **Case studies** should be carefully analysed and evaluated. EU programmes such as URBACT (Networks of cities) could act as catalysts and case studies.

"Smart energy governance"
GSC3 Secure, clean and efficient energy

> "Surroundings: green thinking and living: environmental awareness through education for a "green" lifestyle and renewable energy sources."
> Citizens' vision (GR)

To be smart the energy systems of the future must live up to a wide range of quality criteria, incl. making use of ICT and "ubiquitous computing", but also having the right energy mix, based on sustainable renewables, making clever use of storage options, and making use of existing infrastructures. Adding to this, the smart energy systems need to: i) be attractive to consumers and prosumers, not requiring too high energy system knowledge for them to participate; ii) be socially and economically just and fair; iii) counteract energy poverty and involve ownership structures which motivate citizens to contribute and to accept the energy system transition. These requirements do not necessarily fit well with national energy systems as they are now.

→ The general development of smart energy systems, characterised by an increase of small scale energy production, generating a new diversified and sustainable energy mix, should form an important part of the **EU's energy policy**. The successful adoption of such systems is a prerequisite for the success of a European Energy Union enhancing secure, affordable and climate-friendly energy.
→ It is recommended that actions are taken to establish a transparent, participatory and multidisciplinary energy governance, enabling **multi-layered integration of stakeholders' interests**, as well as fair and inclusive treatment of the involved actors.
→ Attention should also be paid to **aspects of security, data handling and privacy** in a Big Data scenario to ensure trust among end-users.

„Sustainable transport solutions that enable us to live where we choose"
GSC4 Smart, greener and integrated transport

"Every hub is as integrated as possible with the urban context, meaning that it is easily reachable with public transportation, surrounded by a green area with cycling paths and zero impact on the environment."

Citizens' vision (IT)

We need to rethink society's organisation into more distributed communities that (might) produce and consume locally and find themselves supported by more flexible, innovative and sustainable transport solutions.

Another challenge is to find out what the new infrastructures are, as well as the virtual tools and innovative business models in the area of transport that can make local communities more attractive for living. Quality of life should be improved by allowing distributed living aiming at a sustainable lifestyle.

The overarching challenge is to determine the best balance between connectivity and self-sustainability of local communities, taking into account the requirements for sustainability of transport.

→ **Policy makers** (incl. regional authorities) should promote the **development of local economies** and facilitate living and working in local environments, including rural areas. This will require constructing sustainable, accessible, affordable and effective transport systems on a local level. Good connections with central hubs should be developed.
→ **Research addressing issues of distributed living** should be conducted by interdisciplinary teams. Considering the increasing complexity of research questions, topics and scope, this should be required explicitly in the research calls.

"Making dense and growing urban areas more sustainable and liveable"
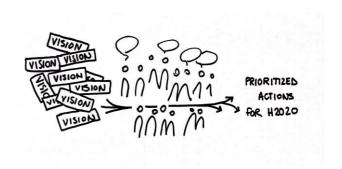### GSC5 Climate change, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials

"Good collective solutions, a strong multi-use mode of thought and high population density will contribute to a lower aggregated environmental burden and higher well-being."

Citizens' vision (NOR)

Highly dense and growing big cities, which have more cultural services, better health care and more education possibilities should become more liveable for everybody. This can happen through different actions implemented not only within the city but also across the whole Functional Urban Area, such as: making big parks from urban neglected areas; architecturally integrating more green in buildings and interstitial public/private shared spaces; renovating public/private housing and encouraging environmentally positive externalities; creating traffic limited zones and cycling mobility.

→ The **European Commission** should consider making the accessibility and affordability of green spaces a stronger and more **explicit priority** in the EU Structural Funds for the 2021-2028 period.
→ When communicating information to change consumption behaviour, **psychological and social effects** need to be studied in addition to the dominant economic factors.
→ The EU should consider the **responsibilities and resources of different actors**. This responds to the shift in the paradigm from thinking of consumers and citizens as rational actors to integrating emotional and affective factors that influence the market place and consumer behaviour.

"Learning for society"

GSC6 Europe in a changing world – Inclusive, innovative and reflective societies

> *"Citizens will have more voice and weight in decision-making."*
>
> Citizens' vision (PT)

Evidence-based policy making often involves tapping into knowledge and evidence across various sources. The current educational system does not foster critical and analytical thinking so citizens can hardly understand evidence for the purpose of policy making. Citizens need to be empowered to access and consult data and evidence while accepting space for their own value-based judgement. Strengthening citizens' trust in science, institutions and policies that are meant to serve the community is also necessary.

→ **European Parliament** representatives should be included in establishing the **scope of research regarding "Evidence-based community building".** Inter-governmental or inter-DG consultation and working groups on evidence-based policy are needed.

→ It is important to **invest in and promote research on community building**, based on: i) interdisciplinary and multisector approach; ii) new models of evidence gathering and assessment; iii) engaging citizens to create a real picture of their needs, interests and wishes.

IN SHORT ABOUT CIMULACT

CIMULACT stands for 'Citizen and Multi-Actor Consultation on Horizon 2020' (the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation). It engages citizens across Europe, along with a variety of other actors, in shaping a desirable sustainable future. In a highly participatory process, the project provides a unique contribution to European research and innovation policies and topics, creates dialogue and shared understanding among the actors, and builds strong capacities in citizen engagement, thereby enhancing responsible research and innovation in the EU.

CIMULACT, which started in June 2015, is a three-year project funded by the European Commission. For more information on the project, please, visit the website at: www.cimulact.eu.

> CIMULACT at the
> 3rd European Technology Assessment Conference in Cork, Ireland (17-19 May, 2017)
> Experts and policy-makers discussed the CIMULACT project and its contribution to co-creating responsible research agendas in terms of project outcomes and their applicability to policy making.

PROJECT PARTNERS

The Danish Board of Technology Foundation (Denmark) – Project coordinator
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