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Engaging Residents of Thessaloniki on Sustainable Mobility through a Citizens' Panel: Considerations and Implications from a Methodological and Practical Perspective

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Presentation Contents

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- Study area
- Establishment of the Citizens' Panel on Sustainable Mobility
(preparation phase)
- Analysis of the meetings of the Citizens Panel *(implementation phase)*
- Results derived
- Conclusive remarks *(lessons learnt)*
 - Methodological
 - Practical implementation



Introduction

- Thematic: Sustainable transport planning
Participatory planning processes
Public engagement / Co-creation techniques

Advantages

Different perspectives

Cost-effectiveness

Long-term success

Relations of trust

Difficulties

Conflicting interests

Specified technical knowledge

Legitimacy of process

Heterogeneity of participants



Aim of this paper

- The research was implemented in the frame of **PE4Trans** project



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

- Adopts a **bottom-up** approach → local citizens' panels (CP) → specific actions by **including** citizens in the policy-making process through **physical meetings**

Aim: present and discuss the case study of the **Citizens' Panel on Sustainable Mobility**, which has been formed since 2018 in **Thessaloniki**, Greece



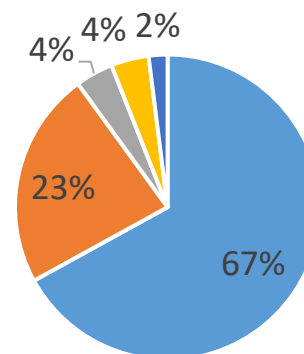


Study area



- Metropolitan Area of Thessaloniki
- 11 Municipalities with 1,012,297 inhabitants
- Only public transport mode: buses

Modal split



- private car
- public transport
- motorcycles
- taxis
- active transport



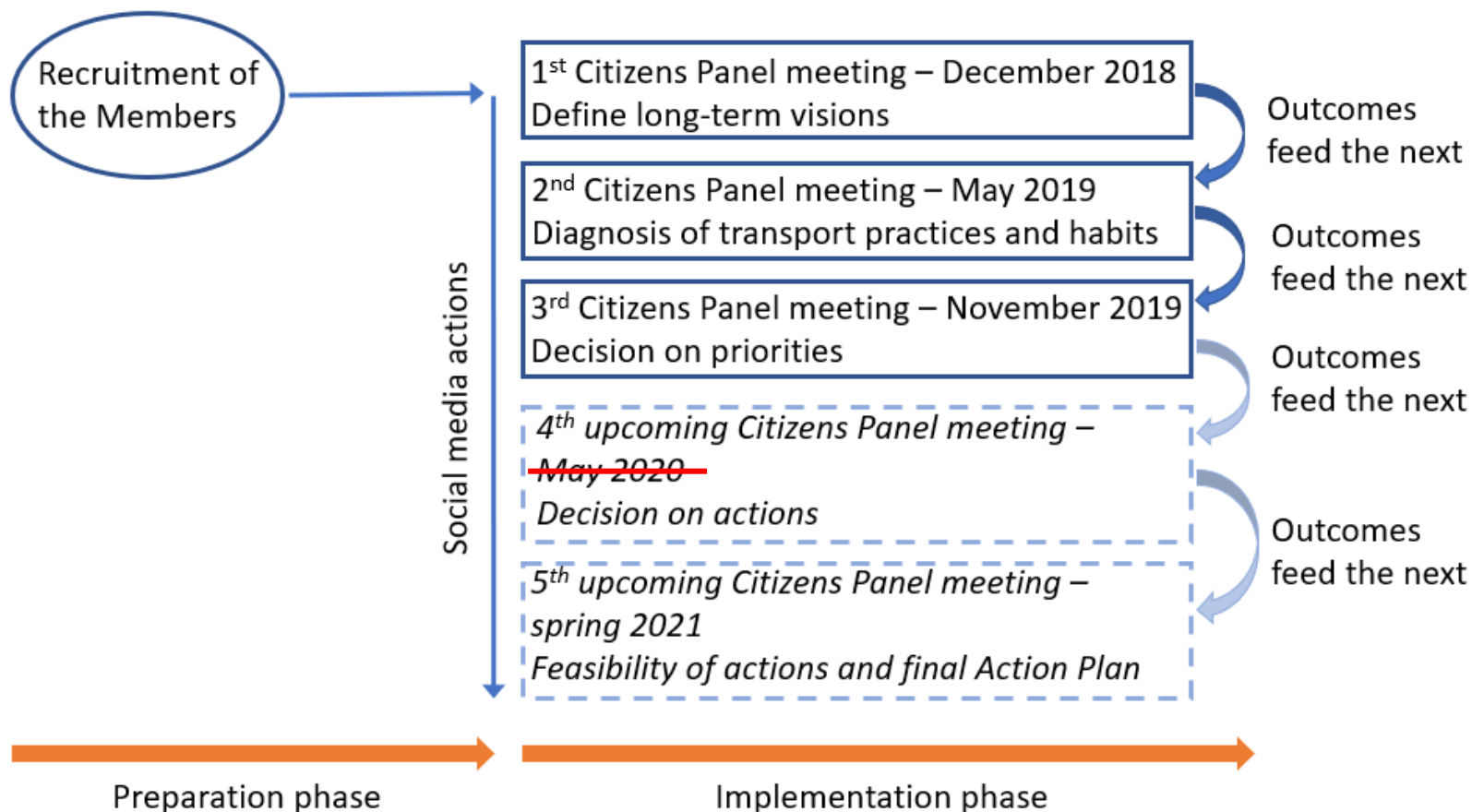
Establishment of CP (*preparation phase*)

- Appropriate **recruitment**:
 - ✓ Heterogeneity !
 - ✓ Invitation process → many communication channels
 - ✓ Large number of applicants → 28 non-expert Members to all meetings → very diverse group
- “Warm up” inspirational material sent
- Special **logo** designed to nudge the Members
- Preparation of physical meetings as **co-creation workshops**





Analysis of CP meetings (*implementation phase*)





Analysis of CP meetings *(implementation phase)*

CP meeting	Methods used so far	Outcome
1 st	Brainstorming in working groups with inspiring pictures; Dot-voting; Further elaboration on the template	Top 5 visions
2 nd	Schwartz Value Map; Brainstorming; Dot-voting; World café; Problem-solving	Local challenges
3 rd	Empathy Map; World Café	6 “personas” (Target groups)
4 th	Not implemented yet due to COVID-19	X actions
5 th	Methods will be elaborated for the fine-tuning and validation of the Action Plan	Action Plan



Main results of CP meetings

- 1st CP meeting → visions

- ❖ **Technology**-oriented vision towards ITS
- ❖ **accessibility** and inclusiveness
- ❖ **car-free** historical center with green spaces
- ❖ **sea transport** in Thermaikos bay
- ❖ city in a **two-way** relationship with its inhabitants



- 2nd CP meeting → regional needs/challenges

- Appropriate **education** and awareness-raising
- **Restructure** and advance of public transport
- **Infrastructure** of poor quality for pedestrians and cyclists
- Lack of proper **holistic** and integrated **strategic planning**





Main results of CP meetings

- 3rd CP meeting → target groups for behavioural change
 - parents with little kids → set the good example to their children
 - people with difficulties (e.g. elderly) and disabilities → campaigns for drivers and citizens to raise awareness
 - Teenagers → positive mobility “influencers”
 - people who choose the car for trips for personal purposes → leave the car e.g. twice a week
 - people living in areas outside of the public transport system network → carpooling

Due to the peculiar situations that COVID-19 shaped worldwide, citizens' mobility habits have changed drastically. It affects the above groups which should be re-defined.



Main results of CP meetings

- 4th CP meeting → expected outcome is a pool of actions
 - Keeping in mind the visions of CP1 and the challenges of CP2 as general guidelines, the actions focus on the target groups of CP3
- 5th CP meeting (spring 2021) → expected outcome is the agreement on final Action Plan to be implemented by RCM



Conclusive methodological remarks

✓ Holistic approach





Conclusive practical remarks

- ✓ The **venues** should be carefully selected according to functional criteria (e.g. number of participants, accessibility) and aesthetic ones to enhance their creative way of thinking
- ✓ The **recruitment** process should be planned in detail beforehand and should be launched much earlier than the 1st meeting



Conclusive practical remarks

- ✓ Keeping them **engaged** is **very** challenging → effort and time should be dedicated → strategic plan with incentives, social media, etc.
- ✓ Interest shown by the citizens exceeded by far the initial expectations
- ✓ *The participatory concept can be wisely exploited in the fields of transport as long as interaction and actual consideration are ensured.*



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