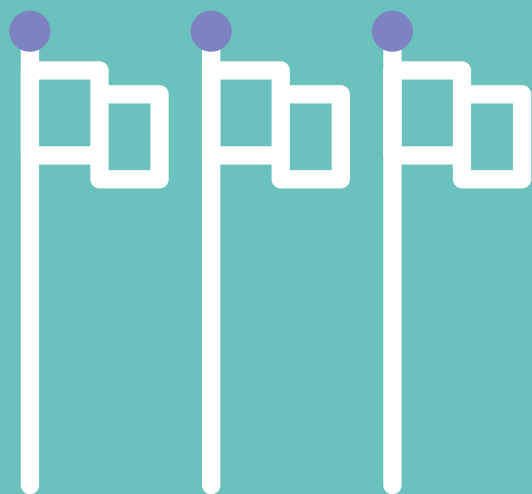




Science Meets Parliaments

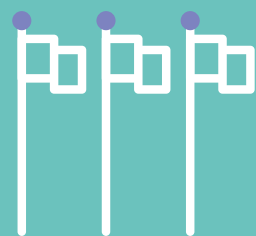


Science Meets Regions

Advancing
evidence for policy
across Europe

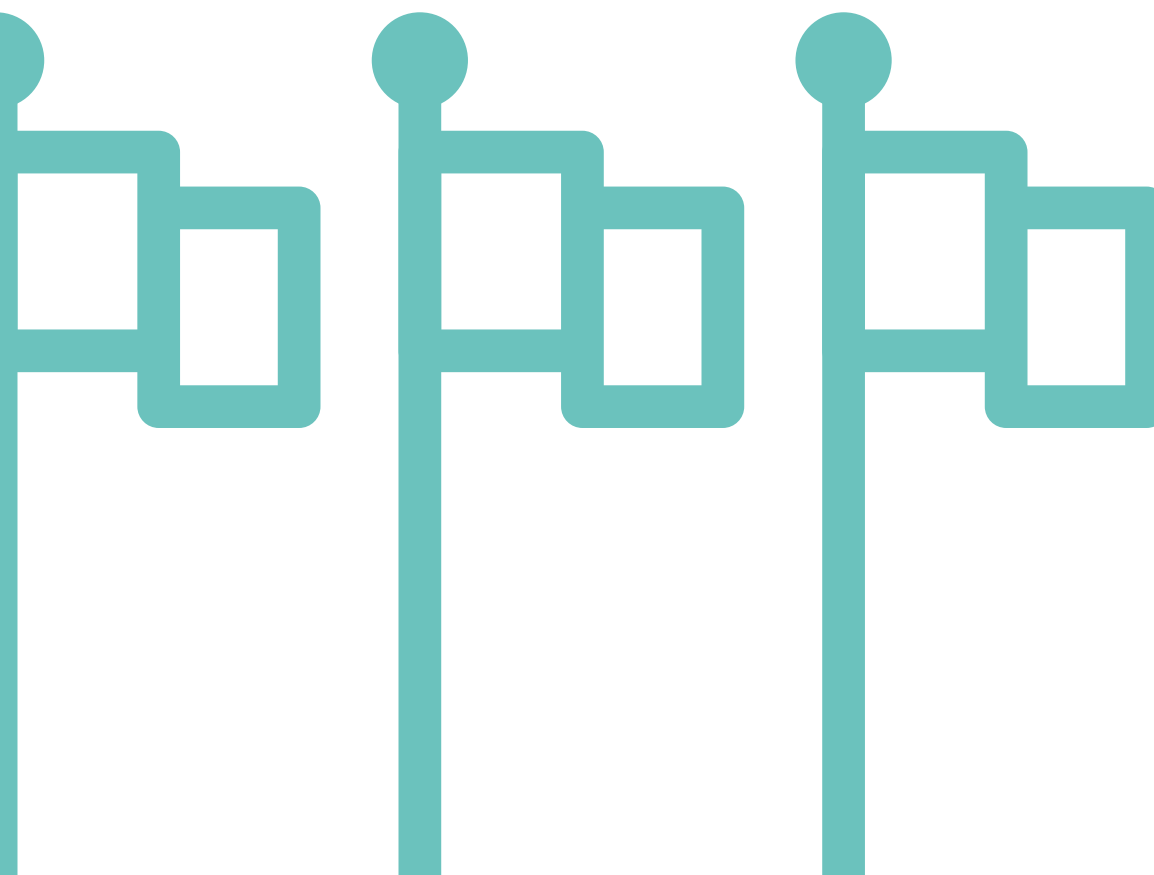


Science Meets Parliaments



Science Meets Regions

Advancing evidence for policy
across Europe
Final report



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Forewords

Politics, values, beliefs, and scientific evidence are key elements in democratic policymaking. The Joint Research Centre, with its flagship initiative ‘Science Meets Parliaments/Science meets regions’, aimed to stimulate policymakers to make use of the best available evidence when making their decisions as well as to promote a holistic, open and inclusive approach to evidence-informed policymaking across Europe.

Thanks to the support of the European Parliament and in cooperation with the Committee of the Regions, we implemented this pilot project, which supported 25 events in Member States. The pilot brought scientists, policymakers and citizens together to discuss some of the big issues they are facing at national, regional and local level. It also financed 14 scientific studies in support of these events, often sourced from local research institutions, and 3 training courses for policymakers on how to integrate evidence in their decision-making processes.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, we have also become more aware of scientists and policymakers’ need to improve their anticipation and communication systems. The JRC, as a leading practitioner at the science-policy interface, is in a unique position to provide analyses, networks, and resources to help member states, regions and local authorities identify and strengthen parts of their evidence for policy ecosystems and ensure that they are well connected across borders.

This year, ‘Science meets Parliaments / Science meets Regions’ comes to its conclusion, and this evaluation report assesses the impact the actions have had, while also exploring ways to take this initiative forward. The overall picture is largely positive, and it is clear that there is a keen interest among countries, regions and cities in the EU for an instrument like this. Optimising the use of evidence for policy is one of the best ways to improve the quality of public administration at all levels of governance.

I am pleased with the contribution from the European Commission Joint Research Centre to this important project, and I wish to thank our institutional partners, the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions, for driving it home. I look forward to a continued cooperation to advance science for policy across Europe.

Mariya Gabriel

*Commissioner for Innovation,
Research, Culture, Education and Youth*

Scientific knowledge is the cornerstone of progress and therefore is vital when policymakers at every level take decisions on societal, political and economic challenges. Equipped with a cross-institutional dynamic, the Pilot project “Science meets Parliaments/Science meets Regions” had a great impact in spreading a culture of evidence-based policymaking in an era that is most needed.

The recent COVID19 pandemic revealed that disinformation -coupled with negativity bias found in a big part of the society- is spreading quicker than fact based scientific knowledge and its damage is often irreversible. We need our society and policymakers to develop epistemic vigilance, the attribute of critically evaluating the information provided to us and make sure its scientifically credible.

STOA's mission is to provide the MEPs with policy options based on scientific foresight and assessment of existing and new technologies that are relevant to their legislative work. Through its “MEP-scientist pairing scheme - a project aimed at enhancing mutual understanding and fostering links between MEPs and scientists” STOA is committed to keep the interaction with the scientific community always open and continue being an integral part of this successful Pilot Project.

Eva Kaili, MEP

Chair, European Parliament Panel for the Future of Science and Technology (STOA)

The conclusion of the “Science meets Parliaments/Science meets Regions” pilot project has been the result of close inter-institutional cooperation involving the European Commission, the European Parliament and the European Committee of the Regions, with the active participation of representatives of many regions and cities across Europe.

Evidence-based policymaking has become the norm rather than the exception for local decision-makers lately. This is why projects spanning the political and scientific worlds should actively be promoted across different levels of governance in the European Union, and particularly at the local and regional level. Deepening at the same time the European Research Area and the European Educational Area calls for a series of joint actions and concrete projects across all EU institutions. Likewise, the digital and green transitions would also benefit from substantial scientific expertise and practical results in order to obtain the necessary societal support and political legitimacy. Local and regional authorities are the linchpin in the process of bringing science within everyone’s reach. Members of the European Committee of the Regions are fully aware of this, not least within the context of concrete measures linked to regional and local resilience.

I look forward to the next edition of the “Science meets Parliaments/ Science meets Regions” project, which will surely address the many challenges linked to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Anne Karjalainen

Chair of SEDEC commission, European Committee of the Regions

01

Pilot project

Executive Summary

The Pilot Project “Science meets Parliaments/Science meets Regions” (2018-2020) was endorsed by the European Parliament and implemented by the JRC, in close consultation with the Committee of the Regions. It aimed to spread a culture of evidence-informed policymaking (EIPM) throughout the EU, giving full ownership to the Member States, regions and cities involved, and focusing on policy topics of concern to the organising entities. Moreover, studies were financed to support the processes set in motion by the events, and training courses on EIPM for policymakers were provided.

This report provides an overview of the main activities implemented as well as the lessons learnt and the results of the evaluation exercise. The evaluation mainly involved a qualitative analysis based on a number of sources: the final reports submitted by the organisers as part of the tendering procedure, the questionnaires sent around to organisers a few months after their event had taken place and the reports of JRC staff attending the various events. Moreover, two online workshops were conducted towards the end of the project, during which the key dimensions of the pilot were addressed and discussed in detail with a view to the possible development of a follow up initiative.

The report has three sections – a descriptive part, an analytical one, and a concluding part on the outcomes and possible follow-up of the initiative.

The descriptive part provides an overview of the types and sizes of the events, the topics chosen by the organisers, the stakeholder mix and the communication and outreach efforts.

The analytical section assesses if and how the project has contributed to have an impact on the four following dimensions:

1. **Policy change:** understood in a broad sense as any step that creates a lasting modification in the policymaking landscape, not just legislative or regulatory changes per se.
2. **Citizen engagement:** different forms of engagement, from consultative to deliberative exercises aiming to understand societal concerns and needs; providing evidence for policymaking; evaluation for policy decisions; and ideas for new policies and services.
3. **Stakeholder cooperation:** the interaction between all ‘quadruple helix’ actors (government, academia, businesses and civil society) at local, national and interregional level.
4. **‘Bringing evidence across’:** dialogue between scientists and policymakers in order to promote the creation or enhancement of EIPM ecosystems.

Finally, the concluding section of this report, titled ‘beyond the pilot phase’, sets out to draw some conclusions from the first two parts and outlines the contours of a possible follow-up initiative with the objective of turning the results of the pilot phase into structural changes in the evidence-informed policymaking landscape across Europe.

“ Science meets Parliament/ Science meets Regions represents a unique platform to promote evidence-informed policymaking bringing together science, policy, current challenges and future thinking.

Stephen Quest

Director General, European Commission Joint Research Centre

Key Elements of the Pilot Project

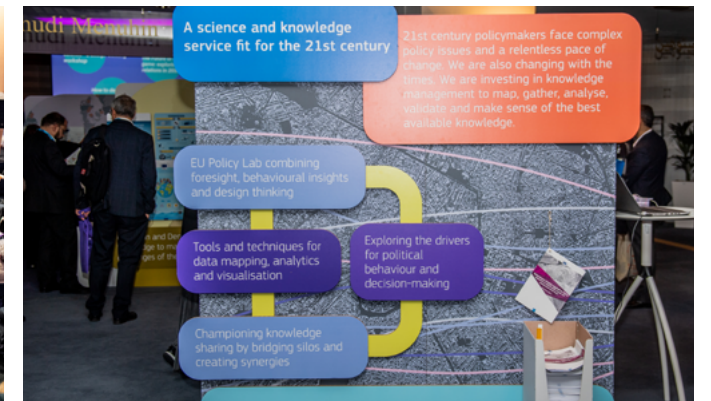
Science meets Parliaments / Science meets Regions: new ways of promoting evidence-informed policymaking

In a joint effort to improve trust in science and evidence, the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the European Parliament Panel for the Future of Science and Technology (STOA) initiated “Science meets Parliaments” in 2015, with the aim to uncover new ways of engaging with citizens and to promote a culture of evidence-informed policymaking. The objective was also to strengthen bridges between scientists and EU policymakers and to create an ongoing dialogue between these parties. In Europe, however, cities and regions play an important role in the process of EU policy and decision-making, and evidence-informed policies are crucial at this level as well. For this reason, ‘Science meets Regions’ was set up in collaboration with the Committee of the Regions in 2016. This initiative focused on interactions between policymakers, the scientific community and citizens where different topics, ranging from energy efficiency to active ageing, were dealt with. A year later, in 2017, different countries and regions joined and organised local events. These events were followed up by two events in Brussels: Science meets Parliaments in the European Parliament (28 November 2017) and Science meets Regions in the Committee of the Regions (29 November 2017). This eventually resulted in the pilot project ‘Science meets Parliaments / Science meets Regions’ which was initiated in 2018.

“ Science advice is an invaluable resource for our democracy. Europe is a global leader in science and this joint action was important to bring scientific expertise closer to policy makers across Europe. Most importantly, the organisers took full ownership by setting the agenda, choosing the experts and deciding on the follow-up.

Mariya Gabriel

Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth



Science Meets Parliament in the European Parliament, Brussels, January 2019.

Objective

‘Science meets Parliaments / Science meets Regions’ aims to promote evidence-informed policymaking across Europe and was centred around the following three actions: organising Science meets Regions and Science meets Parliaments events; providing data and scientific evidence to support national and regional events; organising training and awareness raising to policymakers to strengthen channels of communication and mutual understanding with scientists.

Actions

1. Organising Science meets Regions and Science meets Parliaments events

The format was promoted in EU Member States and regions, which were identified on the basis of a call for expression of interest. The open call listed some suggested topics within which national, regional and local authorities could identify their interest.

The role of the JRC was not restricted to the preparation of the pilot, but was always involved throughout the entire trajectory to support the event: in developing the programme, framing the discussions and providing experts. JRC also provided organisational support where needed.

These events took place between December 2018 and December 2019, and also involved outreach to a broader public, particularly through social media interaction.

2. Financing small-scale studies in support of the events

The JRC also contributed to gathering relevant data and scientific evidence, by financing specific studies on the chosen topic which was identified by regional or national authorities. These were carried out to create a solid base in advance or to provide evidence on which the discussion could further develop.

Fourteen studies were conducted throughout the duration of Science meets Regions and Science meets Parliaments, usually by local research institutions, that operated as consulting experts.

3. Providing training to policymakers on evidence-informed policymaking

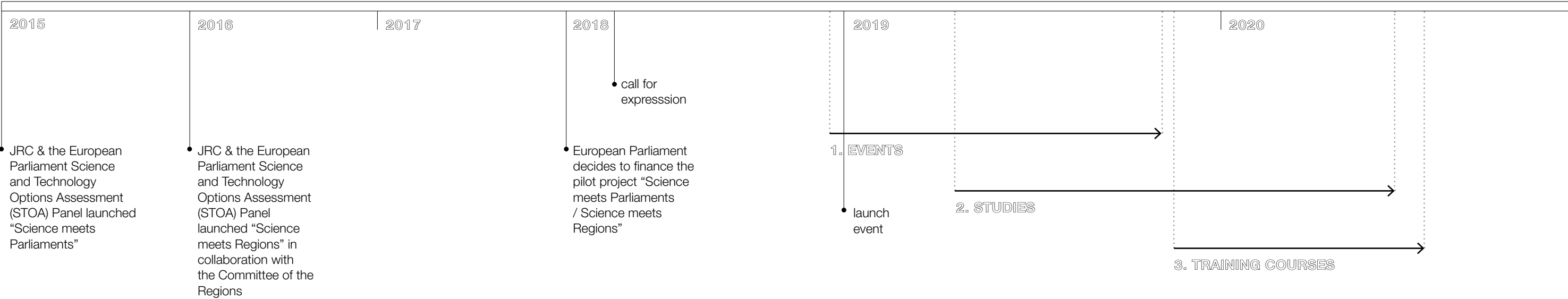
An essential challenge is to provide of training and awareness to policymakers to strengthen the relationship, communication and mutual understanding with the scientific and academic world.

Moreover, evidence-informed decision-making in times of information overload requires the ability to distinguish signal from noise. Policymakers are asked to make sense of signal, put it into perspective and critically reflect on different types of evidence. This requires a thorough process to identify needs, gather evidence, draft, consult and review available information before a policy decision is reached.

The training courses aim to enhance policymakers’ capacity to obtain, assess and utilize targeted, reliable high-quality evidence in an increasingly complex and uncertain world.



Conference in Zagreb



Events

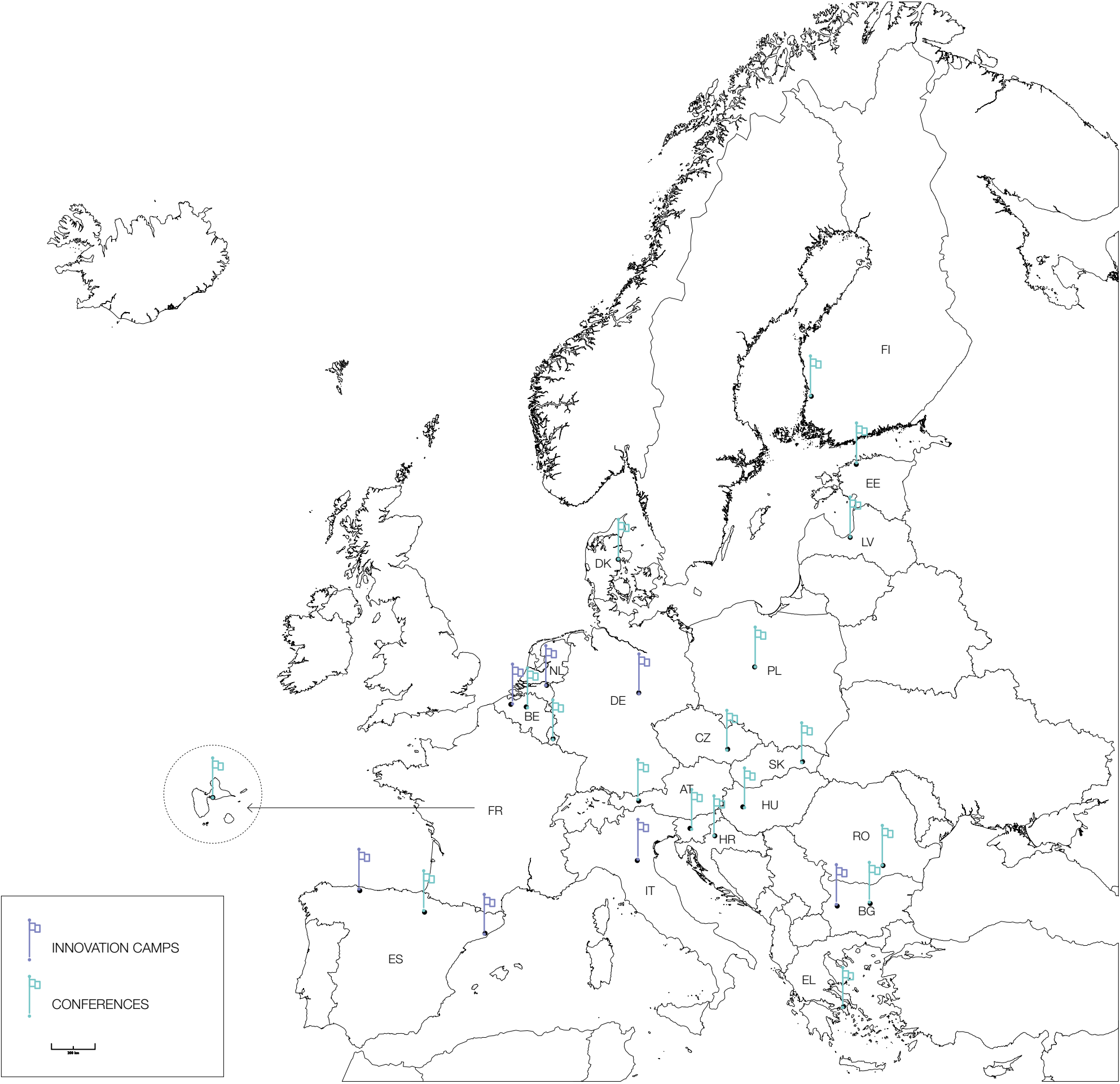
AT	Parliament of the region of Tyrol
BE	Flemish Ministry of Economy, Science and Innovation
BE / NL	City of Nijmegen / City of Ghent
BG	City of Sofia
HR	City of Zagreb
CZ	City of Brno
DK	Central Denmark Region
EE	Chancellery of the Estonian Parliament
FI	Satakunta Regional Council
FR (G)	Guadeloupe region
DE	Federal Land of Saxony-Anhalt
EL	Hellenic Parliament
HU	Lake Balaton Development Council Agency
IT	Po River Basin Authority
LV	Ministry of Education and Science
LU	Ministry of Economy, Innovation and Research
PL	Marshall's office of the Wielkopolska region
RO	Ilfov County Council
SK	Košice region
SI	Ministry of Education, Science and Sport
ES (C)	School of Public Administration of Catalunya
ES (A)	Principado De Asturias
ES (N) / BG (G)	Autonomous Community of Navarra (ES) / City and region of Gabrovo (BG)

25 +

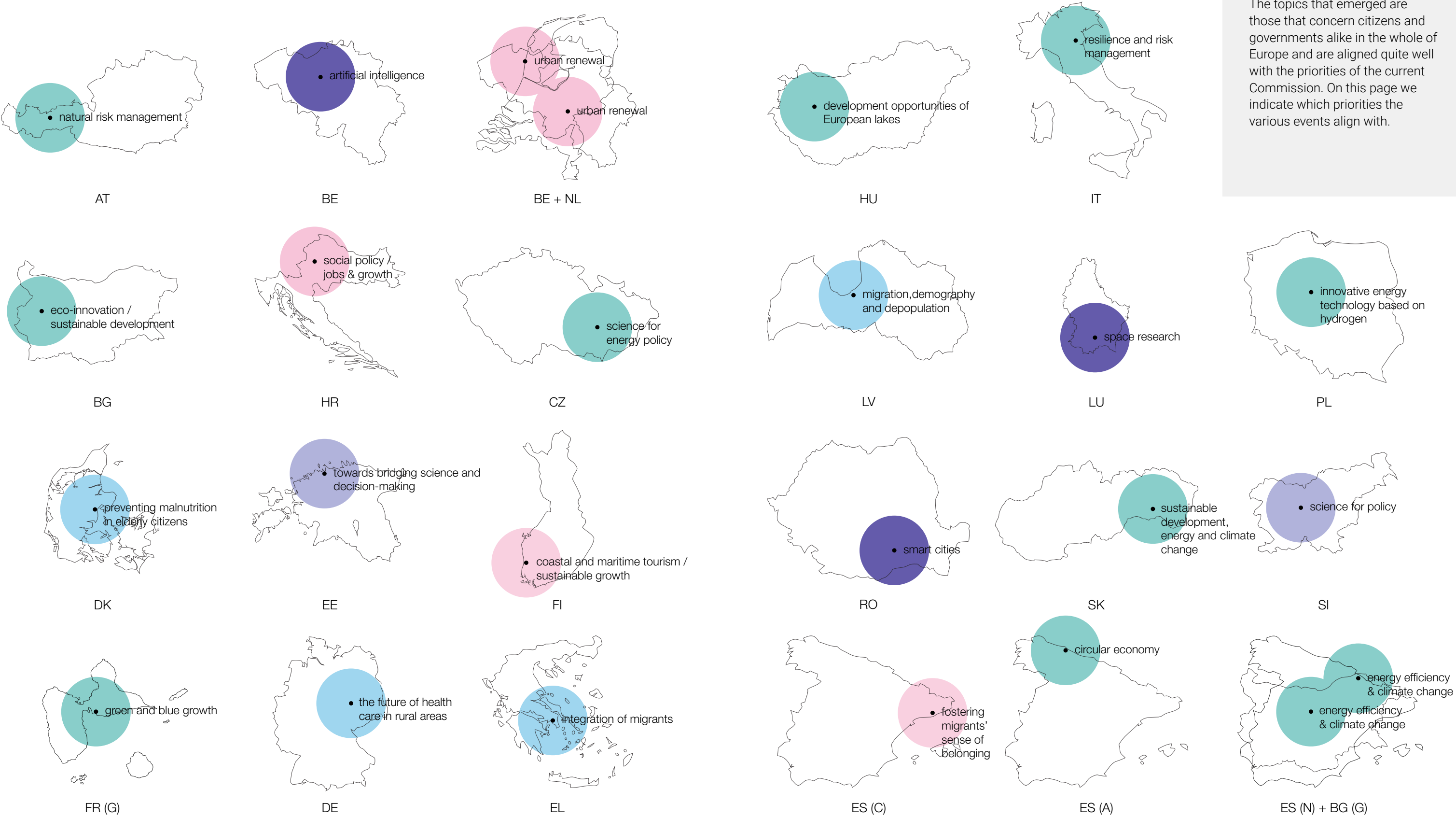
Conferences & Innovation Camps

Applicants were given the choice between organising a classic conference, with lectures and panel discussions, or an innovation camp. The latter is a participatory methodology co-developed by JRC, which requires much more intense engagement from and interaction between participants. The method was developed in the context of the “Entrepreneurial Discovery

Process” used for defining smart specialisation strategies. It implies getting all relevant stakeholders on board, clearly defining the challenges at hand and mobilising the key actors (“challenge owners”) to come up with prototypes of solutions which can then be followed through after the event itself. As such, it is thus more a *process* than an *event*.

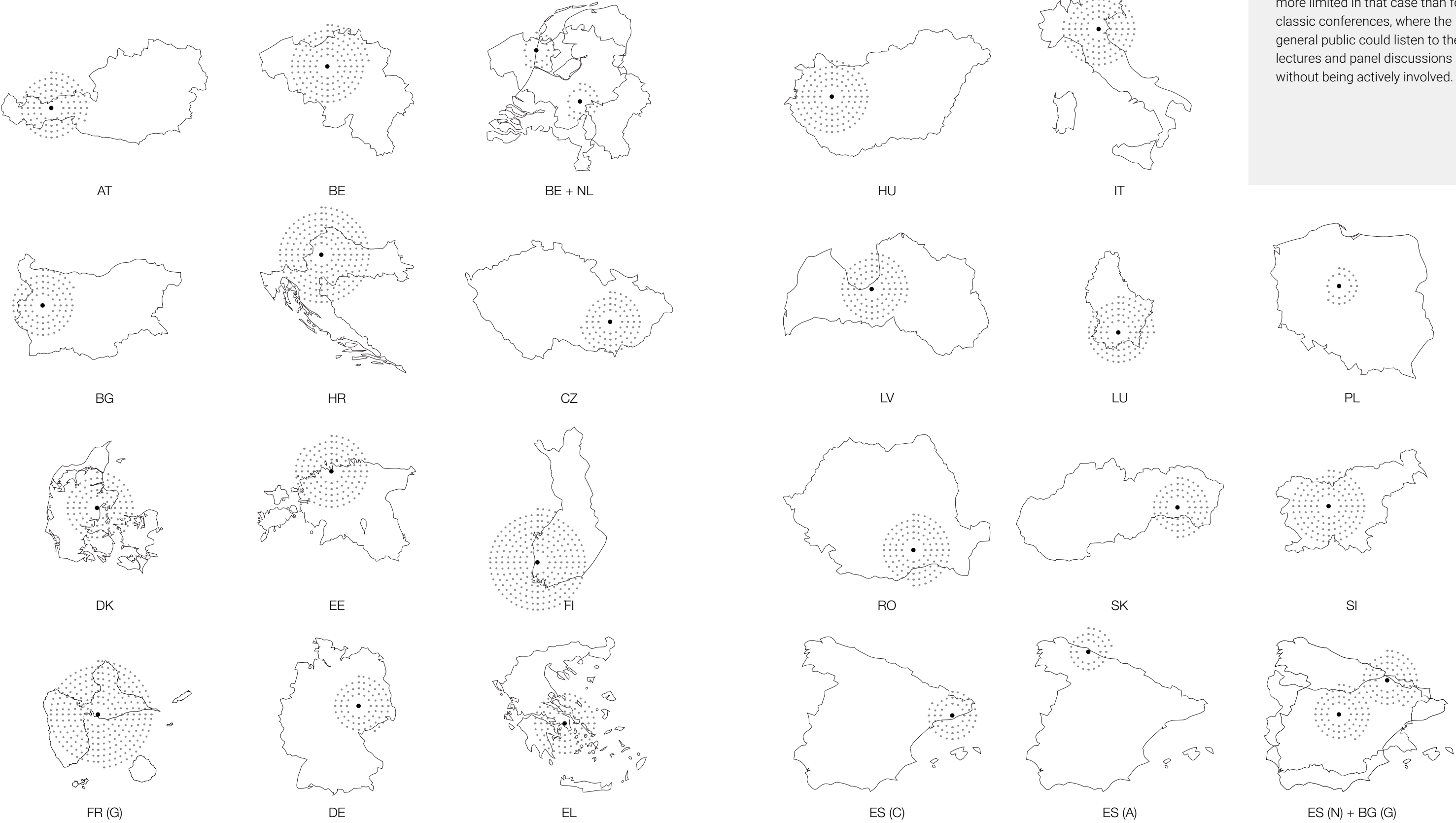


Topics addressed at the events



The JRC adopted a bottom-up approach regarding the topics of the events, defining a few broad areas and giving the participants the possibility to narrow down their subjects, in line with a spirit of full ownership of the initiative. The topics that emerged are those that concern citizens and governments alike in the whole of Europe and are aligned quite well with the priorities of the current Commission. On this page we indicate which priorities the various events align with.

Size of the event

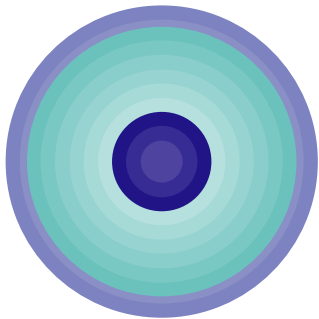
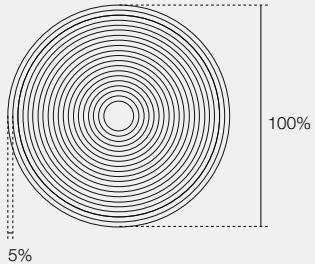


The event sizes varied from 30 to over 200 participants, depending on the type: in the case of innovation camps, carefully selected stakeholders interacted intensively over 2-3 days. Attendance is necessarily more limited in that case than for classic conferences, where the general public could listen to the lectures and panel discussions without being actively involved.

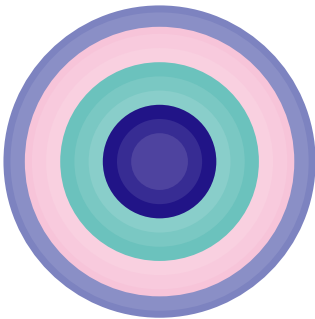
Stakeholder presence



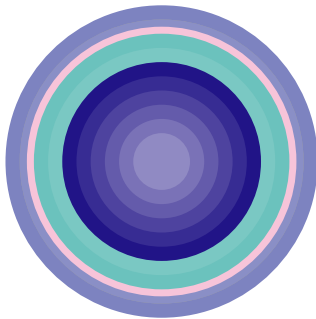
This visualisation shows the relative percentage of each of the quadruple helix actors present at each event. There are clear differences between events, with overall participation of policymakers, academia and civil society organisation and a more limited involvement of business.



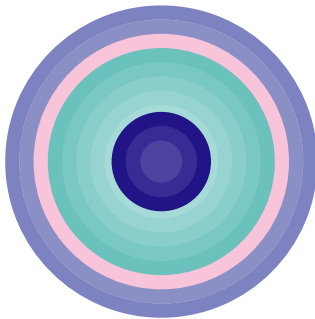
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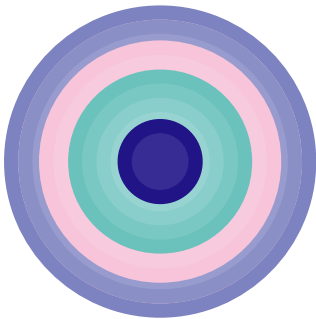
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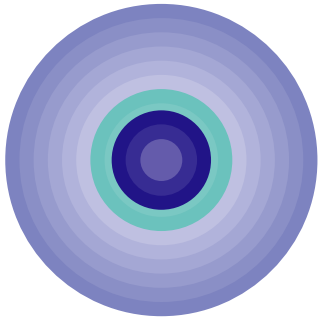
BE + NL



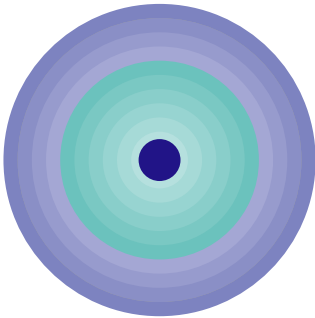
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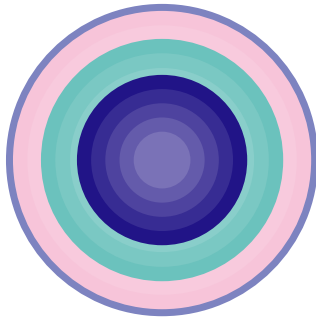
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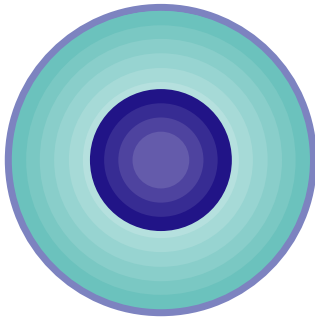
BG



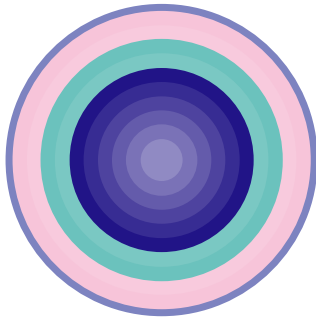
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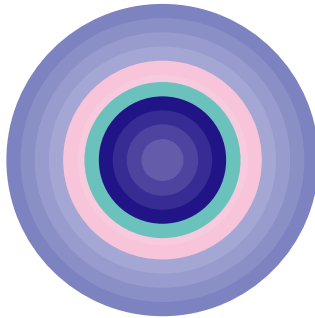
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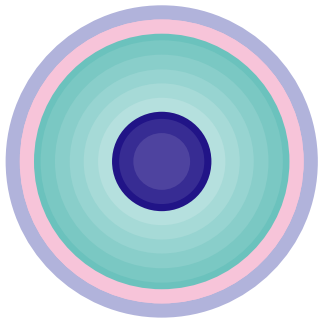
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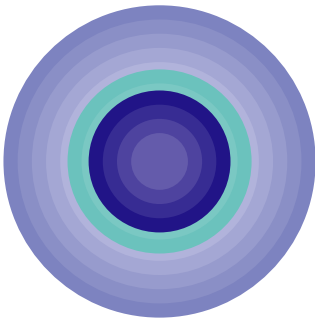
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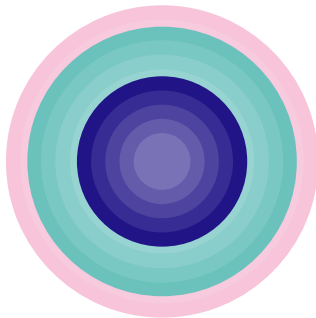
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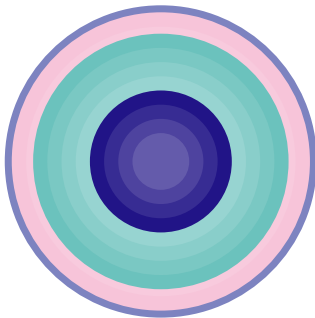
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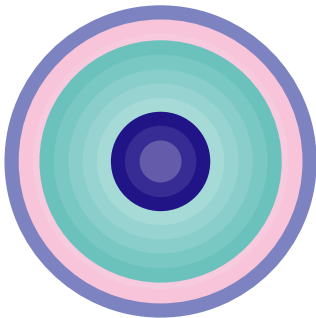
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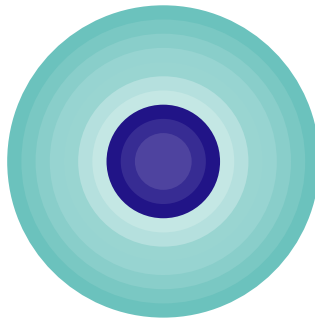
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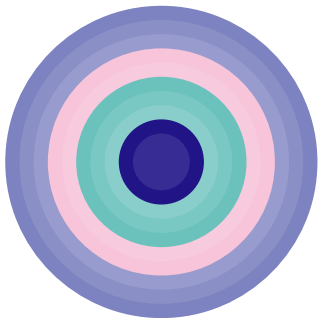
RO



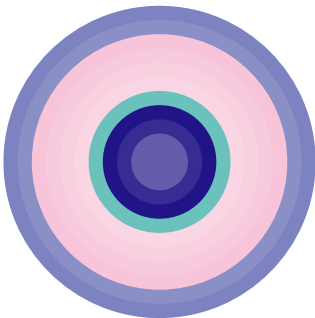
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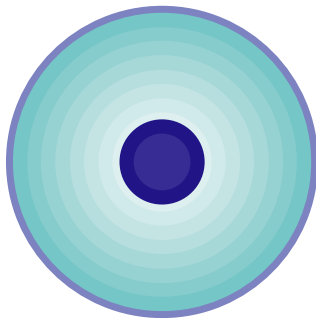
SI



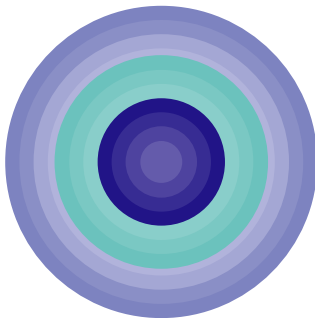
FR (G)



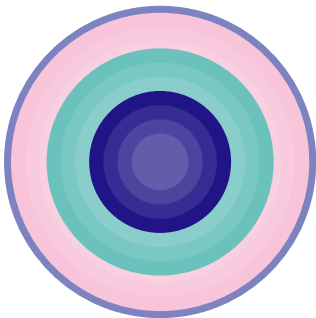
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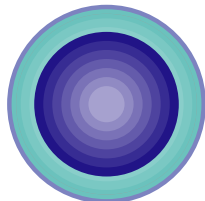
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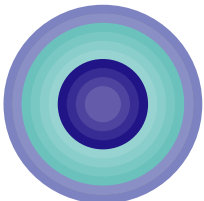
ES (C)



ES (A)



ES (N)



BG (G)

ES (N) + BG (G)

Online communication

Twitter language

#EUsci4PARL

EU_ScienceHub

Europarl_EN

event
scientists
policy
making
European
role
policymaking
21st

challenges
TeRRIFICA
evidence
workshop
policymakers
century
media
future
Regions
Brussels
citizens

JRC
discuss
Europe
change
smart
European Parliament
tomorrow
E.....RCw
policymaking
misinformation

MEPs
decision
social
facts
migration
debate
Parlament
evidence-based
based
week
project
people
work
check
values

#EUsci4REGIO

European

Parliaments
Citizens

cities
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challenges
Europea
event
JRC
Joint Research Centre

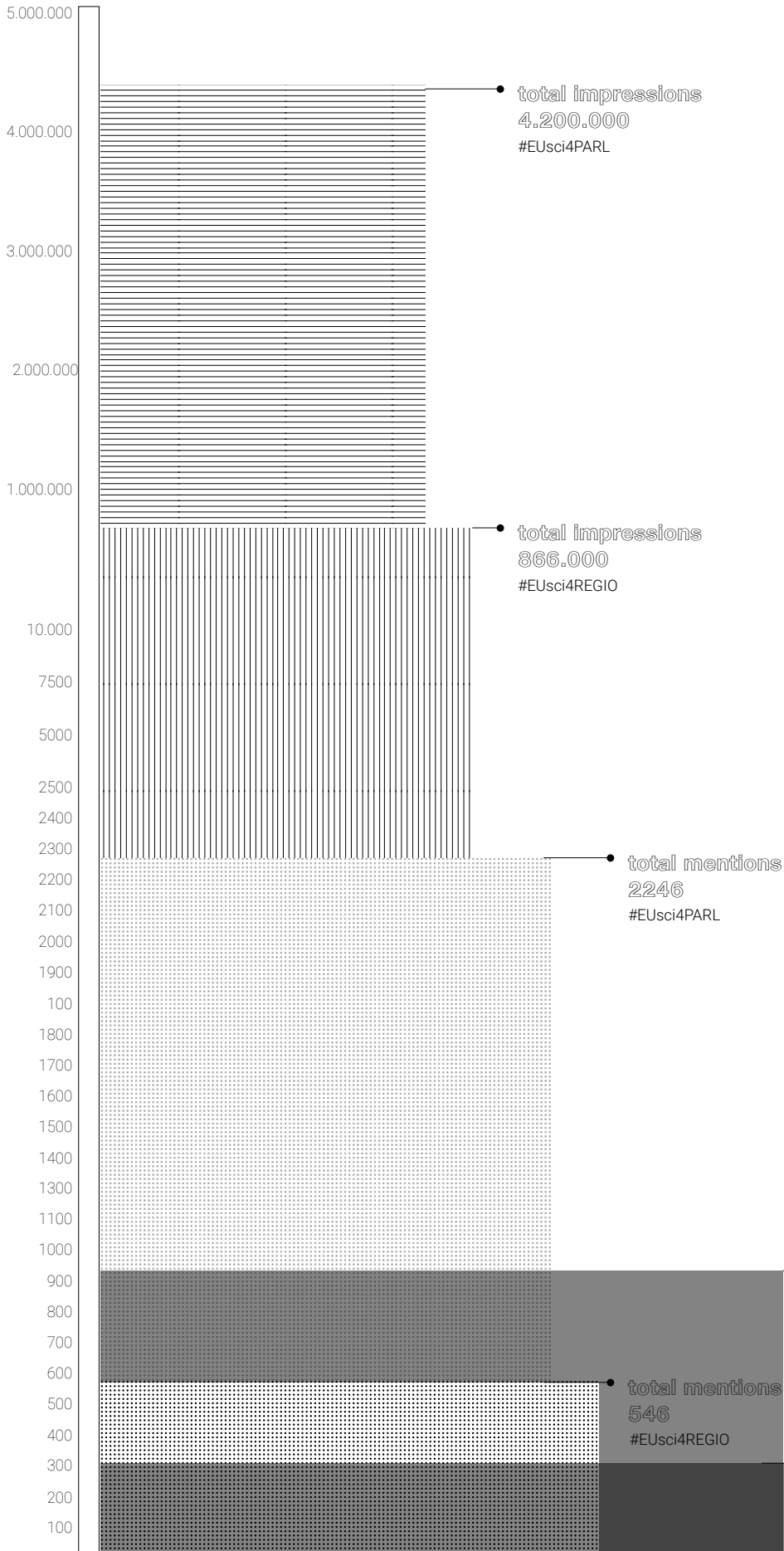
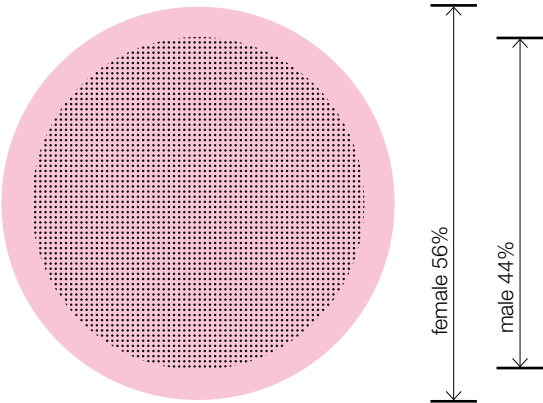
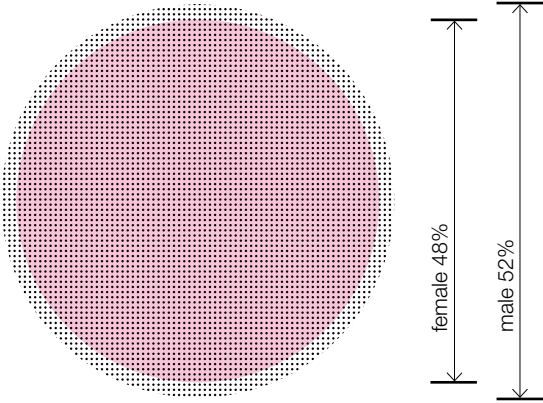
Comisión
residuos
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AI-dag
smart
future
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Europa
mei
Vlaamse

Expertos
proyektu
industriales
energy
young
session
sity
project
place
week
pilot

Consiliul
Ilfov
Biblioteca
valor
Oameni
evento
indicativa
Europeana
tecnológica
regionales
scientists
builds
recursos
Brussels
industria

pink = native language /
region specific language

Twitter demographics



JRC requested the organisers to set up a communication campaign on social media, using Twitter and Facebook. JRC also tweeted in the run-up to events and amplified the messages sent by organisers by retweeting or featuring them on the EU Science Hub Facebook account. Commission representations in the different capitals were also solicited to contribute to the outreach effort. A graphical representation of some of the analytics can be found here.

02

Analysis

Policy Change

Policy change refers to incremental shifts in existing structures or new and innovative policies implemented by the actors involved in the pilot project. It is often difficult to determine the points in time when change occurs. The evaluation exercise aims to map whether the event contributed to or was part of the following changes:

-  Adoption or revision of legislative acts
-  Adoption or revision of policy or programming documents
-  Organisational changes inside the administration
-  Creation or strengthening of partnerships
-  Launch of new initiatives/projects

“ The outcomes of the conference were the subject of a motion of the Dreier-landtag, the joint session of the Regional Parliaments of Tyrol, South Tyrol and Trentino.

Report
Parliament of the region of Tyrol (AT)

“ The innovation camp generated many prototypes that are having strategic impacts at inter-regional and national levels.

Report
Po River Basin Authority (IT)

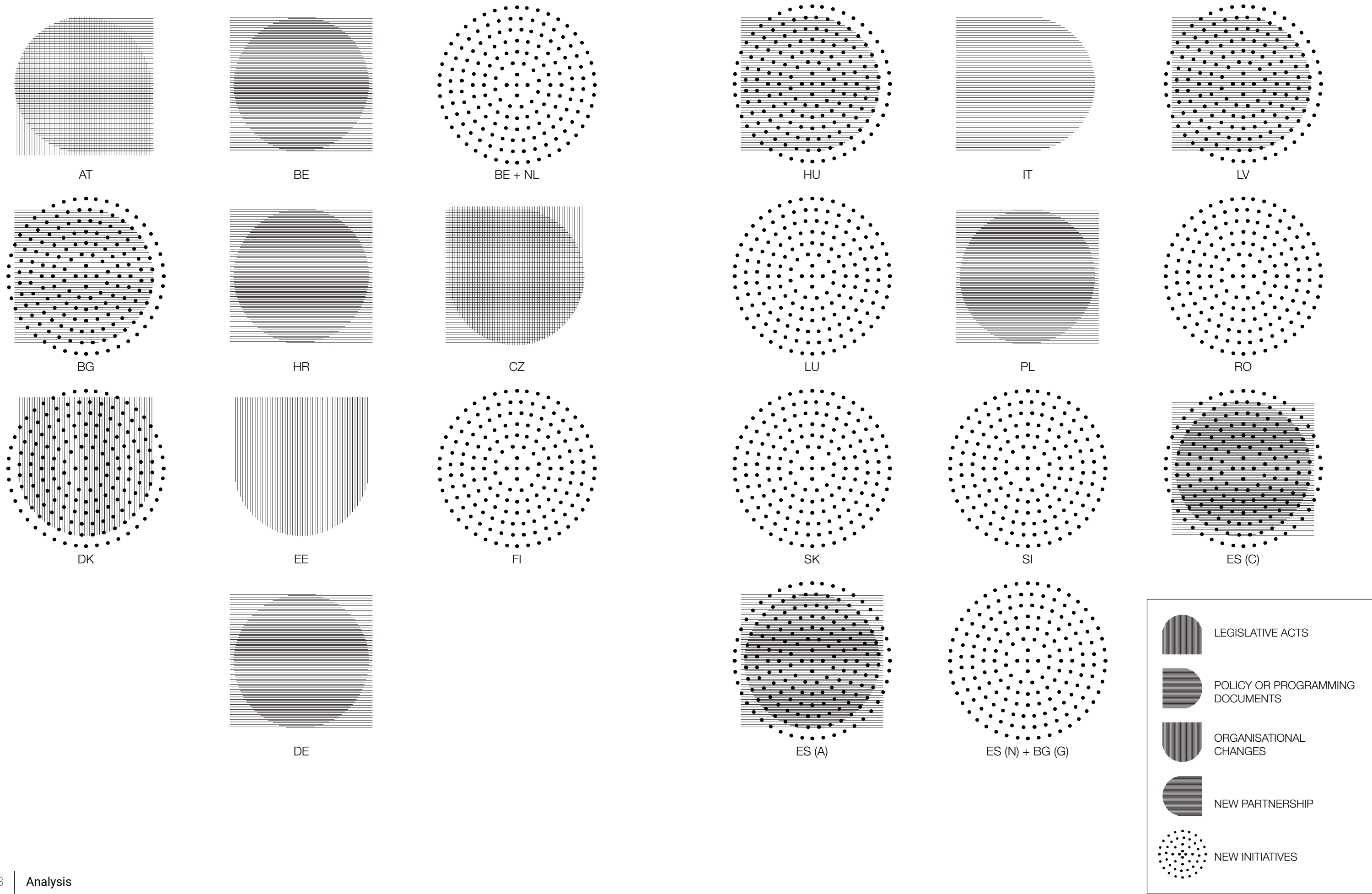
“ Hydrogen Platform we created as advisory body for the Managing Board of Wielkopolska Region.

Questionnaire
Marshall's office at the Wielkopolska region (PL)

“ The aim of our innovation camp has been to provide out-of-the box ideas for the Citizenship and Migrations Plan 2021–2024 of the Government of Catalonia. Moreover, the prototypes proposed will also be included in several specific strategic plans to be shortly drafted and launched by the Government.

Report
School of Public Administration of Catalunya (ES)

5 dimensions of policy changes



Citizen Engagement

The pilot project promoted proactive outreach efforts of citizens based on interactive communication channels and on the production of specific promotional audio-visual materials. This activity has been instrumental to bring science closer to citizens, an issue of paramount importance in the current climate of distrust towards science and evidence, where new ways for engaging and informing citizens are needed.

Some of the initiatives implemented across Europe stimulated different forms of citizen engagement.

“The innovation camp gave citizens the opportunity to make their voices heard on issues which affect them in their everyday lives.

Questionnaire

Federal Land of Saxony-Anhalt (DE)

Innovation Camps

Innovation camps actively involved citizens in identifying policy challenges and in some cases in the implementation of the prototypes identified during the camps.

In Sachsen-Anhalt, the innovation camp gave “citizens the opportunity to make their voices heard on issues which affect them in their everyday lives”.

Involving youth and migrants

In Cataluña (EAPC), the innovation camp also provided the administration with “useful lessons relating to participatory processes, which can help strengthen the engagement of youth and disadvantaged social groups in future participatory projects led by the Government of Catalonia”.

Enhancing intergenerational dialogue

Sofia Innovation Camp team introduced “Photovoice as a participatory city-specific engagement tool”. The camp brought together different generations: “we invited teenagers to participate, and also targeted the senior citizens, thus the age group of participants varied from 17 to 81, which enriched the debates and stirred very inspiring interactions”.

Studies

Studies were also powerful instruments to involve citizens.

In Finland, the accompanying study consisted of a large survey of the local population, which is affected by plans to develop maritime tourism in the region.

Participatory processes

The conferences organised across Europe involved a broad public and in some cases a significant participation of university students (Slovakia, Luxembourg, Poland).

In Belgium-the Netherlands citizen engagement was a particularly strong point. The neighbourhood residents, which are the obvious target audience of any measure of neighbourhood renewal, were actively consulted in the process.

In Nijmegen, this happened through “speed dating”: the working groups were able to question citizens on the specific issues of the neighbourhood, and the sometimes opposing viewpoints of neighbourhood residents enriched the discussion.

“Participatory processes can help strengthen the engagement of youth and disadvantaged social groups in future participatory projects led by the Government of Catalonia.

Questionnaire

School of Public Administration of Catalunya (ES)

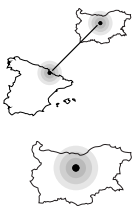
Stakeholder Cooperation

The pilot project contributed to enhancing the cooperation among stakeholders at different levels:

- Cooperation at interregional level among different stakeholders
- Collaborations among national, regional and local stakeholders
- Collaboration at local level among the quadruple helix actors

In some instances, the cooperation among the stakeholders participating in SMP/SMR was related with pre-existing initiatives or agreements. This was the case in Austria with the European group of territorial cooperation (EGTC Tyrol, South Tyrol, Trentino) and the EUSALP Macroregional strategy, or in the interregional partnership between Navarra and Gabrovo. These framework initiatives clearly contributed to the sustainability of the event outcomes. In the majority of cases, the collaboration started during the preparatory process of the event and sometimes generated new cooperation projects or activities after the conference/innovation camp.

Type of stakeholders:



Cooperation at interregional level among different stakeholders



Collaboration was set among national, regional and local stakeholders



Collaboration at local level among the quadruple helix actors

Type of cooperation:



Cooperation related to a pre-existing framework/structure/agreements



Cooperation related to the preparatory process of the event

“ For us the event was a kick-off, and we will use the recommendations from the event to start working together – at local, regional and national level, and also to some extent internationally.

Questionnaire

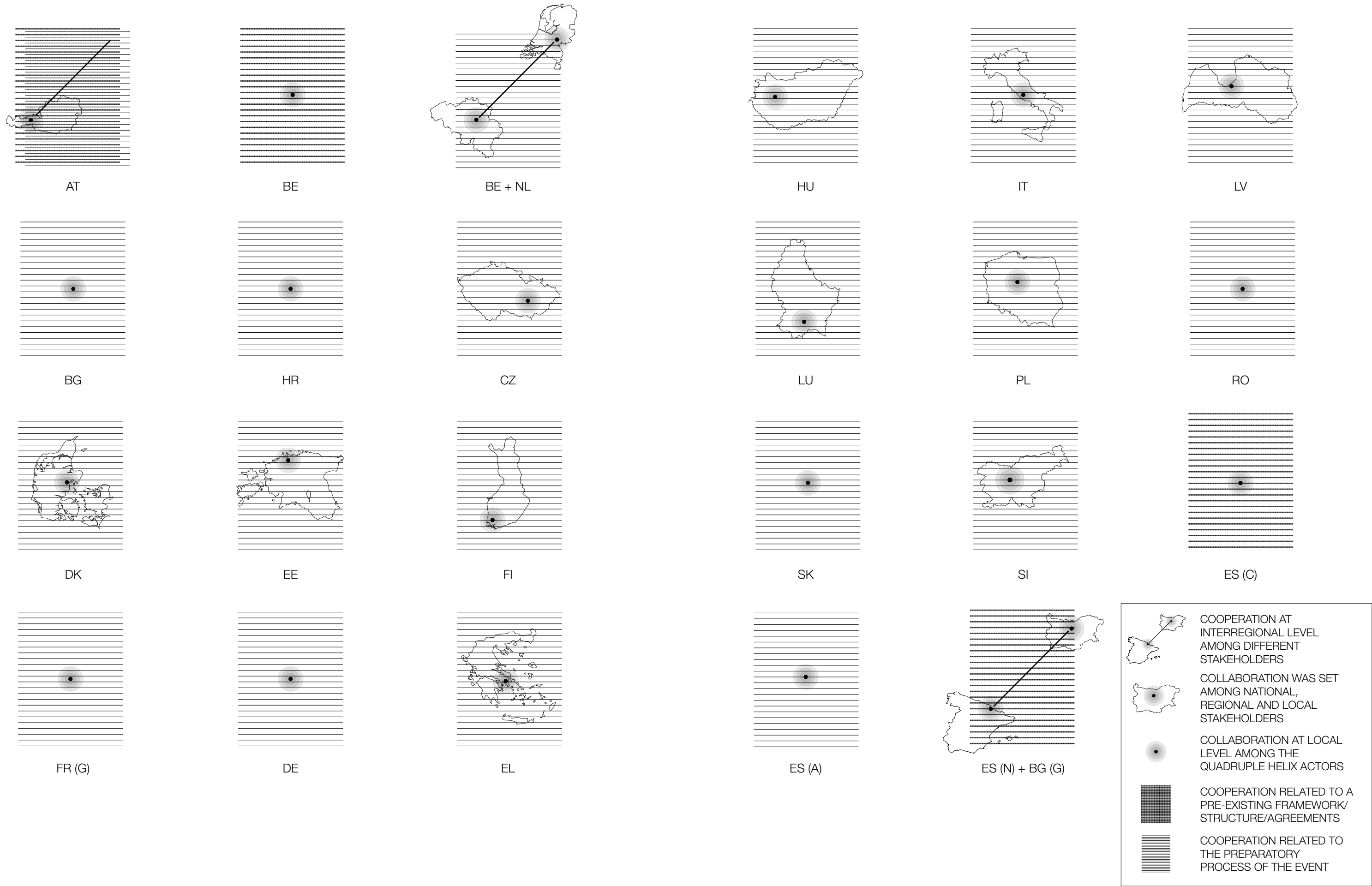
Central Denmark Region (DK)

“ The authorities from three Bulgarian Ministries went back to Pamplona one month after the event for a study visit of four research centers and had intense discussions on the governance models of each of them.

Report

Autonomous Community of Navarra (ES) – City and region of Gabrovo (BG)

Stakeholder cooperation



Bringing Evidence Across

The relationship between science and policymakers has never been straightforward but the explosion in available knowledge, the rise in populism and the erosion of trust in expertise has made informing policy with scientific evidence an even more challenging task.

The pilot project aims at enhancing the dialogue between scientists and policymakers. The evaluation exercise highlighted that in many cases the participation in this initiative has contributed to strengthening existing collaborations between policymakers and scientists.

“ The main outcome of the event has been the structured interaction between policymakers and scientists, as this was the basic focus of its organization.

Questionnaire

Chancellery of the Estonian Parliament (EE)

“ After the event, the Flemish government agreed on the establishment of a knowledge centre “Data and Society”, that will focus on the societal impact of AI in Flanders.

Report

Flemish Ministry of Economy, Science and Innovation (BE)

According to several organisations, this was due to good collaboration between parties or to the joint preparation of the event. This allowed for a deeper understanding of each other’s perspectives, which improved communication and essentially created closer links.

Some organisers pointed out that the event was the starting point for new initiatives and cooperations.

“ The event aims to enlighten the use of evidence in public administration and governance, present a state of the art of the scientific advisory systems in place, new models, an insight on existing structures in place within the European Commission, and rise a discussion on whether a new mechanism of scientific advice to policy might be needed.

Report

Slovenian Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (SI)

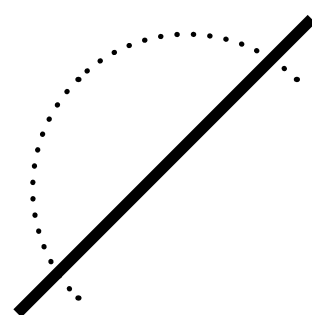
In few cases, the event gave the opportunity to set structures/organisational arrangements for a permanent interaction between scientist and policymakers.

“ The government took an obligation in the coalition agreement to consult with the Academy of Sciences in strategic questions (which is probably unique in the world).

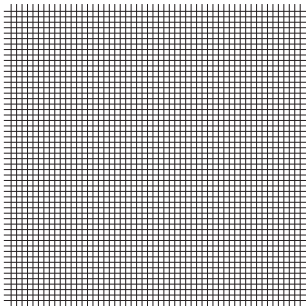
Questionnaire

Chancellery of the Estonian Parliament (EE)

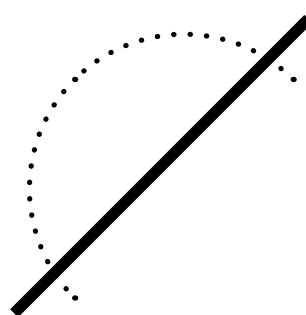
Bringing evidence across



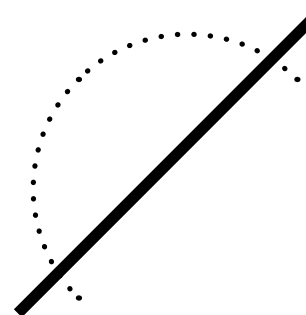
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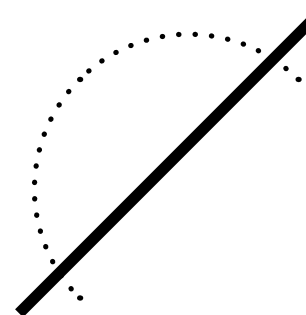
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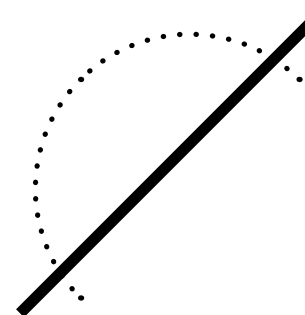
BE + NL



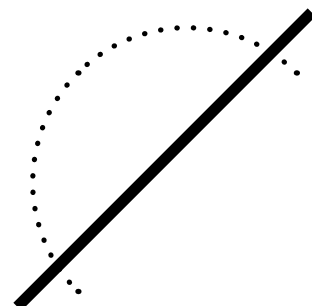
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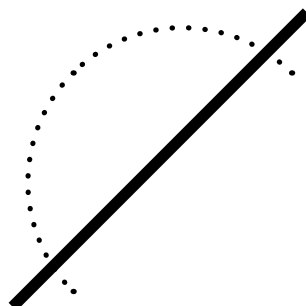
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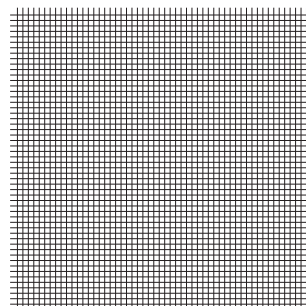
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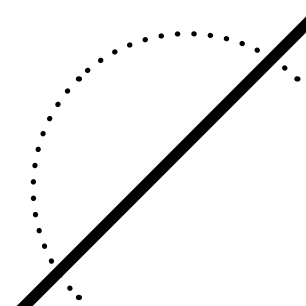
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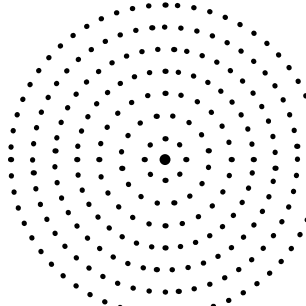
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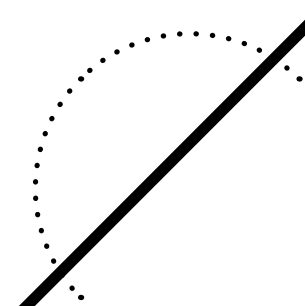
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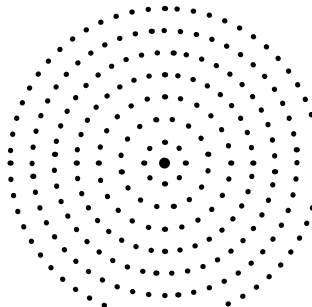
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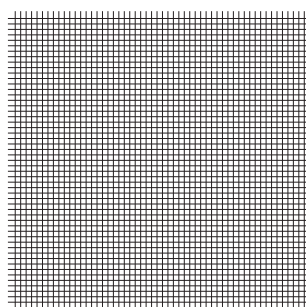
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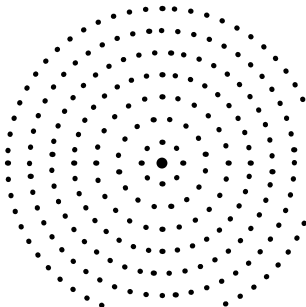
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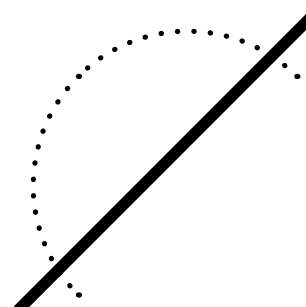
DK



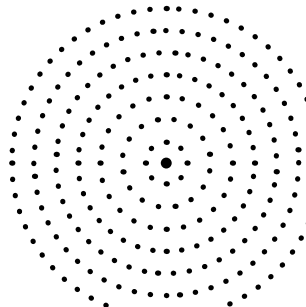
EE



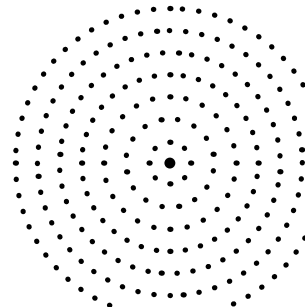
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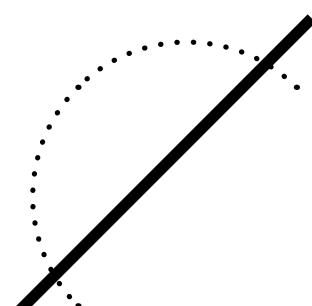
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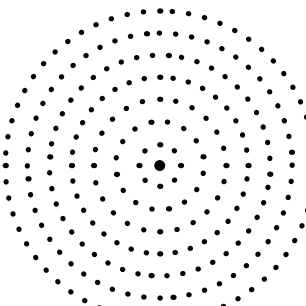
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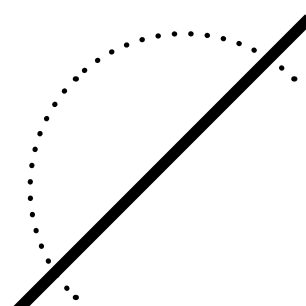
ES (C)



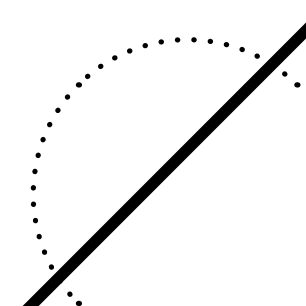
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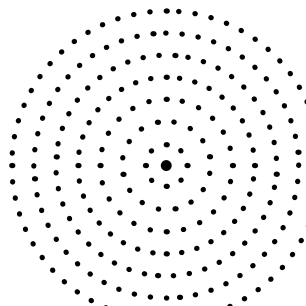
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
ES (A)




ES (N) + BG (G)



SET OR ENHANCE THE EXISTING DIALOGUE



ENRICHED THROUGH NEW INITIATIVES



SET STRUCTURES FOR A PERMANENT INTERACTION

JRC Role

in advancing evidence-informed policymaking across Europe

Designing and launching the pilot

The JRC was responsible for designing and launching the pilot project. The organisers had full ownership in defining the priority topics and the organisational modalities, but the JRC supported them throughout. The evaluation exercise highlighted that this contribution was essential for the success of the specific initiatives and events across Europe. In particular, the JRC contributed to the development of the programmes and the agenda setting, providing experts and supporting the organisation of the events.

The JRC's experts provide support

The active participation of JRC experts was one of the most appreciated aspects of the cooperation. 23 scientists from various directorates and knowledge management centres of the JRC attended the conferences and provided their input, thus contributing to the success of the events.

The presence of JRC experts built a bridge between the local and European context. Moreover, the launch event in Brussels was seen as valuable in giving a clear insight into evidence-based policymaking. Various topics of interest to the organisers, such as artificial intelligence and migration, were discussed at the event, and it was also an occasion for all participants to meet and share experiences in the run-up to their own events.

Outlook on the JRC's future role

During the **evaluation exercise**, the organisers were asked how the JRC could further support them in enhancing evidence-informed policymaking processes in their local context. The participants highlighted the following areas where the JRC could play a major role and add value:

- Support in enhancing the dialogue between policymakers and scientists
- Facilitate the exchange of experiences with peers on regional/local, national and international level

The evaluation workshop represented an additional opportunity to further explore these two areas and discuss the role of the JRC in strengthening practices and initiatives on citizen engagement, stakeholder cooperation as well as collaboration between scientists and policymakers.

On citizen engagement, there was particular interest in creating a platform at European level to share knowledge. The participants asked to have access to JRC expertise on the topic. They highlighted the need to develop methodological aspects, as well as to enhance their capacity to assess projects implemented at local level. They also proposed training courses, matchmaking schemes with EU experts and asked for financial support to set up exchange programmes to share experiences.

Regarding stakeholder cooperation, the partnership with the JRC is considered important since it provides access to:

- Methodological expertise on ecosystem building (e.g. innovation camps, training courses)
- International collaboration
- Research infrastructures

The participants highlighted the need to set up a common platform to share experiences which could be moderated by the JRC. They also envisage a stronger role for the JRC in facilitating contacts and exchanges among European regions. Moreover, the JRC is considered as a bridge between the EU institutions and the territories and could play a key role in drawing attention to local challenges.

Finally, regarding the collaboration between scientists and policymakers, the JRC could play a major role in providing access to networks, knowledge and methodological expertise as well as in mapping the practices on EIPM across the European regions. The participants proposed various initiatives at local level such as small-scale and targeted pairing schemes, scientific debates with citizens, and events co-hosted by the JRC. The JRC is also a crucial partner on foresight, and could contribute to developing, at local and regional level, both the culture and the capacity to anticipate.

The evaluation exercise revealed the increasing need to share experiences among different actors and to create a space where different local ecosystems can have access to resources in terms of knowledge, infrastructures and networking opportunities. The JRC can facilitate this process since it has a wealth of scientific knowledge in different policy areas and has consolidated a strong partnership with European regional and local actors.

Training Courses for Policymakers

Training courses on evidence-informed policymaking: teaching policymakers how to deal with evidence.

One of the factors often inhibiting the use of scientific evidence in policy processes is the lack of mutual trust and understanding between scientists and policymakers.

In the past, JRC has already been training scientists on how to get their message across to policymakers. Communication is a key factor here - scientists need to package scientific evidence in the appropriate way. However, policymakers also need to be equipped with a basic understanding of how science works and what are the principles and pitfalls of using evidence in policy processes.

The pilot project presented the ideal occasion for JRC to work from the angle of the policymakers as well. Hertie School (Berlin) developed a modular training course at the request of JRC, and taught the course three times, to a wide range of policymakers from across Europe. The first course was taught in Brussels for 18 participants, mainly European Commission staff. The second course, in Berlin, also had 18 participants, predominantly local and regional policymakers (16), complemented by 2 national level administrators. Among the local mandate holders, 3 were also members of the Committee of the Regions. In the final course, which was converted to an online series of workshops due to the Covid crisis, 20

participants were present: 11 from regional or local administrations, 5 from EU administrations and 4 from the national level.

Policymakers are increasingly faced with a demand for supporting policy designs and implementation practices with knowledge, information and research. On the other hand, the social, political and media environment makes evaluating, weighing and integrating diverse types of evidence a more complex task – knowledge and information becomes contested and ignored, and policymakers tend to cherry-pick evidence in a world shaped by the increasingly powerful role of digital media and social polarization.

“Policymaker” is broader than just “politician”. Debates about evidence-based policy often focus on two worlds: research and politics. This underestimates the critical role of the executive in policymaking and particularly preparing policies that require executives to acquire knowledge, for example through commissioning evidence and advice early on in the policy process. Executives’ linkages with interest organisations, external experts and advisors as well as engaging with citizens are crucial too. Reforms to promote evidence-based policy often fail to grasp these realities. That is why the training courses combine insights from the world of evidence and data with those from the world of politics and bureaucracy. The course also takes into account that engagement with evidence is often shaped by

“ The course introduces European, national and regional/local policymakers to tools that help them make good use of evidence in policymaking. Policymakers must be able to cope with different types of evidence and relate them to the complexities of contemporary policymaking.

Hertie School training course syllabus

social norms, political preferences and emotions – individuals and organisations are subject to biases in producing and using evidence.

Evidence-informed decision-making in times of information overload requires the ability to distinguish signal from noise. Furthermore, policymakers are asked to make sense of signal, put it into perspective and critically reflect on different types of evidence. This requires a thorough process to identify needs, gather evidence, draft, consult and review available information before a policy decision is reached. On the other hand, today’s policymakers also need to be prepared for politicization and contestation of the evidence itself. In the 21st century, policymaking and evidence is more intertwined than ever before – with evidence increasing in importance, it becomes more contested and often more politicized in policymaking.

Hertie School delivered three training courses addressing the above topics. The first two took place in a physical classroom setting (Brussels, November 2019 and Berlin, February 2020). The last one had to be converted in an online format due to the Covid crisis.

The course introduces European, national and regional/local policymakers to tools that help them make good use of evidence in policymaking. Policymakers must be able to cope with different types of evidence and relate them to

the complexities of contemporary policymaking. Participants were trained to navigate between different types of evidence (analytical skills) and reflected on how to deal with the many political, bureaucratic and societal challenges of evidence-informed policymaking (political management skills). They were exposed to a variety of types of evidence and explore constraints and opportunities in engaging with evidence.

The courses met with an overall extremely positive response. Asked whether the course was relevant for their day to day activities, a clear majority of respondents replied positively. Many also stated that the sessions on critical assessment of evidence, on artificial intelligence and on data science for policy were highly useful.

The considerable interest in this course and the enthusiastic feedback suggests that a training component will have to be an important part of any continuation of the pilot. One element of concern in this regard is to tailor the course even better to the needs of individual participants. It makes a lot of difference whether you are a municipal counsellor, a regional policymaker or an administrator in a national government: both the competencies and the policymaking context differ vastly between those levels of governance. A future course offer could consist of customised modules for a targeted subgroup of policymakers, and even on specific subjects of concern in the cities, regions and member states of the EU.



Training course in Berlin, February 2020

03

Beyond the
pilot phase

Workshops

As one of the last steps in the pilot project, two online evaluation workshops took place in June 2020, the results of which fed in to this report.

A considerable amount of documentation was available to assess the impact of the project, including final reports, questionnaires, and bilateral meetings with participants. The workshops helped to complement this, with interactive discussions that considerably enriched the findings.

The JRC selected 18 participants for this workshop, with a balance between event types, geographical spread, and topics discussed. Apart from event organisers, we also invited a number of stakeholders who had not themselves been involved in the organisation of an event, but could provide valuable insights from their perspective (e.g. European Regions Research and Innovation Network ERRIN, European Committee of the Regions).

The workshops were organised around three key dimensions, which are also central to this report: stakeholder cooperation, citizen engagement and bringing evidence across.

In the first workshop, which took place on 11 June 2020, participants took stock of experiences and challenges faced during the organisation process. They identified several problems in each of the three areas, which could be summarised under a few headers. There are methodological factors at play; for example, authorities can

lack the right tools to set in motion and sustain EIPM processes. Furthermore, knowledge-related factors are important. For example, scientists should be trained on how to deal with policymakers and policymakers should be able to make sense of science. Finally, there are all the elements related to contextual factors: authorities must provide incentives to ensure the sustainability of the cooperative links created in the EIPM process. An example is incentivising academics to engage with policymakers, which is traditionally not seen as very rewarding in an academic career.

One week later, we reconvened for a discussion based on the challenges identified during the first part. Three questions guided the debates:

1. What cooperation instruments could regions put in place to tackle the challenges identified?
2. What resources could they make available themselves?
3. What could be the role of the JRC?

The third question is the subject of a separate item in this report. On the first question, the answers given by participants regarding stakeholder cooperation clustered around mobilising appropriate funding to stimulate collaboration among regions, identifying common challenges faced by regions in Europe, and ensuring structural anchoring of the cooperation through ecosystem building and linking regional

innovation ecosystems to each other. In the field of citizen engagement, it seems there is a clear willingness to address this important dimension, but knowledge of appropriate methods is not always present – it could be enhanced by sharing and exchanging best practices among regions. An important element is also building trust on all sides. Citizens have to trust institutions, politicians and scientists, but the reverse applies as well. Finally, regarding the dimension ‘bringing science across’, a few elements that deserve to be highlighted are: identifying and addressing common challenges and knowledge gaps through interregional collaboration, making expertise available cross-border by pairing experts with policymakers (not just domestically but throughout Europe), and training both scientists and policymakers on how to engage with each other.

As for question 2 on resources, both material (financial) as immaterial (networking) aspects were mentioned in order to enhance stakeholder cooperation and citizen engagement. ‘Bringing across evidence’ was addressed through suggestions such as making excellent science readily available, organising internships for researchers, and building capacity for regional authorities, possibly using the leverage of EU level instruments.

The suggestions made and the issues raised during these workshops will now feed into the process of building new EU-level initiatives

that could build capacity for regional and local administrations to strengthen their ecosystem for evidence-informed policymaking, while facilitating cross-border cooperation as much as possible.

Conclusions and outlook

The pilot project Science meets Parliaments/ Science meets Regions is a JRC flagship initiative to promote a more comprehensive approach to evidence-informed policymaking. 25 events were organised across Europe to engage citizens and stimulate debates for participatory policy formulation, with the full ownership of the communities involved.

The cooperation with the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions enabled the launch of an initiative that also provided national, regional and local authorities with JRC expertise, models and methods. The innovation camp methodology was adopted by 7 organisers to address societal and economic challenges through the entrepreneurial discovery process (EDP) between quadruple helix actors (i.e. government, industry, academia, and civil society).

The evaluation exercise highlighted the need to enhance this methodology in order to strengthen local science for policy ecosystems. Furthermore, the participants in the pilot project emphasised the need to build awareness, mutual understanding and agreement at regional, interregional and national level on policy-relevant questions and the kind of evidence needed to answer them. They also asked for the JRC's support in developing skills to assess and use evidence as well as engaging with citizens and stakeholders at local and European level. During the evaluation workshop, the idea to create a community of practitioners across Europe to

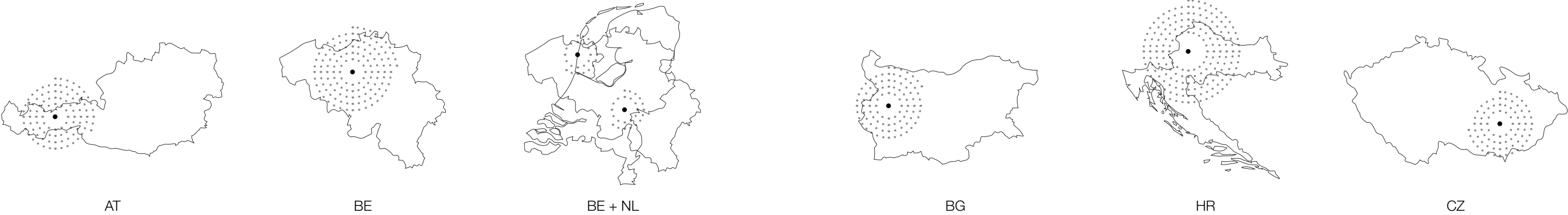
share experiences and knowledge to enhance the local ecosystem for EIPM was proposed. Moreover, it was stressed how important it is to enhance the synergies with other policy initiatives and programmes which adopt the place-based ecosystem approach.

Finally, the pilot phase clearly demonstrated that there is a real interest and need for this kind of programme, especially at regional and local level. The future follow up initiative of SMP/SMR should aim at creating a stronger link with regional and local actors and between regional ecosystems in order to address the critical challenges and policy objectives linked to the economic, social, environmental and digital transition after the Covid-19 crisis.

The JRC will contribute to this process by encouraging dialogue between citizens, scientists and various other stakeholders to create a joint vision of the policy priorities and instruments needed to tackle the challenges ahead.



Annex



AUSTRIA
Natural risk management

The event dealt with cross-border management of natural, starting from an analysis of existing legislation. Natural hazards do not adhere to national borders, so efficient cross-border risk management is of the utmost importance. The conference also contributed to enhancing the already existing cooperation on this topic among the Land Tyrol, the Autonomous Province of Bozen and the Autonomous Province of Trento in the framework of the EGTC Euregio. Following the event, the EGTC adopted a motion of the Dreierlandtag (the joint session of the Regional Parliaments of Tyrol, South Tyrol and Trentino).

Organizer: Tyrol region
Type of Event: Conference
Event location: Innsbruck, Tirol
Event date: 17/09/2019
Participants: 100
Study: N/A

www.tirol.gv.at

BELGIUM
Artificial intelligence

Boosting research on Artificial Intelligence and applying it in various products and services has become a prominent policy topic in Europe. The event provided an overview of challenges and opportunities for policymakers in the field of AI, specifically applied to the Belgian context. Furthermore it represented an unique opportunity to gather inputs at the initial stages of the preparation of a new policy framework.

Organizer: Flemish administration of Economy, Science and Innovation
Type of event: Conference
Event location: Brussels
Event date: 22/05/2019
Participants: 135
Study: N/A

www.vleva.eu

BELGIUM & NETHERLANDS
Urban renuwal

The innovation camp aimed at analysing concrete cross-sectorial problems and concerns that affect European cities in order to come up with transversal strategies on urban renewal in co-creation with citizens and business partners. The Dutch city of Nijmegen joined forces with the Belgian city of Ghent to tackle this topic, exploring future scenarios for specific neighbourhoods in both cities, cutting across spatial planning and social policies.

Organizer: City of Ghent
Type of event: Innovation camp
Event location: Ghent
Event date: 9-11/05/2019
Participants: 25
Study: N/A

BULGARIA
Eco-innovation/sustainable development

The municipality of Sofia organised an innovation camp on the topic of energy and climate change, linking to the Smart Specialisation Strategy of the city. The innovation camp involved a wide range of stakeholders. The stronger mutual understanding and agreement on policy relevant questions discussed during the event resulted in a new quadruple helix-based project in the area of the social effect of technical innovations.

Organizer: City of Sofia
Type of event: Innovation camp
Event location: Sofia
Event date: 29-31/03/2019
Participants: 95
Study: Predicting the Air Pollution by Geo-locations in Sofia

CROATIA
Eco-innovation/sustainable development

In order to tackle pressing social issues - such as unemployment, poverty and social exclusion - with the help of scientific insight, the city of Zagreb organised a conference on evaluating the measures and effects of the main strategic document in the field of social planning. The results of the conference will feed into the city's social plan for the coming years.

Organizer: City of Zagreb
Type of event: Conference
Event location: Zagreb
Event date: 17/10/2019
Participants: 197
Study: Social Plan of the City of Zagreb 2014-2020

www.zagreb.hr

CZECHIA
Science for Energy Policy: Quadruple Helix Eco-innovation

Renewable energy and energy efficiency are high on the policy agenda across the EU. The city of Brno, which is one of the signatories of the Covenant of Mayors, organised an event on eco-innovation, involving all actors of the quadruple helix. The event represented an important opportunity to map research in the energy sector as well as to establish the position of "City Scientific officer".

Organizer: City of Brno
Type of event: Conference
Event location: Brno
Event date: 5/06/2019
Participants: 80
Study: N/A

www.smartcityfair.cz



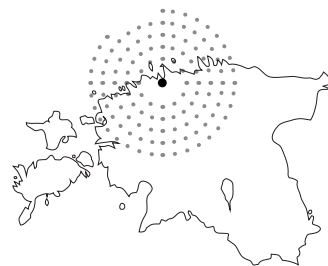
DK

DENMARK
Preventing malnutrition in elderly citizens

Malnutrition in hospital patients and elderly people is a serious problem that demands an interdisciplinary approach and cuts across different areas of policymaking. The conference brought together all relevant stakeholders and was underpinned by scientific expertise, both locally and internationally sourced.

Organizer: Central Denmark – EU office
Type of event: Conference
Event location: Aarhus
Event date: 29/10/2019
Participants: 102
Study: Undernutrition in older people

www.smr-conference.dk



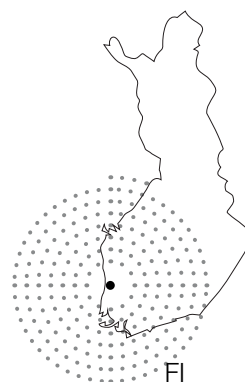
EE

ESTONIA
Towards bridging science and decision-making

This event aimed to provide a theoretical framework as well as to share experience on how to convert science into policy advice, and how to deal with such advice from a “science for policy” perspective. High-level politicians, experts in cognitive studies and communication, and top scientists engaged in various advice mechanisms were invited to present their experience. The event was part of systematic work towards bridging science and policymaking and contributed to support scientists to develop skills in making sense of evidence and communicating it to decision-makers.

Organizer: Chancellery of the Riigikogu - Estonian Parliament
Type of event: Conference
Event location: Tallinn
Event date: 31/01+02/02/2019
Participants: 112
Study: N/A

www.akadeemia.ee



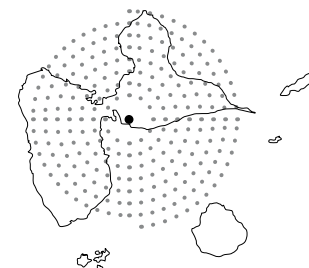
FI

FINLAND
Coastal and maritime tourism/sustainable growth

Coastal and maritime tourism represents a major economic asset for the region, but also entails significant social and environmental consequences in the long term. In order to formulate effective tourism policies, a holistic European approach is needed taking into account the multiple impacts of coastal and maritime tourism as well as the wide spectrum of stakeholders involved or affected by tourism. The event involved local, national and international stakeholders representing tourism, environmental protection, natural and cultural heritage, planning and management, research and policymaking.

Organizer: West Finland
Type of event: Conference
Event location: Pori, Satakunta region
Event date: 26/09/2019
Participants: 220
Study: Stakeholders’ Perceptions of Sustainable Tourism Development in a Cold-Water Destination: The Case of the Finnish Archipelago

www.samk.fi

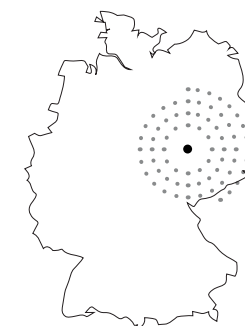


FR (G)

FRANCE
Green and blue growth

The local economy of Guadeloupe rests almost entirely on marine and agricultural activities. The event addressed sustainable economic growth in these fields, and tech transfer from the research lab to the field.

Organizer: Guadeloupe
Type of event: Conference
Event location: Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe
Event date: 17-19/01/2019
Participants: 244
Study: forthcoming



DE

GERMANY
The future of health care provision in rural areas

The innovation camp was dedicated to the impact of demographic change on health care services inside the federal state. An aging population combined with a very rural context and an anticipated lack of medical and nursing staff, makes technological innovation in the healthcare sector a burning issue for Saxony-Anhalt. The results of the innovation camp as well as the follow-up study were integrated in the smart specialisation strategy and will be an integral part of future policymaking initiatives.

Organizer: Bundesland Sachsen-Anhalt
Type of event: Innovation camp
Event location: Halle, Sachsen-Anhalt
Event date: 4-5/04/2019
Participants: 70
Study: Outcomes des Innovation Camps in Sachsen Outcomes des Innovation Camps in Sachsen – Anhalt zu „Zukunftskonzepte der Gesundheitsversorgung im ländlichen Raum“

www.innovation-camp.eu



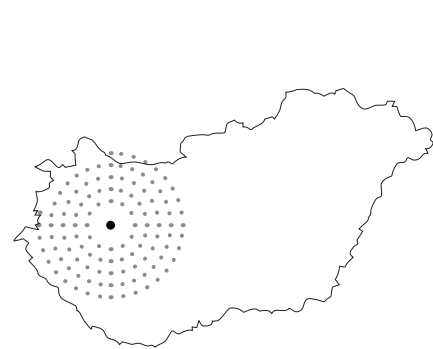
EL

GREECE
Strengthening social inclusion and integration policies for migrants in Greece

Greece was directly affected by the migration crisis, and faces the big challenge of promoting the integration of migrants in Greek society. With the help of local and international scientific expertise, the Hellenic Parliament organised a conference to discuss the measures to strengthen social inclusion and integration policies for migrants in Greece. The event also contributed to enhancing the structured interaction between policymakers and scientists.

Organizer: Hellenic Parliament
Type of event: Conference
Event location: Athens
Event date: 15/03/2019
Participants: 87
Study: From reception to integration

www.eusci4parl.gr



HU

HUNGARY
Common problems and development opportunities of European lakes

Lake Balaton is an important development hub, but faces similar economic as well as environmental challenges as other lake regions in Europe. The event put the sustainable development of the Balaton region and other European lake regions on the policy agenda and introduced the importance of integrated lake management to a wider audience.

Organizer: Balaton region
Type of event: Conference
Event location: Balatonfüred
Event date: 13/05/2019
Participants: 117
Study: The main impacts threatening ecological status and ecological services of large lakes with special attention of Lake Balaton

www.balatonregion.hu



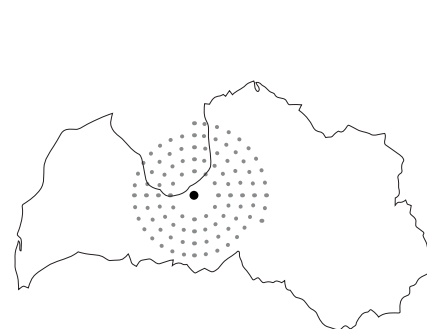
IT

ITALY
Risklience

The innovation camp focused on how to make local communities more resilient to natural disasters as the area of Po River Basin is strongly affected by climate change. There is a strong need to increase awareness, preparedness and ability of communities to develop resilient evidence based strategies that may have scalable effects at the national and European level. Following the innovation camp, some important actions have been taken: new operational guidelines for the organisational and functional management of the alert system for hydrogeological and hydraulic risk for the civil protection; the design of the new Flood risk management plans (P.G.R.A Piano di Gestione del Rischio Alluvioni) of the Autorità di Bacino del Fiume Po (ADBPO). And the REMO prototype for a Risk Engagement Management Organisation at the Po Basin level.

Organizer: Bacino Fiume Po
Type of event: Innovation camp
Event location: Bologna
Event date: 04-06/12/2019
Participants: 117
Study: N/A

www.risklience.adbpo.gov.it



LV

LATVIA

The conference brought together scientists, members of parliament and policymakers to discuss the problem of depopulation. This event connected researchers with different public policy stakeholders and highlighted the role of science in strengthening the evidence-informed policy approach.

Organizer: Ministry of Education and Science
Type of event: Conference
Event location: Riga
Event date: 11/02/2019
Participants: 100
Study: The use of research-based evidence in the Latvian parliament



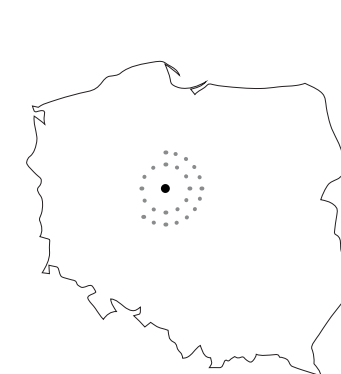
LU

LUXEMBOURG
Space Research

The Luxembourg event focused on the use of space data to inform environmental policymaking across a range of topics: land use change, water management, urban management.

Organizer: Ministry of Economy – Innovation and Research
Type of event: Conference
Event location: Luxembourg
Event date: 04/10/2019
Participants: 98
Study: N/A

www.wen.uni.lu



PL

POLAND
Energy/climate change/ sustainable development

The conference aimed at introducing the opportunities related with new and innovative energy technologies based on hydrogen. The participation of local and international experts represented an unique opportunity to explore and discuss with citizens the transition to a hydrogen-based energy system. As a follow up of the event, the Hydrogen Platform was created as advisory body for the Managing Board of Wielkopolska Region.

Organizer: Wielkopolska region
Type of event: Conference
Event location: Konin, Wielkopolska region
Event date: 12/12/2019
Participants: 250
Study: Hydrogen as a future fuel source: electrochemical storage in carbon materials

www.facebook.com/kierunekwodor/

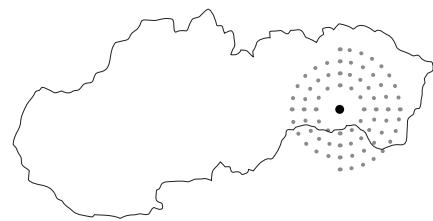


RO

ROMANIA
Smart cities/sustainable development

The event aimed to discuss with a wide public how to convert the city of Magurele into a smart city and a hub of innovative green economy. It also represented a unique opportunity to raise awareness among citizens, businesses, academia and the local public administration about the importance of promoting evidence-informed policymaking.

Organizer: County of Ilfov
Type of event: Conference
Event location: Magurele, Ilfov County
Event date: 12/06/2019
Participants: 105
Study: Development study of the city of Magurele using smart city concepts



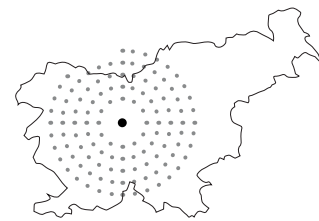
SK

SLOVAKIA
Sustainable development,
Energy and Climate change

One of the prime economic centers of Slovakia, the region of Kosice, wants to lead the way in the transition towards a sustainable and environmentally friendly region. Several leading Slovak scientists participated in the conference, which was intended to contribute to the pledges already made under the Covenant of Mayors.

Organizer: Košice region
Type of event: Conference
Event location: Kosice self-governing region
Event date: 3/10/2019
Participants: 73
Study: Hydrogen+ Strategy for Kosice Region

web.vucke.sk

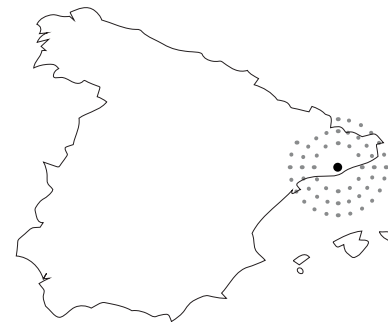


SI

SLOVENIA
Science for Policy

The event aims to enlighten the use of evidence in public administration and governance, present a state of the art of the scientific advisory systems in place, new models, an insight on existing structures in place within the European Commission, and raise a discussion on whether a new mechanism of scientific policy advice might be needed. The first concrete outcome of the event is the institution of a Transition lab – policy lab, in the context of the national project on Circular transformation, that Slovenia is designing with JRC and EIT KICs.

Organizer: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport
Type of event: Conference
Event location: Ljubljana
Event date: 15/11/2019
Participants: 120
Study: N/A



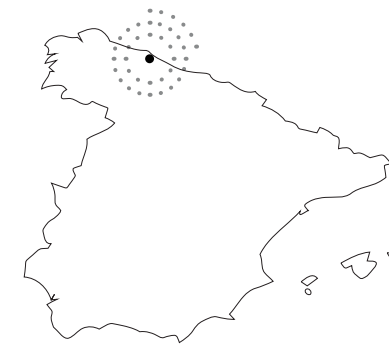
ES (C)

SPAIN
Fostering a sense of belonging
in youth born within migrant
families

Over the last century, Catalonia has undergone three significant migratory movements which have shaped its social and demographic features. Today, nearly 300 languages are spoken within its borders. In this context, the main challenge lies in creating a cohesive society that values diversity and fosters positive interaction amongst its members. The ultimate aim of this innovation camp was to devise and prototype action plans for their inclusion in the inter-ministerial Citizenship and Migrations Plan 2021-2024, to be drafted by the Government of Catalonia's Secretariat for Equality, Migrations and Citizenship (SIMC).

Organizer: The Public Administration School of Catalonia (EAPC)
Type of event : Innovation camp
Event location: Barcelona
Event date: 23-24/10/2019
Participants: 53
Study: N/A

eapc.gencat.cat

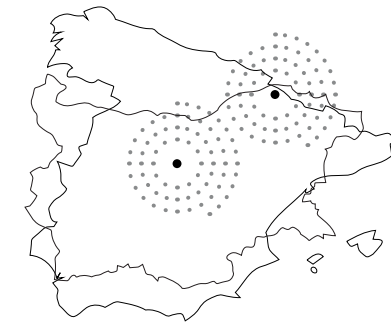


ES (A)

SPAIN
Sustainable development/jobs
and growth/environmental
preservation

The region of Asturias faces a dilemma between developing its raw materials sector and preserving the natural beauty of the region. This challenge was the topic of an innovation camp, involving all relevant stakeholders, not in the least from the scientific and the academic world.

Organizer: Principado De Asturias (IDEPA)
Type of event: Innovation camp
Event location: Covadonga, Asturias
Event date: 28-29/03/2019
Participants: 38
Study: Inventory of R&D&i Infrastructures for the Recovery of Waste in the scope of the Regional Agenda for Research and Innovation of Sustainable Materials of Asturias RIS3



ES (N) + BG (G)

SPAIN & BULGARIA
Energy Efficiency &
Adaptation to Climate
Change

The regional government of Navarra and the city of Gaborvo have both been active in previous "Science meets Regions" initiatives. They joined forces and exchanged best practices in two separate events, on the topics of energy efficiency and water and waste management. As a follow-up to the events new partnerships/networks were set-up and interregional cooperation was consolidated.

Organizer: Comunidad de Navarra
Type of event : Conferences
Event location: Pamplona, Navarra and Gaborvo
Event date: 26/02/2019
Participants: 70
Study: N/A

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