



Societal & Political Engagement
of Young People in Environmental Issues

D2.1: Report on decision-making procedures

WP2 – Analysis and requirements



This project has received funding from the European
Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation
programme under grant agreement No 649493



Document Information

Grant Agreement Number	649493	Acronym	STEP	
Full Project Title	Societal and political engagement of young people in environmental issues			
Start Date	1 st June 2015	Duration	30 months	
Project URL	www.step4youth.eu			
Deliverable	D2.1 - Report on decision-making procedures			
Work Package	WP 2 - Analysis and requirements			
Date of Delivery	Contractual	31 July 2015	Actual	16 September 2015
Nature	R - Report	Dissemination Level	Public	
Lead Beneficiary	DRAXIS Environmental SA			
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Document History

Version	Issue Date	Stage	Changes	Contributor
1.0	14/07/2015	Draft		DRAXIS
1.1	15/07/2015	Draft	Comments and remarks	SAMPAS, ABERTAY
1.2	28/7/2015	Draft	Pilot input	Mollet del Vallès Municipality
1.3	6/8/2015	Draft	Pilot input	Valdemoro Municipality
1.4	7/8/2015	Draft	Pilot input	Region of Crete
1.5	30/8/2015	Draft	Pilot input	Association of Municipalities of Locride
1.6	8/9/2015	Draft	Pilot input	Hatay Metropolitan Municipality
2	16/9/2015	Final		DRAXIS

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Introduction

The aim of Deliverable 2.1 “Report on decision making procedures” is to map decision making procedures on environmental issues, so as to enable the STEP project consortium to get an insight in the regulatory environment, the procedures followed, the stakeholders involved, and the potential fields of e-participation applications. The Deliverable has been compiled through desk research and a survey among the project partners that will be involved in the pilot operation of the STEP platform.

Chapter 1 presents the regulatory framework for public participation in environmental issues. It starts with the Aarhus Convention, and describes the relevant procedures at international, EU, and national level. There is a special focus on the environmental decision making procedures which are in place at the project pilot locations (Region of Crete, Locride area, Mollet del Vallès, Valdemoro, and Hatay Metropolitan Municipality), the public organisations and stakeholders involved, the status of public and young participation, and potential areas which are relevant for the STEP project pilot. Finally, Chapter 1 presents the principles, barriers, challenges, and risks of public participation that should be taken into account in the development of the STEP platform.

Chapter 2 presents e-participation principles, and the situation in Europe, and identifies relevant projects and initiatives that can be an inspiration to STEP, or can be targeted in order to build synergies.

As STEP focuses on young people, Chapter 3 presents an overview of youth participation in Europe, its relevance to environmental issues, and identifies relevant projects and initiatives that can be interesting to the STEP project.

1 Public participation in environmental decision-making

1.1 The Aarhus Convention

1.1.1 The Convention

Since the 1970s there has been a growing recognition of the link between environmental concerns and human rights¹. In 1992, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, this link was formally made when 178 Governments adopted the **Rio Declaration** on Environment and Development, which is still seen as a landmark Declaration today. Principle 10 of this Declaration stated for the first time in an international instrument that “environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens”, “each individual shall have appropriate access to information and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes” and that “effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings” shall be provided^{2,3}.

This decision was enshrined legally at international level in the **Aarhus Convention** or the “Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters”, which was adopted at the Fourth “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference in Aarhus, Denmark, in 1998. The aim of the Aarhus Convention according to Article 1 is as follows (Figure 1)⁴:

“In order to contribute to the protection of the right of every person of present and future generations to live in an environment adequate to his or her health and well-being, each Party shall guarantee the rights of access to information, public participation in decision-making, and access to justice in environmental matters in accordance with the provisions of this Convention.”



Figure 1 - The three pillars of the Aarhus Convention⁵

¹ Human Rights and the Environment Rio+20: Joint Report OHCHR and UNEP, 2012. Background Document for OHCHR-UNEP Joint Side Event “Human Rights at the Center of Sustainable Development - Honoring Rio Principle 1” United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Available at:

http://www.unep.org/environmentalgovernance/Portals/8/publications/JointReport_OHCHR_HRE.pdf

² UNDP, H., 2011, Human Development Report, Sustainability and equity: a better future for all [On line]. Available at:

http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/271/hdr_2011_en_complete.pdf (Accessed: October 2011)

³ Declaration, R., 1992, Rio declaration on environment and development. Available at:

<http://www.jus.uio.no/im/environmental.development.rio.declaration.1992/portrait.a4.pdf>

⁴ McAllister, S. T., 1999, Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making, and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, The. Colo. J. Int'l Env'tl. L. & Pol'y, 10, 187.

⁵ Protecting your environment, The power is in your hands, Quick guide to the Aarhus Convention, 2014, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Geneva. Available at:

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/Publications/Aarhus_brochure_Protecting_your_environment_eng.pdf

The Convention entered into force on 30 October 2001 and was adopted by 47 Parties (46 states and the European Union) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) (Figure 2)^{6,7}. The Aarhus Convention is still open for accession by any country in the world. The EU has begun applying **Aarhus-type principles** through legislative actions that are presented subsequently.

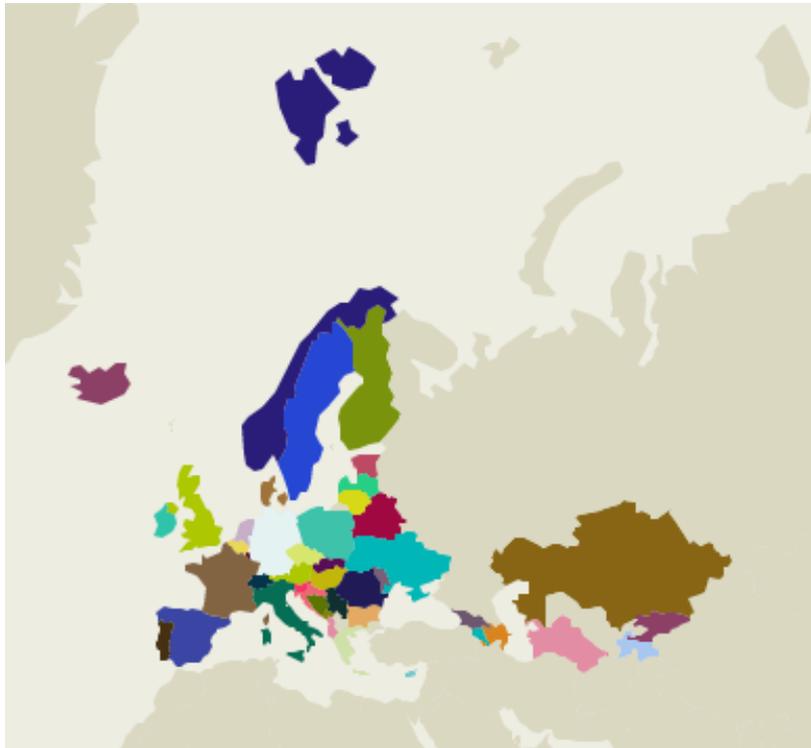


Figure 2 - Parties to the Aarhus Convention ⁸

According to the Convention, any citizen should have the right to get a wide and easy **access to environmental information**. Public authorities must provide all the information required and collect and disseminate them in a timely and transparent manner. Authorities can refuse to do it only under particular situations, such as national defense^{9,10}.

Public participation is one of the most important aspects of the Aarhus Convention. The Convention requires early and effective public participation, when all options are still open on decisions for certain activities' permissions and when the projects' plans or even environmental policies are still prepared. Public participation must be promoted during the preparation of environmental laws and regulations, and the authorities are required to take into due account the outcomes of such participation. The "right to participate" can be more effective when it is supported by the rights of "access to information" and "access to justice". Public participation, when carried out from the outset, contributes in taking environmental decisions for a project or a specific development activity which are less harmful to the environment, more

⁶ The Aarhus Convention: An implementation guide, 2013, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Second edition. http://www.magrama.gob.es/es/ministerio/servicios/informacion/Guia_convenio_Aarhus_2%C2%AA_tcm7-274132.pdf

⁷ <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/introduction.html>

⁸ <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/aarhus/map.html>

⁹ Your right to a healthy environment, A simplified guide to the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, 2006, United Nations Environment Programme. Available at: http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2006/pp/ece%20mp%20pp%205_E.pdf

¹⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aarhus_Convention#cite_ref-12

sustainable and more acceptable to the public. In this way, costly mistakes can be avoided, as hidden or unexpected aspects of a proposed project can be uncovered at an early stage¹¹.

The public may also have **access to justice** regarding environmental matters in order to challenge a refusal or inadequate response to a request for information. The public can also access justice in order to challenge the legality of a plan or a decision on a specific activity and to challenge actions or omissions that contravene national environmental law and the convention's principles¹¹.

The Aarhus Convention is a way of enhancing the environmental governance network. The Convention has introduced a reactive and trustworthy relationship between civil society and governments and added the novelty of a mechanism used to empower the value of public participation in the decision making process and guarantee access to justice¹². It connects environmental rights with human rights and sets that sustainable development can be achieved only through the involvement of all stakeholders. It focuses on interactions between the public and public authorities in a democratic context and is forging a new process for public participation in the negotiation and implementation of international agreements. The convention's non-discriminatory character is underlined emerging public participation regardless of citizenship, nationality or place of residence^{6,11}.

The provisions for public participation processes contained the Aarhus Convention are divided into three categories, according to the types of governmental processes covered:

- The first category concerns public participation in **decisions on specific activities** with a significant impact on the environment. In this case, public participation is often identified with environmental assessment. It is a formal process that helps the decision makers to consider the environmental consequences of the proposed actions. When it is applied to specific activities, e.g., development projects, the environmental assessment study usually takes the form of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).
- The second category covers public participation during the development of **environment-related plans, programmes and policies**, including land-use and sectoral programmes, environmental actions and all the levels of formed environmental policies.
- The third category considers that the public may participate in **laws' and regulations' elaboration** by public authorities¹³.

1.1.2 Implementation

The right of public participation in environmental issues can benefit public authorities at national, regional or local level following the Aarhus Convention key elements.

- The first element consists of the three basic underlying principles (right to information, to participate, and to justice)¹⁴.
- The second element is the Aarhus Parties that have ultimate responsibility for the Convention's implementation. The Parties consist of a mixed but inclusive forum presenting great variety in economic development. Moreover, they have differences in their political systems, including

¹¹ Protecting your environment, The power is in your hands, Quick guide to the Aarhus Convention, 2014, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Geneva. Available at:

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/Publications/Aarhus_brochure_Protecting_your_environment_eng.pdf

¹² Gupta A., 2008, Transparency Under Scrutiny: Information Disclosure in Global Environmental Governance, Global Environmental Politics, 8(2), p.1-7.

¹³ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/aarhus/> - Aarhus Convention, Environment, European Commission.

¹⁴ Newig J., Fritsch O., 2009. Environmental Governance: Participatory, Multi-Level – And Effective?, Environmental Policy and Governance 19, p. 197-214.

countries from former Soviet to western democracies. The Parties also dispose various governance systems, from federal systems, e.g. in Spain and Belgium, to national governments, e.g. in Netherlands and Georgia. They, also, present a diverse range of environmental activities, such as oil and gas exploration, mining, nuclear energy, renewable energies etc.

- The third element for the effective implementation is the structure of the text of the convention, where it is underlined that at the core of the Convention are the three pillars of environmental democracy.
- The last element is the governing multilateral institutional framework consisting of the Working Groups of the Parties, the Compliance Committee, the Bureau, the Task Forces and the secretariat^{11,15}.

The implementation of the Convention is under continual review in a consultative and non-confrontational way. The Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee has been instituted in order to examine communications of alleged non-compliance Parties brought by individuals, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other Parties. In addition, working groups of the Parties must report on their progress in implementing the Convention every year. The Compliance Committee has four meetings per year and the Bureau has two per year. The Task Forces on access to information, on participation in decision-making and on access to justice organise meetings every year. Moreover, they meet every three years to review progress on their national implementation of the Convention and to plan work for the period ahead. Finally, the Secretariat supports all the work including the capacity building. This continuous review ensures that public rights to environmental decisions are political priorities at the national level¹⁵. UNECE presents an aggregated list of all the public's communications for Parties' infringements from 2004 until today. Furthermore, in an attempt to interpret and apply the Convention's provisions to specific situations brought to Compliance Committee's attention by the public and parties and because of other numerous issues related to practical implementation of the Convention, a substantial case law was developed by the Committee during 2004-2011¹⁶.

In order to succeed in fully integrating all aspects of environmental considerations, it is crucial for public authorities to have accurate, up-to-date and comprehensive participation processes. The public has to be informed about all the relevant plans, programmes, policies and legislation in order to have the chance to participate during the decision-making and legislative processes. However, this requires an open, regular and transparent process in order to increase public consultation¹⁵ and decision makers can take advantage from people's knowledge and expertise. People's contribution is a strong opportunity to improve the quality of the environmental decisions, outcomes and to guarantee procedural legitimacy¹⁷.

Within Aarhus Convention framework, the three categories of public participation, according to the types of governmental processes, are analysed in the articles 6, 7 and 8. These articles delimit the requirements for public authorities in order to make public participation effective. Public authorities have to notify the public concerned and establish reasonable time frames for public participation's phases in the decision-making procedures. They, also, have to provide all relevant information to the public concerned and give them opportunities to express their opinion. Furthermore, public authorities must take due account of the public's participation result and inform them about the final decision, justifying it.

¹⁵ Protecting your environment, The power is in your hands, Quick guide to the Aarhus Convention, 2014, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Geneva. Available at:

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/Publications/Aarhus_brochure_Protecting_your_environment_eng.pdf

¹⁶ Andrusyevych A., Alge T., Konrad C., 2011, Case Law of the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee (2004-2011), 2nd Edition, RACSE, Lviv.

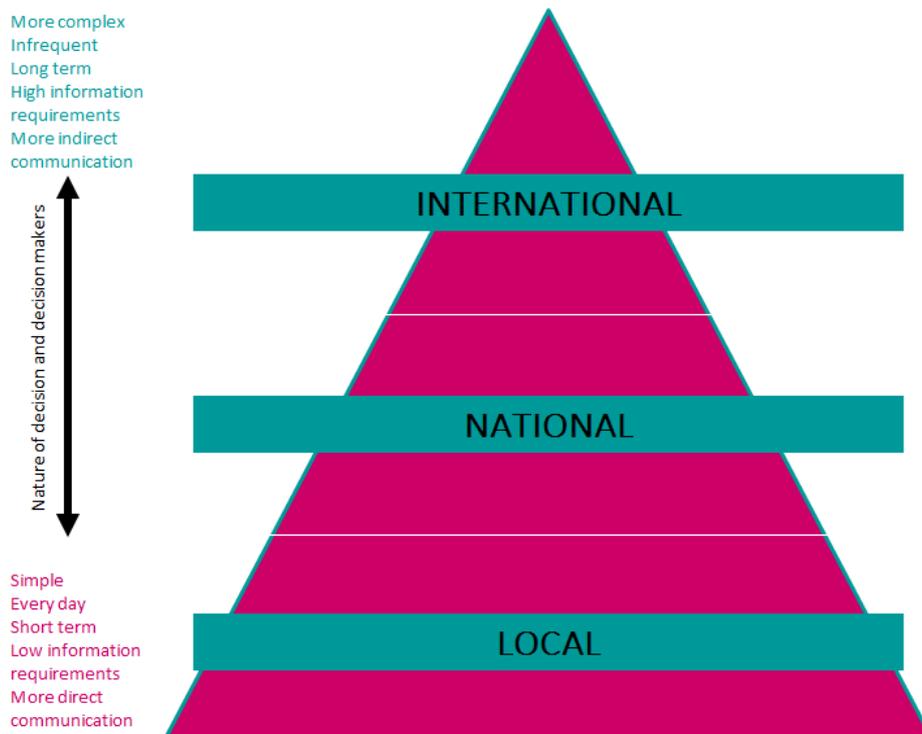
¹⁷ Your right to a healthy environment, A simplified guide to the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, 2006, United Nations Environment Programme. Available at: http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2006/pp/ece%20mp%20pp%205_E.pdf

The public may participate in a particular decision making process according to a number of factors, such as the expected outcome, the scope of the decision, people affected from the decision, and whether the decision concerns a national, region or local level. At this point we can distinguish between the terms “public” and “public concerned”, meaning that people who are affected most by the result of the decision-making or policymaking, “public concerned”, should have a greater ability to influence the outcome¹⁸.

1.2 Procedures

1.2.1 Introduction

The relationship between the nature of decisions and the levels of public participation in environmental governance are illustrated in Figure 3. At **international** level the decision makers involved are the United Nations, international organisations, European authorities, international universities, research institutions and international NGOs. Their decisions are focused mainly on environmental policy. At **national** level the stakeholders who participate are national government ministries, environmental agencies, departments, research and training institutions, universities, business and industry associations, chambers and environmental NGOs. At the **local** level the stakeholders who take part are local environmental authorities, business and industry associations, local chambers, environmental NGOs, community groups, local universities and research institutions^{19,20}. At local level, simple, short-term decisions are taken, with restricted points of view, requiring low information. However, these parameters are reversed going from local to international level²¹.



¹⁸ Challenges in implementing public participation in decision-making, 25-26 October 2010, Task force on public participation in decision-making, First meeting, Geneva, Item 2(b) of the provisional agenda, United Nations, Economic Commission for Europe.

¹⁹ <http://www.gdrc.org/decision/introduction.html>

²⁰ <http://www.gdrc.org/decision/pyramid.html>

²¹ <http://www.gdrc.org/decision/gdrc-edm.html>

Figure 3 - Nature of decisions and levels of public participation in the decision-making process²⁰

Local and international level of decision making should closely link with each other, as the decisions and agreements at international level influence significantly actions at the local level and vice versa²⁰. The communication and **collaboration of stakeholders** between the same level and the other levels in decision-making processes is crucial. It is essential that the national and international goals are converted into local actions which finally help achieve the initial goal. The appropriate stakeholders should participate at the right level and co-operate with each other in order to take the right decision at the level they belong²².

The communicative use of environmental plans is of high importance but it differs among the national, regional and local level. In the decision-making process it is important for the appropriate decision maker to know the existence and the content of the environmental plan. At the national level the plans are usually well known to the public because they are presented more frequently in the media. Especially the OECD countries produce the greatest quality and quantity of communication means in order to inform the public²³.

It is also important to select the appropriate stakeholders. At national level, the stakeholders identify the environmental plans as political plans and it is the first and important step to take into account and begin the decision-making process. However, at local level, there is absence of political choices and the environmental plans look like copies of the national plans. In many occasions, the local policy-making is overruled by the policy at national level, and therefore lowers the level of local environmental planning, making it less relevant. Finally, the intended actor has to make a decision about the message. At the national level, the plans receive many official reactions from all interested sides, such as businesses, NGOs, institutions etc. and therefore are successful in making the decision²⁴. On the other hand, local environmental plans have weak governance stature compared to national plans, because of absence of relevant specific local choices²⁵.

An overview of the stakeholders involved in environmental governance from international to local level is presented at Table 1 and the services they do provide at

Table 2.

Table 1 - Stakeholders in environmental governance from international to local level

International	European	National	Local
United Nations representatives and officials	Representatives and officials of European Parliament, Council of the European Union (mainly the Environment Council), and European Commission	Prime ministers, ministers (mainly of the Ministry of Environment) and senior civil servants in national governments	Members and officials of Regional environmental departments ,
Staff of international organisations (e.g. UNEP, GEF, and CSD)	Members of EU Institutions and Agencies, lobby groups	Political parties and Institutional Bodies (e.g. parliaments, courts)	Members of local public authorities (e.g. municipalities, regional administration, advisory services)
Government representatives and civil servants in international	Government representatives and civil servants in European	Members of national environmental departments	Representatives and members of environmental NGOs and local associations

²² <http://www.gdrc.org/decision/principle-10.html>

²³ Coenen F., 1998, Policy integration and public involvement in the local policy process. Lessons from local green planning in the Netherlands, *European Environment*, 8, p. 50-57.

²⁴ Bressers J., Plettenburg L., 1997, The Netherlands, in M. Janicke and H. Weidner (eds.), *National environmental policies, A comparative study of capacity-building*, Berlin, p. 109-131.

²⁵ Coenen F., Huitema D., O'Toole L., 1998, *Participation and the quality of environmental decision making*, Environment and Policy, Springer Science and Business Media, BV.

negotiations	negotiations		activated in community level
Representatives and members of international environmental NGOs	Representatives and members of environmental NGOs activated in EU countries	Representatives and members of environmental NGOs and environmental protection foundations activated in national level	Local businesses and public (experts and non-experts)

Table 2- Services provided in the framework of environmental governance from international to local level

	International	European	National	Local
Actions	Sign international treaties and other agreements related to the environment with policy oriented outputs	Shape environmental European policy Sign Decisions, Directives, regulations, etc. Supervise environmental acts' implementation Monitor environmental performance and achievement of environmental indicators	Support the commitment to transform international and EU policies to national legislative acts Supervise the implementation of environmental plans, programmes and large-scale activities	Adopt National environmental legislations Supervise the implementation of specific environmental activities Monitor environmental compliance
Goals	Facilitate the arrangement of environmental issues with increasing complexity from the international agenda	Strengthen cooperation between Member States in environmental issues Harmonise environmental conditions and policies	Maintain compliance with international and EU regulations and laws Protect the national environment and its particularities Raise awareness on environmental policy solutions	Decentralise the government power Empower public participation activities in environmental decision making Raise awareness on local environmental departments

1.2.2 International level

There are increasing efforts at the international level to adopt standards designed to govern public participation in national-level decision making²⁶. In addition, a growing number of **law and legislative acts** define the framework of the public participation in **international decision making**. The provision made for public involvement is consistent with principles established by laws and policies presented in the table below.

Table 3- Reference to public participation in international law and the Aarhus Convention²⁷

International legal instruments	Reference to public participation
---------------------------------	-----------------------------------

²⁶ Bodansky, D., Brunnée, J., & Hey, E., 2007. The Oxford handbook of international environmental law. Oxford University Press.

²⁷ Stec, S., Casey-Lefkowitz, S., Jendrovska, J., & United Nations. Economic Commission for Europe. Danish Cooperation for Environment in Eastern Europe, and Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe. 2000. In The Aarhus Convention: an implementation guide.

UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo, 1991)	Provides for the participation of the public in the areas likely to be affected by a proposal (article 2, paras 2 and 6, and article 4, para 2)
Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992)	Requires Parties to promote and facilitate public participation in addressing climate change and its effects and developing adequate responses (article 6 (a) (iii)).
Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992)	States that each individual shall have the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes, facilitated by the widespread availability of information.
UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision Making and Access to Justice in International Environmental Matters (Aarhus 1998)	The most comprehensive legal instrument relating to public involvement. It describes how public participation should work in cases of decision-making. The main text indicates that public participation should be effective, adequate, formal, and provide for information, notification, dialogue, consideration and response.

At international level there are numerous important actors involved in environmental governance including a range of nations and states, other stakeholders, NGOs and international organisations, such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). At this level, stakeholders propose and sign decisions, agreements, and conventions on environmental issues with policy oriented outputs. International environmental governance facilitates the arrangement of environmental issues with increasing complexity from the international agenda so as to be an effective form of multilateral management and essential to the international community in meeting goals of mitigation and the possible reversal of the impacts on the global environment²⁸. Decisions signed at global level clearly influence actions at lower levels of the pyramid.

For example, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), one of the international institutions focused on international environmental governance, provides the following services²⁹:

- Identifies **policy options** and their indicative costs and benefits, bringing diverse stakeholder groups together to raise awareness on these key trends and policy solutions.
- Uses **scientific networks** in order to help close science-policy gaps, as well as capacity building tools and services aiming to help States and other actors design and deploy tools to regularly monitor their natural resources and keep their environmental situation under review.
- Promotes **cooperation** on environmental policy between governments, UN agencies, other intergovernmental bodies, and major groups and stakeholders. It focuses on aligning international laws and standards with the goals, targets and commitments identified in the UN's Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law (Montevideo Programme). Furthermore, it uses alert services, such as annual reports, to update the global community on emerging environmental issues, problems and trends.
- Works with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to run the joint **Poverty and Environment Initiative**, a global programme that helps States understand how sustainable management of natural resources can help reduce poverty and improve livelihoods.

²⁸ Elliot L., 1956, Global Environmental Governance, in Hughes, S. and Wilkinson, R. (eds), Global Governance: Critical Perspectives, London: Routledge, ch. 4, pp. 57.

²⁹ <http://www.unep.org/environmentalgovernance/>, United Nations Environment Programme, Environmental governance.

Another international institution focused on environmental governance is the Global Environment Facility (GEF). GEF is the funding mechanism for the four environmental conventions: climate change, biodiversity, persistent organic pollutants and desertification. One of its roles is to transfer resources from developed countries to developing ones in order to fund United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNEP and World Bank projects³⁰.

Finally, the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)³¹ is another intergovernmental institution. The CSD is responsible for reviewing progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development; as well as providing policy guidance to follow up the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) at the local, national, regional and international levels.

The international **treaties** and other **agreements** related to the environment which have been signed till today, are more than 500³². The core of the global **environmental legal framework**, however, is made up of a more limited number of treaties with a growing number of ratifications. These treaties include the ozone treaty, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Kyoto Protocol, the World Heritage Convention, the Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal (Basel Convention), the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the Cartagena Protocol, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).

1.2.3 EU level

The European Union shapes the EU **environmental policy** through decisions and agreements, and supervises its implementation across the Member States. EU environmental policy is shaped by a variety of actors, including all of the main EU institutions as well as lobby groups which make up the wider Brussels policy making community. Member States shape EU environmental policy by working within the Council of Ministers. There are different Council formations, made up of ministers responsible for particular policy areas, one of which is the Environment Council. On the other hand, the European Commission, that represents the interests of the European Union as a whole, not only has the right to propose new environmental policy, but it also has the responsibility to ensure the implementation of environmental rules. The Commission proposes policies and legislation that protect natural habitats, keep air and water clean, ensure proper waste disposal, improve knowledge about toxic chemicals, and help businesses move towards a sustainable economy. Additionally, the European Commission ensures and monitors that Member States apply EU **environmental laws** correctly, while helping them comply with the EU **legislation and regulations**.

1.2.3.1 Institutions, Enforcement Bodies and EU Agencies in European Union

The EU is an inter-governmental organisation which possesses institutions able to produce legislation that is binding on the Member States. National institutions of Member States on their behalf can further review or

³⁰ Zoë, Young, 2002, A new green order: The World Bank and the politics of the global environmental facility. London: Pluto Press.

³¹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/intergovernmental/csd/about>

³² I. Baste, M. Ivanova and B. Lee, 2011, Part 3: Global responses, Chapter 17, p. 458-486.

ratify the adopted legislation. There is a variety of EU bodies aiming to implement the environmental legislation. However, the Treaty of Lisbon has officially designated only seven institutions. The three main institutions are^{33,34}:

1. The European **Parliament**, which represents the EU's citizens and is directly elected by them.
2. The **Council** of the European Union, which represents the governments of the individual member countries. The Presidency of the Council is shared by the Member States on a rotating basis.
3. The European **Commission**, which represents the interests of the Union as a whole.

Together, these three institutions produce through the "Ordinary Legislative Procedure" (ex "co-decision") the policies and laws that apply throughout the EU. As a rule, the European Commission proposes new laws and the Parliament and Council adopt them. After that, the Commission along with the Member States implements them with the Commission supervising their proper implementation.

Another EU institution is the European Council (or Council of Ministers). The Council of Ministers sets the EU's political direction but does not have the power to pass laws. Moreover, EU disposes two more institutions with crucial role: the Court of Justice of the European Union, which upholds the rule of European law, and the Court of Auditors, which checks the financing of the EU's activities^{33,34}. The EU has a number of other institutions and inter-institutional bodies with specialised roles, such as the European External Action Service, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, etc.

In order to facilitate the efficient implementation of the environmental legislation for all the Member States, the European Union has created special authority bodies. More specifically, **networks of enforcement authorities** have been created by EU aiming to share similar problems and information with the corresponding authorities of Member States regarding the EU environmental law. These enforcement networks are of high importance in seeking uniform interpretation of EU law for all the Member States. The EU enforcement networks are the following³⁵:

- United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
- The European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (IMPEL)
- The Chemicals Legislation Enforcement Network (CLEEN)
- The European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils (EEAC)
- The European Enforcement Project (EEP)
- The European Network of Heads of Nature Conservation Agencies (ENCAnet)
- The European Network of Heads of Environment Protection Agencies (NHEEPA)

The objectives of the enforcement networks are to share, influence and cooperate. They share the best practice gained from existing structures and case studies to all of the Member States. They create sharing information forums, such as meetings, workshops, websites, etc. In addition, they can create databases to provide information and they may undertake joint studies in order to examine problems in the interpretation and implementation of the EU legislation.

Making a special remark, the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP)³⁶ supports the Member States to enhance their environmental governance and transboundary cooperation as well as strengthen implementation of the UNECE regional environmental commitments and advance sustainable development in

³³ Farmer A.M., 2012, Manual of European Environmental Policy, The EU institutions, 1043pp, Routledge, London. Available at: http://www.ieep.eu/assets/1632/1.2_The_EU_institutions_-_final.pdf

³⁴ http://europa.eu/about-eu/institutions-bodies/index_en.htm

³⁵ Farmer A.M., 2012, Manual of European Environmental Policy, Networking to support implementation, 1043pp, Routledge, London. Available at: http://www.ieep.eu/assets/1643/1.13_Networking_to_support_implementation_-_final.pdf

³⁶ <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/committee-on-environmental-policy/about-the-committee-on-environmental-policy.html>

the region. CEP's main aim is to assess countries' efforts to reduce their overall pollution burden and manage their natural resources, to integrate environmental and socioeconomic policies, to strengthen cooperation with the international community, to harmonise environmental conditions and policies throughout the region and to stimulate greater involvement of the public and environmental discussions and decision-making. A useful tool used by CEP is the "Programme on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment" that assists UNECE Member States in working with environmental data and information to enable their timely flows and adequate assessment. The Programme helps to enable an informed decision-making process, both nationally and internationally, in the environmental sector.

EU agencies are discrete bodies from the EU institutions. They constitute legal entities performing specific scientific, technical, legal or managerial tasks of EU legislation. There are over 40 EU agencies available, and are classified into four groups: the decentralised agencies, the executive agencies, the EURATOM agencies and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)^{33,37}.

Decentralised agencies carry out technical, scientific or managerial tasks that help the EU institutions make and implement policies. They also support cooperation between the EU and national governments by pooling technical and specialist expertise from both the EU institutions and national authorities. Executive agencies help the European Commission manage EU programmes. **EURATOM** agencies and bodies were created to support the aims of the European Atomic Energy Community Treaty (EURATOM), which are to: coordinate national nuclear research programmes, for peaceful purposes; provide knowledge, infrastructure and funding for nuclear energy; and ensure sufficient and secure supplies of nuclear energy. The **European Institute of Innovation and Technology** (EIT) is an independent EU body which seeks to promote Europe's ability to develop new technologies, by pooling its best scientific, business and education resources³⁷.

Some of the environment related Agencies are: the European Environment Agency, the European Chemicals Agency, the Community Fisheries Control Agency, the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) and the Joint Research Centre. The **European Environment Agency** (EEA)³⁸ provides sound, independent information on the environment. It is a major information source for those involved in developing, adopting, implementing and evaluating environmental policy, and also the general public. Currently, the EEA has 33 member countries. The **European Chemicals Agency** (ECHA)³⁹ is the driving force among regulatory authorities in implementing the EU's groundbreaking chemicals legislation for the benefit of human health and the environment as well as for innovation and competitiveness. It helps companies to comply with the legislation, advances the safe use of chemicals, provides information on chemicals and addresses chemicals of concern. The role of the **European Fisheries Control Agency** (EFCA)⁴⁰ is to organise operational coordination of fisheries control and inspection activities by the Member States and assist them to cooperate so as to comply with the rules of the Common EU Fisheries Policy in order to ensure its effective and uniform application. **Eurostat**⁴¹ is the statistical office of the European Union situated in Luxembourg. Its task is to provide the European Union with statistics at European level that enable comparisons between countries and regions. The **Joint Research Centre's**⁴² mission is to provide EU policies with independent, evidence-based scientific and technical support throughout the whole policy cycle. Its work has a direct impact on the lives of citizens by contributing with its research outcomes to a healthy and safe environment, secure energy supplies, sustainable mobility and consumer health and safety.

³⁷ http://europa.eu/about-eu/agencies/index_en.htm

³⁸ <http://www.eea.europa.eu/about-us>

³⁹ <http://echa.europa.eu/el/>

⁴⁰ <http://efca.europa.eu/pages/home/home.htm>

⁴¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/about/overview>

⁴² <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/about>

1.2.3.2 Standard decision-making procedure in adoption of new EU laws

The **ordinary legislative procedure** (ex co-decision procedure) constitutes the common decision-making process by the European Parliament and the European Council. The directly elected European Parliament and the Council (the governments of the 28 EU countries) have together the possibility to approve the EU legislation. The vast majority of European laws, including environmental laws, are adopted through co-decision of the European Parliament and the Council^{43,44}.

The first step of the ordinary legislative procedure is the drafting of EU law. The EU Commission, before proposing new decisions, prepares “impact assessments” and detects the advantages and disadvantages of possible policy options from the economic, social and environmental perspective. Moreover, the Commission consults stakeholders, such as local authorities, non-governmental organisations, representatives of industry and civil society and in technical issues consults experts. Therefore, it takes into account public opinion and mainly the opinion of the concerned groups of people in order to avoid later disagreements and redundant red tape. Individuals, organisations, and companies may participate in the consulting process through European Commission's single access point “Your Voice in Europe” (http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/consultations/index_en.htm). Furthermore, in the cases where national parliaments want to express their objection at national rather than EU level, they have the possibility to express their reservations formally. There is no time limit for submission of the Commission proposal⁴⁵.

If EU citizens believe that a new law has to be adopted, they have the opportunity to initiate a legislation procedure by following specific processes. First of all, they may start a Citizens’ Initiative collecting at least 1 million signatures from EU citizens in at least 7 Member States within a year. After that, they can officially ask the European Commission to initiate a legislative procedure for the proposed topic. Another way is to lobby the **Members of Parliament** (MEP) in order to ask the European Commission to initiate a legislative procedure. The MEPs have the possibility to do that only when EU legislation is essential to help the implementation of already signed Treaties. In this case, if the Commission refuses to submit a proposal, it is obliged to explain the reasons for its decision. The MEPs may also request the creation of an own-initiative report by a Parliamentary committee, which once approved by the Parliament, can exercise pressure to the Commission to make a proposal. Furthermore, the MEPs may launch a written declaration, which it can be sent to the Commission with a request for action once it is supported by the majority of the parliament. Finally, the public may submit on their own, a petition to the European Parliament⁴⁶.

⁴³ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/20150201PVL00004/Legislative-powers>

⁴⁴ Farmer A.M., 2012, Manual of European Environmental Policy, The EU institutions, 1043pp, Routledge, London. Available at: http://www.ieep.eu/assets/1632/1.2_The_EU_institutions_-_final.pdf

⁴⁵ http://europa.eu/eu-law/decision-making/procedures/index_en.htm

⁴⁶ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getLastRules.do?language=EN&reference=TOC#T2R1>



Figure 4 - The collaboration between the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of Europe in order to adopt new legislation⁴⁷

When the European Commission completes the drafting of EU law, it submits the legislative proposal to the European Parliament. Therefore, the European Parliament performs the 1st reading of the proposed EU law and has the possibility to adopt the proposal or amend it, in case it disagrees. There is no time limit on the Council's 1st reading. The public can watch the Committee meeting and plenary live at the European Parliament TV⁴⁸ or they may participate in public hearings, organized by the Committees. Citizens may submit their opinion to the rapporteurs and "shadow rapporteurs"; members appointed by each of the political groups to follow the legislative procedure and collect opinions from concerned parties. Citizens, also, may submit their opinion to any other member of the Committee, or of the Parliament. At this stage, amendments can be made by any member of the Parliament, whereas amendments in plenary can be tabled only by the committee responsible, a political group or at least 40 MEPs^{49,50}.

Subsequently, the European Parliament sends the amended draft law to the Council for the 1st reading. If the Council decides to accept the law, the legislation will be adopted. The vast majority of law proposals are adopted at this step of the procedure. There is no time limit on the Council's 1st reading. The public may be informed for the position of their government and send their opinion to the relevant national authorities⁵¹.

However, if the Council disagrees it may propose amendments and send the proposed law back to the Parliament for a 2nd reading. The EU Parliament examines the Council's proposal and may choose one from the three following options; to approve it, to reject it and block the whole procedure, or to amend it and send it back to the Council for a 2nd reading. The time limit for the 2nd reading for the Parliament is 3 months. This time limit may be extended for 1 month after joint agreement⁴⁹. In this step, usually any further changes cannot be performed. The Parliament is mainly focused on restoring its previous amendments in order to compromise with the Council. The citizens still have the possibility to contact their MEPs and ask them to vote for their agreement or disagreement with the amendments and the report^{50,52}.

During the 2nd reading, the Council examines again the proposal within a period of 3 months, with a possible 1-month extension. If the Council approves the amended draft law, then it will be adopted. In this step, the

⁴⁷ <http://www.eaca.eu/#!how-eu-works/c1k25>

⁴⁸ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/schedule/schedule>

⁴⁹ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/20150201PVL00004/Legislative-powers>

⁵⁰ Borchardt K.D, 2010, The ABC of European Union law, European Commission, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 131 pp.

⁵¹ http://europa.eu/eu-law/have-your-say/index_en.htm

⁵² http://europa.eu/eu-law/decision-making/procedures/index_en.htm

Council can only make changes to Parliament's amendments and not at the whole text. The public, if it wants so, may inform the government about their position on the individual amendments.

If the Council does not approve all the amendments, during the 2nd reading, a conciliation committee has to be convened in order to find a solution. The Conciliation Committee must be convened within 6 weeks, with the possibility of extension at maximum 8 weeks. The Conciliation Committee is composed by equal number of Members of Parliament and representatives of Council. If the Conciliation Committee reaches an agreement in a joint text, the new amended law is returned to the Parliament and Council for a 3rd reading. If they cannot agree, the law is not adopted and the procedure is ended. The citizens cannot introduce any amendments in this phase but they can express their opinion about the points that believe can be exempted from the final law.⁵³

During the 3rd reading, the institutions cannot make any amendments. They can only approve it, reject it or not act on it, which will finally cause the rejection of the law. If both institutions approve it, the proposed law is finally adopted. The deadline for this procedure, for both the Council and the Parliament is 6 (or 8 if jointly agreed) weeks of the approval date of the joint text. The citizens have only the possibility to ask MEPs and/or their government to approve or reject the text^{50,52}.

When a proposed law is rejected in any stage of the legislative procedure, it is not adopted and the procedure ends there. The only way to pass a new law in the same field is by a new proposal by the EU Commission.

In the case the Parliament and Council reach an agreement in any stage, the proposed legislation enters into force. Therefore, the final text is jointly signed by the Presidents and Secretaries General of both institutions. After that, the texts are published in the Official Journal and they become official. From the date defined by the Official Journal the laws are directly binding throughout all the Member States of the EU. The EU Directives set only the final targets that must be achieved by the Member States. Thereafter, it is upon each member state to transpose the Directive into their national law in order to achieve the goals. Each Directive sets specific dates which the national law has to adapt at the national level. The EU Decisions applied in specific areas are totally binding for particular authorities or individuals⁵⁴. The public has the possibility to watch online the sessions of the European Parliament and some Council sessions^{55,56}. Figure 5 presents briefly a flowchart of the ordinary legislative procedure.

⁵³ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/20150201PVL00004/Legislative-powers>

⁵⁴ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/collection/legislative-procedures.html>

⁵⁵ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/wps-europarl-internet/frd/vod/research-by-date?language=en>

⁵⁶ <http://video.consilium.europa.eu/>

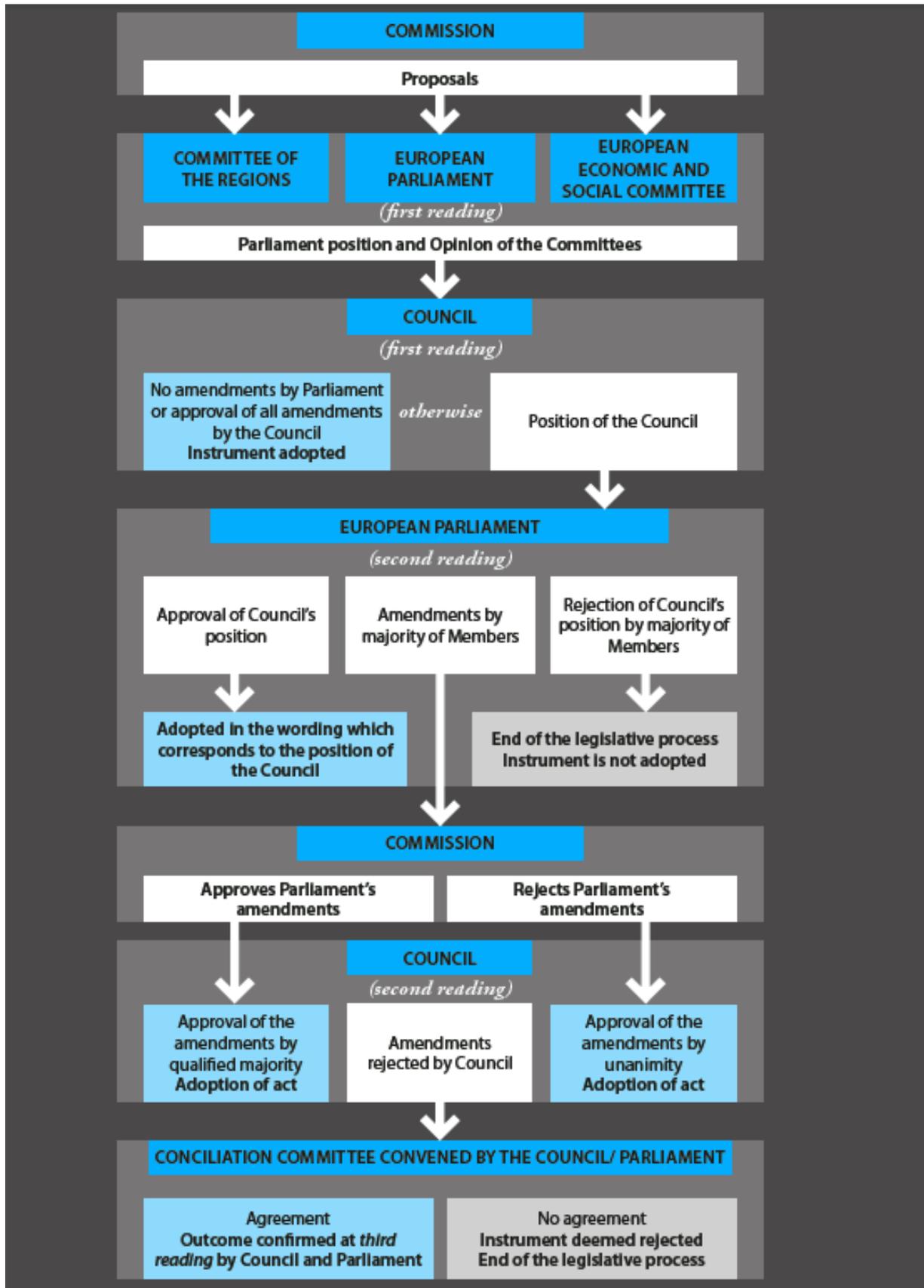


Figure 5 - The Ordinary Legislative Procedure⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Borchardt K.D, 2010, The ABC of European Union law, European Commission, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 131 pp.

1.2.3.3 Regulations, Directives, Decisions and other acts and procedures

EU agreements set targets that can be achieved by several types of legal acts. There is a big variety of **EU legal acts** which allow the EU institutions to impact on the national legal systems in varying degrees. Some of them are totally binding and some other are not. Some of them must be applied to all of the EU countries and other to just a few of them or only to specific companies in order to deal with a particular case. The variety of EU legal instruments can be classified into five basic categories according to the concerned people and their practical effects in the Member States. These categories are the following: (1) Regulations; (2) Directives; (3) Decisions; (4) Recommendations and Opinions; (5) Resolutions, Declarations and Action Programmes. Among them the binding instruments are the Regulations, the Directives and the Decisions, whereas the other two categories constitute the non-binding tools.

A **Regulation** is a directly applicable legislative act, that has to be entirely applied throughout the whole EU and it concerns natural and legal persons. Regulations present two basic features, unusual for the international law. The first one is their Community nature, meaning that the law will be the same throughout all the countries of Member States. The Member States have to apply the Regulation completely. Moreover, Member States cannot exclude the application of a regulation because of provisions or practice of the domestic law. The second feature is that they are directly applicable. Therefore, the Member States do not have to transpose them into the national law. The governing institutions and courts of the Member States are bound by the Union law and they have to comply with it as with the national law^{57,58}.

Another important legislative act together with the regulation is the **Directive**. It is a binding tool which may concern all the Member States or only specific ones. Its purpose is to combine the uniformity of the EU law, respecting simultaneously the diversity of each national tradition and structure. The Directives set targets that must be achieved by the total of the Member States of EU within a specified time-frame. Each Member State has the possibility to determine its own form and methods to transpose the Directive to its national law in order to achieve the targets. EU controls if the Member States act in accordance with the EU law by special criteria. Only under particular circumstances the Member States have to apply directly the Directives^{57,58}.

A **Decision** is a directly applicable instrument, binding in its entirety. Its address is not specified; it may concern all or specific EU Member States, and/or specific natural or legal persons. The EU Institutions in some cases are on their own responsible for the implementing of the Treaties and regulations. Therefore, they have the decisions in order to take measures binding on particular individuals, undertakings or Member States. The decision differs from the regulation because of its individual applicability. For example, EU Commission imposed a decision to Microsoft Company because it detected abuse of its dominant market position⁵⁸.

Regarding the non-binding tools of **Recommendations** and Opinions, the following are applied. A Recommendation allows the institutions to propose a line of action without imposing any legal binding on those to whom it is addressed⁵⁸. **Opinions** can be issued by the main EU institutions (Commission, Council, Parliament), the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee. The Union institutions issue opinions in order to give an assessment of a given situation or developments in the Union or individual Member States. In some cases, the opinions are the precursor of subsequent legally binding acts or the prerequisite for the institution of proceedings before the Court of Justice. For example, during the ordinary legislative procedure the Committees give their opinion regarding economic and social or regional point of view^{57,58}. The proposals for opinions and recommendations are tabled by the Member States and by the Parliamentary Committees and they are put to the vote in plenary, with or without a

⁵⁸ http://europa.eu/eu-law/decision-making/legal-acts/index_en.htm

debate. After that, the final texts are adopted and they are published and sent to the relevant authorities⁵⁹. Their real significance is political and moral.

The final category of the non-binding tools includes the Resolutions, the Declarations and Action Programmes. The **Resolutions** can be issued by the European Council, the Council and the European Parliament. They determine views and intentions for the process of integration and specific tasks inside and outside the EU. For example, resolutions relating to the internal functioning of the EU regard basic issues relating to political union, energy policy and economic union⁵⁷.

The **Declarations** can be divided in two different types. The first type is the declarations which target to the development of the European Union, such as the Declaration on the EU, the Declaration on Democracy and the Declaration on Fundamental Rights and Freedoms. These declarations are equivalent to a resolution. The second type of declaration concerns the decision-making process of the Council and expresses the opinions of a part or all the Council members⁶⁰.

The **Action Programmes** are written by the European Commission and the Council and their main role is to implement the laws and objectives of the Treaties. There are Action Programmes which are provided for in the Treaties and they are bound for the Institutions. These programmes are published as White Papers. On the other hand, there are programmes, which only give general guidelines without binding the Institutions. These are published as Green Papers^{60, 61}.

1.2.3.4 *Better Regulation*

The **Better Regulation** Agenda⁶² is a comprehensive package of reforms covering the entire policy cycle which will boost openness and transparency in the EU decision-making process, improve the quality of new laws through better impact assessments of draft legislation and amendments, and promote constant and consistent review of existing EU laws. It ensures that policy is prepared, implemented and reviewed in an open, transparent manner, informed by the best available evidence and backed up by involving stakeholders. To ensure that EU action is effective, the Commission assesses the expected and actual impacts of policies, legislation and other important measures at every stage of the policy cycle - from planning to implementation, to review and subsequent revision⁶³.

More specifically, open public online consultations are systematically part of the consultation strategy of European Commission for⁶⁴:

- Initiatives subject to **impact assessments**:

Planning of impact assessments is communicated to the public via inception impact assessments (published at: http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/roadmaps/index_en.htm). Stakeholders are consulted on all key aspects of impact assessments and final impact assessment reports are made public (available at: http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/impact/ia_carried_out/cia_2014_en.htm).

⁵⁹ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/texts-adopted.html>

⁶⁰ Borchardt K.D, 2010, The ABC of European Union law, European Commission, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 131 pp.

⁶¹ European Commission, 7th EAP – The new general Union Environment Action Programme to 2020, Publications Office.

⁶² http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/index_en.htm (EC, Strasbourg 2015, Better regulation for better results, An EU agenda)

⁶³ http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/index_en.htm

⁶⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/stakeholder-consultation/index_en.htm (EC, Strasbourg 2015, Better regulation for better results, An EU agenda)

• Initiatives subject to **Evaluation and Fitness checks**:

The Commission is committed to evaluate in a proportionate way all EU spending and non-spending activities intended to have an impact on society or the economy. Evaluations gather evidence to assess how well a specific intervention has performed (or is working) and draw conclusions on whether the EU intervention continues to be justified or should be modified.

A Fitness Check is a comprehensive evaluation of a policy area that usually addresses how several related legislative acts have contributed (or otherwise) to the attainment of policy objectives. Fitness checks are particularly well-suited to identify overlaps, inconsistencies synergies and the cumulative impacts of regulation.

• **Green Papers** (policy discussion documents):

Green Papers are documents published by the European Commission to stimulate discussion on given topics at European level. They invite the relevant parties (bodies or individuals) to participate in a consultation process and debate on the basis of the proposals they put forward.

Furthermore, the public can take part in a current Commission consultation through the “**Your Voice in Europe**” portal (http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/consultations/index_en.htm). All the above consultations are open for a period of 12 weeks.

The European Commission consults citizens and other stakeholders on the major policy initiatives. The ultimate goal is to better consult, at all stages of the policy-making processes. Following the new Better Regulation package, the public will be able to give feedback even earlier in the policy-making process, on impact assessments, on legislative proposals and on draft delegated acts and important implementing acts. Building on the existing minimum standards on Commission communication - COM(2002)704⁶⁵, the Commission's new Better Regulation Guidelines strengthen the commitment to carry out consultations that are of a high-quality, transparent, and reach all stakeholders. For major initiatives, the EC will establish a consultation strategy, identifying relevant stakeholders and most appropriate forms of consultation. These may include online public consultations, targeted consultations, meetings, workshops, seminars, SME panels and online discussion forums that could enhance projects and tools in the context of eParticipation.

1.2.3.5 Environmental decision making in European Union

1.2.3.5.1 Legislative procedures

The legislative procedures in EU are divided in two categories: the ordinary legislative procedures (explained in Chapter 1.2.3.2) and the special legislative procedures.

The **ordinary legislative procedures** refer to **common decision-making** by the European Parliament and the European Council. The ordinary legislative procedure now applies to 83 areas including the environment (with the exception of provisions of a fiscal nature, town and country planning, management of water resources, land use, supply and diversification of energy resources), and energy (excluding measures of a fiscal nature). Under the ordinary legislative procedure, the European Parliament and the Council have equal weight in deciding how the final piece of legislation will look. The European Parliament adopts decisions by the majority of its Members, while the Council takes decisions either by unanimity, or by qualified majority vote (QMV), depending on the legal basis of the proposal. A qualified majority is currently 255 votes out of the total 345 (73.9 per cent) cast by a simple majority of Member States. The use of ordinary legislative

⁶⁵ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52002DC0704&from=EN>

procedures has increased the influence of the Members of European Parliament during the early stages of developing legislation^{66,67}.

The category of **special legislative procedures** is dealing with the consultation, cooperation and assent procedures as required from previous Treaties. The special legislative procedures are applied only when it is required from the Treaty. According to the procedure, in these cases, the Council must consult the European Parliament but is not bound to its opinion. Thus, the power of Parliament is limited. The consultation procedure applies to five categories of environmental measures: provisions primarily of a fiscal nature; town and country planning, land use (with the exception of waste management); quantitative management of water resources; and measures which significantly affect a Member State's choice between different energy sources and the general structure of its energy supply (Article 192(2) TFEU). In these areas, the Council takes decisions on the basis of unanimity^{66,67}.

Except the ordinary and the special legislative procedures, a network of committees of Member State representatives, chaired by the European Commission, agrees, additionally, in detailed Commission implementing decisions. Various committee procedures – known as **'comitology'** – apply inter alia to proposals relating to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), water, nature and biodiversity. The comitology process is increasingly being used as a way to address issues that were unresolved during the co-decision procedure, which implies that larger volumes and more fundamental aspects of legislation are now being dealt with in this manner^{67,68}.

1.2.3.5.2 Environmental Impact Assessment

Public participation in the decision-making process can become more effective with environmental assessment in the form of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The environmental assessment documentation facilitates public's access to reports or studies assessing the environmental and health hazards of an activity. Therefore, this documentation helps the public to develop a more comprehensive opinion on the proposed activity or plan^{69,70}.

In more details, the EU's decision making processes in **decisions on specific activities and projects** are covered by the **Environmental Impact Assessment Directive** (85/337/EEC), which is in force since 1985 and applies to a wide range of defined public and private projects. The initial Directive of 1985 and its three amendments (in 1997, in 2003 and in 2009) have been codified by Directive 2011/92/EU, which then amended in 2014 by Directive 2014/52/EU.

The main requirements⁷¹ of the EIA Directive are:

- For environmentally hazardous projects (the list is given by Directive annex and is rather wide, including also small investments), before the consent is given, each project must be assessed with regard to their environmental effects.

⁶⁶ Treaty on the European Union – Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union - List of Decision-making Procedures by Article. http://ec.europa.eu/codecision/docs/Legal_bases.pdf

⁶⁷ Manual of European Environmental Policy, 2012. http://www.ieep.eu/assets/1634/1.4_EU_decision-making_processes_-_final.pdf

⁶⁸ Geeraerts K, Fedrigo-Fazio D, 2011, The new comitology rules – Delegated and implementing acts, Report by IEEP for the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

⁶⁹ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eia/eia-legalcontext.htm>

⁷⁰ The Aarhus Convention: An implementation guide, 2014, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Second edition. http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/Publications/Aarhus_Implementation_Guide_interactive_eng.pdf

⁷¹ Zubowicz-Thull M., Murphy C., Luchko N., Kotulak M., Ivliev K., Baranovskis G., Struga M., 2012, Toolkit on Environmental Law and Youth Participation, Youth and Environment Europe.

- Information about approving procedure of environmentally hazardous project must be given to the public, each interested person or organisation must have access to the procedure and possibility to express their opinion.
- Interested members of the public, including environmental NGOs must have access to a review procedure before a court of law or similar body. These obligations transpose Aarhus convention requirements but are wider and harder than original Aarhus regulations.

All projects listed in Annex I of the Directive are considered as having significant effects on the environment and require an EIA. This category may contain long-distance railway lines, motorways and express roads, airports, installations for the disposal of hazardous and non-hazardous waste, waste water treatment, etc. On the other hand, for projects listed in Annex II, the national authorities have to decide whether an EIA is needed. This is done by the "screening procedure", which determines the effects of projects on the basis of thresholds/criteria or a case by case examination. However, the national authorities must take into account the criteria laid down in Annex III. The projects listed in Annex II are in general those not included in Annex I (e.g. railways, roads waste disposal installations, waste water treatment plants), but also other types (such as urban development projects, flood-relief works, changes of Annex I and II existing projects). Moreover, every Member State has the possibility to adopt more stringent protective measures according to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)^{72, 73}.

The Environmental Impact Assessment decision making process is determined through the EIA Directive and according to its final amendment held in 2014 by the Directive 2014/52/EU, it incorporates the following improvements:

- Member States now have a mandate to simplify their different environmental assessment procedures.
- Timeframes are introduced for the different stages of environmental assessments: screening decisions should be taken within 90 days (although extensions are possible) and public consultations should last at least 30 days. Member States also need to ensure that final decisions are taken within a "reasonable period of time".
- The screening procedure, determining whether an EIA is required, is simplified. Decisions must be duly motivated in the light of the updated screening criteria.
- EIA reports are to be made more understandable for the public, especially as regards assessments of the current state of the environment and alternatives to the proposal in question.
- The quality and the content of the reports will be improved. Competent authorities will also need to prove their objectivity to avoid conflicts of interest.
- The grounds for development consent decisions must be clear and more transparent for the public. Member States may also set timeframes for the validity of any reasoned conclusions or opinions issued as part of the EIA procedure.
- If projects do entail significant adverse effects on the environment, developers will be obliged to do the necessary to avoid, prevent or reduce such effects. These projects will need to be monitored using procedures determined by the Member States. Existing monitoring arrangements may be used to avoid duplication of monitoring and unnecessary costs.

The way in which an EIA is carried out is not rigid: it is a process comprising a series of steps. These steps are outlined below and are followed with specific adaptations by the Member States. The first step involves site selection, notification and transmittal of information with the involvement of local authorities (screening phase). During the second step, the content and extent of the matters of the EIA information is determined.

⁷² Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 amending Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment.

⁷³ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eia/eia-legalcontext.htm> - European Commission - Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

During this phase the public and stakeholders are involved (scoping phase). At the next step, the EIA report is drafted and the EIA information is collected by the developer. After that, the environmental authorities and the public (and affected Member States) are informed and consulted (according to Annex IV of the Directive 2014/52/EU). At the next step the information is examined and the final decision is made. Finally, the public, the environmental authorities and the affected Parties where appropriate are informed about the final decision^{74, 75, 76}.

1.2.3.5.3 Strategic Environmental Assessment

The EU's decision making processes in decisions on **environmental plans** and **programmes** are covered by the **Strategic Impact Assessment** (SEA) Directive 2001/42/EC, which is in force since 2001 and has been transposed by July 2004. Plans and programmes in the sense of the SEA Directive must be prepared or adopted by an authority (at national, regional or local level) and be required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions. SEA Directive does not provide a specified list of plans/programmes as the EIA Directive does. This process is mandatory for environmentally hazardous plans and programs that establish frames for the environmentally hazardous project or expected to influence Natura 2000 sites, and they must be assessed from the point of view of the environment. The procedure must be public, and each interested person or organisation must have the possibility to express its opinion^{77, 78}.

The SEA decision making process is carried out by the permitting actors (developers, competent environmental authority and public) with the use of the Environmental Report or any relevant studies and documents. During the first stage the developers sets SEA's context and objectives, establishes the baseline by collecting information and identifying environmental problems, and deciding on the SEA's scope. During the second stage they develop and refine alternatives and assess the effects. At this stage, the Responsible Authority confirms the scope of the Environmental Report. In the course of the third stage the Environmental Report is prepared. The Environmental Report contains information on the effects of the "draft plan or programme". According to the fourth stage the public and the environmental authorities are informed and consulted on the draft plan or programme. They hold the environmental report, assess the significant changes, make the decisions and provide information. As regards plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment in another Member State, the Member State in whose territory the plan or programme is being prepared must consult the other Member State(s). On this issue the SEA Directive follows the general approach taken by the SEA Protocol to the UN ECE Convention on EIA in a Transboundary Context⁷⁹. The environmental report and the results of the consultations are taken into due account before adoption. Finally in the last stage, the adoption of the plan or programme and significant environmental effects are monitored, in order to identify unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage. During the monitoring phase, the actual significant environmental effects of implementing the plan or programme are tested against the predicted ones⁸⁰. Once the plan or programme is adopted, the environmental authorities and the public are informed and relevant information is made available to them.

⁷⁴ Guidance on the application of the Environmental Impact Assessment Procedure for Large-scale Transboundary Projects, 2013, European Commission.

⁷⁵ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eia/eia-legalcontext.htm> - European Commission - Environmental Impact Assessment.

⁷⁶ <http://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/SEA/eng/file/No8English.htm>

⁷⁷ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eia/sea-legalcontext.htm> - European Commission - Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

⁷⁸ Zubowicz-Thull M., Murphy C., Luchko N., Kotulak M., Ivliev K., Baranovskis G., Struga M., 2012, Toolkit on Environmental Law and Youth Participation, Youth and Environment Europe.

⁷⁹ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eia/sea-legalcontext.htm> - European Commission – Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment.

⁸⁰ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eia/home.htm> - European Commission - Environmental Assessment.

1.2.3.5.4 Transboundary projects

Regarding transboundary Environmental Impact Assessment, the responsible Member State must take into consideration the environmental impact that may affect another Member State and make the necessary environmental information available to the interested parties and enable them to express an opinion. Specifically, there are 7 key steps in the EIA procedure carried out for large - scale **transboundary projects**:

1. Notification and transmittal of information
2. Determination of the content and extent of the matters of the EIA information
3. Preparation of the EIA information/report by the developer
4. Public participation, dissemination of information and consultation
5. Consultation between concerned Parties
6. Examination of the information gathered and final decision
7. Dissemination of information on the final decision

1.2.3.5.5 Directive on industrial emissions

Industrial activities play an important role in the economic well-being of Europe, contributing to sustainable growth and providing high quality jobs. However, industrial activities also have significant impacts on the environment. The need to further control industrial emissions, as well as the need to lower the unnecessary administrative burden that existed in Union law concerning industrial emissions led to the Commission's proposal for a **Directive on industrial emissions**⁸¹ (IED) that recast seven Directives related to industrial emissions into a single clear and coherent legislative instrument. The proposal for a Directive on industrial emissions (IED) was adopted on 21 December 2007⁸².

The IED seeks to prevent and control air, water and soil pollution by industrial installations. It regulates emissions of a wide range of pollutants, including sulphur and nitrogen compounds, dust particles and heavy metals. It clarifies and strengthens the role of Best Available Techniques⁸³ (BAT) and contains the new concept of "BAT conclusions" which is the document that will be formally adopted by the European Commission.

According to European environmental legislation, Member States are required to report on the implementation progress of key pieces of industrial emissions as laid out by IED (integrated pollution prevention and control). IED is the successor of the IPPC Directive. The IED requires the permit conditions, in particular emission limits, to be based on the best available techniques (BAT) and to make information available to the European Commission.

The Directive ensures that the public has a right to participate in the decision-making process, and to be informed of its consequences⁸², by having access to:

- permit applications in order to give opinions,
- permits,
- results of the monitoring of releases, and
- the European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (E-PRTR). In E-PRTR, emission data reported by Member States are made accessible in a public register, which is intended to provide environmental information on major industrial activities. E-PRTR has replaced the previous EU-wide pollutant inventory, the so-called European Pollutant Emission Register (EPER).

⁸¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN>

⁸² <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/industry/stationary/ied/legislation.htm>

⁸³ <http://eippcb.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reference/>

1.2.3.5.6 *Projects of Common Interest*

A new legal and policy framework, the **TEN-E Regulation**, was adopted on 17 April 2013, and entered into force on 15 May 2013, aiming to optimise network development at European level by 2020 and beyond. This Regulation identifies 12 strategic priority corridors and geographic areas for energy infrastructure with a trans-European/cross-border dimension. The Regulation defines a process to establish on a two-yearly basis lists of '**Projects of Common Interest**' (so-called PCIs) throughout the entire EU, which will contribute to the development of energy infrastructure networks in each of the 12 corridors^{84, 85}.

PCI projects will benefit from the improved regulation and will be eligible for funding under the upcoming CEF, according to the provisions of the *acquis*. They may also benefit from faster and more efficient permitting procedures, maintaining simultaneously the highest possible standard of environmental assessment and protection. For that reason, the new TEN-E Regulation introduces the following measures: the introduction of a binding overall time limits for permit procedures of normally 3,5 years, a 'one-stop-shop' for permitting, a national competent authority for the co-ordination of permit procedures, a transparent and open approach to consultation of the public and stakeholders, the obligation on Member States to assess the need for streamlining environmental assessment procedures, and to take appropriate streamlining measures⁸⁵.

According to the new TEN-E Regulation, the process for granting permit for PCI projects is divided into two basic phases. The first one is the pre-application procedure. This procedure covers the period between the start of the permit granting process and the acceptance of the submitted application file by the competent authority and its duration may cover an indicative period of two years. In this phase takes place the preparation of any environmental report by the project promoter(s). The second phase contains the statutory permit granting procedure. This procedure covers the period from the date of acceptance of the submitted application file until the comprehensive decision is taken. The maximum time limit of this procedure is one year and six months. The combined duration of the two phases shall not exceed a period of three years and six months, with a possible extension of nine months⁸⁶.

1.2.3.5.7 *Environmental Liability Directive*

The **Environmental Liability Directive**⁸⁷ (ELD) aims to make those causing damage to the environment (water, land and nature) legally and financially responsible for that damage. The Directive was adopted in April 2004. It addresses only damage and damaging events which occur after the deadline for transposition at Member States level, i.e. 30 April 2007.

The Directive covers environmental damage caused by or resulting from occupational activities to Species and natural habitats protected under the **Habitats Directive**⁸⁸ 92/43/EEC and **Birds Directive**⁸⁹ 2009/147/EC, Waters covered by the **Water Framework Directive**⁹⁰ 2000/60/EC and **Floods Directive**⁹¹ and Land contamination that creates a significant risk of harming human health⁹².

⁸⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/topics/infrastructure/projects-common-interest>

⁸⁵ Streamlining environmental assessment procedures for energy infrastructure Projects of Common Interest (PCIs), 2013, Environment and Energy, European Commission.

⁸⁶ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-880_el.htm, European Commission, Press release database.

⁸⁷ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2004:143:0056:0075:en:PDF>

⁸⁸ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31992L0043&from=EN>

⁸⁹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32009L0147&from=EN>

⁹⁰ http://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:5c835afb-2ec6-4577-bdf8-756d3d694eeb.0004.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

⁹¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32007L0060&from=EN>

⁹² <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/legal/liability/pdf/Summary%20ELD.pdf>

The establishment of a causal link between the activity and the damage is always required. Affected natural or legal persons and environmental NGOs have the right to request the competent authority to take remedial action if they deem it necessary.

1.2.3.6 Principles and Objectives of EU Environmental Policy

During the last decades the European Union has implemented a wide range of environmental legislation and achieved reductions in air, water and soil pollution⁹³. Chemicals legislation has been modernised and the use of many toxic or hazardous substances has been restricted. Today, EU citizens enjoy some of the best water quality in the world and EU achieved to alter more than 18% of its territory into protected areas for nature⁹³.

However, many challenges persist and these must be tackled together in a structured way. The European environmental policy will be guided by **the 7th Environment Action Programme (EAP)** until 2020. The 7th EAP was signed on November of 2013 by the European Parliament and the Council. The programme entered into force in January of 2014⁹⁴. In order to give more long-term direction it sets out a vision beyond that, with a time horizon until 2050. The long-term targets are the implementation of circular economy where nothing is wasted and where natural resources are managed sustainably, and biodiversity is protected, valued and restored in ways that enhance our society's resilience⁹⁵.

The EU updated the European Environment Action Program into the 7th EAP that will be guiding European environment policy until 2020. The main objectives according to the 7th EAP are⁹⁴:

- to protect, conserve and enhance the Union's natural capital
- to use efficiently the resources of the Union and achieve a competitive green and low-carbon economy
- to protect the health and lifestyle of European citizens from environment-related risks

Moreover, the following factors so called "enablers" are determined so as to achieve the 7th EAP targets, which are⁹⁵:

- better implementation of legislation
- better information by improving the knowledge base
- greater and more organized investment on environmental policy
- total unification of environmental policy into other policies

Finally, two additional horizontal priority objectives were set. The first is to strengthen the sustainability of EU cities and the second to implement Union's environmental and climate strategy more effectively. The priority objectives and the enablers of the 7th EAP are depicted in Figure 6.

⁹³ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/newprg/index.htm> - 7th Environment Action Programme to 2020.

⁹⁴ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/newprg/objectives.htm> - 7th EAP priority objectives.

⁹⁵ Decision No 1386/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 on a General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020 'Living well, within the limits of our planet', Official Journal of the European Union, L 354/171.



Figure 6 - Key objectives, enablers and horizontal priority objectives according to the 7th EAP⁹⁴

1.2.4 National level

As many EU laws are adopted in the form of Directives, the quality of **transposition into national legislation** and their application at national level are key aspects for better implementation. The European Commission has a special obligation to enforce EU laws and thus must control the quality of transposition and application of provisions.

The Commission receives reports about the transposition of Directives into national laws and is thus in a position to check compliance – although due to a lack of resources the checks are rather limited⁹⁶. In case of delayed, incomplete or wrong transposition the Commission can launch an infringement procedure⁹⁶.

The room for manoeuvre to transpose Directives, especially so-called Framework Directives into national law is often substantial and can lead to large interpretation differences and subsequently in different environmental ambition levels.

The second hurdle for a proper application of environmental Directives is the actual implementation of the provisions, measures, monitoring etc. in practice. Most Directives foresee reporting of how those obligations are to be carried out – but often in a very general and summarised format, which is often insufficient to check **compliance**⁹⁶.

However far and fast international economic integration proceeds, political authority remains vested in national governments. Therefore national governments should respect and support the commitment to implementation of international agreements.

At the national and state level, environmental management has been found to be conducive to the creation of decision making roundtables and committees mostly by the competent ministries or agencies. A variety of actors participate in national environmental governance, such as the state, political leaders, unions, businesses, not-for-profit organisations and environmental protection foundations. The stakeholders interact

⁹⁶ Scheuer S., 2004, EU Environmental Policy Handbook, A Critical Analysis of EU Environmental Legislation, European Environmental Bureau (EEB).

with the legislative and executive powers in office as indispensable advisors, and they are linked with environmental management at regional and local levels^{97,98}.

Regarding the transfer of the EIA Directive to the national level at the EU Member States, the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context was signed. This Convention (and especially Article 2.2) requires Parties to establish a national EIA procedure that permits public participation. The Convention does not specify the detail of such a procedure recognizing that it is a matter for the national authorities to determine. But the provisions need to reflect the obligations that arise from compliance with the Convention⁹⁹. Furthermore, it is recommended that, as a minimum, national EIA procedures should include provisions that:

- the public is informed on any proposals relating to an activity with potential adverse environmental impacts in cases subject to an EIA procedure in order to obtain a permit for a given activity
- the public in the areas likely to be affected is entitled to express comments and opinions on the proposed activity when all options are open before the final decision on this activity is made
- reasonable time-frames are provided allowing sufficient time for each of the different stages of public participation in the EIA procedure
- in making the final decision on the proposed activity, due account is taken of the results of the public participation in the EIA procedure.

Regarding the SEA Directive, there are different possibilities to transform it into national law. The SEA Directive could be transposed with a special SEA legislative act, maybe with a word-by-word implementation or with a national legal reference to the Directive, as far as the Court of Justice's requirements are followed. Another alternative is a supplement of SEA provisions to either EIA law or to special laws with planning duties in the Member States. The Member States were obliged to change and amend national provisions to the content of the SEA Directive by 21 July 2004. Some Member States already had an established history of SEA of plans or policies, while others were moved towards a more systematic approach. SEA is often carried out in an ad hoc way. In most cases the SEA is confined to specific sectors, particularly land use and transport plans¹⁰⁰.

1.2.5 *Local level*

Community participation and partnership along with the **decentralisation** of government power to local authorities are important aspects of environmental governance at the local level. The stakeholders that participate in environmental governance are mainly Regional Environmental Departments and Municipalities.

The key conditions for developing decentralized environmental governance are¹⁰¹:

- the access to social capital, including local knowledge, leaders and local shared vision;
- the democratic access to information and decision-making;

⁹⁷ Operational Committee No. 24 "Institutions and stakeholder representatively" (introduced by Bertrand Panher); Final report to the Prime Minister, senior Minister, Minister for the Ecology, Sustainable Development and Territorial Planning; 2008, also known as the Rapport Panher.

⁹⁸ Laime, Marc, 2008. Gouvernance environnementale: vers une meilleure concertation (Environmental Governance: towards better consultation).

⁹⁹ http://www.unece.org/env/eia/pubs/publicpart_guidance.html

¹⁰⁰ Schmidt, M., Joao, E., & Albrecht, E. (Eds.), 2006. Implementing strategic environmental assessment (Vol. 2). Springer Science & Business Media.

¹⁰¹ Pulgar Vidal, Manuel, 2005, Gobernanza Ambiental Descentralizada (Decentralized Environmental Governance).

- the local government activity in environmental governance: as facilitator of access to natural resources, or as policy maker;
- the institutional framework that favours decentralized environmental governance and creates forums for social interaction and making widely accepted agreements acceptable.

1.2.6 *STEP pilot locations*

The STEP project will develop a cloud eParticipation SaaS platform, enhanced with web / social media mining, gamification, machine translation, and visualisation features, which will promote the societal and political participation of young people in the decision-making process on environmental issues, while is also designed to implement 5 different pilot cases in specific administrative environment taking into account organisational, social, linguistic and cultural differences across the EU. The STEP platform will be tested in 4 countries: Italy, Spain, Greece and Turkey, with the active participation of one regional authority, 3 municipalities and one association of municipalities which are member of the STEP consortium, namely:

- Region of Crete - Greece
- Association of the Municipalities of Locride – Italy
- Mollet del Vallès Municipality – Spain
- Valdemoro Municipality – Spain
- Hatay Metropolitan Municipality – Turkey

The number of pilot countries has been chosen so as to have enough pilot partners to allow the testing of the STEP concept in a wide context of national and regional local environments. Under this scope each pilot expects to enable and encourage the participation of young people in the decision-making process on environmental issues. The main elements crucial for the successful implementation of the pilots are the maximised participation of the targeted groups (young, stakeholders etc) and the adequate preparation of the public authorities with the specific case studies to be subjected.

The pilot implementation approach will be based on the PanEuropean Best Practice Manual on eParticipation¹⁰². This approach includes 5 steps: expectations, background, planning, action, communication, feedback and evaluation. The entire mapping task that includes this deliverable will enable the STEP consortium to record the background of the application domain and use it in order to plan and design an efficient e-participation platform, representative case studies and applicable pilots.

In the following paragraphs each pilot is represented by a brief description that includes: decision making procedures with an environmental impact (decisions on specific activities, environment-related plans, programmes and policies, and laws' and regulations' elaboration), the potential stakeholders involved, the methods of involving the public and especially young people and some specific case studies from each pilot area. This mapping of procedures highlights the specificities of each pilot partner, and can be used for adjusting the functionality of the platform accordingly, and for specifying the pilot scenarios. Each description reflects the differences in the various administrative levels and the different legislative context of implementation, as well as the specific national attitudes on public participation.

¹⁰² <http://eparticipation.eu/>

1.2.6.1 Crete Region – Greece

The Region of Crete is a second grade local self-government authority and offers services for the benefit of the citizens.

Region of Crete

Environmental decision making procedures

Environmental decision making procedures in Greece are defined and regulated by the Law 4014/2011, which concerns the environmental permitting processes of projects and activities, as well as by Ministerial Decisions which were issued afterwards, in order to specify the regulations of the Law.

According to the Law 4014/2011, **projects and activities** are divided into two categories (A and B), depending on their **environmental impact**, which is outlined by various criteria, such as the size of the projects and activities, their location in the aspect of land use, the power they use, the amount of the raw material they use, the amount of their products per day etc. Projects and activities listed in the category A are those with major environmental impact. This category is further divided in two subcategories, A1 and A2. The subcategory A1 includes projects and activities with severe environmental impact, whereas the subcategory A2 includes those with moderate environmental impact. Finally, projects and activities with small and local environmental impact are listed in Category B.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is necessary for subcategories A1 and A2. On the contrary, projects and activities of the B category are subject to Standard Environmental Commitments. Projects and activities of very small size and impact are not supposed to environmental permitting, but are just obliged to follow the general environmental legislation.

The procedures of carrying out, submitting, evaluating the EIA and the decision-making on it is called “environmental permitting procedure” and leads to the issue of the “Approval of the Environmental Conditions”, which is an administrative decision.

In case a project or activity is planned to be constructed in a protected area of the European Network of Protected Areas NATURA 2000, a **Special Ecological Evaluation (SEE)** is additionally needed. SEE is part of the Environmental Impact Assessment for the Subcategories A1 and A2. For Category B, SEE is a separate study, which is evaluated in a procedure different form the declaration of the Standard Environmental Commitments.

The Ministry of Reconstruction of Production, Environment and Energy is responsible for the environmental permitting process of the A1 projects and activities. Sometimes, for this subcategory, the Approval of the Environmental Conditions is issued in common with additional Ministries, depending on the type of project or activity.

The Directorate for Environment and Spatial Planning of the Decentralized Administration of Crete is responsible for the environmental permitting process of the A2 projects and activities.

The Standard Environmental Commitments for the B category are issued:

- By the Regional or Ministerial Authority which is responsible for the issue of

the respective establishment and function permission, as part of the respective permission.

- o As a separate administrative action, by the Directorate for Environment and Spatial Planning of the Region of Crete, in case of projects and activities which need no establishment and function permission according to the legislation.

Environmental decision making procedures involve mainly projects and activities included in Subcategories A1 and A2, as follows:

a) According to the Law 4014/2011, before the evaluation of their EIA, projects and activities of the subcategories A1 and A2 have the right to submit the file of **“Preliminary Determination of Environmental Requirements”** (PDER). This step of the procedure is non-mandatory and therefore most of the investors (either public organisations or private companies) avoid it. In the frame of the PDER, however, alternative solutions may be examined, concerning each project or activity, but, most of all, **the investor himself has the chance to carry out a public consultation** concerning the main technical issues of the projects and their possible environmental impact. The consultation phase also involves the other competent Authorities, such as the Directorate for Forests and the Archaeological Authorities and lasts 30 working days.

b) According to the Law 4014/2011 and to the Ministerial Decision 167563/EYPE/2013, the Ministry of Reconstruction of Production, Environment and Energy should publish and submit the EIA of subcategory A1 projects and activities for public consultation. The Ministry submits the EIA to the Regional Council of the Region of Crete to publish it, inform the citizens and all stakeholders and gather their opinions in the frame of the consultation phase. This phase lasts 45 working days.

c) According to the Law 4014/2011 and to the Ministerial Decision 167563/EYPE/2013, **the Decentralized Administration of Crete** should publish and submit the EIA of subcategory A2 projects and activities for public consultation. The Decentralised Administration submits the EIA to the Regional Council of the Region of Crete to publish it, inform the citizens and all stakeholders and gather their opinions in the frame of the consultation phase. This phase lasts 35 working days.

d) According to the Law 4014/2011 and to the Ministerial Decision 167563/EYPE/2013, in case of amendment of environmental conditions of existing projects and activities A1 and A2, the competent Authority would ask for a new EIA, if amendments are supposed to cause a major difference in the type, the size and the impact of the project. The new EIA is submitted to the Regional Council of the Region of Crete to publish it, in order to inform the citizens, but the consultation phase is not mandatory.

- o The above-described procedures are in accordance with the Regulation of the Aarhus convention, while for the projects and activities of the B category, there is no obligation by the law for consultation phase.

Public organisations involved in environmental

National Level: Ministry of Reconstruction of Production, Environment and Energy, other competent Ministries related with the permitting procedure such as the Ministry of Rural Development and Food and the Ministry of Economy,

<p>decision making</p>	<p>Infrastructure, Marine and Tourism.</p> <p>Regional Level: The competent Authorities of the Region of Crete, depending on the type of project or activity under evaluation, together with the competent Ministerial Authorities, according to the Ministerial Decision 1649/45/2014.</p> <p>In the Region of Crete, the Vice Governor for Environment and Spatial Planning always asks the Directorate for Environment and Spatial Planning to additionally express their opinion in every case.</p> <p>Universities and Research Centers may also take part in the decision-making process, or may be asked by the Regional Government to participate, in case of very specialised scientific or technological issues.</p> <p>Local level: Municipalities.</p>
<p>Stakeholders</p>	<p>For subcategory A1: The Ministry of Reconstruction of Production, Environment and Energy should submit the EIA to the Region of Crete for evaluation and public consultation. The Region of Crete then publishes the EIA for all citizens to be informed and carries out the public consultation. The results of the public consultation are then sent to the Ministry, together with the opinions of the competent Authorities of the Region of Crete.</p> <p>For subcategory A2: The Decentralised Administration of Crete should submit the EIA to the Region of Crete for evaluation and public consultation. The Region of Crete then publishes the EIA for all citizens to be informed and carries out the public consultation. The results of the public consultation are then sent to the Decentralised Administration, together with the opinions of the competent Authorities of the Region of Crete.</p> <p>During the above-mentioned public consultation phases, the Municipalities may organise local public consultations, either through their City Council or open to all citizens, in order to form their opinion concerning the EIA under evaluation.</p> <p>Public organisations or private companies, planning projects and activities may organise independent public consultations, before or during the official consultation phase of the EIA, either in the frame of PDER or not, in order to inform the citizens and the local communities about their plans and its environmental and social impact.</p>
<p>Public and young participation in the pilot area</p>	<p>There are currently no special methods or tools to involve the young people in the decision making process. The calls for public consultation are general and they are addressed to all stakeholders, ages and public groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public participation usually takes places in cases of large-sized investments, which cause severe environmental impact and cause major change to the land use, such as wind farms, other large renewable energy projects, fuel storage facilities, large all-inclusive resorts, projects and infrastructures planned into protected areas etc. The people who participate in the public consultation and the decision-making process are mostly the inhabitants and those possessing properties in the zone of the direct influence and impact of the project or activity under evaluation. Environmental non-governmental organisations also participate often in the decision-making process. • Similarly to the categories of people mentioned in the previous paragraph, young people who participate in the public consultation and the decision-making process are mostly inhabitants or possessing properties in the zone of the direct influence

	<p>and impact of the project or activity under evaluation. Young members of environmental non-governmental organisations also participate often in the decision-making process. However, the representation of young people in the decision-making processes is not regular or permanent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An example is the Strategic EIA of a, planned to be constructed in the north-east edge of Crete, A1-subcategory, large all-inclusive resort with golf terrain, and partly located into protected and archaeological areas, which was evaluated by the Region of Crete in April 2014. The participation in the consultation phase was massive, by people being for and by people being against the investment. The Municipality, environmental NGOs, professional associations, Universities, scientists and citizens took part and expressed their opinion. As usual, such a massive public participation is observed in large-sized investments, such as this one. The people who participated were mostly the inhabitants, the professionals, those possessing properties and people who are supposed to be favored or damaged, in the zone of the direct influence and impact of the project or activity under evaluation. There were very few young people among them. In this particular case, some foreign scientists who have studied the Cretan environment took part in the consultation phase, in order to make the authorities and the people focus on the unique natural and cultural value of the area.
Interest in STEP	<p>Some indicative pilot cases that may be included in STEP e-Participation platform implementation in the Region of Crete are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Large wind farms all over Crete ○ Renewable energy plants that use biomass or biogas ○ The interface cables for the connection of Crete with mainland Greece, for energy transportation ○ New infrastructures for solid waste management ○ Waste water treatment plants

1.2.6.2 Association of the Municipalities of Locride– Italy

The Association of the Municipalities of Locride is the non-profit federation that represents all the municipalities (42 municipalities) of Locride in Calabria Region. This area covers 1.366 km² (44% of the province of Reggio Calabria) and has a population of around 150.000.

Association of the Municipalities of Locride

Environmental decision making procedures

Decisions on specific activities with a significant impact on the environment

There is a complex national and regional legislative framework in the field of public participation and environmental permit process. The main legal instruments are the following:

- The **Environmental Impact Assessment** (EIA) is a part of the decision-making process, and constitutes an administrative procedure aimed at identifying the potential negative effects on the environment, ranking the action of the approval process upstream of any authorisation or license required by the law. The EIA procedure in Italy ends with the decree of "Environmental Friendliness".
- The **Strategic Environmental Assessment** (SEA) is a systematic decision support process and an assessment tool for plans and programmes that aims to preserve,

protect and improve the environment and human health, and to ensure the prudent and rational utilisation of the natural resources. These objectives should be achieved by decisions and actions inspired by the precautionary principle, in a perspective of a sustainable development.

- The **Integrated Environmental Authorisation** (IEA) is the provision that authorises the operation of a plant in accordance with the requirements set out in Part Two of the legislative decree of 3 April 2006, no. 152 which is the actual implementation of the EU Directive 2008/1/EC on integrated pollution prevention and control (IPPC). The authorisation provides an integrated approach in order to avoid significant environmental pollution (in the air, water and soil) and to avoid or minimise the production of waste.

All the normative references, national and regional, can be found via the following links:
(<http://www.minambiente.it/archivio-normative>,
<http://www.consiglioregionale.calabria.it/hp4/index.asp?accesso=2&selez=testicoordinati>).

Environment related plans, programmes and policies, including land-use and sectoral programmes, environmental actions and all levels of formed environmental policies

The environmental issues of the Locride area, such as the hydro-geological risk, water treatment and the inefficiency in waste management are the most urgent topics need to be tackled to favour the sustainable development of the area.

In this context the Association of Municipalities of Locride, supported by all 42 municipalities of the Locride area including the Sant'Agata del Bianco Municipality aim to promote a unified movement of renewal of the policy of public administrations, improving the functional municipalities' ability in defending the improvement of life and environment.

At the same time, the **Calabria Region**, through the **Political Department of Environment**, has scheduled a series of actions which have as priority the re-organistaion of the "environmental system", including actions for the role of environmental education, training and participation.

With the regional law n. 19 of 2002 concerning the protection of the Region of Calabria, a consultation with the social stakeholders has been planned and regulated in the process of formation and approval of territorial planning tools, providing also comments and suggestions on the drafting of the plan.

The procedure is presented step-by- step below:

- i. The City Council draws up a preliminary document of the plan.
- ii. The Mayor calls a planning conference, inviting the Province, the neighbouring municipalities, the environmental community, the local institutions of the protected areas involved, the economic and social stakeholders and the authorities involved.
- iii. At the Conference, the participants can submit proposals and written submissions, which are analysed by the municipal authority during the adoption of the Municipal Structural Plan (PSC). The Municipality draws up a special report.
- iv. The City Council adopts the Municipal Structural Plan (PSC) and a copy is sent to the provincial authority. The PSC also submitted to the headquarters of the city council for 60 days.
- v. Before the expiry date, the consultation process takes place with comments from the stakeholders involved:
 - a) Public authorities and organisations with public interest
 - b) Economic, social and professional entities
 - c) People or groups that stand to be directly affected.
- vi. The competent office of the province, within a 90-day period, notifies about any remarks on the Municipal Structural Plan (PSC) taking into account the regional

	<p>planning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> vii. The City Council submits the final Municipal Structural Plan (PSC) to the official Council for the required approval. viii. Following the approval of the final Municipal Structural Plan (PSC) by the City Council, a full copy of the approved plan is transferred to the Province and the City, filed for free consultation. ix. The notice of the plan's approval is posted in the legal publication of the Region of Calabria. <p>The regional law also allows the municipalities to activate (in accordance with article 11 of the law) workshops of participation (district or regional) for consultation with citizens, business organisations, cultural and environmental associations dealing with strategic choices for approval of structural plans and environmental reports. Nevertheless, these procedures do not always provide an effective intervention and full involvement of the citizens.</p> <p><i>Regulations, directives, decisions and other acts and procedures elaboration by public authorities</i></p> <p>The information and public communication are governed, in general terms (not only in relation to environmental issues), by a major body of law, comprising: the Legislative Decree no. 80/98, the Law 29/93, the Law 150/2000 and the Legislative Decree no. 165/01. These rules require governmental organisations to adopt criteria for transparency and impartiality. Therefore, appropriate structures for informing the public should be established and coordinated. In accordance, every public administration must adopt a "URP" - Public Relations Office and a communication plan; and every governmental structure must implement a series of public communication and dissemination activities. Moreover, Local Agenda (LA) 21 is a tool by which the administration defines not only its goals of protecting the environment but also the strategies and actions put into practice. Through this process, the administration opens a dialogue with citizens, local associations and businesses in order to collect opinions on an action or a plan agreed between the authorities and the local communities. The monitoring process LA21 in Calabria is supervised by the Department of Environmental Policies.</p>
<p>Public organisations involved in environmental decision making</p>	<p>The Calabria Region is the authority responsible for issuing the Integrated Environmental Authorisation (IEA) procedure through the Political Department of Environment as the competent authority for granting an authorisation. The IPPC desk is also active for industrial activities, while the system INFEA (Information on Environmental Education) constitutes a network of regional authorities for environmental education.</p> <p>The Environmental Agencies System (APAT-ARPA-APPA) is responsible for the technical and scientific environmental data collection, procession, monitoring and distribution. The Environmental Agencies System coordinates informative and educational initiatives based on quantity and quality data presentation in order to promote environmental awareness.</p> <p>The Regional Agency for Environmental Protection of Calabria (ARPACAL), the instrumental entity of the Region, has the responsibility to assist technically and scientifically the local authorities and other stakeholders who, in various capacities, operate in activities such as the prevention and protection of the environment, by surveying and monitoring various environmental parameters.</p> <p>The Ministry for the Environment and protection of land – MATT is responsible for disseminating environmental information to the state and raising awareness on environmental issues (www.minambiente.it).</p> <p>The Political Department of Environment is responsible for the planning, coordination and implementation of environmental awareness and education initiatives.</p>
<p>Stakeholders</p>	<p>The most recognisable stakeholders in Locride area in Calabria Region are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o the APAT, responsible for the overall coordination and relations with the

European network EIONet

- o the **Regional Focal Point**, taking the role of reference points on the ground
- o the **National Topic Centres**, which provide operational support for the management of data and information concerning specific environmental themes through a series of related institutions.

APAT produces a series of important documents, such as country's reports (for example: report on waste, report on air quality in urban environments), and publishes and distributes each year the "yearbook" of environmental data. It also manages and publishes online environmental databases: GELSO (Good practices for local sustainability), CORINAIR-IPCC (Inventory of emissions to air), INES (Register on the release and transfer of pollutants), BRACE (National database on quality air) and data on Marine Meteorology.

The main sources of information for the public authorities are the various institutions and organisations commissioned to carry out studies and to collect data. Among these are agencies for environmental protection such as APAT, ARPA, APPA, CNR, ENEA, ISTAT, ICRAM, ISS, Universities, NGOs, etc.

Public and young participation in the pilot area

In the field of waste cycle management, several Municipalities of Locride have promoted the involvement of young people through the contact with the local schools. In this context, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed on "information, awareness and education for sustainable development" between the Political Department of Environment of the Calabria Region and the Regional School Office - General Directorate for Calabria, to strengthen activities on environmental education.

In addition, some schools implement successful projects in the field of awareness on environmental issues. At the same time, various networks, social associations, public institutions and young citizens are active in raising awareness on environmental protection.

In the field of structured dialogue on the European model, the association Civitas Solis (www.civitassolis.org) that operates in the youth field of Locride, in collaboration with the Association of Municipalities of Locride and the Calabria region, has implemented, as part of the European Youth Programme, a number of successful territorial seminars of structured dialogue. The seminars involve the municipal councils of youth and other voluntary groups in a process of innovative debate on social and environmental related topics. The association has specific agreements with both the Municipality of St. Agata del Bianco and with various municipalities of Locride in the field of youth policy and management of youth centers.

The Municipality of Roccella Jonica (one of the 42 municipalities of Locride) won the prize "Start-up" in 2013 for achieving the increase of **waste recycling** from 14% to 74% through curbside collection. After taking part in a training course delivered by the Calabria Regional authority (CONAI), the Municipality has obtained funding by a regional call for the creation of the Center of Municipal Collection. CONAI has also collaborated with the City Council in the design and implementation of the "door to door" collection service of paper, glass, light multi-material (plastic and metal), organic, and undifferentiated, which has been promoted through a major campaign and has been received with great enthusiasm by all citizens.

Interest in STEP

The procedures followed for the construction of the paths of structured dialogue with young people organized by Civitas Solis can be part of the STEP pilot. There can be synergies with schools in the Locride area that carry out pilot awareness activities about **waste recycling** and environmental protection, or with environmental monitoring activities organised by social networks such as the "**Observatory Environmental Law for life**", the Corsecom, and the territorial Third sector Forum. With regard to the surrounding municipalities and the City of Sant'Agata del Bianco, activities involving citizens in the

1.2.6.3 Mollet del Vallès Municipality – Spain

Mollet del Vallès is a city of the metropolitan area of Barcelona. Its population has an average age of 38,5 years.

Mollet del Vallès Municipality

Environmental decision making procedures

Decisions on specific activities with a significant impact on the environment

An indicative example is presented: Within the **European Sustainable and Safe Mobility Week**, the Mollet del Vallès city council turned a street in the city centre, namely the Granada street, into a pedestrian area. This action was initially conceived as a month-long pilot test starting on the European Sustainable and Safe Mobility Week.

This initiative took into account citizen participation by giving a significant role to the neighbouring citizens of the street, the municipal school Col·legis Nous located in Granada street and the care home located in a nearby street. During the initial phase, the neighbours were sent a letter with information about the pilot test to be carried out and the changes that were planned to be implemented. Signs were also put up to ensure wide exposure of the action.

In the second phase, the management of the school Col·legis Nous engaged with the project and asked for their collaboration in organising several acts during the European Sustainable and Safe Mobility Week. The school management therefore organised, through the school council, a series of activities in the street such as drawing classes, chalk painting classes, psychomotricity classes, etc. At the same time, the care home organised activities in the street (reading and psychomotricity workshops). The aim was to enable the neighbours and the related stakeholders so as to make this initiative successful.

The Mollet del Vallès city council, taking into account the feedback from the stakeholders involved, decided to maintain the street as a pedestrian area permanently. One of the key factors in the making of this decision was the explicit request of the Col·legis Nous school.

Environment related plans, programmes and policies, including land-use and sectoral programmes, environmental actions and all levels of formed environmental policies

In 2005 the Urban Mobility Plan received its final approval. The approval of this plan was the result of the work carried out by the city in the last few years. Since 2005 Mollet del Vallès municipality has a citizen participation body, the **Mobility Panel** for conducting debates and finding solutions in order to provide a closer to more sustainable city mobility.

During the elaboration of the **Urban Mobility Plan**, the citizen participation process was planned with the aim to include visions and knowledge of citizens and seek agreement on action proposals. Neighbours and shop owners associations, as well as the Mobility Panel, took part in this process. To be more specific, an action called "Mou-te" was launched, consisting of a ride by bicycle to spot strong and weak points of the roads and pedestrian mobility.

During these actions different contributions from the participating citizens were taken into account. These citizens belonged to different collectivities (youth, people with mobility problems, families, etc.) Their contributions were put together in a

document that was presented later in a citizen participation workshop (**Extended Mobility Panel**), where those same citizens who had taken part in the "Mou-te" programme were able to talk about their experiences. As a result a document was drafted, called Participative Diagnostic, which complemented the Technical Diagnostic document also presented during the workshop.

Regulations, directives, decisions and other acts and procedures elaboration by public authorities

The Catalan Government Mobility Law, Law 9/2013, requires that the drafting of Mobility Plans include a citizen participation process. In this sense, the Mollet Urban Mobility Plan enjoyed a great level of involvement from associations and citizens in the city.

City Board rules and regulations

Within the possibilities for development and application of Mollet Citizen Participation Regulations, on 24th February 2012, the Mollet del Vallès established the **City Board**. It includes representatives from each municipal group, a representative from each specialised municipal council (chosen by each council themselves), 10 representatives from trade unions, the most representative professionals and businesspeople of the city, 5 individuals of special relevance and 4 more citizens chosen randomly from the census. In addition, the City Board has the opportunity to take part in the annually plenary meeting, to present the work that this body of citizens has carried out.

Municipal Registry of Participative Citizens

The **Municipal Registry of Participative Citizens** started to operate in 2014, and more than a hundred people have joined to collaborate in participative processes in the areas of rural-urban spaces, services to citizens and economy-employment. This registry is a space for all those people who are not part of the association's network and want to actively collaborate in the activities and plans of the city. They will be part of the new specialised citizen participation municipal councils, and have already been invited to collaborate in a special commission of the City Board and the STEP project.

Citizen participation regulations - Environmental Council

There is a Municipal environmental council, one of the total nine specialised councils. These councils empower debates and suggestions among councilmen, bodies and experts related to the specialisation of the council. Nowadays, these councils have grouped in three greater councils (the Social, Natural and Economical) in order to continue and facilitate the work and the implementation of these three main directions of work, included in the city **Strategic Plan Mollet 2025**.

Over the years of work of the environmental council, its main task is to monitor, make proposals and guide the stakeholders so as to achieve better environmental planning and efficient environmental policy making.

Public organisations involved in environmental decision making

The main organisations involved in the environmental decision-making are the state government and the autonomous government, which apply the European directives and create their own regulations.

In the case of Catalonia it is the **Generalitat de Catalunya** (autonomous government) which has executive responsibilities regarding the environment. More specifically, the department which is mainly involved in environmental decision-making is the **Territory and Sustainability Department**. The role of the Catalonia Waste Agency

	<p>(ARC) and Catalan Institute of Energy (ICAEN) should also be noted, as they set the regulations regarding waste and energy management respectively.</p> <p>At the province level the body which offers guidance and collaboration to municipalities in order to promote policies, regulations, and actions in the areas of mobility, air quality, energy saving, environmental awareness, etc. is the Diputació de Barcelona.</p>
<p>Stakeholders</p>	<p>The main stakeholders involved in environmental issues are the following:</p> <p>Consortium for Waste Management in Vallès Oriental: A body consisting of municipalities in the county, responsible for offering support to city councils in the waste management area. In addition, the public company SAVOSA, created by the Consortium of Waste Management in Vallès Oriental, offers to the municipalities direct services regarding the collection of general waste, paper and cardboard, plastic, glass, as well as the management of the municipal waste plants. It also offers environmental awareness activities to all the member municipalities, aimed at children and adults, mainly regarding the promotion of selective waste disposal in waste prevention.</p> <p>Besòs Consortium: Public local body in charge of managing rivers and riverbeds, which also advises and collaborates with the city council in the water cycle reservation and the management of urban sanitation.</p> <p>Regional Council of Vallès Oriental: This body is promoting the Supramunicipal Plan for the Improvement of the Air Quality in Vallès Oriental.</p> <p>Gallecs Consortium: The Consortium of Gallecs Space is the managing body of the local rural natural area covering 733,51 ha. It represents the Generalitat de Catalunya via the departments of Territory and Sustainability, Agriculture, Cattle, Fishing, Food and Environment, and the councils of Mollet del Vallès, Santa Perpètua de Mogoda, Palau-solità i Plegamans, Parets del Vallès, Llicà de Vall and Montcada i Reixac.</p>
<p>Public and young participation in the pilot area</p>	<p>For involving citizens, especially young ones, in the environmental decision-making processes, it is essential first to raise their awareness in all environmental fields. In this sense, Mollet City Council, together with the Diputació de Barcelona are organising several environmental related activities such as bicycle repair workshops, recycled oil soap workshops, efficient cooking workshops, etc. Many of these activities are promoted through the Municipality's resources, as well as via different agencies and associations, while another information channel is the Youth Service in Mollet City Council.</p> <p>In addition, the first Tuesday of each month there is an environmental information point (the green stall) in the weekly street market that promotes environmental awareness regarding water, air quality, energy saving and waste. This initiative also gathers the citizens' contributions concerning the environment. An example is the surveys that being carried out in order to assess the street cleaning and the waste system collection of the Municipality. Additionally there are surveys for the use of water or the energy usage practices at home. This procedure gives insight into the opinion and practices of citizens and the possibility to include them in the relevant decision-making processes.</p> <p>Moreover, through the Council of Children (CIM) in Mollet del Vallès, students from municipal schools are able to deal with and talk about environmental issues such as mobility and energy saving in cooperation with the Municipal Technical Services.</p>

	<p>Finally, another approach is related to the energy saving project 50/50 (2013-2016). The project includes five public primary schools and three sports facilities. The aim is to achieve energy savings in these facilities. The project is based in the 50/50 concept, that is, 50% of the economic savings through energy savings (electricity and gas) are returned to the facilities and the other 50% goes to the energy suppliers' payment. One of key elements of the project is the constitution of the energy team, composed of students, the school's director, the teaching staff and the municipal technicians. Every school enrolls such a team, so as to develop the facility Action Plan. Each school has decided how to invest the energy savings, with the help, in some cases, of the municipal technicians. In most cases part of the energy savings has been destined to buying school material and to pay for the investments required in the Action Plan. As a result of this project, students have been able to express their opinion in the areas of efficiency and energy saving in their schools. Students can participate and vote for actions necessary for the school's operation, as well as for the usage of the funds obtained from energy saving. In this way students, and especially students who are part of the energy team, make their projects and actions implemented, using this knowledge to their own homes and lives.</p>
<p>Interest in STEP</p>	<p>The Mollet del Vallès Municipality has several procedures in which STEP can be used for public participation in decision-making, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mobility Board: Proposals and polls about the Urban Mobility Plan. ○ Mollet Children Council: Collaboration with young citizens in the design and implementation of environmental initiatives. ○ City Board: Public participation in the planning and implementation of the Mobility Plan, the Youth Plan or the Social Inclusion Plan, the Strategic City Plan Mollet 2025 and the municipal Plan. ○ Your proposal counts: Decision-making process for the municipal budget in which any citizen in Mollet del Vallès Municipality can make an investment proposal using predefined forms.

1.2.6.4 Valdemoro Municipality – Spain

Valdemoro City is a municipal district, located in the Southern zone of the autonomous community of Madrid, Spain. The population of Valdemoro is very young and active; 22% of the population is younger than 15 years old and 7% of the population is older than 65, a percentage that is significantly smaller than the 15% average of Madrid Region.

Valdemoro Municipality	
<p>Environmental decision making procedures</p>	<p><i>Decisions on specific activities with a significant impact on the environment</i></p> <p>An indicative example, on decision making process that promotes the value of environmental conservation for a controversial project, is presented. It concerns the proposed development of the farm "El Espartal", located at the east of the city of Valdemoro. The farm would include: 6.100 houses of different types, sports facilities, golf course, which includes municipal golf school, parks and other endowments, and also mentioned and highlighted a draft recovery Environmental Bolitas de Airón park and adjacent areas belonging to Vallejo Glen Brook. After this presentation many of the residents of the municipality were in disagreement with</p>

this development and arranged actions against it. Demonstrations and protests were organised against this decision and letters of protest were sent to both the **City Council** and the Community of Madrid in order to inform the municipal authorities and the media. The result of all these actions was the declaration of the El Espartal as a Special Area of Conservation as well as as a Zone of Cultural Interest by the Community of Madrid, with the category of Archaeological Zone.

Environment related plans, programmes and policies, including land-use and sectoral programmes, environmental actions and all levels of formed environmental policies

In 2009 the **Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan of Valdemoro** was promoted by the City Council in collaboration with the Institute for Diversification and Saving of Energy (IDAE), the Ministry of Industry and the Regional Transport Consortium of Madrid. The Sustainable Mobility Plan of Valdemoro is a strategy paper for the challenges that will arise in the coming years regarding the mobility of pedestrians and vehicles in the city and the environmental effects. It is a tool for planning the development of Valdemoro, offering alternatives to sustainable, effective and comfortable traffic arrangement. The Plan itself is a large study, conducted over two years by a team of engineers, architects, planners and other technicians. For two years a large team of technicians has analysed the current situation of mobility in Valdemoro, made a diagnosis and proposed a set of actions to achieve sustainable forms of travel. Over 5.000 hours were spent in study and consultation for the analysis of the development of Valdemoro and the upgrade of the needs of the city, while included: Descriptions of the current situation, conclusions on the mobility in Valdemoro, proposals to address the needs of future mobility in Valdemoro and solutions to be implemented (<http://www.valdemoro.es/plan-movilidad-urbana>).

Regulations, directives, decisions and other acts and procedures elaboration by public authorities

Every project has an environmental impact that is exposed in municipal boards and on the web so they can conduct consultation and must be accompanied by an **Environmental Impact Report** so as to be approved or not. Therefore, any citizen is able to register a suggestion or a non-acceptance remark. These registrations are sent to the appropriate municipal department within 2-3 days and are studied by the municipal officers who issue a report within a week. This report is part of the record with the non-acceptance or the suggestions included. After the public consultation period the project is approved by the corresponding municipal body and moves to the implementation phase. At this stage the citizens is able to make complaints if the project does not conform to the characteristics that were approved. This procedure is compatible with orders, laws, guidelines, royal decrees, ordinances and regulations from different public administrations such as local state administrations, regional and national.

- Law 19/2013, of December 9, transparency, access to information and good governance. (BOE 12/10/2013).
- Law 21/2013, of December 9, Environmental Assessment. (BOE 11/12/2013).
- Law 27/2006, of July 18, by which the rights of access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters are regulated (incorporates the Directives 2003/4 / EC and 2003 / 35 / EC). (BOE 19-07-2006).
- Order AAA / 1601/2012 of 26 June, by which application instructions are held in the Department of Law 27/2006, of July 18, by which the rights of

	<p>access to information are regulated, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters. (BOE 19-07-2012).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Instrument of Ratification of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, done at Aarhus (Denmark) on 25 June 1998. (BOE 16-02-2005).
<p>Public organisations involved in environmental decision making</p>	<p>Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment (http://www.magrama.gob.es/)</p> <p>The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment is the competent department in the field of State Administration for proposing and implementing government policy on: Fighting climate change, Protection of natural heritage, biodiversity and sea water, Rural development, Agriculture, livestock and fisheries, Feeding.</p> <p>Council of Environment, Local Government and Planning of the Community of Madrid (www.madrid.org/medioambiente/)</p> <p>The Council of Environment has regional powers on agriculture and rural development, environment, environmental assessment and territorial planning strategy and land.</p> <p>Department of Planning, Human Resources and Services of Valdemoro Municipality - The Environmental Department (http://www.valdemoro.es/urbanismoyservicios)</p> <p>The Municipal Environmental Department carries out the work in the following areas: Maintenance of parks and gardens, appliances and furniture collection, Municipal solid waste, animal shelter, spot clean and insect and rodent control in public jurisdiction.</p>
<p>Stakeholders</p>	<p>Ecologists in Action (http://www.ecologistasenaccion.org/)</p> <p>“Ecologists in Action” is a federation of over 300 environmental groups active in several towns and cities. Their main goal is to emerge social ecology, face other social problems derived from environmental issues and prevent ecological crisis. Accordingly, they perform awareness campaigns, public complaints or legal actions against those who damage the environment, while also produce concrete and viable proposals providing an operable alternative.</p> <p>Greenpeace Spain (http://www.greenpeace.es/)</p> <p>Greenpeace is an independent global campaigning organisation that acts to change attitudes and behaviour, to protect and conserve the environment and to promote peace by: Facing climate change, Preventing pollution and abuse of the oceans, land, air and fresh water, Protecting biodiversity, Working for ending the nuclear threats, Creating a toxic free future, Campaigning for sustainable agriculture and Promoting peace, global disarmament and non-violence.</p> <p>WWF/Adena Spain (http://www.wwf.es)</p> <p>WWF works for a living planet and its mission is to stop the environmental degradation of the planet and build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature: Conserving the world's biological diversity, Ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable and Promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.</p> <p>Ecologists in Action El Espartal Valdemoro (www.colectivospartal.org/)</p> <p>In 2005, the citizens of Valdemoro decided to defend sustainable development, social ecology through the public service system so as to defend the environment.</p>

Ecologists in Action El Espartal Valdemoro organisation is a space for citizen participation and democracy, where everyone has the same ability to make decisions and proposals. It works independently from any political and trade union and provides its own initiatives. Keeping an ideological and economic autonomy, the association promotes the collaboration with other associations, NGOs, authorities and citizens' movements, especially at the local level. Concerning the regional issues, Ecologists are looking for broaden contacts and activities in order to create a sustainable regional environment.

Initiatives Association for the Welfare of Animals (AIBA) – Valdemoro (<http://aibaweb.jimdo.com/>)

The Association for the Welfare of Animals is a non-profit entity whose main field of activity is confined to the Community of Madrid (Spain). Their purpose is the protection and welfare of the animals. The understanding of the broadest sense and the commitment through education and socialisation in animals awareness are essential tools for problem solving, as well as the recognition of animal rights.

In addition, there are more local stakeholders participating in the environmental impact procedures such as the Ecologists in Action El Espartal Valdemoro, the Initiatives Association for the Welfare of Animals and other active, environment related organisations.

Public and young participation in the pilot area

Although the environmental implications of various projects may have an effect on young citizens, their participation in decision-making is limited. The main initiatives for young citizens are presented by the Department of Planning, Human Resources and Services of Valdemoro Municipality (The Environmental department):

The **Waste management in our town** initiative designed for students (age: 12 to 18) as a workshop to highlight the importance of the proper waste management and the best practices so as to achieve waste control.

A walk through the Bolitas de Airon Park aims at students aged from 6 to 18 years old and introduces the Bolitas de Airón Park describing both the park's ecosystem and wildlife through a guided tour.

The **Visit the Clean Point** initiative concerns students from 6 to 16 years old and explains the way that the waste facility works. The initiative also promotes the use of clean points, while creates environmental awareness on raw material management.

The **Animalaula** initiative designed for students from 6 to 12 years old in order to express the benefits and the obligations that entail living with pets. The Initiatives Association for the Welfare of Animals (AIBA) – Valdemoro, as an active partner, will feature volunteers so as to conduct talks in schools.

Saving energy is one of the activities in the **schools** proposed by the students themselves. Activities are proposed by students and voted by all (students, teachers, service personnel, parents, etc) through a consultation phase and aim to the energy improvement of the school operation. Savings are invested in works of improvement or upgrading school equipment. These activities derive from the school community. At the end of the second year of the initiative's operation some of the participating schools applied for participation in the program of the Community of Madrid "ECO-SCHOOLS", evolving their experience in energy saving to a higher level of implementation.

Despite the low turnout, there are initiatives of young people themselves concerned about environmental issues are organized to achieve the objectives proposed and

	thus make visible the needs and problems in society. This youth initiative leading to the creation of youth associations and movements of awareness that get very good results and is another channel of participation for young people which it is promoted from the Youth House and from the area of Citizen Participation.
Interest in STEP	<p>Valdemoro Municipality will take the chance to promote participatory tools in order to enhance the suggestions, ideas and opinion of the young people focusing on environmental issues namely recycling, saving energy, responsible consumption, urban mobility. Some indicative proposals for pilot cases are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Awards for the best action taken by schools to energy saving and environmental education. ○ Awareness activities and environmental motivation in the House of Youth and the schools of Valdemoro. ○ Information and activities promoting recycling and responsible consumption. ○ Construction and proper use of bike lanes in the Valdemoro Municipality.

1.2.6.5 Hatay Metropolitan Municipality – Turkey

Hatay is one of the major cities in the Mediterranean region of Turkey with its population of 1,503,066 and with its 12 districts. Hatay is a growing city and recently became a Metropolitan Municipality.

Hatay Metropolitan Municipality	
Environmental decision making procedures	<p>Although Turkey is not a party to the Aarhus convention, the importance of environmental issues has considerably increased in last decades. As a result, public participation is foreseen in environmental policy.</p> <p>The environment Law published in the Official Gazette in August 11, 1983 (Law No. 2872) is Turkey's first framework of environmental legislation. A new regulation regarding the Environmental Permit and License ("the New Regulation"), published on September 10, 2014, went into effect on November 1, 2014. The New Regulation was issued and will be administered by the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning ("the MoE"). It continues to provide a legal framework for many regulations scattered throughout Turkish legislation that seek to clarify and elaborate its intentions, including Environment Impact Assessment ("EIA"). The aim of the Environment Law is not only to prevent and eliminate environmental pollution, and also to ensure management of natural and historic assets and land in such a way as to utilise its richness and preserve it for the future generations.</p> <p>Under both the Permit and License Regulations, it is required to obtain a single consolidated permit, which is valid for a period of five years, instead of obtaining separate environment permits (e.g., emission permit and water discharge permit). The New Regulation sets forth a temporary certificate, the "temporary activities certificate" and two types of permits, the (i) environmental permit and the (ii) environmental permit and license. The environmental permit covers air emissions, environmental noise, deep sea discharge and hazardous waste discharge, whereas the environment license addresses the technical sufficiency of the applicant facility.</p> <p>The facilities listed in Annexes 1 and 2 of the New Regulation must obtain either a Permit or a Permit and License. Activities deemed to have the greatest</p>

environmental pollution impact are listed under Annex 1, whereas activities deemed to have a less polluting impact are listed under Annex 2. Activities under Annex 1 must obtain a Permit or Permit and License from the MoE, whereas the activities listed in Annex 2 must obtain a Permit or Permit and License from the Provincial Directorates of the Environment and Urban Planning agency.

EIA is compulsory for all large-scale economic activities. Projects for large-scale infrastructure, residential development, energy production facilities, various industrial facilities (for example, cement, fertilizer, sugar, tobacco processing, and tire production industries, etc.), and leather processing facilities fall under this category. Furthermore, development projects on agricultural lands, wetlands, lakes, and eco-systems rich in bio-diversity, as well as lands protected under national law or according to international agreements, are subject to EIA.

According to the new State Bidding Law (2002), the bidding process cannot begin before the appropriate EIA certificate is obtained for the projects requiring the preparation of EIA reports.

Methods of participation into the EIA process in Turkey include both “submitting views in written form” and “holding meetings”. An important and positive point in this process is that each party is bestowed with all the 4 possible opportunities to voice out their views. In practice, the participation in the EIA process in Turkey needs to be improved. Methods proposed to challenge the problems in this respect include: to identify and implement methods of participation which are most applicable to local conditions, to encourage the establishment of environmental organisations, to enable the more effective participation of local universities, NGOs, and professional organisations in the EIA process. Also, the Eight Five Year Development Plan calls for new regulations to increase the efficiency of the EIA process. The general public tends to exercise its participation and scrutiny functions through NGOs, local governments, and the media.

Municipalities are responsible for projects on environmental infrastructure, drinking water and sewerage services, waste collection, disposal of wastes and appropriate land use development plans in urban areas. In accordance with Municipal Law no. 5393, environment and environmental health, cleaning and solid waste, afforestation, and services related parks and green-fields are under the authority and responsibility of the municipality. The actions to be taken according to these services are:

- Providing tap, drinking and industrial water
- Establishing wastewater and rainwater drainage systems
- Collecting, transporting, storage, disposal and recycling of the solid wastes
- Identifying the excavation solid and debris dumping areas; liquefied petroleum gas storage spaces; construction products, firewood, coal and wreckage storage and selling spaces.

In addition to these activities, municipalities’ involvement in the decision-making process on environmental issues, except for routine environmental inspections, takes place as follows:

- a. Upon a complaint submission, which could be both written and verbally or via e-municipality systems, to the related departments, officials open a file for the control.

- b. Providing opinion on the EIA application files and EIA reports. And also via attending Public attendance meeting and Investigating-Evaluation Commission for the projects in the EIA Directive included in Annex-1 list of the examinations.
- c. Carrying out many studies in the field of R&D, planning, study etc. for the purpose of solving environmental issues within municipal authority, duty and responsibilities. The Municipality discusses the problems with other authorities if the situation isn't in our scope of authority.

In particular, the Municipality's decision making process on environmental issues starts with the study of the related department about the specific subject. Also, citizens can submit a petition about their **environmental concerns** to the related department of the municipality. The municipal council, which convenes monthly under the presidency of the mayor, evaluates these environmental plans, projects and demands in accordance with the regulations, directives and acts. Then, the final decision of the council is performed by the order of the mayor.

- o At first, the process starts by a complaint or demand.
- o Transactions can be made in many ways such as the oral announcement, public announcement, posters, brochures, etc.
- o Topics to be included in the environmental studies, which are related to the public involvement, are: to study the remarks of the public for the planned projects, taking ideas and opinions. And also, to organise events and seminars on environmental cleanup and awareness on water consumption.

The **Municipal council**, which convenes on the first week of each month, is the decision making body of the municipality. It submits citizens' demands, detections of the municipal officials, and offers of the NGOs to the mayoralty. The subjects which are approved by the mayoralty are discussed at the municipal council meetings. The offers, which are found acceptable, are transferred to the related commission. After the examination of the related commission's detailed report, the subject is finalised at the next month's municipal council.

- o In metropolitan municipalities: the environmental plan is made by the municipality itself and approved directly by the metropolitan municipal council.
- o Municipalities are supposed to build and operate domestic solid waste disposal plants. The ones who benefit from these services are obliged to attend the expenses like investment, management, maintenance, repair and reclamation. Solid waste collection, transportation, and disposal charges, which cannot be used apart from the related services, are collected from the ones that benefit from these services.

<p>Public organisations involved in environmental decision making</p>	<p>Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning of Turkey (http://www.csb.gov.tr/english/)</p> <p>Ministry office of the Republic of Turkey, responsible for the environment, public works, and urban planning. The Ministry's mission is to fulfill the works and services regarding planning, construction, transformation and environment management in order to supply cities having high quality of life and sustainable environment with regulatory, supervisory, participatory and solution-oriented perceptions.</p> <p>Environment and Urban Planning Provincial Directorate of Hatay Governorship</p> <p>Provincial branches of the Ministry of Environment represent the Ministry at the local level. The main functions of the provincial branches are: to take measures in</p>
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order to prevent and minimise pollution caused by land based polluters and to inspect any activity that might threaten the ecology and cause sea pollution; to control facilities approved by local authorities and their waste collection, refining and discharge systems according to the standards set by the Environmental Law and related regulations; to observe and control every activity within the local area that affects the environment and to start necessary processes to stop these activities and to inform the Ministry about the requests of the institutions; and to carry out administrative tasks of the Ministry. The Directorate also runs the EIA procedures.

Hatay City Council

Municipal council is the decision making body of the municipality. It conducts discussions and consultation activities during municipal council meetings so as to provide opinion on specific environmental issues.

Environmental Protection & Control Department of Hatay Metropolitan Municipality

The duties of the Directorate of Environmental Protection and Control Department of Hatay Metropolitan Municipality are to coordinate environmental arrangement of historical areas and green zones allocated in the Municipality's development plan, determination of natural protection areas, planning, maintenance and repair of areas to be forested in accordance with five-year plans.

Stakeholders

The environmental protection activities taking place in the last decade have led to the development of many national, regional and local environmental institutions in Turkey. The main stakeholders, which are actively involved in the environmental issues in order to create public awareness and encourage public participation are:

The Environment Foundation of Turkey (TCV)

It was established in 1978. The Foundation promotes the environment through research, publication of books, newsletters, brochures and other information media, and emphasises creating public awareness. The TCV has been a member of the UNEP National Committee since May 1992.

The Society for the Protection of Nature (DHKD)

It was founded in 1975. The society works for the conservation of biological diversity and natural resources, encourages the sustainable use of natural resources, increases public awareness of nature conservation, carries out projects aimed at protecting significant and threatened ecosystems and lobbies official institutions and agencies in support of these goals. It has 12,000 supporting members. The Society is an associate member of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Bird Life Partner of Turkey.

The Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion for Reforestation and Protection of Natural Habitats (TEMA)

It was founded in 1992. The chief aim of the foundation is to raise public awareness of several environmental issues posing great danger to Turkey's future. Land erosion, deforestation, loss of farmland productivity, and threats to biodiversity are their main concerns. TEMA develops and carries out model projects in rural development, rangeland rehabilitation, and reforestation.

The Turkish Marine Environment Protection Association (TURMEPA)

It was founded in 1994. The objective of the Association is the protection of marine pollution.

Mustafa Kemal University- Hatay- Environmental Engineering Department

Researchers conduct projects in cooperation with the public and private sector. It offers consultancy services as well as serves for education and training on the following issues: identifying environmental pollution, preventing environmental pollution and protecting the environment; chemical, biological, microbiological, toxicological, hygienic, legal and economic studies on polluted resources (water, land, air); carrying out environmental impact assessments; physical, chemical and biological treatment plants that aim to prevent environmental pollution, flue gas and exhaust treatment tools; environmental planning, landscape design, legal and economic issues; new environmental technologies; and environmental hygiene.

Antakya Environment Protection Association

It was founded in 1990, aims to protect the environment and inform citizens, particularly young people, on environmental issues.

Public and young participation in the pilot area

With regard to the pilot area and considering the environmental issues that Hatay Metropolitan Municipality involves, citizens are able to participate in environmental decision making process both by submitting petitions to Council.

The Solution Offers Symposium about Environmental Issues of Hatay (<http://www.hataycevresempozyumu.com/>) is a national symposium, organised between the dates of 28-30 May 2015 under the guidance of Hatay Metropolitan Municipality and Mustafa Kemal University and with the contributions of several NGOs. The purpose of the symposium is to put the scientists, related sectors, people works on decision making and supervision positions, students and young people to form a platform that facilitates them to discuss environmental issues. The environmental decisions taken by the Solution Offers Symposium about environmental issues of Hatay are evaluated in accordance with the regulations, directives and acts by the municipal council. The affirmed suggestions are directly added to municipality's five-year environmental strategic plan.

Within the boundaries of Hatay city, power plants, tramp vessels, slaughterhouses, industrial sites (auto mechanic repair, auto body, etc.), activities in the leather sites (tannery, etc.) have significant effects. Besides, the contaminants originating from household waste pose significant pressure on the environment.

Interest in STEP

The Hatay Municipality has an interest to implement participation activities in relation to the following activities:

- Asi river delta is in borders of Hatay province and forms the delta plain in southernmost of Turkey. Thus, the **Asi River Reclamation project** will be addressed not only as a local river training project, but also a Mediterranean Basin issue. Within the scope of Hatay Metropolitan Municipality coast reclamation project, Hatay's waste water management plan will be updated

The environmental projects of the Hatay Metropolitan Municipality can be related to STEP pilot implementation, namely:

- **The City Park project:** Hatay's brand new heart-warming urban space which

is built on a 30.000 m² area, has three-storey car parks with 417 vehicle capacity, playground, tennis and basketball courts. This project will come into service in the year 2015.

- **Power Generation Plant** (Solid waste use): As an alternative source of energy with the related works for this power generation facility are put into action.
- **Waste water treatment facility project**
- **Defne Şelale district recreation field project**
- **Hatay city Council project**: Single problems and proposals are going to be discussed in a democratic manner within the context of the Hatay City Council.
- **Hatay Metropolitan Municipality super service desk project**: Inform citizens and provide them the easiest access to the municipality's services, while empower consultation and awareness.

1.3 Principles

1.3.1 Levels of public participation

According to the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe¹⁰³, the levels of public participation can be classified as follows: the informative, the consulting, the involving and the collaborative level (Figure 7). The form of public participation in each level may become clearer with the following example of decision making process through an Environmental Impact Assessment on specific activities.

The first step is to keep the **public informed** of the status of the proposed project and the EIA process. Goals at the informative level can range from providing information to interested parties on an as-requested basis, or more proactively making information available to all interested parties to create awareness of the process and issues.

Public participation activities at the **consulting level** are used to obtain input that will be considered in the EIA or the decision making procedure. Often this input is gathered in response to a specific proposal (e.g., about the project scope) or to the EIA report itself. The consulting level usually involves the distribution or presentation of a report, proposal or recommendation, and a request for public comments on the information provided.

Public participation activities at the **involving level** include opportunities for dialogue with the interested parties. Within the involving level, the communication is increased, the impact is analysed via reports and studies, the consultation is strengthened, and public input, issues and concerns are taken into consideration. Involvement activities should start with mutually accepted objectives, such as jointly identifying and addressing one or more specific issues.

Public participation activities at the **collaborating level** consist of more active interaction and partnership than the other levels. They entail seeking direct advice and ideas from the interested parties to work together to identify and develop options and potential solutions.

¹⁰³ Szentendre, 1996. The Regional Environmental Center, Awakening Participation: Building capacity for public participation in environmental decision making for CEE, Module 2: Principles of public participations, p. 46.

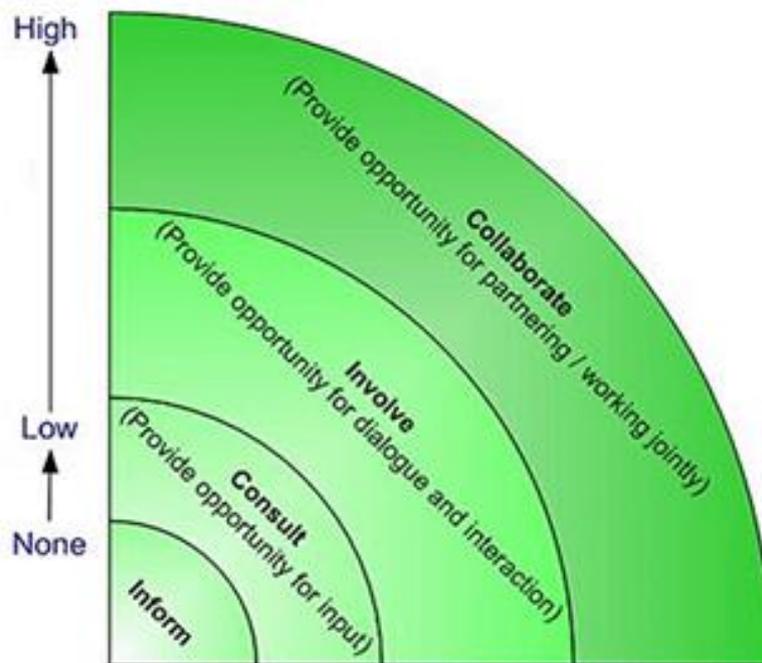


Figure 7 - Levels of public participation in environmental decision-making processes¹⁰³

A similar analysis from the International Association for Public Participation entails that public participation involves five elements in increasing order of public influence¹⁰⁴:

- Inform: to provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.
- Consult: to obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.
- Involve: to work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered
- Collaborate: to partner with the public in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
- Empower: to place final decision making in the hands of the public.

Another classification, according to Luyet's et al. (2012)¹⁰⁵, is based on stakeholder involvement. In this case, the types of public and stakeholders participation are also divided in five levels in relation to the rate of their participation. The levels contain the information, the consultation, the collaboration, the co-decision and the empowerment level. Information for the participation process for each level is presented in Table 4.

Table 4- Levels of public's and stakeholder's participation in environmental decision-making processes¹⁰⁵

Level of stakeholder participation	Information about stakeholder participation process
Information	Provision of information regarding a specific project.
Consultation	Presentation of the project to stakeholders. They express their suggestions and after that the decisions are made with or without taking into account stakeholders' opinion.
Collaboration	Decision making process takes into due account stakeholders input.

¹⁰⁴ International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). 2007. 'Spectrum of Public Participation'. Available online: <http://www.iap2.org/>

¹⁰⁵ Luyet V, Schlaepfer R, Parlange M. B., Buttler A., 2012, Review – A framework to implement Stakeholder participation in environmental projects, Journal of Environmental Management, 111, p. 213-219.

Co-decision	Stakeholders cooperate with the public in order to get an agreement for a solution and then they implement it.
Empowerment	Stakeholders are delegated in order to make decisions over the development and implementation of a project.

1.3.2 Stakeholder identification and engagement

1.3.2.1 Stakeholder identification

Nowadays, there are several stakeholder identification techniques^{106,107,108,109}. Most of them are based on a set of criteria such as proximity, economy, use and social values to identify stakeholders, economic interest, principles or values.

The choice of a specific identification technique in environmental decision making will mainly depend on the context, the participation phase and the available resources. The integration of all stakeholders is one principle for a successful participation. Failing to identify some stakeholders may introduce bias in the subsequent stages of the process. Another potential consequence of unidentified stakeholders is the possibility for them to appear later and have negative impacts on the project¹⁰⁵. Performing the identification process with several heterogeneous persons can minimise these risks. On the other hand, involving all possible stakeholders may increase the complexity and the cost of the participation process. The challenge is to find the optimum balance between these risks.

Taking into account the needs of the environmental decision-making processes, it is possible to recognise some indicative stakeholder categories that affect or can be affected by activities with environmental implications or specific environmental projects.

The stakeholders who can be identified by type fall into the following categories:

1. **Statutory** stakeholders are authorities who get involved in consultation and engagement by law or because of the positions they hold. This type of stakeholders involves authorities from all administrative levels, such as environmental departments, competent consulting agencies and local councils. These authorities may exert very strong influence in decision-making processes and they always know about local engagements and are invited to participate.
2. **Environmental groups** are entities such as NGOs, local or national initiatives, activists etc. Environmental groups' participation is voluntary, and they are significant as they represent the interests of a large part of the public.
3. Private or public **organisations with particular expertise**. These stakeholders have specialised knowledge about an environmental issue or a particular expertise, for example academics with special knowledge about a specific issue.
4. The **public** in general. Public, as would be expected, represents public opinion about an environmental issue.

¹⁰⁶ Creighton, J.L., 1986. Managing Conflict in Public Involvement Settings: Training Manual for Bonneville Power Administration, Pablo Alto, California. Creighton and Creighton, Los Gatos, CA.

¹⁰⁷ Selman, P., 2004. Community participation in the planning and management of cultural landscape. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management* 47, 365-392.

¹⁰⁸ Mitchell, R.K., Agle, B.R., Wood, D.J., 1997. Toward a theory of stakeholder identification and salience: the principle of who and what really count. *Academy of Management Review* 22, 853-886.

¹⁰⁹ Stanghellini, P.S., Collentine, D., 2008. Stakeholder discourse and water management-implementation of the participatory model CATCH in a Northern Italian alpine sub-catchment. *Hydrological Earth System Science* 12, 317-331.

Another way to identify stakeholders is by their relationship to the activities with environmental implications or specific environmental projects.

1. **Primary stakeholders** are the people or groups that stand to be directly affected, either positively or negatively.
2. **Secondary stakeholders** are people or groups that are indirectly affected, either positively or negatively.
3. **Key stakeholders**, who might belong to either or neither of the first two groups, are those who can have a positive or negative effect, or who are important to the decision making process.

1.3.2.2 Stakeholder engagement

The input of key stakeholders, from expertise to opinion, is vital in creating sustainable and socially compliant solutions by reducing environmental risk and increasing accountability. The most profound benefits of stakeholder engagement are effective and strategically aligned with the following actions¹¹⁰:

- Lead to more equitable and sustainable social development by giving those who have a right to be heard the opportunity to be considered in decision-making processes.
- Enable better management of risk and reputation.
- Allow for the pooling of resources (knowledge, people, money and technology) to solve problems and reach objectives that cannot be reached by single organisations.
- Enable understanding of the complex social environment, including sustainable development and identification of new strategic opportunities.
- Result in process improvements.
- Improve the decision-making and actions that impact on society.

There are many types and levels of stakeholder engagement. Stakeholder engagement has been increasingly seen as a basic human right: both as a result of the human right to a certain level of **environmental quality**, as well as a result of the human right to **participatory democracy**¹¹¹. However, levels to which stakeholders are engaged, as well as types and methods of engagement, are varied. According to Warburton¹¹² there are about 150 different techniques and approaches that can be applied depending on the objectives of the proponent organisation. Several hierarchies of engagement types and levels have also been developed. These range from low level of engagement ('passive participation', 'tokenism', 'manipulation'), to a mid-range where participants are involved in decision making about largely predetermined questions; to the higher-end of the scale where stakeholders undertake their own initiatives or are enabled to develop strong leadership roles (e.g. 'partnerships'; 'empowerment', 'citizen control')¹¹³.

Some indicative methods of stakeholders' engagement can be: Newsletters, Reports, Presentations, Public hearings, Internet webpages, Interviews, Questionnaires and surveys, Field visits and interactions, Workshops, Participatory mapping, Focus groups, Citizen juries, Geospatial decision support systems, Cognitive maps, Role playing, Multimedia analysis, Scenario analysis, Consensus conferences, etc.

¹¹⁰ Krick, T., Forstater, M., Monaghan, P., & Sillanpää, M. (2005). The stakeholder engagement manual volume 2: The practitioners handbook on stakeholder engagement. Account Ability, the United Nations Environment Programme, and Stakeholder Research Associates.

¹¹¹ Appelstrand, M., 2002. 'Participation and societal values: the challenge for lawmakers and policy practitioners'. *Forest Policy and Economics*. Vol. 4, pp. 281–290.

¹¹² Warburton, D., 1997. *Participatory action in the countryside. A literature review*. Countryside Commission. Cheltenham, UK, 61 pp

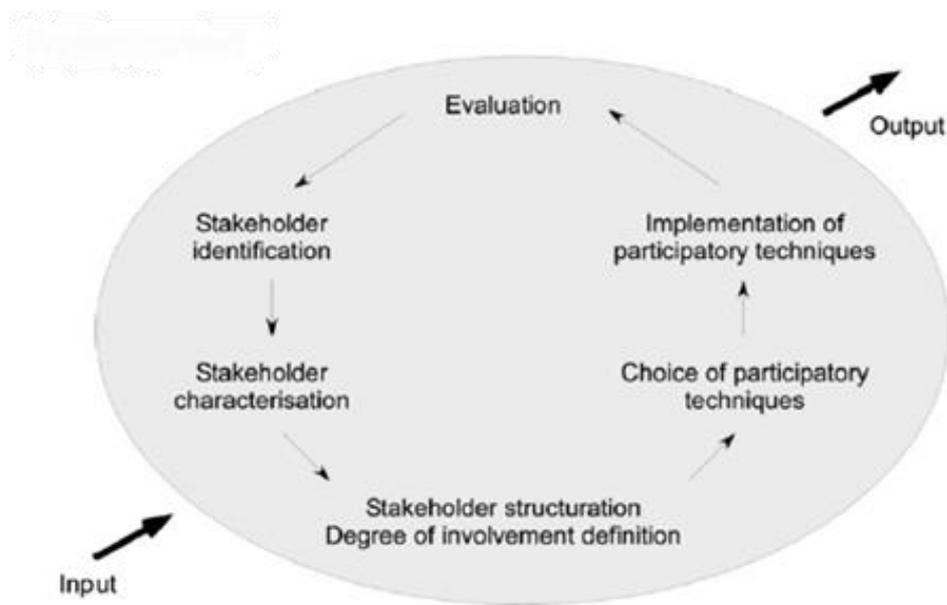
¹¹³ Buchy, M., and Hoverman, S., 2000. 'Understanding public participation in forest planning: a review'. *Forest Policy and Economics*. Vol.1, pp.15–25.

These ways of engagement are directly related to the level of the **stakeholder involvement** in the participation process that is analysed in the previous paragraph 1.2.2. In the following table is presented this engagement with respect to some indicative participation techniques¹¹⁴.

Table 5 - Selected participatory techniques connected with stakeholder engagement¹¹⁴

Participation technique	Newsletters	Reports	Presentations, public hearings	Internet webpage	Interviews, questionnaires and surveys	Field visits and interactions	Workshops	Participatory mapping	Focus groups	Citizen jury	Geospatial decision support systems	Cognitive maps	Role playing	Multimedia analysis	Scenario analysis	Consensus conference
Level of involvement																
Information	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X				
Consultation			X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X		X	X
Collaboration			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Co-decision							X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Empowerment							X	X	X	X					X	X

In order to implement successfully **participatory techniques**, stakeholders are identified, characterized and structured, then the participation level is attributed and finally participation techniques are decided. A successful participation process needs establishment of clear rules. In order to motivate the stakeholders to be active through the entire process, adequate information and publicity about the techniques is necessary. Inappropriate implementation can lead to stakeholder’s mistrust and frustration, and as consequence, failure of the process¹¹⁴. The steps for an effective participatory process are presented in Figure 8.



¹¹⁴ Luyet V, Schlaepfer R, Parlange M. B., Buttler A., 2012, Review – A framework to implement Stakeholder participation in environmental projects, Journal of Environmental Management 111, p. 213-219.

Figure 8 - A framework for stakeholders' participation¹¹⁴

A typical decision-making process and the steps and ways of stakeholders' participation are the following¹¹⁴.

- First of all a preliminary planning and design is prepared. In this step the potential participation methods are analysed, the processes are defined, and information is collected and exchanged
- The next step is the development of the stakeholder engagement plan. According to this step the objectives are established, the major issues are identified and addressed, the key stakeholders are identified and involved, the method of public participation is determined, preparation is held in order to provide and receive information and the critical path is developed.
- The following steps contain the preparation of stakeholders engagement through the development of alternative activities and decisions, the estimation of possible consequences, the evaluation of trade-offs and selection of the best choice.

Afterwards the responsible authorities determine the budget, staff, resources, logistics, roles and responsibilities and they are prepared to give and receive feedback. After that, the selected plan is implemented, the authorities follow the designed critical path, they apply the public participation method, they provide and receive information and they monitor the process. Finally, the feedback of the process is performed. In this step a report is sent to decision-makers and to participants and the overall process is evaluated.

1.4 *Barriers*

Public participation is particularly beneficial in decision-making processes. However its implementation may face problems and barriers in terms of attitudinal issues, lack of operational capacity, lack of clarity on the expected results and lack of a legislative framework¹¹⁵.

In most cases, **public participation** is **limited** to the “report and comment” type of participation¹¹⁶. In the national legal systems, the constitutional rights for public participation are vague, providing the general democratic principles like elections, referenda, freedom of speech, right to submit petitions to public authorities. Public participation functions mostly as an opportunity for the public to comment on draft decisions, especially on policy level, which allows the public to make only minor changes to the policy in preparation.

Furthermore, public participation is regarded as expert consultations. There is not much effort vested in putting information into simple, semantically important, language and trying to get input from the general public.

Participatory practices can be costly in terms of time and money spent, for both administrations and citizens. There are also political costs of public participation, including the loss of administrative and political control over political processes¹¹⁷. These costs are often overlooked, a serious omission, because they directly influence who can take part¹¹⁸ to participatory processes.

¹¹⁵ <http://www.gdrc.org/decision/001-Thesis.pdf>

¹¹⁶ Environmental Democracy. An Assessment of Access to Information, Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters in Selected European Countries, The Access Initiative Europe.

¹¹⁷ www.participationinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/pp_in_e_report_03_06.pdf

¹¹⁸ People and participation. How to put citizens at the heart of decision-making, 2005, Involve. <http://www.involve.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/People-and-Participation.pdf>

Another challenge is to overcome the citizens' **reluctance** to be involved, as in many cases they think they are not knowledgeable enough to participate in complex decision-making processes. There is usually only limited knowledge within society for policy-making processes and limited knowledge and skills to communicate constructively with decision makers. In several countries, participation in general elections alone is perceived to be public engagement rather than participation in all aspects of policy-making processes with the goal of effecting change¹¹⁹. Furthermore, it is important to meet the challenge of **complexity**, simplifying the procedures and systematically analysing a wide range of examples.

There is also the problem of **representation**, which is a double one: drawing a sample of citizens that involves all shades of opinion and, at the same time, satisfying the broader public not individually involved in the participation process¹¹⁷. This sample of participating citizens usually is not representative in the conventional sense of being a statistical mirror of society, resulting in the exclusion of most marginalized and vulnerable groups, which are often left out of political processes.

According to a report created by the University of Oxford for the National Campaign for People's Right to Information (NCPRI)¹²⁰, public participation is hampered by three primary factors: **lack of support** from the political context on public involvement; **lack of the resources** and human capacity to initiate effective public participation, information distribution and education campaigns; and problems in access to information.

1.5 Challenges

According to the first meeting of the task force on public participation in decision-making, held in 2010 in Geneva¹²¹, the challenges in achieving effective public participation process should be examined with the goal to strengthen civil society and build capacity for public authorities and other stakeholders. The Task Force on Public Participation in decision-making was established to improve the implementation of the Aarhus Convention's provisions on public participation, including through sharing expertise and good practices, developing recommendations, strengthening civil society and building capacity for public authorities and other stakeholders.

The authorities have to determine with **clarity** the timeframe available for participating in the decision making process, and apply reasonable **time-frames**. When planning for a consultation it is important to consider how much time is given to the public to comment on the document. Different tools may require different timeframe, and the timeline will need to correspond to the type of document, the issues raised, its length, and the issues that are raised available expertise on the issue. For example, if the document raises new issues the public may need more time to familiarise itself with them. The same if the law affects a wide range of issues. Although most of the documents set a certain timeline, most of them specifically mention the possibility for this timeline to be extended. According to EC Principles and Minimum Standards¹²² nonbinding tool, the public participation process may be extended and be facilitated depending on the circumstances. However, it must be pointed that there is **no universal law** applicable in all the EU countries, hence the public participating procedures and the indicating fixed time-frames for public participation differ

¹¹⁹ <http://www.wmd.org/assemblies/sixth-assembly/workshops/making-democracy-work/how-ensure-citizen-engagement-policy-makin>

¹²⁰ Khaitan T., Mehta D., Aparajita A., McConnachie C., Sharma D., Carelli F., Dhru K., 2011, A comparative survey of procedures for public participation in the lawmaking process – Report for the National the National Campaign for People's Right to Information (NCPRI), University of Oxford, Oxford Pro Bono Publico.

¹²¹ Challenges in implementing public participation in decision-making, 25-26 October 2010, Task force on public participation in decision-making, First meeting, Geneva, Item 2(b) of the provisional agenda, United Nations, Economic Commission for Europe.

¹²² European Commission, Action plan "Simplifying and improving the regulatory environment", COM(2002) 27

respectively. Therefore, each EU country has defined each own time-frames with or without national legal obligation¹²³.

The 'public concerned' should be defined adequately and informed in an early stage of decision-making, when all options are open in order to carry out an effective public participation process. Detailed provisions on notification of the public should be provided, all the required information should be applied and easy access to documentation should be provided in various ways (not limited only in electronic tools). Furthermore, the authorities have to clarify to the public in each decision making process, to whom they can address to, in order to receive information and consultation or how they can participate in the process¹²⁴. Therefore, the authorities have to achieve **easy access to information** providing **equal opportunities** to all the people and not be limited only to specific groups of people¹²².

1.6 Risks

Public participation presents various benefits, however it may also, pose risks. Public participation does not always lead to consensus about an issue. Therefore, public participation exercise is needed in order to present adequately a problem to the public and to attempt a common decision. Moreover, there are cases where officials of local authorities may feel threatened by public participation as their decisions will be open to public scrutiny for the first time. Furthermore, another risk is that this process can raise **unrealistic expectations** to the public. In many cases the public believe that everything will be changed quickly. When this does not happen, frustrations may arise and the public **loses trust** in the responsible authorities and the process. Another risk is that the decision making process may **slow down** the decision. Therefore, a balance needs to be reached between the need to make a decision in a reasonable amount of time and the need to involve the public in the decision-making process¹²⁵.

¹²³ Zolyomi, S. Tripolszky, E. Nedelciu, 2013, Implementation of Environmental Impact Assessments in Central and Eastern Europe, Case studies from Estonia, Bulgaria and Hungary.

<http://www.ceeweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Implementation-of-Environmental-Impact-Assessments-in-Central-and-Eastern-Europe.pdf>

¹²⁴ Khaitan T., Mehta D., Aparajita A., McConnachie C., Sharma D., Carelli F., Dhru K., 2011, A comparative survey of procedures for public participation in the lawmaking process – Report for the National the National Campaign for People's Right to Information (NCPRI), University of Oxford, Oxford Pro Bono Publico.

¹²⁵ Public Participation in Making Local Environmental Decisions, The Aarhus convention Newcastle workshop – Good practice handbook, 2000, Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions.
<http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/ecases/handbook.pdf>

2 e-Participation

2.1 e-Participation principles

e-Participation provides tools for **new modes of governance** and for connecting civil society groups with governmental structures. There are many forms of e-participation, such as e-informing, e-consulting, e-involvement, e-collaboration and e-empowerment, which are corresponding to the levels of public participation in decision-making processes. Some of the tools used in eParticipation are discussion forums, blogs, wikis, chat rooms, voting systems, web and podcasts, along with the standard website and e-mail services. Moreover, e-participation may include the use of Web 2.0 and social media tools. e-Participation spaces are open public spaces without temporal or geographical limitations, which allow non-centralised communication where many participants can express their opinion to many others¹²⁶.

Figure 9 is a graphical presentation of the e-participation field, which contains the e-participation actors, the e-participation activities and the e-participation effects.

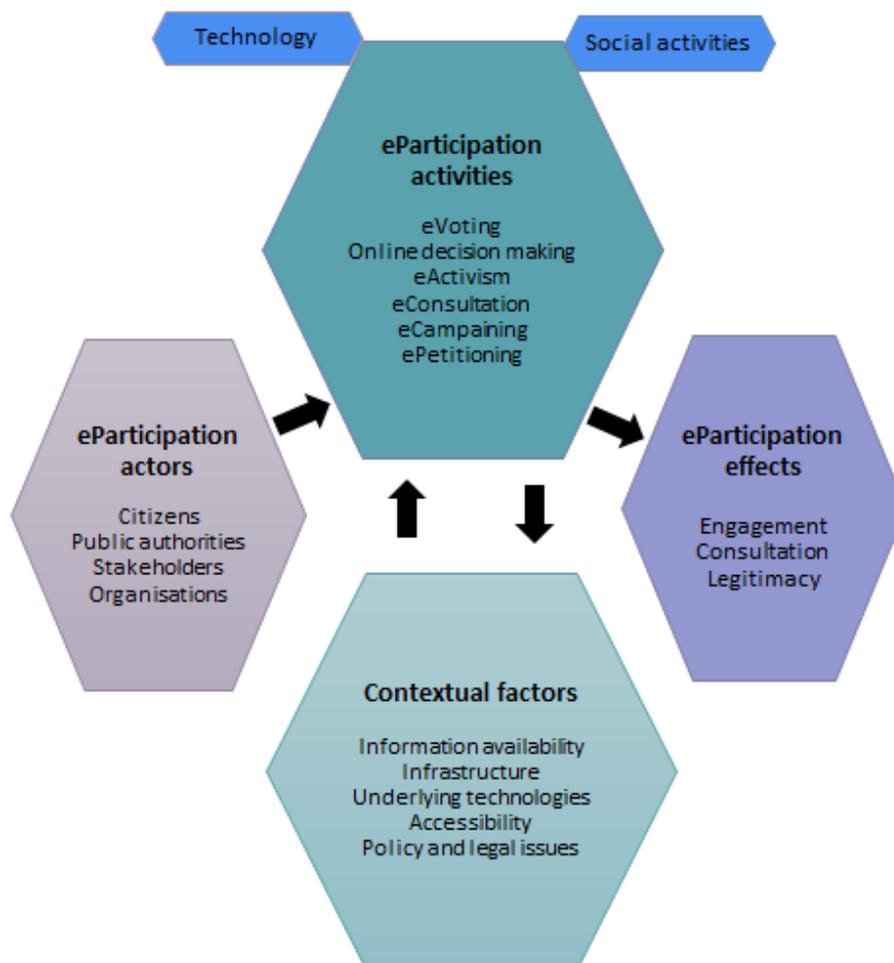


Figure 9 - The shape of e-participation field

¹²⁶ Yetano A., Royo S., Acerete B., 2013, E-Participation on environment-related policies. An assessment of European local government practices, PACITA conference participation within the field of climate change, Prague, 13-15 May.

e-Participation is particularly beneficial in comparison with classic participation methods. It can reduce costs of transaction and coordination in social and political relationships and can be more deliberative because of the asynchronic and anonymous character of ICT¹²⁷. In addition, e-participation may allow to process information with improved methods, which are provided by information technologies. e-Participation, also, gives to participants increased convenience, satisfaction and the feeling of greater involvement in society¹²⁷. It is not a simple rational method but an emotional experience. Furthermore, it is beneficial to environmental organisations, as it improves their effectiveness and legitimacy. It can also increase the efficiency and quality of their policy-making. Generally, e-participation can **increase** rates of **participation** and, when it is undertaken with the right way, it can increase the intensity and quality of participation¹²⁷.

2.2 e-Participation in Europe

2.2.1 Overview

Across Europe various interesting e-participation initiatives have been established. EU e-participation activities have been offered in 33 different EU languages contributing to a large number of European citizens getting involved in the process^{128,129}. e-Participation initiatives have been used with success at local, regional and national level. However, the transnational level is the least frequent level of participation in Europe^{129,130} potentially because EU-driven initiatives cover relevant cross-border, multi-national participation needs.

A survey of e-participation cases across Europe¹²⁸ was able to identify 255 cases originating from 23 different countries. These cases have international, European, transnational, regional or local scope. The overall survey indicates that there is a considerable number of eParticipation **initiatives** across the European continent, operating at different levels (Figure 10) and offering different kinds of activities to the public but also to other stakeholders (Figure 11). The majority of the identified cases provide information, deliberation and consultation facilities for various subjects.

In addition, most cases target citizens and other stakeholders at local and national levels¹³¹. The frequency of use of **participation areas** vary according to participation level. Utility of information provision is more frequent at a larger scale of participation level, such as the European and international level, whereas consultation and spatial planning activities are more frequent at smaller scale of participation level. Therefore, when an e-participation initiative targets a great number of people, it generally provides only information. However, when it targets a small number of people it may be more specific allowing active participation and specific outcomes¹³².

¹²⁷ European eParticipation Summary Report, Summary of the “Study and Supply of Services on the Development of eParticipation in the EU”, 2009, prepared for the European Commission, European Commission Information Society and Media.

¹²⁸ Panopoulou E., Tambouris E., Tarabanis K., 2009, eParticipation initiatives: How is Europe progressing?, European Journal of ePractice, No 7, ISSN: 1988-625X. www.epractivejournal.eu

¹²⁹ European eParticipation Summary Report, 2009, Summary of the “Study and Supply of Services on the Development of eParticipation in the EU”, prepared for the European Commission by the Danish Technological Institute, Leeds University (UK) and University of Macedonia (Greece).

¹³⁰ J. Ramon Gil-Garcia, 2013, E-Government Success around the World: Cases, Empirical Studies, and Practical Recommendations, DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-4173-0, 467 pages.

¹³¹ European eParticipation Summary Report, 2009, Summary of the “Study and Supply of Services on the Development of eParticipation in the EU”, prepared for the European Commission by the Danish Technological Institute, Leeds University (UK) and University of Macedonia (Greece).

¹³² Tarabanis K, Tambouris E., Panopoulou E., 2010, eParticipation Initiatives in Europe: Learning from Practitioners, Electronic Participation Lecture Notes in Computer Science Volume 6229, 2010, pp 54-65.

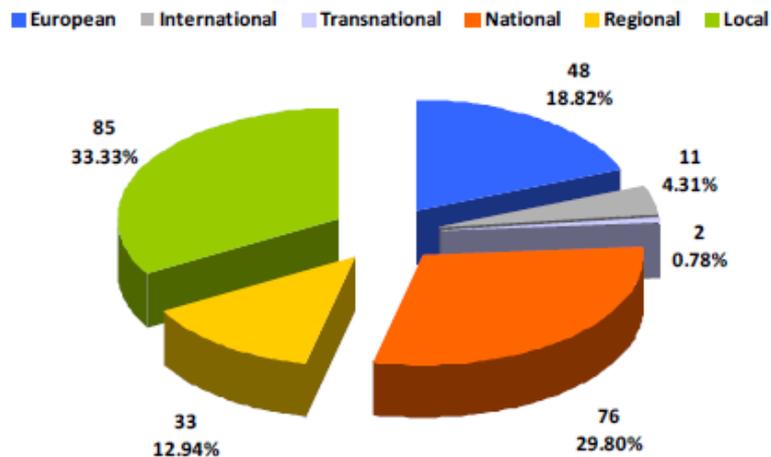


Figure 10 - eParticipation levels across Europe¹³¹

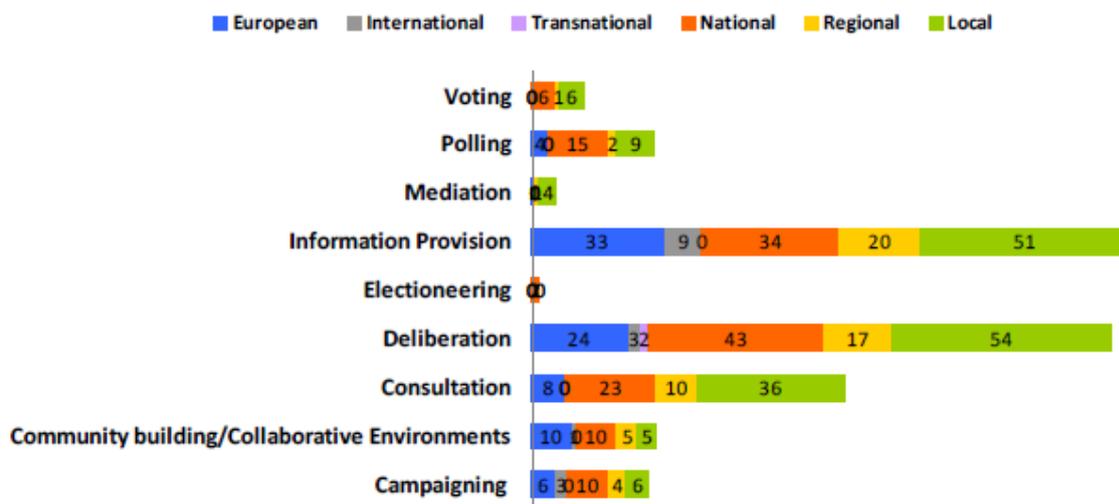


Figure 11 – e-Participation areas¹³¹

The survey has identified 48 initiatives with a European scope, which includes initiatives by European Institutions (mostly the European Parliament and the European Commission), by Agencies of the European Union, by political parties, and initiatives relevant to EU presidencies and to **Plan-D activities** for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate, which aim to encourage wider debate between the EU institutions and citizens according to European Commission¹³³. Furthermore, 10 international initiatives originate from important civil society organisations and other international organisations, such as Amnesty international, Greenpeace and the Aarhus Clearinghouse¹³⁴.

The origin of European initiatives is usually derived by EU institutions which mainly based in Brussels and other European cities whilst the origin of international activities may be determined by the headquarters' location of each organisation. The origin of the national, regional and local initiatives is presented with numbers in Figure 12. As it can be seen, these initiatives originate from 18 different European countries, 16 EU Member States, Switzerland and Iceland¹³⁴.

¹³³ EC, Plan-D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate, COM(2005).

¹³⁴ Panopoulou E., Tambouris E., Tarabanis K., 2009, eParticipation initiatives: How is Europe progressing?, European Journal of ePractice, No 7, ISSN: 1988-625X. www.epracticejournal.eu

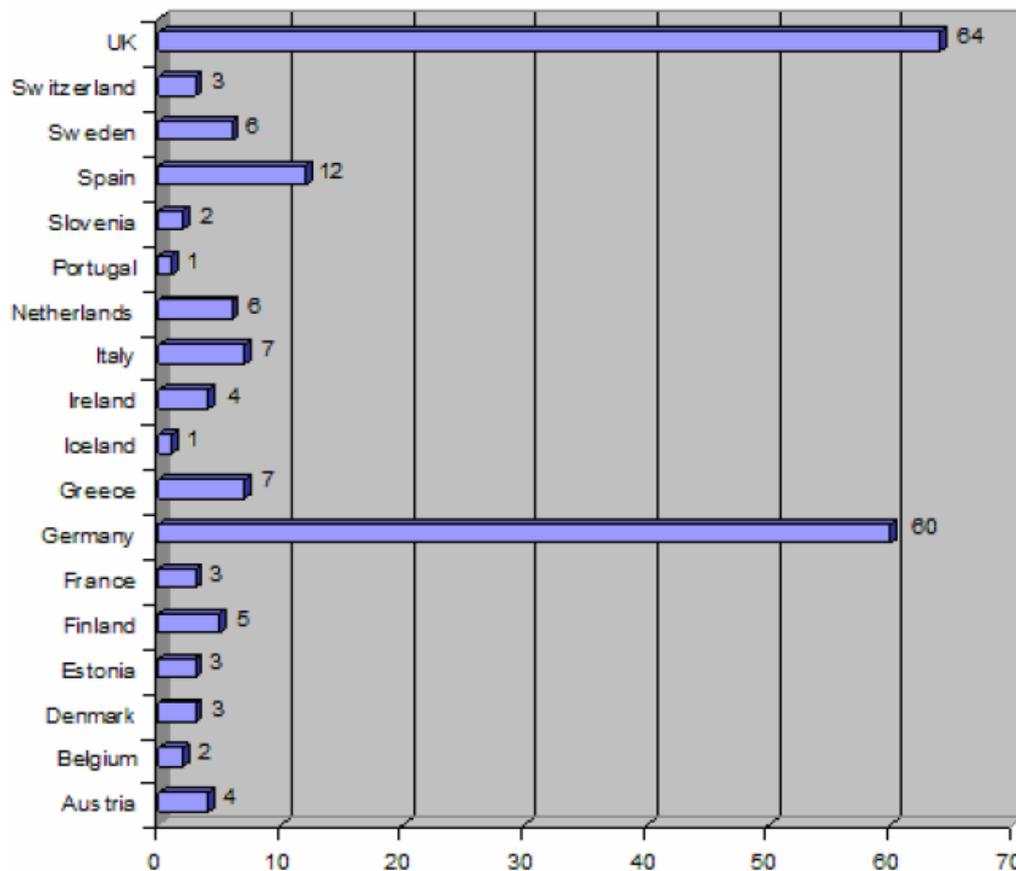


Figure 12 – Origin of initiatives with a national, regional and local scope¹³⁴

2.2.2 Initiatives and projects

2.2.2.1 e-Participation European initiatives

According to the “**European citizens' initiative**”, EU citizens have the possibility to participate directly in the development of EU policies, by calling on the European Commission to make a legislative proposal. The rules and procedures governing the citizens’ initiative are set out in an EU regulation adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union in February 2011¹³⁵. A citizens’ initiative has to be an invitation to the European Commission to propose a law in a field where it has the power to do so, for example in the fields of environment, agriculture, transport or public health. All EU citizens (nationals of an EU country) old enough (2) to vote in European Parliament elections (18 years old except in Austria, where the voting age is 16) have the possibility to be organisers of initiatives. However, they first have to form a citizens’ committee composed of at least seven EU citizens living in at least seven different EU countries¹³⁶.

The “**Your Voice in Europe**” portal is another European eParticipation initiative, which constitutes a tool for submitting comments and views on EU policies, discussion on current issues, and chat-online with EU leaders. It also facilitates communication with Members of Parliament, and other bodies, and informs about opinion polls.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Regulation (EU) No 211/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011 on the citizens’ initiative. (<http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/legislative-framework>)

¹³⁶ EC, 2014, Guide to European citizens' initiative, second edition.

¹³⁷ K. Hadzi-Miceva-Evans, 2010, Comparative Overview of European Standards and Practices in Regulating Public Participation, European Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ECNL), This paper was commissioned by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in

2.2.2.2 EU projects – e-Participation Preparatory Action

In recent years, the European Commission has been actively promoting and supporting initiatives aiming to boost citizens' participation in Europe's political life through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). As part of the 5th and 6th Framework Programmes, the EC launched the e-participation Preparatory Action promoting the use of ICT in legislative and decision-making processes within parliamentary and government environments. As a result, **more than 20 e-participation projects** aiming to test e-participation on a European scale were funded by EC from 2006 to 2008. Some of them succeeded to meet their scope, while others failed to achieve widespread uptake. The impact of these project was assessed by a number of reports, such as the Impact Assessment and the Consolidated Report written by the e-participation monitoring project "Momentum" (Charalabidis, 2010)¹³⁸, and the publication of other scientific papers examining the success of the completed e-participation initiatives, such as the "On sustainable participation" (Molinari, 2010). According to these reports and papers, despite a good level of success of the projects, several limitations were identified: the participation in project pilots was below the predicted levels, and the impact of the projects on decision-making processes was limited. Moreover, most projects failed to meet their sustainability prospects and to outlive their funding schemes.

2.2.2.3 EU projects – CIP ICT PSP - Objective 3.5: e-Participation

Based on the impact assessment reports and literature evaluating the success of the e-participation projects, the EC launched the **ICT Policy Support Programme** (CIP PSP CALL 3bis) aiming to stimulate innovation and competitiveness through the wider uptake and best use of ICT by citizens, governments and businesses. In this framework, several projects were funded under the objective 3.5: e-Participation - empower and involve citizens in transparent decision making in the EU. In contrast to the past, the emphasis of this call was not on developing new ICT, rather on using new trends in communication such as social media to generate mass participation, deploying and enhancing existing validated ICT, and achieving project sustainability.

"**Parterre – Electronic tools for spatial planning and territorial development**" (<http://www.parterre-project.eu/>) is another EU funded project focusing on sharing and interaction between people and policy-makers. Various e-participation tools are offered to local government institutions, including an evaluation tool enabling public sector organisations to judge whether they are ready to launch a local electronic participation model. Moreover, an "Electronic Town Meeting" was developed to enable users to discuss policy initiatives in small groups. These meetings can then be broadcast online using the Demos Plan, a collaborative planning tool. Political decision-makers and citizens can use it to work together to draw up plans, make drawings and draft documents in real time.

Accordingly, a successful case study of combination of e-participation tools and social media is the online platform called "**Puzzled by Policy**" (<http://join.puzzledbypolicy.eu/>). This platform encourages people to become actively involved in discussions concerning immigration policies across Europe as well as increases interaction levels between various stakeholders, mainly ordinary citizens and decision-makers. The "Puzzled by Policy" platform combines tried and tested eParticipation concepts and tools such as EU Profiler and a debate forum (U-Debate), with new widget applications to reduce the complexity of decision making at the

Europe (OSCE) Spillover Monitor Mission in Skopje and the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation – MCIC Skopje, for the publication "Transparency and public participation in law-making processes".

¹³⁸ Charalabidis, Y., Gionis, G., Ferro, E., & Loukis, E. (2010). Towards a systematic exploitation of web 2.0 and simulation modeling tools in public policy process. In *Electronic Participation* (pp. 1-12). Springer Berlin Heidelberg.

EU level and 'push' the platform to popular social media sites such as Facebook as well as to users own desktop and mobile devices. The project offers interactive features to its users who can install the PbP widget on anyone's social network, blog or other destination and share the widget with friends or colleagues.

2.2.2.4 Other e-Participation platforms & initiatives

eParticipation.eu (<http://eparticipation.eu/>) initiative uses online environments so as to exchange citizens' e-participation practices to increase and promote participatory opportunities within the European Union member states starting from local governments. This practical presentation of best practices is first of all targeted to the officials of local authorities and institutions responsible for dealing with local public participation and democracy issues. Hopefully, this material will also inspire the wider public, including the representatives of civil society

World Wide Views on Climate and Energy (<http://climateandenergy.wvviews.org/>) is a global citizen consultation, providing unique information about how far citizens around the world are willing to go, in order to deal with climate change and to bring forward an energy transition. The project is co-initiated by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretariat, the French National Commission for Public Debate (FR), the Danish Board of Technology Foundation (DK) and Missions Publiques (FR), with the support of the French Government, COP21 host.

The "WEPOLITICS" (<http://www.wepolitics.gr/>) network is a Greek network that allows users to ask questions, express their opinion and receive statistics, in real time, on various issues concerning them, such as about politics, society, civilization or for environmental issues. The responses are formatted in charts that mark a continuous survey of society but also issues asking users themselves.

Internet voting, or **i-voting** (<https://e-estonia.com/component/i-voting/>), is a system that allows voters to cast their ballots from any internet-connected computer, anywhere in the world. Unrelated to the electronic voting systems used elsewhere, which involve costly and problematic machinery, the Estonian solution is simple, elegant and secure. During a designated pre-voting period, the voter logs onto the system using a ID card or Mobile ID, and casts a ballot. The voter's identity is removed from the ballot before it reaches the National Electoral Commission for counting, thereby ensuring anonymity.

PARTECIPA (<http://www.partecipa.gov.it/>) is an Italian Public Administration initiative that supports the multilateral development of the three cornerstones of Open Government: transparency in public administration, fight against corruption and participatory democracy. This initiative provides specific actions for an efficient involvement of civil society in public policy, develops guidelines on public consultations and gives evidence about the main consultation procedures of Italian Public Administration.

2.2.3 European e-Government Action Plan (2011-15)

In the last years a new beneficial method of governance, e-Governance, has gained ground in Europe. Through the use of digital tools and systems, e-Government provides better public services to the citizens and businesses. The benefits of the effective application of e-Governance contain increased transparency, greater participation of citizens in political life and generally more efficiency and savings for governments and businesses^{139,140}.

¹³⁹ Bertot, J. C., Jaeger, P. T., & Grimes, J. M., 2010. Using ICTs to create a culture of transparency: E-government and social media as openness and anti-corruption tools for societies. *Government information quarterly*, 27(3), 264-271.

European governments in order to strengthen their efficiency and dynamism, included in the 2020 Digital Agenda a **European e-Government Action Plan** for the years 2011-2015. The basic target of the Action Plan is to move current administrations to a new generation of e-Government services at local, regional, national and European levels. The priorities of the Action Plan was set by the **Malmö Declaration** that was approved unanimously by ministers responsible for e-Government policy of the European Union (EU) Member States, the Candidate Countries and the European Free Trade Area (EFTA) Countries, on 18 November 2009, in Malmö, Sweden¹⁴¹. The Declaration was made on the occasion of the 5th Ministerial e-Government Conference, and supported by industry and by a citizens' panel¹⁴². According to the Declaration's ambitious vision, by 2015 European public administrations will be "recognised for being open, flexible and collaborative in their relations with citizens and businesses. They use e-Government to increase their efficiency and effectiveness and to constantly improve public services in a way that caters for user's different needs and maximises public value, thus supporting the transition of Europe to a leading knowledge-based economy".

More specifically, according the European e-Government Action Plan defines four types of priorities to be taken¹⁴³:

- The first priority is user empowerment. User empowerment aims at increasing the capacity of citizens, businesses and other organisations to be pro-active in society through the use of new technological tools. Therefore, the Commission intends to promote actions to develop services designed around users' needs, and inclusive services, such as **personalised online services**. **Moreover, intends to** introduce collaborative production of services undertaking a study of the methods to be implemented to enable users to play an active role in the design and production of e-Government services. It also intends to prioritise exchange of good practice in this regard. Another target is to improve transparency enabling citizens to have online access to their personal data held by administrations. In addition, it will foster the involvement of citizens and businesses in policy-making processes through an electronic service supporting "citizens' initiatives" (that has already been created at the link <http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/welcome?lg=en>).
- The second priority is strengthening the internal market using seamless business services, personal mobility, implementation of cross-border services at EU level.
- The third priority is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Governments and administrations. This priority will be carried out through the promotion of information and communication technologies (ICT) that intends to improve the organisational processes. The Commission will rationalise administrative processes by transforming the e-Practice portal and mainstreaming online public procurement procedures.
- The fourth priority is to create preconditions for the development of e-Government. The deployment of e-Government services in Europe requires the implementation of a certain number of conditions such as the interoperability of the systems and tools, the identification and authentication through the STORK project and the revision of the e-Signature and innovation.

¹⁴⁰ Gil-García, J. R., & Pardo, T. A. (2005). E-government success factors: Mapping practical tools to theoretical foundations. *Government information quarterly*, 22(2), 187-216.

¹⁴¹ Ministerial Declaration on e-Government approved unanimously in Malmö, Sweden, on 18 November 2009.

<https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/sites/digital-agenda/files/ministerial-declaration-on-egovernment-malmo.pdf>

¹⁴² <https://eups20.wordpress.com/the-open-declaration/>

¹⁴³ The European e-Government Action Plan 2011-2015 Harnessing ICT to promote smart, sustainable & innovative Government, Brussels, 15.12.2010 COM(2010) 743 final.

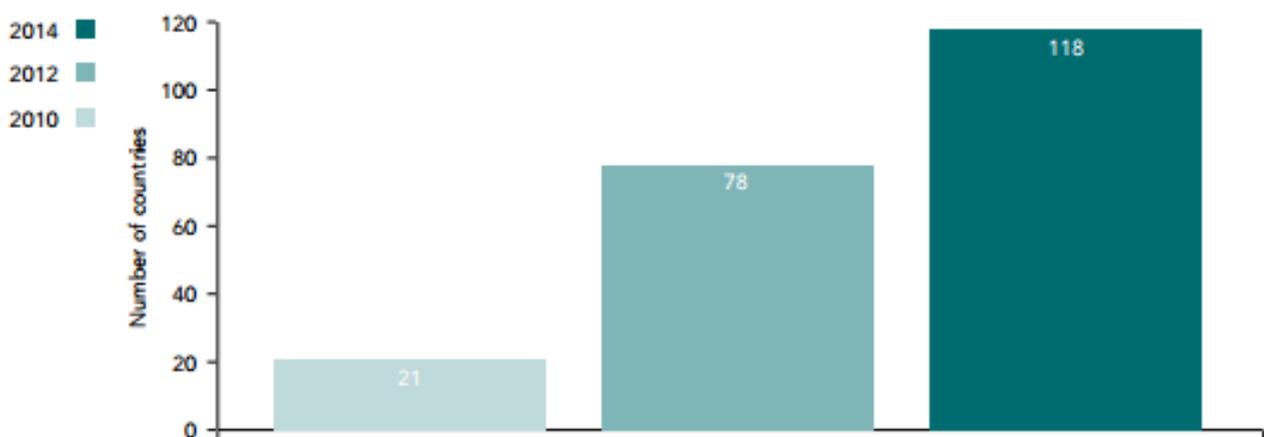
2.3 e-Participation and social media

e-Participation is very important in Europe's future and the use of e-participation through **social media** may be very useful in supporting European policy making and democracy, because of the leadership and economic advantages that is expected to bring¹⁴⁴. The use of social media will fill in the gaps, making e-participation part of people's lives. Social media can contribute significantly in environmental decision-making processes through engaging mass audiences and increasing general awareness of the issues at stake¹⁴⁴. They can make e-participation platforms more accessible to public, who otherwise do not deal with political debates. Moreover, social media can make public participation easier and more intuitive. e-Participation through social media will be more effective if engages citizens through content channels, that are otherwise popular, rather than operating independently of them.

Social media leverages people's existing preferences for engagement in online activities aiming to shape e-participation. In the cases where the implementation of a social media e-participation platform succeeds, this type of engagement should be encouraged, promoted and developed further. The key to ensuring that e-participation does not become a sidelined activity is to move beyond proprietary web platforms toward greater integration with existing social media, integrating e-participation into the online behaviours of citizens across Europe. Therefore, it can be argued that the use of social media is complementary to traditional e-participation tools and practices and can in fact increase user engagement¹⁴⁵.

A recent research¹⁴⁶ proves the power of social media tools in shaping of political opinion. According to this research, it was found that during the national elections (2010) in the Netherlands, politicians with higher Social Media engagement got relatively more votes within most political parties.

According to Figure 13, the number of countries using social media has more than tripled from 2010 to 2012 and increased by another 50 per cent in 2014. Following the same trend, as illustrated in Figure 14, 71 countries have explored the use of social media in e-consultation, indicating a 400 per cent increase as compared to 14 countries in 2012. These two significant trends are set to continue in the next few years. The challenge for governments is to identify the right "business case" for implementing a social media channel, one with a convincing argument and implementation plan that will enable governments to reduce cost or to provide a better service, or to deliver both of these aspects at the same time¹⁴⁷.



¹⁴⁴ Kaplan, A. M. & Haenlein, M., 2010. Users of the World, Unite! The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media, *Business Horizons*, 53, 59-68.

¹⁴⁵ Lacigova O., Maizite A., Cave B., 2012, eParticipation and Social Media: a Symbiotic Relationship? *European Journal of ePractice* - www.epracticejournal.eu, No 16, ISSN: 1988-625X.

¹⁴⁶ Effing R., Hillegersberg J. V., Huibers T., 2011, Social Media and Political Participation: Are Facebook, Twitter and YouTube Democratizing Our Political Systems?, Conference Paper, DOI: 10.1007/978-3-642-23333-3_3 · Source: DBLP.

¹⁴⁷ United Nations e-government survey, 2014, E-government for the future we want, Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Figure 13 – Number of countries using social media for e-consultation¹⁴⁷

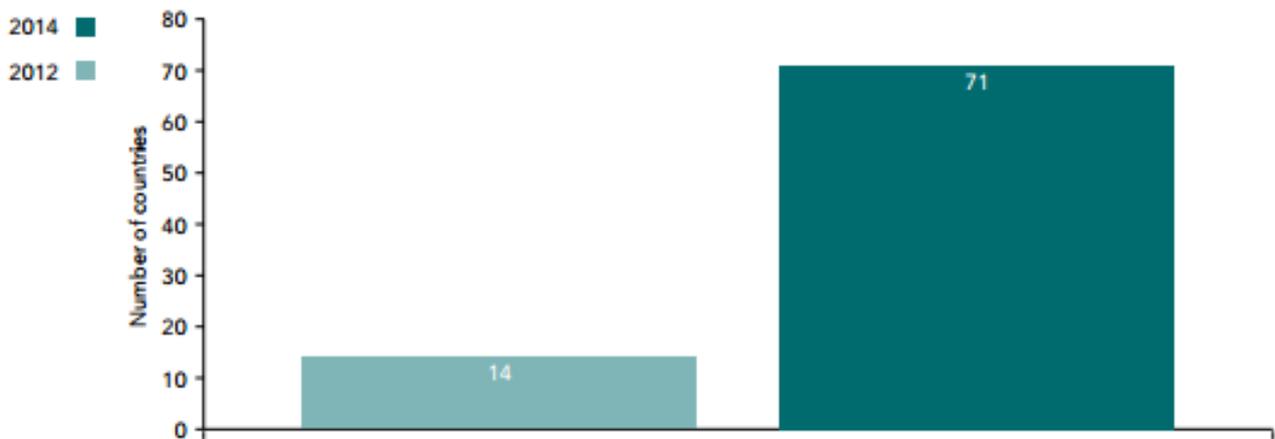


Figure 14 – Number of countries using social media for e-government¹⁴⁷

Social media have some basic characteristics that render them the most appropriate means to disseminate and promote environmental awareness. First of all, social media offer an unprecedented velocity of circulation and of diffusion of information, providing the user rapidly with ideas, embeds, and widgets or other like unit. Furthermore, they are known to encompass a vast pool of users and to have pervasive force in creating new trends and formulating behaviours. Thus, social media, combined with the planetary network of smartphones and tablets, offer a great opportunity for the spread of a new sustainable culture¹⁴⁸.

¹⁴⁸ Viglianisi M. F., Sabella G., 2011, Biodiversity, environmental education and social media, Biodiversity Journal, 2 (4): 195-200.

3 Youth participation

3.1 Status of youth participation in Europe

Starting with the general context of youth decision making in Europe and according to the recent findings of the Eurobarometer (Standard EB 77, spring 2012), half of the young people tend to distrust the European Union. Traditional channels of representative democracy, such as voting at elections and joining political parties only partially stimulate young people's interest in active participation. The percentage of young people voting in elections and being members of a political party is significantly lower than that of their elders¹⁴⁹. More specifically, according to responses published in Eurobarometer 'Youth on the Move' (2011), some 80 % of eligible voters aged between 16 and 29 voted in local, regional, national or EU elections in the preceding three years. Furthermore, in countries, such as Spain and Italy, the proportions of young people who took part in elections (67-72 %) were also lower than the EU-27 average.

However, interest and involvement in political and social activities are not confined to the sphere of elections and political parties. According to the study on 'Youth Participation in Democratic Life, there is no crisis of democratic participation or disenchantment with politics among youth in Europe, but young people lack attractive alternatives among established politicians and feel that their opinions are not represented. This is supported by the Eurobarometer Flash 'European Youth: participation in democratic life' 2013 (No 375), according to which young people are more active in less institutionalised and structured forms of participation, such as contributing to the work of nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) or community-driven initiatives and joining social movements. The Flash Eurobarometer 'Youth on the Move' confirms the preference of young people for being active in nongovernmental and local associations rather than in political parties. Twice as many respondents as those who were active in a political party said they were involved in the work of an NGO, or a local organisation aimed at improving the local community or environment.

3.2 Youth participation in environmental issues

Decisions taken now on matters such as climate change, the depletion of resources, and the loss of biodiversity will have long-term consequences that will affect the future generations. Young people will have to live longer with the consequences of current decisions, and have special concerns and responsibilities in relation to the environment. Their participation in environmental decision making is an essential part of developing a sustainable future.

Young people have the ability to **mobilise** support, to contribute intellectually but also to bring unique perspectives. They may provide interesting **solutions to environmental threats**, they may be able to contribute to solving problems in the area by promoting innovative resources and they declare that they want to be involved in events organised to discuss possible solutions to environmental problems¹⁵⁰.

¹⁴⁹ ESS5-2010, ed.1.0.

¹⁵⁰ Brondi S, Sarrica M, Nencini A, 2012, Youth participation in environmental issues: A study with Italian adolescents, Human Affairs, 22 (3), p. 390-404.

Although youth participation in environmental issues is recognised for its great importance, according to some researchers^{150, 151}, young people usually remain unheeded in such processes. They have energy, time and capacity; but often they do not have knowledge and experience.¹⁵² Another deterrent factor for young people's disengagement is that society, in general, has the perception that young people are too young to participate and it would be better to delegate their responsibilities to others (adults, experts etc.). Hence, young people feel powerless in participating processes and detached from policy making and finally they resign from the effort¹⁵⁰.

More specifically, according to Brondi et al. (2012) and other researchers¹⁵³, young people have a strong sense of belonging and ownership in their community. Gender and political orientation of young people has statistically significant effects on the psychosocial dimensions, whereas school, class, nationality and local roots do not. Interestingly, active and less active young people in environmental issues are not differentiated by the level of identification with the place, the collective self-esteem or their social integration. In comparison with adults, young people anticipate environmental threats with greater sensitivity, and have the ability to enact forms of active citizenship. In addition, they are aware of the fine balance between environmental sustainability and economic development.

There are various ways of youth involvement in advocacy for environment, such as by the use of environmental law, campaigns, advocacy, lobbying, etc. Governments throughout the world, according to their strategies, should endorse good practices so as to strengthen youth participation in environmental issues. They have to establish procedures which will allow consultation and possible participation of youth in environmental decision-making processes. They should promote conversation with youth organisations about drafting and evaluation of environmental plans or programmes. They should take due account into their policy the recommendations of international, regional and local youth conferences and other forums about youth prospects on social and economic development and resource management. They should ensure access for all young people to all types of education and incorporate the concepts of environmental awareness and sustainable development. Moreover, vocational training may be expanded in implementing innovative methods in order to increase skills, such as environmental scouting. Governments, also, may create alternative employment opportunities to youth and provide required training in order to push them to get involved professionally in environmental issues. They, also, may establish task forces that include youth and youth non-governmental organisations to develop educational programmes specifically targeted to the youth population. Furthermore, youth representatives could be included in their delegations to international meetings¹⁵⁴. Other studies suggest that youth councils, youth-led media, youth advisory boards, youth organizing and other self-advocacy and community youth development activities are the best avenues for achieving youth engagement.

The emergence of **social media** is a great **opportunity for increasing the political and social engagement of young people**. Social media is transforming traditional media and influencing how we share news and information. For example, more than three-quarters (77.7%) of world leaders have a Twitter account¹⁵⁵. Presidents, prime ministers, foreign ministers or their respective administrations in 153 countries have a

¹⁵¹ Schnack, K., 2008, Participation, Education, and Democracy: Implications for Environmental Education, Health Education, and Education for Sustainable Development. In A. Reid, B.B. Jensen, J. Nikel, V. Simovska (Eds.). Participation and Learning: Perspectives on Education and the Environment, Health and Sustainability, pp. 181-196. Dordrecht: Springer.

¹⁵² European environmental law and youth participation, March 2012, Report of the study session held by Youth and Environment Europe in co-operation with the European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe, European Youth Centre Strasbourg.

¹⁵³ Bonaiuto, M., Breakwell, G., Cano, I. (1996). Identity Processes and Environmental Threat: The Effect Of Nationalism and Local Identity un Perception of Beach Pollution. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* 6, p. 157-175.

¹⁵⁴ Children and youth in sustainable development, UNEP:

<http://www.unep.org/documents.multilingual/default.asp?DocumentID=52&ArticleID=73&l=en>

¹⁵⁵ Twiplomacy Study, 2013. <http://twiplomacy.com/>

presence on Twitter. All European governments have an official Twitter presence. Several studies^{156,157,158} indicate the **importance of the Internet** in fostering social contact and facilitating interaction between citizens and their political representatives through what are usually called ‘e-democracy’ projects, often targeting young Internet users. Indeed, the percentage of young people contacting public authorities via the Internet has increased in recent years¹⁵⁹.

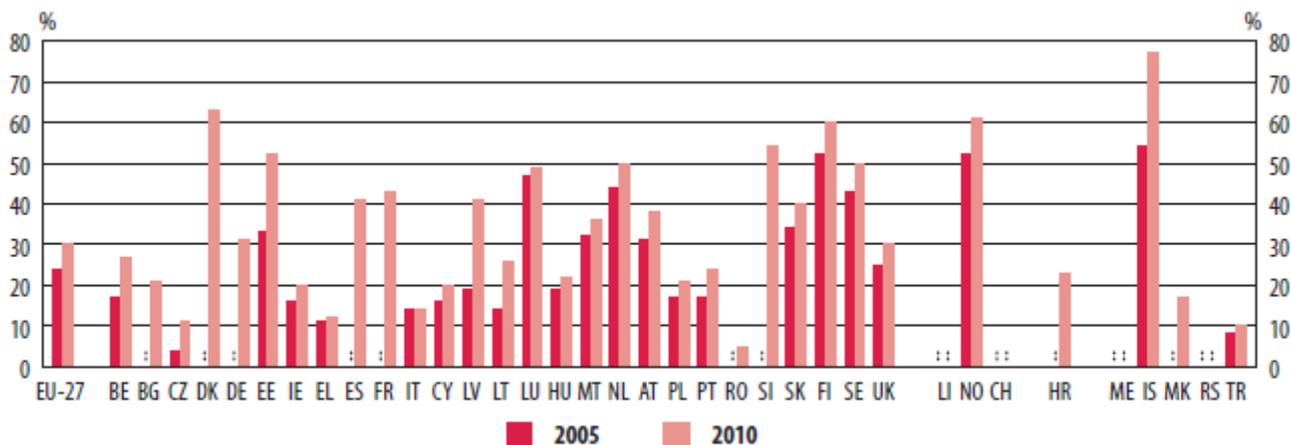


Figure 15 – EU youth indicator: Share of the population aged 16-24 who have used the internet (in the last three months) for interaction with public authorities, 2005 and 2010¹⁵⁹

This is clearly due to the increase in Internet use in general, but is also an indication that new forms of political participation can be especially appealing to the young, in comparison to more traditional ones. However, the challenges posed by a potential digital divide should be acknowledged. The new media can restrict access to certain networks and areas of knowledge solely to those able to use a computer and surf the Internet, thereby replicating the social inequalities of the ‘non-virtual’ environment¹⁶⁰.

3.3 Youth participation initiatives

There are numerous formal initiatives aiming to promote participation of young people, such as the **European Youth Portal**, the **European Youth Parliament**, etc. However, this formalised approach is alien and intimidating to young people, and reaches only a limited proportion of the population, and especially these who already have many of the skills required to participate effectively¹⁶¹.

Moreover, there are various cases of youth participation in the European Environment and Health Policymaking Process. A milestone was the **Youth Conference in Vienna, 2007**, which was held in parallel to the midterm review of progress made since the Budapest Conference. During this conference, six delegates were elected for youth representation and presentation of youth views. The Conference gathered 51 young people from 28 countries. Another milestone was in Parma, 2010, where a Youth Declaration was presented to the ministers, underlining the measure of youth concern about the effects of the environment on health, and inviting countries to include the issues in the Youth Declaration in the national and international

¹⁵⁶ Kim, Y., Hsu, S. H., & de Zúñiga, H. G., 2013. Influence of social media use on discussion network heterogeneity and civic engagement: The moderating role of personality traits. *Journal of Communication*, 63(3), 498-516.

¹⁵⁷ Lee, C. P., Chang, K., & Berry, F. S., 2011. Testing the development and diffusion of e-government and e-democracy: A global perspective. *Public Administration Review*, 71(3), 444-454.

¹⁵⁸ Christensen, H. S., 2011. Political activities on the Internet: Slacktivism or political participation by other means?. *First Monday*, 16(2).

¹⁵⁹ Eurostat 2010 – Survey on ICT usage in households and by individuals (ISS-HH). Online data code: isoc_pibi_igov

¹⁶⁰ EU Youth Report, 2012.

¹⁶¹ Youth Participation in Democratic Life, EACEA 2010/03, January 2013.

agendas. One of the aims for Parma was, also, to extend the youth network to all 53 countries in the European Region and have a representative in each country delegation¹⁶².

Today, there are various e-participation youth networks and web platforms available throughout Europe and worldwide that facilitate youth participation in decision-making processes. These networks are dealing with a big variety of issues, mainly social or political issues and some of them deal with environmental issues. Some indicative examples are presented below:

- The **European Youth Portal Structured Dialogue** (https://europa.eu/youth/EU/participation/structured-dialogue_en) is a process for discussions between young people and policy makers about different themes, to make sure the opinions of young people are taken into account in defining the EU's youth policies. The European Youth Portal covers 33 countries and is available in 27 languages. The themes and topics for discussion are decided at European level by EU Youth Ministers; then a committee of the current trio of EU Presidency countries, the European Commission and the European Youth Forum is responsible for coordinating the process and deciding upon sets of questions to be asked to young people across Europe twice a year. These questions are then used as the basis for national consultations in each EU country, which are organised by National Working Groups, and in most cases they are led by youth councils and include other youth organisations and stakeholders. Some international youth organisations also consult their members and give feedback on the questions on an ad hoc basis. Each country manages the consultation process in its own way, to meet the needs of their young people.
- **Ideas lab** (https://europa.eu/youth/ideas_en) is a new initiative from the European Commission that provides a space where young people across Europe can generate new ideas and solutions on a wide range of topics. These ideas will then be rated by other young people online, before the ideas are sent to policy and decision-makers for evaluation, feedback, and even to be turned into reality. Over 600 young people took part in 40 national Ideas Labs events during March and April this year, and created new ideas under the topics: Employment – Original ways of increasing young people's job opportunities; Great entrepreneurial ideas to improve the lives of young people; How to activate young people in civic life; Engaging young people in development issues during the EU Year for Development 2015.
- **EUth** - Tools and Tips for Mobile and Digital Youth Participation (<http://www.euth.net/>) in and across Europe is an innovative three-year research project funded by the European Commission. The aim of the project is to get more young people involved in political decision-making and increase youth trust in European political institutions. Eleven project partners from eight different countries will develop an open and easy-to-use online participation platform along with different mobile tools and apps for smartphones and tablets. This way, young people can get involved whenever and wherever they wish with minimum effort. The platform will be used by youth organisations and administrations of any size and level all over Europe.
- **Our Space**, is an online e-participation platform (<http://www.joinourspace.eu/>). OurSpace is a tool that uses social networking and Web 2.0 features to encourage young people and members of the European and National Parliaments to share ideas and engage in debates about issues that affect their everyday life.

4 Conclusions

A mapping of decision making procedures on environmental issues has been performed, presenting the regulatory framework and the procedures followed, with a particular focus on e-participation and youth participation. The report has identified procedures to which the STEP platform can be applied by public authorities who wish to involve young citizens in decision-making processes with an environmental impact (decisions on specific activities, environment-related plans, programmes and policies, and laws' and regulations' elaboration).

In particular, for the STEP project pilot locations, environmental decision making procedures which are in place have been identified, as well as the public organisations and stakeholders involved. The status of public and young participation in the pilot area is described, and indicative examples are presented. Potential areas of interest in which the STEP pilot implementation can focus have been pointed out. In particular:

The Region of Crete (Greece) can use STEP for public consultation on the Environmental Impact Assessments regulated by the Law 4014/2011. Indicative pilot cases can be wind farms, renewable energy plants, energy transportation, infrastructures for solid waste management, and wastewater treatment plants.

The Association of Municipalities of Locride (Italy) can integrate STEP in the structured dialogue which takes place as part of the European Youth Programme, or the consultation with local stakeholders for the formation and approval of territorial planning tools. There is a particular interest in waste management.

The Municipality of Mollet del Vallès (Spain) can pilot test STEP in public participation procedures in the planning and implementation of the Mobility Plan, the Youth Plan, the Social Inclusion Plan and the Strategic City Plan Mollet 2025.

The Valdemoro Municipality can integrate STEP for improving the procedures for collecting suggestions, ideas and opinion of young people focusing on environmental issues such as recycling, saving energy, responsible consumption, and urban mobility.

The Hatay Metropolitan Municipality can use STEP for improving public consultation procedures on issues such as the Asi River Reclamation project, the Municipality wastewater management plan, energy generation, urban spaces, and district recreation.

The findings of the report will be the input for Task 5.1 "Pilot operation plan", which will detail the pilot scenarios through which the STEP platform will be tested in an operational environment. In addition, they will enable the consortium to better understand the needs of policy makers, and accordingly adapt the STEP platform functionality (WP3) and the project exploitation activities (WP6).

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