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Legitimate (multilevel) crisis management from the perspective of human rights, rights and position of minorities, and non-discrimination: Research outline

WP4: Legitimate Crisis Governance in the Context of Human, Rights, Minority Rights and the Principle of Non-Discrimination



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Executive summary

Deliverable 4.2 presents the research outline and design that will be used to execute qualitative field research within WP 4 to detect perceptions and attitudes of respondents regarding the impacts and consequences of Covid-19 related crisis management on human rights, rights, protection and situation of diverse minorities and other distinct communities as well as on (the realization of) the principle of non-discrimination. Unlike other research WPs within the LEGITIMULT project, the field research of WP 4 is planned to continue throughout the duration of the project. In the first phase, its central goal is to collect data and develop a database on perceptions and attitudes of interviewees/respondents selected among persons belonging to national, ethnic, linguistic and other minorities and diverse distinct communities with regard to the effects, impacts and consequences of Covid-19 related crisis management – particularly from the perspective of respective distinct communities. Additionally, particularly in the later stages of the LEGITIMULT project the data, the research results and findings of WP 4 will be used to test, evaluate and interpret the research data, results and findings of other WPs and the project as a whole. The main method used for the qualitative field-research of WP4 are open-ended in-depth interviews that will be complemented by other methods, such as direct and indirect observation (with and without participation), informal conversation, focus and discussion groups, panels, etc. The appendices include the interview protocol that presents the process of carrying out the interviews as well as collecting, organizing and coding the data, forms of consent of respondents and interviewees, brief presentation of used definitions and concepts as well as theoretical model of social and political participation of minorities that should be used in organizing, classifying and interpreting of research data, results and findings.

Keywords: crisis management, inclusion, participation, multilevel governance, (social) minorities and persons belonging to them, human and minority rights, protection of (persons belonging to) minorities, border communities, (principle of) non-discrimination.



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1. Introduction

This research outline and design (Deliverable 4.2) presents and explains the plan of conducting qualitative field research (more precisely in-depth open-ended interviews with persons belonging to diverse minorities, including representatives of those minorities throughout the duration of the project), data collection and analysis, database creation and organization, formulation and interpretation of the collected data, research results and findings to be carried out by the Work Package 4 (WP4) Legitimate Crisis Governance in the Context of Human Rights, Minority Rights and the Principle of Non-Discrimination of the LEGITIMULT project.

The LEGITIMULT project analyzes and compares Covid-19 related crisis management processes, crisis policies and decision taking, measures and actions as well as their effects, impacts and consequences in European countries. More precisely, considering their complexity, nature and dynamics observed from the perspective of multilevel governance (MLG), and focusing on responsibilities, competences, tasks, relations and cooperation of governments and authorities at all levels, the project studies Covid-19 related crises management and policies in 31 European democracies² from the perspective of inclusion and participation of diverse social actors as well as democracy and legitimacy of crisis management and governance.³ Its work is organized in 9 WPs that focus on the following specific tasks: **WP1 Dataset and Qualitative Analysis** in cooperation with all WPs oversees the development of an extended and integrated database on the MLG dimension of national Covid-19 crisis policies and measures. **WP2 From Crisis Management to Legitimate Crisis Governance in MLG Systems** explores the concepts of crisis management and crisis governance in the context of Covid-19 crisis and aims to develop a more functional concept of legitimate crisis governance based upon the principles of human rights and democratic governance that can provide legitimate responses within democratic MLG systems to crisis situations in times of uncertainty. **WP3 The Making and Breaking of Rules in Crisis Situations: The Rule of Law and Democratic Participation**, **WP4 Legitimate Crisis Governance in the Context of Human Rights, Minority Rights and the Principle of Non-Discrimination**, **WP5 Legitimate Crisis Governance and Trust**, and **WP6 Legitimate Crisis Governance and Economic Sustainability** study and assess specific areas and topics relevant for assessing democratic governance and crisis response(s) in crisis situations and for dealing with the MLG dimension of democratic crisis governance. **WP7 Shaping the Future – from Project to Practice** that in cooperation with other WPs and based upon their work, findings and inputs focuses on results and future outcomes of the project aims to organize interactive events with relevant stakeholders in different environments that will discuss the concept of legitimate crisis governance and test its implementation. These activities should contribute to the development of a **toolbox highlighting the core elements of legitimate crisis governance**. In this context, based upon the LEGITIMULT Impact Strategy, **WP8 Dissemination and Communication** is designed to bring together, disseminate and communicate the results, findings and best practices of all WPs. In addition to coordinating the dissemination and communication of the project's research findings and results, and in cooperation with all other WPs, it will engage with the practitioners and

² These European democracies are the EU-27 member countries, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, and the UK

³ See, LEGITIMULT project on legitimate crisis governance in multilevel systems: <http://legitimult.eu/> as well as: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100089222897068>, <https://www.linkedin.com/company/legitimultproject> and <https://twitter.com/legitimult>.



stakeholders throughout and beyond the duration of the project in order to promote the concept and tools of legitimate democratic crisis governance, particularly the toolbox that can be used in different crisis situations in the future. Finally, in order to ensure the best possible functioning and execution of LEGITIMULT project, **WP9** focuses on the **Management** of the consortium.

WPs 3 and 5 as well as 6 that combines qualitative and quantitative research are predominantly quantitative in their research approaches and methods. The WP4 focuses on qualitative research considering, testing and complementing the data, research results and findings of other WPs. In this context, WP4⁴ studies various impacts and consequences of Covid-19 related crisis management in diverse environments on human rights, status, situation, rights and protection of minorities, and the principle of non-discrimination. More precisely, the qualitative research of WP4 explores the attitudes and perceptions of persons belonging to (social) minorities, including different and diverse marginalized groups and border communities with regard to legitimacy and democratic nature of crisis management and governance in respective environments. Assessing the impact(s) and consequences of crisis management policies and measures, the research focuses particularly on exclusive, restrictive and repressive crisis policies and measures as well as their (predominantly negative longer-term) social consequences and impact(s) on human rights, the rights and position of diverse minorities and persons belonging to them as well as the principle and policies of non-discrimination.

The quantitative research data, results and findings of other WPs as well as the reviewed literature provide the necessary inputs for designing and executing successful qualitative research of WP4. However, the data produced by in-depth open-ended interviews, focus groups, informal conversations and observations that indicate the attitudes and perceptions of the impacts and consequences for persons belonging to diverse minorities and other distinct communities are case and context specific. They reflect personal attitudes and perceptions of respondents. At best, they apply to the distinct communities to which the respondents belong, and can provide specific case studies for comparative purposes. They might be helpful in detecting similarities and differences. Although the research results and findings of WP4 should not be generalized, they are instrumental for the evaluation and interpretation of the data, results and findings of other WPs. Considering its nature and function within LEGITIMULT project, the qualitative field research of WP4 will continue throughout the duration of the project with additional questions added to the main questionnaire based upon the data, research results and findings as well as upon possible requests and questions of other WPs.

Based upon our literature review, informal conversations and previous research presented in Deliverable 4.1, examining the various impacts and consequences of Covid-19 related crisis management in relation to human rights, the status, situation, rights and protection of minorities, and the principle of non-discrimination in the context of multilevel governance, multilevel governance institutions and intergovernmental relations (MLG IGR) addresses two research questions: Which conditions, circumstances, policies, measures, actions can contribute to more democratic and legitimate crisis management and governance? How can the inclusion and participation of diverse social actors, including social minorities and persons belonging to them in crisis management processes and decision-making be improved, thereby enhancing the legitimacy of crisis governance? In this context, WP4 tests four (working) hypotheses.

⁴ For a brief presentation of LEGITIMULT Project and WP4 on legitimate crisis governance in the context of human rights, minority rights and the principle of non-discrimination, see: <http://www.inv.si/Dokumenti/dokumenti.aspx?iddoc=1055&idmenu=19&lang=slo>.

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General hypotheses:

(H1) Covid-19 crisis management strategies, policies and measures, particularly those that limit and/or suspend certain human rights, impact on all individuals, communities, groups, associations, organizations and institutions in a defined environment.

(H2) The inclusion and participation of relevant and interested actors (individuals and diverse forms of their association and organization), including diverse social minorities and persons belonging to them in the formulation and adoption as well as in the implementation of crisis procedures and processes, policies and measures improve the legitimacy of crisis governance.

Specific hypotheses:

(H3) Different crisis management procedures and processes, policies and measures impact minorities and persons belonging to those minorities more negatively than the rest of the population.

(H4) Formal and informal inclusion and participation of diverse minorities, persons belonging to them and particularly their representatives in the formulation, adoption and implementation of crisis management procedures and processes, strategies, policies and measures can improve their legitimacy, acceptance and effectivity within minority communities and societies as a whole.

The following section presents the research outline and design developed to meet the tasks and goals of WP4 and conduct the qualitative field research.

2. Research outline and design

The presented research outline and design reflect that there is no fully adequate research approach, method and concept in studying complex social phenomena and concepts. For this reason and in line with methodological pluralism approach, we use and combine as many (disciplinary, multi-, trans- and interdisciplinary) research approaches, methods and concepts as possible that reflect those phenomena and concepts from different angles and in different contexts.

Our literature review confirms relevance of the presented research questions and hypotheses. There seems to be a general agreement that exclusive, restrictive and repressive crisis management usually dominated by the executive had a negative impact on democracy.

Our literature review and previous research as well as the first interviews within the project carried out in summer 2023 confirm the relevance of LEGITIMULT research design, approaches and methods in studying the legitimacy of the Covid-19 related crisis management, as well as the relevance of the research questions and hypotheses of WP4. Studying complex, dynamic and constantly evolving (social) phenomena and concepts requires and stimulates constant, intense, open and inclusive conceptual and methodological discussions. Focusing on crisis management, its legitimacy as well as its consequences and impacts upon individuals and distinct communities, particularly upon different minorities and persons belonging to them, requires using, coordinating, combining, interpreting, constantly evaluating and developing diverse (disciplinary, multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary) research approaches and methods as well as terminologies, concepts,

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definitions, theoretical models and theories. Inclusive cooperation with relevant stakeholders particularly when discussing the concept of legitimate democratic crisis governance, support the identification of best practices and recommendations as well as the development of a toolbox for legitimate crisis governance. The approaches and practices of methodological pluralism (see e.g., della Porta & Keating 2008) used in studying socially relevant diversities, equality, inclusion, integration and participation of diverse minorities, distinct communities and persons belonging to them prove useful also in the research of democracy and legitimacy of crisis management and governance.

The qualitative research of WP4 studies the attitudes and perceptions of persons belonging to social minorities and other distinct communities (such as marginalized groups and border communities) towards Covid-19 crisis management and governance. It focuses on their evaluation(s) of legitimacy and the democratic nature of crisis management and governance, particularly in terms of the impact(s) of crisis management policies and measures on their respective communities and societies. This includes the impacts of exclusive, restrictive and repressive measures on human rights, the rights and position of minorities, principles and policies of non-discrimination as well as the long-term consequences of those policies and measures.

For this purpose, the qualitative research of WP4 is based on open-ended in-depth interviews. Direct and indirect observations, informal conversations and (formal) events, such as meetings, panels, workshops and/or focus groups complement the interview data. Our initial interviewees include persons (particularly activists and representatives) belonging to different minorities, distinct and/or marginalized groups and communities, such as national, ethnic, religious and language minorities, (im)migrants (in addition to documented ones also undocumented ones, if possible), refugees, homeless, gender and LGBTQIA+ communities and associations, etc. in Austria, Croatia, Italy, Slovenia and possibly other countries (e.g., Spain⁵). Additional interviewees will be identified through “snowball” sampling.

At least 5-10 interviewees will be included from each selected community to get a relevant insight of the perceptions and attitudes of persons belonging to it. With the higher number of respondents, the relevance and validity of qualitative research results and findings improve. Even in the case that only one or two interviewees from a certain distinct community are accessible for our research, including additional respondents can provide useful insights and may indicate perceptions and attitudes of their respective distinct community.

The initial case studies will include national/ethnic/linguistic and other minorities, including border communities and other distinct communities selected by the project partners participating in the qualitative field research within WP4. Their selection will be based upon existing cooperation, contacts, links and channels of communication. These include national/ethnic/linguistic minorities in Austria (e.g., Slovene minority in Carinthia), Croatia (e.g., national minorities listed in the legislation), Italy (e.g., German and Slovenian linguistic minorities and border communities) and Slovenia (e.g., Hungarian and Italian minorities and Roma). Additional interviewees within the respective distinct communities, as well as additional minority and other distinct communities that will be included in the field research, will follow the suggestions of the initial interviewees. Case studies in additional countries will include interviews

⁵ There might be an opportunity to interview undocumented migrants in Spain.



with persons (particularly activists and representatives, but also those that are not organized or socially/politically active within their distinct communities) from different minorities, distinct and/or marginalized groups and communities, such as national, ethnic, religious and language minorities, (im)migrants (in addition to documented ones also undocumented ones), refugees, homeless, gender and LGBTQIA+ communities and associations.

Ongoing discussions within WP4 are planned throughout the duration of the project to identify the case studies of other minorities and distinct communities, to establish contact with respondents from additional communities, and to determine how many interviews will be carried out with respondents from these communities.

We developed the concept and core questions for open-ended in-depth interviews taking into account our previous research and literature review. Based upon our already existing contacts and cooperation as well as on our previous research,⁶ informal conversations were held with members and representatives of different social minorities and institutions (e.g., national, ethnic and linguistic minorities, migrants, offices for migrant workers, gender and LGBTQIA+ activists in Slovenia, Austria, Croatia and Italy)⁷ as well as with selected researchers to test the concept and core questions of the open-ended in-depth interviews.⁸ Those conversations detected some difficulties and possible problems, particularly terminological and conceptual ones that need to be considered. Considering the different social, economic and educational backgrounds, status and positions of individual interviewees, terminologies and concepts needed to be clarified to ensure that they fully understood the questions. For instance, individual respondents adopted different meanings and interpretations of our terminology and concepts (e.g., democracy, inclusion, integration, participation, legitimacy, human rights, including rights and protection of diverse social minorities, the principle of non-discrimination, direct and indirect discrimination) differently. Still, all respondents confirmed the importance of informal and formal inclusion and democratic participation of minorities and their representatives in decision-making processes for the legitimacy of crisis management.

All interviewees can decide whether they want their interview to be anonymized or not. Often, persons belonging to different minorities want to have their names, work, positions within their minority community and views documented in the research findings, publications and media. Such a practice that takes into account expressed wishes and interests of interviewees is consistent with the research ethics and rules.

The systematic inclusion and participation of respondents, stakeholders, practitioners and other target populations into interactive and open terminological, conceptual and methodological discussions can be instrumental for the success of a project, its findings and its impact.

⁶ E.g., interviews on political participation of minorities carried out within the project *Political participation of national minorities and persons belonging to them: Comparative study of political participation of Slovene minorities in the neighboring countries of the Republic of Slovenia* that – although not planned initially – addressed also the consequences and impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and related crisis management.

⁷ Some of them may be included in the further research as interviewees.

⁸ These informal conversations took place in different forms at different locations, mostly as person to person conversations and occasionally through informal group discussions with few participants. Such informal conversations as informal settings were chosen to test the core interview questions, because according to our experience in formal settings people tend to adjust their behaviour, attitude, reactions, language and answers to their specific perception of the formal event.



Discussing the process of interviews, members and representatives of various minority communities in the informal conversations suggested that the respondents should present their understanding and interpretations of terms, definitions and concepts at the very beginning or the interview, prior to questions asked by interviewers. Particularly important for our research and interpretation of research results would be their understanding, interpretation(s) and assessment(s) of the concepts and their definitions of legitimacy, legitimate democratic multilevel crisis management and governance (in general and in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic), diverse social minorities, human and minority rights, inclusion, integration and participation. The informal conversations indicated that before asking their questions in the interview, the interviewers need to explain exactly and comprehensively the concepts and definitions of legitimacy and multilevel democratic crisis governance as they are used in the WP4 field research.

Legitimate democratic (multilevel) crisis management and governance presumes democratic inclusion, integration and participation of the people in accordance with democratic principles, rules and procedures in the development, formulation decision-making and implementation of crisis strategies and policies. Our informal conversations found that social activists, members and representatives of social minorities consider the inclusion and participation of persons belonging to minorities to be key indicators of legitimacy and democracy of crisis management and governance. They stressed the importance of social and political participation of diverse minorities and persons belonging to them for legitimacy and democracy in diverse and plural contemporary societies. There was a general agreement that democracy is a highly valued and supported social practice, value, principle and goal.

The interview protocol (see Appendix 1) defines and explains the process of setting, organizing and conducting our interviews. It also includes the main interview questions that were developed based on our previous research and the literature review. The data and findings of other WPs, their requests for clarifying certain issues and concepts as well as the development of policy recommendations and the LEGITIMULT toolkit, will indicate additional questions that will need to be added to the existing interview questions. Consequently, the interview questions will be constantly revised, updated and complemented. Ongoing qualitative field research, constantly updated databases and findings will provide the basis for the evaluation and interpretation of the results and of other WPs and the project as a whole. The theoretical model of social and political participation and representation of (national) minorities (Žagar 2017, 16-18), which was developed as a tool and yardstick for the IES research, informed the research outline, design and analysis. According to our theoretical model (Appendix 5), the inclusion, integration, social and political participation of minorities are key preconditions for and yardsticks of democratic and legitimate decision-making in general and in the specific context of crisis management in respective environments.

Appendices provide further important parts of our research outline and design. They clarify the research process and formalize the consent of the respondents. (See Appendix 2 Statement of agreement of participants in interviews (interviewees) within the EU Horizon Europe project LEGITIMULT: Legitimate crisis management and multilevel governance (LEGITIMULT – GAP-101061550), particularly for WP 4 Legitimate Crisis Governance in the Context of Human Rights, Minority Rights and the Principle of Non-Discrimination) and Appendix 3 (Data privacy information and declaration of consent). Appendix 4 presents brief explanations of the terms and concepts relevant for the process of carrying out open-ended in-depth interviews.



3. Conclusion

In accordance with the research outline and design of of WP4 open-ended in-depth interview and other qualitative methods will be carried out throughout the duration of LEGITIMULT project. This will result in constantly updated data and databases and findings providing the necessary for the evaluation and interpretation of the data and results of other WPs and the project as a whole.

Our literature review, previous research, informal conversations and initial interviews carried out within qualitative field research of WP4 indicate the relevance of our research questions and working hypotheses. They demonstrate that formal and informal inclusion and participation of minority communities, persons belonging to those (social) minorities, particularly their leaders, activists and (s)elected representatives, in crisis management processes, the formulation, adoption and implementation of strategies, policies and measures a can improve the legitimacy and democratic nature of crisis management and governance. This is even the case, if their inclusion and participation are merely symbolic. The inclusion and participation of diverse actors in decision-making and implementation of crisis management enhances its acceptance and legitimacy in general and from the perspective of minorities. In turn, exclusive crisis management dominated by the executive, especially restrictive and repressive policies and measures (including suspensions and derogations of human rights and basic freedoms) that effect everybody, usually impact minorities and persons belonging to those minorities more negatively than the rest of the population. Consequently, exclusive, restrictive and repressive crisis policies and measures decrease legitimacy of crisis management.

4. References

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LEGITIMULT project on legitimate crisis governance in multilevel systems:

<http://legitimult.eu/>

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100089222897068> ,

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/legitimultproject> and

<https://twitter.com/legitimult>.

LEGITIMULT Project and its WP4 on legitimate crisis governance in the context of human rights, minority rights and the principle of non-discrimination:

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1:

EU Horizon Europe project LEGITIMULT: Legitimate crisis management and multilevel governance (LEGITIMULT – GAP-101061550)

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL for the interviews carried out by the Work Package 4: Legitimate Crisis Governance in the Context of Human Rights, Minority Rights and the Principle of Non-Discrimination

I. Initial contact

Based upon the list of the initial interviewees, created by the partners carrying out the interviews, the next phase of the field research will use the method of “snowball” sampling. Interviewees indicate possible additional interviewees from their own minority or distinct minority/marginalized groups/communities or other minority or distinct minority/marginalized groups/communities. Subsequently, the initial contact will be established through a formal letter, e-message, phone or internet call. To enable clear the communication and expression of interviewee’s points and views, contact will be either in the language of the interviewee, language of the environment that the interviewee speaks and understands well or in other language that the interviewee speaks and understands.

The first formal contact will:

- Briefly present the LEGITIMULT project, its aims and goals with regard to legitimacy of Covid-19 related crisis management and crisis management in contemporary societies in general. It will also demonstrate the work and function of WP4 within which the interviews are carried out, codified and analyzed to study the impact(s) of crisis management on minority and marginalized communities and groups and particularly their perceptions of the legitimacy of crisis management and individual crisis management measures and actions;
- Explain the concept and the aim of the interviews, including the fact that the views of interviewees and findings will be used to evaluate and interpret findings of other WPs and the whole LEGITIMULT project;
- Offer the choice to interviewees to decide whether their names, identity, answers, views and information should be anonymized in the process of coding or their names and identity shall be revealed;
- Explain the process of the interview, indicating that it could take at least half an hour and longer, and ask the interviewee to suggest the most suitable location and time for the interview as well as the language of the interview (if the interviewer does not speak the language of the interviewee);
- Ask the interviewee, whether the interview can be recorded (usually audio recording, possibly also video recording) or whether the interviewer should only take notes to document the interview;
- Ask the interviewee to suggest the most suitable ways and means of communication in the process of arranging and setting up the interview;



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- Express the readiness of the partner(s) carrying out the interviews and the interviewer(s) who will be interviewing the interviewee to answer all possible questions of the interviewee and offer additional explanations if needed.

If following the formal letter or e-mail there is no reaction from the interviewee upon the initial contact within two weeks, a formal letter or email will be resent asking the interviewee to express readiness or refusal to participate in the interview. If there is no reaction this should be considered as the refusal.

II. Interview organization and procedure

After they accepted their participation, interviewees will be contacted to arrange place and time for the interview and other organizational details. If possible, the interview will be conducted in an environment that enables an uninterrupted communication between the interviewee and interviewer. Interviewers will aim to create a friendly and comfortable atmosphere in order for interviewees to freely and comfortably express their views. The interviewees should be allowed to speak freely and without interruption, while interviewers can ask further questions to cover relevant issues.

The interview will begin with the (official) presentation/introduction of all participating interviewers and interviewee. The interviewer(s) will explain the process of the interview and ask the interviewee again if the interview can be recorded. If the interviewee refuses the recording of the interview, it will be documented with written notes of the answers, explanations and views, as well as, if possible, descriptions of the interviewees' behaviour and attitude. If the interview is audio recorded or noted, the interviewer(s) may ask the interviewee if a photo can be made for documentation purposes (e.g., with regard to the understanding of the place and atmosphere of the interview).

At the beginning of the interview, the interviewee will be asked to read and sign the following statement of agreement, which will be archived with the recording/notes and transcription of the interview:



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Statement of agreement of participants in interviews (interviewees) within the EU Horizon Europe project LEGITIMULT: Legitimate crisis management and multilevel governance (LEGITIMULT – GAP-101061550), particularly for Work Package 4 Legitimate Crisis Governance in the Context of Human Rights, Minority Rights and the Principle of Non-Discrimination

1. First name(s) (middle name(s)):
2. Family name(s):
3. Gender/sex: FEMALE MALE NONBINARY
4. Age:
5. Country:
6. Minority:
7. Language of communication in interview:

In accordance with the rules, regulations and standards of ethical research, I confirm that I was informed about the LEGITIMULT project, its methodology, contents and goals and that I voluntarily participate as the interviewee. I agree with the use of the interview, individual statements and views expressed as well as all data presented for the LEGITIMULT project, research, dissemination of research results and publications.

I agree that in the documentation, data, dissemination and publications of the LEGITIMULT project:

1. My identity is disclosed, including my name(s), affiliation(s) and other relevant data.
2. My interview and all data that can disclose my identity are anonymized.

Please, select one of the above options.

Signature:

Place and date:



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The official form of consent of the LEGITIMULT project will also be presented to the interviewee who will be asked to sign it upon it is being read and explained.

Before starting the formal part of the interview framed by the core interview questions, the interviewer(s) should ask the interviewee if (s)he is familiar with a few central terms and concepts used in the LEGITIMULT project, such as legitimacy, trust, acceptance, democracy and particularly democratic decision-making, crisis and crisis management. If the interviewee confirms the knowledge and understanding of those terms and concepts, (s)he should be asked to explain his/her understanding. In case of any doubts, sub-questions should be asked to clarify the interviewee's understanding and interpretation of those terms and concepts to avoid any possible misunderstandings in this respect.

If the interviewee does not know and understand the terms and concepts or upon the presentation of the interviewee's understanding and interpretation of those terms and concepts, the interviewer(s) will explain the definitions, interpretations and understanding of those and other key terms and concepts used within the LEGITIMULT project by the researchers and interviewers. Other key terms and concepts include:

- Crisis management, particularly crisis management measures and policies,
- Authority, including levels of authority and their role,
- Government and governance,
- MLG, etc.

Upon the initial part of the communication presented above, the interviewer(s) will explain how these terms and concepts are used and understood in the LEGITIMULT project (by researchers). Following the presentation of each term and concept, the interviewee will be asked if the presentation was clear and sufficient. If there are any questions and comments, including additional ones that have not been discussed so far, the interviewer(s) will try to answer and clarify them addressing all issues mentioned by the interviewee.

Throughout the interview, in case of any possible doubt regarding the use, understanding and interpretation of terms and concepts as well as the understanding and interpretation of the interviewee's answers, expressed views and/or mentioned contexts, the interviewee will be asked to clarify the exact use, understanding, meaning and interpretation.

Following the initial part of the interview described above, the interview will proceed by addressing the core questions, complemented by additional ones.



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TEMPLATE: Common framework and obligatory core questions to be addressed in the open interview with persons belonging to minorities, particularly minority activists, members and representatives of minority associations, organizations, political parties and/or institutions

Each interviewee shall be asked to answer the following questions:

1. Affiliation(s) with as well as role(s) and position(s) within the minority community and minority association(s), institution(s) and/or parties.
2. General assessment of minority-majority as well as, if applicable and relevant, minority-minority relations.
3. Assessment of inclusion and integration of the minority and persons belonging to it in the society and social environment:
 - a. At the local level
 - b. At the regional/provincial level (if applicable)
 - c. At the level of the federal unit (if applicable)
 - d. At the national level
4. General assessment of the crisis management (strategies, policies, measures) in your country during the Covid-19 epidemics/pandemics, and in general:
 - a. At the local level
 - b. At the regional/provincial level (if applicable)
 - c. At the level of the federal unit (if applicable)
 - d. At the national level
5. Personal assessment of the impact of the crisis management and its measures during the Covid-19 epidemics/pandemics in your country on human rights and basic freedoms.
 - a. At the local level
 - b. At the regional/provincial level (if applicable)
 - c. At the level of the federal unit (if applicable)
 - d. At the national level
6. Do you consider crisis management and its measures in your country during the Covid-19 epidemics/pandemics effective and successful?
 - a. At the local level
 - b. At the regional/provincial level (if applicable)
 - c. At the level of the federal unit (if applicable)
 - d. At the national level
7. Do you consider the crisis management during the Covid-19 epidemics/pandemics inclusive and democratic? Why?
 - a. At the local level
 - b. At the regional/provincial level (if applicable)



- c. At the level of the federal unit (if applicable)
- d. At the national level

(Sub-questions on legality and legitimacy of the crisis management and its measures. If the interviewee is not familiar with all used concepts, explain those that are not known simply but in detail.)

8. What were the impacts and consequences of the crisis management during the Covid-19 epidemics/pandemics for/on your minority community and persons belonging to it? Did such crisis management effect the minorities more than the rest of the population? How?
 - a. At the local level
 - b. At the regional/provincial level (if applicable)
 - c. At the level of the federal unit (if applicable)
 - d. At the national level
9. What improvements and changes would you suggest to improve crisis management in such circumstances?
 - a. At the local level
 - b. At the regional/provincial level (if applicable)
 - c. At the level of the federal unit (if applicable)
 - d. At the national level
10. How would you improve the crisis management in your social environment, and make it more democratic? How could the crisis management be less limiting with regard to human rights and basic freedoms?
 - a. At the local level
 - b. At the regional/provincial level (if applicable)
 - c. At the level of the federal unit (if applicable)
 - d. At the national level
11. How would you increase inclusion and democratic participation of minorities and persons belonging to them in the process of crisis management?
 - a. At the local level
 - b. At the regional/provincial level (if applicable)
 - c. At the level of the federal unit (if applicable)
 - d. At the national level
12. Asses/evaluate the legitimacy of the authorities during the Covid-19 epidemics/pandemics in your country:
 - a. At the local level
 - b. At the regional/provincial level (if applicable)
 - c. At the level of the federal unit (if applicable)
 - d. At the national level
13. Asses/evaluate the acceptance, relevance and proportionality of decisions, measures and actions of the authorities in general and particularly in the context of crisis management during the Covid-19 epidemics/pandemics:
 - a. At the local level



- b. At the regional/provincial level (if applicable)
 - c. At the level of the federal unit (if applicable)
 - d. At the national level
14. Assess/evaluate your trust in the authorities during the Covid-19 epidemics/pandemics:
- a. At the local level
 - b. At the regional/provincial level (if applicable)
 - c. At the level of the federal unit (if applicable)
 - d. At the national level

III. Transcribing and coding the interviews

As soon as possible upon the completion of the interview, particularly in the case that it is not (audio/video) recorded, the interview will be transcribed based upon the notes of the interviewer(s), so that the transcription clearly presents and explains the key points and views. If the interview is recorded, the transcription will be made based upon the audio/video recording and notes of the interviewer(s). If the interviewee does not want his/her identity to be revealed, the interview and its transcription will be anonymized. If the interviewee wishes the name and identity to be visible, the transcription of the interview will include also these data and information.

In case the interviewee wishes that the interview is anonymized, the transcription will not include any information or element, including the contextual ones that could reveal the identity of the interviewee (e.g., the exact place of the interview, the position or function of the interviewee that can be identified, all other facts and information indicating the identity of the interviewee).

Upon the transcriptions of the interviews and anonymization of those transcripts of the interviews for which the interviewees requested anonymization, the transcriptions shall be stored in accordance with the LEGITIMULT and EU rules and procedures. They will be made available to all researchers of the LEGITIMULT project and upon their request also to other interested researchers as well as to the interested scholarly and broader public.



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Appendix 2:

Statement of agreement of participants in interviews (interviewees) within the EU Horizon Europe project LEGITIMULT: Legitimate crisis management and multilevel governance (LEGITIMULT – GAP-101061550), particularly for Work Package 4 Legitimate Crisis Governance in the Context of Human Rights, Minority Rights and the Principle of Non-Discrimination

8. First name(s) (middle name(s)):
9. Family name(s):
10. Gender/sex: FEMALE MALE NONBINARY
11. Age:
12. Country:
13. Minority:
14. Language of communication in interview:

In accordance with the rules, regulations and standards of ethical research, I confirm that I was informed about the LEGITIMULT project, its methodology, contents and goals and that I voluntarily participate as the interviewee. I agree with the use of the interview, individual statements and views expressed as well as all data presented for the LEGITIMULT project, research, dissemination of research results and publications.

I agree that in the documentation, data, dissemination and publications of the LEGITIMULT project:

3. My identity is disclosed, including my name(s), affiliation(s) and other relevant data.
4. My interview and all data that can disclose my identity are anonymized.

Please, select one of the above options.

Signature:

Place and date:



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Appendix 3:

ANEX III: Data privacy information and declaration of consent

Project acronym	LEGITIMULT
Project name	Legitimate Crisis Governance in Multilevel Systems
Grant Agreement no.	101061550
Project type	Research and Innovation Action
Start date of the project	01 October 2022
End date of the project	30 September 2025
Disclaimer	This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2021 research and innovation program. The views and opinions expressed in this document are solely those of the project, not those of the European Commission.

1. Introduction

The study described below is part of the research project LEGITIMULT. This project receives funding from the European Commission as part of the funding programme Horizon Europe (project number 101061550). You have been invited to participate in this study. Before you agree to participate in this study, please read all the information provided carefully, and do not hesitate to reach out with any questions regarding the study or the potential benefits and risks involved.

2. Purpose of the study

LEGITIMULT assesses the impact of the measures taken by various international, national and subnational governments on multilevel institutions and intergovernmental relations in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. The project analyzes the effect of these measures on democratic governance, highlighting to what extent multilevel governance influences democracy, favoring a model of legitimate crisis management. The objective of the LEGITIMULT project is to create and develop the concept of legitimate crisis governance, as it is crucial for maintaining democratic standards in crisis situations and prevents social fragmentation and alienation. Policy recommendations and practical tools merge into a toolkit for legitimate crisis management, ready to use in potential future crises.

3. Target group, conditions of participation and role of participants in the study

Research participants must meet the following criteria to take part in this study:

- is a member of a minority or marginalized group/community (e.g., ethnic, linguistic, religious, LGBTQIA+, asylum seekers, etc.),
- is an official and/or collaborator within different public or private institutions or civil society organizations dealing with minority issues and/or marginalized communities/groups,
- is of age (at least 18 years old).

Participation in this scientific study is completely voluntary, and you can withdraw your consent to participate at any given time.



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4. Procedure

The interview will be conducted in the following way: You will be asked about 15 questions that will reflect your perception of Covid-19 related crisis management, how you experienced the measures taken by the government during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, and your thoughts on and attitude towards those measures. We are interested in your opinion, your view, your experience both on a personal level and on the level of the minority community to which you belong. There are no right or wrong answers. You can freely, in your own way and with your own words express your views and opinions.

We expect an interview to take approximately 1 hour to an hour and a half, possibly longer.

Based on the data collected by the interviews, we will try to detect and determine the impacts and consequences of crisis measures, policies and strategies on democratic decision-making, human and minority rights, the implementation of the principle of non-discrimination and on the position and status of national/ethnic/linguistic and other minorities as well as persons belonging to those distinct communities (i.e. members of those minorities and other distinct communities). Additionally, the collected data, research results and findings will be used to check/test, evaluate, supplement and interpret the results and findings of other sets of research within the LEGITIMULT project that use different research approaches and methods.

5. Potential risks and benefits

As the interviewee you have a choice to disclose your identity or opt for anonymization of your personal data and contents of the interview. We expect no risks associated with the disclosure of your identity and would be grateful if you agree that your identity is disclosed, thereby giving your views and positions additional weight.

However, you might opt for anonymization, if you fear that potential risks might occur for you if your personal data and views are disclosed. In this case, all your answers will be anonymized, so that they will not reveal your identity.

Benefits to participating in this study include aid to the wider community, insight in the perceptions of diverse minorities and general situation, the development of tools for more legitimate governance in the future potential crisis situations, as well as contribution to knowledge.

6. Your personal data

The following information regards your personal data and its protection.

As our research project involves partners that are based outside the EU (Canada, Norway, Switzerland) and case studies of third countries (Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom), your unidentifiable data may be shared outside of the EU. Norway and Iceland are EEA countries and apply GDPR, whereas privacy laws in Canada, Switzerland and the UK have been recognized by the European Commission to provide adequate data protection.⁹ The ethical

⁹ **Canada:** Art. 1, European Parliament and Council, *Commission Decision of 20 December 2001 pursuant to Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the adequate protection of personal data provided by the Canadian Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*, 20 December 2001, OJ L 2, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32002D0002> [accessed 27 June 2022], 13;

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standards and the GDPR will be rigorously applied, and data transfer will comply with the legislation of the respective country in which the data was collected.

There will be no automated decision-making involved in the processing of your personal data.

For any questions and issues regarding your personal data protection, please contact:

Data Controller and/or Data Protection Officer: Romana Bešter, E: romana.bester@inv.si, T: 01 200 18 86

7. Purpose of processing your personal data

The information gathered as part of this study will be published in reports on the research project or in scientific papers in the form of anonymized/pseudonymized reports, statistical evaluations or scenarios without including any personal details. It will not be possible to track your identity from reports or papers at a later date, and only the primary researcher will have had access to identification data (unless you sign a written consent that your identity can be disclosed). Any image material will be anonymized.

Your personal data will only be processed as part of this research project if you give your explicit consent.

After the completion of the research project your data will be preserved for the purpose of proving compliance with the guidelines for good scientific practice. The research partners may also process your data for other scientific research purposes relating to LEGITIMULT if these are not aimed at producing person-related results.

8. Processed data

The following data will be collected:

- name;
- age;
- gender;
- email address;
- occupation;
- ethnicity;
- religion;
- personal consequences of Covid-19 measures;

Switzerland: Art. 1, European Parliament and Council, *Commission Decision of 26 July 2000 pursuant to Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the adequate protection of personal data provided in Switzerland*, 26 July 2000, OJ L 215, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02000D0518-20161217> [accessed 27 June 2022], 2; **United Kingdom:** Art. 1, European Parliament and Council, *Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1772 of 28 June 2021 pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the adequate protection of personal data by the United Kingdom*, 28 June 2021, OJ L 360, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021D1772&qid=1656320827662> [accessed 27 June 2022], 67.

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- level of trust in the government's crisis management.¹⁰

Upon your consent, the study will be documented by video and audio recordings for the purpose of analysis. Unless you agree with the disclosure of your identity, any video and audio material recorded will be anonymized or deleted at the end of the project.

For those who opt for anonymization, all information collected from you will be handled confidentially and according to relevant legislation. Individual participants that opt for anonymization will be given a code, and the data will be stored in a coded form. Results will be analysed and presented in a coded form. In these cases, individuals cannot be identified without a code key. A code key, which can be used to identify individual research participants and their responses, will be stored by the Institute for Ethnic Studies in Ljubljana and the data will only be reported in a form in which it is impossible to identify individual participants.

9. Data storage period

After completion of the research project your personal data will be retained only for as long as necessary to provide evidence of compliance with good scientific practice in accordance with the relevant guidelines. In compliance with the GDPR, personal data will not be kept in a form that permits identification of the individual for longer than is necessary for the purposes for which it was processed. The LEGITIMULT study registry will be stored at the IES in the digital storage for 10 years, after which it will be destroyed by deletion.

10. Recipients of your personal data

In case you opt for anonymization, only the institutions conducting this specific study will have access to your personal data. Other research partners within LEGITIMULTA¹¹ will have access to the anonymized/pseudonymized personal data, as each institution pseudonymizes their data during the project before it is sent to the partners, and anonymizes their data after the project ends. As LEGITIMULT promises open ended access to its research findings, people and institutions outside LEGITIMULT will also have access to the anonymized/pseudonymized data.

11. Rights of participants and contacts

You are entitled:

- to request information about your processed data;
- to receive the personal data concerning yourself (before anonymization);
- to ask for incorrect data to be corrected or deleted;
- to ask for restriction of data processing where possible;
- to ask for transmission of data to another controller; or
- to contact the Data Protection Authority in cases of suspected violation of the data protection provisions.

¹⁰ Additional categories might be added during the execution of the project, if necessary. If additional categories are added they need to be included in this list.

¹¹ The LEGITIMULT consortium consists of the following institutions: European Academy of Bozen; University of Bergen; University of Leiden; Institute for Ethnic Studies; University of Antwerp; National University of Distance Education; Free University of Berlin; Zagreb University (Faculty of Political Science); International IDEA; The Forum of Federations; University of Fribourg.



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You are also entitled:

- **to withdraw your consent at any time** and
- **to object to the processing of your data.**

You may withdraw your consent at any time (including during the study) without any consequences. You do not have to justify this withdrawal. Once you inform us that you withdraw your consent, your data will not be used in the subsequent phases of the research project. Please note that documents already published (e.g. project reports prepared for the funding provider, scientific publications) or project results obtained using your data before you withdrew your consent cannot be altered. Please also note that your data may have to be further processed to prove compliance with the guidelines of good scientific practice.

If you require further information about your rights as a test subject or the study itself, or if you have further questions, or wish to exercise your rights or abort the study, please contact the coordinator of the WP4 Mitja Žagar (E : mitja.zagar@guest.arnes.si) or the Data Protection Officer: Romana Bešter, E: romana.bester@inv.si, T: 01 200 18 86.

For matters of data protection and management, you can also contact the Data Protection Officer: Romana Bešter, E: romana.bester@inv.si, T: 01 200 18 86



12. Declaration of Consent according to data protection law

I have read and understood the Declaration of Consent. I have received answers to all my questions related to this study.

By signing this declaration, I consent to my participation in this study.

By signing this declaration I agree that LEGITIMULT may process my personal data of the categories listed in section 8 for the purpose(s) specified in section 7.

By signing this declaration I also agree that my personal data may be disclosed to the recipients listed in section 10.

I hereby agree that LEGITIMULT may use photos, audio recordings, video material or parts thereof, for marketing, advertising and public relations for the research project and may publish these materials to achieve the above purposes.

I hereby agree that LEGITIMULT may include my name and my email address in their dissemination list in order to receive further general LEGITIMULT news:

Name	
Email address	

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that at the time of signing this Declaration of Consent,

I am of full age and legal capacity.

I have received a copy of this Data Privacy Information and Declaration of Consent.

I understand that I may withdraw my consent in whole or in part at any time by giving notice to the contact address specified in section 11.

First name and surname of participant

Date, place and signature of participant

Statement of investigator's responsibility: I have explained the nature and purpose of this research study, the procedures to be undertaken and any risks that may be involved. I have offered to answer any questions and fully answered such questions. I believe that the participant understands my explanation and has freely given informed consent.

First name and surname of researcher

Date, place and signature of researcher



Appendix 4:

BRIEF EXPLANATIONS OF USED TERMS AND CONCEPTS:

LEGITIMACY = inclusion in and acceptance of decision-making, decisions, policies and measures (in different environments and at different levels) by the people, including distinct groups and communities that consider them right, appropriate and proportional.

TRUST = believing and accepting others, particularly a specific actor, e.g. authorities at different levels.

ACCEPTANCE = accepting others, particularly specific actors, their decisions and actions.

DEMOCRACY = ideal, concept, specific arrangement, system and process(es) that based upon regulations and established procedures allow for and enable inclusion of people in all spheres of life, including inclusion and participation in (political) decision-making.

DEMOCRATIC DECISION-MAKING = inclusive process of decision taking, based upon formal rules within competent bodies.

CRISIS = crisis situation, a specific situation and circumstances that require urgent action to address and resolve a specific problem that cannot be properly addressed and resolved by the system/usual arrangements and within the established procedures in a certain (micro, macro and/or) global environment.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT = management and/or regulation of a crisis situation by taking and executing crisis measures and policies.

AUTHORITY = competent bodies and institutions entitled (based upon law) to adopt and execute decisions, policies and measures, e.g. local, regional and/or state/national authorities.

GOVERNMENT = structure and system of (competent) authorities with their clearly defined competences.

GOVERNANCE = process of regulating and governing/managing

MULTI LEVEL GOVERNMENT/GOVERNANCE = division of labor, functions and competences at different levels within the government and governance, governing processes.



Appendix 5:

THE THEORETICAL MODEL OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION OF (NATIONAL) MINORITIES (Žagar 2017, 16-18)

Among the **general approaches** to social and political participation of (national and other) minorities and persons belonging to them the theoretical model lists: (I) constitutionally and/or legally regulated **formal participation** in the legislation and executive as well as in consultative bodies, (II) **informal participation** in political processes and decision-making as well as lobbying, (III) inclusion, membership and activism in **political parties** (both, mainstream parties and minority ones), **movements, organisations and associations**, (IV) **(Neo)Corporatist approaches, arrangements, bodies, processes and mechanisms** (such as different forms of consultations and consultative bodies), (V) **consociative arrangements**, particularly elite power-sharing, (VI) inclusion and participation through **basic principles** of constitutional and international law that include human rights, rule of law, democracy and democratic participation, equal rights and equality, justice, non-discrimination, limited majority rule, special rights and protection of minorities, (VII) inclusion and participation through **inclusion and integration policies**, and (VIII) inclusion and **participation through specific systems and mechanisms of minority protection** (at all levels), based upon the special rights of minorities. (Žagar 2017)

Among the **concepts, types and mechanisms** of social and political participation of (national and other) minorities and persons belonging to them that can provide for and promote their better inclusion and participation the theoretical model includes: (I) **Elections and electoral systems** that can provide (A) for formally guaranteed **direct representation** of minorities in the legislative (1) through reserved minority seats, (2) special minority thresholds for minority political parties and/or candidates, (3) over-proportional representation of minorities and/or minimal quotas of minority representatives on the lists of mainstream parties, or (B) for **informal political arrangements and declarations** suggesting the mainstream political parties to include a certain number or share of minority candidates on their electoral tickets/lists. (II) **Informal agreements in political processes** and principles declared by statutes, programs and other documents of **political parties** that should ensure (1) inclusion and participation of minority politicians and representatives in mainstream political parties, including quotas for diverse minorities, (2) inter-party cooperation and consensus building on minority (related) issues, (3) participation of minority political parties in political processes, including elections. (III) **Special procedures of decision making** regulated by law or political agreements, including minority veto and obligatory or consultative opinions of minority institutions, organisations and/or representatives or joint consultative bodies that can ensure the adequate participation of minorities and realization of their specific interests. (IV) Inclusion of minority representatives and elites in policy formulation and decision-making through various **(Neo)Corporatist and Consociative arrangements** and/or (formal and informal) bodies and institutions at all levels of government (from local to national) that brings in those processes specific views and interests of diverse minorities. (V) **Affirmative action and other affirmative measures** (sometimes called positive discrimination) that promote inclusion, integration and participation of minorities and persons belonging to them. (VI) At least proportional, if possible over-proportional **employment (quotas) of persons belonging to minorities** in the public and private sectors that shall ensure the adequate number and share of persons belonging to different minorities among public/civil servants in state administration and public institutions. (VII) **Monitoring of the situation, position and status of minorities and persons belonging to them** for which adequate internal and external mechanisms shall be established. (VIII) **Autonomies**, particularly minority autonomy that can be realized through

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diverse arrangements of self-rule and management at different levels (from local to national), such as formal (constitutional, legal, political) and informal autonomies, territorial (federalism, regionalism) and non-territorial autonomies (such as cultural, functional and personal autonomy). (Žagar 2017)



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