



Shaping
our future together
in new ways

Overview

March 2019

EPICS.eu is a vision of positive further development of our democratic society, and an invitation to all areas of society, especially the younger generation, to actively participate in shaping our common path.

The digital core of *EPICS.eu* is the concept of an open source platform residing at the level of the European Union. This platform is to be developed and operated jointly, in the public interest and with utmost transparency, and shall enable all citizens to participate directly in social issues and developments.

To this end, *EPICS.eu* seeks to optimally combine the respective strengths of artificial intelligence, collective intelligence and expert knowledge. In this way, a multitude of multilingual, diverse citizen contributions can also be made available in a wide variety of contexts.

We use an innovative process, Agile Socio-Konsensing (ASK), to unleash positive social potential that has been largely untapped. This facilitates the finding of joint solutions in a creative and constructive way (e.g., by combining face-to-face and digital options for meeting).

Key features of *EPICS.eu*

- Integration of a digital concept into a larger context:
A purely digital platform can only marginally improve social cohesion. *EPICS.eu* therefore relies not only on technology but also on a flexible but effective connection of the platform to the representative structures of our democracy, a variety of opportunities for people to meet at the local level, and intensive cooperation with traditional media.
- Overall social development framework:
We seek to intensively involve the general public, especially young people, in the development and advancement of the platform in order to ensure the maximum attention and acceptance from the start. In addition, the project explicitly invites all relevant social forces (e.g., politics, administration, science, business and civil society) to participate on a sustainable basis.
- Finding solutions via ASK:
The collective experience of a collaborative process leads people to understand each other's perspectives on a topic. Further, this enables technologically supported cooperation that counteracts how society is currently drifting apart, in part due to technology. Even target groups that have not yet been reached by existing citizen participation efforts can be involved step by step in this way.
- Use of Artificial Intelligence for a non-profit purpose:
EPICS.eu pursues a people-centric vision. This approach could be exactly the comprehensive AI project with a specific European flavor that many are currently seeking.

- Consideration of science and research:

To be successful, participation should and must provide citizens with added value. The latest findings in the following areas (partly from active supporters of *EPICS.eu*) are important for inclusion in the implementation: experience from participation research and democracy development; gamification, incentives for motivation; and research in reputation and (self-) efficacy.

Far-reaching potential

- Extended scientific research on cooperative decision-making in combined online/offline environments
- Supplement/alternative to existing social networks – which are of a commercial nature and not transparent – by means of alternative community building and a networked exchange of ideas and solutions
- Flexible forms of participation, from citizen surveys to genuine participation in key societal issues at local, regional, national and European levels (complementing and developing representative democracy, bridge functionality)
- Promotion of societal interest in constructive participation in response to political, social, ecological and economic challenges (win/win situation for citizens on the one hand and for politics/administration/economy/science on the other)
- Strengthening the idea of European integration at the citizen level through a community project for the direct benefit of people (including removal of linguistic, cultural and interpersonal barriers)

Current status

EPICS.eu can satisfy a great need for constructive and effective citizen participation in society as a whole. We are convinced that we can realize this vision step by step. An initial prototype of the platform and suitable pilot projects are currently in the preparatory phase.

The financing and the organization of social support within the necessary framework pose even greater challenges. Here we have established numerous promising contacts, including the universities and city administration of Munich.

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