

NATIONAL MINI-PUBLIC REPORT: GERMANY

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Culminating more than a decade of crisis in Europe, the Covid-19 pandemic has opened an important window of opportunity for institutional and policy change, not only at the “reactive” level of emergency responses, but also to tackle more broadly the many socio-political challenges caused or exacerbated by Covid-19. Building on this premise, the Horizon Europe project REGROUP (*Rebuilding governance and resilience out of the pandemic*) aims to: 1) provide the European Union with a body of actionable advice on how to rebuild post-pandemic governance and public policies in an effective and democratic way; anchored to 2) a map of the socio-political dynamics and consequences of Covid-19; and 3) an empirically-informed normative evaluation of the pandemic.



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Organisational matters

The organization and implementation of the mini-publics was done by a team of six people in total: Andreas Grimmel (organization, coordination, and moderation), Susanne My Giang (organization, coordination, moderation, and protocol), Jannis Beckermann (assistance in organization, moderation, and protocol), Rahel Schwarz (assistance, moderation, protocol), Stefan Wallascheck (assistance and protocol), Martin Lieberich (moderation). Furthermore, Professor Dr. Christine Landfried (Political Science, University of Hamburg) and Professor Dr. Markus Kotzur (Law, University of Hamburg) contributed as resource persons on both days. Maike Brakhan from Missions Publiques, who provided the basic structure and playbook of the mini-publics, was also present on the first day.

The mini-publics took place over two days - 24.06.2023 and 08.07.2023 - in the rooms of the Europa-Kolleg Hamburg. On the first day, the event started at 9:00 am and ended at 5:00 pm. On the second day, the event started at 9:00 am and ended at 4:30 pm. The rooms used for the event were the large plenum of the Europa-Kolleg Hamburg, as well as a seminar and meeting room where one subgroup discussed during the division into two subgroups. The other subgroup remained in the plenum for the discussion. The plenum had about thirty seats, and the seminar room had fifteen seats. Furthermore, the large foyer of the Europa-Kolleg Hamburg was used for catering and breaks.

A total of thirteen participants took part in the mini-public, both on the first day and on the second day. There were no drop outs at the second meeting. The participants were selected by Sortition Foundation according to representative methods. A total of 22 participants were selected and invited. Of these individuals, a total of thirteen actually participated. According to the participants, they were approached and invited either by postal letter, direct approach, or at the doorstep.

Table 1: Composition of participants according to age, education, gender

| Age | |
|-----------|-----|
| 18-24 | 16% |
| 25-44 | 45% |
| 45-64 | 16% |
| 65+ | 23% |
| Education | |
| Primary | 0% |
| Secondary | 0% |

| Tertiary, non-university | 54% |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Tertiary, lower university (BA) | 23% |
| Tertiary, higher university (MA, PhD) | 23% |
| Gender | |
| Male | 69% |
| Female | 31% |

The age of the thirteen participants was as follows: Two individuals were 18-24 years old, six individuals were 25-44 years old, two individuals were 45-64 years old, and three individuals were older than 65 years old. None of the participants had only a primary or secondary degree. Seven individuals had a tertiary, non-university degree. Three individuals had a tertiary, lower university degree (bachelor's degree) and three individuals had a tertiary, higher university degree (master's or PhD). Of the thirteen participants, a total of four were women, and nine were men (see Table 1).

Content of the discussions

In this section, the subject and content of the two days of the mini-public is presented and summarized in chronological order. In particular, the arguments of the participants and resource persons are discussed, as well as the process that finally led to the formulation of the policy recommendations.

Day 1: Exchanging experiences

The first day began with an introduction on the topic and a round of introductions, so that both the content was mapped out but also an open atmosphere was created for the discussion. The guests introduced themselves personally with their names, their motivation, and expectations for the event. This was followed by an icebreaker/get-to-know-you game. Here, the guests shared a personal characteristic and assigned it to each other. The atmosphere was very relaxed and all participants were very motivated, but also in eager anticipation about the citizens' jury. All participants then completed a questionnaire on media behaviour, disinformation, and trust in political institutions.

This was followed in a further section by a "Moving Debate". Here, a total of seven questions were addressed to the participants, which they answered by lining up in the plenary room of the Europa-Kolleg. These questions included an assessment of the participants as to whether they felt able to understand and process the information they received about the pandemic. Some questions were also asked about the communication of political decisions, the role of traditional media, the importance of fake news, the role of non-elected experts during the pandemic, the readiness of society to cope with

a pandemic in the long term, and personal preparation for the corresponding situation. Questions were answered in a differentiated manner by the participants throughout, and there were different positions and views. One participant, for example, professed to be a supporter of “Team Drosten” (a recognized expert in Germany in the field of virology and epidemiology):

I’m absolutely ‘team Drosten’. There were many opportunities to learn a lot about the virus. And there was such a focus on the topic that you had a really good chance to inform yourself, like never before.

Another participant was much more sceptical here - although not about the role of experts themselves - and criticized, for example, the information overload during the pandemic:

For me, the high frequency of information was challenging. Everything happened very quickly and you were regularly hit with a new wave of information. I experienced a lot of fatigue concerning new information in my social environment. In comparison, I was the one who read the most and informed himself the most. Well, the communication channels also changed very often and the means and so on. In the end, I found all this kind of confusing.

This set was followed by another section that was intended to deepen the topic by showing a video with expert opinions, but in particular also an interview with the resource persons Prof. Dr. Markus Kotzur and Prof. Dr. Christine Landfried from the University of Hamburg, who answered the participants’ questions with their expert views referring especially to the political and legal framework, but also to considerations of democratic theory. This offer was accepted by the participants with great interest, so that a large number of interested questions were addressed to the experts and answered by them. One participant, for example, asked about ways of counteracting polarization in the context of a crisis, referring in particular to the historical experience in Germany:

Historically, we have gone through many crises in Germany. In the long run, this has sometimes ended up in a very harsh polarization. The National Socialism is a drastic example. But there, too, crises occurred before, what drove people at least to some extent in the direction of this very extreme opinion. Now we see another crisis. Moreover, we see very extreme opinions again. Thank God, we don’t have a similar situation like in the 1930s when our democracy finally broke apart. But, populist parties like the AfD reach up to 20 percent in the polls today and represents a pretty polarised opinion of parts of the society. How would you assess that? Where does it come from that people focus on these polarised opinions in times of crisis? And would you agree that there is a connection between the current rise of the AfD and crisis situation post-Covid?

After the lunch break, the day continued with a situation analysis and an analysis of the state of affairs. The central question was what words the participants would choose to describe the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on trust in politics. Uncertainty, scepticism, and confusion were mentioned particularly frequently by the participants. The following word cloud graphically depicts the weighting of the terms mentioned.

Figure 1: Participants describing the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on trust in politics



In the subsequent vision building, the group was divided into two subgroups, each of which was then asked to separately develop a “vision for the year 2040” in which society is better or even ideally prepared for a pandemic.

Here, participants were asked the question of what such a society would look like and what would happen in it to counter a pandemic. Participants actively engaged in this discussion and developed a number of perspectives that were elaborated during the discussion. In particular, the role of information and broad societal discussion was emphasized. For example, one participant summarized:

In a perfect society in 2040 that meets a new pandemic, we would have a broad consensus concerning at least the factual level of what is true and what is false. Of course, this consensus has to be established somehow. It doesn't happen by itself.

Based on this discussion, the two subgroups then worked out an agenda setting, with each group dealing with specific sub-areas such as science communication or fake news.

The results of this process were presented to the respective other group, finally discussed in plenary and put to the vote, with only the aspect with the highest ranking in each case, i.e. first place, being adopted for day 2 from the four subsequent topics.

Table 2: Ranking of topics discussed on day 1

| Topic 1: Scientific communication | | |
|---|--|--------|
| Ranking | Policy recommendations | Points |
| 1 | Professionalise science communication | 2 |
| 2 | Improve interdisciplinarity | 1.5 |
| 3 | Create a common fact base (scientifically sound) | 1 |
| Topic 2: The role of non-elected experts in decision-making | | |
| Ranking | Policy recommendations | Points |
| 1 | Composition of a permanent expert council | 2.2 |
| 2 | Justification of political decisions on the basis of expertise | 1.6 |
| 3 | Limits of experts in politics (only recommendations) | 0.8 |
| Topic 3: Disinformation | | |
| Ranking | Policy recommendations | Points |
| 1 | Political education/media literacy | 1.5 |
| 2 | The role and tasks of the public media | 1.1 |
| Topic 4: Trust in political institutions | | |
| Ranking | Policy recommendations | Points |
| 1 | Rules and procedures of political-democratic controls (in particular by improving transparency). | 1.6 |
| 2 | Possibilities for confidence-building through politics | 0.9 |

Finally, the participants were asked to briefly describe in their own words their impressions of the discussion held on day 1 via Slido. The feedback was consistently positive, as can be seen from the large number of positive terms used in the final evaluation, where participants were openly asked for their own assessment in a word cloud (see section “Feedback from participants and resource persons” below).

The day concluded with a short summary and farewell to the participants.

Day 2: Deliberation and crafting recommendations

At the beginning of the second day, the four in-depth topics selected in the previous session were briefly presented again: “Disinformation,” “Role of unelected experts,” “Scientific communication” and “Trust in political institutions”. The group was then again

divided into two subgroups, but this time with a different composition than before. In this division, care was taken to ensure as even a distribution as possible between male and female and younger and older participants. Groups then began brainstorming ideas for policy recommendations. Proposals were developed in partner work. Participants developed different approaches to each issue and discussed them. Each group finally appointed an ambassador who went to the other group to present the proposals they had developed.

In this first section, group 1 discussed “professionalization of science communication” and “countering disinformation through political education and media literacy.”

Under the topic “professionalization of science communication” the participants proposed enhancing science communication and public acceptance through several means. Firstly, the establishment of an “Expert Council+” is recommended. This council, after engaging in interdisciplinary discussions inclusive of citizens, would address both the public and political spheres. Additionally, it was suggested that public broadcasting should allocate more space to science and its communication, fostering greater public acceptance and exerting influence on political decisions. Lastly, the participants saw a pressing need for better funding directed towards universities and scientific institutions, specifically for science communication.

On the topic “countering disinformation through political education and media literacy” the participants discussed several strategies to tackle the pressing issue of disinformation. The first prominent approach emphasized the need to regulate and combat corporate disinformation. This would involve levying penalties at the federal level, pushing for enhanced moderation, and advocating for the removal of misleading content. By amplifying the powers and jurisdiction of law enforcement, there would be a clearer pathway to take legal actions against large multinational corporations that either perpetuate or fail to address the dissemination of false information, the participants said.

Simultaneously, the participants highlighted the importance of increasing media literacy among the population. They proposed increased funding for schools and the integration of media competence as a dedicated subject, possibly starting as early as elementary education. For the adult segment of the population, community colleges (VHS) were pinpointed as crucial institutions to better represent and reflect the cultural diversity of the community. Furthermore, they recommended harnessing EU funds to bolster intercultural institutions. Such an initiative - in the views of the participants - would pave the way for accessible micro-funding, ensuring every individual, irrespective of their background, possesses the necessary skills to differentiate between genuine information, and misleading narratives in today’s digital world.

Also in the first section, the topics “creation and composition of a permanent council of experts” and “Rules and procedures of political-democratic control (especially by improving transparency)” are discussed in group 2.

Here, again subdivided in two groups of three, the participants delved into the discussion on the first topic, namely the “Creation and composition of a permanent council of experts”. The discussion atmosphere was characterized by motivation and constructiveness. One participant, however, occasionally dominated the discussions with idiosyncratic proposals and remarks.

In the joint exchange, the first group of three emphasized the importance of a more transparent way of working for the Council of Experts, which is mainly to develop recommendations. The diversity in the composition of the council was particularly emphasized. At the same time, participants found it challenging to establish a precise quota of experts for future crises, as the focus of a new crisis is unpredictable. Nevertheless, it was emphasized that different perspectives - not only from the natural sciences but also from the social sciences - should be taken into account.

The second group of three agreed that a diverse, interdisciplinary composition was important. Without it, only certain groups of experts, such as physicians, would contribute their views. A speaker from this group emphasized the need for regulated moderation and outside oversight of the council. When asked by the moderator who she thought should provide this oversight and who should convene the council, one participant came forward enthusiastically and emphasized that it should basically be up to elected parliaments to make final decisions. He referred critically to experience from the Covid-19 pandemic, during which decisions on key issues such as triage had to be made by ethics councils on very short notice. Decision-making structures should be better prepared for the short-term nature of such crisis situations. After the discussion, participants came back into their groups of three to formulate a policy recommendation in one or two sentences and to consider possible follow-up questions for scientists to provide renewed input.

In their proposals, the second group of three emphasized the urgency of establishing a permanent council of experts. Also, in view of the Ukraine war starting in 2022, it became clear that constant preparation for crisis situations is essential. It would therefore be advisable for policymakers to move quickly to establish such a council of experts, which can make recommendations depending on the current situation. The council should be staffed flexibly with appropriately qualified experts depending on the situation, the second group noted.

The first group of three basically agreed with the assessment of the other group. However, it specified the composition of the expert council. This council should include peo-

ple with practical experience and different professional backgrounds. Diversity should also be ensured. In addition, the experts would have to be selected by an independent institution or person. It was also pointed out that neutral moderation of the discussion in the expert council would be necessary, the participants said.

The second topic of this group (“Rules and procedures of political-democratic control, especially by improving transparency”) was also discussed critically, but also very constructively.

The participants again deepened the discussion on the second topic in two groups of three. One participant raised the question of who or what should be controlled more closely and who should provide more transparency. With regard to a council of experts, control and transparency would be ensured by the previously formulated proposals.

During the discussion, it was again emphasized that experts must be credible and trustworthy in order for the recommendations of an expert council to be considered sensible and worth following by the population. Furthermore, reference was made to the danger of democratic principles being undermined in crisis situations, with particular emphasis being placed on the experiences in the run-up to National Socialism in Germany.

It was noted that after the experience of the Covid-19 pandemic, on the one hand, more uniform measures were needed on the federal level. In addition, clearer communication channels were needed for all parts and groups of the population. For example, the participants in the first group of three argued for a move away from the decision-making patterns of (German) federalism in the crisis situation of a pandemic, which were perceived as too small-scale, in order to ensure more traceability and comprehensibility of crisis rules. In addition, clearer, more transparent communication would be desirable to create more trust in political crisis decisions.

In addition, a question was formulated for the legal and policy experts later in the day. This is, “Wouldn’t more uniform measures have been possible during the Corona pandemic?”.

One participant vigorously emphasized the need to set clear priorities. In this context, health protection should be given a particularly high priority. He also stressed the importance of increased (data) exchange and communication between the different political levels.

Another participant posed a question for the legal and policy experts speaking later: “To what extent is it even possible to suspend federal structures in a crisis situation like the Corona pandemic?”. This was unclear to the participant. Several attendees also shared the personal experience of feeling unsettled during the Covid-19 pandemic due to confusing regulations that varied within the federal system.

In the following section, as on the first day, the resource persons Prof. Dr. Landfried and Prof. Dr. Kotzur were asked for their assessment of the recommendations. A lively and exciting discussion ensued, in which a wide range of arguments were exchanged and new aspects were introduced by the experts, which were gratefully received by the participants.

After a lunch break, the recommendations were revised and refined in the respective subgroups in the light of the experts' assessments. Following this, the ambassadors were again sent to the respective other group to present their findings.

During the main part of the second day, the focus was on developing concrete recommendations in the subgroups. These were presented to the plenary and ranked. The final section of the day focused on the presentation, discussion, and evaluation of the policy recommendations.

The group ambassadors then presented their detailed and revised policy recommendations to give all participants a clear picture of their content. The revised policy recommendations were released for online voting (via Google form). During the voting process, each recommendation was discussed individually and put to a vote. The results of the voting were then collected via Slido, with participants asked to rank their top recommendations (see section "Policy recommendations" below).

In a subsequent section, participants were encouraged to reflect on the entire process, as well as the discussions, in their own words. The collected opinions were evaluated via Slido and visualized in the form of a word cloud (see below).

Policy recommendations

In the process of formulating, discussing, improving, and reformulating the policy recommendations, the following eight recommendations (two from each of the four different topics (trust in political institutions, role of non-elected experts, scientific communication, and disinformation) emerged.

Eight recommendations were presented to the participants for voting and ranking. This vote resulted in the ranking shown in figure 3 (importance descending).

Table 3: Ranking of policy recommendations

| Ranking | Policy recommendations | Points |
|---------|---|--------|
| 1 | Evaluation/review of measures and political responsibilities in the Corona pandemic | 6.4 |
| 2 | Permanent Council of Experts + Specialists | 5.5 |
| 3 | European, interdisciplinary information body | 4.5 |
| 4 | Disclose participation of political persons in interest groups outside political parties | 4.2 |
| 5 | Contexts, situations, and political decisions are provided by the information body in understandable language | 3.9 |
| 5 | EU funding programme “Media Competence in Educational Institutions” | 3.9 |
| 7 | Clear allocation of competences for the expert council and recommendations are communicated to the public. | 3.8 |
| 8 | Further training measures in the area of media competence (especially for teaching staff) | 3.7 |

Recommendation 1 (trust in political institutions):

There is a need for a transparent, retrospective, and scientifically grounded assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, and appropriateness of the measures, as well as the political responsibilities that played a role during the Covid-19 pandemic. The goal is to systematically derive ‘lessons learned’ for future crises. This could be achieved, for instance, through external funding (especially from EU funding programs), independent institutes, and in collaboration with public authorities.

Recommendation 2 (trust in political institutions):

A system must be created that discloses the participation of political persons in interest groups outside the political parties, thus creating transparency. A publicly accessible ranking system could serve to prioritize political office out of this transparency rather than seeking personal advantage.

Recommendation 3 (role of non-elected experts):

There should be a democratically legitimized (by means of an election procedure), interdisciplinary and diverse permanent expert council consisting of as many scientific disciplines as possible, but also practitioners. In the event of a crisis, this council should be assisted by further specialists in specific fields and cases - depending on the challenge/crisis.

Recommendation 4 (role of non-elected experts):

There must be a clear allocation of competencies for the council of experts and there

must be clear criteria as to when it takes action in the event of a crisis. Its competencies also include, above all, foresight, planning, and the development of concrete plans of action for public policy. Although the council's recommendations are not politically binding, they are communicated publicly, fact-based, and as comprehensibly as possible, and can indirectly bind/guide policymakers, thus providing a framework for orientation in any case.

Recommendation 5 (scientific communication):

A European, interdisciplinary information body should be created. The task of the body is to comment on/classify/"translate" the decisions of politicians and scientific experts.

Recommendation 6 (scientific communication):

The information body is to carry scientific information to the entire European population by explaining contexts, situations, and political decisions in understandable language. The information body thus uses as many information channels as possible and ideally reaches all sections of the population.

Recommendation 7 (disinformation):

A program should be created through EU funding to improve media literacy in educational institutions. This could be achieved through an exchange of teachers on a European level.

Recommendation 8 (disinformation):

There should be further training measures in the area of media literacy that are financed by the EU, e.g., by offering training courses for teachers in the area of media literacy or by sending experts in this area to educational institutions.

The results of the ranking show that participants considered it particularly important to comprehensively review and evaluate the Covid-19 measures taken by policymakers and the respective responsibilities (**Recommendation 1**). The participants ranked the effectiveness, efficiency, and appropriateness of these measures, as well as the political responsibilities, as the **number one recommendation** in order to be able to draw conclusions for future crises. The participants thus emphasized a most constructive approach to the "lessons learned" of the Covid-19 pandemic, which politicians, public authorities, but also the scientific community must provide. All but one of the participants viewed this recommendation as very effective or somewhat effective in its implementation. Opinions on whether this recommendation can actually be implemented, however, are divided: 15.4% said it is very easy to implement, 30.8% said it is somewhat easy to implement, 15.4% said it is neither easy nor difficult to implement, 38.5% said it is difficult to implement, and no one said it is very difficult to implement. The potential

for division in this measure is perceived as very low or somewhat low by the vast majority of participants (69.3%).

The proposal that there should be a democratically legitimized, interdisciplinary, and diverse permanent expert council composed of as many scientific disciplines as possible, but also practitioners (**Recommendation 4**) was also rated very highly by the participants and **ranked second** in the ranking. All participants rated the effectiveness of this measure as either somewhat effective or very effective. The vast majority of participants also viewed this measure as either somewhat easy (61.5%) or very easy (15.4%) to implement. The potential for division was also perceived as low (77% of participants gave scores of 1 or 2 on a scale of 5).

Also among the highest mentions in the ranking is the recommendation to establish a European, interdisciplinary information body with the task of commenting on/classifying/"translating" the decisions of policy makers and scientific experts (**Recommendation 5**). This recommendation is **ranked third**, and the effectiveness of this measure is also rated as either very effective (61.5%) or somewhat effective (30.8%) in the vast majority of participant opinions. Implementation, on the other hand, is rated differently: The majority, 46.2%, saw the measure easy to implement, 20.1% saw it as neither easy nor difficult to implement, 15.4% said it is difficult to implement, and 15.4% saw it as very easy to implement. Nonetheless, there was wide agreement on the view that this measure does not have a high potential to divide society (50% of participants were not divisive at all and 33.3% were only slightly divisive).

In **fourth place** is the recommendation to create a system that discloses the participation of political persons in interest groups outside the political parties and thus contributes to the transparency of the political process (**Recommendation 2**). This measure was overwhelmingly viewed by participants as somewhat effective (53.8%) or even very effective (38.5%). There were differences, however, in how easy participants thought it would be to implement the recommendation: 41.7% saw it as difficult, 33.3% as somewhat easy, and 8.3% each as very easy, very difficult, or neither easy nor difficult. On a scale of 1-5 (high splitting potential to no splitting potential at all), 61.6% scored either 1 or 2, so in the vast majority, no major splitting potential was seen among participants.

In **fifth place**, participants selected the recommendation to establish an information body to communicate scientific information to the entire European population by explaining contexts, situations, and policy decisions in plain language (**Recommendation 6**). This recommendation was seen by the vast majority of participants as very effective (53.8%) or somewhat effective (38.5%). Opinions on whether this recommendation would be easy or difficult to implement, on the other hand, were again divided, with 38.5% saying it would be difficult, 30.8% saying it would be somewhat easy, and 15.4% each saying it would be very easy and neither easy nor difficult. The potential to divide

society was rated as very low or low by the vast majority of participants (77%).

Also in **fifth place** is the recommendation to create a program through EU funding that would serve to improve media literacy in educational institutions and that this would be achieved in particular through the exchange of teachers at European level (**Recommendation 7**). This measure was rated as either somewhat effective or very effective by 46.2% and 30.8%, respectively. Only 15.4% saw this measure as neither effective nor ineffective or as he ineffective (7.7%). The measure was predominantly rated as easy to implement (53.8% somewhat easy, 23.1% very easy). The majority also rated the splitting potential as very low (61.5%) or low (23.1%).

Participants ranked the need for a clear allocation of authority for a council of experts to be created, whose task would be to develop concrete action plans for policy (**Recommendation 4**) in **sixth place**. This measure was rated by all participants as either somewhat effective (53.8%) or even very effective (46.2%). According to the majority of participants, it would also be easy to implement this recommendation (61.5% said this was somewhat easy and 15.4% saw this as very easy). The majority also considered the splitting potential of this measure to be low (77%).

In **seventh place**, the recommendation was selected that there should be further training measures in the area of media literacy financed by the EU, for example by offering training courses for teachers in the area of media literacy or by sending experts in this area to educational institutions (**Recommendation 8**). The effectiveness of this measure was predominantly rated as very high (69.2%) or at least somewhat effective (30.8%). According to participants, the recommendation was rated very easy (53.8%), somewhat easy (30.8%), or neither easy nor difficult (15.4%). The potential for social division was consistently viewed as low (69.2% saw no potential for division at all, 30.8% saw only a low potential for division).

Attitudinal study

In the following, the “Before and After” surveys are systematically evaluated and summarized.

Chart 1 represents how the participants stand regarding their trust in other people. 77% of respondents indicated that they tend to trust other people. This gives a clear indication of how trust stands within this group of respondents towards the general public or towards people outside their immediate social circle.

Chart 2 describes the behaviour of respondents in terms of their news consumption. It is found that a significant majority, specifically eight out of thirteen respondents, state that they consume news on a daily basis. This quantitative information indicates that a

large portion of this group regularly engages with current news and developments.

Chart 1: Tendency to trust other people (in %)

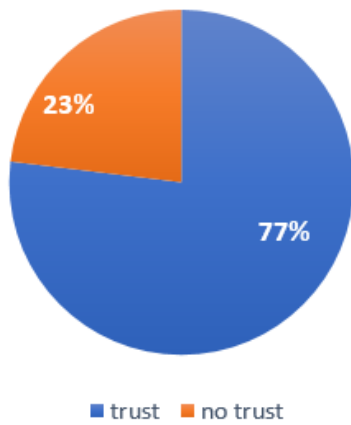


Chart 2: Number and frequency of participants following the news

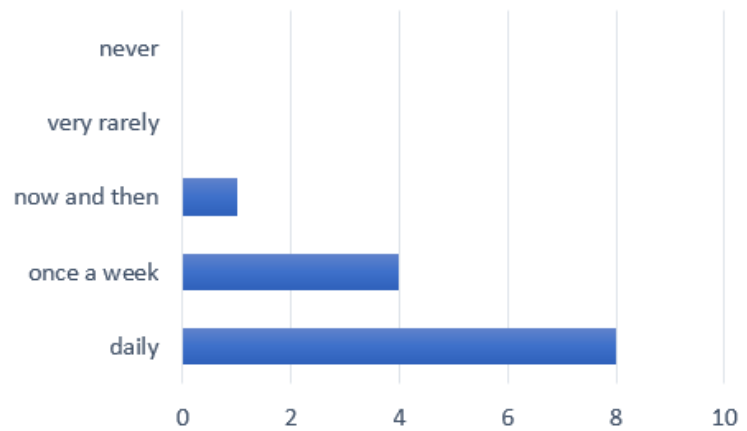


Chart 3 focuses on the respondents' choice of media. It shows that eleven out of thirteen respondents use traditional media channels as their main source of information. However, in addition to traditional media, digital channels such as YouTube, TikTok, Twitter, and search engines such as Google are also used by the respondent group. This suggests that despite the dominance of traditional media, digital platforms play an important role in the information consumption of this group.

Chart 3: Use of media (in number of participants)

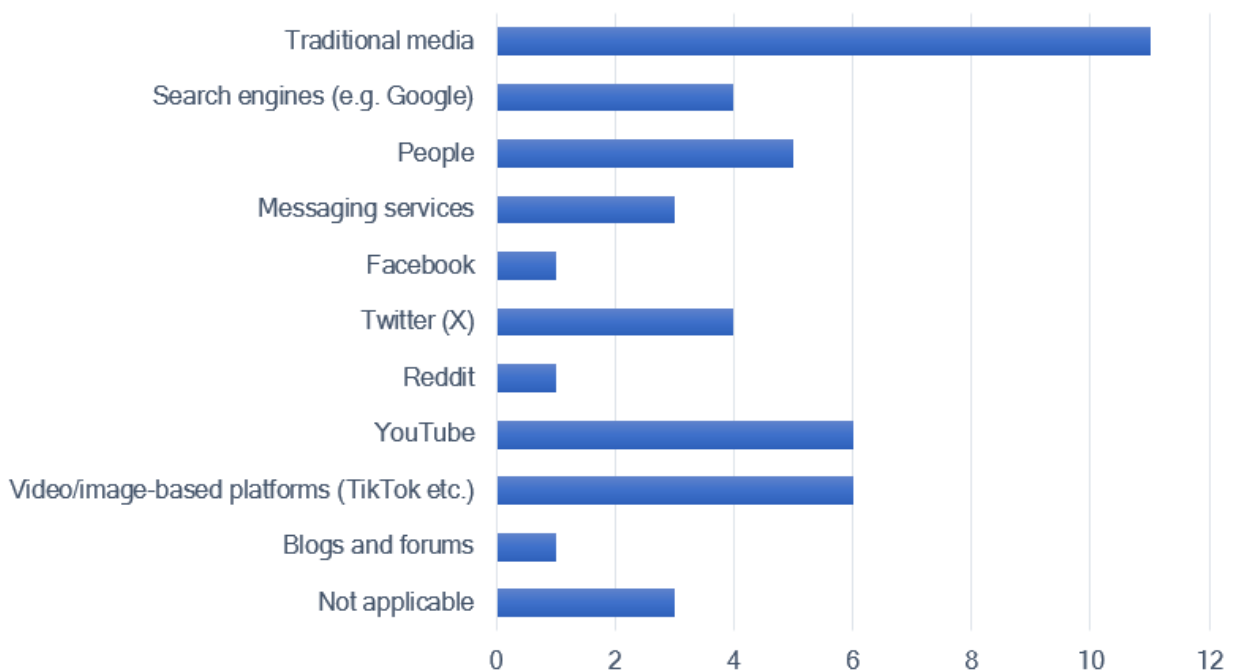


Chart 4 deals with respondents' perceptions of their ability to identify disinformation. After participating in mini-public, some participants expressed that they felt better prepared to identify such information and possibly to be more critical of sources.

Chart 4: Ability to recognize disinformation (in number of participants, before and after the mini-public)

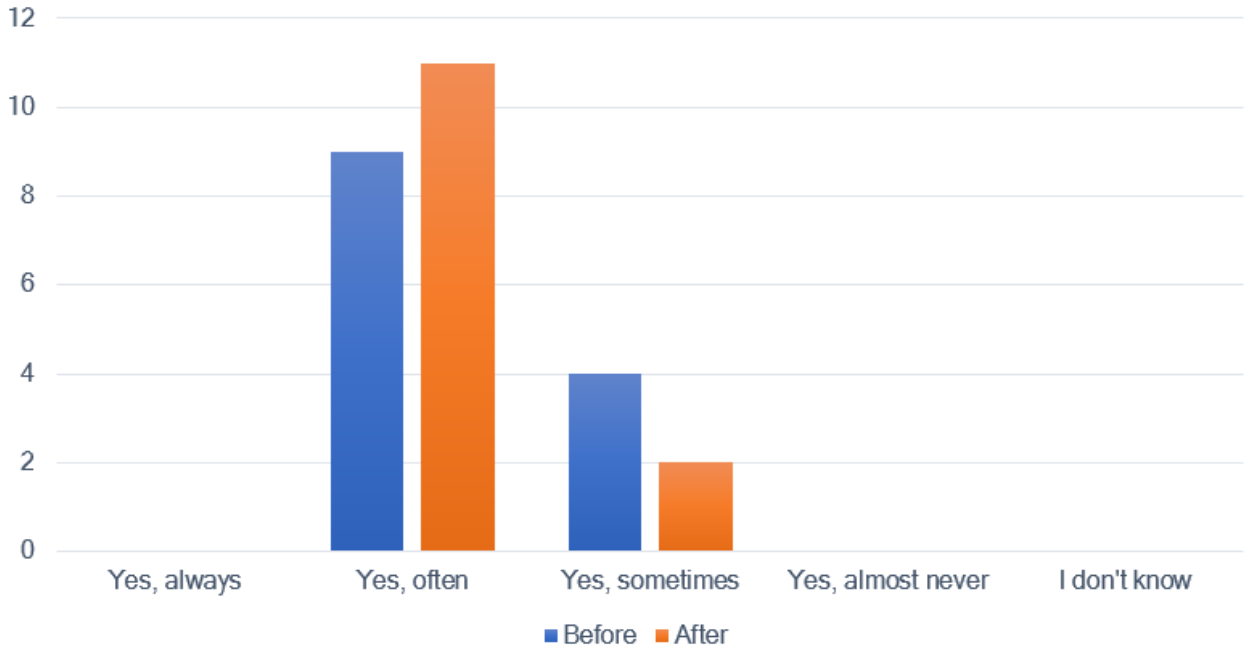


Chart 5 examines participants' trust in various institutions. The data shows varying levels of trust in institutions such as the European Union, the national parliament, and the government. Interestingly, the analysis shows that trust in certain institutions can vary before and after participation in the mini-public.

Chart 5: Trust in different institutions (in number of participants before and after the mini-public)

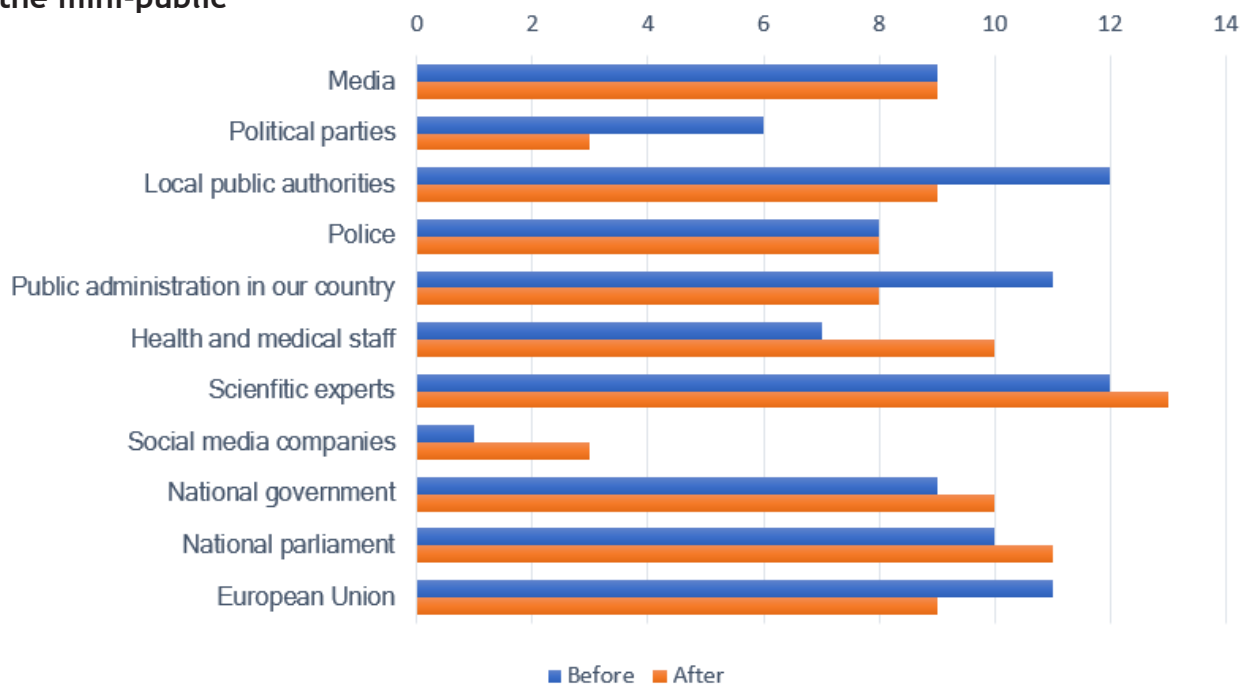
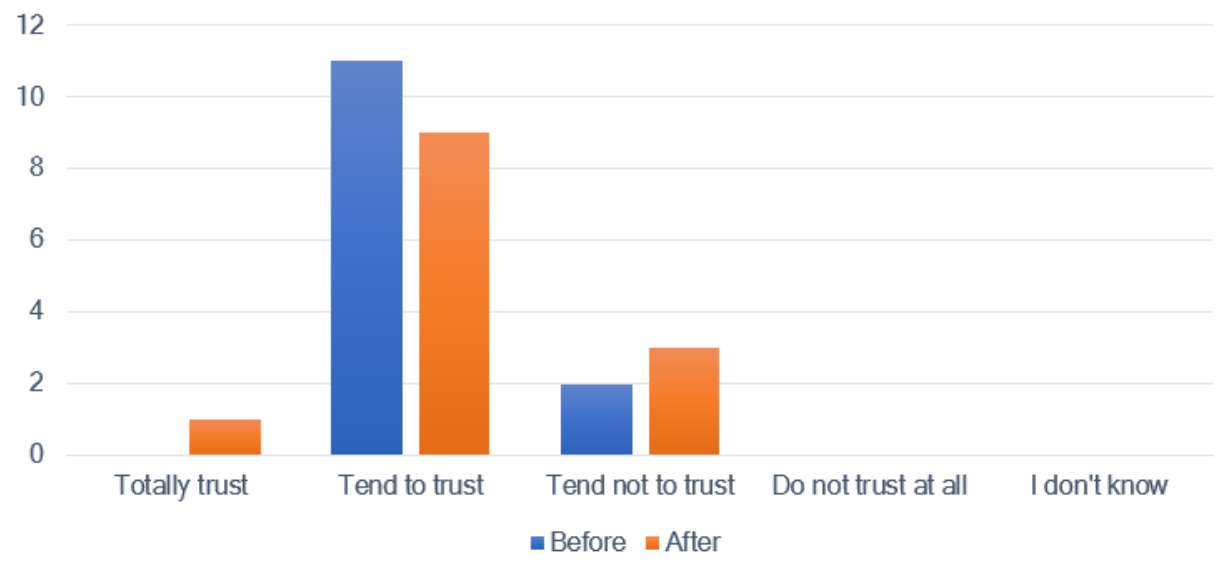


Chart 6 shows the respondents' confidence in decisions made by future governments. It shows a general confidence in such decisions. However, the data also indicates that this confidence is present to a similar extent both before and after the event, with only minor fluctuations in the percentages.

Chart 6: Trust in future government decisions (in number of participants, before and after the mini-public)



Finally, charts 7 to 9 show respondents' opinions on specific statements. These charts capture minor shifts in respondents' opinions and assessments.

Chart 7: Statements - Part I

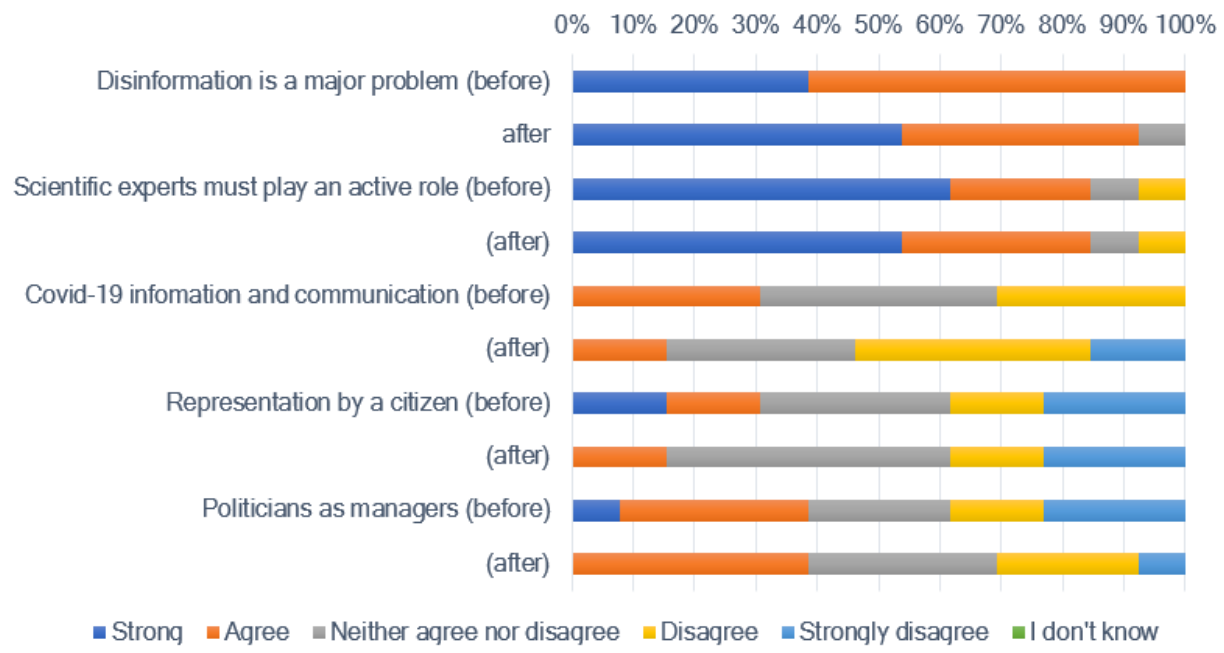


Chart 8: Statements - Part II

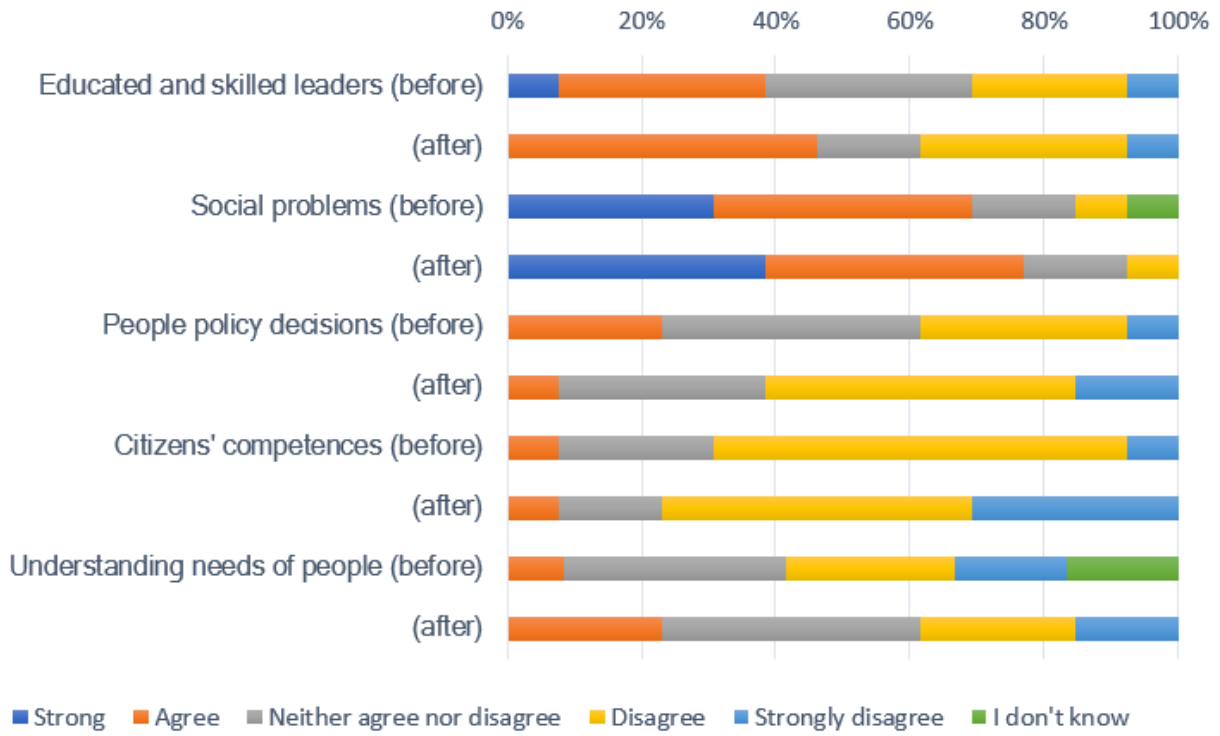
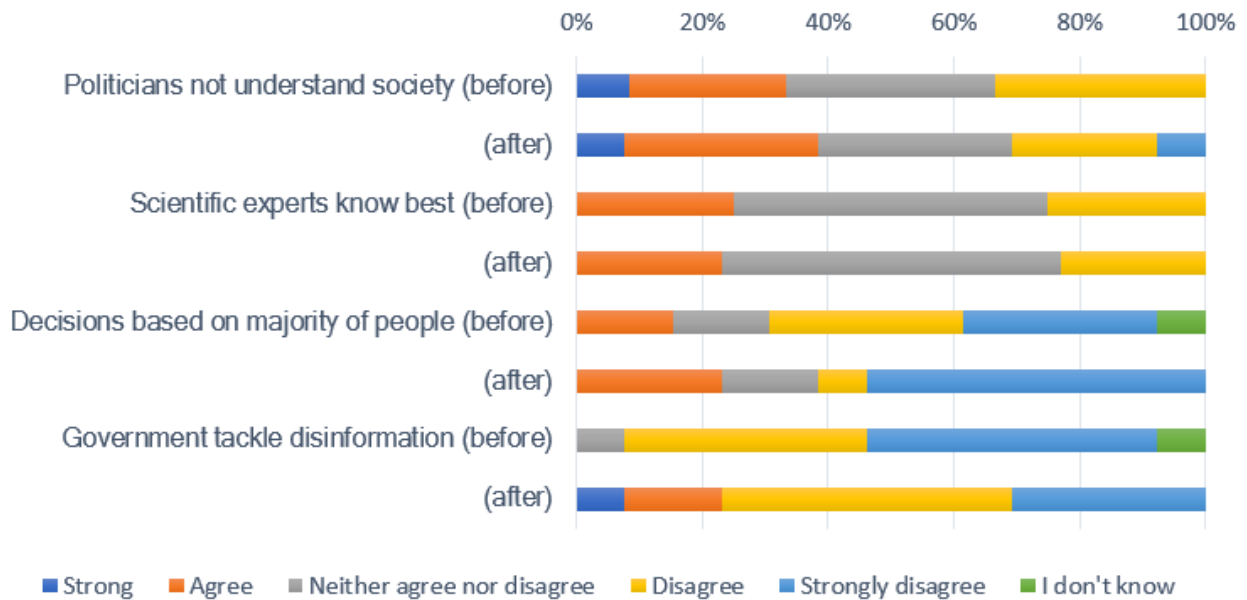


Chart 9: Statements - Part III



In summary, these charts provide a structured and quantitative assessment of the views and opinions of a specific group of respondents regarding trust, media consumption, and institutional trust. However, when analysing these data, it is important to consider the small sample size and to be cautious when attempting to draw generalized conclusions from the results.

Feedback from participants and resource persons

The mini-publics event format was consistently and very positively received by both participants and resource persons. The numerous feedbacks testify enthusiasm for the format, its content, and the successful implementation among participants.

Many participants emphasized the open and inclusive atmosphere that prevailed during the event. This environment allowed them to actively participate, share their opinions, and exchange ideas with other participants who had different perspectives and backgrounds. A special feature that was repeatedly highlighted was the exchange between generations, especially between young and older participants.

Some were impressed by the depth of the discussions and found them challenging at the same time. One participant noted that it was sometimes difficult to follow in detail everything that was discussed because the discussions were intense and sometimes very 'academic'. This comment reflects the complexity and richness of the topics covered in the mini-publics.

There were also constructive suggestions for improvement. After the first day, some expressed a desire for further information material and preparatory tasks to better prepare for the next day. This shows a clear commitment and desire to participate more actively in the discussions.

A critical point raised by some participants concerned whether the policy recommendations formulated in the mini-publics will actually have an impact on policy decisions.

The resource persons also commented positively on the format. They were particularly impressed by the quality of the discussions and the commitment of the participants. Some criticisms related the length of the expert video shown at the beginning of each session.

The immediate feedback captured via Slido was particularly revealing.

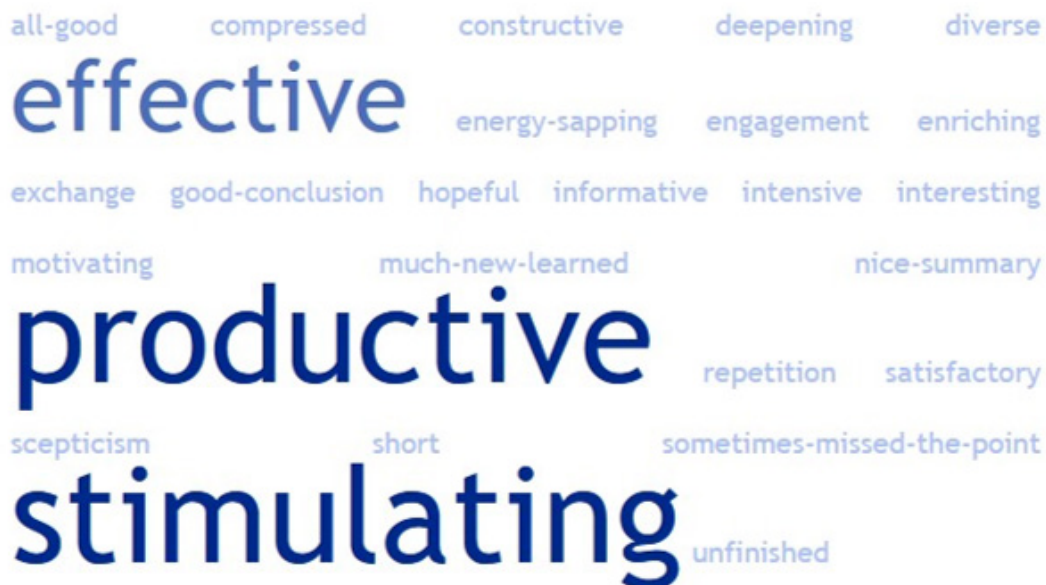
Day 1: Feedback from this day included terms such as "Interesting", "Entertaining", "Exciting", "Inspiring", "Stimulating", "Directional", "Productive", and "New Ideas", underscoring the diversity and depth of impressions and sentiments.

Figure 2: Participant feedback on day 1



Day 2: The terms “Stimulating”, “Productive”, “Effective”, “Diverse”, “Deepening”, “Motivating”, “Interesting”, and “Informative” dominated the second day and illustrated the continued interest and positive response of the participants.

Figure 3: Participant feedback on day 2



The opportunity for participants to engage directly with experts and express their questions and concerns was highlighted as particularly valuable. It was emphasized several times how enriching it was to gain insights into expert knowledge and to have this knowledge flow into the discussions.

In conclusion, the overwhelmingly positive feedback is a confirmation of the relevance and effectiveness of the mini-public format. It shows that it not only provides a platform for dialogue, but also promotes the active participation of citizens in important issues.

Self-evaluation

The mini-public held at the Europa-Kolleg Hamburg is an example of a successful citizen participation process in modern democracy. The event took place in an atmosphere characterized by openness, inclusivity, and constructiveness. Even during the initial phase, there was a clear willingness to cooperate and a positive commitment on the part of the participants.

Behind the smooth running was a solid organization in which no unforeseen challenges arose. This result was made possible not least by the harmonious and efficient cooperation of the team. Much emphasis was placed on ensuring that all processes were transparent and efficient, which helped to win the trust of the participants.

The quality of communication is often a decisive factor for the success of such events. In this case, communication with the participants was fluid and consistently friendly. This contributed significantly to a constructive and effective exchange, which increased the added value of the mini-public.

An important point for reflection concerns the selection of participants. The selection made by the external service provider Sortition Foundation did not reflect all social groups to the desired extent. In particular, cancellations at short notice meant that the group actually present had an above-average academic background. In addition, women and people with an immigrant background were not optimally represented. Nevertheless, the discussions were characterized by a high quality of content, which shows that profound and high-quality debates are possible even in such an optimizable group composition.

The policy recommendations resulting from the mini-public confirm the quality and depth of the discussions. It became clear that every voice was not only heard, but also respected and valued. The combination of participant engagement and structured discussion led to the development of concrete and well-founded proposals.

In summary, the mini-public at Europa-Kolleg Hamburg was a clear success. The quality of discussions, the commitment of the participants, and the recommendations that ultimately resulted highlight the importance and value of this event.