



Recommendation 16:



Using 'e-participation' to meet the societal need 'Participative access to public sector services (political participation)'

Actual solutions and services:

There are already many e-participation platforms in several EU states up and running, e.g. in Estonia, several Scandinavian countries, UK, Germany, Spain to mention just a few. Sometimes these applications are used on a national level and sometimes on a local one (e.g. in Frankfurt, Reykjavik, Gothenburg). Additionally there are running e-participation platforms on a European level, like the European Citizens Initiative or the Online EU Public Consultations among others.

SWOT Analysis	
Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active citizenship. • Engagement and empowerment of people with mobility problems. • Enhanced transparency and increased acceptance of political decisions (e.g. with regard to planning processes, cost savings, etc.). • Reducing democratic deficit. 	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet access and familiarity with e-participation technologies as prerequisites. • Lack of participants' identification. • Resolutions often not considered seriously by decision makers
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative forms of engagement and (young) people's disengagement in 'traditional' politics. • Non discrimination of participants • Technological advancements in ICTs, which make traditional democratic institutions look sluggish, irresponsible and 'outdated'. 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital divide (both in terms of digital infrastructure and in terms of citizens' experience with e-participation). • Manipulation by organised groups (especially in small scale applications). • Online propaganda. • If not properly addressed, e-participation can be frustrating for the citizenship.

Participative access to public sector services (political participation):

Our informants mentioned establishing trust in governance, voicing their opinions, accessing timely and accurate information, unlinking public sector and politics as some of the key needs under this header.

One informant expressed his opinion as: "A clear point of authority to be established (often have to roam offices because it is not clear the authority for a particular task)."

E-participation:

*E-Participation refers to the ICT supported participation in processes involved in government and governance. Such processes may concern administration, service delivery, decision making and policy making. According to a more detailed definition, e- participation is the use of ICT to broaden and deepen political participation by enabling citizens to connect with one another and with their elected representatives.**

* Macintosh A (2004) Characterizing E-Participation in Policy-Making: In the Proceedings of the Thirty-Seventh Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS-37). Hawaii.