



Communicating Europe Initiative Fund

Interim Report

Project Title: *Don't Debate. Deliberate! Developing Ireland's Citizens Dialogues on the Future of Europe through deliberative procedures*

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Funding: €3500

Report:

Project coordinators would like to thank DFA once again for the financial opportunity to organise a methodologically revised citizens' dialogue on the Future of Europe that may prove useful for national coordinators approaching the Conference on the Future of Europe. Due to time and cost constraints, the proposed project could not take on the scope that we initially wished for. Nevertheless, coordinators have come up with a revised cost and time efficient method of sampling that is proving instrumental to the development and quality of the project. Coordinators have opted for a QMethod approach to sampling and data codification which will inform the structure and operation of our citizens' dialogue on the Future of Europe. The process is as follows:

- 1) Collect extensive data pertaining to public opinion on matters of EU immigration and environmental policies. Data is collected from a multitude of sources ranging from previous national reports, social media platforms, newspaper comments, opinion pieces, online blogs, and public contributions to name a few. Data analysis is exhausted until a complete framework of all potential (relevant) opinions are collected from the public sphere that showcase public attitudes toward the EU's governance of such policy areas.
- 2) The data is codified and examined for the most common categories of opinions that have an average to above-average representative value. This provides insight into the most likely opinions that are held by the Irish public regarding EU governance on immigration and environmental policy. This process allows for the criteria of ranking the chosen participatory cohort against the most likely range of opinions established from the data, this is beneficial for formulating deliberative questions, designing group membership, improving the deliberative quality of the dialogue forum, and planning time considerations.

Plan of Action:

At present, our research assistant is using the month of January to mid-February to collect and compile data from a wide range of sources (see point 1). From mid-February to the beginning of March data will be codified and analysed to deduce the most common opinions

held by the Irish public that will be then used to shape the narrative of the dialogues (point2). The dialogues will take place over two consecutive weekends during the month of March. They will consist of 20-25 participants broken into 5 groups each over the space of 2 days. Group make-up will be designed to ensure a variety of opinions are accounted for to bolster the deliberative element of the dialogue. Participants will be asked to deliberate the extent of European governance in the chosen policy areas and rationalise the implications of various options drawing upon the European Commission's *Five Scenarios* for guidance. Following the deliberative process, participants will be asked to provide their recommendations and finally to deliberate toward a consensus on a likely agreeable position despite varying attitudes on the future of integration and governance in the chosen policy areas under deliberation. The dialogues will be completed on the 31st March 2021.