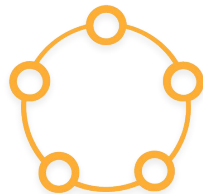




**HECSOs**  
community engagement



## **TOOLKIT n°3**

Community Engagement: A European institutional conceptual framework



Erasmus+

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# 1 - Rational and scope

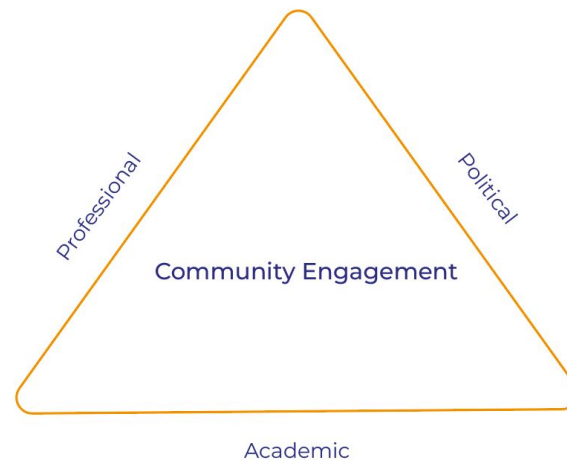
New epochal changes concerning how common resources are managed and administered, how decisions on the collective future are made and how the development of territories is planned, are challenging the core values of public management across Europe. **New forms of governance, engagement of people and new ways of building social cohesion through local and community participation are permeating the functioning and structures of local governments, welfare organizations, higher education institutions and professional works.** In this scenario, as case studies presented in Toolkit 2 - Atlas of Best Practice show, innovative methodologies, approaches and professional profiles working for “community engagement and territorial development” are emerging. **Most of those practices are pilot ones, context-based and context-related** and their experimental status therefore results in the absence of a common vocabulary to define them.

The most often used term to encompass this heterogeneous set of practices that foster, sustain and empower participation of people and communities is “**community engagement (CE)**”.

“Community engagement” results consequently as **a fluid concept** at a professional, academic and political level and this degree of ambivalence makes it difficult to find a way among many definitions.

This toolkit aims to be an orientation guide, exploring how the concept of community engagement is used at a European policy level, briefly preceded by an overview of the most relevant scientific and academic literature as further evidence of the absence of a unique definition.

This choice was made in light of the collaborative nature of HECSOS project whose partners look to **European policies as a common supranational political framework.** Therefore the present toolkit focuses primarily on the European Commission’s papers, documents, programs, and projects within the last 5 years (2017-2023) with the goal of analyzing **how the concept of “community engagement” developed at EU policy level** and give the reader an overview of the various terminology used, according to the nuances of contexts and **applications.**



## **2- How academics define “community engagement”**

HECSOs project aims at improving Universities' capacities to cooperate with Civil Society Organizations systematically and continuously on community engagement as an innovative and impactful way for socio-economic inclusion of people in need. Starting from this goal, the present chapter offers a glimpse into academic and scientific literature to provide the reader with a more comprehensive overview of the context within which the project and this toolkit develops.

Over the last decades **HEIs all over Europe have been intensifying the debate concerning their social responsibility and social impacts to their related communities and territories of belonging.**

"Embracing Ernest Boyer's challenge (1996)<sup>1</sup> for higher education institutions to "reaffirm their historic commitment" to community engagement, "the **scholarship of engagement**" - as he defined it - has led to a stronger integration of faculty research and student learning into the life of communities outside the academy.

Service-learning pedagogy, community-based participatory research, public scholarship, participatory evaluation, engaged research, service and knowledge sharing are just some examples of intellectual arenas where a set of powerful strategies for collaboratively generating knowledge and practices develop to alleviate social problems affecting communities (Bringle, Games, and Malloy 1999).

Within this movement, **community engagement now references such a wide variety of activities in higher education that confusion often results from the use of the term:** according to Sandmann we assist at a real "**definitional anarchy**" of what "community engagement" stands for.

This is true for both the academic world and the professional level: each of them looking at the other in search of comparison and feedback, yet **encountering a set of practices and theories that are as dense as they are heterogeneous.**



Starting from the **Carnegie Foundation for Advancement of Teaching's** definition of "community engagement" :

- **Community engagement** describes **activities that are undertaken with** community members. In reciprocal partnerships, there are collaborative community definitions of problems, solutions, and measures of success.
- **Community engagement** requires **processes** in which academics recognize, respect, and value the knowledge, perspectives, and resources of community partners and that are **designed to serve a public purpose, building the capacity** of individuals, groups, and organizations involved to understand and collaboratively address issues of public concern.
- **Community engagement** is shaped by **relationships** between those in the institution and those outside the institution that are grounded in the qualities of **reciprocity, mutual respect, shared authority, and co-creation** of goals and outcomes. Such relationships are by their very nature **trans-disciplinary** (knowledge transcending the disciplines or university) and **asset-based** (where the strengths, skills, and knowledge of those in the community are validated and legitimized).
- **Community engagement** assists campuses in fulfilling their civic purpose through socially useful **knowledge creation and dissemination**, and through the cultivation of democratic values, skills, and habits - democratic practice.

Although specifically referring to the role of higher education institutions, the above definitions can easily be borrowed and used by other non-educational institutions and organisations. According to other interpretations, community engagement is also defined as:

- a dynamic **relational process** that facilitates communication, interaction, involvement, and exchange between an organization and a community for a range of social and organizational outcomes<sup>2</sup>.

As a concept, "engagement features attributes of **connection, interaction, participation, and involvement**, designed to achieve or elicit an outcome at individual, organization, or social levels".



## Hecosos' Case Study Analysis Report

Over the past ten years, the term "engagement" has been employed in a number of academic fields, including sociology, political science, psychology, and organizational behavior. For example, sociology has investigated "**civic engagement**", psychology studied "**social engagement**", educational psychology has examined "**student engagement**", while political science explored "**nation state engagement**". Additionally, the concepts of "**employee engagement**" and "**stakeholder engagement**" have been investigated in the literature on organizational behavior and management. In the academic literature on marketing and customer service, the terms "consumer engagement" have only recently emerged.

**Community engagement (CE) is a psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive, co-creative experiences with a focal agent/ object** (e.g., a social business, an NGO) in focal service relationships (Brodie et al., 2013). Within a collective domain, CE becomes an '**interactive experience**' in which the community collaborates by carrying out processes of **learning, sharing, socializing, co-developing and educating**. Engagement states occur within a dynamic, iterative process of service relationships that co-create value.

"**Engagement**" represents a multi-dimensional concept, context-dependent state of mind characterized by **three specific dimensions**:

- 1) **cognitive** (thought processing and elaboration);
- 2) **emotional** (affective);
- 3) **behavioral** (actions, energy, effort, time).

The concept plays a central role in the process of relational exchange where other relational concepts are engagement antecedents and/or consequences in iterative engagement processes within the community (Brodie et al., 2013). Relational engagement antecedent includes "**involvement**", "**participation**", "**flow**" and "**rappport**". Engagement relational consequences include "**commitment**", "**satisfaction**", "**trust**" and "**loyalty**". The iterative (cyclical) nature of the service relationships process implies that specific CE relational consequences may extend to act as engagement antecedents in subsequent engagement (sub-) processes and/or cycles: engagement behaviors lead to more satisfaction and affective loyalty, and at the same time, satisfied and loyal consumers take part in more engaged behaviors.

A positive relation between engagement and satisfaction occurs, as well as commitment. CE is, also, expected to be positively related to trust and loyalty. Bowden (2009a) and other authors, propose a range of conceptual frameworks that highlight different aspects of the concept. This takes us to interpret **community engagement as the process (and the outcome of this process, in terms of capability) of collectively engaging around a common benefit that requires the use of different kinds of resources**.

While in the prevalent accredited literature community engagement is often used to refer to engagement with a broad range of external stakeholders on a broad range of issues (e.g. in the Carnegie Classification of Community Engagement in Higher Education – Brown University, 2013; or in Benneworth et al., 2018), some have argued that the term can imply having a stronger emphasis on issues of social justice and engagement with disadvantaged groups in society (Hazelkorn, 2016; Benneworth, 2013).

Therefore, **depending on the types of activities, communities and societal needs involved in the process of engaging a community, academic and scientific literature present different expressions:**

- **Civic engagement:** is widely used in literature and in practice (e.g. McIlrath and Mac Labhrainn, 2007), and is used synonymously with community engagement. Nevertheless, the term 'civic' does imply a focus on promoting active citizenship and democratic values.
- **Public engagement:** the term initially emerged in the 1990s from the field of science, as part of the transition from promoting passive 'public understanding of science' to active 'public engagement with science' (Ćulum, 2017; Stilgoe, Lock and Wilsdon, 2014). Although the term appears to refer to the 'general public', in most instances it is in fact much closer to the definition of community engagement involving multiple 'publics' (Stilgoe, Lock and Wilsdon, 2014; NCCPE, n.d.[c]) and addressing multiple societal needs.
- **Regional engagement:** this term is widely used in the literature, and overlaps in a number of ways with the previous terms, regional engagement arguably has two distinctive features that differentiate it from the previous examples. First, it is specifically place-based in its focus, whereas the other terms can include local, national and international dimensions. It has a much stronger emphasis on regional economic development and innovation, rather than on other societal needs (see e.g. Benneworth and Sanderson, 2009; Edwards et al., 2017; Reichert, 2019). Nevertheless, some discussions on regional engagement are moving towards holistic approaches that incorporate broader notions of societal development extending beyond the economic sphere (e.g. Goddard and Pukka, 2008).

- **Social / Societal engagement:** this term is used only sporadically in the literature. Its meaning ranges from a general reference to external communities (e.g. Maassen et al. 2019; Benneworth and Osborne, 2014; OECD, 2017), to a predominant focus on local communities and vulnerable groups (e.g. Mora et al., 2017, in the context of Latin America).
- **Civic and community engagement** (Watson, 2007) / **Public and community engagement** (Furco, 2010): those terms share the same standpoint that organizations/public institutions should connect with a range of external stakeholders (in a range of different ways) in order to contribute to addressing a societal need. Where differences can be distinguished between the terms, they relate to the primary focus and societal objective of the engagement that is being referred to.

The brief presentation above supports the thesis presented in the introductory chapter that **an unambiguous terminology and agreement on the definition of community engagement is absent in the academic environment. This ambiguity can sometimes be a difficulty for practitioners to self-evaluate their work and put it into a theoretical perspective.**

**What policy framework does the European Union offer to orient such reflections and choices and to guide this debate regarding community engagement and its definitions?**

The following chapter tries to answer this question

## **3 - Genesis and evolution of EU Community Engagement concept**



Before going into the terminology of community engagement in the European Commission's documents and recommendations, it is interesting to analyze the genesis and evolution of this political concern at a European political level.

In fact, after being a non-issue for several decades, the role citizens – and more broadly civil society – should play within the Union became central to EU political discourse back in the late 1990s. It is in the **2000 Commission White Paper** on European Governance that **citizen participation was recognised as one of the pillars of good governance well beyond the social policies**. Citizen participation throughout the entire European policy cycle was highlighted as key to ensure the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of EU policy making.

In the same year, **Declaration No. 23 of the future of the Union annexed to the Treaty of Nice** expressed “the need to improve and to monitor the democratic legitimacy and transparency of the Union and its institutions, in order to bring them closer to the citizens of the Member States”. As an evolution of this debate, **The Draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe** recognized in 2004 the principle of representative democracy as foundational and introduced for the first time the principle of **participatory democracy**<sup>3</sup>.

Moreover in 2005 the importance of a “long-term plan to reinvigorate European democracy and help the emergence of a European public sphere where citizens are given the information and the tools to actively participate in the decision-making process and gain ownership of the European project” was made explicit.

Over the years scholars have been defining this “long-term plan” and its related measures as part of an authentic “**institutionalization process of a participatory norm in the EU**”<sup>4</sup>. Indeed, while participatory practices always existed in the history of the Union to legitimize EU policy making<sup>5</sup>, the ‘Provisions on Democratic Principles’ of the Treaty of Lisbon recognised in 2007 for the first-time **participation as an autonomous, democratic principle on which the Union is founded**<sup>6</sup>.

On this principle a set of European tools, projects, initiatives and rules have been established to foster citizens and communities participation as key factors not only for the improvement of public policy, for the enhancement of social cohesion but more recently for the achievement of sdgs’ goals and to encourage a EU cultural identity.

This toolkit will describe them in detail in the following chapters analyzing how the concept of participation and community engagement is used and through which terminology.

## **4 - EU-tools, projects and channels to foster citizen participation and community engagement**

## 4.1 Permanent Tool of engagement

### EU Citizens' Initiative : Article 11 .4 Treaty on European Union

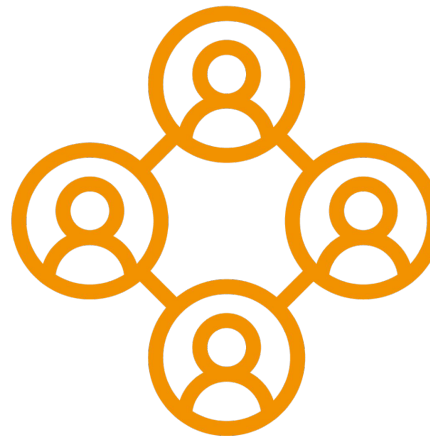
[europe.citizens-initiative.eu](http://europe.citizens-initiative.eu)

*Citizens of the Union numbering at least one million who are nationals of a significant number of Member States may take the initiative of inviting the European Commission, within the framework of its powers, to submit an appropriate proposal on matters where citizens consider that a legal act of the Union is required for the purpose of implementing the Treaties.*

The European Citizens' Initiative is the most recent European participatory tool and it is "**the world's first transnational citizens' initiative<sup>27</sup>**" mechanism according to Greenwood, J. *The European Citizens' Initiative: bringing the EU closer to its citizens?* *Comp Eur Polit* 17, 940–956 (2019).

As a **bottom-up mechanism**, it is intended to give to the European citizens the right to ask the European Commission to adopt legislation. According to Article 24 TFEU, Parliament and the Council adopt the provisions for the procedures and conditions required for a citizens' initiative and every citizen of the Union shall have the right to petition Parliament. The ECI had originally been introduced with the aim of establishing new dialogue among political institutions, civil societies, and people in order to "**translate the social realm shaped by citizens making use of their rights and freedoms into a political will<sup>28</sup>**".

The participatory democratic rationale behind ECIs has also been explained by the General Court of the EU: "The principle of democracy, which, as it is stated in particular in the preamble to the EU Treaty, in Article 2 TEU and in the preamble to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, is one of the fundamental values of the European Union, as is the objective specifically pursued by the ECI mechanism, which consists in improving the democratic functioning of the European Union by **granting every citizen a general right to participate in democratic life<sup>29</sup>**".



## Right of petition: Article 227 Treaty On The Functioning of the European Union

[Petition.eu](https://petition.eu)

*Any citizen of the Union, and any natural or legal person residing or having its registered office in a Member State, shall have the right to address, individually or in association with other citizens or persons, a petition to the European Parliament on a matter which comes within the Union's fields of activity and which affects him (her) directly.*

The right to petition represents the oldest, most accessible, permanent, and general-purpose participatory mechanism for any individual who intends to enter into contact with the EU institutional apparatus<sup>10</sup>.

As such, EU petitions represent the cornerstone of participatory democracy in the EU, by giving citizens a voice and taking their policy concerns directly to the heart of Parliament, and of the whole Union, so as to influence its administrative, legislative and ultimately political agenda. **The right to petition applies to any individual resident on the EU territory, including minors and illegal migrants, as well as companies and organizations**, and a petition may relate to issues of public or private interest. In Parliament, petitions are dealt with in the Committee on Petitions (hereinafter 'PETI Committee'), a dedicated parliamentary committee in charge of the whole petition life cycle.

The right to petition plays different and complementary functions, from **administrative and political oversight** over the Commission and the Member States to **legislative agenda-setting**, while offering a unique **mechanism of representation for individuals and minorities**. By drawing Parliament's attention it offers a permanent feedback mechanism turning citizens not only into watchdogs of the application of EU law<sup>11</sup>, by bringing to the EU institutions' attention new policy ideas, needs and preferences, also beyond ongoing legislative files, petitions may play an agenda-setting role, similar to that sought by an ECI. The bottom-up, political scrutiny and oversight combined with the law-making function inherent to the EU petition system unveil yet another, broader role played by the right of petition, that of a mechanism of participatory democracy<sup>4-12</sup>.



## Public consultations: Art. 11.3 Treaty on European Union

[commission.europa.eu](https://commission.europa.eu)

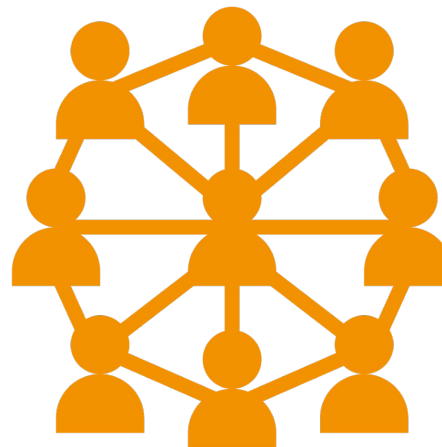
[ec.europa.eu](https://ec.europa.eu)

*The European Commission shall carry out broad consultations with parties concerned in order to ensure that the Union's actions are coherent and transparent.*

Public consultations allow European citizens to give their opinion on a draft initiative of the European Commission or on evaluations of the performance of existing EU actions. This right of consultation is enshrined in the Treaty on European Union in Article 11 paragraph. This top-down mechanism can be considered **an input mechanism in policy shaping**<sup>13</sup>.

Originally, in a first phase dating back to the early days of EU integration, consultations were developed as a means to **secure the efficient performance of the Commission's decision-making prerogatives**<sup>14</sup>. Subsequently, in a second phase starting in the mid-90s, consultations gained an additional, higher level rationale: that of **legitimizing the Commission's policy work**, both epistemically (through information collection) and socially (through wider participation). More recently, a third phase started: consultative processes were also recognised as **a way to improve the quality of legislation**.

This led the consultations to be integrated into and become **part of the impact assessment analysis**, a fundamentally technocratic process centered on evidence collection and evaluation. By approaching public consultations through the prism of the impact assessment system, the Commission continues to instrumentally approach public input as yet another element to consider while evaluating the prospective impact of its proposals<sup>15</sup>.



## 4.2 Experimental tools of participation and community engagement

### Conference on the future of Europe

[conference.on.the.FutureofEurope.eu](https://conference.on.the.FutureofEurope.eu)

The Conference on the Future of Europe was **a citizen-led series of debates and discussions that ran from April 2021 to May 2022** and enabled people from across Europe to share their ideas and help shape our common future. The Conference was **the first of its kind**: as a major pan-European democratic exercise.

This was done via an innovative **Multilingual Digital Platform** where any European could share ideas, and both national panels and **European Citizens' Panels**, with more than 5 million unique visitors to the platform and more than 700,000 event participants. The Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFE) concluded its work in May 2022 with the **submission of 49 proposals to the European institutions**.

### European Citizen Panel

[European Citizens' Panels.eu](https://EuropeanCitizensPanels.eu)

Another major legacy of the Conference are the Citizens' Panels making **recommendations ahead of certain EC initiatives on Food Waste, Virtual Worlds and Learning Mobility Abroad**. As a result of them the [Citizens' Report](#) from the Panel provided a full set of recommendations. It is the first concrete and structured contribution by citizens to the development of European digital policies, resulting from an exercise in participatory democracy. The Commission proposes a number of actions directly responding to citizens' concerns, such as: a citizen Toolbox to help better understand how to manage their virtual identities, their virtual creations, their virtual assets and their data; reinforce citizen empowerment in virtual worlds, including for children; support digital skills development, particularly for women and girls; building a talent pool of virtual world specialists; Support research on the impact of virtual worlds on people's health and well-being.



## Cohesion Policy 21-27: Policy Objective 5 “Europe Closer To Citizens”

[Cohesion Policy legislation 2021-2027.eu](https://ec.europa.eu/cohesion/policy-legislation-2021-2027)

The territorial dimension of the EU cohesion policy was strengthened in the 2021–2027 programming period with the introduction of the dedicated Policy Objective 5 (PO5) ‘Europe closer to citizens’, which aims to foster the sustainable and integrated development of all types of territories and local initiatives. Policy Objective 5 aims to **promote integrated social, economic and environmental development, cultural heritage and security in urban, rural and coastal areas, including through participatory local development initiatives**. This objective will be implemented using resources from the European Regional Development Fund (**ERDF**) and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (**EMFF**) in the Regional Operational Programmes (**ROPs**). Through this objective, cohesion policy recognizes the strategies developed by local actors as crucial for useful interventions for communities and for dialogue with supra-local interventions. This mechanism has been set in place in order to **ensure that funding is used in an efficient manner, responds to the challenges identified within a certain territory, and that local stakeholders are informed and involved**. Territorial strategies also provide the opportunity to build capacity and initiate local actions contributing to European policies, including green and digital transitions. The Commission recognizes the role of small and medium size cities and functional area approaches as important driving forces for regional and rural attractiveness and development by creating positive spillover effects between urban areas and other territories, and reinforcing urban-rural linkages.

## The European Climate Pact

[European Climate Pact.eu](https://climate.ec.europa.eu/european-climate-pact)

The European Climate Pact, a new non-legislative initiative to bring together different stakeholders with the aim to commit them to action for our climate, environment and sustainability. The initiative aims to **inform, inspire and foster cooperation between people and organizations**.



### **Multi-stakeholder platform on SDGs** (ended in 2019)

[Multi-stakeholder platform on SDGs.eu](https://multi-stakeholder-platform-on-sdgs.eu)

The multi-stakeholder platform was set up on 22 May 2017 to: support and advise the European Commission and all stakeholders involved on the implementation of the SDGs at EU level; support and advise the European Commission in relation to Commission events in sustainable development; help to prepare the selection process of an annual sustainability award; provide a forum for exchange of experience and best practice on the implementation of the SDGs across sectors and at local, regional, national and EU level.

### **Europe for Citizens (EFC)**

[Europe for Citizens \(EFC\).eu](https://europeforcitizens.eu)

The Europe for Citizens Program supports initiatives to strengthen remembrance of recent European history and to enhance civic participation at EU level.

### **The Competence Centre on Participatory and Deliberative Democracy**

[Competence Centre on Participatory and Deliberative Democracy.eu](https://competence-centre-on-participatory-and-deliberative-democracy.eu)

The competence Centre on Participatory and Deliberative Democracy supports EU policy making by enriching the EU knowledge base on participatory and deliberative practices; providing guidance for researchers and policymakers; building capacity on methodologies; developing dedicated public spaces for citizen engagement; experimenting with new methodologies.



## **5 - Recurring terminology**

*As made explicit in the rationale and scope section at the beginning of the document, this toolkit has traversed the aforementioned tools and documentation in search of the recurring terminology used by the European Union to denote practices, initiatives, processes of citizenship and community engagement in decision-making processes, projects, initiatives. In this section the toolkit presents the major findings:*

### **1. Public participation:**

This term refers to the act of involving citizens in political or governance decisions. It can cover a variety of activities, such as public consultations, discussion forums and voting initiatives. It invites community members to actively participate in the decision-making process, through activities such as public consultations, discussion forums and voting initiatives. This term is often used in documents related to democracy, civil rights, governance and legislation.

### **2. Active citizenship:**

This concept emphasizes the importance of citizens' active involvement in the social, economic and political life of their community. It can include activities such as volunteering, participation in elections, civic activism or participation in civil society organizations. It encourages community members to actively participate in the social, economic and political life of their community, thus promoting their active involvement in local issues. This term is often used in documents dealing with civic education, youth, culture, European citizenship, social inclusion and democracy. It can be found, for instance, in the documents of the 'Europe for Citizens' programme or in the action plans for civic education.

### **3. Social innovation:**

This term refers to new ideas, strategies or organizational models that respond to social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations. These innovations can emerge from participatory processes involving a variety of stakeholders, including local communities. This term is mainly used in documents dealing with research, innovation, social enterprise, social inclusion and employment. It can be found, for example, in documents of the Horizon Europe research and innovation programme, or in strategies for social enterprise and social innovation.

### **4. Co-creation:**

This term refers to the process through which services or solutions are developed in collaboration with users or beneficiaries. In the context of EU policy, it may refer for instance to the co-creation of public services with citizens. This term is mainly used in documents dealing with research, innovation, culture, education and digital. It can be found, for instance, in the documents of the research and innovation programme Horizon Europe, or in the strategies for digital education and culture.

### **5. Stakeholder engagement:**

This term refers to the process by which organizations involve various interested parties (or stakeholders) in their decisions or activities. In the context of EU policy, it can refer to the involvement of a variety of stakeholders, including local communities, in the decision-making process. This term is used in a wide range of documents, as the EU emphasizes the importance of stakeholder engagement in all areas of its policies and actions.

### **6. Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI):**

ITI is a mechanism for EU countries to combine funding from various EU funds to implement integrated strategies in a specific geographical area. It may involve a high level of community involvement in the identification of investment priorities and project management. This term is used in documents concerning cohesion policy, regional and local development, and the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). It can be found, for example, in regulations and guidelines for the use of ESIFs.

### **7. CLLD Community Led Local Development:**

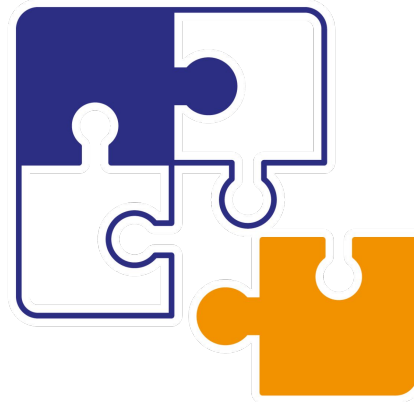
This term is mainly used in documents concerning cohesion policy, rural development, fisheries, and the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). It can be found, for example, in regulations and guidelines for the use of ESIFs.

## **6 - Conclusions**

Through the analysis of programmes, tools, and press releases related to the European Commission's initiatives to foster citizens' and communities' participation in the life of the Union and the mechanisms mentioned above, four main axes can be highlighted as areas of impact where participation and engagement of citizens and communities are seen as a key factor:

- A. Improvement of public policy:** Citizens and community engagement provides access to a wider range of knowledge, experience and expertise. This fosters a better understanding of community needs and expectations, leading to more relevant, effective and sustainable policies and interventions.
- B. Enhancement of social cohesion:** Citizens and community engagement promotes social cohesion by facilitating dialogue and collaboration between different actors, groups and sectors of society. It fosters mutual understanding, trust and solidarity, helping to reduce inequalities and divisions.
- C. Achievement of SDGs Agenda:** Citizens and community engagement is an integral part of the SDGs process of achievement and remains essential for maintaining progress over time.
- D. Promoting European Identity:** Citizens and communities engagement can contribute to fostering a sense of European belonging and identity, encouraging citizens' participation at local and national level, and stimulating the construction of an active and aware European citizenship.

A helpful structure to clarify distinct ways of framing community engagement by clustering them by the societal objectives they address is also proposed in scientific literature by Hazelkorn (2016).



Hazelkorn proposes three models of CE:

- **The social justice model:** CE focuses on addressing social disadvantage in surrounding communities and other activities aiming at community empowerment.
- **The economic development model:** CE emphasizes the traditional third mission focus on economic growth, innovation, entrepreneurship and business engagement.
- **The public good model:** CE focuses on contributing to community development and revitalisation activities, both from an economic and a non-economic perspective, with a strong 'place-based' emphasis.

Although various terms exist to refer to engagement (including civic, public, regional and societal engagement), **the goal of jointly and collectively addressing societal needs reveals to be a common aspect.**

Starting from this observation, **community engagement** is no longer seeking a unique definition throughout a list of specific activities or areas of actions, but more horizontally **is framed by the role of the community as that of a partner whose knowledge and experience can benefit the process by enriching the shared knowledge and produce mutual benefit.**

**Community engagement can therefore be defined simultaneously as a principle with mutual benefit at its core; a methodology involving multiple partnerships and collaborative work; and an objective for contributing to societal development and social change.**

The next toolkit will start from this here to unpack the concept of community engagement and explore some recurring elements, showing in more detail what "engage a community" entails in a more concrete way.



## **7 - Bibliography**

**1** [Conceptualization of the Scholarship of Engagement in Higher Education: A Strategic Review, 1996–2006, 2008](#)

*Abstract:*

During the past decade the generalized concept of the scholarship of engagement has evolved: once a broad call for higher education to be more responsive to communities, it is now a multifaceted field of responses. Engaged scholarship now has its own distinctive architecture, building on yet differing from traditional scholarship.

**2** [Johnston, K. A. \(2018\). Toward a theory of social engagement. In K. A. Johnston & M. Taylor \(Eds.\), The Handbook of Communication Engagement \(pp. 19-32\). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley](#)

*Abstract:*

Engagement is a socially responsive approach to communication practice with outcomes aligned with individual, community, civic and institutional benefits. While scholarship to date has focused on the individual attributes of an engagement state, a social perspective of engagement recognizes collective level effects, where meaning is co-created through a socially situated process. This chapter presents a multilevel model of social engagement as a coherent theoretical framework to build on individual engagement dimensions and broaden understanding and knowledge of engagement beyond a binary process. The chapter recognizes the important role of communication interventions (dialogue, advocacy and interaction) at individual and social levels, and the influence of social conditions on the outcomes of individual, and social, levels of engagement.

**3 - 15** [Alberto Alemanno, Jean Monnet \(2022\). "Towards a permanent citizens' participatory mechanism in the EU". Brussels, European Parliament, doi:10.2861/16186](#)

*Abstract:*

This study, commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the AFCO Committee, examines the EU participatory system and its existing participatory channels against mounting citizens' expectations for greater participation in EU decision making in the aftermath of the Conference on the Future of Europe. It proposes the creation of a permanent deliberative mechanism entailing the participation of randomly selected citizens tasked to provide advice upon some of the proposals originating from either existing participation channels or the EU institutions, in an attempt at making the EU more democratically responsive.

**4** [Saurugger Sabine \(2010\). "The social construction of the participatory turn: The emergence of a norm in the European Union". Europea Journal of Political Research.](#)

*Abstract:*

At the beginning of the 1990s a new discourse emerged at the European Union level, insisting on the necessity of 'civil society' participation in decision-making processes. Based on a 'strategic-constructivist' research design, this article addresses the question of the emergence of this participatory turn in the official discourse and its transformation into a norm. It argues that the continued activism of an elite forum, consisting of political and administrative actors as well as academics, created the momentum that brought the concerned actors to accept the participatory norm and to play the roles required by it. However, due to internal competition amongst norm entrepreneurs, and a changed political situation, this norm is still contested, making it difficult to assess how its implementation will function.

**5** [J. Mendes, Participation in European Union Rulemaking: A Rights-Based Approach, Oxford University Press, 2011](#)

*Abstract:*

The book is a critical legal analysis of the current scope of participation rights in EU law, embedded in the political and institutional contexts of European integration. Participation has featured prominently in recent institutional and political developments that have been shaping the EU's constitutional framework - most intensely in the follow up of the Commission's White Paper on Governance. Yet, little attention has been paid to participation rights as a means of ensuring the procedural protection of persons affected by EU regulation in its diverse forms. Both the EU legislator and the EU Courts have largely ignored this dimension of the rule of law. This book shows why the current judicial and legislative conceptions are inadequate to ensure the legal protection of rights and interests affected by EU regulation.

**6 - 12** [Alemanno, A. \(2014\) "Unpacking the Principle of Openness in EU Law: Transparency, Participation and Democracy". \*European Law Review\*, 2014, vol. 1, pp. 72-90.](#)

*Abstract:*

The purpose of this article is to shed some light on the emerging, yet largely undefined, principle of openness in EU law. After addressing the semantic confusion existing between openness and transparency, it attempts – through a textual and systemic interpretation of their respective legal basis – to identify the normative content of the EU turn to openness. It then moves to explore the principle's potential for attaining its declared Treaty-sanctioned objectives: promoting good governance and ensuring the participation of civil society in the democratic life of the Union. It illustrates that, although openness largely maintains an instrumental rationale – aimed at enhancing the quality of the regulatory outcome rather than at promoting a more inclusive process –, the institutional, substantive and societal landscapes surrounding its operation have changed in recent times. It demonstrates that these alterations may help to shift the understanding of openness in the EU away from a specific, unidirectional, bottom-up right of access to information to a much broader, proactive and top-down duty of the EU administration to genuinely open its vault of information to the public and create new avenues of participation for civil societies and other organised interests. The changing nature of the openness rights accompanied by the growing demand for more active participation inherent to our times is set to reinvigorate civic life and, more importantly, to ensure political legitimacy grounded in democratic values.

**7** [Greenwood, J. \*The European Citizens' Initiative: bringing the EU closer to its citizens?\* \*Comp Eur Polit\* 17, 940–956 \(2019\)](#)

*Abstract:*

In defiance of accounts which see the European Union (EU) as structurally incompatible with democracy, the Lisbon Treaty set out the general right and specific means for citizens to participate in EU decision-making. Whilst the Treaty codified long-established practices of representative democracy and of dialogue with civil society organizations, it also notably introduced a new measure, the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI), commencing in 2012. The ECI has limited formal powers, with no ability to mandate political institutions. It is promoted by the European Commission as an agenda-setting and participatory democracy measure, rather than one of direct democracy. Nonetheless, it has an elevated status within one of the current European Commission's ten strategic priorities and is remarkable in a number of ways.

**8** [D. Szeligowska & E. Mincheva. 'The European Citizens' Initiative – Empowering European Citizens within the Institutional Triangle: A Political and Legal Analysis', \*Perspectives on European Politics and Society\*, 2012, 13\(3\), pp. 270-284.](#)

*Abstract:*

The article presents the origins of the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) and traces the variety of issues that arose in debate between the Commission, Parliament and Council during the passage of the Regulation, which now defines the procedural rules of the instrument. Its nature is assessed by detailed analysis of the procedural requirements and the provisions surrounding them. This is followed by an elaboration of the ECI's potential contribution to the political system of the EU, and the ways in which its use could remedy the EU's 'democratic deficit'. Particular attention is given to the impact of the rules upon the European Commission.

**9** [Judgment of 10 May 2017, Efer v European Commission, T-754/14, ECLI:EU:T:2017:323, paras 37-38.](#)

**10** [Levelling the EU participatory playing field: A legal and policy analysis of the Commission's public consultations in light of the principle of political equality](#)

*Abstract:*

The EU Commission has a long tradition of consulting interested parties when formulating its policies. While the rationale, format and legal basis relied upon by the Commission when holding public consultations have changed over time, its systematic inability to make those consultations equally accessible to all affected parties has remained constant. This article discusses the extent to which such a consultation practice conflicts with the principle of political equality, as enshrined in Article 9 TEU. Given the Commission's unrestrained discretion regarding who, how and when to consult and the absence of corresponding participatory rights, it argues that the EU can no longer presume that all stakeholders—especially citizens and civil society groups—enjoy equal access to EU institutions. Rather, under a proposed substantive reading of the principle of political equality, it contends that EU institutions are procedurally required to ensure that everyone will effectively be given equal opportunities of access to the policy process. Only a series of structural, power-shifting reforms—some of which are proposed in this article—may enable participation to become an autonomous form of legitimation of the Union.

**11** [Committee on Petitions. Report on the outcome of the Committee on Petitions' deliberations during 2018, 2018/2280\(INI\), January 2019, let. L and M.](#)

*Abstract:*

**12** [M. Nentwich, 'Opportunity Structures for Citizens' Participation: The Case of the European Union', in A. Weale & M. Nentwich, Political Theory and the European Union, Routledge, 1998, p.125](#)

*Abstract:*

**13** [Alemanno, Alberto \(2020\). "Leveling the EU participatory playing field: A legal and policy analysis of the Commission's public consultations in light of the principle of political equality". European Law Journal. 26 \(1-2\): 114-135. doi:10.1111/eulj.12371. ISSN 1468-0386. S2CID 228921826](#)

*Abstract:*

The EU Commission has a long tradition of consulting interested parties when formulating its policies. While the rationale, format and legal basis relied upon by the Commission when holding public consultations have changed over time, its systemic inability to make those consultations equally accessible to all affected parties has remained constant. This article, by engaging with theoretically informed empirical studies, discusses the extent to which such a consultation practice conflicts with the principle of political equality, as enshrined in Article 9 TEU. Given the Commission's unrestrained discretion regarding who, how and when to consult and the absence of corresponding participatory rights, it argues that the EU can no longer presume that all stakeholders — especially citizens and civil society groups — enjoy equal access to EU institutions, as well as equal information, and voice. Rather, under a proposed substantive reading of the principle of political equality, it contends that EU institutions are procedurally required to ensure that everyone will effectively be given equal opportunities of access to the policy process. To attain this objective, it puts forward a set of recommendations aimed at re-designing the actual legal and policy framework for consultations, on the one hand, and building an enabling participatory environment surrounding them, on the other hand. Ultimately, only a series of structural, power-shifting reforms — some of which are proposed in this article — may enable participation to become an autonomous form of legitimation of the Union.

- 14** [J. Mendes, Participation in European Union Rulemaking: A Rights-Based Approach, Oxford University Press, 2011; P. Staszczyk, A Legal Analysis of NGOs and European Civil Society, Kluwer, 2019, pp. 128-9\].](#)

*Abstract:*

Develops a powerful legal argument for the extension of participation rights in EU law, to offer better protection to those affected by European regulation



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