**How public authorities engage with end-users in addressing climate change policies: results from a wide European survey**

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One of the primary goals of the European Union is to increase the engagement of the general public in the process of developing and implementing policies that are related to climate change and its consequences. The EU recognises that climate change is a complex and urgent matter that requires the collaboration and participation of all relevant parties, including, but not limited to, citizens, civil society organisations, businesses, and public authorities [1–4]. In its efforts to combat climate change, the EU is working to establish a culture of dialogue and engagement that will ensure the legitimacy, transparency, and accountability of its actions. In addition to this, the EU acts to empower and encourage the general population to act and support the transition towards a society that is resilient, low-carbon, and sustainable. In its efforts to combat climate change, the EU is working to establish a culture of dialogue and engagement that will ensure the legitimacy, transparency, and accountability of its actions [5–7]. In addition to this, the EU acts to empower and encourage the general population to act and support the transition towards a society that is resilient, low-carbon, and sustainable.

A common challenge for many public authorities is ensuring effective stakeholder engagement. These must comprehend how stakeholder relationships are changing and manage stakeholders who may be working towards the same objective but may not be using the same tools or procedures.

Climate Assemblies as a deliberative process became more popular as a participatory mechanism for involving public in decision-making process. Several countries and regions have organized climate assemblies as part of their efforts to engage citizens in shaping climate policies and strategies in the context of addressing climate change. Investigation of current practices in developing and implementing climate change policies, including the public authority’s capacity to engage with end-users is the outmost importance for identifying barriers and facilitators for citizen participation.

Such an investigation was carried out through a European wide survey (65 cities and regions), targeted local and regional authorities, in CLIMAS project - CLIMAte change citizens engagement toolbox for dealing with Societal resilience (launched in January 2023). The results revealed that in coordinating Climate Assemblies, it is fundamental for public authorities to adopt a holistic and participatory strategy to involve citizens. This approach ensures democratic legitimacy, social inclusivity, and policy efficacy, enhancing the quality of public services and fostering a sense of community ownership. However, the success of this engagement lies on the authorities’ capacity to plan and execute the process, equipped with the necessary resources, expertise, regulatory guidance, and a conducive organizational culture.

The public authorities’ role as facilitators of the dialogue between all stakeholders, including citizens and decision/policymakers is crucial, and the present research sheds light on the main aspects to be addressed or developed when engaging with stakeholders and citizens. Together with identification of drivers and barriers for successful deliberation and investigation of different cultural, social, political and environmental contexts, CLIMAS project partners aim the development of future tools and wider recommendations.

*Key words: climate change policy, end-user engagement, climate assembly, capacity to engage*

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