



# eParticipation for the European Sustainability Strategy

„Technical questions of the EU sustainability strategy“ –  
„Is eGovernance providing answers?“

Sophie Strasser

[www.seri.at](http://www.seri.at) [www.sustainability-strategy.net](http://www.sustainability-strategy.net)

# About SERI

- The **Sustainable Europe Research Institute**
- Pan-European **think tank**; main office in **Vienna**
- **Themes:** Ecological Economics, Globalisation, Europe, Sustainable Societies, Production, Policy and Politics.
- Research, Consulting and
- Communication

# Structure of the presentation

- **Introduction**
- **Forms of Participation, requirements of eParticipation**
- **Embedding in eGovernance for SD**
- **Experiences from our projects on community and city level**
- **can the results be applied to the European level?**
- **Discussion**

# Introduction

- EU – many citizens perceive a lack of participatory democracy
- eParticipation: One of the key areas of eGovernment (Digital Democracy and eParticipation, Electronic Service Delivery, Public eGovernancem, eAdministration, eManagement and eOrganization)
- If eDemocracy supports the system of representative government, how can eParticipation be viewed as a tool for increasing the level of participation on a European level?

## Levels of eParticipation ...

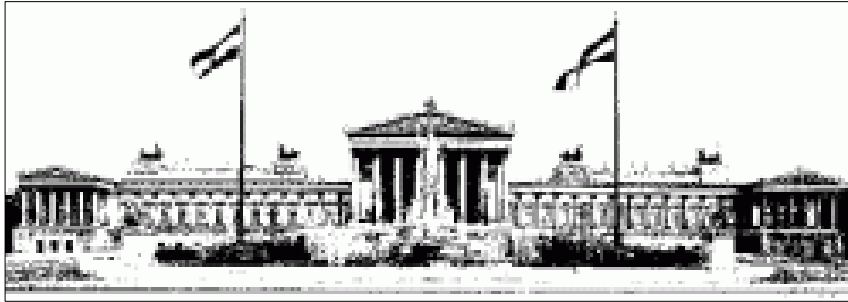
Principles of  
sustainable  
development

Level 1	Manipulation	These levels assume a passive audience, which is given information that may be partial or constructed.
Level 2	Education	
Level 3	Information	People are told what is going to happen, is happening or has happened.
Level 4	Consultation	People are given a voice, but no power to ensure their views are heeded.
Level 5	Involvement	Peoples' views have some influence, but traditional power holders still make the decisions.
Level 6	<b>Partnership</b>	<b>People can begin to negotiate with traditional power holders, including agreeing roles, responsibilities and levels of control.</b>
Level 7	<b>Delegated power</b>	<b>Some power is delegated.</b>
Level 8	<b>Citizen control</b>	<b>Full delegation of all decision-making and action.</b>

The Internet's most dominant advantage is its function as a **decentralized communication system**. As such it can serve as an important ingredient in the building of participatory democracy.

Source: Marsh, 1969

# eGovernment and eDemocracy



**eGovernment** is broadly defined as the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to improve the activities of public sector organizations. It can take place in intra-governmental processes, processes between governments and other public or private organizations as well as interactions between governments and the citizens they represent and serve (eGovernment for Development, 2003).



The term **eDemocracy** relates primarily to the latter and is defined as “harnessing Information and Communication Technologies to enhance democratic processes and empower citizens” (Development Gateway, 2003).

eGovernment applications in general and **eParticipation** in particular can impact sustainable development in all three dimensions:

- **environmental**, e.g. pursuing more resource-efficient production and consumption
- **social**, e.g. opportunities for spreading knowledge, fostering cultural cooperation on a global level,
- **economic**, e.g. facilitating access to markets



# Current projects at SERI relating to participation

- **eCommunity (EU Life Demonstration)**

Possibilities and risks of online participation

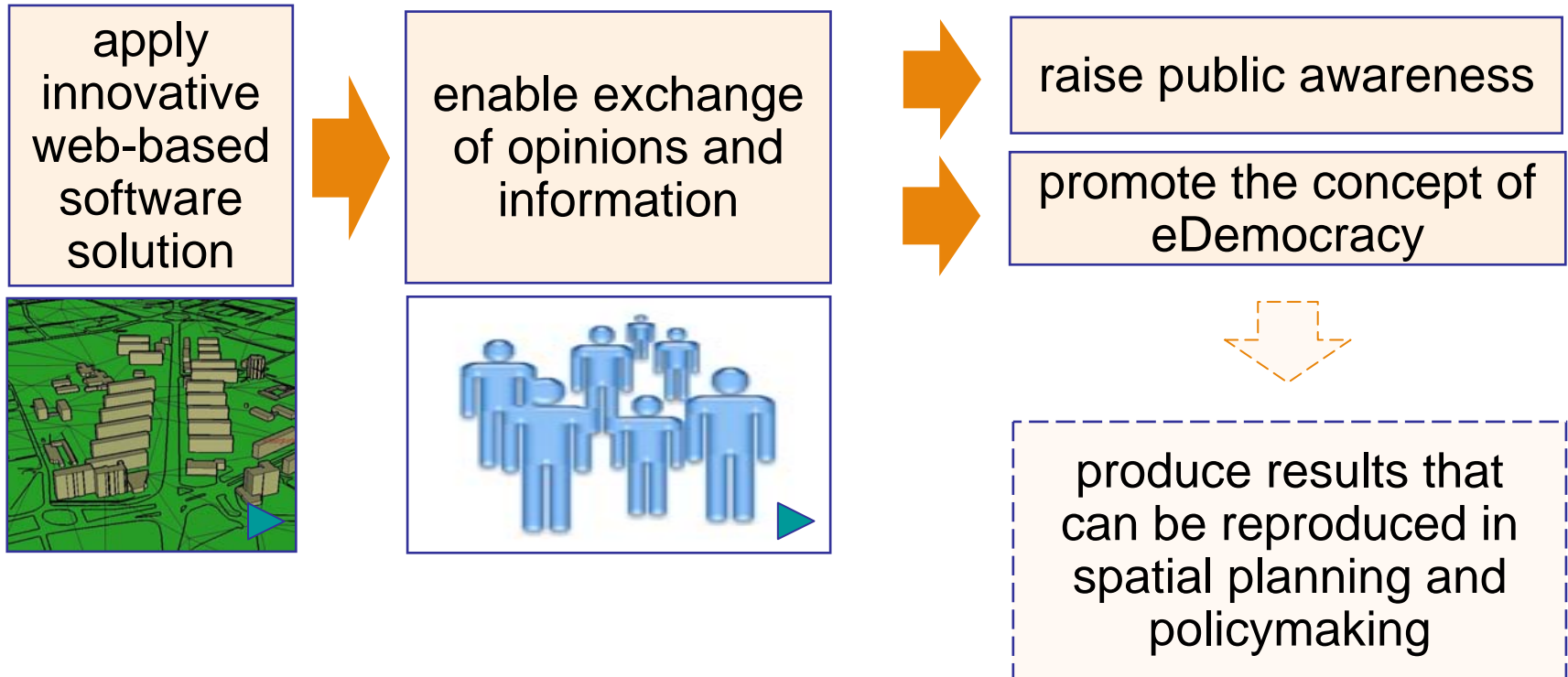
- **Intelcities (FP6 IP)** urban eGovernance

- **Artemis (FWF)** face-to-face participation in decision making process



# Community

The objective of eCommunity is to **promote sustainable and democratic urban planning** by using opportunities offered by information technology and WWW.



# Urban planning and internet communication

- **More thorough interactive planning process requires:**
  - **Public participation** already in the beginning of the planning process
  - **Distribution of information** throughout the whole planning process
  - **Interactive planning**
- **Interaction is needed for:**
  - **discussion** of objectives and priorities
  - **distribution** of information
  - expression of **opinions**
  - gain of **trust**
  - **inclusion** of various parties to the planning

# Basic requirements of eParticipation of Citizens

Analysis of European cutting-edge projects on the topics e-Government and Urban Planning. Three major themes recur as **prerequisites** for success:

- Access (eInclusion)
- Trust
- Institutional change

An online tool cannot remedy or replace an inadequate offline citizen participation process.



# intelcities **INTEGRATED PROJECT – SUMMARY**

**Duration January 04 – July 05**

**Budget: Euro 12M (EU Contribution 6.8M)**

**Based on INTELCITY FP5 Roadmap project exploring KS by 2010  
+ SUD by 2030**

**Critical mass of 19 cities, 20 ICT companies, 35 research groups  
including 16 SMEs in a total of 20 European Counties**

**Prototype modules to be “built” in six cities to be linked together  
to demonstrate an Integrated Open System City Platform  
(IOSCP).**

**Iterative methodology of RTD pilot studies embedded in cities and  
meeting citizens’ needs**

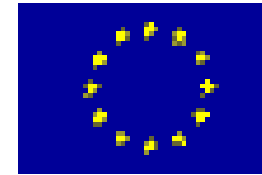
**New business opportunities for ICT companies**

**Coordinator – City of Manchester: Dave Carter, Head of Economic  
Development**

**FZK- ITAS – Lead of WP11 e-Governance**



## IP6 Integrated Project



Information Society  
Technologies

## Urban Sustainability in the Context of eGovernance - Best Practice Cases - eGovernance and ICT

- **potential to introduce new patterns of social structure and behavior, of public and private organization, of production and trade.**
- **re-define the links and relationships between people, nations and religions. Low-cost access to networks – fiber, cable, wireless and satellite- can empower creativity, innovation and local entrepreneurship, as well as strengthen local communities, and improve resource productivity (Club of Rome, 2003).**

# Intelcities - results of case studies

- People need to see their impact
- Participation works better the nearer the impact location
- Raise interest and willingness to spend time
- Complement representative democracy?
- Representative democracy versus direct participation?

# Requirements for SD

- reducing the digital divide via appropriate technology development and education
- Young people – raising awareness
- Need to preserve cultural diversity
- Systemic approach for monitoring and early warning



# eParticipation Good Practice

- Promotion
- Political commitment and responsiveness
- Clear purpose of the initiative
- Clear rules of engagement
- Inclusiveness
- Use of Moderators
- Privacy
- Working in Partnership

Kearns, Ian et al, 2002 -

•Timing

•Tailoring

•Integration

OECD





# Participatory approach for better eGovernance

„Participation is the value recognizing the right of citizens to act on their own governance choices and to play an active role in the public life of society. In practice , this means that all citizens should have a fair opportunity to participate, regardless of economic class, gender, religion or ethnicity. Correspondingly, it imposes an obligation on citizens to participate in the affairs of the community and nation.“ Robert Miller, Canada

# EU Sustainable Development Strategy

The Commission's proposals to the Goteborg Summit:

- Break the link between economic growth and resource use
- Resource-productivity monitoring by 2003
- De-couple transport growth from GDP growth
- Promote telework; accelerate investments in *new communications infrastructures* and diversify employment in rural areas
- Reduce energy demand through to better energy-efficiency

Goteborg Summit March 14, 2001

## EU strategy goal for Europe:

To become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world.

Lisbon Summit March 24, 2000



# use of ICTs for participation on the EU level - opportunities and constraints

- At EU level, 'YourVoice in Europe' [http://europa.eu.int/yourvoice/index\\_de.htm](http://europa.eu.int/yourvoice/index_de.htm) offers a single access point in all official languages of the EU for public consultation.
- experience from consultation
- experience gained in eVoting
- experience needed in social and cultural factors
- create interest, keep content and offers up-to-date
- Question of mandate (legal basis, usefulness and justification)



# Current discussion in the EU

- EU recognizes research need in eParticipation
- Main issues: technology and design
- Not much concern about need, impact, access, legal mandate...
- priority: ‚bottom-up‘ eDemocracy
- Main issue: trust
- Eventually targets for eaprticipation will be designed ( preparation for EU vote 2009)



**Thank you for your  
attention.**

**Good-bye!**