

Application Form

**PART 1: BASIC DATA**

**Experience data** (complete the information below in a clear and concise manner)

<b>Title of the experience:</b> Konferenz zur Zukunft Europas – Onlinekonsultation “NRW gestaltet Europa” / Conference on the Future of Europe - Online consultation “NRW shapes Europe”		
<b>Name of the city or region:</b> North Rhine-Westphalia		
<b>Inhabitants of the city or territory:</b> 17,9 Million		
<b>Country:</b> Germany		
<b>Institution presenting the candidacy</b> (name of the municipality, department, government, institution leading the candidate experience): State Chancellery of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia		
<b>Website of the experience or institution:</b> <a href="https://www.land.nrw/">https://www.land.nrw/</a> ; <a href="https://nrweuropa.make.org/">https://nrweuropa.make.org/</a>		
<b>Profiles in social networks of the experience or the institution:</b> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/NRW/">https://www.facebook.com/NRW/</a>		
<b>Start date of the experience:</b> 23.09.2021		
<b>End date of the experience</b> (if operational, indicate "ongoing"): 07.11.2021 (end of the online consultation); 29.11.2021 (citizens' dialogue); ongoing: integration of the results in EU-policy-making		
<b>Budget of the experience</b> (indicate the budget of the experience or the resources mobilised for its development and implementation): 100.000 €		
<b>Type of candidacy</b> (Mark with an X in the right column)	New experience	X
	Innovation on an existing experience	
	Continuity of an experience	
<b>Type of experience</b> (Mark with an X in the right column) (you may choose more than one)	Participatory budgeting	
	Participatory planning	
	Standing council	

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	Workshop/meeting for diagnosis, monitoring, etc.		
	Public Hearing/Forum		
	Poll/referendum		
	Assemblies / Citizen juries / Deliberation spaces		
	E-government/Open government/Digital platforms		X
	Citizen initiative		
	Other (specify): online citizen consultation		X
<p><b>Objective of the experience</b></p> <p>(Mark with an X in the right column) (you may choose more than one)</p>	To achieve higher levels of equality in terms of participation		X
	Including diversity as a criterion for inclusion		
	Community empowerment		X
	To empower non-organised citizens		X
	To increase citizen's rights in terms of political participation		
	To connect different tools of participation within a participatory democracy "ecosystem"		X
	To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the mechanisms of participatory democracy		X
	To improve the quality of public decision-making through the mechanisms of participatory democracy		
	To improve the evaluation and accountability of the mechanisms of participatory democracy		
To improve any public policy through the active participation of the public		X	
<b>Territorial area</b>	All the territory	Local	

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(Mark with an X in the right column) (you may choose more than one)		Regional	X
	District		
	Neighbourhood		
<b>Thematic area</b> (Mark with an X in the right column) (you may choose more than one)	Governance		X
	Education		X
	Transport		X
	Urban management		X
	Health		X
	Security		X
	Environment/Climate change and/or urban agriculture		X
	Civic associations, grassroots and new social movements		
	Culture		X
	Housing		
	Job creation		
	Decentralization		
	Local development		
	Training/learning		X
	Economy and/or finances		X
Legal regulations		X	
Social inclusion		X	

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	All	
	Other (write the topic) Question of the consultation: <b>“Citizens of NRW: What are the concrete steps we can take to reinvent Europe?”</b> ; nine topics covered by the Conference on the Future of Europe ( <a href="https://futureu.europa.eu/processes?locale=en">https://futureu.europa.eu/processes?locale=en</a> )	X
<p><b>Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) associated with the practice</b></p> <p><i>Mark with an X in the right column (more than one option can be chosen)</i></p> <p><i>You can also add the specific target</i></p>	SDG 1 - No poverty	X
	SDG 2 - Zero hunger	
	SDG 3 - Good health and well- being	X
	SDG 4 - Quality education	X
	SDG 5 - Gender equality	X
	SDG 6 - Clean water and sanitation	
	SDG 7 - Affordable and clean energy	X
	SDG 8 - Decent work and economic growth	X
	SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	
	SDG 10 - Reduced inequality	
	SDG 11 - Sustainable cities and communities	X
	SDG 12 - Responsible consumption and production	X
	SDG 13 - Climate action	X
	SDG 14 - Life below water	
	SDG 15 - Life on land	
	SDG 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions	X
SDG 17 - Partnership for the goals		

## PART 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIENCE

Fill in the following fields clearly and concisely. You can add links if you consider it appropriate.

### **Context**

In a **maximum of 300 words**, it presents the cultural, geographical, historical, institutional and socioeconomic context of the city, the territory in which the experience takes place.

North Rhine-Westphalia is located in the western part of the Federal Republic of Germany and thus, geographically speaking, in the heart of Europe. With around 17.9 million inhabitants, it is the most populous and also most densely populated state in Germany. With around ten million inhabitants, the Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan region is even one of the most densely populated regions in Europe.

In addition, NRW is the most important economic region in Germany and has been for years. With 697 billion euros, NRW generates 20.9 percent of the German GDP and is one of the most important economic regions in Europe. 19 of the 50 German companies with the highest turnover are based in NRW, and also 12 of the 40 largest trading companies. But above all, around 711,600 small and medium-sized enterprises form the economic backbone of the state.

The region is one of the most popular investment locations for foreign companies in Europe. More than 20,000 foreign companies have already invested in NRW and manage their German or European activities from here. They now employ around 1.3 million people.

NRW is also the state of highly qualified academics and specialists. This is ensured by the 67 universities and universities of applied sciences, where around 770,400 students are learning for a successful professional future. More than one in four academics in Germany is trained in NRW.

NRW also offers plenty of room for variety and stimulation outside of its vibrant economic life. This is why the state is one of the most popular travel destinations in Germany, with over 22 million guests annually. The cultural offerings are also top-notch: More than 900 museums and 130 theatres make the state one of the most diverse cultural regions in Europe.

### **Precedents**

*Explain the precedents and origins of the experience: if it is the innovation of an existing experience, what are its origins, if it is a new experience, what are the antecedents in participation in your city/municipality/region. You can also indicate if you have been inspired by experiences in other cities/countries. (maximum 300 words)*

In the context of the Conference on the Future of Europe, the state of North Rhine-Westphalia saw an opportunity to make its contribution to the formation of opinion on the future of Europe and to contribute a comprehensive political mood picture of the most populous German state. For this purpose, the innovative online consultation was conceived and carried out in cooperation with Make.org. Since such a far-reaching and interactive participation method did not exist before, this concept was newly created for this six-week online

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consultation. The State Chancellery of North Rhine-Westphalia had already conducted smaller survey formats in the past and now aimed to use this online consultation to reach a large number of citizens and collect their ideas and suggestions regarding the future of Europe.

Because the consultation was conducted online, it was particularly easy and effortless for a large part of the population to access. As a result, it was possible to achieve a significantly higher number of participants than expected. A particular advantage of this special consultation technique was that a disproportionately large number of young participants as well as residents of rural regions were heard. These two population groups can normally not be reached sufficiently with traditional participation concepts. The online consultation method developed is thus an ideal complement to traditional participation methods. While traditional participation methods tend to appeal to older generations, new online concepts also enable younger generations to make their voices heard politically. Only the combination of different - traditional and new - participation methods will continue to ensure that the entire population is represented and that the concerns, ideas and needs of all generations are made visible.

**Objectives of the experience**

*What is the objective listed in Part 1 that you think is the most important, and indicate other outstanding objectives of the experience (**maximum 100 words**)*

The main objective was to obtain representative results regarding the opinions on the future of Europe of all the citizens of NRW. Therefore a higher degree of equality in terms of citizen participation was intended. Because the participation process took place online and was easily accessible, the goal, that the consultation participants almost reflected the population groups of NRW, could be achieved. This approach was based on the conviction that a Europe that is close to its citizens can only be maintained and improved if the wishes, ideas, hopes and concerns of all EU citizens are equally respected in the future.

**Methodology**

*Describe the methodology of the experience: phases of the process, participation channels (**maximum 300 words**)*

In the framework of this online-consultation participants collected their wishes, expectations, and priorities for the future of Europe, shared ideas and evaluated them. The entire process started with one simple, open and unique question asked to the citizens from NRW: **“What are the concrete steps we can take to reinvent Europe?”** Participants could suggest proposals on the main participation channel, the platform of Make.org, which is accessible to

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everyone. Participants were able to vote and indicate their preferences on the proposals of others to identify engagement trends and shared ideas amongst the citizens of NRW.

With more than 500 proposals and 200,000 votes submitted by over 28,000 participants all over NRW, data scientists and sociologists were able to create the common agenda of the citizens consisting of 17 shared ideas and 10 controversial ideas. An idea is an aggregated recommendation for action supported by a high number of proposals being similar to one another and votes. The 17 shared ideas constitute what the citizens of NRW expect the future of Europe to look like. They are embedded in the 9 topics of the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE), such as "Climate change and environment" or "European democracy".

In a citizens' dialogue on 29.11.21 (organised by IFOK with the help of Make.org), the digital participation experience was widened, allowing citizens to discuss the results and recommendations with selected experts and Dr. Holthoff-Pförtner, Minister for Federal and European Affairs of NRW and State Secretary Dr. Speich. During the dialogue, the ideas from the consultation were actively discussed in moderated workshops such as "The Future of Mobility in Europe", where they were processed into detailed recommendations for action by the participants.

### **Innovation**

*Explain what you consider most innovative in the practice. (In a **maximum of 150 words**)*

The practice of using the digital platform and methodology of Make.org enabled to reach a large diversity of people, especially those who are not normally used to such participatory approaches. This was achieved through a user interface that is optimised for maximum engagement and by always picking up participants where they are, often on social networks such as Instagram or Facebook.

In this way, the "usual suspects" symptoms of many other participation projects that fail to think outside the box of a few very engaged citizens, could be avoided. Through this method, participation figures were 10 to 100 times higher than usual participation projects. The participation process was also mainly conducted online, allowing to reach as many people as possible, at any time, independent of their place of residence, gender or age.

### **Inclusion**

*Point out the importance of including as many groups and diverse populations as possible and how you have achieved it. (In a **maximum of 150 words**)*

Including a large diversity of citizens, regardless of their age, gender or region was of the utmost importance. In accordance with the goals of the CoFoE and the State Chancellery, we particularly focussed on the participation of young citizens, which are a driving force in the development of their future. More than 40% of all the participants were aged from 16 to 24. We also managed to reach out to the city and the countryside, which usually is a challenge in such processes. In fact, 77% of the participants came from small and medium-sized towns in NRW. The distribution of participants was close to the distribution of the general population in those three terms (see results report p.6). The diversity of participants could also be found

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in the citizens' dialogue, where young and old people participated, from all educational and social backgrounds.

**Communication**

*What has been the strategy and communication channels of the experience so that the population knows about it and gets involved. (In a **maximum of 150 words**)*

We developed a communication strategy involving numerous channels and actors to involve a large variety of citizens. Paid acquisition campaigns on Facebook and Instagram were implemented, accessible and visible to every citizen in NRW which invited people to participate and vote on the proposals, by showing them concrete ones made during the consultation. Regular social media posts on the channels of Make, NRW and our partners also gave updates about the consultation. Mailing campaigns explaining the consultation process and inviting citizens to participate were another important channel, involving actors from organisations of the civil society as well as state organisations. Amongst others, the state chancellery contacted all the European Schools in NRW to participate, organisations such as Mehr Demokratie or Europa Union NRW informed their various networks about the consultation and encouraged participation, the Europe Direct group in even Gütersloh created a special podcast episode dedicated to the project.

**Articulation with other actors**

*It explains how the experience was articulated with different actors and simultaneous or pre-existing processes. What roles did these participants assume? Explain the degree of success of this joint. (In a **maximum of 150 words**)*

The open-data platform "open.nrw" acted as an information point for the consultation, explaining the project and initiating participation. European Schools throughout the region informed their students about the consultation and the citizen dialogue to talk about their ideas for the future of Europe. This was especially important to reach our goal to involve young citizens in the process. On an institutional level, the NRW's chancellery made sure the consultation and its results were known amongst all its ministries so that the recommendations of citizens could be taken into account in their policy making. As Chairman of the German delegation, State Secretary for Europe Dr. Speich shared the results amongst the members of the Committee of the Regions (CoR), the German Bundesrat and the plenary of the CoFoE, where he acts as representative of the CoR, adding a pan-european element to the ideas mentioned by the citizens of NRW.

**Evaluation:**

*What evaluation mechanisms have been implemented? Develop whether citizenship has participated in the evaluation of the practice (In a **maximum of 300 words**)*

Two kinds of evaluation mechanisms were implemented. The internal evaluation consisted in evaluating the whole procedure, the cooperation between the state of NRW, Make.org and IFOK concerning the participation process and its communication strategy to encourage



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citizens to participate. Overall, all actors emphasised the clear, structured organisation of the consultation, which enabled all involved actors and partner organisations to have a clear overview of what their tasks were, especially in applying the same goals: reaching a large variety of citizens in NRW, regardless of their age, their gender or their region.

Another aspect of the evaluation is to analyse how the ideas of the citizen of NRW were integrated into the discussions and proposals of the CoFoE, as the 17 shared ideas have been published on the Conference platform, making it a part of the final discussions of the panels, where all the content of the platform was integrated. We are currently doing this work.

At the end of the process, especially when the next steps will be clarified on a European level, it will be important to inform the participants about the results and how their proposals have been taken into account. This procedure is particularly important to add legitimacy to the ideas shared by the citizens, to show them that their voices are heard and taken into account in the implementation of European policy-making.

### **Impacts and results**

*Describe the impacts and results of the process. How many people have participated, and which are their profiles. What have been the impacts on public policies, on the functioning of the administration and on citizens. (In a **maximum of 300 words**)*

This participation process reached 815,000 people in NRW through its communication campaign. Within six weeks, 28,000 citizens took part. A total of 508 suggestions for shaping the future of Europe were submitted. Since Make.org does not store the data of all participants, it was not possible to create an exact profile for each participant. However, based on a random system, enough information was collected regarding gender, place of residence and age of the participants to determine a balanced and diverse participation. It was found that the 16-24 age group was by far the most represented demographic, with 41% of participants. It became clear that this age group, which makes up 11% of the total population of NRW, perceived the online participation process significantly more than all other age groups. They were followed by the 25-30 year olds with 27% and the 35-44 year olds with 13%. 56% of participants were male, 42% female and 2% non-binary. Of the participants, 23% lived in a large city, 47% in a medium-sized city, and 30% in a small town. It can be observed that the inhabitants of small towns, who make up 13% of the total population of NRW, made proportionally more use of the online consultation than people in urban regions.

All results of the consultation as well as the citizens' dialogue have been incorporated into the digital platform of the Conference on the Future of Europe. As a member of the plenary assembly, State Secretary Dr. Speich carried the results as voices from NRW into the discussions of the Conference. Taking into account the results of other citizens' dialogues from across the EU, conclusions with guidelines for the future of Europe were drawn up in the form of 49 detailed pan-European proposals.

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### PART 3: EXPERIENCE SUMMARY

*A summary of the experience: origin, objectives, operation, results, monitoring and evaluation (Do not hesitate to repeat aspects that have already been written before, this summary is the one that will be shared on the digital platform for open evaluation and in the publication of the award). (In a **maximum of 500 words**)*

As the Conference on the Future of Europe stated in its final report, the active involvement of citizens is elementary for a citizen-centred Europe that adequately represents their concerns, interests, wishes and hopes. Citizens want a visible and easily accessible Europe in which they can actively participate.

But in order to adequately address citizens' concerns, the European institutions must first be aware of them. Thus, a method for representative and meaningful citizen participation is needed.

A particular challenge in citizen participation is that traditional methods often do not reach the entire population. Traditionally conducted consultations of citizens in public areas have been proven to reach older generations in particular. As a result, consultation results disproportionately show the concerns of older generations, while the concerns of younger generations are not visible and consequently do not receive the necessary attention in EU policy.

The new concept of an online consultation, developed in cooperation with Make.org, helps to obtain results that are representative for all generations and thus for the entire population. The innovative online consultation enables citizens to voice their concerns at any time from any location and thus standardises the participation opportunities for all citizens. For example, participation is not restricted to the limited time windows during which participation formats are conducted in pedestrian areas. Even the place of residence no longer plays a role in participation opportunities. Every citizen has the same opportunity to access the participation process, regardless of whether they live in the centre of a large city or in a more rural area, where participation formats are conducted less frequently.

The newly designed online consultation proved to be particularly successful in several aspects.

First, the communication campaigns for the online consultation reached an above-average number of people, namely a total of 815,000. With this wide reach, it set the first step for a representative result.

In addition, the participation rate was also much higher than expected, with a total of 28,000 participants. Participants took part in 202,224 votes and made 508 suggestions for the future of Europe. The disproportionately high participation of young citizens was particularly pleasing.

The consultation model involved participants sharing their ideas and concerns about the future of Europe on relevant topics such as climate change and the environment, the

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economy, social justice, migration, education and democracy in Europe. The results were then published in a report and visually accompanied by graphics and quotes from the citizens. In particular, the topics on which there was great agreement as well as the most controversial topics were highlighted.

This online consultation thus contributes on several levels to the realisation of the goals set by the Conference on the Future of Europe. First of all, it makes Europe more visible in the regions and encourages citizens to actively participate in politics. Secondly, it represents an innovative online participation method that reaches younger citizens and, in combination with traditional participation methods, ensures that the views of the entire population are properly reflected in EU policies.

***We invite you to share annexes that allow you to better illustrate your experience: videos, photographs, documents... They can be sent through a heavy document delivery system such as WeTransfer, Dropbox or Google Drive***

<p><b>How have we communicated? (In English) :</b>  <a href="https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1a_wvu7oVedX2PU97Wreq8yJEDBrLygMdz5osf9yBQU/edit#slide=id.g120a8c77f89_0_147">https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1a_wvu7oVedX2PU97Wreq8yJEDBrLygMdz5osf9yBQU/edit#slide=id.g120a8c77f89_0_147</a></p>	<p>→ <b>Consultation results report (in German):</b>  <a href="https://assets.make.org/consultations/make_org_nrw_europa_endbericht_de_20211125.pdf">https://assets.make.org/consultations/make_org_nrw_europa_endbericht_de_20211125.pdf</a></p> <p>→ <b>Report of the civil dialogue (ifok)</b>  <a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HHf-REIZ5wHK9S7G5DEQDrtNjlvv6MbE/view?usp=sharing">https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HHf-REIZ5wHK9S7G5DEQDrtNjlvv6MbE/view?usp=sharing</a></p>
<p>→ <b>Video of the Citizen Dialogue (in German) :</b>  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3GzseBu2UM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3GzseBu2UM</a></p>	<p>-&gt; <b>Video of the former Minister of European Affairs -Dr. Stephan Holthoff-Pförtner (in German):</b>  <a href="https://youtu.be/xeVGdME2bvQ">https://youtu.be/xeVGdME2bvQ</a></p>
<p>→ <b>Europe Direct Kreis Gütersloh</b>  <a href="https://soundcloud.com/europedirectguetersloh/europa-braucht-deine-idee-gesprach-uber-die-zukunft-europas?si=c57e081f2b064dd1b90b8e77dbe10053">https://soundcloud.com/europedirectguetersloh/europa-braucht-deine-idee-gesprach-uber-die-zukunft-europas?si=c57e081f2b064dd1b90b8e77dbe10053</a></p>	