



**PHOENIX**

The Rise of Citizens Voices  
for a Greener Europe



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101037328

## How can citizens drive the climate transition?

**The European research project PHOENIX invests in new forms of public participation to address environmental issues.**

- The climate crisis requires urgent measures that, in order to be successful, should be discussed and co-created with citizens.
- PHOENIX is an **EU Horizon 2020** research project aimed at improving people's participation in the decision-making process on environmental issues;
- PHOENIX will build a portfolio of participatory and deliberative methodologies and test them in **11 European pilots**;
- PHOENIX started in February 2022 and brings together experts, scholars, practitioners, and civil society organizations from **15 partners based in 10 European countries**.

*Measures adopted to tackle climate change and accelerate the green transition will have a major impact on people's lives. In light of growing public disillusionment with traditional institutions, the involvement of citizens in the co-creation and development of environmental policies becomes crucial.*

*A European research project rethinks citizen participation in decision-making and engages people in building a more democratic, just and green future.*

Climate change is no longer just a threat, but a reality the whole planet must deal with. Higher average temperatures, longer-lasting droughts, more intensive wildfires and stronger storms are among the effects of the greenhouse gas emissions the world is already experiencing. **The European Union is at the forefront of tackling the climate crisis**, putting in place a series of measures with the aim of reducing emissions by 55% by 2030 and achieving full climate neutrality by 2050. Known as the **European Green Deal (EGD)**, the EU's strategy to achieve these goals contains a package of actions that will improve the well-being and health of citizens and future generations.

Still, the colossal transformation involving the economy, industry and society will deeply impact **people's lives and habits**. As the European Green Deal will bring substantial changes, citizens, depending on their social and geographic circumstances, will be affected in different ways. The shift from fossil fuels to cleaner power sources raises questions about how the world of work will change, who can access the new jobs, what skills will be required



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and how workers, especially low-skilled ones, will be trained to fit the new professions. Such high stakes entail that **communities and citizens deserve to be involved.**

This is particularly true considering the other challenge our democracies are facing. Citizens around the globe no longer feel represented by **traditional top-down power dynamics**, putting democratic structures more and more under pressure. Against this backdrop, public participation and confidence in the transition are paramount if policies are to work and be accepted. **This is the premise PHOENIX is based on.**

Acronym for 'Participation in HOlistic ENvironmental/Ecological Innovations', PHOENIX is an **EU Horizon 2020 research project** aimed at studying and improving participatory and deliberative practices to address environmental issues. The project brings together **15 European partners**, encompassing experts, scholars, practitioners, and civil society organizations with strong expertise in implementing deliberative and participatory processes.

The project's declared objective is to increase the potential of the so-called **Democratic Innovations (DIs)** – i.e., innovative practices meant to improve and deepen citizen participation in decision-making – in order to address specific topics of the European Green Deal. Among these: circular economy, farm-to-fork, energy transition, and healthy soil and biodiversity.

The **preliminary research phase** – which will provide both an analysis of best practices of DIs and data-driven insights into the relationship between society and nature and into the impact of the EGD in specific contexts – will soon move to its practical application. The research will indeed offer the basis to implement a portfolio of enriched participatory methodologies – called the '**Phoenix Tangram**' – able to respond to different territories' characteristics and challenges. Lastly, the project aims at testing these methodologies in **11 pilots** placed in 7 European countries, at local, regional and national scales.

According to PHOENIX, the **benefits of public participation** to address environmental issues are countless. By involving citizens in the decision-making process, local and national governments can shape **more legitimate policies**, improve public bodies' reputations and accountability, get new insights and improve confidence in the transition. On the other hand, citizens' involvement can **help vulnerable groups** and communities to be more included in decision-making and improve people's willingness to change their habits and behaviour. Last but not least, if citizens and decision-makers start co-creating policies, the **mutual trust** between them will increase, strengthening the quality of our democracies.



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If it is true that public participation can play an important role in achieving climate neutrality, at the end of its 3.5 years of work, PHOENIX will show how to engage in a more meaningful, democratic dialogue in order to build a **stronger, healthier and greener Europe**.

“The process of ecological transition should not be vertical, but horizontal and inclusive, collaborative and participative, to produce positive effects on the behalf of the most socially vulnerable groups”

**Giovanni Allegretti, Project Coordinator (CES)**

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## PROJECT DETAILS

**Project title:** Participation in HOlistic ENvironmental/Ecological Innovations

**Start date:** 1 February 2022

**End date:** 31 July 2025

**Duration:** 42 months

**EU Contribution:** 4,975,448 €

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**PROJECT WEBSITE**

<https://phoenix-horizon.eu/>

**SOCIAL MEDIA**



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