EUARENAS

CITIES AS ARENAS OF POLITICAL INNOVATION IN THE STRENGTHENING OF DELIBERATIVE AND PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

SOCIAL MEDIA & FORESIGHT TOOLKIT

NOVEMBER 2022

EUARENAS investigates the ways in which social movements coupled with local government reform initiatives, manifesting themselves in local-level experiments, create momentum for political change that include more inclusive and participatory forms of governance.

For more information:

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About the document:

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Table of contents

1. ABOUT

1. About

Foresight - or future thinking - provides scope for people to think about the future and use this to model and respond to potential prospective circumstances. In an ever-changing world, it asks us to think about our future, what challenges are on the horizon, and how we can address them to achieve shared outcomes. Foresight provides participatory methods that supports people and organisations – from citizens to policy makers – to gather intelligence that can support the building of medium-to-long-term scenarios about the future and develop plans for how these can be created.

It is important to see this future thinking work not as 'prophecy' or 'predication', but as a systematic and action-driven way in which we can create and shape the future of our worlds (see Competence Centre on Foresight, EU Commission and ForLearn Online Foresight Guide). Foresight is not about predicting a singular, correct version of our future (OECD, 2019) but instead embodies epistemological pluralism in action as it supports the creation of visions for the future (Inayatullah, 2010). It provides policy-makers in particular with the skills and tools to work with uncertainty and develop robust policies that respond to possible futures (see Figure 3) and support long-term development (UK Government Office for Science, 2022).

Figure 1: Cone of Uncertainty, UK Government Office for Science (2022)
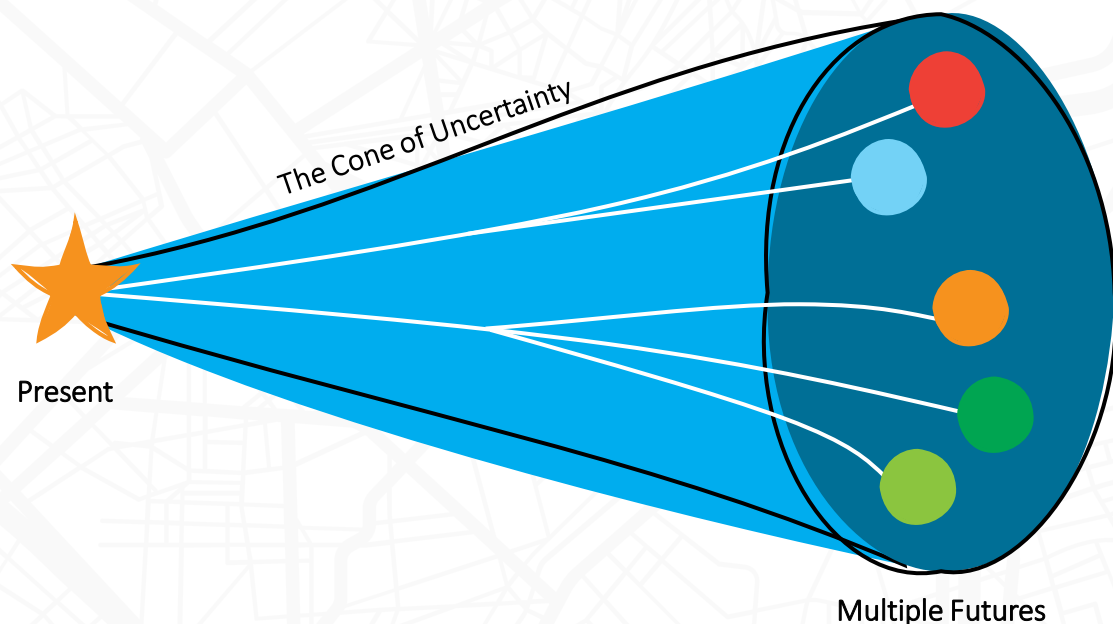
In a world of increasing uncertainty and complexity, set against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, foresight and future thinking techniques can act as a key tool in the innovation of policy development, bringing citizens and decision-makers together to define solutions about our shared futures (Fox, 2020).

EUARENAS is in response to a major European challenge: the need to strengthen legitimacy, identification and engagement within the democratic public sphere. Foresight and approaches to future thinking can support this aim by nurturing active citizenship and be a part of defining social agendas as well as the shaping of political life. In this sense, it is both a tool for understanding democratic innovations as they emerge and for engaging citizens and other actors in such innovations within the participatory and deliberative realms. As a starting point for such work, we must look at source material in the present in order to identify insights or signals as to what the future could hold, and also, what it could be. This is where social media signals from accounts connected to the social movement arena come into play.

1.1. Social media and social movements – a window into the future?

Social media provides a window into current debates, social issues and topics pertinent to communities. Whilst the presentation of such content is not necessarily a reflection of society, and like traditional media

representations is more of a refracted view on current trends rather than a mirror image, it is still a valuable source material for understanding society. Social media accounts, particularly those associated with civil society and social movements can provide us with signs of what issues and debates are pertinent to people (as opposed to institutions) and simultaneously offer a glimpse of emerging trends in the social sphere. Such content can be useful for hypothesising over the future of our world.

As Kayser and Bierwisch (2016) outlined, social media can provide rich source material for foresight work, and it has the added value of increasing the number of actors' perspectives which can be brought into future-thinking activities. This guide supports the combining of signals from social media with future-thinking activities. It adopts aspects of the Delphi method that enables experts from across policy, practice and research to contribute their knowledge and experiences into the research activities and use social media content from the present day as stimuli for identifying the future trajectory of society. Delphi is a research technique that uses the survey format as a means of collecting data from experts within their area of expertise (Chuenjitwongsa, 2017). The approach enables researchers to handle "divergent opinions" with the aim of achieving "consensus concerning real-world knowledge on a certain topic" (ibid). The method adopts an iterative process in which "various rounds of questions [are asked] to a selected group of experts on a particular subject" and the responses in each round are to formulate the questions in the subsequent round (Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition, 2021: 2). This iterative process allows for the identification of "agreement and disagreements among participants" (ibid).

Whilst the purpose of this toolkit is not necessarily geared towards consensus over future visions of our world due to foresight being rooted in plurality rather than singularity of vision, the Delphi method's ability to identify areas of debate or contestation between experts and the ability to apply the tool remotely in a distributed dialogue-esque manner, makes it an apt choice for this work. The toolkit also incorporate practices associated with policy stress testing, a foresight practice that enables the testing of "strategic objectives against a set of scenarios to see how well they stand up against a range of external conditions" (UK Government Office for Science, 2017:12). Such approaches can be applied to different policy arenas and legislation areas, as demonstrated in Fernandes and Heflich's (2022) recent work in this domain. Furthermore, as Peter McGowran's (2021) mapping of future-thinking techniques onto the ROAMEF Policy Cycle (HM Treasury, 2020) (see Figure 2) demonstrates, foresight is a tool that is apt for every stage of the policy development journey - from creating a rationale for a policy and identifying policy need, to evaluating the policy and appraising whether or not it is fit for purpose for future challenges.

Figure 2: McGowran's (2021) The Futures x Policy Cycle
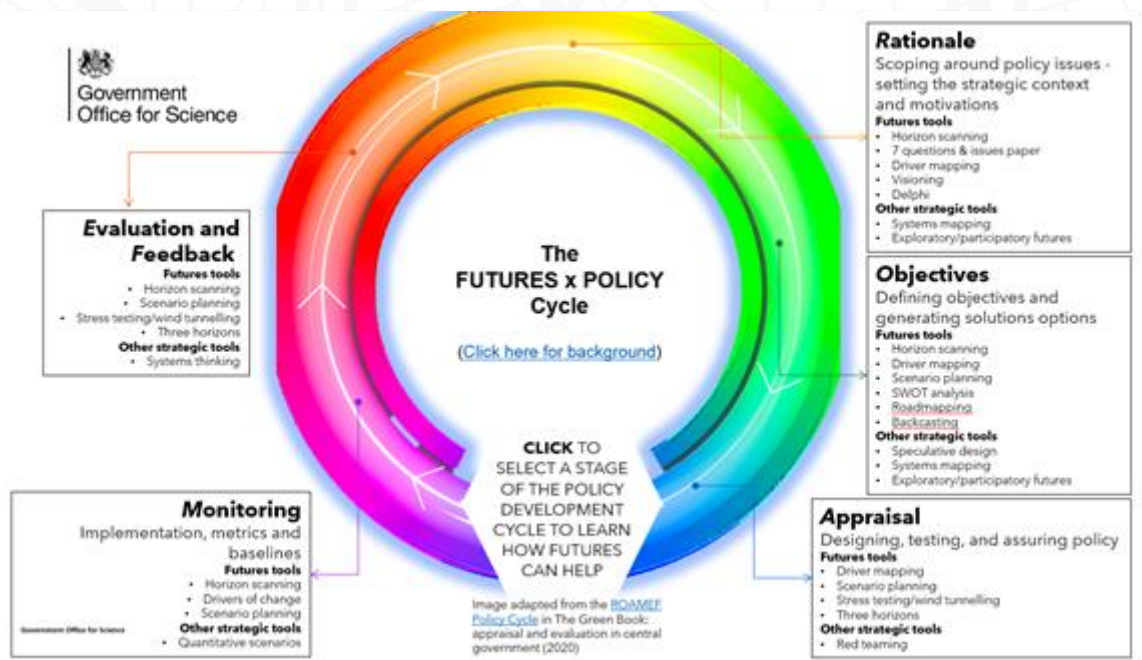
1.2. About the toolkit

Social media provides rich, qualitative socio-cultural information. Posts on the vast array of platforms that now exist offer us the chance to explore the world from different people's, groups' and organisations' perspectives, offering bitesize clips of everyday experiences, opinions, thought-leadership and emerging trends. This toolkit aims to support researchers and practitioners alike to use social media posts combined with elements of the Delphi method and policy stress testing approaches to explore future trends in society and the policy environments needed for potential future scenarios. The toolkit is underpinned by theoretical and conceptual framings of foresight practices. However, they are presented in a manner than enables them to be practically applied and implemented as a means of engaging experts from across policy, practice and research in conversations about the future. They were initially devised to examine the topic of area of 'the future of democracy', however, they can easily be adapted to supporting future-thinking activities on a range of topics, using social media as the core source material.

The guidelines will enable users to:

1. Identify signals in social media posts from social movements and connected arenas about the future

2. Involve a panel of experts from policy, research and practice in the co-analysis of the social media posts and identification of future trends

3. Create potential future scenarios and stress test existing policy in-line with these scenarios

Included within the guidelines are step-by-step instructions that outline how the research tasks can be implemented, alongside templates and tips.

1.3. Overarching approach

There isn't an overall approach to foresight and techniques for future thinking are varied. As Figure 3 shows), we have combined different varied understandings of and models for future thinking into the EUARENAS approach to foresight (see Nesta, n.d.; Shallowe et al, 2020; Makridakis, 2004; OECD, 2019; UK Government Office for Science, 2017).

Figure 3: EUARENAS Foresight Approach
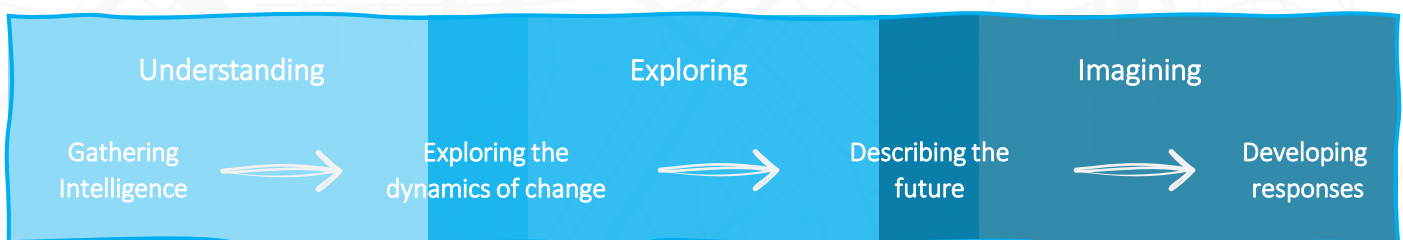
This toolkit support work predominantly in the 'Understanding' and 'Exploring' phases, but through the policy stress testing element it enters into the 'Imaging' phase. They present how emerging trends on social media can be utilised to engage experts from different domains (i.e., policy, practice, research) to think about the future of a range of topic areas. Underpinning this toolkit, is a blended approach. As indicated in Figure 4, it combines practices associated with foresight, and methods from traditional and participatory research.

Specifically, it incorporates:

• Desk-based research: Another term for secondary research – i.e. examining existing materials and publications.

• Data analysis: An umbrella term for examining, ordering and presenting data so that it displays key insights and ideas.

- Textual analysis: This is a research method used for analysing visual, written and audio cues within texts (i.e., social media posts).

- Collective Sense-Making: This is a participatory approach to working with a group of people to ascertain different perspectives on data and topics in order to construct meaning, underpinned by the notion of collective intelligence (Lévy, 1997).

- Delphi method: A series of questionnaires completed by experts in a particular arena/topic area that provides scope for identifying future developments within that specific field.

- Policy stress testing: An approach to testing policy objectives against future scenarios.

Figure 4: Blended approach to social media foresight guide
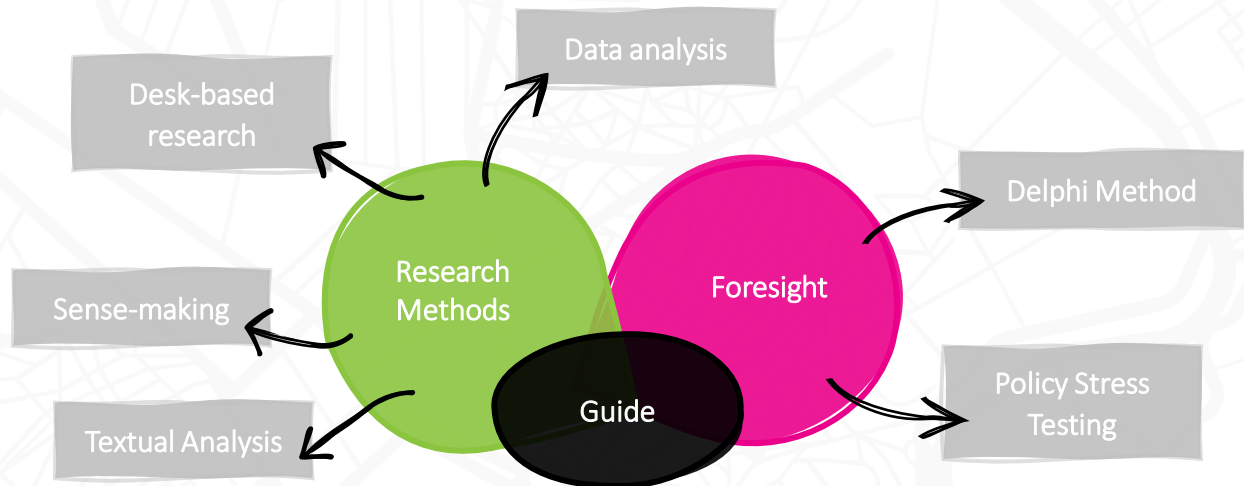
2. SOCIAL MEDIA FORESIGHT GUIDELINES

2. The Toolkit

2.1. Step-by-step instructions

Step One: Recruiting experts and selecting social media sources

To conduct these research activities, you will need to recruit a set of experts in the field of democracy from the policy, practice and research arenas. You should aim to have at least 6 experts involved. You will also need to select at least 5 social media accounts to use in the study. You should use the 'Identifying social media content and experts: Task Sheet' and 'Recruitment email to experts: Template' to help you to recruit your experts and identify your social media source material. You'll also need the 'Consent Form'.

Step Two: Setting up and using your Padlet board

Once you have recruited your experts and identified the social media accounts you'll be utilising in this research, you will then need to set-up a Padlet board and populate it with at least 50 social media posts from your selected accounts. These posts should be from the last 6 months. You will then need to give access to the Padlet board to your group of experts and set them the task of commenting on its content. Use the 'Gathering social media signals: Instructions' and 'Reviewing social media posts: Instructions' to help you.

Step Three: Setting up and sending questionnaires to your experts

When you experts have commented on the Padlet board, you should use this to create questionnaire 1 and send it to you experts. You should use the results of this questionnaire to create questionnaire 2. Again, this should be sent to your experts. When you have the results of questionnaire 2 you should develop some scenarios for inclusion in questionnaire 3 that is aimed at policy stress testing. When you have developed questionnaire 3, send it to your experts to complete. Use 'Creating questionnaires: Instructions' to help you to do this.

Step Four: Synthesising and presenting learning

With the findings from the Padlet comments and series of questionnaires, you are now ready to complete the 'Social Media Signals Report Template'. This template enables you to synthesise the key findings from each stage of the research process. We would recommend that you complete this report template in-line with each research activity to help you to develop your questionnaires. If you would like to share the insights form the process in a more public way, we have created a 'Foresight briefing template' that will help you to communicate the learning in a concise manner.

2.2. Guidelines, worksheets and example documents

Identifying social media content and experts: Task Sheet

Social Media Content

Use the table below to identify five social movement/activist social media accounts you will use in these research activities.

These social movements/activist examples should be from your local, regional and/or national context. You should ONLY select group, collective and/or organisations' social media accounts - NOT individual people's accounts.

Social movement	Social media platforms included in research	Description of social movement / activist group	Justification for inclusion in research activities
Camerados	Twitter	Camerados is a movement of people who want us all to look out for each other and be more human in how we interact with others.	• Operates outside of current 'formal' democratic structures • Not a traditional 'issue-based' movement • Centred around a set of core principles • Various ways of involving/activating people

Experts

Use the table below to identify 15 experts in democracy, citizen participation and/or deliberative processes (and related arenas) from across policy, practice and research who you will initially invite to take part in these research activities. These experts should be from your local, regional and/or national context. The aim is to have between 6 - 10 experts involved.

You should involve AT LEAST ONE expert who is a representative of the policy arena (e.g. a policymaker, politician etc.).

Name	Organisation	Policy / Practice / Research	Description of expert (i.e., 1 - 2 sentences)
Dr. Hayley Trowbridge	People's Voice Media	Practice & Research	Hayley is the strategic lead of a civil society organisation that specialises in working with citizens and their stories to influence policy, practice and research.

Name	Organisation	Policy / Practice / Research	Description of expert (i.e., 1 - 2 sentences)

Recruitment email to experts: Template

Dear <INSERT NAME OF EXPERT>,

I am <INSERT YOUR NAME>, and I am a researcher on <INSERT YOUR PROJECT'S NAME> - a project that is examining participatory and deliberative democracy across Europe - and I work for <INSERT ORGANISATION>.

We are currently conducting research into <INSERT TOPIC AREA> and as part of this work on a national level here in <INSERT YOUR COUNTRY> we are recruiting a group of 'experts' from across policy, research and practice to be part of the research process. We though that you and your expertise in <INSERT WHY YOU HAVE SELECTED THEM>, would be really beneficial to our project - hence this email.

What are the research activities?

The research activities we would like you to take part in are:

1. <u>Social media posts</u> - Reviewing a selection of social media and commenting on what we learn <INSERT TOPIC AREA> from the post. Our research team will collate the social media posts and create a platform for you to comment on them. This sense-making activity will help us to have yours and other experts' perspectives on the raw data we are using.

2. <u>Questionnaire 1</u> - You will be asked to complete 'Questionnaire 1' which will be questions based on the results of Task 1/the social media posts. These questions will be a mixture of open and closed questions.

3. <u>Questionnaire 2</u> - You will be asked to complete 'Questionnaire 2' which will be questions based on the results of Task 2/Questionnaire 1. These questions will be a mixture of open and closed questions.

4. <u>Questionnaire 3</u> - You will be asked to complete 'Questionnaire 3' which will be questions based on the results of Task 3/Questionnaire 2. These questions will be designed to 'stress test' existing policy in accordance to future scenarios that have emerged in the previous tasks.

These activities are designed using a mixed methodological framework that draws on notions of collective intelligence and sense-making, Delphi surveys and policy stress-testing etc.

How much time would I need to commit and when?

All of the activities would take place remotely, and although you'd need to complete specific actions/activities within set timeframes - the day and time you do them is completely up to you.

The following are the timeframes we are working to:

- Task 1: Reviewing a selection of social media posts - This activity can take place any time between <INSERT DATES> and we anticipate you spending a minimum of 0.5 days of your time on this.

- Task 2: Questionnaire 1 - This activity can take place any time between <INSERT DATES> and we anticipate you spending a minimum of 0.25 days of your time on this.

- Task 3: Questionnaire 2 - This activity can take place any time between <INSERT DATES> and we anticipate you spending a minimum of 0.25 days of your time on this.

- Task 4: Questionnaire 3 - This activity can take place any time between <INSERT DATES> and we anticipate you spending a minimum of 0.25 days of your time on this.

We estimate that this will be the equivalent of 1 - 2 days overall (although you are welcome to spend more time on the activities if you wish) and easy-to-follow instructions will be sent to you for each of the above tasks in due course.

What do I get out of this?

At the end of the process, we will prepare a short internal report that we will share with you. This will be ready by <INSERT DATE>. We also may produce a public insight briefing that will be released in <INSERT DATE>. If you wish, you can be named as a contributor in this public briefing. The findings from this work, will also <INSERT HOW THE RESULTS WILL BE USED>.

We hope through these activities that you also learn and have the chance to explore perspectives on <INSERT TOPIC AREA> that could be valuable for <INSERT EXPERTS FIELD OF WORK>.

<INSERT ANY DETAILS OF EXPENSES/REIMBURSEMENT/INCENTIVE YOU ARE OFFERING>.

What's next?

We are looking for confirmation of experts who are interested in being involved by <INSERT DEADLINE>, so if you are happy to participate then please let me know via email and complete the attached consent form <REMEMBER TO ATTACH A CONSENT FORM>.

If you'd like to discuss this further, then I am happy to arrange a meeting in order to help you make a decision over your involvement.

Best wishes,

<INSERT YOUR NAME>

Gathering social media signals: Instructions

Once you have identified the 5 social movement/activist social media accounts you will use in these research activities, you need to collate at least 50 social media posts from across these accounts. The step-by-step instructions below will walk you through this.

1. Setting up a Padlet

We have opted to use Padlet (https://Padlet.com/) as the common platform that all research teams will use to collate the social media content and ask their experts to use to comment on the content. Here is a video introduction to Padlet: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLdZJAc3bGQ

To set-up a Padlet, you need to:

a. Create an account on Padlet. You can opt for a 'free' account for the purposes of these research activities. You can do this here: https://Padlet.com/auth/signup

b. Once you are logged in, you will be able to create a Padlet by clicking on the pink 'Make a Padlet' button on your dashboard. Select either the 'wall' or 'grid' option.

c. In 'settings' give your Padlet a title that is apt to your study.

d. Then add a description about your Padlet. This should explain about your research study and what the Padlet is being used for.

e. You should add an icon to your Padlet. This could be your project logo or an appropriate image.

f. Now, go to 'Wallpaper' and select 'solid colour'. Select 'white'.

g. On 'Attribution' disable 'display author name above each post'.

h. On 'Comments' enable 'allow viewers to comment on posts'.

i. On 'Reactions' enable 'likes' (i.e., the heart shape icon).

Padlet has produce a set of instructions about creating Padlets that may be useful for you. You can access them here: https://Padlet.help/l/en/get-started/how-do-i-create-a-Padlet

2. Populating the Padlet

Now that you have your Padlet set-up, it is time to populate it with 50+ social media posts from your selected social media accounts. The social media post you select should be related to your topic area and research project.

To do this you need to:

a. Click on the pink 'plus sign' button at the bottom of the Padlet.

b. Give your post a relevant title/subject matter - e.g., Name of social movement, topic of social media post

c. To add the social media content, you can either take a screengrab of the social media post and add it as an image (use the camera icon) or put a direct link to the social media post (use the link icon)

d. Once the social media content is added, click 'publish'.

Padlet has produce a set of instructions about creating new posts that may be useful for you. You can access them here: https://Padlet.help/l/en/get-started/how-to-add-a-post-to-a-Padlet

You can see an example Padlet set-up using these settings, with one post on it here: https://Padlet.com/hayley184/iz2ezxam8sflpd16

3. Sharing the Padlet

You are now ready to share your Padlet. To share it with your experts you need to:

a. At the top right-hand corner of the Padlet you will see a 'share' button. Click on this.

b. Go to your privacy settings and ensure they are set to 'secret', that visitors can write on the Padlet and that visitors DO NOT need to be logged in.

c. Then go 'back' and click 'copy link to clipboard'. You will then be able to paste this link into your instructions to your experts - there is guidance on this in the next part of these guidelines.

Padlet has produce a set of instructions about 'sharing' that may be useful for you. You can access them here: https://Padlet.help/I/en/get-started/how-to-share-or-publish-a-Padlet

Reviewing social media posts: Instructions

The core purpose of these research activities is to use the social media posts and the experts' perspectives to identify signals about the future of your chosen topic area. The first step in this process is to engage the experts in commenting on the social media posts you have selected.

You need to ask your group of experts to review and comment on the social media posts you have collated on the Padlet. To do this, you should send the following instructions to the experts and we recommend giving the experts AT LEAST two weeks to do this task.

Hello <INSERT EXPERT NAME>,

We are now ready to start the first part of the research activities in which we are going to ask you to review and comment on some social media posts.

What you need to do:

1. Click on this link to access a 'Padlet' where we have collated the social media posts for you to review: <INSERT PADLET LINK>

2. Read through the different social media posts on the 'Padlet'.

3. Use the 'like' button (the heart icon) to indicate which posts you feel <u>are most pertinent</u> to the <INSERT TOPIC AREA>. This could be the posts that identify a key issue, vision, direction etc. for the future.

4. Use the comment function (i.e., type where it says 'add comment' underneath the social media posts on the Padlet) - see attached screenshot) <REMEMBER TO ATTACH SCREENSHOT> to add your thoughts to around 15 - 20 of the social media posts on the Padlet. When commenting, use your expertise and perspectives to **identify any signals in the social media posts about the future of** <INSERT TOPIC AREA> and reflect on:

    i. is this part of a wider trend or theme you are seeing emerging in the arena of **<INSERT TOPIC AREA>**?

    ii. do you see anything innovative about **<INSERT TOPIC AREA>** in the post?

    iii. does this social media post relate to or contradict any of the other social media posts on the Padlet - if so, how and what is your understanding of this relationship/conflict?

    iv. does this indicate a positive, neutral or negative future for **<INSERT TOPIC AREA>** - and why?

    v. any other reflections relating to the future of **<INSERT TOPIC AREA>** that the social media post stimulates.

You should keep each individual comment concise but with enough detail to contribute meaningfully to the discussion. We imagine most comments will be between 2 - 4 sentences in length.

5. Email <INSERT EMAIL ADDRESS> when you have finished commenting on the 'Padlet'.

We would like you to spend 0.5 days on this activity and complete it by <INSERT DEADLINE>. We will then use the results of this to inform 'Questionnaire 1', which we will send to you shortly after this first task has been completed.

If you need any technical (or other) assistance, please contact <INSERT CONTACT DETAILS>.

Best wishes,

<INSERT YOUR NAME>

Creating questionnaires: Instructions

The Delphi method is useful for involving experts in thinking about the future and developing ideas around a particular issue or topic. It involves using a series of questionnaires in which each questionnaire is developed based on the responses of the previous one. You can find a description of this approach here: https://www.involve.org.uk/resources/methods/delphi-survey The following instructions are informed by aspects akin to Delphi Surveys, with questionnaire 3 embedding elements of policy stress testing into it.

Questionnaire 1

1. **Choose your questionnaire platform.** Both questionnaires will need to be done digitally. We recommend using a tool such as Google Forms to conduct it. However, you can use whichever tool/platform you are most comfortable with to conduct the research. Please use the same platform for both questionnaires to aid engagement of the experts.

   Top Tip: Here is a handy guide to using Google Forms.

2. **Review the comments and likes on the Padlet.** Look over the comments and:

    a. identify the top five 'liked' social media posts

    b. list the key signals about the future of democracy identified in the comments

    c. list any key topics/areas of debate or areas of contention from the comments

3. **Set-up questionnaire 1.** Use the above review to develop a questionnaire for your experts. The questionnaire should contain the following questions (or similar variations of to make it relevant to the results of the Padlet):

   Top Tip:
   If there is not a clear 'top five' then you can use another number (e.g. here are the top three social media posts).

    1. What is your name?

    2. Our group of experts voted these five social media posts <INSERT LINKS> as the most pertinent from the dataset to the future <INSERT TOPIC AREA> - why do you think this is?

    3. From the comments on the individual social media posts, here are a list of 'signals' identified by the group of experts about the future of <INSERT TOPIC AREA>. From your perspective, please rate them in terms of 'importance' to the future of democracy. With 0 being least important and <INSERT HIGHEST NUMBER> being most important.

   Top Tip: To create 'ranking' style questions in Google Forms, see this handy guide.

    4. Can you explain why you have chosen to order the signals in this way (e.g., why do you think those signals are most and least important to the future of <INSERT TOPIC AREA>?)?. Contributions here should be about 2 - 5 sentences in length.

5. From the comments on the individual social media posts, here are a list of 'signals' identified by the group of experts about the future of <INSERT TOPIC AREA>. From your perspective, please identify which of these signals link to a 'positive' or 'preferred' vision of the future and explain why you think this? Contributions here should be about 2 - 5 sentences in length.

6. From the comments on the individual social media posts, here are a list of 'signals' identified by the group of experts about the future of <INSERT TOPIC AREA>. From your perspective, please identify which of these signals link to 'negative' or 'not preferred' visions of the future and explain why you think this? Contributions here should be about 2 - 5 sentences in length.

7. The key topic areas/debates identified through the comments on the individual social media posts are <INSERT KEY TOPICS/DEBATE AREAS>. What are your thoughts on how topics/debates could impact POSITIVELY on the future of <INSERT TOPIC AREA> and why do you think this? Contributions here should be about 2 - 5 sentences in length.

8. The key topic areas/debates identified through the comments on the individual social media posts are <INSERT KEY TOPICS/DEBATE AREAS>. What are your thoughts on how topics/debates could impact NEGATIVELY on the future of <INSERT TOPIC AREA> and why do you think this? Contributions here should be about 2 - 5 sentences in length.

9. Please look back over the Padlet and comments briefly, is there any on there that has surprise you or challenged your own thinking - if so, what and why? Contributions here should be about 2 - 5 sentences in length.

Remember, you can choose to ADD MORE QUESTIONS if you feel they are relevant based on the comments/interactions with the Padlet. You can use both open and closed questions as you see appropriate.

4. **Test the questionnaire.** Ask someone in your team to test that the questionnaire works and make any necessary amendments.

5. **Send the questionnaire to experts.** Email your experts with the link to the questionnaire - remember to be clear about the deadline for their contributions and the purpose of the questionnaire. Template copy is provided below. We advise giving experts at least 2 weeks to complete it.

6. **Collate results.** Use the questionnaire/survey platform to collate the responses from the experts.

Email to experts' template copy (questionnaire 1):

Dear <INSERT NAME>,

Thank you for your contributions to the Padlet board. Based on yours and other experts' contributions we have developed a questionnaire for you to complete.

We have used <INSERT PLATFORM> to write the questionnaire and you can access it here: <INSERT LINK TO QUESTIONNAIRE>

We anticipate the questionnaire taking between 1 - 2 hours to complete and we need responses back by <INSERT DEADLINE>.

If you need any technical (or other) assistance, please contact <INSERT CONTACT DETAILS>.

Best wishes,

<INSERT YOUR NAME>

Questionnaire 2

1. **Review the results of questionnaire 1.** Look over the results of questionnaire 1 and:

    a. List the signals in order of importance (least to most) based on the individual orderings by the experts.

    b. List the signals identified by the experts linking to positive/preferred visions of the future.

    c. List the signals identified by the experts linking to negative/non-preferred visions of the future.

    d. Identify the key ideas that could impact positively on the future of your topic area.

    e. Identify the key ideas that could impact negatively on the future of your topic area.

    f. Identify anything that has surprised or challenged the experts from the Padlet board/result so far.

2. **Set-up questionnaire 2.** Use the above review to develop a questionnaire for your experts. The questionnaire should contain the following questions (or similar variations of to make it relevant to the results of questionnaire 1):

    1. What is your name?

    2. In questionnaire 1, the experts ordered the signals from the social media posts in order of importance as follows <INSERT SIGNALS IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE>, what are your reflections on this? Contributions here should be about 3 - 7 sentences in length.

    3. In questionnaire 1, the experts identified the following in relations to positive/preferred visions of the future <INSERT FINDINGS>. What current policies, research and/or practice supports these visions and what would need to change to achieve them? Contributions here should be about 3 - 7 sentences in length.

        > Top Tip: If there isn't a consensus in terms of 'order of importance', then state that there wasn't a consensus and ask the experts to comment on why they think that is the case.

    4. In questionnaire 1, the experts identified the following in relations to negative/non-preferred visions of the future <INSERT FINDINGS>. What would need to change in terms of policies, research and/or practice to avoid these visions? Contributions here should be about 3 - 7 sentences in length.

    5. The list below are statements about what can POSITIVELY impact on the future of <INSERT TOPIC AREA>, rate them based on how much you agree or disagree with them. <INSERT LIST OF STATEMENTS GENERATE FROM QUESTIONNAIRE 1 REPONSES, OPTIONS FOR AGREEMENT SHOULD BE STRONGLY AGREE, AGREE, NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE, DISAGREE, STRONGLY DISAGREE>

    6. The list below are statements about what can NEGATIVELY impact on the future of <INSERT TOPIC AREA>, rate them based on how much you agree or disagree with them. <INSERT LIST OF STATEMENTS GENERATE FROM QUESTIONNAIRE 1 REPONSES, OPTIONS FOR AGREEMENT SHOULD BE STRONGLY AGREE, AGREE, NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE, DISAGREE, STRONGLY DISAGREE>

7. You can use the space below to write any reflections or comments that you have on the positive and negative impacts and influences on the future of <INSERT TOPIC AREA>.

Remember, you can choose to ADD MORE QUESTIONS if you feel they are relevant based on the input from questionnaire 1. You can use both open and closed questions as you see appropriate.

3. **Test the questionnaire.** Ask someone in your team to test that the questionnaire works and make any necessary amendments.

4. **Send the questionnaire to experts.** Email your experts with the link to the questionnaire - remember to be clear about the deadline for their contributions and the purpose of the questionnaire. Template copy is provided below. We advise giving experts at least two weeks to complete it.

5. **Collate results.** Use the questionnaire/survey platform to collate the responses from the experts.

Email to experts' template copy (questionnaire 2):

Dear <INSERT NAME>,

Thank you for your contributions to questionnaire 1. Based on yours and other experts' responses we have developed a second questionnaire for you to complete.

We have used <INSERT PLATFORM> to write the questionnaire and you can access it here: <INSERT LINK TO QUESTIONNAIRE>

We anticipate the questionnaire taking between 1 - 2 hours to complete and we need responses back by <INSERT DEADLINE>.

If you need any technical (or other) assistance, please contact <INSERT CONTACT DETAILS>.

Best wishes,

<INSERT YOUR NAME>

Questionnaire 3

1. **Review the results of questionnaire 2.** Look over the results of questionnaire 2 and:

   a. **Develop 3 – 5 scenarios for the future of democracy across Europe based on the above results from questionnaire 2.** You may also want to include ideas from questionnaire 1 too. The scenarios should be:

      i. Length – No more than ½ page of A4

      ii. Focus on preferred futures – i.e. The scenarios should be positive even if they are addressing negative issues (i.e., if an issue is lack of inclusion of migrant voices in democracy, the scenario should outline how we get to the inclusion of migrant voices in democracy)

      iii. Conceptual but with some tangibility – The scenarios can be on a macro level (i.e., not full of detail) but they should have some specific elements in them that connect them to reality. They shouldn't include anything that isn't real in the boundaries of our reality.

      iv. Different from each other – This may be about having different visions for democracy as a whole, scenarios focused on specific demographics or scenarios focused on a specific aspect of democracy (i.e., citizen voice on environmental issues, citizen involvement in local decision-making etc.)

    b. **Identify existing policy, strategy or a project's objectives that is relevant to 'stress test' against the visions.** This could be on an organizational, local, region, national, European level. You could select more than one policy, strategy or project to include if you want to. You will need to provide your experts with this policy, strategy or project's objectives in order for them to complete the task so they should be in the public domain.

2. **Set-up questionnaire 3.** Using the same platform as previous questionnaires, set up questionnaire 3. The questionnaire should contain the following questions (or similar variations to make it relevant to the policy, strategy or project's objectives that you are stress testing).

    a. What is your name?

    b. Imagine the world as described in Scenario 1. Please rate each of the objectives from the <INSERT POLICY, STRATEGY OR PROJECT> in accordance to how relevant of the scenario you perceive them to be. <You should now list each objective and allow experts to rate it as (1) Robust – i.e., very relevant and fit for purpose (2) Redundant – i.e., not relevant or (3) In need of modification – i.e., partially relevant>

    c. Explain why you have rated the objectives in the way that you have. Contributions here should be about 3 - 7 sentences in length.

    d. You should repeat questions b and c for each different scenario.

    e. Thinking about all of the scenarios proposed in this activity, what are the key aspects of the <INSERT POLICY, STRATEGY OR PROJECT> that could support them to come to fruition? Contributions here should be about 3 - 7 sentences in length.

    f. Thinking about all of the scenarios proposed in this activity, are there any aspects of the <INSERT POLICY, STRATEGY OR PROJECT> that could prevent these scenarios coming to fruition? Contributions here should be about 3 - 7 sentences in length.

    g. Finally, in relation to the scenarios proposed in this activity, what additional elements would need adding to <INSERT POLICY, STRATEGY OR PROJECT> to better enable the scenarios to come into fruition? Contributions here should be about 3 - 7 sentences in length.

3. **Test the questionnaire.** Ask someone in your team to test that the questionnaire works and make any necessary amendments.

4. **Send the questionnaire to experts.** Email your experts with the link to the questionnaire - remember to be clear about the deadline for their contributions and the purpose of the questionnaire. Template copy is provided below. We advise giving experts at least two weeks to complete it.

5. **Collate results.** Use the questionnaire/survey platform to collate the responses from the experts and input the results into the relevant section of the report template.

Email to experts' template copy (questionnaire 3):

Dear <INSERT NAME>,

Thank you for your contributions to questionnaire 1 and 2. Based on yours and other experts' responses we have developed a set of scenarios about the future of democracy in <INSERT TOPIC AREA>. You can download them here <INSERT LINK>.

Read through the scenarios carefully. We would then like you to test

Top Tip: If the strategy, policy or project objectives document is lengthy, try to find or create a succinct summary for your experts. This should cover the parts you'd like them to focus on.

how current <policy, strategy or project's objectives – DELETE AS APPROPRIATE> supports or doesn't support the scenarios we've produced.

To do this please read through <INSERT SPECIFIC POLICY/STRATEGY/PROJECT OBJECTIVES>. You can access this here: <INSERT LINK>.

We have used <INSERT PLATFORM> to write a final questionnaire and you can access it here: <INSERT LINK TO QUESTIONNAIRE>

We anticipate the pre-reading and questionnaire taking around 2 hours to complete and we need responses back by <INSERT DEADLINE>.

If you need any technical (or other) assistance, please contact <INSERT LOCAL CONTACT>.

Best wishes,

<INSERT YOUR NAME>

Feedback Loop

Creating a strong feedback loop with the experts is recommended. To do this, we suggest:

1. **Thank your experts**. Send an email to your experts thanking them for their involvement. This should detail timescales by which you will send them the initial internal report (i.e., the summary report in these guidelines minus details of the other experts who contributed) and the insight briefing. You can also use this email to arrange any outstanding reimbursements agreed.

2. **Send initial internal report.** Send the internal report to your experts - remember to take out the section on details about the experts who participated and any other identifiable data.

3. **Send insight briefing.** Send out the insight briefing that WP5 leaders will produce for Spring 2023.

Social media signals report: Template

CORE DETAILS	
Partner name	
Country	
Date range of social media posts	

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT			
Social movement	**Social media platforms included in research**	**Description of social movement / activist group**	**Justification for inclusion in research activities**

EXPERTS			
Name	**Organisation**	**Policy / Practice / Research**	**Description of expert (i.e., 1 - 2 sentences)**

REFLECTIONS ON SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT/PADLET BOARD
List the top five 'liked' social media posts (please give translations in English)

List the key signals about the future of democracy identified in the comments

List any key topics/areas of debate or areas of contention from the comments

Write around 200 - 300 words that synthesises the key learnings (from your perspective) on the social media posts and experts' comments.

RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE 1

List the signals in order of importance (least to most) based on the individual orderings by the experts.

List the signals identified by the experts linking to positive/preferred visions of the future.

List the signals identified by the experts linking to negative/non-preferred visions of the future.

Identify the key ideas that could impact positively on the future of your topic area.

Identify the key ideas that could impact negatively on the future of your topic area.

Identify anything that has surprised or challenged the experts from the Padlet board/result so far.

RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE 2

What did we learn from the experts about the most importance signals in the social media posts that would inform your topic area in the future?

What current policies, research and/or practice (e.g., services, democratic processes etc.) support the experts' positive visions about the future of your topic area and what would need to change to achieve them?

What would need to change in terms of policies, research and/or practice (e.g., services, democratic processes etc.) to avoid the experts' negatives visions about the future of your topic area?

What did we learn from the experts about what will positively influence the future of your topic area?

What did we learn from the experts about what will negatively influence the future of your topic area?

RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE 3

Use the space below to outline 3 - 5 future scenarios based on the results of questionnaires 1 and 2.

What policy, strategy or project objectives are we stress testing?

What aspects of the policy, strategy or project objectives were RELEVANT to the future scenarios and WHY?

What aspects of the policy, strategy or project objectives were REDUNDANT to the future scenarios and WHY?

What aspects of the policy, strategy or project objectives needed MODIFYING to make them relevant to the future scenarios and WHY?

Overall reflections on whether the policy, strategy or project objectives are fit for purpose in the context of the future scenarios

OVERALL LEARNING

Write 300 - 500 words that synthesises the key learning about the future of democracy from these research activities. Please identify the following:

- **Key emerging themes and trends**
- **Key innovations**
- **Key challenges**
- **Key opportunities**
- **Key policy learning – i.e., existing policy that is fit and existing policy that isn't fit for the future scenarios**
- **Contextual considerations**

Consent form

This is the consent form we used in EUARENAS for these activities. You may want to adapt this for your own research study.

About EUARENAS and your participation in the 'Social media signals and future thinking activities (WP5)'

We ask for your participation in the EUARENAS "Cities as Arenas of Political Innovation in the Strengthening of Deliberative and Participatory Democracy" research project, funded by the European Commission under the Horizon 2020 program (grant agreement no 959420). In this project we join citizens, activists, community-led initiatives, local administration and scientific and practice-based experts in order to investigate the ways in which social movements coupled with local government reform initiatives create momentum for political change that include more inclusive and participatory forms of governance. Any data and information gathered in the research project may be shared between the consortium partners and eventually be published.

If you have any concerns related to this or your participation in it, you may contact EUARENAS project coordinator Stan Domaniewski at the University of Eastern Finland at: stanislaw.domaniewski@uef.fi.

As research participant for EUARENAS we really appreciate you sharing your lived experience story with us. In signing this form and ticking the boxes below, you hereby agree to:

- Take part in this research project. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reasons via informing <INSERT PARTNER NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS>.

  ❑ YES   ❑ NO

- I understand that if I decide to withdraw, any data that I have provided up to that point will be included in the EUARENAS research project.

  ❑ YES   ❑ NO

- I consent to the processing and storage of any personal information I have provided in relation to this workshop and my story. All personal data will by anonymised, unless it is necessary for further research activities such as future contact.

  ❑ YES   ❑ NO

- I consent to my research data being stored and used by others for future research and I understand that my research data may be published.

  ❑ YES   ❑ NO

Participant		
Name of participant	*Signature*	*Date*
Researcher		
Name of researcher	*Signature*	*Date*

Foresight briefing template

Use the template below to present your learning from the social media activities. Remember to include the project and funder logo, and disclaimer on your final design. Keep the briefing concise (2-3 pages).

<INSERT MONTH & YEAR>

<INSERT TITLE OF BRIEFING>

<INSERT AUTHORS>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

80 words (approx.) that cover the key points in the briefing, such as:

- Topic area of briefing
- What data was used to produce briefing and how
- The most important key finding/insight from the briefing
- Why the findings and insights are pertinent and who they are relevant to

ABOUT <INSERT PROJECT>

A short description about the research project and a link to a website if available.

INTRODUCTION

250 words (approx.) that contextualised the briefing and covers:

- Short justification of why social media can provide useful signals about our future
- 1 - 2 sentences on method/data sources to set context – more detail to be given in latter sections.
- 1 - 2 sentences about what this briefing presents – i.e., what is the new knowledge, why is the briefing relevant to current challenges democracy/society etc.

EMERGING TRENDS - WHERE IS DEMOCRACY HEADING?

300 words (approx.) that outlines the key insights from social media and foresight activities. This should largely be informed by the results of the Padlet comments and questionnaires 1 and 2.

- Outline key topics, themes or innovation areas that have emerged
- Provide details of key challenges and opportunities for democracy
- Detail any key contextual considerations to your results

FUTURE SCENARIOS AND POLICY

Outline briefly a small number of future scenarios for your topic area that have come from the work. Your findings should briefly mention the policy landscape you utilised for the questionnaire 3 and the results from this questionnaire.

Be as concise as possible and ensure your synthesis is informed by the results of the research activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Identify 1 – 3 key recommendations based on the learning from the social media and foresight activities in regards to the future of your topic area.

It is recommended that you frame these as recommendations for how policy can be developed to support future visions for democracy (i.e., based on results from questionnaire 3).

METHOD

This briefing has been compiled from the results of working with a group of experts to analyse signals from social media about the future of <INSERT TOPIC AREA>.

The experts were made-up of <INSERT DESCRIPTION OF EXPERTS>. Via a process of annotation and the Delphi method, the experts reviewed social media content and hypothesised over emergent trends pertinent to democracy.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Insert a description of the social media content you used as parr of the research activities.

You should indicate core details such as broad characteristics of the accounts you chose, the type and number of posts, platforms examined, dates of the social media posts, core themes/topics look at etc.

2.3. Editable Templates

1   **Identifying social media content and experts: Task Sheet**

2   **Social media signals report: Template**

3   **EUARENAS consent form**

4   **Foresight briefing template**

     The full list of templates can be downloaded here or at euarenas.eu/deliverables.

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