Citizen Consultations

Results of participatory activities in six European countries
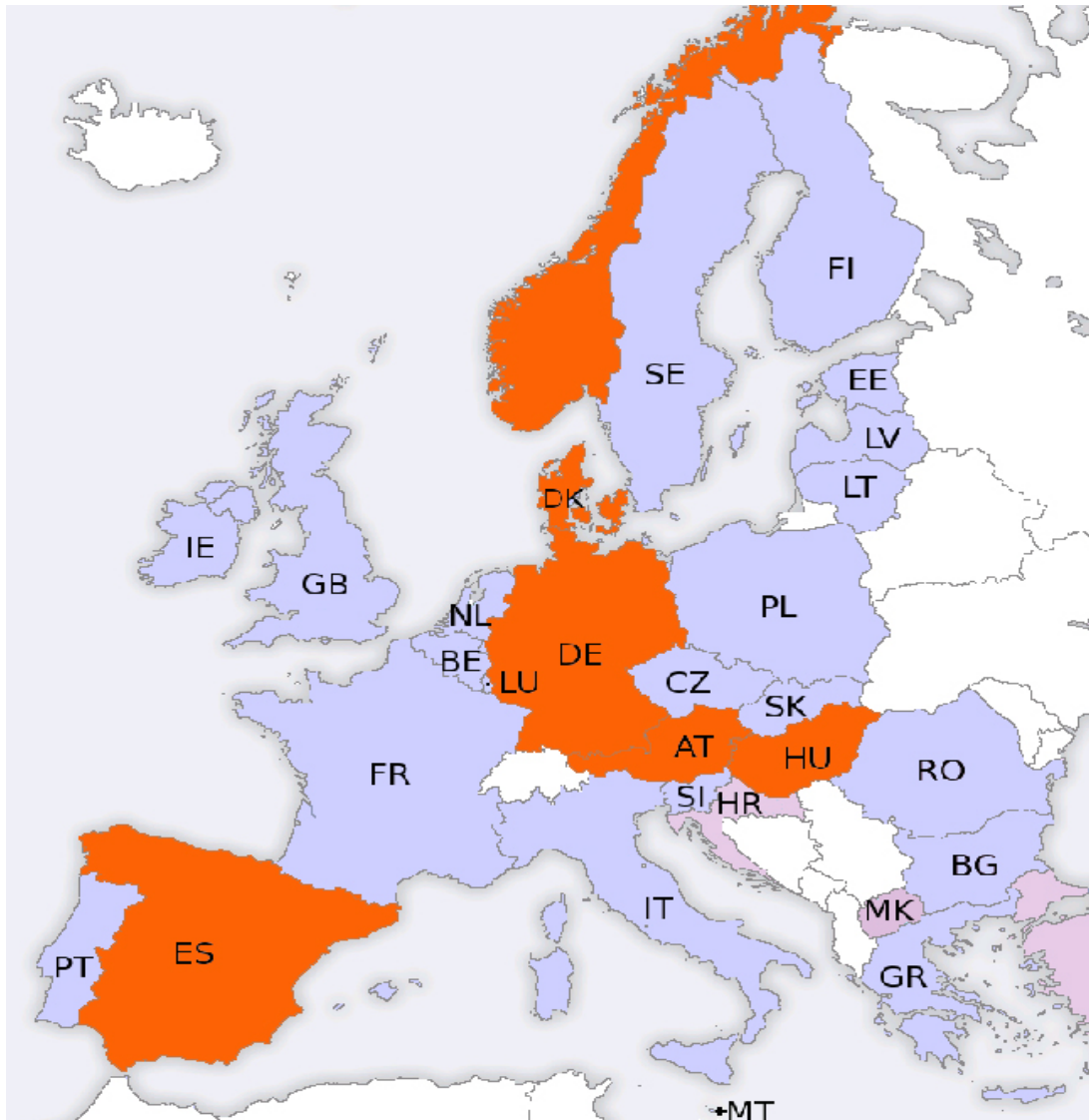
The participatory method

- The Interview Meeting combines debate, completing a questionnaire and group discussions

- Results are not representative

- The six meetings gathered a total of 158 participants

- Diverse selection of European citizens

- Focus group interviews give the citizens the opportunity to explain the reasoning behind the answers of the questionnaire

Six Interview Meetings in six European countries:

- Norway

- Denmark

- Germany

- Austria

- Hungary

- Spain

Are security dependent on technologies?

- *"I tend to think that whatever fosters security is okay with me. This is why I do not understand some of the debate; why do people worry if there are so much bigger dangers for mankind than giving away your data." (DE)*

- *"The causes that generate terrorism should be abolished." (HU)*

Can violation of privacy be accepted?

- *"(…) people participate voluntarily in "Big Brother". It is a tendency in the society that it seems that people don't think it is that important having a private sphere anymore" (NO)*

- *"If I have nothing to hide, why should I worry?" (ES)*
"If I have nothing to hide, why should they monitor me?" (ES)

- *"We have to restrict our freedom in some degree to have security." (HU)*

Are the security technologies effective?

- *"The problem is that even if you put up more and more cameras you will not have enough personnel to watch them all, and people know that. So I think it is a kind of pseudo-security." (DE)*
Yes, but it gives the opportunity to determine the perpetrator afterwards, even if you cannot prevent the crime." (DE)

- *"I actually think it gives a high degree of false security. I think it is really a bit worrying. It's a little bit to please the old ladies (…)" (DK)*

Are the security technologies effective?

- *"(…) crime rates are decreasing where surveillance cameras are deployed, the problem however is, that the whole thing is moving somewhere else…" (AT)*

- *"Personally I want it to be a lot of surveillance! (…) I really can't understand why people fear to be monitored in their own country if they didn't do anything wrong." (NO)*

- *"If you had two policemen patrolling, going around whistling, right. That would be ten times more effective than a video camera." (DK)*

When are sec. technologies acceptable?

- *"Executives were talking about the danger of terrorism, because it was their interest, but it's terribly destructive. Because a lot of people are really afraid. Presently, Hungary doesn't really have to be afraid of terrorism." (HU)*

- *"The biggest problem in Norway today is traffic accidents and heart attacks" (NO)*

When are sec. technologies acceptable?

- *"There are places, dark places, where I would say that it feels good to see a camera at use there; whether it is turned on or not, I don't know, but at some places it can facilitate a feeling of security." (DE)*

- *"I am very ambivalent in these affairs. On the one hand, I have the impression they deploy it excessively, on the other hand, at specific places (…) I consider it as justified." (AT)*

Will security technologies be abused?

- *"Definitely. Abuse is written in big letters above it. Above each advantage." (AT)*

- *"All technology can be misused anyway. So there will be persons that try to exploit this." (NO)*

- *"Whenever humans are operating systems or if someone can gain personal advantage, you have to expect misuse." (DE)*

Will security technologies be abused?

- *"Then as far as possible you have to guard against misuse. Individuals should have as little power in the system as possible." (DK)*

- *"I don't mind collection of data. But what happens to them, and who get access to them is the most important question." (NO)*

- *"I believe that they should be careful about who is going to have access to our data, to all our data, to all our private things." (ES)*

Basic conclusions

- The threat of terror does not justify privacy infringements

- Physically intimate technologies are unacceptable

- Misuse of technology must be prevented

- Function creep is not acceptable

Makes security tech. acceptable

- Proportionality between security gain and privacy loss
- Court order can make even highly privacy infringing technologies acceptable
- Strict control of the individuals behind the technologies
- Privacy infringing security technologies must be the last option

Democratic demands

- Informative and open public debate

- Broad involvement of relevant parties

- Always analyze privacy impact before implementing