

# NATIONAL MINI-PUBLIC REPORT: FRANCE

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Culminating more than a decade of crisis in Europe, the Covid-19 pandemic has opened an important window of opportunity for institutional and policy change, not only at the “reactive” level of emergency responses, but also to tackle more broadly the many socio-political challenges caused or exacerbated by Covid-19. Building on this premise, the Horizon Europe project REGROUP (*Rebuilding governance and resilience out of the pandemic*) aims to: 1) provide the European Union with a body of actionable advice on how to rebuild post-pandemic governance and public policies in an effective and democratic way; anchored to 2) a map of the socio-political dynamics and consequences of Covid-19; and 3) an empirically-informed normative evaluation of the pandemic.



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## Contents

This report provides an overview of the French citizens' jury on disinformation and trust in politics, which was held in the framework of the Horizon Europe research project REGROUP. The report (1) discusses organisational matters, (2) provides a summary of the discussion contents, (3) presents the jurors' policy recommendations, (4) analyses the attitudinal participant surveys, and includes (5) citizens' feedback, and a (6) self-evaluation.

## Organisational matters

The French citizens' jury on disinformation, knowledge circulation, and trust in politics took place over two Saturdays, June 24 and July 08, 2023. The organisation committee consisted of five team members of the Jacques Delors Institute. Senior research fellow Andreas Eisl was responsible for the overall organisation and served as one of the co-moderators. Solena Lefeuvre served as the second co-moderator and the main contact person for the participants before and after the meetings. Eulalia Rubio had a supporting role, ensuring that the citizens' jury went smoothly. Tanguy Piochaud and Anatole Bonnardeau, finally, were responsible for preparing the venue, organising the catering and providing technical support. In addition, Irina Bonczok from the organisation Missions Publiques joined the first session in an observing capacity.

To support the work of the participants the organising team could build on the help of four experts on the topics covered (all were introduced as 'resource persons' to participants). On June 24, [Thierry Vedel](#) (political scientist at the CEVIPOF) and [Mathilde Cousin](#) (fact-checker journalist at 20 Minutes) provided valuable input for the participants and were available for questions. On July 08, Victor Chomel (researcher) and Thierry Hornet (journalist) engaged in a discussion on the preliminary policy recommendations developed by the participants.

The citizens' jury took place at the House of Europe (Maison de l'Europe) in Paris. A large room was available for the plenary sessions, while two smaller rooms were used for the two working groups. For the breaks there was also a terrace available to the participants.

The organisation Sortition Foundation was responsible for the recruitment of the participants. Out of a set of interested citizens, the organisation selected participants with the objective to include a diverse set of citizens regarding several dimensions such

as gender, age, education, geography, and types of consumed news sources. Out of 22 invited participants, nineteen confirmed their presence for the first session. However, only sixteen participants joined for the first session on June 24. Out of the sixteen participants, thirteen joined also for the second session on July 08. As means of compensation, a voucher of hundred euros was given to participants who attended both days of deliberation.

**Table 1: Distribution of participants along three dimensions**

Age	
18-24	15%
25-44	31%
45-64	23%
65+	31%
Education	
Primary	8%
Secondary	23%
Tertiary 1	8%
Tertiary 2	38%
Tertiary 3	23%
Gender	
Male	38%
Female	62%

Notes: This data refers to the thirteen participants that were present for both sessions of the citizens' jury. Tertiary 1 = Non-university higher education, Tertiary 2 = Bachelor or equivalent, Tertiary 3 = Masters or equivalent, PhD

In our view, the objective of diversity has been relatively well captured even with the thirteen citizens present for the two sessions of the citizens' jury (see Table 1). The different age groups (18-24, 25-44, 45-64, 65+) were quite evenly represented. All levels of educational attainment were included. The participants covered a broad range of preferences regarding news consumption. Finally, while the selection had aimed for parity in terms of gender, more women than men took part in the citizens' jury.

## Content of the discussions

The citizens' jury consisted of two full days of exchanges and deliberations, starting at 9:00 and concluding at 17:00. The first day was centred on getting to know each other, delving into the jury's topics and exchanging experiences and visions for the future. The second day focused on developing policy recommendations on the identified priority areas.

## Day 1: Exchanging experiences

The first day of discussions focused on sharing the individual experiences of the jurors. The introductory exercises (an ice-breaker activity and a moving debate) helped to create a good, active, and constructive atmosphere for the rest of the day.

First of all, the moving debate - an exercise where participants position themselves in the room according to their responses to a set of questions/statements linked to disinformation and trust in politics during the pandemic - was consensual, while at the same time revealing strongly varying individual experiences. Most of the discussions were not very polarised and confidence in the so-called 'official' institutions mostly prevailed. The jurors were unanimous on the need for a collective awareness of the persistence of crises and the threats posed by them to society. Some of the jurors had migrant backgrounds and gave accounts of the situation in their countries of origin (e.g., Senegal, Togo, Rwanda). In their view, the public in Africa did not take the threat of the epidemic seriously, as protective measures were not applied, and in comparison, they felt more confronted with misinformation. One of the jurors shared some more 'radical' points of view, stating their lack of confidence in international institutions (WHO), their criticism of the pharmaceutical industries, their 'anti-vax' stance, and their support for divisive figures in the French public debate, such as the physician Didier Raoult<sup>1</sup>.

The contributions of the two experts Thierry Vedel and Mathilde Cousin attracted a great deal of interest from the jurors and provided valuable food for thought. An introductory video, common to all REGROUP citizens' juries and providing input from four researchers was watched attentively and raised several questions, most importantly a conceptual one on the distinction between misinformation and disinformation.

The presentation by political scientist Thierry Vedel focused on the collective characteristics of the scientific world and its temporalities. He made a conceptual contribution on the notions of knowledge, belief, and opinion. Lastly, Vedel focused on the role of communication and information, drawing a distinction between its supply (relationship to truth, intentionality, social networks, and algorithms) and its reception by citizens (confirmation bias, social psychology, consumption, social ties). He raised some interesting questions and challenged the participants regarding potential confirmation biases that they held:

*Shouldn't we also be looking at the reception side, i.e. how we consume news? How do we relate to political information? Aren't we ultimately interested in bad information? And aren't the people who consume false information doing so deliberately, because it interests them?*

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<sup>1</sup> Despite the lack of hard medical evidence, Raoult promoted the use of the medication hydroxychloroquine to treat coronavirus patients.

The presentation by journalist Mathilde Cousin focused on the work of fact-checkers and the spread of fake news in public debate. She spoke about the two main areas of her work: Verifying public statements and verifying rumours and viral content. She raised a few issues relating to disinformation and fact-checking, the international distribution and translation of fake news, and role of artificial intelligence. She drew a distinction between fact-checking and ‘traditional’ journalism, arguing that they differ in terms of content and article design. She also set out the various rules that codify the activity of fact-checkers: If a study is mentioned, the fact-checker makes a point of consulting it directly, anonymity is avoided, and the people interviewed are mentioned explicitly:

*The idea is that people who read our article can go through the fact-checking process themselves.*

Finally, Cousin mentioned various initiatives that aim to prevent misinformation, such as the videos produced by [Google](#) to discern false content, the [Verificat](#) project launched in Barcelona to check the facts declared by political candidates during election periods, and more generally media education courses.

Both presentations raised questions about the scientific approach, which was considered biased by some participants, about the polarisation of the political debate with a focus on the case of the United States under the Trump presidency, and about the divisive debates on democracy in general. One participant even claimed that democracy did not exist.

The lunch break showed how important the morning’s discussions had been for the jurors, who instinctively got together to talk about them. Debates ensued and jurors spoke at length about how they had been recruited. Some even asked to change some of the answers on their surveys, saying that their opinions had changed.<sup>2</sup>

The working groups for the afternoon session were set up by the moderators in a manner that aimed at ensuring balanced groups in terms of age, education, and gender. For both groups, the initial scenario exercise<sup>3</sup> was rather unclear, so the moderators had to explain it several times. Nevertheless, once the discussions got under way, all the participants took part in the debate and demonstrated their projection skills.

The first group dealt with issues of misinformation and political trust. The “ideal societies” of the citizens had many common points, oriented towards solidarity, concerned with the general interest and the preservation of the common good. Citizens agreed on the need to base political decision-making on scientific expertise, to establish a stronger link between political power and civil society, to set up systems to prevent the spread of fake news, and to facilitate access to corresponding technologies. The group

<sup>2</sup> The participants were not allowed to modify the survey answers.

<sup>3</sup> This exercise required participants to engage in ‘vision building’ with the objective to imagine an ‘ideal society’ in terms of political trust and how such a society would look like.

put forward several concrete proposals: The creation of a state body, in cooperation with government bodies and civil society, responsible for verifying information on a national and European scale; the introduction of a financial plan for emergency situations, an action plan for transport, and a system for universalising information between the media; and the promotion of manual and medical professions. One of the jurors emphasised the positive aspect of the management of the pandemic and that the need for improvement should not detract from what had been achieved, for example regarding home office possibilities. Once again, citizens spoke about their personal experience and the management of the pandemic in their country of origin (Rwanda). In the end, they agreed on their priorities: On the one hand, controlling the spread of fake news, and on the other hand, issues of civic education and political ethics. In short, participants referred a great deal to the power of the state, which must anticipate crises and take collective responsibility for them. When it came to choosing spokespersons for each group, the consensus quickly centred on the two youngest members of the group.

The second group focused on scientific communication and the role of non-elected experts in political decision-making. The jurors were unanimous on the need for more global governance of crises and the standardisation of national policies at different levels (European and international). The terms “spirit of cohesion”, “proximity”, and “transparency of information” dominated the discussions, and once again, the creation of a centralising body was proposed.

Intergenerational concerns were taken very seriously by the second working group, since the issue of raising awareness and educating the youngest members of the population was regularly raised. More broadly, there was unanimous agreement on the need to make scientific information more easily accessible and understandable for the broader population. One of the jurors centred the presentation of their proposals around feelings of fear, which need to be appeased, and feeling of conviction, which need to be won over, once again demonstrating the predominance of individual experience in understanding collective processes. At the end of the day, the jurors voted in favour of developing fact-checking, creating a body to punish disinformation, strengthening integrity checks on political figures, and giving experts a greater role in political decision-making.

## Day 2: Deliberation and crafting recommendations

After some introductory remarks, the second session directly delved into breakout discussions. While retaining the same groups, they partly dealt with themes that had been discussed in the other group during the previous session.

The first group dealt with the role of non-elected experts in political decision-making and political trust. For the first topic, it was the multidisciplinary committee that



elicited the most reactions. Initially proposed by the first participant, the discussion on this topic took up a significant part of the allotted time, with jurors debating especially the selection process of experts and how to communicate its findings. The topic of trust in politics was approached from the angle of citizens' consultations, on which the participants had many ideas: The generalisation of referendums (with references to Switzerland), opinion polls, or even the keeping of a register of people received by the President of the Republic. Numerous examples from the French political scene were evoked, showing just how much this topic affects the jurors.

For the second group, discussions focused on misinformation and scientific communication. As with the first group, the jurors all got involved in drawing up the recommendations, which quickly became very practical, such as the creation of a label for verifying information between the various media and the introduction of awareness-raising campaigns aimed at young audiences. There was less interest in the monitoring and sanctions section, which had been dealt with by the first group during the first session.

The exchange with the experts was extremely prolific, as not all the themes highlighted by the jurors in the morning could be discussed. Having both the point of view of an academic researcher, specialising in the dynamics of disinformation on social networks, and the more journalistic point of view on media awareness and education practices, gave the jurors comprehensive input and opportunities to discuss their preliminary ideas.

[Victor Chomel](#) (associate researcher at the CNRS) wrote a thesis on disinformation on social networks. He presented the tools developed by the CNRS to map disinformation according to political affinity or subject. He described the many forms of disinformation (fake accounts, fake behaviour, fake content) and reminded us of the importance of always putting facts into context. He shed a great deal of light on the issues of scientific communication and the role of experts in political decision-making, reminding the jury of the differences between media and scientific timeframes.

Journalist [Thierry Hornet](#) (a member of the association [FakeOff](#), responsible for media education for young people) explained the concepts of opinion and information by describing the workings of his profession and gave some advice to the jurors on how to get out of the “affinity bubbles” created by social networks (following personalities whose ideas you don't share, being open to the diversity of the media).

*Contrary to what you might think, social networks don't allow people to talk to people. Social networks lock people into bubbles of people who think the same as they do.*

This advice left a lasting impression on the jurors, many of whom commented on how their relationship with information had changed as a result. The discussions also enabled participants to learn more about the French media landscape and the initiatives



already in place to combat misinformation, in particular the media federation, where Thierry Horner recalled the existence of a [‘Désintox’](#) collective during the last election campaign.

During the lunch break following their presentation, the two resource persons stayed for a while to talk more informally with the participants. The discussions were dense and rich, and the jurors showed a great deal of interest. New debates began with Victor Chomel on the role of platforms in the fight against disinformation and to render the functioning of social network algorithms more understandable.

The contributions of these experts and the discussions between the groups in the afternoon enabled the recommendations to be fine-tuned without any difficulty in terms of time or ideas. The members of the jury were really committed to the exercise and paid close attention to detail, even during the breaks when they continued their discussions.

## Policy recommendations

At the second meeting of the French citizens’ jury, the participants formulated ten policy recommendations based on the orientations decided during the first session (see Table 2): Two recommendations each on the topics of scientific communication and disinformation, as well as three recommendations each on the topics of the role of expertise in decision-making and trust in politics.

**Table 2: Policy recommendations of the French citizens’ jury**

Ranking	Policy recommendations	Points
1	Create a European “label” for the reliability of news sites (similar to “news-guard”) under the responsibility of a non-profit organisation. This label will be activated by default by search engines and browsers.	7.92
2	Raising public awareness of fact-checking: Train journalists, educate children, highlight fact-checking content (TV, press, etc.). These actions are to be supported by public funding.	7.08
2	The creation of an interdisciplinary, permanent, and consultative European expert committee, whose members are chosen by their peers, dedicated to the subjects of climate and health and with mediators responsible for communicating with the general public.	7.08
4	Introduce training in the scientific approach and method for all journalists.	6.08
5	Introduce audits to monitor misinformation on platforms in order to identify problems (fake accounts, sharing, etc.) and introduce corrective measures.	5.77

6	Introduce mediators in the major French research institutes, responsible for communicating and popularising the work of researchers. This will include the creation of new information formats, such as videos, specially designed for young people.	5.23
7	Regulate the transparency of social network algorithms and encourage the plurality of content offered to users outside of personal affinities.	5.00
8	Instituting the regular publication of a list of all material benefits received in the course of their duties for the President, ministers, and ambassadors.	4.00
9	Introduce a system for verifying facts and in particular numbers announced by candidates during election periods. This verification would be carried out by a body or association specifically dedicated to the issue.	3.69
10	Create a website and an application bringing together different political figures (presidency, government, parliament) and offering users a vote for the popularity rating of these different figures.	3.15

Notes: Policy recommendations translated from French. The shown point score is based on calculations of the survey tool Slido, which aggregates the individual rankings of the ten policy recommendations in a point score between 1 and 10 (with 10 as the highest priority).

These policy recommendations were the result of extensive deliberations and improved by exchanges with two resource persons and between the two working groups. After having drafted the recommendations, the participants had to rank them in order of priority using the online tool Slido. The results of this ranking are shown in Table 2. Based on the individual rankings of the policy recommendations, Slido calculates a point score between 1 and 10 (with 10 as the highest priority) that provides not only an ordinal ranking but also indicates the differences in terms of priority given to the different recommendations.

To better understand the underlying factors motivating this ranking, we had the participants evaluate these recommendations regarding efficiency, effectiveness, their societal divisiveness, and their political feasibility using a five-level Likert scale. Due to a technical error, the participants could not fill out the provided google form at the end of the second session but were able to do so online during the following week. Twelve of the thirteen participants of the second session finally completed the form. To ensure that all of them understood the difference between the terms ‘efficiency’ and ‘effectiveness’, the form contained a short explainer. Table 3 shows the result of the citizens’ assessment of their own policy recommendations, based on the overall ranking of their priority, which are visualised in Figure 1.

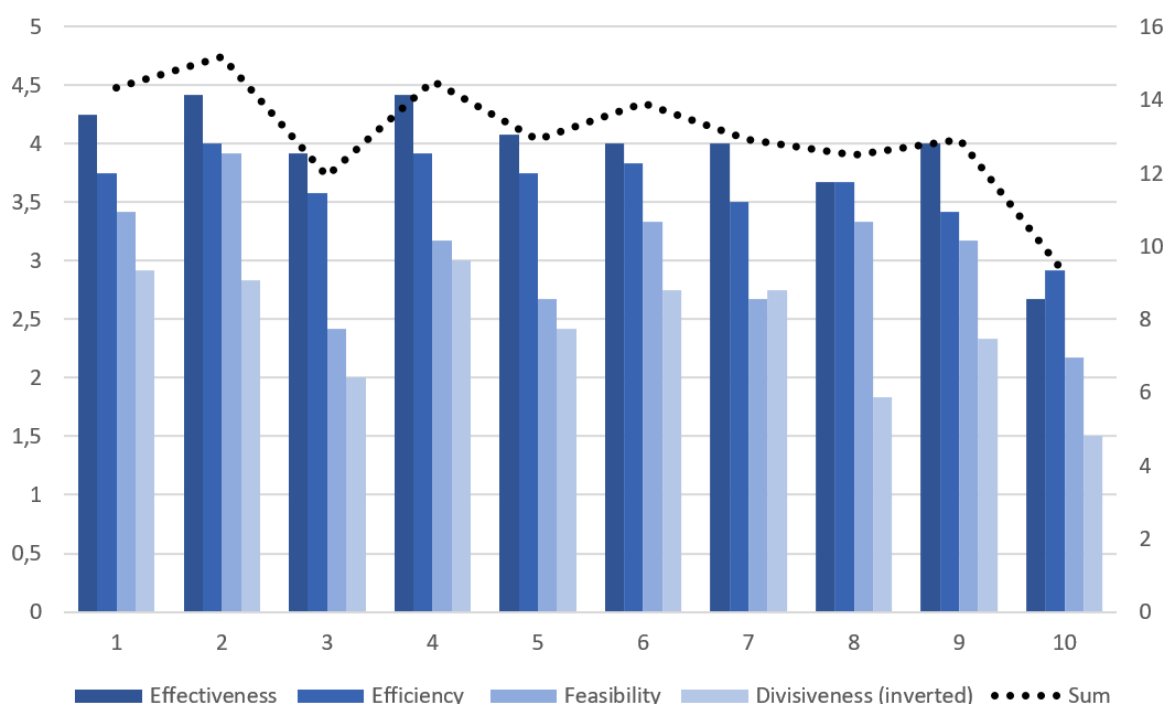
**Table 3: Evaluation of policy recommendations by citizens' jurors**

Ranking	Policy recommendations	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Feasibility	Divisiveness (inverted)	Sum
1	Create a European “label” for the reliability of news sites	4.25	3.75	3.42	2.92	14.34
2	Raise public awareness of fact-checking: Education, training, and popularisation of fact-checking	4.42	4	3.92	2.83	15.17
2(3)	Creation of a European expert committee on climate and health	3.92	3.58	2.42	2	11.92
4	Train journalists in the scientific approach and method	4.42	3.92	3.17	3	14.51
5	Introduce audits to monitor and deal with misinformation on platforms	4.08	3.75	2.67	2.42	12.92
6	Introduce scientific mediators in the major French research institutes	4	3.83	3.33	2.75	13.91
7	Make social network algorithms more transparent and show more plural contents	4	3.5	2.67	2.75	12.92
8	Require the publication of all material benefits received by high-level government officials	3.67	3.67	3.33	1.83	12.5
9	Introduce a fact-checking system during election periods	4	3.42	3.17	2.33	12.92
10	Create an application to rate the popularity of political figures	2.67	2.92	2.17	1.5	9.26

Notes: The data shows the average value given by the participants on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, with 1 describing strong disagreement and 5 describing strong agreement, aggregated across participants. To make the data directly comparable, the response values to the divisiveness of recommendations were inverted.

Based on the presented data we can make several observations. First, participants considered their policy recommendations, in general, to be both highly effective and efficient. This applies to nine of their recommendations; only the recommendation given the least amount of prioritisation (“create an application to rate the popularity of political figures”) received a relatively low score for both its effectiveness and efficiency. This result can likely be explained by the fact that jurors drew up these recommendations and that they also adapted them in line with some of the resource persons’ feedback. The low score for the last recommendation is most likely linked to its genesis. The idea was developed in one of the working groups, which supported its inclusion in the final recommendations but was met by scepticism by the other working group members, who seemed rather baffled by the idea.

**Figure 1: Visualisation of the participants' evaluation of their policy recommendations**



Notes: The data shows the average value given by the participants on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, with 1 describing strong disagreement and 5 describing strong agreement, aggregated across participants. To make the data directly comparable, the response values to the divisiveness of recommendations were inverted.

Second, political feasibility and the absence of political divisiveness did not affect the prioritisation of policy recommendations. While participants gave lower scores to these than for effectiveness and efficiency for all of the ten recommendations, there is no clear relationship with the ranking of policy priorities. Recommendation 3 (“creation of a European expert committee on climate and health”), for example, received some of the lowest scores on the feasibility and divisiveness dimensions but was nevertheless ranked as a priority. In general, the jurors gave similar scores to political feasibility and the lack of divisiveness suggesting that they considered them to be linked. Only regarding recommendation 2 (“raise public awareness of fact-checking: education, training, and popularisation of fact-checking”) and recommendation 8 (“require the publication of all material benefits received by high-level government officials”) there was a larger difference between the assessments of political feasibility and the absence (or not) of political divisiveness.

Finally, if we look the four analysed dimensions together (see the dotted line in Figure 1), there is no particularly strong link between the prioritisation of policy recommendations and their assessment in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, feasibility, and lack of divisiveness. Other than recommendation 10, most of them scored well across the various assessed dimensions.

## Attitudinal study

To better understand the impact of deliberative democracy formats such as citizens' juries on the attitudes of participants, we conducted an attitudinal survey at the beginning of the first session and at the end of the second session. The survey included several general questions about the participants as well as questions through which we could capture the attitudes of citizens on the issues debated at the citizens' jury as well as whether their participation had an impact on individual attitudes.

Most importantly, the survey was interested in (1) whether citizens felt competent to recognise disinformation, (2) the level of trust citizens had vis-à-vis specific actors or organisations, (3) their trust towards governmental decision-making regarding future health crises, and (4) identifying the (dis)agreement with numerous statements on disinformation, the role of politicians and experts in policy-making, and political trust.

**Table 4: Competence to identify disinformation**

Before session 1	After session 2
1	1
2	2
2	2
2	3
2	2
1	1
1	2
1	2
2	2
1	2
2	2
2	1
1	2

Notes: The asked question was “Do you feel competent to recognise disinformation?”. The shown answers are based on a scale which reaches from 0 = no, (almost) never, 1 = yes, sometimes, 2 = yes often, to 3 = yes, always. Questions translated into French.

Concerning citizens' competence to recognise disinformation (see Table 4), ahead of the first session, six of the participants stated that they would be 'sometimes' able to identify disinformation, while seven stated that they would be able to do so 'often'. None of them thought that they could always or never identify disinformation. After the second session, eight of the thirteen respondents felt equally (in)competent then before the first session. Importantly, four citizens felt more competent, while one citizen felt less competent to recognise disinformation. Almost all these changes were due

to switches between the ‘sometimes’ and ‘often’ category. In addition, one participant felt competent to ‘always’ identify disinformation following the second French citizens’ jury.

**Table 5: Trust in institutions/actors**

Institution/actor	Before session 1	After session 2	Evolution of trust	Stat. significant change
The media	0.62	0.62	Same	No
Political parties	0.31	0.15	Less	Yes
Regional or local public authorities	0.92	0.75	Less	Yes
The police	0.25	0.42	More	No
Public administration in our country	0.73	0.73	Same	No
Health and medical staff in our country	0.92	0.83	Less	Yes
Scientific experts	0.80	0.90	More	Yes
Social media companies	0	0.09	More	Yes
The national government	0.50	0.58	More	No
The national parliament	0.67	0.75	More	No
The European Union	0.82	0.82	Same	No

Notes: The asked question was “How much trust do you have in certain institutions?” Question translated into French. The shown data is based on two answer options, 0 for the tendency to not trust and 1 for the tendency to trust, aggregated across participants. The identification of statistical significance is based on t-tests.

When asked about their trust in different societal institutions and actors, the citizens showed a wide variety of trust depending on the specific institution/actor (see Table 5). While, before the first session, none of the participants trusted ‘social media companies’, almost all trusted ‘regional or local public authorities’, the ‘health and medical staff in our country’, ‘the European Union’, and ‘scientific experts’. Following the second session, there were some - mainly slight - changes in trust, as summarized in the table below.

While trust slightly increased for institutions such as the national government and the national parliament, it decreased more noticeable for political parties and regional and local public authorities. Somewhat surprisingly, given the events taking place in France on June 27 (Killing of Nahel Merzouk) and the following days, the trust in the police increased between the first and second session of the citizens’ jury. Also interestingly, while participants’ trust in scientific experts increased following the citizens’ jury, it

decreased for French health and medical staff. Finally, trust in social media companies also improved, although remaining at a very low level.

Regarding the question about trust towards governmental decisions in case of future health crises, there were only minor changes in citizens' attitudes.<sup>4</sup> Out of the twelve participants that provided responses in both survey waves, the majority of them stated that they 'tend to trust' the government. While one participant's trust in the government increased, it decreased for two others. Most interestingly, the citizens' jury seemed to have had a slightly attenuating effect on citizens' responses. While one person moved from 'totally trust' to 'tend to trust', another person moved from 'do not trust at all' to 'tend not to trust'.

Beyond these three questions, the survey confronted the citizens' jurors with fourteen different statements regarding disinformation, and the role of politicians, experts, and citizens in political decision-making (see Table 6).

**Table 6: Citizens' agreement with various statements**

Statement	Before session 1	After session 2	Evolution of agreement	Statistically significant change
(a) Disinformation is a major problem in our society	4.46	4.62	More	Yes
(b) Scientific experts must play an active role to shape public policy	4.15	4.23	More	Yes
(c) Information about the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic was well communicated by the government	2.85	2.62	Less	No
(d) I would rather be represented by a citizen than by a specialised politician	3.15	2.69	Less	No
(e) Politicians should be like managers and fix what does not work in society	4.08	3.85	Less	No
(f) The leaders of my country should be more educated and skilled than ordinary citizens	3.92	4.15	More	Yes
(g) Social problems should be addressed based on scientific evidence, not ideological preferences	4.15	4.31	More	Yes
(h) The people, and not politicians, should make our most important policy decisions	3.15	2.62	Less	No
(i) Most citizens have all the competences required to make political decisions	2.23	2.23	Same	No

<sup>4</sup> The asked question was „Thinking about our national government's response to the coronavirus pandemic, to what extent do you trust or not the government to make the right decisions on emerging health crises in the future?“ Question translated into French.



(j) Most citizens are capable of understanding the needs of people like me	3.42	3.25	Less	Yes
(k) Politicians do not understand what is going on in society	3.33	3.67	More	Yes
(l) Scientific experts know best what is good for people	3	3.15	More	Yes
(m) Decisions about science and technology should be based mainly on what the majority of people in a country think	2.5	3	More	Yes
(n) The government does enough to tackle disinformation	2.31	2	Less	No

Notes: The asked question was “To what extent do you agree with the following statements?”. Question translated into French. The shown data is based on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, with 1 describing strong disagreement and 5 strong agreement and aggregated across participants. The identification of statistical significance is based on t-tests.

Ahead of the first session, the participants agreed especially with the statements that “disinformation is a major problem in our society” (a), that “scientific experts must play an active role to shape public policy” (b), that “politicians should be like managers and fix what does not work in society” (e) and that “social problems should be addressed based on scientific evidence, not ideological preferences” (g). The participants were more sceptical whether “most citizens have all the competences required to make political decisions” (i) and whether “the government does enough to tackle disinformation” (n). Beyond these observations, it is particularly interesting how the two sessions of the citizens’ jury have affected the participants’ attitudes. Some trends can be deduced from the participants’ responses.

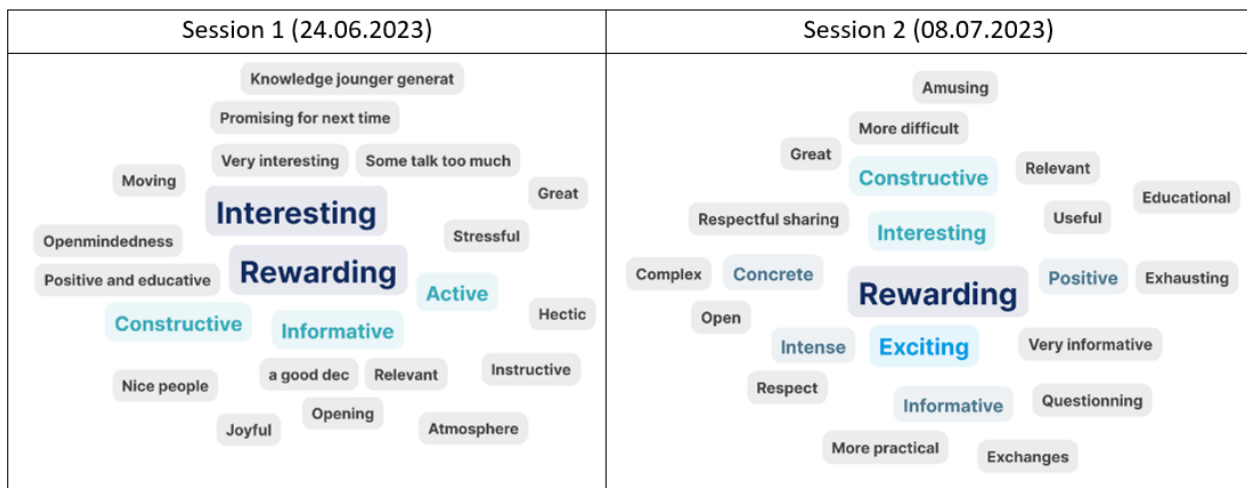
First, following the two sessions, citizens were even more convinced of the problematic nature of disinformation (a) and that the government was not doing enough against it (n). Second, the participants developed a stronger support for an active role of scientific experts (b) and evidence (g) in policy-making, were slightly more convinced that experts would know what is good for people (l) and showed greater scepticism towards the capacities of citizens to understand the needs of other citizens (j) and to make political decisions instead of specialised politicians (d, h). Somewhat contradicting this tendency, the participants were, however, also more favourable of decisions about science and technology themselves being based on popular preferences (m). Finally, the citizens’ jurors adjusted to a certain extent their view of politicians, considering politicians to less understand society (k) after the second session, while also believing less strongly that politicians should be like managers (e) but instead considered it more important that politicians should be better educated than ordinary citizens (f).

# Feedback from participants and resource persons

Overall, the feedback of the participants and resource persons was very positive. All of the participants showed interest in a constructive discussion and, across both sessions, there was a positive atmosphere among the participants, even if points of view sometimes strongly differed. As the word clouds shown in Figure 2 highlight, a large majority of citizens seemed to be content with both sessions. The terms voiced most often following the first meeting were ‘interesting’, ‘rewarding’, ‘constructive’, ‘informative’, and ‘active’. The participants considered the second meeting most importantly as ‘rewarding’, but also ‘exciting’, ‘constructive’, and ‘interesting’. Among the few negative comments were that ‘some talk too much’, ‘stressful’, and ‘hectic’ (session 1) as well as ‘more difficult’, ‘exhausting’, and ‘intense’ (session 2).

The follow-up survey also highlighted that the participants remained, to a large extent, engaged in the citizens’ jury exercise. Nine of the thirteen jurors showed interest in taking part in the transnational citizens’ jury, taking place in Brussels in March 2024. Eight of the participants inscribed for the project’s newsletter and seven of them were willing to share their experience with the French citizens’ jury with the consortium and beyond.

**Figure 2: Word clouds**



Notes: Word clouds generated using Slido. Responses translated from French.

The feedback of the resource persons was positive, but as they only attended parts of the citizens’ jury, they could mainly assess the sessions in which they were present. The resource persons appreciated the active participation of the jurors and had lively discussions. Most of the resource persons had previous experience with talking to citizens and managed to exchange with them in a very constructive and productive manner.

## Self-evaluation

Taken together, the organising team of the French citizens' jury was very content with how the event played out. Given the contentious issues that were to be discussed by the participants, there were some initial concerns about potential conflicts, but - while there were significantly diverging views - the participants remained generally polite, constructive, and inclusive. Regarding the selection of resource persons, the organising team was also worried that it might not be capable to identify the most adapted persons, coming from a different field of expertise. In the end, this, however, worked out perfectly, with excellent presentations and discussion contributions by the invitees. In addition, the participants seemed very content with the resource persons, making many positive remarks about their contributions afterwards.

In terms of the programme, the proposed framework worked very well, and was tweaked only slightly regarding the length of specific sessions and in light of the experiences of the first citizens' jury held in the Netherlands. The programme was dense but it remained possible to largely stay within the set time frames without having to cut any major parts of the exercise. It might have made sense to let the two working groups keep the two issues areas that they had already developed during the first session in the second one. Here there is a difficult trade-off to make between shared ownership and the quality/depth of policy recommendations.