Digital Democracy and Collective Intelligence - exploring new forms of governance

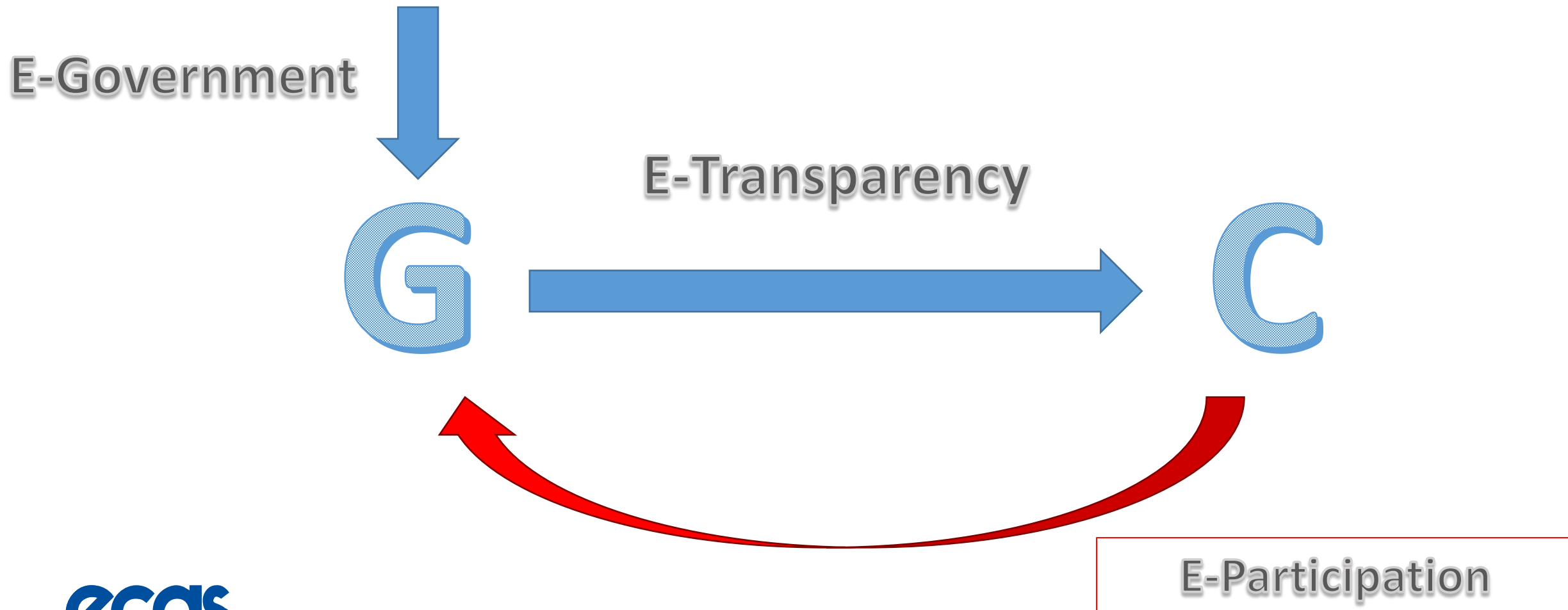*Elisa Lironi, ECAS Senior Manager European Democracy*

What is Digital Democracy?

⭐ Digital Democracy (or eDemocracy) refers to the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to support democratic decision-making in order to enhance democratic institutions and democratic processes.

⭐ It relates to the online activities of governments (administration, representatives, political parties) and citizens.

(Digital Democracy is NOT meant to replace traditional forms of representative democracy, but rather to complement them by adding elements of citizen empowerment and more direct participation.)

★ Three aspects of E-Democracy

E-Government

E-Transparency

G

C

E-Participation

Examples of E-Participation across Europe

★ Participatory Budgeting

★ Crowdsourcing

★ E-Initiatives

★ E-Voting

★ E-Consultations

Why foster E-Participation?

The Potential of E-Participation

★ Enhancing participation and active citizenship;

★ Ensuring a learning process;

★ Engaging young people in policy-making;

★ Ensuring innovative ideas for policy-making;

★ Increasing political trust and legitimacy.

STUDY ALERT

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
DG INTERNAL POLICIES

POLICY DEPARTMENT ON CITIZENS' RIGHTS
AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

June 2016

New publications available online

AFCO

Potential and Challenges of E-Participation

in the European Union

Study

This study was commissioned and supervised by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the AFCO Committee. European countries have started exploring e-participation as a way to regain citizens' trust and revitalise European democracy by developing a more responsive, transparent and participatory decision-making process. The main objectives of the study are to identify best practices in EU Member States, describe e-participation tools and initiatives at the EU level, and explain the benefits and challenges of e-participation.

Link to the full study (.pdf)

Case 1: Constitutional reform in Iceland

★ Step 1: 1000 citizens in a National Forum to explain the values they would want to see in the Icelandic Constitution

★ Step 2: 25 citizens in the Constitutional Council to produce a draft constitution to be passed in the Parliament; Openness by social media.

★ Step 3: Non-binding referendum, 49% turnout

(Ultimately stalled in the Parliament)

New Constitutional Reform process started in 2019 combining:

1. Survey
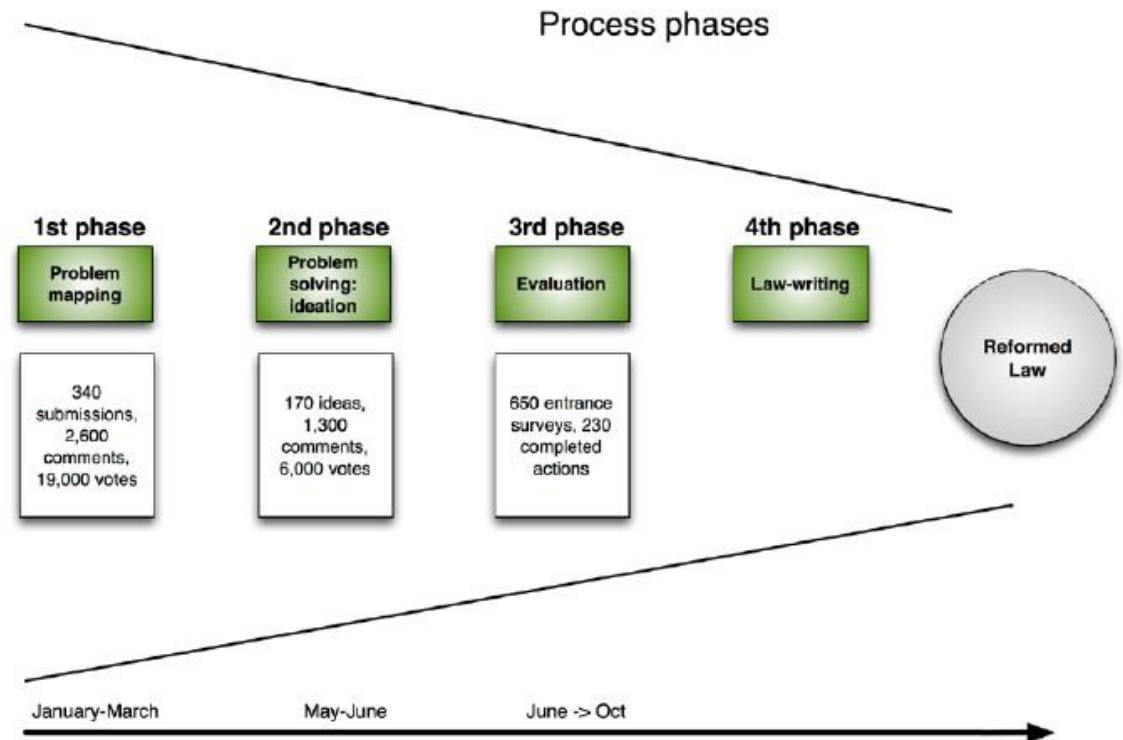2. Deliberative Polling
3. Crowdsourcing

Case 2: Open Ministry in Finland

★ Step 1: Finnish Parliament adopted the New Citizens' Initiative Act (50 000 signatures in six months would lead to a discussion in Parliament)

★ Step 2: Open Ministry was launched

★ Example: Off-Road Traffic Act

(Never completed)

Process phases

1st phase	2nd phase	3rd phase	4th phase
Problem mapping	Problem solving: Ideation	Evaluation	Law-writing
340 submissions, 2,600 comments, 19,000 votes	170 ideas, 1,300 comments, 6,000 votes	650 entrance surveys, 230 completed actions	

Reformed Law

January-March   May-June   June -> Oct

Recommendations

★ Accessibility

★ Representativeness

★ Impact and Feedback

Often overlooked!

- *Human resources;*
- *Financial resources;*
- *Training of public authorities;*
- *Strong guidelines/rules on the process.*

TRUST THE PROCESS

Thank you for your attention!

Elisa Lironi

elisa.lironi@ecas.org