


**Event report****EXPRESS² Co-Creation Workshop***25.11.2024*

On November 25, 2024, as part of WP2 (Theoretical Framework), the Co-Creation Workshop was organised by the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. The aim of this event was to discuss the research findings from WP2 with relevant stakeholders and the EXPRESS² project researchers, as well as to discuss on the draft of the EU social contract, which is to be published in the coming months, and strategies for its effective dissemination among EU inhabitants. The goal was to ensure that the contract is deliberated upon, participated in, and decided by the inhabitants of the EU. The workshop was initially planned to last an hour and a half, from 10:00 am to 11:30 am CEST, and was recorded online. However, due to the active participation of all involved, it extended to almost two hours.

The Co-Creation Workshop was divided into two sections. During the first part, Dr. Antoni Abat i Ninet, EXPRESS² scientific coordinator and leader of WP2, explained that the primary goal of the social contract draft is not the content of the social contract itself but to engage EU inhabitants in the discussion and deliberation of European issues. Dr. Abat outlined two options considered by WP2 researchers for the creation of the EU social contract draft. The first option involves a contractualist format, comprising a contract with enumerated clauses outlining the rights and duties of EU inhabitants and institutions. The second option is a more open-ended document in the form of a declaration.


Following Dr. Abat's introduction, Maja Bobić, Head of Projects and Fundraising (EMI) & WP3 (Citizens' Engagement and Deliberation) Leader, presented the different strategies planned under WP3 to disseminate the EU social contract draft and gather feedback from various stakeholders. She explained that the work would begin with a mapping of key stakeholders, conducted in collaboration with all partners. Additionally, tailor-made events would be organised for various stakeholder groups, such as civil society organisations and institutional stakeholders including the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Council, and others, such as the European Economic and Social Committee. Bobić also mentioned that a complementary narrative campaign would be launched to highlight the benefits of the EU social contract, aiming to reach over 2.5 million EU inhabitants.



Objectives

- 1) To create spaces for deliberative democracy, rational consensus, and decision-making for stakeholders and individuals to frame the EU social contract;
- 2) To systematise results and individual comments to deliver recommendations to the institutions of the EU; and
- 3) to encompass: i) awareness and narrative-change campaigns reaching and engaging millions of inhabitants on the draft social contract; ii) meaningful engagement of CSOs and citizens in collaborative deliberation and feedback on the EU social contract draft; iii) comprehensive advocacy engagement with the EU institutions, and iv) collecting, analysing and communicating the comments, suggestions, adhesions and oppositions to the draft

Maja Bobic



In the second section of the EXPRESS² Co- Creation Workshop, invited stakeholders and project researchers debated the best ways to present the EU social contract draft in order to maximise participation and engagement from EU inhabitants. Several topics were discussed, including the role of EU Member States in the process, complementary strategies to enhance participation and deliberation by inhabitants and institutions, and, from a legal perspective, whether the social contract should belong to private or public law.

However, the main focus of the discussion was on the format of the contract itself. The central question was how to best present the content and format of the EU social contract to gather the most effective feedback. The conclusion of this debate, which explored the options presented by Dr. Abat and additional complementary perspectives, was that the best approach would be to present an open-ended draft of the EU social contract. This draft, to be presented in February, will not be final. Instead, it will outline the main principles on which the definitive version will be based but will remain open-ended to avoid limiting the freedom of EU inhabitants, institutions, and other stakeholders to express their vision for the contract's content.

With the feedback gathered from various stakeholders during the deliberation and discussion process, along with insights from the research conducted within the project framework, a final version of the social contract will be drafted. This final version will be presented at the project's Final Conference in Brussels as a recommendation to the European institutions.