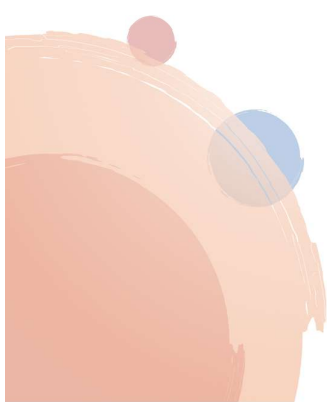




Event Report - WP2

**Project: DIGIVOTE - Digital Democracy: Trust,
Transparency and Engagement in Voting
Systems**



Event Dissemination Report - WP2

Project: DIGIVOTE - Digital Democracy: Trust, Transparency and Engagement in Voting Systems

Programme: CERV

Project No.: 101252326

Prepared by: Vladislav Artiukhov, Ana Wende, Mathis Grosbois (Culture Goes Europe e.V.)

Quality review: ddr. Maja Pucelj, EMUNI

Event: Online event: "Voting Reimagined: Public Conversation on Digital Conversation"

Date: 23 April 2026

Location: online

Work Package: WP2 - Voting Reimagined: Starting the Digital Conversation

Deliverable type: Event Report

Project's website: <https://emuni.si/digivote/>

Contents

Introduction	4
The DIGIVOTE Project	4
Event Format and Objectives	5
Panel Discussions	6
1. Practical implementation: the Estonian case (Ivan Polynin)	6
2. Legal and constitutional conditions for legitimacy (Prof. Maciej Serowaniec)	7
3. The information environment and the “integrity of consent” (Alessia Sciamanna)	9
4. The user perspective and accessibility (Margarita Osipova)	10
5. Comprehensibility and the German case (Moritz Borchardt)	11
Open Exchange	12
<i>Is voting a private act or a social ritual?</i>	12
<i>Comprehensibility as the decisive obstacle</i>	12
<i>The limits of the banking analogy</i>	13
<i>Supporting the most vulnerable through the transition</i>	13
Key Themes and Findings	14
Policy Implications for Future Digital Voting Initiatives	15
Conclusion and Next Steps	16
<i>Added value of the event</i>	16
<i>How the event contributes to the future of the project</i>	17
Assessing Participants’ Receptivity of Digital Voting	18
Appendix	19
Appendix 1. Event description sheet	19
Appendix 2. - Detailed Overview of the Results from the Online Survey (Mentimeter)	24

Introduction

The launch of the public event “Voting Reimagined: A Public Conversation on Digital Voting” was held online on 23 April 2026 as part of the DIGIVOTE Project. It brought together 113 participants from 15 countries, including representatives from academia, civil society, and the general public, and featured presentations by five speakers from fields related to the topic of digital voting. The event initiated a compelling and inclusive dialogue on the opportunities, challenges, and democratic implications of digital voting in contemporary democratic systems.

The purpose of the event was two folded: on one hand, it aimed at presenting citizens and stakeholders with expert arguments both for and against digital voting, and on the other hand to capture their perspectives through a live participatory survey, thus directly informing the project’s evidence base.

The discussion revolved around key questions pertaining to the accessibility to digital vote, the trust felt among citizens and towards political and governmental actors, questions about transparency and the respective legal frameworks, as well as the technological feasibility in contemporary times. The event was structured as to move beyond the narrow question of the technical implementation of digital voting structures to instead focus on the more demanding democratic questions, namely whether it can be made legitimate, comprehensible, inclusive, and trustworthy.

The DIGIVOTE Project

DIGIVOTE is a multi-country initiative that aims to examine the potential of digital voting as a tool to enhance democratic participation, and to identify associated risks and challenges. The project underlines public perceptions of digital voting, by providing spaces for participatory and open debates to the general public, that tackle aspects related to not only technical aspects but also broader issues such as trust, inclusivity, transparency, and institutional legitimacy. The project aims to facilitate informed public dialogue on digital voting in Europe, collect data on citizens’ perceptions and experiences, and develop policy recommendations for secure, transparent, and inclusive digital voting systems.

Event Format and Objectives

The event was structured as an interactive public discussion combining concentrated expert input with active participant engagement.

Five panellists were each invited to address a single, sharply framed question from their own discipline, by pointing out to the most pressing issues, referring to actual cases, and expressing concerns. After the round of statements, the facilitator then opened the floor for an extended moderated exchange in which panellists challenged one another directly and responded to questions submitted by the audience in the chat. The session closed with the live presentation of the DIGIVOTE survey, presented to the audience, as an official mean of assessment of the public. This format was chosen specifically to demonstrate that there is no disciplinary consensus on digital voting, and that the topic of digital voting still presents some resisting aspects.

Table 1. Programme overview

Time	Session
16:00 - 16:10	Welcome & Introduction: Formal opening, short introduction to DIGIVOTE, and presentation of the panel members.
16:10 - 17:00	Expert Panel Discussion: Focus on the main barriers to digital voting and on possible pathways to overcome them responsibly.
17:00 - 17:15	Presentation of the Survey: On the basis of which we will formulate recommendations to the European Commission
17:15 - 17:30	Q&A and closing: Open exchange with participants and final remarks.

This public event was facilitated by Vladislav Artiukhov (Culture Goes Europe e.V.).

Panellists:

- Ivan Polynin, a PhD researcher in Political Science at Tallinn University.
- Professor Maciej Serowaniec of Nicolaus Copernicus University.
- Alessia Sciamanna - a researcher in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and an Assistant in International and EU Law at Pegaso Digital University.

- Margarita Osipova, a PhD researcher and Teaching Assistant in Human-Computer Interaction at Bauhaus-Universität Weimar.
- Moritz Borchardt, Chairman of the DARE Network

Panel Discussions

The five contributions are summarised below in terms of their arguments, evidence and concepts each speaker brought to the table. Together, they map the problem of digital voting across five reinforcing layers: how it works in practice, whether it can be made legally legitimate, whether the information environment around it can be trusted, whether ordinary users can engage with it, and whether it can be made comprehensible to every citizen.

1. Practical implementation: the Estonian case (Ivan Polynin)

Ivan Polynin presented Estonia's internet-voting (i-voting) system, the most mature example in Europe, and made the central point that i-voting cannot be understood in isolation. It is one service within a wider state e-governance ecosystem through which Estonians already conduct almost all of their dealings with the state online - paying taxes, registering with a family doctor, and much else. Voting is, in his words, an important service but not the only one; trust in i-voting is inseparable from trust in that surrounding infrastructure.

On eligibility and access, he explained that any Estonian citizen may vote online in national elections, while local elections are open to eligible residents and EU citizens. Voters authenticate with an Estonian ID card or temporary-residence-permit card, or with the Mobile-ID or Smart-ID applications - in each case a means of cryptographically proving identity. This means that i-voting is available only during the advance-voting window before election day.

Polynin then addressed security directly, prefacing it (quoting Amartya Sen, "any summary is barbarism") as necessarily simplified. The system's key safeguards, as he described them, are: only the last vote counts, meaning that a voter may re-cast their ballot an unlimited number of times during the i-voting period to correct a mistake or simply change their vote; the voter's identity is stripped from the ballot but the vote remains individually verifiable through a personal QR code visible only to that voter, while remaining anonymous at the counting stage; and,

decisively, a paper ballot cast on election day overrides any digital vote. The digital signature used carries the same legal weight as a handwritten one.

He grounded the case in adoption data. From a 2005 pilot in which roughly 2% of voters used i-voting, uptake rose to between 45% and 51% by the 2023 parliamentary and most recent local elections, making it a mainstream channel; i-voting now accounts for an estimated 60–70% of advance votes, with some 5–8% cast from abroad.

On impact, Polynin distinguished advantages from concerns rather than disadvantages.

Advantages: reliability by analogy (citizens who trust the same eID infrastructure for banking and taxes have grounds to trust it for voting); gains in accessibility, participation and turnout; and what he called “technological leapfrogging”: the observation that the absence of an entrenched legacy system can make it easier to adopt a new one outright, as several post-Soviet states did in banking, and as Estonia arguably did in digital governance.

Concerns: an irreducible client-side risk (a voter’s own device could be compromised by malware), though he noted no known instance of large-scale effect; theoretical vulnerabilities to sophisticated state-level attacks, against which, he argued, no system is fully protected; and a contested claim that i-voting may favour liberal over conservative parties. On the last point he was candid that the literature is divided - some published work finds no partisan effect - but argued that because younger, more educated voters adopt the channel faster, a demographic skew is likely to appear, which is why Estonia’s conservative party opposes i-voting; he expected such traditions to erode over time.

2. Legal and constitutional conditions for legitimacy (Prof. Maciej Serowaniec)

Professor Maciej Serowaniec answered the question of what conditions digital voting must satisfy to be considered legitimate. His framing was emphatic: digital voting is not an administrative innovation but a means of exercising political sovereignty and must therefore meet the highest legal safeguards and be capable of full integration into a state’s constitutional architecture and the rule of law. He set out five cumulative conditions:

- **A clear, precise and democratically enacted legal basis.** Digital voting cannot rest on executive discretion or informal arrangements; legislation must define its scope, safeguards, institutional responsibilities and procedures for oversight and review. Here, the requirement of an explicit assessment of constitutional compatibility was emphasised, particularly where constitutional norms implicitly assume secrecy and physical supervision of the ballot.
- **Full respect for the core electoral principles.** Universality, equality, freedom, secrecy and directness function as substantive constraints on system design: universality requires that every eligible voter can actually access and use the system; equality that no voter's influence is distorted by technological disparities; and freedom that voters are protected against coercion in the uncontrolled environments in which remote voting takes place.
- **Transparency and verifiability.** Elections must be not only fair but demonstrably fair. Voters, parties, observers and courts must be able to verify that votes are correctly cast, recorded and counted, through both individual and system-wide verification - without which effective judicial review and the resolution of electoral disputes become impossible. A remark about the project's own survey confirmed transparency and verifiability as priorities for participants.
- **Independent oversight and institutional accountability.** Continuous supervision by impartial, adequately resourced bodies (e.g., electoral commissions, constitutional courts, cybersecurity authorities and data-protection agencies), with real power to audit, certify, investigate irregularities and, where necessary, suspend or invalidate results. Without credible oversight, it was pointed out that legal guarantees become "empty declarations."
- **Proportionate security and data protection.** The state bears a positive obligation to protect elections against internal and external threats - cyber-attacks, unauthorised access, manipulation and insider risk - at a level proportionate to the constitutional significance of an election, not a minimal one. Failures here, it was argued, are not mere technical defects but potential violations of fundamental democratic rights, and the system must comply with GDPR and privacy standards.

The speaker's overarching argument was that these conditions only hold within a broader environment of rule of law, institutional stability and credibility. In a memorable formulation, he described digital voting as “parasitic on the quality of the legal system as a whole”: it cannot compensate for systemic deficiencies, so where courts are not independent or oversight is politicised, even a well-engineered system will fail to achieve legitimacy. A system may therefore function flawlessly in technical terms and still not be legitimate in a constitutional democracy.

3. The information environment and the “integrity of consent” (Alessia Sciamanna)

Alessia Sciamanna shifted the discussion from the security of the vote to the conditions under which the voter’s will is formed in the first place. Building explicitly on Professor Serowaniec’s legal foundation, she argued that digital, internet and mobile voting all require citizens to navigate digital environments that are governed by large technology platforms, such as “de facto sovereigns” and parastatal entities that now manage much of the public infrastructure of democracy. Her central diagnosis was a systemic shift “from the rule of law to the terms of service.”

From this she developed the concept of the “integrity of consent”: the proposition that democratic legitimacy depends on protecting the formation of political will before the citizen ever reaches the digital ballot box, and not only on securing the act of voting itself. Because code is not neutral but a normative device that orients behaviour, the opacity of recommendation algorithms (e.g., operating through filter bubbles, micro-targeting, misinformation and echo chambers) does not merely reflect citizens’ preferences but can actively shape their will, fragmenting the public sphere into automated silos. She offered Brexit as a cautionary example, arguing that algorithmic manipulation breached the “immaterial borders” of democratic will and ultimately reshaped the Union’s physical borders. The deeper risk, in her account, is not a citizen’s decision to vote but what they are induced to vote for, which can affect every other right.

Crucially, Sciamanna treated these as matters of public law that must be reclaimed from “private ordering,” and set out a concrete, three-layered programme for the future:

- **Use the existing EU framework - the “digital quadrilateral”.** The DSA, DMA, AI Act and Data Act were pointed out as defensive shields, singling out the Digital Services Act (which opens the “black box” of the algorithm and imposes a systemic duty of care to mitigate risks to elections) and the AI Act (which draws red lines against AI systems capable of manipulating election results).
- **Move “from the shield to the sword”.** Beyond defensive regulation, appeals for a proactive reclaiming of the public sphere were made - for example, extending the principle of pre-election “electoral silence” into the digital world by obliging platforms to freeze recommendation algorithms, behavioural advertising and micro-targeting for a fixed window before the ballot, so that citizens can make a calm, conscious choice.
- **Protect the citizen’s “cognitive sovereignty”.** Investment in digital literacy, reframed not as a technical skill but as a procedural safeguard for democracy, enabling citizens to navigate the “infodemic” and recognise manipulation. Without conscious citizens, she argued, accountability remains a utopia.

The speaker closed by commending awareness-raising projects such as DIGIVOTE as genuinely valuable inputs for policymakers designing effective interventions and concrete regulation.

4. The user perspective and accessibility (Margarita Osipova)

Margarita Osipova brought the perspective of human-computer interaction, positioning herself as a “user’s advocate” whose area of expertise asks about what people actually want from a system, what they expect, and where the tensions and failure points lie. Her contribution was a methodological challenge to the rest of the panel, questioning whether digital voting succeeds depends less on the elegance of the system than on a disciplined, evidence-led understanding of the people expected to use it.

She drew out two ideas in particular. The first was the digital divide as a design problem rather than a slogan: designers routinely assume that everyone has smartphones, laptops and working connectivity, yet these assumptions fail in practice - Osipova cited a recent conference whose entire participatory exercise collapsed because the venue Wi-Fi broke. For a system intended for “everyone,” such constraints must be researched and designed around before any later step, by first establishing who the audience actually is. The second was the Technology Acceptance Model: people do not adopt a technology simply because it exists and

is convenient; they must first perceive it as useful and as easy to use, and only then form an intention to use it.

The speaker illustrated this precondition with her own small study of participation in local decisions (such as whether to build a park), in which the generational gap was stark: younger citizens valued being able to engage and vote digitally, while older participants preferred a paper letter through the mailbox. The lesson drawn is that the designer's job is to address all citizens, and not a self-selecting digital group. Rather than firm conclusions, Osipova offered the project a research agenda - to identify the relevant stakeholders and the tensions between their expectations, to map distinct user groups against accessibility and inclusivity needs, and above all to recognise that "trust" has no single definition: it varies with values, life history, experience, background and ability, and must be investigated empirically with the very people a system is designed for.

5. Comprehensibility and the German case (Moritz Borchardt)

Moritz Borchardt, the panel's only non-academic voice and an educator working in international youth work and human-rights education, reflected on Germany's experience. He recalled that electronic voting machines (first used in 2005) were effectively prohibited following the Federal Constitutional Court's 2009 ruling, and identified the decisive argument as comprehensibility: how votes are cast and counted, and how the counting machines work, must be understandable to the broader public - by non-experts, and not only specialists.

From this he built the strongest sceptical case of the day. Elections, he argued, are "the operating system of our society" and therefore cannot be designed for the technically literate. Most voters are not academics, and a system that the supermarket cashier cannot understand is not democratically acceptable, however secure it may be. Borchardt had seen highly capable people fail basic digital tasks, and insisted that the design must account for demography, disability, rural connectivity and the simply non-expert. Estonia, he acknowledged, is a genuine success - but precisely because its population has become accustomed to e-governance. He contrasted this case with very different difficulties elsewhere (citing connectivity problems, and the contrasting case of South Africa) to argue that cultural readiness cannot be assumed across Europe.

Echoing Sciamanna, he argued that the challenge is not only legal or technical but social: societies need "social technologies" (shared habits for handling information

overload and disinformation) before moving towards e-voting, and regulation alone is insufficient. His sharpest point was procedural and democratic: the decision whether to adopt digital voting must itself include everyone, not just a pro-technology, university-educated minority; ideally it should be put to the whole public. As an educator, he framed his role as widening options and understanding rather than prescribing choices - “talk with people, not about them.”

Open Exchange

The most distinctive part of the event was the extended moderated exchange that followed the contributions, in which panellists engaged each other directly and responded to audience questions from the chat. Far from producing consensus, it exposed genuine and instructive fault lines - the disagreements that the project will need to address head-on. Four threads stood out.

Is voting a private act or a social ritual?

Prompted by a participant’s question about voting as a social practice, Polynin argued that i-voting “doesn’t turn you aloof” and questioned how social conventional voting really is - citing colleagues at the University of Tartu whose research concentrates on turnout and impact. Borchardt pushed back forcefully: as a disabled person he is content to queue briefly, and he defended the in-person ballot as a civic ritual with “spiritual, philosophical meaning” - going somewhere and sharing the act with neighbours, including those ones never speaks to - that logging into an account cannot replicate. He also reframed the accessibility argument: where queues genuinely exclude disabled voters, that is a failure to invest in public infrastructure, and digital voting then becomes attractive because of other failures. Polynin countered that secrecy is protected in the booth, not the room, and turned the comprehensibility point around: few citizens fully understand existing bureaucratic voting either, yet the law lets observers watch the count in person - “I can’t see the electrons flow” in an app. The coordinator added a practical observation from advance voting in Slovenia, where roughly a hundred people shared a single hall and curtain, suggesting that the home environment can in fact be calmer, provided freedom from undue influence is guaranteed.

Comprehensibility as the decisive obstacle

Borchardt stated that he could accept the technical and secrecy aspects, but that comprehensibility kept him firmly undecided: everybody - “ideally literally everybody” - must be able to understand how the system works. He stressed that he holds this position despite being left leaning and despite believing digital voting might benefit his own side, because, in his words, voting “cannot be about political preferences.” Polynin offered the counterargument that comprehension is learned, not innate - “Estonians are not born with the knowledge of e-voting; it’s taught” - and expressed confidence that, given adequate resources for civic education, any electorate could acquire it. The coordinator reinforced both points: the know-how demonstrably exists (online banking, the Estonian model), but a long transition and a degree of national consensus on direction are prerequisites.

The limits of the banking analogy

Osipova challenged the recurring comparison between digital voting and online banking. Banking adoption, she noted, was driven by market incentives and began with a narrow group of early adopters before the industry was forced to make services broadly accessible; digital voting enjoys no such commercial engine and must engage a broad and diverse public from the outset. This makes the adoption challenge harder, not easier - and, she suggested, points to the need for deeper, contextualised research into people’s actual experiences as a possible focus for a future panel.

Supporting the most vulnerable through the transition

Sciamanna and the coordinator converged on the practical question of how to bring the “silver generation” and the digitally excluded along. Drawing on the digitalisation of healthcare during the pandemic - where, she noted, even an advanced system like Italy’s is still wrestling with the same issues six years on - Sciamanna argued that the move from paper to digital is necessarily a slow, supported transition rather than a one- or two-year switch, with resistance strongest among those with least access to education. Her proposed remedies were concrete: officially certified, trained assistants who can support people in person using certified devices and proper handling of personal data, and a dense network of small local access points (in municipal spaces, community venues and the like) modelled on functioning healthcare schemes. The coordinator endorsed the gradualist view, citing the disruption caused in Slovenia when a health portal abruptly became the only channel to reach doctors, and agreed with Borchardt

that a national consensus on direction - never unanimous, but real - is needed before such steps.

Key Themes and Findings

Across the contributions and the open exchange, several themes recurred with enough force to be treated as findings of the event.

- **Trust is multidimensional and cannot be reduced to security.** Every panellist located trust beyond the technical layer - in the legal order (Serowaniec), the information environment (Sciamanna), the user's lived experience (Osipova) and public comprehensibility (Borchardt). The clear consensus was that a technically secure system that citizens cannot understand, verify or form their will freely within is not a legitimate one.
- **The Estonian case is a proof of concept, not a template.** It demonstrates that high adoption and integration are achievable, but speakers repeatedly stressed that its success rests on a mature e-governance ecosystem and long societal adaptation that cannot simply be exported.
- **The decisive risks are societal as much as technical.** Cyber-security and the secrecy of the vote matter, but the discussion gave equal weight to the digital divide, uneven digital literacy, algorithmic manipulation of opinion, and the exclusion of non-expert and vulnerable citizens.
- **Legitimacy is formed before, during and after the vote.** Sciamanna's "integrity of consent" and Serowaniec's insistence on verifiability together frame digital voting as a continuous process - protecting opinion-formation upstream, securing the act of voting, and guaranteeing auditability downstream.
- **Inclusion is a precondition, not an afterthought.** Osipova's user-research agenda and Borchardt's demand for whole-of-society decision-making converge on the principle that the design - and the decision to adopt - must involve the full electorate, with particular attention to those most at risk of exclusion.

These findings were corroborated by the live participatory survey. Of the 113 attendees, around 41 engaged with the survey. Respondents most often associated digital voting with "accessibility," "trust" and "democracy" - mirroring the themes of the discussion - while "security" was simultaneously the most

common single concern and the factor most frequently named as something that would make people more willing to vote digitally. A clear majority were receptive in principle (25 of 35 respondents to the relevant question answered positively), yet an overwhelming share asked the project to focus future work on “security and transparency.” The full results are reproduced in Appendix 2.

Policy Implications for Future Digital Voting Initiatives

The discussions and survey results suggest several policy priorities that should guide future debates and potential implementation pathways for digital voting systems in Europe.

- **Trust must be approached as a multidimensional policy objective.** Future initiatives should address not only technical security, but also legal legitimacy, transparency, public comprehensibility, accessibility, and citizens’ confidence in democratic institutions.
- **Security and transparency should remain the primary policy priorities.** Survey participants consistently identified these two dimensions as the most important conditions for greater acceptance of digital voting. Future policy development should therefore prioritise verifiable audit mechanisms, independent oversight structures, and clear accountability procedures.
- **Digital voting should be developed within robust legal and constitutional frameworks.** Any future deployment should be supported by clear legislation, constitutional safeguards, effective judicial review mechanisms, and compliance with data protection standards, including GDPR requirements.
- **Inclusion and accessibility should be treated as preconditions rather than supplementary objectives.** Policymakers should ensure that digital voting solutions are designed with diverse user groups in mind, including older citizens, persons with disabilities, citizens living abroad, and individuals with lower levels of digital literacy.
- **Digital literacy and civic education should accompany technological innovation.** The event highlighted the importance of equipping citizens

with the skills needed to understand digital democratic processes, evaluate online information critically, and participate confidently in digital environments.

- **The broader digital information environment requires policy attention.** Measures addressing misinformation, algorithmic manipulation, and opaque platform practices should be considered as part of any comprehensive strategy aimed at safeguarding democratic participation in digital contexts.
- **A gradual and evidence-based transition is preferable to rapid implementation.** The experience of Estonia demonstrates that successful digital voting systems are embedded within broader digital governance ecosystems and require long-term societal adaptation, public trust, and institutional readiness.
- **Future policy discussions should continue to involve citizens directly.** The event demonstrated the value of participatory dialogue and public consultation in identifying concerns, expectations, and priorities related to digital voting. Such engagement should remain a central component of future policy development processes.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The “Voting Reimagined” event achieved what a launch event for a project of this kind should: it did not flatten a complex question into a comfortable answer, but surfaced the real tensions that any move towards digital voting must resolve, and it did so in front of, and with, the public it concerns. The deliberate confrontation of five disciplines produced a richer and more honest picture than a single-perspective seminar could have - and, crucially, it generated material that directly shapes the project’s next phase.

Added value of the event

- **A structured evidence base, not just a discussion.** The event paired expert input with a live survey, so that participant attitudes were captured against the very themes the experts raised. This produces a baseline reading of public perception - receptive in principle, but conditional on security and transparency - that the project can now build on rather than assume.

- **A clearly mapped problem space.** The five-layer framing (practical, legal, informational, user-centred, civic) and the four points of expert disagreement give the consortium a concrete, prioritised agenda - comprehensibility, the integrity of consent, inclusive transition, and verifiable security - rather than a generic call for “more research.”
- **Genuine transnational reach and engagement.** 113 participants from 15 countries, weighted towards students and younger citizens, demonstrate that the project is reaching the demographic most likely to adopt digital voting and most able to influence its trajectory - and that there is real public appetite for the conversation.
- **Actionable, policy-relevant proposals.** Several contributions translated directly into policy language an evaluator and a policymaker can use: Serowaniec’s five legal conditions for legitimacy, Sciamanna’s shield-to-sword regulatory programme and digital-literacy-as-safeguard, Osipova’s user-research methodology, and Borchardt’s principle of whole-of-society decision-making.

How the event contributes to the future of the project

The event was explicitly designed as the first stage of a sequenced engagement cycle, and its outputs feed each subsequent stage:

- **Directly into the DIGIVOTE survey.** The survey presented live at the event is now being disseminated more widely to participants and their networks. The themes that dominated the discussion - security, transparency, verifiability, the digital divide and support for vulnerable voters - are precisely those the survey instrument probes, so the event both validated the survey’s focus and helped recruit respondents to it.
- **Into national-level events in partner countries.** The next stage moves from this pan-European online conversation into in-person, national events that will test the same themes in specific legal, cultural and demographic contexts - including the questions of age, comprehensibility and trust that the panel could only open here.

Assessing Participants' Receptivity of Digital Voting

The online event included an initial participatory survey, delineating a general perception of participants' relation with digital voting. Out of 113 attendees, around 41 participants have variably answered the survey.

A general reading of the results show that most of the respondents were students. This aspect demonstrates the reach of the event to the wider younger population and their interest in the topic. "Accessibility", "trust" and "democracy" were the three main words immediately associated with digital voting, aligning with the central themes debated throughout the session. The majority of the participants exhibited high levels of receptivity, with around 25 out of 35 respondents answering positively to digital voting. An overwhelming percentage of the respondents have denounced their interest in discussions around the "security and transparency" of virtual voting systems, with "security" also serving as the main concern for voting digitally.

A comprehensive description of the results has been produced and divulged in a separate document (see Appendix 2).

Project Consortium

The DIGIVOTE consortium brings together academic, civil society, and human rights expertise from across Europe:

EMUNI University (Slovenia) - Project Coordinator



FECE (Bulgaria)



Estonian Human Rights Centre (Estonia)



ESTONIAN HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE



Co-funded by
the European Union

Odyssea (Greece)



PRO RIGHTS (Italy)



Culture Goes Europe (Germany)

Nicolaus Copernicus University
(Poland)

This project is funded by the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) Programme of the European Union. The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the European Commission can be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Appendix

Appendix 1. Event description sheet

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.)

 *Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).)*

PROJECT	
Participant:	6 - CGE e.V. (Culture Goes Europe)
PIC number:	932617074
Project name and acronym:	Enhancing Trust, Transparency, and Engagement in Digital Voting - DIGIVOTE

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	2



Co-funded by
the European Union

Event name:	Online event: "Voting Reimagined: Public Conversation on Digital Conversation"
Type:	Expert public discussion
In situ/online:	Online
Location:	Zoom environment
Date(s):	23.04.26
Website(s) (if any):	https://www.cge-erfurt.org/digivote/
Participants	
Female:	69
Male:	42
Non-binary:	2
From country 1 [Germany]:	34
From country 2 [Bulgaria]:	10
From country 3 [Poland]:	21
From country 4: [Greece]:	10
From country 5: [Slovenia]:	18
From country 6: [Italy]:	9
From country 7: [Sweden]:	3
From country 8: [Estonia]:	1
From country 9: [Switzerland]:	1
From country 10: [Lithuania]:	1
From country 11: [Malta]:	1
From country 12: [Croatia]:	1
From country 13: [Spain]:	1
From country 14: [Latvia]:	1

From country 15: [Lithuania]:	1		
Total number of participants:	113	From total number of countries:	15
Description <i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>			
The online public event “Voting Reimagined: A Public Conversation on Digital Voting”, organised under WP2 (Voting Reimagined: Starting the Digital Conversation), took place on 23 April 2026 in an online format via Zoom. The event aimed to initiate a broad and inclusive discussion on digital voting, democratic legitimacy, public trust, accessibility, and institutional transparency in the context of evolving democratic systems in Europe. The event brought together 113 participants from 15 countries, including representatives from academia, civil society organisations, students, researchers, youth workers, digital democracy practitioners, and members of the general public. The programme combined expert input with interactive participation and public dialogue. The event opened with a presentation of the DIGIVOTE project objectives and the broader goals of the CERV programme. This was followed by an expert panel discussion featuring speakers from Estonia, Germany, Italy, and Poland, who addressed practical, legal, societal, and technological dimensions of digital voting systems. The discussions focused on topics such as: • public trust and democratic legitimacy in digital voting systems; • cybersecurity, secrecy, and transparency of online voting; • constitutional and legal considerations; • accessibility and inclusion in digital democratic participation; • digital literacy, misinformation, and the integrity of political discourse; • user-centred design and public understanding of voting technologies. Speakers provided comparative perspectives and highlighted both the opportunities and the structural risks related to electoral digitalisation. Particular attention was given to the Estonian experience with internet voting and to the German constitutional approach to transparency and public verifiability in elections. The event also included the presentation of an online participatory survey aimed at collecting citizens’ perceptions and attitudes towards digital voting. Participants then engaged in a moderated Q&A session and open discussion, contributing reflections and questions regarding the future of digital democracy in Europe. The activity contributed to the objectives of WP2 by: • initiating a transnational public dialogue on digital voting; • increasing awareness regarding democratic and technological challenges related to electoral digitalisation;			

- engaging citizens and stakeholders in evidence-based discussion;

We had 113 participants from 15 countries, including Germany, Poland, Slovenia, Greece, Italy, Bulgaria, Sweden, Estonia, Malta, Croatia, Spain, Latvia, Lithuania, Switzerland, and others.

Participants included:

- 42 male participants;
- 69 female participants;
- 2 participants identifying as other gender identities.

The event involved speakers, researchers, consortium representatives, civil society actors, students, and members of the wider public.

Country	Gender	Speaker / Other direct participant	N. of participants
Germany	Male	Speaker	2
Germany	Female	Speaker	1
Germany	Male	Other participant direct	15
Germany	Female	Other participant direct	16
Bulgaria	Male	Other participant direct	2
Bulgaria	Female	Other participant direct	8
Poland	Male	Speaker	1
Poland	Male	Other participant direct	8
Poland	Female	Other participant direct	12

Greece	Male	Other participant	direct	3
Greece	Female	Other participant	direct	7
Slovenia	Male	Other participant	direct	10
Slovenia	Female	Other participant	direct	8
Italy	Male	Other participant	direct	3
Italy	Female	Other participant	direct	7
Estonia	Male	Speaker		1
Malta	Female	Speaker		1
Sweden	Female	Other participant	direct	3
Lithuania	Male	Other participant	direct	1
Switzerland	Female	Other participant	direct	1
Croatia	Female	Other participant	direct	1
Spain	Female	Other participant	direct	1
Latvia	Female	Other participant	direct	1

COUNTRIES	N. OF PARTICIPANTS
Germany	34
Bulgaria	10
Poland	21
Greece	10
Slovenia	18
Italy	9
Sweden	3
Estonia	1
Switzerland	1
Lithuania	1
Malta	1
Croatia	1
Spain	1
Latvia	1
Lithuania	1
SUM	113

Appendix 2. - Detailed Overview of the Results from the Online Survey (Mentimeter)

The following table visually details the results obtained through the initial survey, employed to the participants during the webinar “Voting Reimagined: A Public Conversation on Digital Voting”, part of the European Union’s “DigiVote” project.

The survey counted with a total of 41 respondents, yet answers were given variably to each question. The results are shown by descending frequency (highest to lower).

Question 1. “How would you describe your connection to today's topic of Digital Voting?” (Closed question)

Option	n of respondents
Students	6
Civil Society/NGO	5
Interested Citizens	2
Researcher/Academic	1
Public Administration/Government	0
TOTAL:	23 / 41 respondents

Question 2. "What is the 'one word' that comes to mind when you think about digital voting?" (Open question)

Responses	n of answers
Accessibility* (with variations in wording)	8
Trust	5
Democracy	4
Easy* (with variations in wording)	3
Fast* (with variations in wording)	2
Flexibility* (with variations in wording)	2
Fraud* (with variations in wording)	2
Hacking* (with variations in wording)	2
Risk* (with variations in wording)	2
Voting* (with variations in wording)	2
Better	1
Convenient	1
Corruption	1
Fear	1
Forbidden	1
Helpful	1
Innovation	1
Modern	1
Phone	1
Questionable	1
Reliable	1
Responsability	1
Scam	1
Security	1
Technology	1
Transparency	1
Vulnerability	1

Responses	n of answers
Holidays also	1
Yay	1
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>51 answers out of 30 participants</i>

Question 3. "Digital Voting: Yay or Nay?"

(Closed question)

Option	n of respondents
Yay	25
Nay	10
<i>TOTAL:</i>	<i>35 / 41 respondents</i>

Question 4. "Which aspects of today's discussion would you like us to focus on more?"

(Closed question)

Option	n of respondents
Security & Transparency	22
Accessibility & Inclusion	5
Future Scenarios	3
Differences Across Europe	2
Trust	0
<i>TOTAL:</i>	<i>32 / 41 respondents</i>

Question 5. "What is one thing that would make you more likely to vote digitally?"

(Open question)

Responses	N of respondents
Security * (with variations in wording)	16
Transparency* (with variations in wording)	5
Easy access	2
Emigration* (with variations in wording)	3

Responses	N of respondents
Easier process	1
Correct environment	1
Fair elections	1
Flexibility	1
GDPR	1
Lower risk of cyberattack	1
No external interference	1
Not sure that exists	1
Privacy	1
Regional decisions	1
Soft politics	1
Step-by-steps guidelines	1
Who is the contractor	1
Freebies	1
TOTAL:	<i>41 answers of 30 respondents</i>

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	29.5.2026	Prepared report for the submission to EC