

## **TITLE OF PROJECT: *Deliberative poll: National EU debate***

**OBJECTIVE:** Increasing the involvement of the expert and general public in a deliberative poll regarding the gains and losses of Macedonia's EU accession. By doing so, it will contribute to strengthening the culture of informed public debate in the Republic of Macedonia.

**RATIONALE:** This project aims to remedy the lack of debate and inclusiveness of the wider public in the public policy process in Republic of Macedonia. The situation regarding inclusion of the wider public, as well as the existing of an argumentative debate about the EU accession process, has worsened further, due to the backsliding in the accession process as a result of the combination of domestic issues and the name issue. The wider public – as target group of the proposed action – is mostly excluded from debates about the EU. Moreover, there has been a lack of accessible and objective data and information about the EU. This project will provide a model of consulting and informing the public, which will contribute in bridging the gap between the issue of chronic lack of consultation and debate, especially when it comes to EU related issues.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The project has been envisaged as a forum for exchange of ideas so to enable constituencies to be directly engaged in the process of public debate. It aims to increase the involvement of experts and the wider public in Macedonia through an innovative method – deliberative polling<sup>1</sup> by fostering discussion on the gains and losses of EU accession process. It will contribute towards more knowledge and understanding on the changes of positions and opinions by both experts and the wider public. This will be achieved through an informed discussion on the gains and losses from EU accession; increased inclusion of experts and the wider public in the public debate about the EU, as well as increased knowledge of the wider public on the gains and losses from EU accession<sup>2</sup>.

The results from the action will be publicly available and presented in accessible and **understandable way** to the general public through traditional, electronic and social media. This innovative method will be supported by the Stanford University Centre for Deliberative Democracy.

By implementing the deliberative polling as a innovative method in the public debate in Macedonia, the proposed action will establish a new practice in the public consultation process in the country. Moreover, this will directly contribute in EPI's work as an organization that actively participates in the national public debate on EU in line with its organisational mission. Final results from this action will be integrated into EPI, thus contributing towards enhanced capacities to further engage the general public and constituencies into the public debate.

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<sup>1</sup> Using the method of deliberative polling, see <http://cdd.stanford.edu/what-is-deliberative-polling/>. This particular method has been internationally recognized as an effective mean for public consultations that enables citizens in the further engagement in similar public initiatives. At the same time, it has been recognized to contributed towards efficiency of engagement in the process of public policy as a significant societal change in long run

<sup>2</sup> For more, please see: <http://participedia.net/en/methods/deliberative-polling>