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PRESS RELEASE

Epidemic preparedness and response: Europe listens to the citizens' voice

ASSET project will organize [citizen' consultations](#) on issues related to pandemic and epidemic preparedness and response in 8 European countries on 24th September.

The event will involve 50 women and men from each country, representative of the whole national population, according to a method developed and tested by the Danish Board of Technology Foundation (DBT). All the participants will voice their opinion, at the same time and with the same procedure, on a series of very important themes related to epidemics in four areas:

- **Personal freedom and public health safety.** In case of infectious threats a conflict between public health safety and personal freedom can be inevitable: which are citizens attitudes toward each issue of concern (i.e. making vaccination compulsory in case of pandemic);
- **Communication between citizens and public health authorities.** In the past, top-down and reticent communication from public health authorities impaired public trust and effective response to infectious threats. So, it is important to understand what kind of information people would like to receive, through which channels, and also if they feel they should provide information as well;
- **Transparency in public health.** Conflict of interest between industry and authorities, as well as the occasional need of silence for security purposes will be discussed in this session, when citizens will be asked also on the usefulness of initiative such as ASSET project to improve dialogue.
- **Access to knowledge.** Some questions in this session will explore the source of information used by citizens and their willingness to receive also unproved pieces of information.

An **Open session** will allow citizens participating to the consultation to provide policy makers with what they think are the most important recommendation. All the answers will be collected into a database, analysed and then discussed with a delegation of the European Parliament in spring 2017.

For any further information, please visit our website (<http://www.asset-scienceinsociety.eu/>)

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