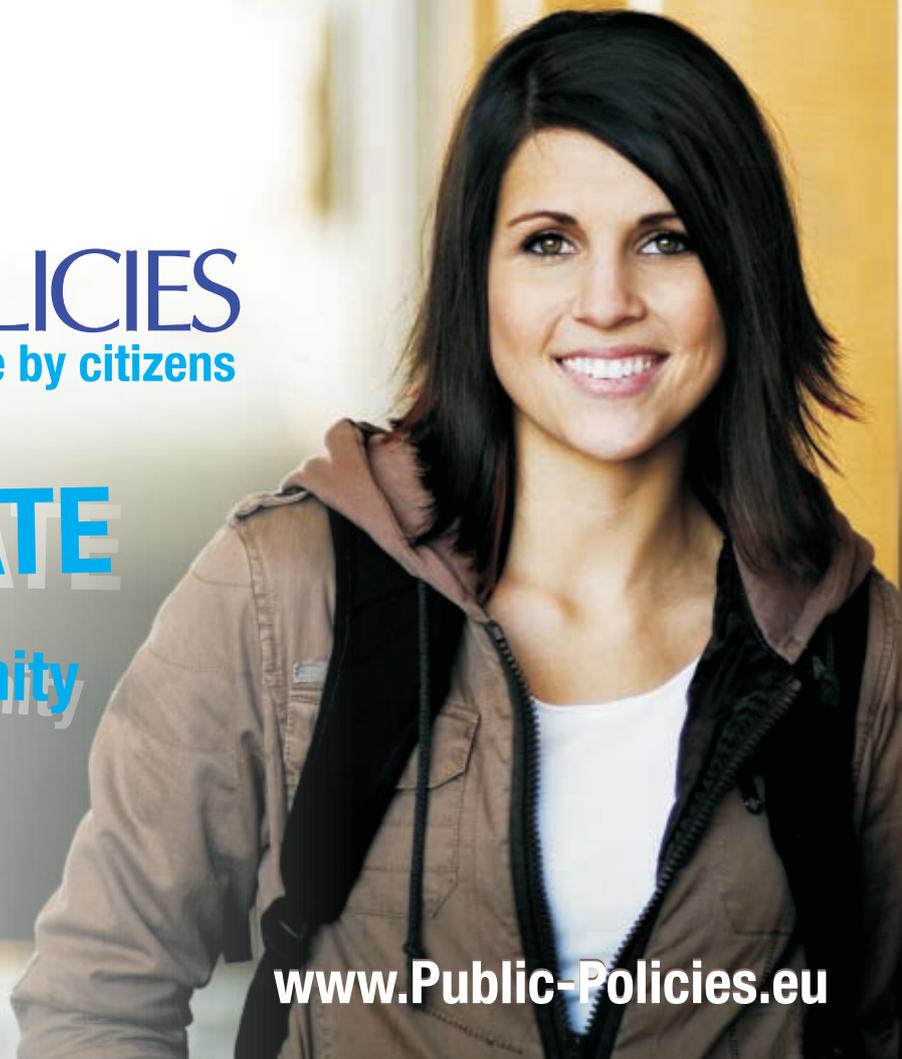


# PUBLIC POLICIES

made by citizens

# PARTICIPATE

in the life  
of your community



Project financed by the European Commission  
through Youth in Action Programme

[www.Public-Policies.eu](http://www.Public-Policies.eu)

# about US The Management Team

“Public Policies Made by Citizens” is the name of the online participation platform that serves “SMART Method of Public Policy” which is a combination of online with offline citizen engagement.

The Management Team of “SMART Method of Public Policy” at a European level is formed by the core group that is developing the project “Public Policies Made by Citizens” under the framework of European Commission's Youth in Action Programme. The team is responsible for approving the problems and the solutions that citizens are offering on the European citizen engagement platform [www.Public-Policies.eu](http://www.Public-Policies.eu), as well as for sending out policy papers.



**Radu Oprea**  
Founder of “SMART Method of Public Policy”  
**Country: Romania**

The idea of “SMART Method of Public Policy” came to me in 2007, when I was doing my summer internship at Los Angeles Mayor's Office and also working at Drescher Library at Pepperdine University, in Malibu, CA. Thus, I came across a book called “Citizen Lobbyists. Local Efforts to Influence Public Policy” written by Brian E. Adams. It was my first contact with the field of participative democracy and learned that people do not get involved in the lives of their communities mainly due to lack of time and money. In Fall 2007, I took a class in Deliberative Democracy and studied various methods of participation, most of them based on face-to-face meetings. SMART Method was developed to benefit from an online citizen engagement platform that allows citizens to raise problems of public concern and offer solutions, at every level of government. I hold a Master of Public Policy Degree from Pepperdine University in Malibu, CA, United States and I am currently a PhD Candidate in Economics, at Lower Danube University from Galati, Romania.

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I am currently a student in project management and European studies, involved in the board of the national students union of France and working as an elected member of the board of the mutual insurance company for students in Paris. I am also a participant in various European projects.

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I am currently managing international projects at the Italian non-profit organization e-Medine in fields like sport, youth in action and lifelong learning. I am also preparing new project proposals and am always looking for new possibilities of cooperation in the field of education and research. I graduated at Slovak Agricultural University at the Faculty of Economics.

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**Iulian Cazacu**  
President of SMART Development Center  
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I founded SMART Development Center in 2003, to bring a contribution to raising the level of civic participation among citizens. I strongly believe that we can be more active if we have access to more efficient means of expressing our opinions. Ever since 1999, I have been involved in various projects for student, youth and professional organizations. Besides SMART Development Center, I am a close partner of the Young Entrepreneurs from Romania Association, the Association of Sustainable Development from Slatina and the Group of Young People's Social Debate. I am also a consultant of information technology and advertising.

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# background

**In our vision, public policy simply means solving problems of public concern.** We want to use our efforts to find those solutions that are feasible, valuable and sustainable, and that have a higher impact to our lives. We also want this process to be based on the active participation of every day citizens, who would offer a direction to the best line of action.

It is well known that we play limited roles in public life. We are usually called upon during elections to vote and influence the public policies for the next years. But, during an elected term, we do not have efficient means to influence important decisions that affect our communities, be it at a local, national or international level. If we are lucky, some elected or appointed officials really encourage participation projects and we manage to make our voices heard in the community and influence public policies.

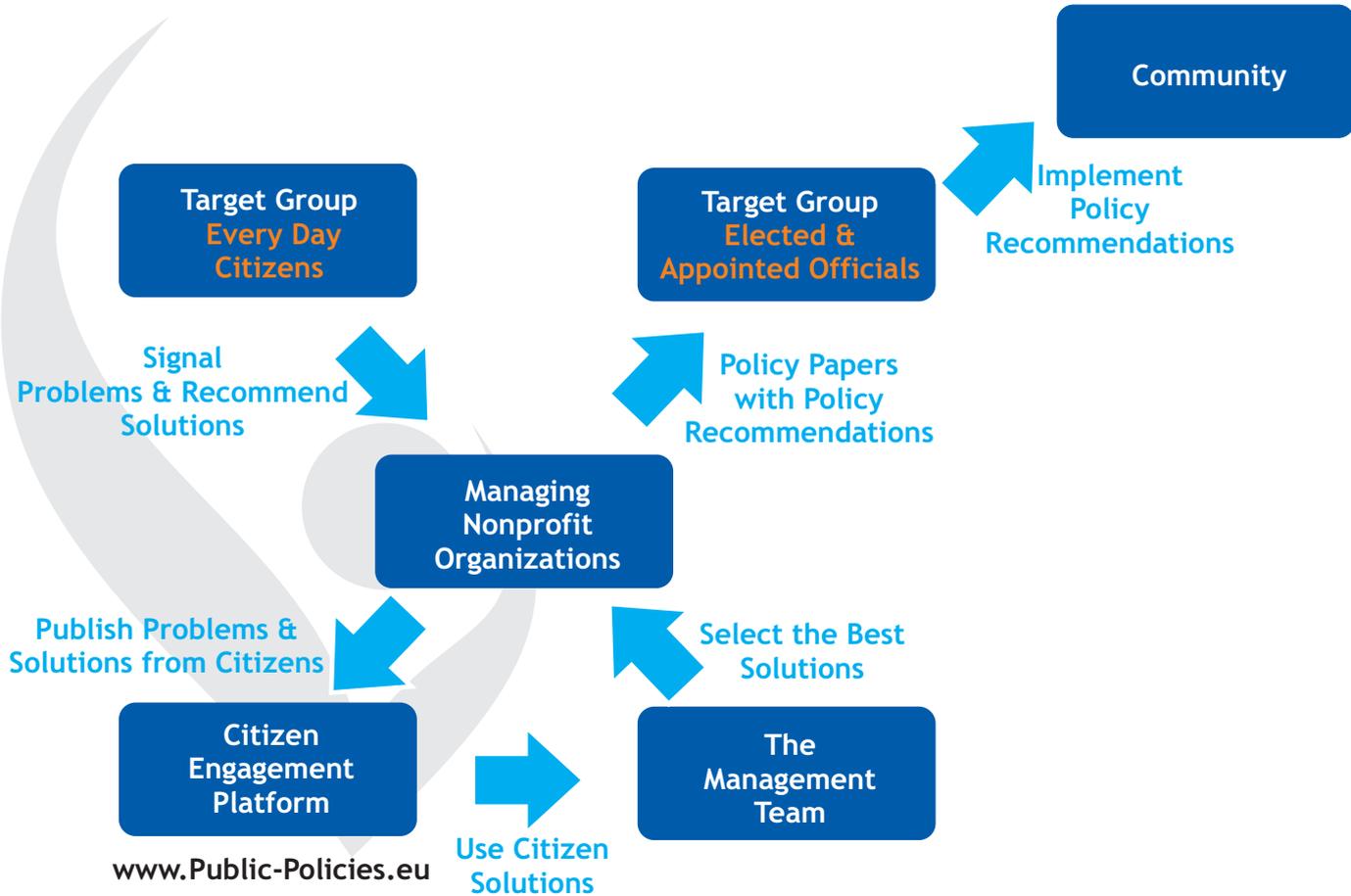
We also encounter a limited access to the decision making process that affects our daily life. This is due to circumstantial and personal matters. The circumstantial problems are based on a lack of efficient means to offer our feedback to problems of public concern. The personal matters are based on "lower socioeconomic status of the citizens who want to participate, lack of impact of personal participation compared to collective participation, limited time and money, lack of information and knowledge about issues, and lack of confidence in people's ability to be effective" (Brian Adams, "Citizen Lobbyists. Local efforts to influence public policy").

## SMART Method of Public Policy

# brief presentation

The website, [www.Public-Policies.eu](http://www.Public-Policies.eu), is the backbone of our method and offers two important services:

- It allows any person to raise a problem of public concern that needs a valuable, sustainable and feasible solution, accessing the "Raise a problem to our team" link.
- It allows any person to recommend a solution to the existing problems that are published on the website.



Once we have enough solution proposals for any given problem of public concern published on the citizen engagement platform, our project team follows the next steps to support and endorse the best solutions:

1. First, we analyze each solution proposal individually, and consider those that are valuable, sustainable and feasible.
2. Once our team decides upon the best solution, we create a policy paper. This describes the problem along with the best solutions given by the citizens. It also contains a recommendation at the end based on the careful analysis of ethical criteria.
3. In the next step, we start building awareness around our solution, so we send the policy paper to elected and appointed officials, to implement our solution.
4. We also archive the policy paper on **www.Public-Policies.eu** for public review.
5. We publish every official response on the page of the problem. The problem poster has the option to either approve the response if he/she is pleased with the feedback of the authorities or reject the response, motivating his/her decision. If rejected, the participation process is started all over again.



Photo: The International Workshop “Public Policies Made by Citizens”, Moeciu, May 2010, Romania.

# step-by-step presentation



On the citizen engagement platform that serves “SMART Method of Public Policy” at [www.Public-Policies.eu](http://www.Public-Policies.eu), any citizen can raise a problem of European public concern. The problem poster will click the “**Raise a problem to our team**” link available from any page and fill in the problem identification form. This form gathers data that is aimed at creating more leverage to the participation process.

**STEP 1**  Once the form is submitted and afterwards approved by a member of the management team, the problem’s page is automatically created by a script. A status bar indicates step 1 or red color, meaning that the problem meets the criteria of “SMART Method of Public Policy.” The problem’s page has features that allow it to engage the participation process in an interactive and constructive way and to generate leverage in order to determine community action.

**STEP 2**  The lower part of the problem’s page contains the form that allows citizens to publish their solutions. The visitor has the option to write the text of his/her solution and publish it along with name, photo, hyperlink towards a website, and the date the solution was approved by an administrator. Once a solution is published, the status of the problem is switched to orange, or **step 2**.

**STEP 3**  When the problem poster wishes, or when a problem receives a good number of solutions, one of the members of the management team issues a policy paper. This is an official document that analyzes the problem, along with the most valuable, sustainable and feasible solution(s) and recommends a line of action. Once the policy paper is ready, it is sent by fax and email to the public institution that is able to allocate resources and solve the problem. It is also archived on the problem’s page. Once this happens, the status of the problem changes to yellow, or **step 3**.

**STEP 4**  Because the policy paper is sent as an official document, an answer is expected from the public institution that the paper is addressing to. Once an answer is received at the office of the nonprofit organization that sent the policy paper, it is scanned and published on the problem’s page. At this moment, the status bar of the problem changes to light green or **step 4** and the problem poster receives a notification email that gives him/her two options:

**STEP 5**  If satisfied with the answer or with the action of the public institution, he/she will close the problem and nobody is able to offer solutions anymore. The status of the problem changes to dark green or step 5. If not satisfied, then he/she will state the reasons why and the participation process is started all over again from **step 2** or the orange status, until another policy paper is issued and a new answer is received.

# participation problems

SMART Method of Public Policy addresses two major citizen engagement problems:

1. **The lack of participation of every-day people and experts in solving community problems at local, national and international levels.**
2. **The flows of the citizen engagement tools that people and organizations use nowadays.**

Researches show that people don't participate in solving community problems mainly because of **"lower socioeconomic status, lack of impact of personal participation compared to collective participation, limited time and money, lack of information and knowledge about issues, and lack of confidence in their ability to be effective"** (Brian E. Adams, "Citizen Lobbyists. Local efforts to influence public policy"). SMART Method of Public Policy's theory for social change focuses around the individuals, who feel they need to take action and fix what is wrong in the community, but they are limited due to one or more of the reasons mentioned above.

As scholars argue that governments alone cannot solve pressing social problems, SMART Method of Public Policy provides the resources that every-day people need, to bring their knowledge to the table. The problems of local, national or international communities are opportunities for SMART Method. The face-to-face or offline participative democracy models face important challenges that SMART Method of Public Policy tends to minimize:

- Limited time and money - in order to participate in citizen engagement programs, people need to dedicate first of all time. This is a big problem in attracting professionals, as they are usually very engaged in many projects. The projects are also expensive to organize.
- Sometimes, group discussions tend to be polarized by one or few members. This requires facilitators to make sure that everybody's opinion is being heard. However, they are not all the time effective and can be expensive.
- Lack of knowledge about issues. This is more prevalent in the case of offline participation methods that last for short periods of time. The randomly selected people usually do not have enough knowledge about the issues being discussed and there is not enough time to learn about them during the unfolding of the project. The longer the participative democracy process, the more time you have to think about issues and recommend a better solution.
- Lack of ability to be effective. A couple of major factors influence this. One of them is the lack of accountability. Usually, you don't have access to people's data to ask them about the participative democracy process or about the policy they chose. Sometimes, even the project participants are not confident enough in their ability to influence policy. So far, hardly any participative democracy initiative is generating a change of policy.

# advantages

SMART Method of Public Policy allows people with various backgrounds to participate, from PhD professors to unskilled workers. All they need to have in common is the desire to solve community problems. SMART Method of Public Policy allows anybody to choose a public issue of importance to him/her, provides the strategy and the tools to address it, mobilizes other interested people to form a small policy working group and creates an opportunity to build awareness and influence policy.

SMART Method of Public Policy focuses mainly on the quality of the solutions that emerge out of its participation model. These should comply with the three criteria, inspired from Mark Moore's Creating Public Value: be **valuable**, **sustainable** and **feasible**.

The main advantages of SMART Method of Public Policy consist in its cost of use, flexibility in terms of time to offer a solution to a community problem and its educational approach. People use the Method at no cost. Because they can use the participation platform from basically anywhere they have an Internet connection, they offer their input whenever they have time. More over, people can use additional time to do individual research on the issue they want to solve and thus make more informed solution proposals. One important side of the method of participation is its focus on the educational approach. The participation platform offers enough information to show citizens what the policy making steps are and how to work online. This is aimed at offering basic policy skills to all participants, in order to make them more confident in their ability to be effective as a group. Also, the basic information provided on the citizen engagement platforms, helps shorten the educational gap between more educated people and less educated ones.

SMART Method of Public Policy is a combination of online and offline citizen engagement. It benefits from advantages specific to the online dialogue like little to no cost of use, flexibility of participants to give solutions to problems of public concern, educational approach, and interactivity among the participants. At the same time, SMART Method is coping with the disadvantages of offline engagement, like the lack of accountability of the end result of a participation endeavor, limited time and money of participants to offer input in pressing community problems, polarization of discussions, and lack of knowledge about issues.

As the majority of work is done online, the policy making process is pushed further using the authority of a legally established nonprofit organization. This way, the most valuable, sustainable and feasible solution proposals from citizens, are sent to the desks of elected and appointed officials.



Education and Culture DG

'Youth in Action' Programme

# about the project

**SMART Method of Public Policy** is being developed with a grant from the European Commission's Youth in Action Programme, Action 1.3, Projects for Participative Democracy. Before applying for funding, SMART Development Centre established partnership agreements with seven other nonprofit organizations from Romania, Greece, Italy, and France. These are the Students' League from Galati (Romania), e-Medine and ASTAR (Italy), Institute of Entrepreneurship Development and EuroScience (Greece), and Etudiants pour une Société Durable and Etudiants pour une Europe de l'Education (France).

The project has three specific objectives related to creating the citizen engagement platforms for Europe, Romania, Italy, France, and Greece, organizing an international workshop on participative democracy and launching the citizen engagement platforms in Romania, Italy, France, and Greece:

**Objective 1: To develop the final version of the online platforms that facilitate young people's participation at the local, national and European levels.** This is a technical objective that created a hub website at [www.Public-Policies.eu](http://www.Public-Policies.eu) and four other websites linked to it (one for every partner country). Once this objective is met, young people from the partner countries will be able to use SMART Method of Public Policy to offer solutions to problems of European concern and to community problems from their countries. They can also raise community problems important to them, on the same websites.

The participation platform is called "Public Policies Made by Citizens" and is adjusted to allow for participation at European, national and local levels.



The **European citizen engagement platform** is hosted at [www.Public-Policies.eu](http://www.Public-Policies.eu) and allows people to publish problems of European public concern and solutions to them. A problem of European public concern is one that can be solved by, or addressed to, a European institution. Support is provided for participation in English, French, Italian, Romanian, and Greek. Any person can use it for problem and solution identification.





**POLITICI PUBLICE**  
făcute de cetățeni

The Romanian citizen engagement platform is hosted at [www.PoliticiPublice.ro](http://www.PoliticiPublice.ro) and allows for participation at national and local levels.

**POLITICHE PUBBLICHE**  
fatte dai cittadini

The Italian citizen engagement platform is hosted at [www.Politiche-Pubbliche.it](http://www.Politiche-Pubbliche.it) and allows for participation at national and local levels.

**POLITIQUES PUBLIQUES**  
à l'initiative des citoyens

The French citizen engagement platform is hosted at [www.PolitiquesPubliques.fr](http://www.PolitiquesPubliques.fr) and allows for participation at national and local levels.

**Δημόσιες Πολιτικές**  
προερχόμενες από τους πολίτες

The Greek citizen engagement platform is hosted at [www.Public-Policies.gr](http://www.Public-Policies.gr) and allows for participation at national and local levels.

**Objective 2: To organize a youth participation workshop in Romania, to exchange experiences, good practice examples and challenges of young people participation, between the partner organizations.** This objective identified better ways to culturally and administratively adjust SMART Method of Public Policy that will be applied in the partner countries and to use it so that more young people participate with solutions to community problems.

The international workshop on participative democracy took place in Moeciu, Romania in May 2010. There were 21 people from the four partner countries who tested the citizen engagement platforms, set up marketing initiatives and promotional messages, and decided upon the next steps.

**Objective 3: To launch the project “Public policies made by citizens” in Greece, Italy and France and to further develop it in Romania, to cover every Romanian county.** This objective officially marks the beginning of the project in the partner countries. In Romania, it marks the beginning of the project in every county.

# about us

## Managing Partners

The managing partners of "SMART Method of Public Policy" form the legal authority under which the policy papers with solutions to problems of European public concern are sent to decision makers, for community action. The solutions are selected among those given by citizens, to every problem of European public concern published on [www.Public-Policies.eu](http://www.Public-Policies.eu).



Smart Development Center, Romania

Area of interest: participative democracy, youth, entrepreneurship, and environment.

SMART Development Center was founded in 2003 as a nonprofit association, nonpolitical and nonpartisan. We started working in the same year, through involvement in various youth projects.

Our mission is to engage people in providing valuable, sustainable and feasible solutions to problems of public concern. We envision a world where all people are collaborative problem solvers, proactively address issues important to society and develop satisfactory policies to make positive improvements to their lives and their communities.

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The Institute of Entrepreneurship Development, Greece

Area of interest: entrepreneurship, social inclusion, equality, human rights, and disadvantaged groups.

The Institute of Entrepreneurship Development was founded in 2005, as a Non-Profit organization and NGO. Our vision is anthropocentric and our basic concern is to provide assistance to citizens and disadvantaged groups in order to improve their places in society, increasing the level of social inclusion and cohesion.

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The Observatory on Euro-Mediterranean Democracy, Knowledge and Common Heritage (e-Medine), Italy

Area of interest: ICT, knowledge management, renewable energy and environmental preservation, organization of international meetings and conferences, support to technology transfer, e-learning, and dissemination.

Members of the Observatory e-Medine share a common interest on the preservation and promotion of the Mediterranean Cultural Heritage to enhance the intercultural dialogue and cooperation among entities in the Mediterranean area. As a result, e-Medine rises from the necessity to group under the same association skills and people from different institutions and organizations all over the entire Mediterranean continent.

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Etudiants pour une Société Durable, France

Area of interest: students, participation projects, youth citizenship, sustainable society, and sustainable development.

Etudiants pour une Société Durable - ESD is a students' association that aims to promote youth participation in public policies projects for a more sustainable society, from the local to the European level. The association has members in various universities in France, and is working on sustainable development projects.

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Etudiants pour une Europe de l'Education, France

Area of interest: students, higher education in Europe, universities, student democracy, Bologna process, and students' rights.

Etudiants pour une Europe de l'Education - EEE is a students' association that works towards the creation of a European higher education system in order to improve students' life in Europe. The association is working with members of the national student union of France.

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Other partners of the project are EuroScience Greek Regional Section, ASTAR Italy and the Students' League from Lower Danube University Romania.

- **Publish a problem**  
of European public  
concern
- **Publish your solutions**  
to problems of European  
public concern
- **We are doing the rest**  
using “SMART Method of Public Policy”



**www.Public-Policies.eu**

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**www.PoliticiPublice.ro**

**www.Politiche-Pubbliche.it**

**www.PolitiquesPubliques.fr**

**www.Public-Policies.gr**