

The REcup Project, under the European program CERV-2022-CITIZENS-TOWN, hosted its Final European Conference on “e-Participation and e-Decision Making as a Tool for Unemployed Citizens’ Participation” on November 25, 2024, in Bucharest, Romania.

The Final European Conference on e-Participation and e-Decision Making served as the culmination of the REcup Project, bringing together policymakers, digital governance experts, social policy analysts, and unemployed citizens to explore how digital tools can enhance civic engagement and influence employment policies. The event provided a platform to discuss digital inclusion strategies, share best practices from across Europe, and formulate policy recommendations for participatory democracy in employment policymaking.

The conference began at 09:30 AM, with participants engaging in networking and introductory discussions over coffee. At 10:00 AM, the Opening Remarks set the agenda, highlighting the importance of e-Participation as a tool for employment advocacy.

The first keynote speech, delivered by a Policy Expert on Digital Transformation, introduced the potential of e-participation tools to democratize decision-making processes and amplify the voices of unemployed citizens in policy discussions. A follow-up discussion allowed attendees to exchange perspectives on digital inclusivity and the challenges of engaging with policymakers through digital means.

At 11:00 AM, a policy analyst facilitated a discussion on Challenges and Opportunities in e-Decision Making, examining barriers such as digital literacy gaps, access to technology, and transparency concerns. Participants debated potential solutions, including expanding digital education initiatives and improving the accessibility of e-participation platforms.

A workshop on Practical Tools for Implementing e-Participation Strategies followed at 12:00 PM, providing participants with hands-on experience in digital engagement platforms used at the local, national, and European levels. A case study presentation at 12:30 PM showcased successful e-participation models from various EU member states, emphasizing how digital platforms can effectively integrate unemployed citizens into policymaking.

At 1:00 PM, a thematic speech on the Future of e-Decision Making in Social Policy explored how AI-driven policy tools, data analytics, and digital governance mechanisms could shape unemployment benefits, job training programs, and labor market policies. The session underscored the importance of balancing technological innovation with citizen empowerment.

After a networking lunch from 1:30 PM to 3:00 PM, the conference resumed with a debatable discussion on policy recommendations for integrating e-Participation into employment strategies. Experts presented actionable solutions for enhancing digital engagement, ensuring that e-Participation mechanisms genuinely benefit unemployed citizens rather than creating additional barriers.

The conference concluded with a networking dinner at 7:30 PM, where participants reflected on the key takeaways of the event and discussed future collaborations to advance digital democracy in employment policymaking.

Through thought-provoking discussions and innovative policy exchanges, the Final European Conference of the RECup Project reinforced the role of digital engagement in empowering unemployed citizens. By integrating e-Participation tools into labor policies, the event demonstrated how participatory democracy can be leveraged to ensure inclusive, transparent, and citizen-driven employment strategies across Europe.

