HUWY WORKSHOP
ERIKA PORQUIER PRESENTATION

Good afternoon. I am Erika Porquier and, first of all, I'd like to apologize for not being with you in Krems and to subject you to the torture of listening to a recording with my voice on a Friday afternoon.

I'll compress the presentation trying to be brief and clear. Other information can be found in the article I prepared for the workshop (Social networking as aggregator to citizens engagement) and in the one I wrote for the conference together with Mr. Francesco Molinari. The title is:" Social Networking on Climate Change: The IDEAL EU Experience" You are also welcome to send me your questions by email, if you have any. I wrote the details in the last slide.

In the article I present the three projects my company was involved in as partner. In all of them, the use of participative tools was central.

As you can see from the first slide, the three experiences are: a project at European level, carried out by three European regions (France, Spain and Italy), a regional level experience promoted by the Tuscany region in Italy and one at local level, promoted by the local health authority of Prato, the second biggest city of Tuscany, situated near Florence.

I decided, together with the workshop organizers, to describe the first one, focusing on the tool and to give some hints of the other two.

The first project is IDEAL_EU. Just to give you a framework to find your way, I can say that the project was funded by the European Commission in 2008 in the context of the eParticipation preparatory action.

The objective was to raise awareness among young citizens of Poitou-Charentes, Catalunya and Tuscany regions with regard to climate change and energy issues.

We wanted them to participate actively in an on line debate on a Social Networking platform (SNP), launching proposals to be gathered to be discussed in a virtual town meeting among the three regions and then to be drafted and directly delivered to the Temporary Commission on Climate Change and Energy, chaired by the MP Mr. Guido Sacconi.

So, if we refer to the policy life-cycle stages,
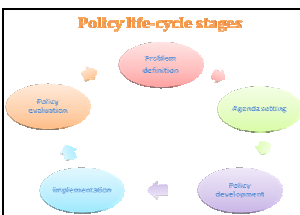
the SNP has been a valid support for the Agenda Setting and the Policy development stages.

Regarding the former, the SNP was used to support topic refinement through the systematic distribution of tailored information to the young citizens of the three regions (because the objective was actually to raise awareness and spread correct information to make young citizens focus on the problem) and, as far as the latter is concerned, the tool played a central role by fostering and stimulating on line discussions among them.

The framework used in this workshop summarizes the main aspects of the project. We were asked to describe the tools and their characteristics by referring to well known web 2.0 instruments. I can say Ideal_eu SNP has the structure of digg.com, the famous social bookmarking site. As in digg, where news is suggested by users and appears on the front page on the basis of a non-hierarchical ranking but deriving from degree of users' appreciation, in Ideal_eu the proposals or the themes published by registered users were shown on the home page and their order was based on the number of votes received. So users contributions went up and down the ranking according to how popular they were. The more interesting a proposal was, the more it

was supported and the more it became visible, taking the top positions on the home page.
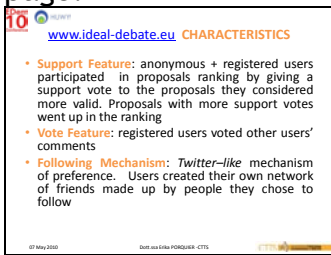
We called this method the "support feature", that is, the opportunity for registered and non-registered users to vote, expressing their interest, on one proposal.

Every published proposal could be commented on by other users and comments could be given a vote (plus 1 or minus one) to show approval or disapproval.
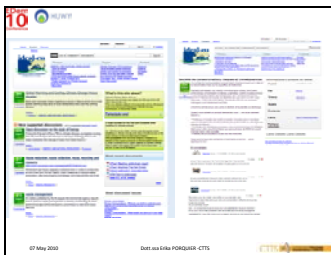
This is the image of the home page where discussions are displayed on in ascending order of popularity and, next to it, the page of one of the discussions with relative comments.

Another feature which is worth mentioning has been borrowed from Twitter.
It is the following mechanism, that is the mechanism of preference by which users create their own network of friends.
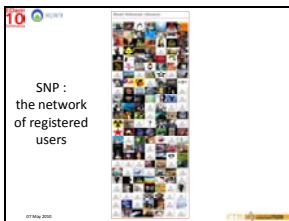
each user could create his own personal network.

On the subject of users, in the SNP we had 4 kind of users: the registered user, the non-registered/anonymous user, the stakeholder and the moderator. Registered and anonymous users are quite clear.
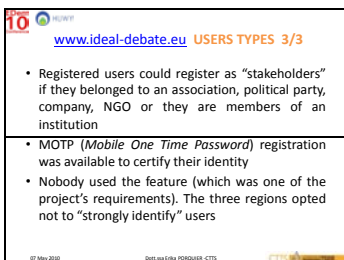
By Stakeholders we meant members of the EU Parliament or members of institutions. Foe these users to take part in debates, they needed to be clearly identified to reassure users about their identity. For Stakeholders to be identified, we implemented a "strong authentication" method based on the One time password.

www.ideal-debate.eu **CHARACTERISTICS 2/3**

- Multilanguage tool
- 4 sections (in French, Catalan, Italian and English)
- Debates were carried out simultaneously BUT separately (each Country used its own section)
- General coherence was maintained thanks both to the active facilitation made by the three regions and to the choice of the same themes of debates
- Multimedia section (videos, images, pictures)
- Document section (official documents from EU white papers.. and regional laws on the Climate change and energy issue)

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There is something else I'd like to tell you about the SNP: This is a Multilanguage tool, made up of four sections, one for each language of the three regions plus English. The English section was used by users coming from Countries with no connection with project partners, who came across the SN tool through search engines and decided to leave comments and participate in the debates giving their contribution.

- www.ideal-debate.eu is in DRUPAL, one of the best Open Source platforms for building and managing portals and communities with large numbers of users
- DRUPAL is coded in the open source scripting language PHP and it is licensed under the GPL
- The customization of Drupal modules made the SN tool compliant with Accessibility rules (WCAG and Italian law L. 4/2004)

A last thing for people who are more interested in technical subjects, my company CTTS designed the social networking platform using DRUPAL, an Open Source platform coded in PHP. The customization of Drupal modules made the SNP compliant with Accessibility rules.

DATA on users & their activity on SNP

Dec 2008		Dec 2009	
Total n. of **Registered users**	1176	Total n. of **Registered users**	1213
Catalunya	196	Catalunya	193
Poitou-Charentes	764	Poitou-Charentes	761
Toscana	74	Toscana	84
Other nationalities	142	Other nationalities	140
Number of **Discussions**	134	Total n. of **Discussions**	275
Number of **Comments**	1372	Total n. of **Comments**	2982
Numbers of **Votes** of the most supported discussions (FR)	509	Numbers of **votes** of the most supported discussion (English section)	878
Numbers of **Votes** of the most supported discussion s (ES)	371	Numbers of **visits** Anonymous + registered users	15,629
Numbers of **Votes** of the most supported discussion (IT)	281	**2010**	
Numbers of **Votes** of the most supported discussion (English section)	684	Total n. of **Registered users**	1224
Numbers of visits Anonymous + registered users	6973	Total n. of **Discussions**	255
		Total n. of **Comments**	2990
		Numbers of **votes** of the most supported discussion (English section)	887
		Numbers of **visits** Anonymous + registered users	2,271

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Ideal_eu project obtained encouraging results. The first year 2008 we had 1176 registered users. In 2009, although on line debates were concluded, we had 1213 registered users , so plus 37 users who continued to make comments on posted issues, and in February 2010 we had 11 more users who subscribed to the platform. This is maybe due to the interest grown on Climate Change matters by Copenhagen Conference and thanks to the dissemination activities carried out by the partners.

Just some words on the other two projects:

PIAZZA TOSCANA www.regione.toscana.it/partecipazione

- December 2008 RT has asked CTTS to customize the SNP to put the instrument at the service of the regional law of participation (L.R. 69/07)
- Many new participative processes were going to start in the region
- The Region wanted the new platform to be a large virtual container which could host online debates on all the participative processes financed by the new regional law on Participation

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in December 2008 RT asked CTTS to customize the SNP to put the instrument at the service of the regional law of participation. Many new participative processes were going to start in the region and the Tuscany regional authority wanted the new platform to be a large virtual container which could host

online debates on all the participative processes financed by the new regional law on Participation.
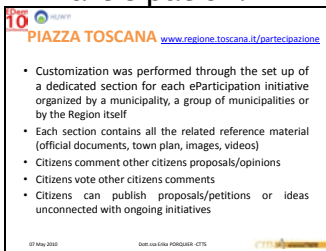
Customization was performed through the set up of a dedicated section for each eParticipation initiative organized by a municipality, a group of municipalities or by the Region itself. In Piazza Toscana we have a new section which was not present in the IDEAL_EU tool, where people can publish proposals/petitions or ideas unconnected with ongoing initiatives.
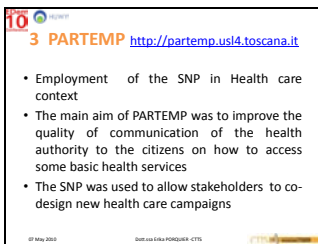
The last project is PARTEMP, acronym of PARTicipation and EMPowerment of people, a project promoted in 2009 by the local health authority of Prato. The main aim of the project was to improve the quality of the communication of the health authority to the citizens on how to access some basic health services. A very simple version of the social networking tool was used to involve stakeholders (associations involved in the health care) to co-design health campaigns and to judge with a vote and make comments on ongoing health campaigns of the health authority.

Despite the small numbers, I consider the experience really significant because it involved groups of non expert and not young users. The policy life-cycle stages here are the Policy development and policy implementation stages. The local health authority declared the intention to launch one of the health care campaigns designed during the trial.

For any additional information, please get in touch with me at the following address. Thank you.