# Preliminary report on democratic forums - SLOVENIA

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#### Introduction

This preliminary report offers a rough analysis of data from democratic forums in Slovenia, based on the initial round of coding<sup>1</sup>. Firstly, it describes the methodology including some information on participants' recruitment and their background and general information about the implementation of democratic forums. The main part summaries the key topics and related issues discussed in the plenary and breakout sessions followed by a comparison between breakout groups focusing on similarities and differences between them. Before we present the results it is important to shortly present main social, economic and political background of the period that the democratic forums were implemented.

At the period when the democratic forums were implemented Slovenian economy started to recover after the long period of recession (since 2008), still the better economic indicators did not result in the abolishment of austerity measures, and the majority of those firstly labelled as temporary measures remained in force. Political situation was relatively stable, the government coalition was led by Modern Centre Party, which won a majority at the last elections (in August 2014), however, the public opinion support of the government decreased at this time also due to its handling of the migration crisis, while at the same time the support of the right wing parties increased, according to critics predominantly on the behalf of migration crisis (Dnevnik, 2015)<sup>2</sup>.

Hence, at the period when democratic forums were implemented public discussions were significantly marked by the migration issues, Slovenia being a part of the so-called Balkan route from Greece to Western European countries. The most striking issues were erection of a fence in November 2015 along the border with Croatia in order to limit the large migration flows. However, despite the mass migration flows through Slovenia (from 16 October 2015 to 1 March 2016 a total 476,184 migrants crossed into Slovenia), only a small share of refugees applied for asylum in 2015 (in total there were 277 asylum seekers).

These trends might be relevant when considering the issues discussed in the DF.

# Methodology and general information about the implementation of democratic forums

The democratic forums in Slovenia were carried out on 14<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of November 2015 in M hotel in Ljubljana. The recruitment was done in two phases, firstly the potential respondents filled out the screening questionnaire on the web. An invitation was send to 3857 persons (18 to 70 years old from the central Slovenia region), based on the screening criteria defined in Copenhagen a selection of 157 respondents was done also according to additional open ended

<sup>1</sup> All the coding was done by Maša (blue breakout group and the plenary sessions) and Tatjana (orange and yellow breakout groups).

<sup>2</sup>Anketa: SDS med begunsko krizo prehitel SMC. Dnevnik 9.11.2015. Dostopno na: http://www.rtvslo.si/slovenija/anketa-sds-med-begunsko-krizo-prehitel-smc/378192

questions<sup>3</sup>, in line with the screening criteria 55 respondents were contacted over phone and 39 respondents were recruited, 37 came to the event on both days. The recruitment was restricted to the urban area, this lead to the fact that there were some difficulties with the recruitment of the participants with the conservative political views. The more detailed description is of participants' background and demographic data is presented in the Appendix (Table 1).

The implementation of democratic forums was well organised by the Agency Aragon and went according to the plans and instructions set in the Copenhagen meeting, hence, fulfilling the general comparability criteria with other countries. As in other countries also in Slovenia there were some peculiarities in regard to the implementation of democratic forums.

Concerning sitting arrangements for morning plenary session tables were formed in a shape of class, but this did not have a negative impact on dynamics of participation. Still for the afternoon plenary we decided for the U shape of chairs in order to insure more informal feeling, however, the participants in the U formation started often talking with their neighbours and afterwards complained about the lack of space. We decided for the same class shaped sitting arrangements in the second democratic forum for the morning plenary, again the setting order was predefined, but contrary to the first day we started with the lowest number (50) in the first row and ended with the highest number (88) in the last row and in the afternoon plenary the sitting was again arranged in the U form.

The first day morning plenary session aimed at understanding of what people think when they hear the term "welfare" and what will be the key issues in regard to welfare policy in the future. Participants mentioned 12 different areas. A wide range of specific areas in the context of each general theme was mentioned: public health care, financing of the welfare state (taxes, transparency of spending, savings), pensions (minimal pension, long-term strategy regarding pensions), unemployment and employment (differences in wages, compensation for unemployment, shorter working hours, lower taxes for economy), school and preschool reform (quality, scholarships, kindergarten expenses), housing policy (for young people, for older people, social housing), income inequality (relation between wages, minimum wage), help for elderly (apartments, integration into society, pensions), help for young people (apartments, maternity leave, child benefits), gender equality, crisis of values in the society (lack of integrity, honesty). Afterwords researchers and moderator grouped these issues under 7 main issues which were: (public) health care, financing of welfare state, education and preschool education, employment, care for young people, care for elderly, education of values, rights and duties. Participants had to choose 5 among these 7 issues by voting. The main issues chosen were:

- (public) health;
- employment;
- education and preschool education;
- care for elderly;
- values, rights and duties.

<sup>3</sup> How do you imagine Slovenia in 25 years' time?; What is your vision of Slovenia?; Which problem is currently most urgent and how would you solve it, if you were Slovenia's prime minister?. These questions were added in order to get the first glimpse of potential respondents (how they express themselves, motivation for answering etc.)

These issues were later more in detail discussed in breakout sessions. For the breakout sessions participants were according to the instructions for group formation<sup>4</sup> beforehand categorised into groups and each group was marked with a specific colour (orange - unemployed, yellow – ethnic minorities and blue – self-employed). Group discussions were in separate rooms and participants were placed in a circle (chairs and tables). Each group decided the order of issues being discussed and 5 "rapporteurs" were defined in each group (one for each issue) for the reporting of the main findings in the afternoon plenary session.

The afternoon plenary session was intended for all the participants to exchange their views. In regard to each issues the rapporteurs presented summaries of the discussions that took place in the breakout groups and afterwards a discussion followed. Although it was already late afternoon, participants were still very motivated for discussion. Moderator also encouraged the participants to ask any potential questions that might be useful for next time and what kind of information they want to be covered in the stimulus. The following were requested: data on inequalities, statistics on flexible form of employment and unemployment rates, income taxation levels, demographic statistics and average pension's levels, differences in the employments rates by gender and gender pay gap, statistics on immigration and emigration. GDP growth rate and public debt, government expenditure for social security, data on the share of private educational institutions and tertiary education graduates by field of study.

The second day morning session started with the presentation of the stimulus by Maša and the moderator pointed out the main goal of the day - forming the priorities for the government. The majority of participants had read the stimulus before, we got a very lively feedback. This was followed by a discussion in the breakout groups where the participants discussed the agreed five main topics (income inequality, labour market, gender, intergenerational issues and immigration) and had to set the main priorities.

The discussion in the breakout groups was very lively, although some of the topics were harder to discuss like gender, since the majority of participants did not consider gender related policies to be an issue in Slovenia. In organising the discussion in the breakout groups we took into consideration experiences from other teams and hence the discussions in groups turned out very well. The participants were asked to decide for three priorities, which they voted on from the list they made in the initial discussions and then discussed them according to the template. However, the questions who will benefit or who will be disadvantaged was not always appropriate, so the moderator asked more general questions what are the benefits of this policy/measure and what are the disadvantages and at the end she always asked them how the government should finance the chosen priority measure. The moderator also instructed the participants that they should give very concrete priorities. Still, some priorities were quite general and not specific, or combined several priorities. In some of the groups all three priorities were discussed and in some only two, due to time constraints. During the breaks we (the researchers) grouped the priorities in order to avoid the repetition in the plenary session, as was advised.

The afternoon session started with the presentations of the priorities by the rapporteurs of the groups. In order to avoid repetition one group presented the priorities first and the others added

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Main groups that constitute the key minorities across Europe were grouped together: ethnic minorities were all in the same group, as well as self-employed and unemployed participants; the rest of the breakout group was a deliberate mixture of other "mainstream" categories (e.g. gender; age; family status; richer/poorer etc.).

to them. Moderator asked for the comments on the group level for example what does the orange group think off and this worked very well. In the discussions some new and more specific priorities were formed; so in some cases the participants ended forming additional priorities in the plenary and voted on all of them. For the voting the respondents were given in advance small green or red papers with their numbers and the moderator collected them in a box for each priority. Additionally, the participants were asked to write on the paper (with their number) their top priority for each theme. One smaller issue/complication was that when we grouped the priorities we accidentally left out one priority expressed in one group (the universal basic income under the income inequality), so we introduced it at the end again (under other issues) and voted on this priority separately. Otherwise, in general the voting experience turned out well, however, the grouping of priorities was still a bit confusing and sometimes these priorities were not very clear or people understood different things with it. We concluded with a discussion on the experience of democratic forum. We got a very positive feedback, some of them even wanted a third day and suggested that we meet again in 5 years' time. In regard to the box of thoughts, even though the participants were encouraged by the moderators to put some thoughts in the box, we got only a few comments, and on the first day the box was mainly used for questions and not so much for reflections.

In general the democratic forums, the plenaries as well as breakout sessions, turned out well and we were impressed by the participant's willingness to actively participate. We have taken into consideration all the recommendations and experiences from other teams and this was very helpful. From our side three researchers were present (Maša, Tatjana and younger researcher Maja) observing and taking notes. The sessions were video recorded, also using several cameras, to enable identification of the respondents, and the transcripts in Slovene and English language (with identified participants) were provided by the agency.

#### Welfare state futures key topics

The key topics discussed are in general quite similar in all three groups, while in the plenary (due to how it was structured), they were mostly repeated. Furthermore, quite a few of the topics overlapped from the first to the second day, which enables a comparison on potential development of topic and its change. Consequently we decided to present the discussions according to the topics in this section, while also trying to illustrate differences between groups (in the tables).

#### a. Labour market

Labour market was the topic that was identified among participants as important topic to discuss on the first day, as well as by researchers and therefore was discussed on both days.

Issues that arose around this theme were:

- One of most emphasized themes was the **problem of unemployment**, in particular of the young and old (50+). Regarding the young it was linked to the need to integrating education and needs of the market better (being quite critical on current situation - we don't know in which direction we'd like to go, they are opening places for students in university courses without knowing exactly what the needs of the economy are ...), and

- regarding the old it was linked in discussion on the need for requalification and problems this poses for the older workers.
- Effects of unemployment (at individual level) were mentioned, and there was some discussion on willingness to work and of abuse of unemployment benefit. Participants stressed the role of state in addressing unemployment.
- In relation to this the **role and efficiency of Employment Service** was discussed in all three groups to a significant extent, and participants were mostly dissatisfied with its work, and there was a high agreement on this in all three groups. (*I think that we've said a lot about the employment service. Here it should be reorganized, to provide real support, ...)*
- In all three groups (and plenaries) the need for (higher) minimum wage was widely discussed, as a way to increase equality, reduce poverty, and decrease undeclared work. (And if the minimum wage is high enough, you'll go to work more, but it should provide at least something, because for the majority, if they don't have a place to live, you can't survive on minimum wage.).
- Participants discussed problem of illegal/ undeclared work, partly in context of people being forced into this kind of work (due to low salaries or pensions), partly linking this to problem for the welfare state and payment of contributions.
- **The taxation** was important topic again discussed in all three groups and plenary sessions. Taxation and income brackets were seen as problematic, especially for lower income groups; as well as putting a burden on employers (*Taxes need to be relaxed because the employers are simply not hiring, the burdens are too big.*)
- Decreasing safety of employment and exploitation of employees was discussed along with the need for increasing flexibility of employment, and linked to this also increasing self-employment (particularly as a way to decrease unemployment, however with several drawbacks, seen as precarious, forced choice).
- Also discussed were prolonged working periods (linked to pensions), and combining work and retirement so as to enable more decent standard of living of pensioners.
- Stimulating economy, promoting small enterprises, attracting companies (reducing bureaucracy) was put forward; also social enterprises were mentioned and flexible working hours, shorter working hours were seen as a way to increase quality of life and increase number of jobs available.

In the end the proposed priorities received large majority of positive votes, with proposal for shorter working hours receiving the least.

|           | Issues day 1                       | Priorities day 2                 |
|-----------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Blue - SE | Raising minimum wage               | Raising minimum wage             |
|           | Creating jobs                      | Changing tax burden              |
|           | Reform of Employment Agency        | Promoting small enterprises      |
| Yellow -  | Reform of Employment Agency        | Labour market flexibility        |
| EM        | Support to the vulnerable groups   | More active role of Employment   |
|           | (older, disabled), with retraining | Agency                           |
|           |                                    | Shorter working hours, part time |
|           |                                    | jobs                             |
| Orange –  | Lowering tax on labour             | Changing labour taxation and     |
| UN        | Reform of Employment Agency        | contributions                    |
|           | Reducing working hours             | Reducing bureaucracy             |
|           | Problem of precarious work         |                                  |

|           |  | Linking education to the needs of the labour market |
|-----------|--|---|
|           |  |   |
| Plenary - | Improving the link between education             | n and economy (37 Y)                                |
| voting    | Security and flexibility of labour market (31 Y) |   |
|           | Stimulating shorter working hours (29Y)          |   |
|           | Encouraging small enterprises (34 Y)             |   |
|           | Proactive role of employment service (32 Y)      |   |
|           |  |   |

Note: total number of voting participants was 37; Y – voted yes on the issue Groups: orange – unemployed (UN), yellow – ethnic minorities (EM) and blue – self-employed (SE)

In sum, the issues in the labour market were seen as vital for the future of the welfare state and participants were quite critical of current situation.

## b. Ageing/intergenerational issues

The intergenerational issues can be divided in to two main topics, most commonly discussed. First one is pensions and the second one is care for the elderly.

The main issues discussed regarding the theme of **pensions** are:

- Adequacy of pensions and living standard of pensioners were most relevant topics, and in this context minimum and maximum pensions (especially raising the minimum pension to ensure decent standard) were discussed, often even pension equalization was mentioned (*Perhaps it'd be best if they were the same for everyone, that they'd enable you to lead a normal life. An old person needs to live also.*). There was some disagreement on the issue of equal pensions for all, which is reflected also in low number of votes this suggestion received in the end. Also there was some disagreement on how high the minimum pension should be (in all three groups) (*Guaranteed minimum pension. You shouldn't have less than that, 500 or 600 should be the lowest pension. Even if you worked for fewer years or had a lower salary.*).
- Encouraging **individual savings** for old age was seen as possible solution again here there was some disagreement (on whether people would be responsible for this or poverty would increase).
- Respondents felt that options for working when retired should be available to increase pensioners standard of living (also linked to issue of currently doing undeclared work), but not all agreed to this (you've mentioned before that we should enable people in retirement to be active, to do some work. No, increase the pensions on such a level that they don't need to work. A person that is I don't know 60 years old, they should retire and that's it.).
- Role of state was emphasized (seen as important to guarantee decent level of living).
- Participants discussed changing working conditions for young (precarious work) and impact this will have on their pensions.
- Intergenerational financial transfers (from elderly to young) and interdependence of the generations was mentioned.

The main issues discussed regarding care for the elderly were:

- **Prices of nursing homes**/institutional care were seen as extremely high, need for subsidies or raise of pension to enable payment of care was put forward by all three groups and there seemed to be *high consensus* on this, also discussed was quality of institutional care (*Let's see, the elderly home costs 1500 EUR for people who are chained to the bed. I think that is the price. So the person should receive 1500 EUR pension, end of story*).
- From the perspective of future needs availability and accessibility of care was put forward, as well as the need to develop care alternatives (social home care, sheltered housing), however, this was quickly linked to issue of affordability.
- Responsibility of family members was mentioned, however, it was noted that it is difficult for children to help parents (also due to current conditions in the labour market).
- Social inclusion of elderly was discussed (in particular in blue group) and the need to reduce social isolation; role of volunteers, retraining of unemployed to work in the field of care for the elderly, with high level of consensus (And go somewhere to socialize, like we've said before. To community centers, meetings and such, record, have a discussion and then see what can be done.).
- Role of elderly in transferring knowledge, experience (also in work place) to the young, mentorships was discussed with high level of consensus (And not that the elderly would take the work from younger people, but that there's no opportunity for them to pass their rich knowledge on the younger generations. Because people simply cut them offgoretire, bye, you go and then the knowledge is lost because there's no opportunity for them to pass it on.).

|          | Issues day 1   | Priorities day 2                      |
|----------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Blue -   | Poverty of elderly and minimum                                 | Minimum guaranteed pensions           |
| SE       | guaranteed pension   | Full subsidies for institutional care |
|          | Subsidizing institutional care                                 | Developing care services for          |
|          | Developing alternative services (to                            | elderly                               |
|          | institutional care)  |                                       |
|          | Equal rights for disabled (to personal                         |                                       |
|          | assistant)   |                                       |
|          | Social inclusion of elderly                                    |                                       |
| Yellow   | Increase of (minimum) pensions                                 | Care services for the elderly         |
| - EM     | Cost of institutional care                                     | Raising the pension                   |
|          | Length of working life   | Encouraging individual savings for    |
|          | Individual saving schemes                                      | pension                               |
| Orange   | Cooperation between young and old                              | Decent pensions for everyone          |
| -UN      | Cost of institutional care                                     | Upgrading the standards in            |
|          | Stimulation development of jobs in the                         | institutional care                    |
|          | field of care for elderly                                      | Intergenerational cooperation and     |
|          | Decent pensions  | development of gerontology            |
|          |  |                                       |
| Plenary  | Raising pensions (28 Y)  |                                       |
| - voting | Raising minimum pension (34 Y)                                 |                                       |
|          | Encouraging individual savings (16Y)                           |                                       |
|          | Equal pensions for all (14 Y)                                  |                                       |
|          | Home care services, development of services for elderly (35 Y) |                                       |
|          | Subsidies for institutional care (26 Y)                        |                                       |

| Studies in the field of ageing (20 Y)             |
|---|
| Mentorship, cooperation with young and old (35 Y) |

*Note: total number of voting participants was 37; Y – voted yes on the issue* 

*Groups: orange – unemployed (UN), yellow – ethnic minorities (EM) and blue – self-employed (SE)* 

In sum, discussions on both days revolved around similar themes, focusing on poor financial situation of the elderly and ways to address it, as well as provision of care and social integration of older people.

## c. Income inequality

The income inequality theme was only discussed on the second day, however it was often intertwined with discussions on the labour market, as well as intergenerational issues (pensions).

#### Main issues discussed were:

- The **raising of minimum wage** was seen as a measure to reduce income inequality, so that it ensures decent standard of living, and provide motivation for work and this discussion was present in all groups. (*That the wages will be more fair, that there won't be such differences between the rich and those that don't have anything.*).
- Pay ratios were seen as a way to decrease income inequality (i.e. determining pay ratios in companies between managers and workers).
- In all groups there was an extensive discussion of the need to lower the **taxes** for lower (and middle) classes and referred to disappearing of middle class (*Capitalism is stealing money from the weak*. It's just the few on top who live well, the great majority of people the middle class is out of the game, it fell dramatically, disappeared, and that's the thing, this higher class needs to...), increasing taxes for higher incomes; increasing the number of tax brackets, as well as introducing tax on luxury. Discussions were here quite lively on what is luxury, as well as how should the brackets be divided.
- Equal pensions, general issue of equality and fairness, comparison of pensions and workers income (and their relation).
- Universal basic income was seen as possible way to increase equality (If we said all this income, all this reliefs would be suspended and everyone would be getting this basic universal income. But basically it would all be more transparent ... There'd be no more hiding, it wouldn't pay for that private business owner to hide, so that they'd have free kindergarten, and so on. Those would be the benefits.), but it was only discussed in yellow group with no clear consensus on the matter and shortly in the plenary as proposed policy priority, still the votes in the plenary show quite high support.

|             | Priorities day 2                                      |
|-------------|---|
| Blue - SE   | Raising the minimum wage                              |
|             | Changing the tax burden (tax brackets)                |
|             | Equal pensions  |
| Yellow - EM | Raising the minimum wage                              |
|             | Tax on luxury, changing the tax burden for low income |
|             | Universal basic income                                |

| Orange – UN      | Raising the minimum wage Tax on luxury, changing the tax burden Ratios (between lowest and highest wage) determined (in companies)  |
|------------------|---|
| Plenary - voting | Raising minimum wage (36 Y) Change of taxes – more tax brackets (37 Y) Higher taxes for luxury (35 Y) Universal basic income (30 Y) |

Note: total number of voting participants was 37; Y – voted yes on the issue Groups: orange – unemployed (UN), yellow – ethnic minorities (EM) and blue – self-employed (SE)

In sum, decreasing income inequality was a clear priority for all and taxes and minimum wage were seen as most relevant ways to address this. High agreement on issues linked to income inequality is reflected in high support to all proposed priorities.

#### d. Gender

Gender was only discussed on the second day, however, gender issues were also discussed within the first day topic education and preschool education and also intertwined with the topic of labour market. Among the topics gender was the most hard to discuss since the majority of participants did not perceive gender related issues as problematic in Slovenia with an argument "that things are well regulated".

Issues that arose around this theme were:

- Linked to **labour market** discrepancy of the actual practice with legislative regulation (there was a general agreement that we have a very good legislative arrangements in regard to parental leaves and gender equality issues) and actual practice (violation of legislative arrangements) "we probably have this apparent equality. Because if you look at it, when a woman is choosing a job, is opting for a job, they give her a bunch of papers to sign; that she won't decide to have a child in 5 years, in 10 years, that she won't do this, that she won't do that... a bunch of demands"; problem of not being able to take a sick leave for a child (for people employed in private sector,), these violations of rights should be penalised.
- Gender pay gap and differences in salaries between men and women are still a problem, there was some disagreement whether this really is the case, however, they agreed that women do not have the same chances of promotion,
- **Parental and sick leave** take up parental leave and sick leave for a child by men disagreements between the participants on whether and how much time should be taken by fathers and whether some parental leave should be only reserved for the mother); extension of paternity leave, the leave reserved only for the father.
- **Domestic issues** more gender equality in terms of domestic work and care for the children. There was some disagreement between the participants whether gender equality within the household is a private matter of mutual agreement between partners or the state should have a role in this.

- Differences in the perception of gender equality issues in regard to urban or rural environment.
- **Kindergartens** should have more flexible opening hours that would enable women to better reconcile work and family and work longer (this would be an important benefit for lone mothers); afternoon day care should be more accessible; kindergartens at companies were seen as a good option in terms of reconciliation of work and family life.
- Some participants emphasised that women should have a choice and the state should put in place policies that a woman can stay at home if she chooses so (there are already some policies in place but not enough).
- Different attitudes toward gender segregation of certain professions and feminisation of certain professions (e.g. state administration, employment agency, social work offices, school and kindergarten teachers), agreement that management positions are still predominately occupied by man, positive experiences from women in leadership positions and women entrepreneurship, different views on gender quotas in politics and on boards, feminisation of certain professions should be reduced especially through education.

|                  | Priorities day 2  |
|------------------|---|
| Blue - SE        | More flexibility in childcare                               |
|                  | More involvement of fathers in the use of parental leave    |
| Yellow - EM      | More involvement of fathers in the use of parental leave    |
|                  | Defaminisation of professions through education             |
|                  | Equal treatment of man and women in employment              |
| Orange – UN      | Same job, same pay  |
|                  | Gender should not be a condition for a job                  |
|                  | Organized childcare in the workplace                        |
|                  |   |
| Plenary - voting | Same job, same pay (27 Y)                                   |
|                  | Gender should not be a condition for a job & defaminisation |
|                  | of professions (20 Y)                                       |
|                  | Longer paternity or parental leave for fathers (20 Y)       |
|                  | Flexibility in childcare (31 Y)                             |
|                  | Childcare provision within enterprises (27)                 |

Note: total number of voting participants was 37; Y – voted yes on the issue Groups: orange – unemployed (UN), yellow – ethnic minorities (EM) and blue – self-employed (SE)

In sum, there was a general agreement among the participants that there are good and comprehensive policies in place in regard to gender equality issues and reconciliation of work and family life, however, the main issue is that these are not always respected in practice and still a more traditional view on gender issues prevails.

## e. Migration

Migration related issues were only discussed on the second day, however, they also appeared in relation to other topics, especially the labour market and education. Besides they were mentioned in relation to values and legislation. A large part of discussion related to emigration,

since emigration is perceived as a bigger issue than immigration in Slovenia, hence this was coded separately under emigration.

Issues that arose within the immigration theme were:

- Welfare chauvinism was often the case in discussions about immigrants but also a disagreement among participants who should we help first immigrants or nationals in poverty. For example statements like "Basically, we do not value ourselves enough. For example the migrants who have been moving to our country, or transiting Slovenia, well, we do not even provide for our own the way we have provided and taken care of them. We put a roof over their heads, put them in tents and fed them. While there are many Slovenian families really struggling and standing on the very edge, and nobody is helping them".
- Accepting economic immigrants only for the period when we need them, often limited to certain professions, "then they'll all need support and social transfers, we should prevent that, to have as few of those that assimilate on social transfers as possible, that they'll contribute something to the society, a certain added value"; some participants stressed that social benefits should be granted to immigrants as late as possible since "the problem is that when he comes to work here, he gets his rights too quickly and then drags along his wife and children and all, and he's employed while others are on benefits".
- Participants agreed that more emphasis should be put on integration policies for immigrants and also on learning Slovenian language, assimilation to certain degree, some participants argued for complete assimilation and citizenship in order to grant them equal rights others stressed that cultural diversity should be maintained; "multiculturalism, of course, it needs to exist, but to what degree and in what way", ... "but then by working in our country, the migrants will be paying our taxes, our contributions and thus basically repay what the state had invested in them."
- Fear in relation to threatening to Slovene identity was often the case in discussions: "Slovenia is so small that there is a threat that we'll lose our own identity if we let too many of such people in. Because it will be immediately covered by that, we are too small. Germany is big, there all of that gets lost".
- Discussion on setting the appropriate quota for immigrants and grading system who can come to the country (priority given to high skilled workers and younger population active workforce, only immigrants without criminal record); "You need to limit this in a way right, so that we don't have 30 % immigrants in the end"; on the other hand the majority agreed that Slovenia is not a very attractive country for immigrants.
- Positive aspects of immigration of experts were mentioned in regard to competitiveness of the market, however, some participants expressed the fear that Slovene workers would be disadvantaged because of immigration of experts from other countries.

## Emigration:

- Agreement on the enforcement of policies for reducing brain drain especially in relation to the possibilities of employment in home country.
- Some participants stressed that the problem of work emigration is also related to low pay and living standards, »I think it is in the first place the social aspect that matters,

- which means a decent pay check, a decent life standard and I think this would prevent so many people from moving abroad;".
- Discussion also related to bad economic situation of Slovene companies being closed down or moved to the third world countries, which is causing emigration of workers since they do not have job opportunities in Slovenia.

|                  | Priorities day 2  |
|------------------|---|
|                  | Priorities day 2  |
| Blue - SE        | Quotas and grading systems for immigrants                       |
|                  | Setting the conditions for immigrants such as knowledge of      |
|                  | language, readiness for assimilation, behaviour and age         |
|                  | limitations   |
| Yellow - EM      | Encouragement of foreign investments                            |
|                  | Encouragement of immigration of young experts                   |
|                  | International education for foreign students in Slovenia        |
| Orange – UN      | Reducing brain drain (retain the university degree experts at   |
|                  | home)   |
|                  | Integration of immigrants                                       |
|                  | Attracting immigrants high skilled professionals (doctors,      |
|                  | engineers) and unskilled jobs that Slovenians do not want to do |
|                  | (construction and garbage removal)                              |
|                  |   |
| Plenary - voting | Attracting immigrants for shortage professions (32 Y)           |
|                  | Assimilation of immigrants (28 Y)                               |
|                  | Reducing brain drain (34 Y)                                     |
|                  | Internationalisation of education (21 Y)                        |
|                  | Foreign investments (23 Y)                                      |

Note: total number of voting participants was 37; Y – voted yes on the issue Groups: orange – unemployed (UN), yellow – ethnic minorities (EM) and blue – self-employed (SE)

In sum, within the discussion welfare chauvinism was often expressed together with fear of immigrants threatening Slovene identity and a very selective view on which immigrants are welcome to Slovenia, in short only the ones that Slovenia could benefit from and a very restrictive view on which rights should be granted to them.

#### f. Health care

Health care was identified as an important issue on the first day and discussed within breakout sessions on the first day and the plenary sessions. A substantial part of discussion related to private provision of healthcare, therefore this was coded in a childnode. On the second day it also appeared under the topic of intergenerational issues.

Issues that arose in relation to health care were:

- The problem of insufficient **financing of public healthcare** was an issue discussed within all the groups in relation to access to services. "If there isn't any money for public

- healthcare, this will become a problem. You will have to pay for every service and think twice before signing your child up for a procedure, (...)".
- An issue is also that with cuts in funds for healthcare more and more of the rights of
  patients are being restricted, especially in regard to prescriptions of medications, sick
  leave and access to services there was a general agreement that the public healthcare
  system in Slovenia deteriorated.
- The participants agreed that **health insurance** should be dependent on personal income and that supplementary insurance should be abolished, as some cannot pay it. "And all additional services should be paid from the compulsory health insurance. Even the white fillings at the dentist's should be covered by the compulsory insurance. (...)" The argument was that supplementary insurance only benefits the insurance companies.
- There was a general agreement that **public and private healthcare** should be separated; and some even though private health care should be abolished "If you're private, you have a private practice, you shouldn't be working in public healthcare at the same time, which is the case now." There was a general agreement among the participants that healthcare should be accessible to everybody on equal terms and this is best achieved through public healthcare, with an argument that healthcare and profit are incompatible.
- Participants agreed that **corruption in public healthcare** in a big problem, there should be more supervision, transparency and efficiency in healthcare financing as well as spending.
- In terms of **efficiency of services** the participants agreed that long waiting lists in public healthcare are the biggest problem, which cannot be solved by private services for those who can afford to pay for them. A problem of lack of doctors and nurses and especially specialists was linked to this and burning out of the health professionals. Linked to this was also need for computerisation of healthcare.
- Participants stressed that there should be more emphasis on **prevention** and holistic treatment in healthcare, as well as alternative medicine.
- Some reference was made in regard to the connections of healthcare services and pharmaceutical industry, this is a big problem since "there is big money involved, which mostly, is mostly really being wasted on medicine and drugs, it is such a powerful lobby, that... it is more powerful than the oil lobby, or has become in recent years".
- Some participants stressed that too many people are abusing the right to sick leave.
- Participants agreed that healthcare system in Slovenia needs a **fundamental and urgent reform**, however, this is a highly political issue "this is actually the problem, that ministers, during their term of office, might begin a reform, but are then replaced with a new one, who stops what the former has started and starts doing a new thing, and so on, in a vicious circle".

|           | Issues day 2  |
|-----------|---|
| Blue - SE | Public and private healthcare must be separated         |
|           | Equal access to services                                |
|           | Health care should not be based on profit               |
|           | Contributions should be income related                  |
|           | Abolishment of supplementary insurance                  |
|           | Abolishment of waiting lists and setting the priorities |
|           | Computerisation of healthcare (IT services)             |
|           | Emphasis on prevention, healthy life style              |

|             | Transparency of public procurement and employment                   |
|-------------|---|
|             | Optimisation of costs   |
| Yellow - EM | Greater control over the spending of public funds and corruption    |
|             | in public procurement should be reduced                             |
|             | Strict separation of public and private health care                 |
|             | Abolishment of supplementary health insurance, more funds into      |
|             | compulsory insurance and the basket covered from should be          |
|             | expanded  |
|             | Contributions for income insurance should be income dependent       |
|             | Computerisation of healthcare information system                    |
|             | Payment of doctors on the basis of their productivity               |
| Orange – UN | More should be spend on prevention rather than curative             |
|             | (medications)   |
|             | Abuse of sick leave   |
|             | Problem of long waiting lists                                       |
|             | Lack and burning out of doctors                                     |
|             | Payments of supplementary insurance should be income related        |
|             | Incorporation of alternative medicine within the public health care |
|             | Strict control of pharmaceutical lobby and their relations with     |
|             | doctors   |

In sum, attitudes toward the arrangement and developments within the health care system in Slovenia were predominantly negative and there was a general agreement that healthcare should be a priority in the future and this is best achieved through public healthcare system accessible to all on equal terms.

## g. Education

Education including preschool education was identified as one of the main policy issues on the first day and discussed with the breakout groups, moreover, it intertwined with the topic of labour market discussed on both days and was also mentioned within intergenerational issues. Preschool education discussions related to issues reconciliation of work and family life, hence, preschool education is more in detail covered under the topic of gender.

The most common issues that arose within the topic of education were:

- Adaptation of education according to the needs of the labour market was emphasized as the priority for the future in all three groups. Participants agreed that the cooperation of the education institutions with the economy in the most important issue, referring to the changes in curriculum and predictions how many people will need to be employed in certain sectors. \*\*Employment should be linked with education, students and young people should be encouraged to study and train in the areas where the economy is developing". Poor link between this was seen as reason for higher unemployment. Requalification of professions during career and lifelong learning was mentioned as a solution to link education to the labour market.
- There was a general agreement between the participants that beginning with secondary education and continuing through tertiary education practical work through internships should be required or mandatory.

- An importance of gerontology studies was mentioned in line with the demographic changes and higher demand for care of the elderly.
- There was a substantial discussion around **public and private education** and the participant agreed that the most important is to have state run public education accessible to everyone based on equal opportunities. "I'm again concerned about this relationship between the public and the private. Similar as in healthcare. As if the population were divided into two: poor, rich. So the rich people will have private healthcare, private schools, high quality. And the poor ones will be in public schools, public healthcare". Another issue was whether private education should be state financed and to what extent education should be privatised in order to increase competition between private and public schools and hence increase the quality of public schools. Some participants proposed the introduction of voucher system for tertiary education but not all participants agreed.
- The participants raised an issue that **quality of education** is decreasing and that parents have too much power in the school system, they mentioned should be strict control and supervision over education on the national level, especially in regard to private education,
- Issues were raised around the **student work** in Slovenia. "Young people today study until the age of 35, they enrol in 10 universities in order to have the status of a student, but end up not being able to find full time jobs. (...) And if student work as we know it, would be cancelled, there would be a whole lot of job vacancies".
- Participants emphasized that the state should ensure more scholarships, subsidies for food, transport and textbooks, these should be free for everyone or at least for the poorer families.
- Participants emphasized that the state should introduce measures to stop brain drain, which is linked to the problem of unemployed highly educated profiles.
- There should be more emphasis on internationalisation of education (more student exchanges and possibilities to study abroad).

|             | Issues day 2  |
|-------------|---|
| Blue - SE   | Internships   |
|             | Scholarships and food subsidies                                   |
|             | Reform of school system: mote powers to the teachers, better      |
|             | coordination of school system with commercial needs, less pupils  |
|             | in a class  |
|             | Improving the quality of education and quality control            |
| Yellow - EM | National programme of vocations and mandatory internships         |
|             | beginning with secondary education                                |
|             | Help for the socially disadvantaged (subventions of school meals, |
|             | scholarships)   |
|             | Education of values in the school curriculum                      |
|             | National programme of professions according to the needs of the   |
|             | labour market   |
|             | Better access to preschool education in regard to opening hours   |
|             | and costs   |
| Orange – UN | Cooperation of education with economy                             |
|             | Internship required or mandatory                                  |

Children should know their duties as good as their rights
Separation of public and private schools (private school should not be state financed, priority given to public schools to ensure equal access to education)
School should also educate for values and responsibility (reintroduction of behaviour assessment, "security guards in schools are embarrassment to our society")

In sum, similarly to healthcare also in the area of education there was a general agreement among the participants that priority should be given to public educational system free of charge and accessible to all on equal terms. Secondly, education needs to be closely related to the labour market and based on more practical knowledge.

#### h. Values

The topic of values, rights and duties was chosen among the most important issues on the first day and was discussed within the breakout groups. The topic also frequently intervened with other topics especially education and childcare and parenting. Moreover, the discussion on values often appeared under the topic of labour marker in reference to the abuse of the social benefits system and the abuses of legislation.

Issues that arose under the topic of values were the following:

- The discussion evolved around the issues of **solidarity** and all the participants agreed that more emphasis should be dedicated to solidarity and mutual help. Some participants linked these issues with the past in the sense that capitalism destroyed the values of solidarity and mutual help that we used to have in socialist times and these should be reintroduced "Relearn human values, because we've forgotten them. A man is a wolf to another man. We'll need to work on this social aspect, on self-respect, on human values."
- **Corruption** of government, state owned companies, juridical system and the public sector was stressed out as a bad example to ordinary people. There should be more transparency within the functioning of the state and state institutions. "A new scandal, not every day, sometimes multiple scandals per day, it's all a bit too much if you are hoping to educate good citizens." Participants agreed than inefficient and unfair juridical system is a big problem and that integrity in politics is an important issue.
- Issues in regard to grey market and payment of taxes. Some participants stressed that this problem of grey economy cannot be solved until people receive decent pay for their work.
- Issues of the **abuse of the social welfare benefits** were also an important part of discussions "for example one files an application at the social work centre, for child allowance, whatever: all the applicants withdraw money from the accounts and hide their property. Which leads to the harder you work, the more the state will take from you. That's how things are today".
- A subject of education for values, duties and responsibilities should be reintroduced in schools; national awareness of Slovenes should be raised starting with education in schools.

- Role of media - Participant agreed that the media plays an important role in values and attitudes formation, however, they see the problem in reporting predominantly negative news.

|             | Issues day 2  |
|-------------|---|
| Blue - SE   | Taking good practices out of capitalism and socialism               |
|             | More emphasis on solidarity, honesty, civil values                  |
|             | Efficiency, transparency and stability of legislative system        |
|             | Higher quality of life and financial security (also linked to less  |
|             | grey market)  |
| Yellow - EM | Emphasis on solidary and mutual help                                |
|             | Emphasis on integrity and responsibility (politicians should set an |
|             | example for citizens)   |
|             | Education of values and ethics in the school curricula              |
| Orange – UN | Devaluation of values as a main problem (bad examples from          |
|             | politicians)  |
|             | Responsibility for actions (education in schools, evaluation of     |
|             | behaviour, rewards for volunteering)                                |

In sum, discussion of values, rights and duties was mostly linked to the role of the state and especially juridical system in promoting and giving examples of good practices, which is now the opposite. Education for values should start at home, continue through the educational system and should be reflected within good examples and role models in public sphere. More emphasis should be dedicated to solidarity and mutual help that should be reintegrated into society.

## **Comparison between breakout groups**

Bellow we will present most active participants and main themes discussed along with preliminary observations of the similarities and differences between the breakout groups. In this section only the references within the breakout groups' discussions are taken into account, excluding the plenary sessions.

However, one should note that some of the themes discussed were the topic of both days, while others were only introduced on the second day, which influences the number of references per theme.

## 1. Blue breakout group (self-employed)

The blue group included three participants that were self-employed, however, they were not among the most active participants in the group. Below is the described list of participants, in descending order according to their active participation.

## Most active participants

- 1. Participant 83 (366 references)
  - Male, Slovene, 45, tertiary education, full time employed, public sector, financial and tax offices, middle of the political spectrum, 1 child
- 2. Participant 82 (354 references)
  - Female, Slovene, 44, secondary education, full time employed, public sector, personal assistant, middle of the political spectrum, 2 children
- 3. Participant 81 (293 references)
  - Female, Slovene, 59, secondary education, retired, right political spectrum, no children
- 4. Participant 88 (205 references)
  - Female, Slovene, 43, tertiary education, full time employed, public sector, business secretary, left political spectrum, 2 children
- 5. Participant 77 (191 references)
  - Female, Slovene, 38, tertiary education, part-time employed, self-employed physiotherapist and yoga teacher, middle of the political spectrum, 3 or more children
- 6. Participant 86 (144 references)
  - Female, Slovene, 25, tertiary education, full time employed, private sector, logistic and transport, left political spectrum, no children
- 7. Participant 85 (128 references)
  - Male, Slovene, 36, tertiary education, full time employed, public sector, secretary at the ministry, right political spectrum, 2 children
- 8. Participant 78 (117 references)
  - Male, Slovene, 47, secondary education, full time employed, self-employed, accountant, middle political spectrum, 3 or more children
- 9. Participant 76 (108 references)
  - Male, Slovene, 41, tertiary education, full time employed, self-employed, electrician and musician, middle political spectrum, no children
- 10. Participant 84 (97 references)
  - Female, Slovene, 36, tertiary education, part-time employed, public sector, bookkeeper, left political spectrum, 2 children
- 11. Participant 80 (62 references)

Male, Slovene, 67, secondary education, retired, political orientation don't know, no children

12. Participant 87 (52 references)
Male, Slovene, 52, tertiary education, retired, middle political orientation, no children

## Top themes discussed

| T1                                | D1                         |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Themes                            | Blue group – self-employed |
| Labour market                     | 230                        |
| Intergenerational issues          | 183                        |
| Immigration                       | 122                        |
| Education                         | 101                        |
| Childcare and parenting           | 100                        |
| Healthcare                        | 83                         |
| Old-age pensions                  | 73                         |
| Values and legislation            | 62                         |
| Gender                            | 59                         |
| Income inequality                 | 44                         |
| Social safety net                 | 41                         |
| Unemployment                      | 38                         |
| Taxation                          | 32                         |
| Funding and or financing priority | 31                         |
| Productivity                      | 22                         |
| Welfare state financing           | 18                         |
| Other - various                   | 4                          |
| Emigration                        | 0                          |
| Universal basic income            | 0                          |

## **Preliminary observations**

- In general all participants within the group were actively involved in discussion with relatively equal dominance of three participants.
- The dynamic of this group differed from other groups since the statements of the participants were longer, which is evident from a much smaller number of references per participant than in other two groups. This can be partly explained by a different role of moderator as in the other two groups more time was devoted to voting of policy priorities.
- In this group more discussion than in other two groups was dedicated to immigration issues and focused more on restrictions for immigrants and welfare chauvinism was more pronounced than in other two groups.
- This is the only group that indicated stimulating small enterprises as relevant (to address the needs of the labour market), which might be linked to presence of self-employed in the group.
- In relation to income inequality this is also the group that proposed equal pensions, which again might be linked to self-employment status of some participants (as self-employed often pay the lowest contributions and consequently also receive lower pensions).

- In regard to gender issues this group was the only one that did not put equal pay for man and women as a priority but focused more on accessibility of childcare and bigger involvement of fathers in parental leave.

# 2. Orange breakout group – unemployed

This group included the four unemployed participants, which were however among less active participants. Below is the described list of participants, in descending order according to their active participation.

# Most active participants

1. Participant 55 (750 references)

Male, Slovene, 44, secondary education, full time employed, public sector, technology of transport, left political spectrum, 1 child

2. Participant 50 (455 references)

Male, Slovene, 35, tertiary education, full time employed, middle political orientation, 2 children

3. Participant 58 (400 references)

Female, Slovene, 49, secondary education, full time employed, public sector, technician in a laboratory, left political orientation, no children

4. Participant 62 (352 references)

Male, Slovene, 44, tertiary education, full time employed, private sector, art and technical editor in a publishing house, middle political orientation, 2 children

5. Participant 56 (272 references)

Male, Slovene, 68, secondary education, retired, middle political orientation, 2 children

6. Participant 61 (191 references)

Female, Slovene, 47, secondary education, full time employed, public sector, photographer, middle political spectrum, no children

7. Participant 51 (182 references)

Male, Slovene, 27, secondary education, unemployed, middle political orientation, no children

8. Participant 53 (182 references)

Female, Slovene, 55, secondary education, unemployed, right political orientation, no children

9. Participant 60 (179 references)

Female, Slovene, 40, tertiary education, part-time employed, private sector, clerk, left political orientation, no children

10. Participant 57 (172 references)

Female, Slovene, 36, tertiary education, full time employed, private sector, purchasing and marketing, middle political orientation, no children

11. Participant 59 (46 references)

Female, Slovene, 29, tertiary education, unemployed, middle political orientation, no children

12. Participant 54 (45 references)

Female, Slovene, 51, secondary education, retired, right political orientation, no children

13. Participant 52 (44 references)

Male, Slovene, 39, secondary education, unemployed, does not care about politics, 3 or more children

# Top themes discussed<sup>5</sup>

| Themes                            | Orange group - unemployed |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Labour market                     | 264                       |
| Education                         | 119                       |
| Intergenerational issues          | 118                       |
| Values and legislation            | 90                        |
| Old-age pensions                  | 85                        |
| Childcare and parenting           | 79                        |
| Gender                            | 73                        |
| Income inequality                 | 69                        |
| Healthcare                        | 68                        |
| Immigration                       | 58                        |
| Unemployment                      | 50                        |
| Taxation                          | 48                        |
| Welfare state financing           | 32                        |
| Emigration                        | 25                        |
| Productivity                      | 15                        |
| Other - various                   | 13                        |
| Funding and or financing priority | 10                        |
| Social safety net                 | 4                         |
| Universal basic income            | 0                         |

# **Preliminary observations**

- In general almost all participants within the group were actively involved in discussion with a dominance of one participant followed by four which were also more involved than the rest of the group.
- In this group there are the most references by participant since the statements were shorter as they often evolved around discussions of simply agreeing or disagreeing. This was partly influenced by the moderator, since a lot of discussion evolved around voting on priorities and assigning weight to their importance.
- This group stressed to a higher degree the need to link education and the labour market and education is as well the second most referenced topic, which might be linked to presence of unemployed in the group.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Due to the differences in the unit of coding according to themes between the blue group and on the other side the orange and the yellow group, the number of references by theme in these two groups is calculated from the number of coded attitudes by theme, since these were systematically coded by statements/sentences, while within the coding of the themes the unit of coding sometimes included the whole dialogue due to very short statements. These makes the data more comparable with the coding in the blue group and is something we will address and correct in the next rounds of coding. The current numbers are therefore not final and only illustrate the order of relevance of themes.

- In regard to gender issues in this group more emphasis was on equal pay of women and men. Contrary to other groups they proposed organised childcare within companies as that the best solution and did not put fathers' involvement in parental leave as a priority.
- Addressing the immigration issues more discussion in this group focused on emigration issues in regard to brain drain than in other two groups.
- Within the discussion of education a significant part of discussion evolved around the issue of private education and there was a general agreement in the group that priority should be given to public state education in order to ensure equal access to education.

## 3. Yellow breakout group – ethnic minority

This group included three participants with ethnic background/nationality other than Slovene. Below is the described list of participants, in descending order according to their active participation.

# Most active participants

- 1. Participant 73 (529 references)
  - Female, Slovene, 49, tertiary education, full time employed, private sector, moderator in workshops, does not know political spectrum, no children
- 2. Participant 67 (478 references)
  - Male, Slovene, 67, tertiary education, retired, right political orientation, no children
- 3. Participant 65 (418 references)
  - Male, Montenegrin, 29, tertiary education, employed full time, private sector, sale adviser, right political spectrum, no children
- 4. Participant 69 (353 references)
  - Male, Slovene, 43, tertiary education, employed full time, private sector, sale, middle political spectrum, 2 children
- 5. Participant 68 (303 references)
  - Female, Slovene, 47, tertiary education, full time employed, public sector, librarian, left political spectrum, children yes number?
- 6. Participant 72 (210 references)
  - Male, Slovene, 58, secondary education, employed full time, public sector, instituution for handicapped, middle political spectrum, no children
- 7. Participant 75 (164 references)
  - Male, Slovene, 38, tertiary education, full time employed, private sector, business analyst, informatics, left political orientation, no children
- 8. Participant 63 (117 references)
  - Female, Slovene/Macedonian, 44, secondary education, full time employed, private sector, accountant, don't know political orientation, 2 children
- 9. Participant 70 (88 references)
  - Female, Slovene, 34, tertiary education, full time employed, public sector, professional worker, left political orientation, no children
- 10. Participant 71 (76 references)
  - Female, Slovene, 42, tertiary education, full time employed, private sector, director of purchase, left political orientation, no children
- 11. Participant 66 (61 references)
  - Female, Slovene, 21, secondary education, in full time education, middle political spectrum, no children

- 12. Participant 74 (41 references)
  Female, Slovene, 41, full time employed, public sector, manager of the sector for management of material funds, middle political spectrum, no children
- 13. Participant 64 (12 references)
  Male, Croatian, 68, secondary education, retired, middle political spectrum, no children

## Top themes discussed

| Themes                            | Yellow group - minority |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Labour market                     | 302                     |
| Income inequality                 | 122                     |
| Education                         | 108                     |
| Intergenerational issues          | 108                     |
| Childcare and parenting           | 75                      |
| Healthcare                        | 75                      |
| Welfare state financing           | 74                      |
| Old-age pensions                  | 71                      |
| Unemployment                      | 67                      |
| Immigration                       | 62                      |
| Values and legislation            | 57                      |
| Social safety net                 | 54                      |
| Gender                            | 51                      |
| Universal basic income            | 47                      |
| Taxation                          | 44                      |
| Other - various                   | 13                      |
| Funding and or financing priority | 11                      |
| Emigration                        | 10                      |
| Productivity                      | 9                       |

## **Preliminary observations**

- In general almost all participants (with one exception) in the group were actively involved in the discussion with a dominance of three participants.
- In comparison to other two groups this group had in general more positive attitudes and the least negative attitudes of all three groups.
- This is the only group that stressed individual savings as relevant to address pension issues.
- This is also the only group that put forward the universal basic income as important to address income inequalities and also put help for socially disadvantaged among the priority issues in education.
- In regard to gender issues childcare arrangements were not seen as the priority and more emphasis was devoted to defeminisation of professions and equal opportunities of men and women.
- Considering immigration issues the discussion was more than in other groups based on economic aspects of immigration such as foreign investments and investment in human capital.
- In healthcare discussions more emphasis than in other two groups was placed on transparent public spending and productivity issues.

## Attitudes and change

We have at the moment only coded attitudes according to the first instructions (positive, negative, mixed and neutral) and we agree that this is quite difficult and potential biased way of coding. Consequently, both researchers coding the content were in constant contact regarding the way to code these attitudes to reduce this bias. In general negative and neutral references are predominant, with fewer positive statements. Especially pronounced negative views were in connection to healthcare, labour market (and unemployment), as well as values (which was a specific topic identified). Mixed attitudes were predominant in relation to immigration. Interestingly, in the separate group discussions the negative and neutral attitudes were balanced, while in plenary sessions there were much less negative statements and neutral predominate.

We have not yet coded the sources of argumentation, however, the most common source of argumentation seemed to be personal experience (what people have experienced themselves, or their family members). Also media and political events have been quite often referred to (as presenting a general knowledge of what are important issues). We have noticed that on several occasions participants have also used the data from the stimulus for the argumentation of various points.

We were not able to code any attitude change. We have looked at the results of the survey on this issue. In general in line with expectations based on international comparative surveys, participants from Slovenia had a relatively egalitarian stance and saw government's responsibility as high in all observed areas. This is in line with the discussions in the DF, since a lot of emphasis was put on increasing equality (in wages, in pensions). Based on survey results one can notice also some changes in the attitudes among the participants of the DF between day 1 and day 2; these changes are mainly increased perception of the role of the government/state in providing welfare and increased emphasis on equality<sup>6</sup>.

However, also some higher recognition of financial burden can be observed, as number of participants that think social benefits/services place a great strain on economy increased.

Between the day 1 and day 2 one can also notice some change in priorities. The care for elderly has gained in importance (increased number of those that think government should spend more), which is in line with strong recognition of aging of population as key issue for the future within discussions. On the other hand the child-care has been less prioritized (less seen as governments responsibility, and decreased number of participants thinking government should spend more), which might perhaps be linked with discussions on how companies should do more in providing childcare. Also unemployment has been less prioritized (slight decrease in seeing it as government's responsibility, strong decrease in number of those that think governments should spent more on this issue).

One also interesting change is increased welfare chauvinism. Namely, the number of participants stating that immigrants could obtain rights to social benefits and services after one year working and paying taxes in the country has halved, and increased the share of those that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Disagreement with the statement large differences in income are acceptable to reward talents has slightly increased. Increased number of participant that feel that higher earners should pay higher share of earnings in tax. Increased agreement with the statement that for fair society differences in income should be small. Increased agreement with the statement that government should be responsible for providing jobs for everyone and providing healthcare for the sick, standard of living for the elderly.

felt they should obtain rights only after gaining citizenship (from 52% to 71% of participants), which is in line with predominantly negative discussions on this issue in the groups.

#### Conclusion

Our general evaluation of the Democratic Forums is that they went very well and produced a large amount of interesting data. The groups and the plenary sessions worked well, however, the second day seemed to be too tight, as time frames for each topic did not allow a lot of discussion in the groups and most often the group was forced to move from the topic not finishing the debates. Despite both days being quite long and tiring for participants they seemed to be engaged in the discussions and active until the end.

Overall participants were very engaged in the discussions and especially within the breakout sessions. In general the discussions and choice of topics between different groups were relatively similar, however the specific differences that did arose are interesting and we shall look into this further in the future analysis.

In regard to methodology of coding there are some issues from the comparative perspective since the differences in coding unit need to be taken into consideration when observing the quantitative aspect of differences between groups and themes. We plan to do the next round of coding in which we will adopt the new proposed codes, correct the mentioned differences in coding approach, as well as develop specific codes in relation to the gender and care themes that we plan to analyse in more detail (as agreed in the Copenhagen meeting). We will also develop more detailed analysis of the themes related to ageing for the comparative article being prepared with the team from Norway.

# APPENDIX

**Table 1: Sociodemographic characteristics of participants** 

|                                    |                             | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Gender                             | Male                        | 18        | 47,4    |
|                                    | Female                      | 20        | 52,6    |
| Age                                | Under 24                    | 1         | 2,6     |
|                                    | 25-34                       | 5         | 13,2    |
|                                    | 35-44                       | 16        | 42,1    |
|                                    | 45-54                       | 9         | 23,7    |
|                                    | 55-64                       | 3         | 7,9     |
|                                    | 65+                         | 4         | 10,5    |
| Nationality                        | Slovenian                   | 35        | 92,1    |
|                                    | Montenegrin                 | 1         | 2,6     |
|                                    | Slovenian/Macedonian        | 1         | 2,6     |
|                                    | Croatian                    | 1         | 2,6     |
| Work status                        | Working full time           | 23        | 60,5    |
|                                    | Working part time           | 3         | 7,9     |
|                                    | Unemployed                  | 4         | 10,5    |
|                                    | Retired                     | 7         | 18,4    |
|                                    | In full-time education      | 1         | 2,6     |
| Employment sector                  | Employed in the public      | 10        | 48      |
| Employment sector                  | sector                      | 12        |         |
|                                    | Employed in the private     | 13        | 52      |
|                                    | sector                      | 15        | 32      |
| Household's total net income, all  | No income                   | 1         | 2,6     |
| sources                            |                             |           | ·       |
|                                    | 700 € or less               | 3         | 7,9     |
|                                    | 700 € - 900 €               | 4         | 10,5    |
|                                    | 900 € - 1300 €              | 1         | 2,6     |
|                                    | 1300 € - 1700 €             | 4         | 10,5    |
|                                    | 1700 € - 2100 €             | 8         | 21,1    |
|                                    | 2100 € - 2500 €             | 7         | 18,4    |
|                                    | 2500 € - 2900 €             | 2         | 5,3     |
|                                    | 2900 € - 3300 €             | 4         | 10,5    |
|                                    | 3300 € - 4100 €             | 1         | 2,6     |
|                                    | 4500 € - 4900 €             | 1         | 2,6     |
|                                    | Above 4900 €                | 2         | 5,3     |
| Education                          | Secondary education         | 16        | 42,1    |
|                                    | Tertiary education (Bach.   | 17        | 44,7    |
|                                    | equiv.)                     | 11        | 11,7    |
|                                    | Tertiary education          | 5         | 13,2    |
|                                    | (Master, Spec., Phd)        |           |         |
| Position on the political spectrum | Left                        | 10        | 26,3    |
|                                    | Middle                      | 18        | 47,4    |
|                                    | Right                       | 6         | 15,8    |
|                                    | I don't care about politics | 1         | 2,6     |
|                                    | Don't know                  | 3         | 7,9     |

**Table 2: Difference in attitudes** 

|  | Mean     | Mean    |
|--|----------|---------|
|  | (before) | (after) |
| Large differences in income acceptable to reward talents and efforts   |          | 3,41    |
| Women should be prepared to cut down on paid work for sake of          |          |         |
| family   | 3,74     | 3,7     |
| For fair society, differences in standard of living should be small    | 2,76     | 2,54    |
| Job for everyone, governments' responsibility                          | 6,95     | 7,57    |
| Health care for the sick, governments' responsibility                  | 8,82     | 9,32    |
| Standard of living for the old, governments' responsibility            | 8,63     | 8,84    |
| Standard of living for the unemployed, governments' responsibility     | 7,37     | 7,32    |
| Standard of living for low wage workers, governments' responsibility   | 7,82     | 7,73    |
| Child care services for working parents, governments' responsibility   | 8,18     | 7,65    |
| Paid leave from work for parents with preschool children,              |          |         |
| governments' responsibility  | 7,65     | 7,47    |
| Paid leave from work to care for sick family, governments'             |          |         |
| responsibility   |          | 7,68    |
| Social benefits/services place too great strain on economy             |          | 2,65    |
| Social benefits/services prevent widespread poverty                    |          | 2,28    |
| Social benefits/services lead to a more equal society                  |          | 2,75    |
| Social benefits/services encourage people other countries to come live |          |         |
| here   |          | 3,06    |
| Social benefits/services cost businesses too much in taxes/charges     |          | 2,26    |
| Social benefits/services make it easier to combine work and family     |          | 2,69    |
| Social benefits/services make people lazy                              |          | 3,11    |
| Social benefits/services make people less willing care for one another |          | 3,08    |
| Social benefits/services make people less willing look after           |          |         |
| themselves/family  |          | 3,51    |
| Government decrease/increase taxes and social spending                 |          | 4,66    |
| Immigrants receive more or less than they contribute                   |          | 3,62    |

N=37