

# New developments in the science- for-policy landscape. How to trustworthily communicate with the public.

Public Administration Expert Group, 1 October 2024

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# The Joint Research Centre (JRC)

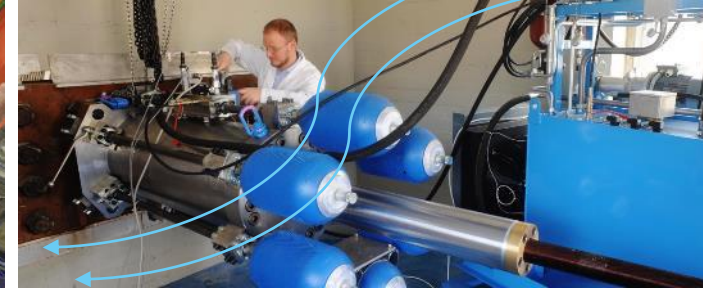
- Science and knowledge service in support of EU policies
- Directorate General under Commissioner Iliana Ivanova
- Board of Member States Governors
- 2000+ scientists, across 6 sites and different KC and CC
- Yearly over 2800 peer-reviewed publications



# Over 50 JRC facilities – some examples

Virtual tour at <https://visitors-centre.jrc.ec.europa.eu/en/media?type=8>

European Laboratory for Structural Assessment (ELSA)



Hopkinson Bar facility (HOPLAB)

Vehicle Emission Laboratory (VELA)+ vehicle Market Surveillance Laboratory



European Interoperability Centre for Electric Vehicles and Smart Grids

Battery Testing Facility Laboratory



Nuclear Forensic Laboratory

# How we work on Science for policy



ANTICIPATE



INTEGRATE

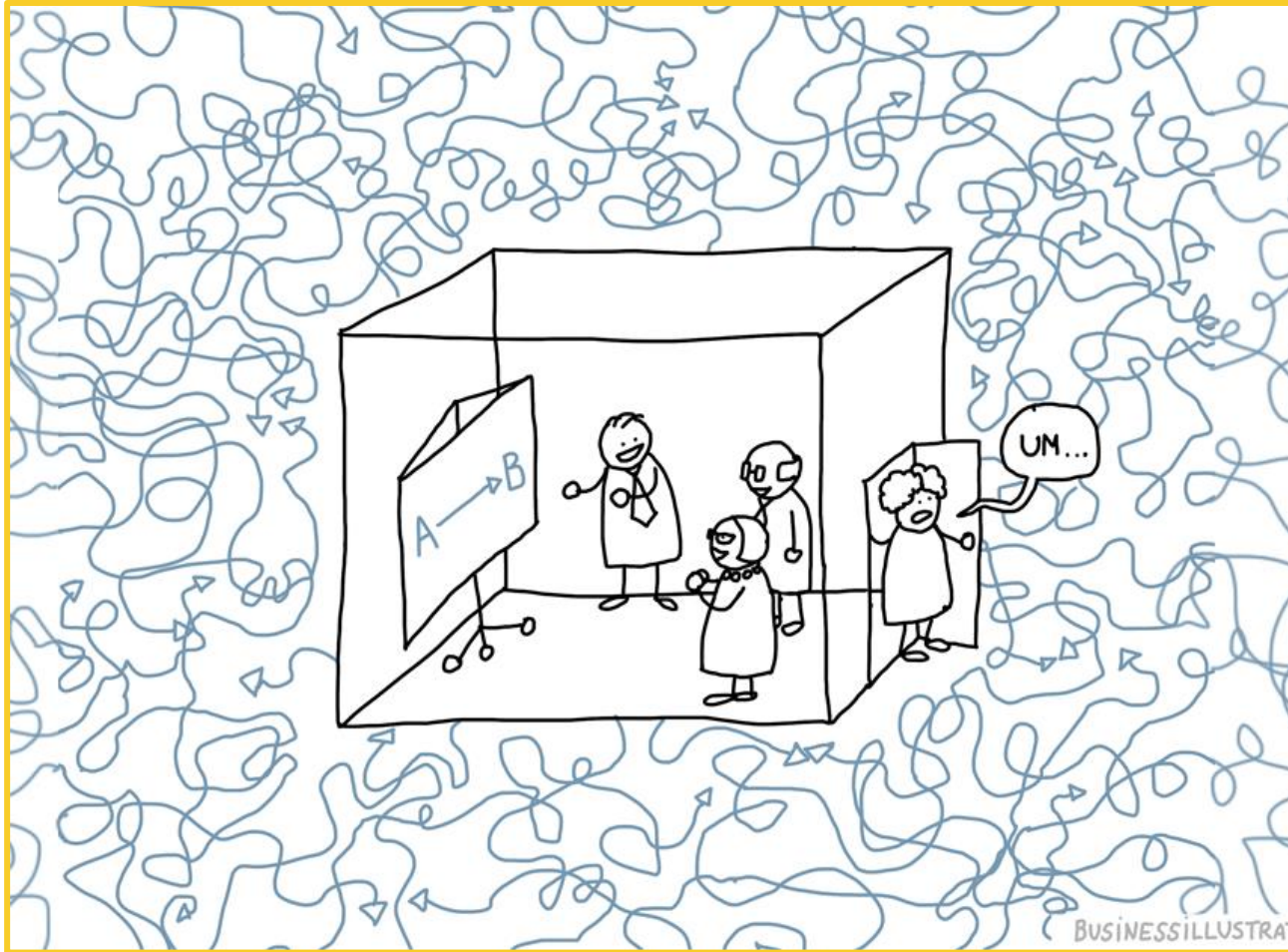


IMPACT

## Our purpose

The Joint Research Centre provides independent, evidence-based knowledge and science, supporting EU policies to positively impact society.

# Why do we need evidence-informed policymaking?



We live in **complex** societies, with multiple crises and **diverse perspectives** on how to address policy challenges

Evidence provides us with the **best available picture of reality** to make informed policy choices

**Evidence can help inform our policy decisions** at different stages of the policymaking process and make more robust decisions

# Evidence use good for democracy

## Citizen demand for evidence-informed policymaking



Almost 7 out of 10 European citizens (68%) agree:

“Scientists should intervene in political debate to ensure that decisions take into account scientific evidence”

Eurobarometer of Science and Technology, Sept 2021

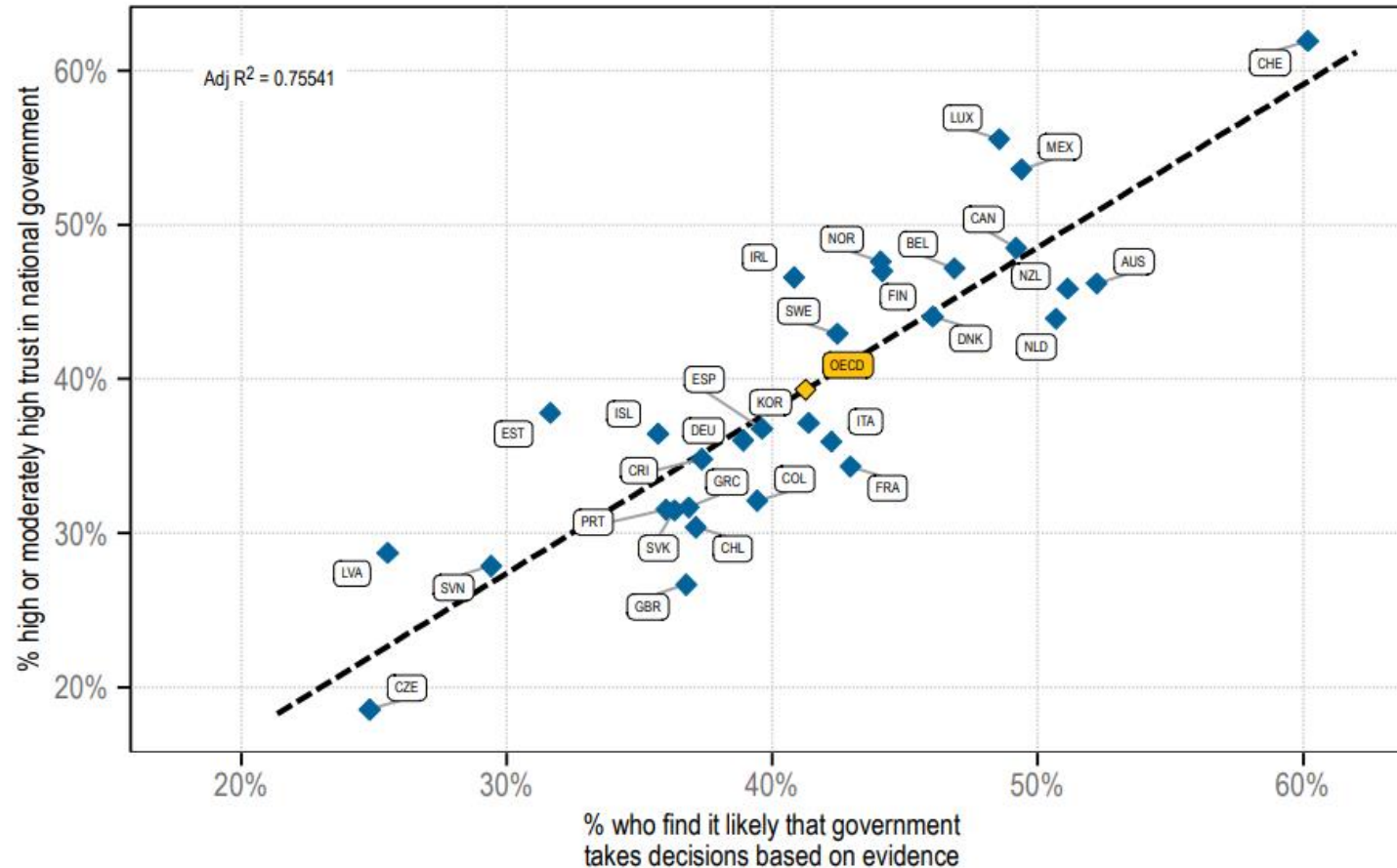
## Fake news and misinformation



Almost 4 out of 10 respondents (37%) come across *fake news* every day or almost everyday

Flash Eurobarometer 464, 2018

# Evidence use good for building trust in governments

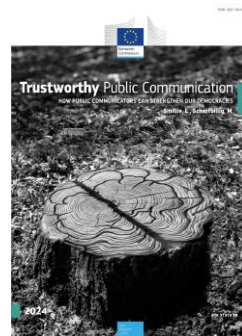
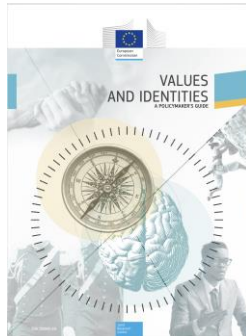
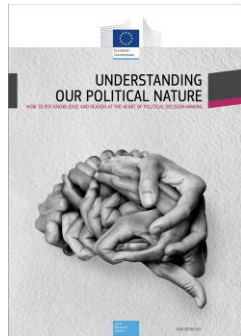


Note: The scatterplot presents the share of “high to moderately high trust” responses to the question “On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all and 10 is completely, how much do you trust the national government?” on the y-axis. The y-axis presents the share of “likely” responses to the question “If the national government takes a decision, how likely do you think it is that it will draw on the best available evidence, research, and statistical data?”. Both high or moderately high trust and ‘likely’ correspond to the 6-10 responses on the 0-10 scale.

Source: OECD Trust Survey 2023.

# The importance of building trust in democratic settings

- **The principle of informing policy** through evidence should correspond to democratic principles.
- **Recognise the importance of** identity, values, worldviews, and behavior.
- **EIPM enhances transparency, public scrutiny and accountability**
- **Mobilise evidence in the consultation process, engaging in informed deliberation with citizens** on pressing issues provides clarity on policy decisions and their impact.
- **Providing a solid justification** for the direction of policies, rooted in transparent evidence enhances citizens' trust



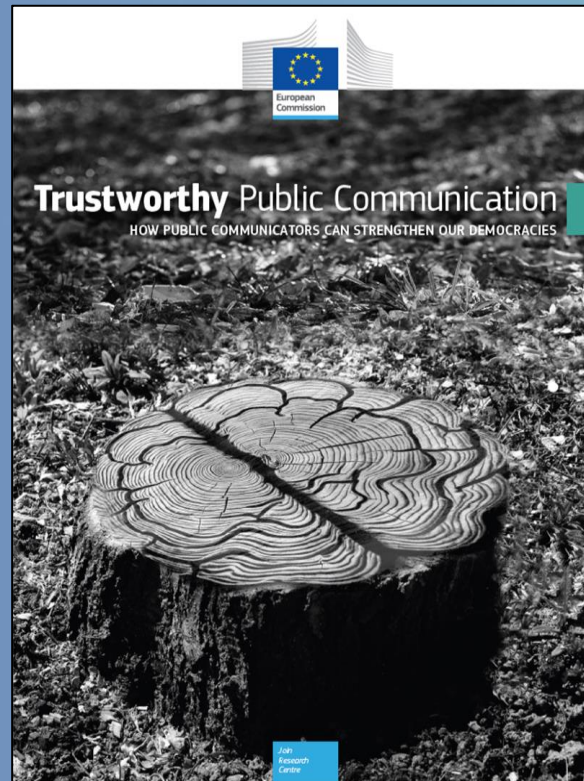
## Further readings:

- *Understanding our Political Nature: How to put knowledge and reason at the heart of political decision-making* (JRC, 2019)
- *Values and Identities: a policymaker's guide* (JRC, 2021).
- *Trustworthy Public Communication* (JRC, 2024)



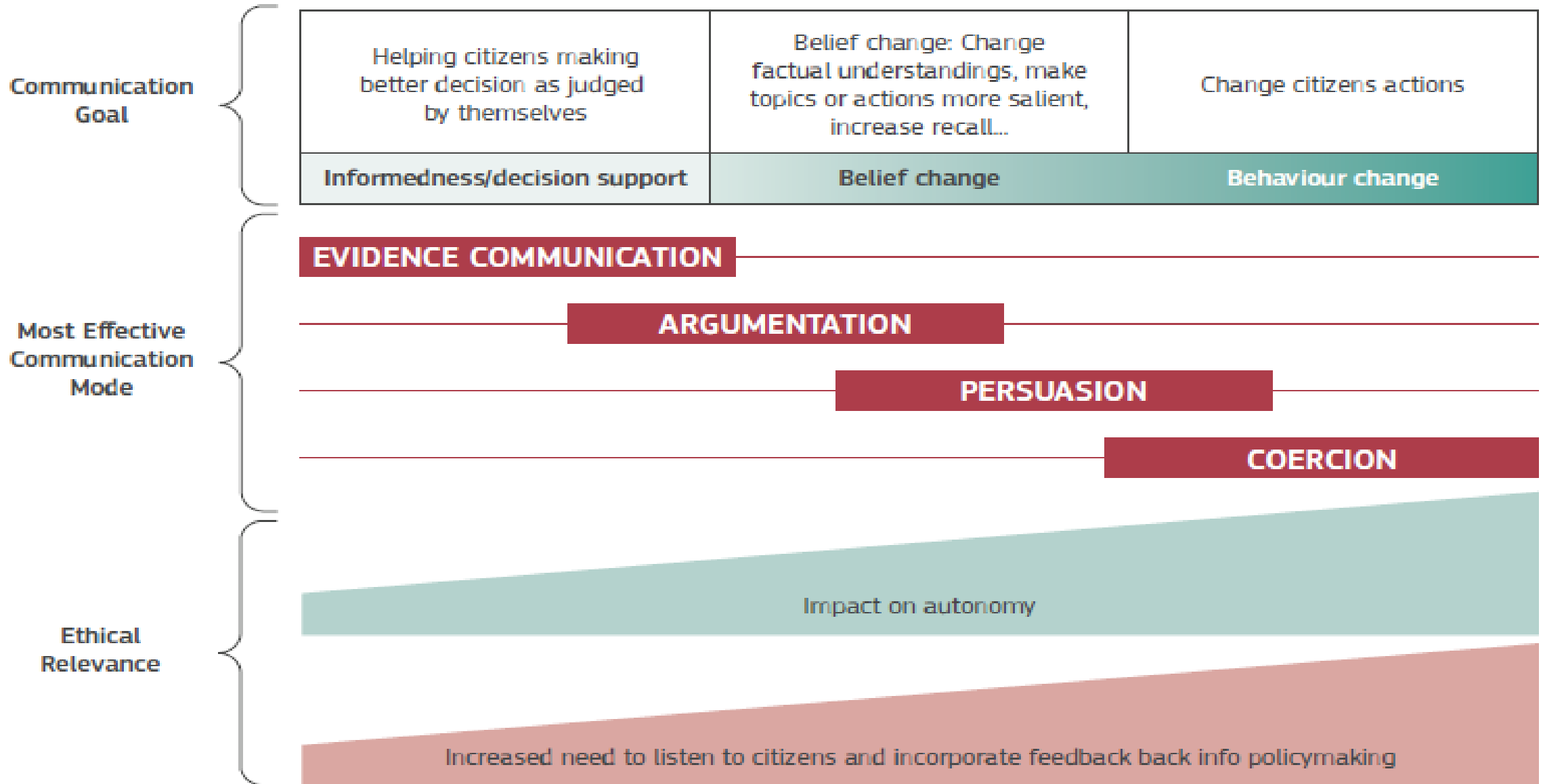
# Trustworthy Public Communication

How public communicators can strengthen our democracies



10 recommendations for communicators

# Modes of communication





- 1. Building and retaining public trust in their public administration, through being trustworthy at all times, should be a public communicator's primary goal*
- 2. Public communicators should invest more in effective ways of listening to citizens to increase trust in their public administration and democracy*
- 3. Public communication goals - ranging from informing to behavioural change - should be decided up front and communicated transparently*

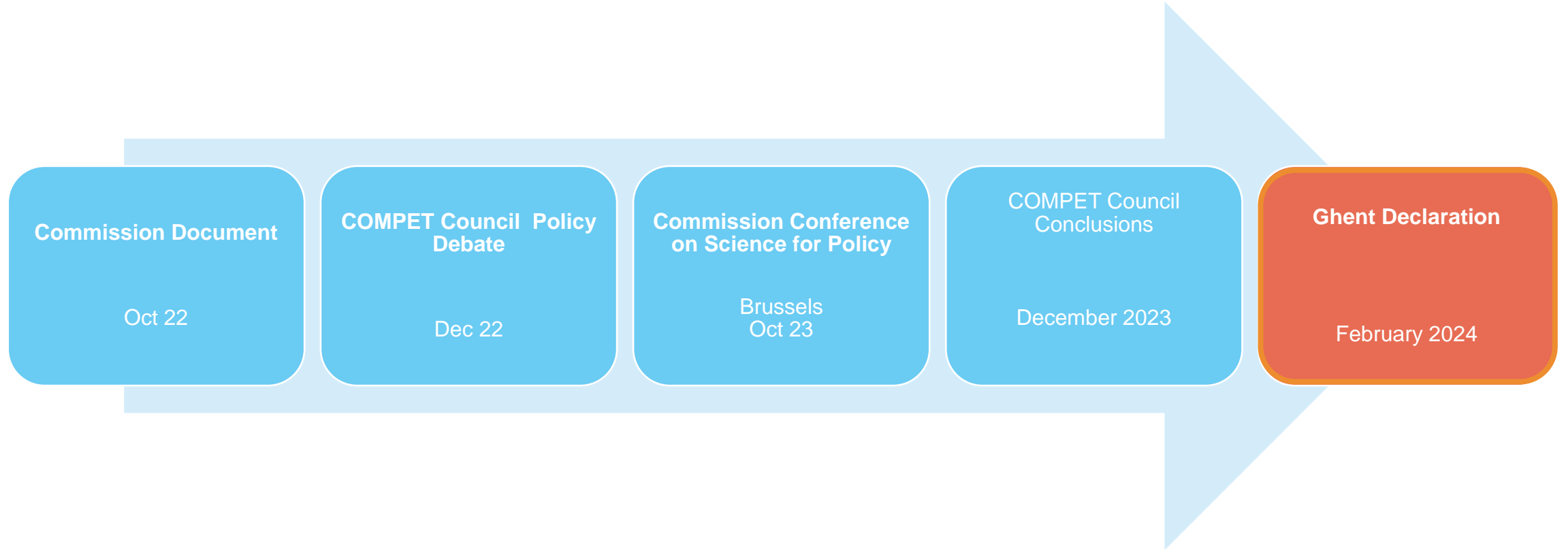


4. *If behaviour change is the communication goal, behavioural sciences should guide the selection of the most appropriate tools*
5. *Public communications should not be “one size fits all”, instead be formal, layered and acknowledge emotions and uncertainty*
6. *Public communicators should match audience research techniques to different public communication goals*
7. *Individual profiles should not be used to target public communications; one alternative is values segmentation, providing messages that resonate with all parts of society*



8. *Public communicators should acknowledge public concerns preemptively, before policy solutions have been developed, this includes strategies to combat mis- and disinformation*
9. *Public communicators should invest in evaluation to increase the impact of their communications*
10. *New challenges require new skills, competences and centres of expertise to support public communication professionals*

# A political process in support of science for policy is in motion



# A shared commitment by Member States to strengthening science for policy

**8 Dec 2023: EU-27 governments (via research ministers) agreed to Council Conclusions on R&I use for public policies.**

## Key principles

Science-informed policies of higher quality

All fields of science can and should play a role in policymaking

R&I policy measures positively impact society and resilience of democracy

## Call for joint EC-MS actions, incl

...foster a European science-for-policy ecosystem connecting science and policymaking

...develop tools for training, dialogues and mobility of staff between science and administration

...foster the use of TSI to support public policymakers in science for policy

# ComPAct- October 2023

## Enhancing the European Administrative Space



- **PILLAR 1:** The Public Administration Skills Agenda
- **PILLAR 2:** Capacity for Europe's Digital Decade
- **PILLAR 3:** Capacity to lead the Green Transition

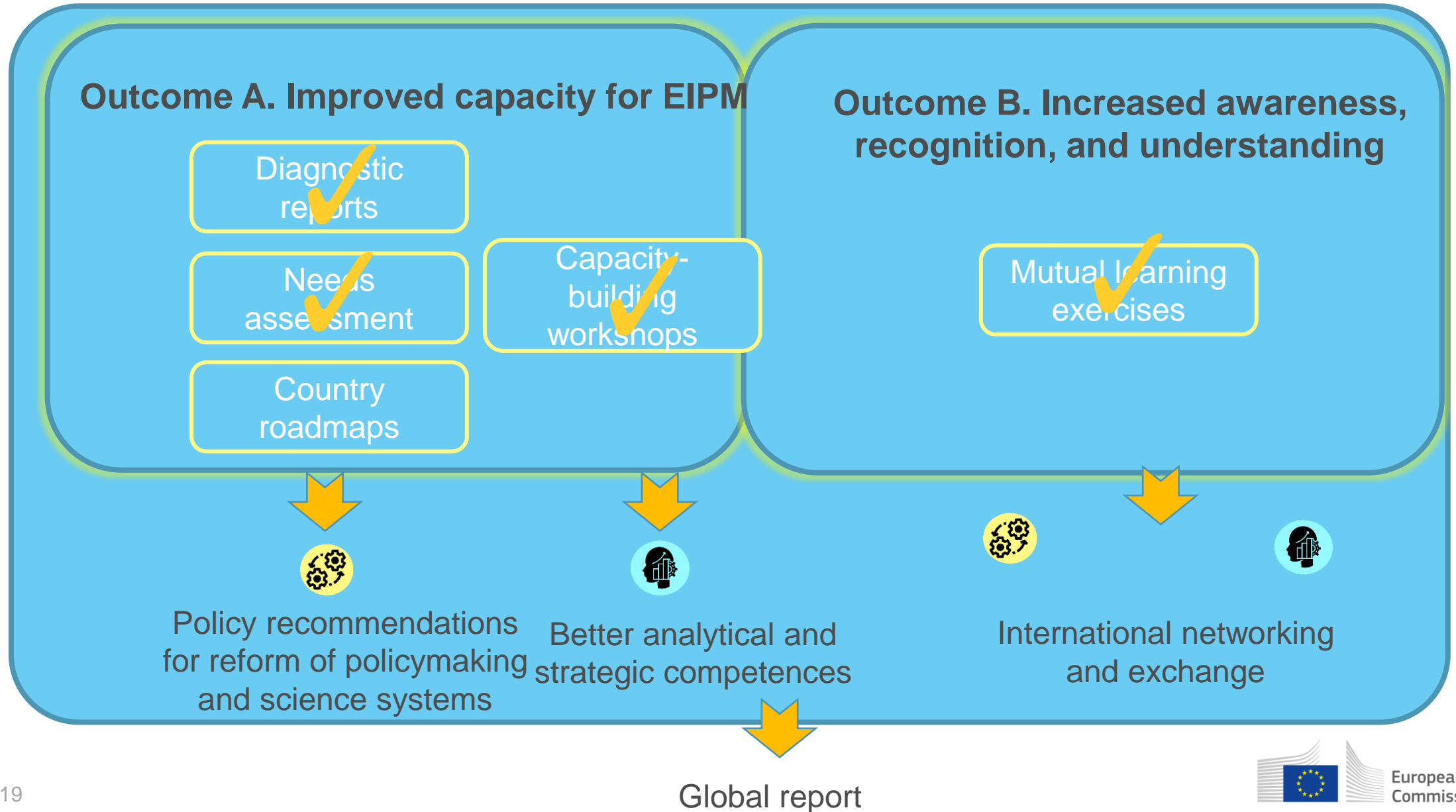


# Technical Support Instrument project on Science for Policy in 7 EU Member States



- TSI project funded by DG REFORM and delivered by the JRC and OECD
- Mixed group of beneficiary organisations (demand and supply)
- Aims to improve capacity for evidence-informed policymaking
  - Country analysis of organisations, processes and interconnections
  - Capacity-building workshops for professionals
  - Mutual learning exchange (foresight, policy evaluation, AI in policymaking)
- At the end... roadmap with recommendations for reforms
  - Better inter-ministerial coordination (networks of science advisers)
  - Improving the weight of scientific evidence in RIA, policy evaluation, foresight, etc.)

# Process and where we are



# Insights

- Better use of scientific knowledge in government is a key
- Depart from what already exists, learn from others
- Combine 'carrot' and 'stick' actions: use opportunities and focus on responsibilities
- Focus on long-term and cross-departmental knowledge agenda, gather evidence needs
- Strengthen collaboration within and between ministries and academia, work on reducing siloes
- Provide incentives for both scientists and civil servants to unlock collaboration potential
- But do not confuse science-for-policy with policy for science; do not treat S4P as another science funding scheme

# Technical Support Instrument project on Science for Policy – second edition

- TSI project funded by DG REFORM and delivered by the JRC and OECD in 2025-2027
- Mixed group of beneficiary organisations (demand and supply)
- Based on ComPAct Initiative:
  - Pillar 1. The public administration skills agenda.
  - Pillar 3. Capacity to lead the green transition - a sectorial approach, with some of participating Member States interested in building capacity for evidence-informed policymaking for the green transition.
- The expected long-term impact of this project is the **reinforced institutional integration of the use of evidence, science and evaluation for policymaking and by extension reinforced trust in public administration and governments.**

# Technical Support Instrument project on Science for Policy – second edition

- **Projected short/medium term outputs:**
  - **Increased institutional capacity in governance and public administration** for the integration, use and influence of scientific evidence in policymaking.
  - **Improved professional capacity and collaboration:** Increased professional competences in the scientific community and policymakers for evidence-informed policymaking, raising awareness about the value of knowledge exchange and innovative practices in policy.
  - **Facilitating an international platform** for practitioners, scientists and policymakers to exchange practices, mutual learning, and nurture ideas for policy development at the European and national level.
  - **Nurturing political impact and normative development.** Ensuring awareness, recognition, understanding, and commitment at the political level for follow-up actions that would consolidate ongoing and future reforms independently of political cycles and regain public trust in governments and public administrations.

# Thank you



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