


## TECHNICAL REPORT (PART B)

### COVER PAGE

*Part B of the Technical Report must be downloaded from the Portal Technical Report (Part B)/Termination Report screen, completed and then assembled and re-uploaded as PDF on that screen.*

PROJECT	
Project number:	101061550
Project name:	Legitimate Crisis Governance in Multilevel Systems
Project acronym:	LEGITIMULT

REPORTING PERIOD	
 Please note that you must report on the entire reporting period.	
RP number:	2
Duration:	from [01/10/2023] to [30/09/2025]

#@PER-REP-HE@#

#@PRO-GRE-PG@# [This document is tagged. Do not delete the tags; they are needed for the processing.]

## 1. EXPLANATION OF THE WORK CARRIED OUT AND OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRESS

Include an overview of the project results towards the objective of the action in line with the structure of the Annex 1 to the Grant Agreement including summary of deliverables and milestones. In the technical description below, please avoid repeating information that is already present in part A of the report (in continuous reporting). For projects under topics indicating the need for the integration of social sciences and humanities, explain the role of these disciplines in the project so far.

(No page limit per work-package but the report should be concise and readable. Any duplication should be avoided).

### 1.1 Objectives

*(Please list the specific objectives for the project as described in section 1.1 of the DoA; Please provide a short summary of progress towards the achievement of each of the project objectives. Highlight significant activities in support of these achievements. Please provide clear and measurable details; report on objectives not fully achieved or not on schedule. )*

In section 1.1. of the DoA three objectives have been formulated:

#### **Objective 1: Assess the impact of the Covid-19 measures on democratic governance**

The work packages contribute to the analysis of the impact of Covid-19 measures on democratic governance in various ways. While work packages 2 and 5 focus on individuals' attitudes and behaviours, work packages 3, 4 and 6 analyze several principles of democratic governance such as the rule of law, democratic participation, non-discrimination, minority rights and economic sustainability. Work packages 2-6 have provided a detailed literature review on the ongoing discussions within their respective areas, and have since worked on methodological questions related to the next steps in the research.

**Work package 2** elaborated the conceptual foundations for a study that aims at the driving factors behind the outbreak of protests against Covid-19 measures. During the reporting period, WP2 has made substantial progress toward this objective through several complementary studies examining how Covid-19 measures affected democratic governance and legitimacy within multilevel systems. A systematic literature review was completed and published, summarizing 114 studies on multilevel governance and crisis responses. This work provides the first consolidated overview of how institutional structures influenced the timing, stringency, and legitimacy of Covid-19 policy measures. It identifies key knowledge gaps, including the limited analysis of post-first-wave policy adaptation and the lack of comparative studies between federal and unitary systems.

WP2 also conducted a comparative case study of Belgium, France, Germany, and the Netherlands covering the period 2020–2022. The study analyzes sense-making, decision-making, and meaning-making during the pandemic, showing how institutional architecture shaped coordination, communication, and legitimacy. For example, Germany's cooperative *Ministerpräsidentenkonferenz* enabled horizontal coordination across states, while France's Conseil de défense sanitaire centralized strategic decision-making and communication. In addition, a pre-registered survey experiment was carried out in Germany and the Netherlands (N = 2,252). The experiment tested whether citizens perceived region-specific crisis measures as less legitimate than nationwide ones. The results show that citizens did not penalize regional differentiation and that the deciding level (national vs. regional) had only marginal influence on perceived legitimacy. This indicates that fairness and justification matter more than the uniformity of measures. These combined efforts have substantially advanced understanding of how pandemic governance affected citizens' acceptance of public authority and the broader functioning of democratic governance in multilevel systems.

**Work Package 3** focuses on democratic participation and the rule of law. As a first step, it reviewed the state of the art on the legitimacy of Covid-19 crisis governance. In the following, it conducted four comparative analyses of the legal emergency frameworks in the regions of European decentralized countries and of the role of parliaments, including regional parliaments and the European Parliament in Covid-19 crisis governance, as well as regional courts and expert advisory bodies in Covid-19 crisis governance.

**Work package 4** focuses the impact of Covid-19 crisis governance on the principle of non-discrimination and the rights of national minorities. The qualitative research of WP4 explored the perceptions of persons belonging to diverse minority groups and communities regarding the (detected, perceived and possible) impacts of Covid-19 crisis governance on these communities and persons belonging to them, and consequences of specific crisis measures and the whole process of Covid-19 crisis governance (management) on these groups, communities and their members. In this context, the research focused particularly on their perceptions of the legitimacy of crisis governance from the perspective of human and minority rights, the implementation of the principle of non-discrimination, and cases of possible/perceived (direct and indirect) discrimination, as well as detecting and analyzing the impact of Covid-19 measures on gender and the situation of (vulnerable) individuals and women. Building upon the common research approaches and methodology, and considering the analysis of the existing research, literature, data and sources, a specific methodology of WP4 field research was developed to generate new qualitative data based upon the study of selected minorities as case studies that were organized in a specific dataset available to the general public and interested scholars. The research results were presented also in conference papers, public events and publications, presented in this report.

**Work package 5** investigates the impact of the Covid-19 crisis measures on individuals' trust in governments – with trust being an important aspect of legitimacy and as such being linked to the project's goal of conceptualizing legitimate crisis governance. It started its work with a systematic literature review on citizens' trust in times of crisis and/or in multilevel systems to determine the state of the art, integrate findings on trust during crisis and trust in multilevel systems, and to uncover gaps in the literature to be explored further. The findings of the literature review also fed the design of the survey, i.e., the questions that were asked and the way in which they were asked. The literature review was published in *Perspectives on Federalism*.<sup>1</sup> WP5 thus designed and conducted a survey experiment that explores citizens' trust in different levels of government (from the local to the EU level) to take a crisis measure (restrictive or support measure) when confronted with a crisis scenario, which was modelled after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. That way, WP5 established which levels are trusted the most in times of crisis, compared to a benchmark situation, and which levels are better suited to take which types of measures when considering citizens' trust. Besides, the survey included additional questions on citizens' perceptions of the legality and transparency of COVID-19 pandemic management, their preferred crisis management values and the effect of intergovernmental relations when deciding on measures on citizens' trust. These questions were included to address particular gaps identified in the literature review – absence of literature on how decision-making procedures affect trust (objective 1) and how intergovernmental relations in multilevel systems affect trust (objective 2). First, literature discusses how (perceptions of) the content of measures affects citizens' trust, but not how citizens' perceptions of the procedures are used when deciding on measures affects trust. WP5 found that citizens' perceptions of the legality and transparency matter for their trust in government to deal with a crisis, indicating that both legality and transparency should not be disregarded too easily in times of crisis. This research therefore argues that not only the content of the measures matters for democratic or legitimate crisis governance, but also the procedures used in the decision-making process play a role, thereby adding to the first research objective. These studies resulted in two papers, one published, one under review:

- On the effect of transparency perceptions on trust (published in *Public Management Review*).<sup>2</sup>
- On the effect of legality perceptions on trust (currently under review).

---

<sup>1</sup> Frateur, J. (2023). How multilevel governance structures and crisis mitigating measures impact political trust: a systematic literature review. *Perspectives on Federalism*, 15(3), 55-85.

<sup>2</sup> Corrado, S. & Frateur, J. (2025). Trust during crisis: Unveiling the role of perceived procedural transparency. *Public Management Review*.

To add to the study of democratic governance and to address another gap identified in the literature review – no comparative research on trust evolutions over time – WP5 also used existing datasets to study trust evolutions over time. More particularly, it used Eurobarometer data, data of the Oxford Covid-19 government response tracker, data from the Human Mortality Database and self-coded data to study trust evolutions between the first and second pandemic phase in 27 EU member states and the UK. By using time-series qualitative comparative analysis, WP5 was able to determine the conditions under which trust increased and decreased in the given time period, highlighting the need for country-specific explanations instead of generalizations based on single country studies. As such, it contributed to the objective of measuring how the COVID-19 measures and citizens' perceptions thereof impacted democratic governance over time. It was found that trust decreased over time because of three mechanisms: pandemic fatigue, contestation of insufficient crisis governance and pervasive national executives. An increase in trust, not previously studied in the literature, could be explained by country-specific mechanisms. The results of these analyses are published as a research article in *Comparative European Politics*.<sup>3</sup>

**Work package 6** studied the economic and social aspects of Covid-19 crisis governance and its sustainability. It initially surveyed the relevant literature on the topic and then has focused on methodological debates, bringing together economics, political science and political economy in the discussion not only on economic and social measures, but also on their impact and relationship to legitimacy. The literature review provides an important source to examine policy responses in the context of our study of the legitimacy of social and economic measures in multilevel systems. These measures challenged economic sustainability and decision-making in multilevel systems. When adopting these measures, governments faced a trade-off between current and future investments and welfare provision. The literature review examines existing studies, indexes and databases dealing with the design and effects of the social, fiscal and economic measures in multilevel systems. The review addresses issues around crisis management in multilevel systems in terms general as well as in relation to the social and economic measures during the pandemic. The review also focuses on the role of domestic and transnational governance arrangements in dealing with Covid-19. Early evaluations focused on the relevance and efficiency of policies, with some assessing the intermediate impact of responses. Among EU Members States, the objectives were fairly homogeneous and early social and economic measures were generally effective, though they relied on different strategies. Subnational governments took a key role in providing social and economic assistance, which strained their public budgets severely and created demands to strengthen their fiscal capacities. WP6 could draw some lessons from the existing literature and first evaluations. Besides fast interventions and established risk management frameworks, clear responsibilities and mandates as well as strong internal communication and cooperation mechanisms among agencies and governments were crucial not only for the adoption of effective public health measures but also for the making and implementation of social and economic measures. Moreover, MLG enabled tailor-made, inclusive and effective policies based on local expertise and resources. Yet, uncoordinated measures produced inconsistent, potentially disruptive outcomes across governments. Even though multilevel governance increases the complexity of decision-making, blurs accountabilities and may slow down policy responses, multilevel coordination and cooperation can be expected to offer enhanced legitimacy of crisis governance in terms of both the output dimension as well as the input dimension. With this in mind, the review has revealed the need to improve the knowledge of the impact of multilevel governance on the making and implementation of social and economic measures. Due to the high number of crises, stakeholders and academics have meanwhile moved on and most relevant databases and directories are no longer updated. Nevertheless, they still provide great sources to further examine policy responses in the context of our study on the legitimacy of measures in multilevel systems.

Regarding the methodological questions that were discussed before the empirical part of the research agenda was stated. WP6 focused on normative criteria about governance practices and outcomes to examine the throughput and output legitimacy of social and economic crisis measures. In so doing, WP6 analysed the quality of democratic procedures and the effectiveness of measures. Throughput legitimacy refers to the quality of the policymaking process. More specifically, WP 6 focused on efficacy and accountability. Efficacy is high if measures are introduced and implemented competently on time and without administrative obstacles and error or significant cases of fraud.

---

<sup>3</sup> Frateur, J., Bursens, P., Popelier, P. & Corrado, S. (2025). How to explain citizens' declined political trust during the COVID-19 pandemic: a time-series qualitative comparative analysis (TsQCA). *Comparative European Politics*, 23, 552-575.

Accountability is high if measures are subject to parliamentary scrutiny and policy evaluation (for instance by a court of auditors) based on a clear, predefined strategy. Output legitimacy refers to the ability of governments to solve policy problems. Assessment of output legitimacy thus depends on the specific policy problem at hand. WP6 analysed the effectiveness of measures in keeping the economy afloat, preventing unemployment, maintaining income levels, and averting poverty. In multilevel systems, the legitimacy of crisis management concerns responses by several governments and the impact of measures across the country. Therefore, WP 6 included the territorial consistency across the regions of a country regarding the efficacy and effectiveness of economic and social measures in our assessment of political legitimacy. Regarding efficacy, territorial consistency means that the distribution of aid reflects specific regional needs and conditions. In terms of effectiveness, a consistent territorial impact means that in all regions the measures were similarly effective in achieving their goals.

## **Objective 2: Evaluate the impact of MLG institutions on Covid-19 measures and on the impact of these measures on MLG governance and wider questions of democratic legitimacy**

The second objective is addressed by the work packages in the following ways:

**Work package 1** collected data to assess how the Covid-19 crisis governance changed MLG institutions and intergovernmental relations and MLG shaped the democratic quality of Covid-19 crisis governance. It did so in close cooperation with existing data, particularly International IDEA's Global Democracy barometer and its measures during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Work package 2** reviewed the literature on legitimate crisis governance in the context of multilevel governance. It is currently working on an outline of a qualitative study that investigates crisis governance modes in different MLG contexts, to further our understanding of the linkages between crisis governance and MLG – which is an area that remains understudied and with little existing theoretical discussion. The systematic review demonstrates that federal and decentralized systems were generally slower in the early stages of the pandemic but often more flexible and adaptive later on. These findings underline that the relationship between decentralization and crisis effectiveness is contingent on coordination mechanisms, information exchange, and the clarity of legal mandates. The comparative case study shows how sense-making, coordination, and communication were structured differently across MLG systems. Unitary systems such as France relied on hierarchical coordination and centralized communication, while federal systems like Belgium and Germany employed cooperative structures balancing national coherence with subnational discretion. The Netherlands evolved from a decentralized to a more centralized approach over time, demonstrating how institutional adaptability can sustain legitimacy. The survey experiment adds an individual-level perspective to these institutional analyses. Citizens' legitimacy assessments did not significantly differ across governance levels, suggesting that effective coordination, transparency, and clear justification may matter more than the formal level of decision-making authority. Finally, WP2 produced a consolidated set of policy recommendations, translating its analytical results into actionable guidance for legitimate crisis governance in multilevel systems. These recommendations emphasize eight key principles:

1. Centralized coordination combined with decentralized implementation;
2. Strengthened monitoring, reporting, and early-warning systems;
3. Independent and multidisciplinary advisory councils;
4. Transparent and consistent communication strategies;
5. Institutionalized crisis learning and adaptability;
6. Clear and flexible legal frameworks for emergency decision-making;
7. Strong intergovernmental collaboration mechanisms; and
8. Tailored, context-specific responses within an overarching national framework.

Together, these outcomes provide theoretical, empirical, and practical contributions to understanding how multilevel governance structures shape both policy effectiveness and democratic legitimacy during crises.

To study the impact of multilevel governance on the rule of law and democratic participation in Covid-19 crisis governance, **Work Package 3** has collected and integrated data at the EU, national, regional levels. Particular attention has been given to the regional level, as previous research has

largely overlooked the role of regional governments, parliaments, and courts, as well as the dynamics of expert advice in crisis governance within decentralized and federal systems.

Regarding multi-level governance (MLG), **WP4** found out that respondents in Austria, Croatia and Slovenia generally did not focus on the specific levels of government deciding crisis policies and specific measures. However, they agreed that more consultation and inclusion would enhance legitimacy at all levels. In Italy, by contrast, usually the interviewees refer to the national and regional/local levels and perspectives. They point that the multilevel aspect, competence distribution and coordination between the center and subnational level(s), autonomy of subnational level(s), and federal dynamics are important. This applies particularly to regional policymaking, such as e.g., coordinating the transfer of patients to ICU beds, and cross-border cooperation in South Tyrol, where a cross-border task force working on special arrangements and rights for cross-border commuters was established

**Work package 5** treats MLG as an independent variable in its survey experiment to explain its impact on individuals' trust in authorities that took Covid-19 crisis measures. In doing so, it contributes to establishing important linkages between individual trust in decisions and the level of government that has taken the decision. WP5 did so through the aforementioned survey, by studying citizens' trust in different levels of government, and by studying citizens' trust in government that consulted other governments when deciding on measures, i.e., by studying the effect of intergovernmental consultations on citizens' trust. Multilevel systems have different levels of government that are interconnected to a greater or lesser extent. This leads governments to cooperate/coordinate/consult with one another when deciding on (crisis) measures, but this interconnectedness is seldomly addressed when studying trust in multilevel systems. WP5 found that citizens differentiate between levels of government when expressing trust, but less so in times of crisis. It is also found that trust in the national level increases the most when citizens are confronted with the onset of a pandemic, while a similar effect is not found for the local (and regional) level. Finally, WP5 found differences between countries and between types of political systems in the way citizens trust their different governments, indicating that the institutional set-up plays a role in citizens' attitudes towards their governments. Regarding the effect of consultation, we found that consultation prior to decision-making on crisis measures leads to higher trust in the consulting level when that level is lowly trusted, but leads to lower trust in the consulting level if it was highly trusted. The effect is mediated by attachment to a government level, age, political sophistication and perceived impact of a government. Here as well, we found different effects of consultation depending on the type of political system. This resulted in two working papers that are currently under review:

- On the effect of intergovernmental consultations on trust (currently under review).
- On trust in different levels of government in times of crisis (working paper – chapter of the LEGITIMULT edited volume).

The survey, which is publicly available on Zenodo, constituted the main data that were analyzed to study and explain citizens' trust in governments at different levels to take different crisis response measures (both objectives).<sup>4</sup> Finally, most of the work done in WP5 was used in the doctoral dissertation of Jakob Frateur, doctoral researcher on WP5, who defended the PhD on 2 October 2025.<sup>5</sup>

In **Work Package 6**, MLG also serves as an independent variable in order to investigate the effects and sustainability of social and fiscal measures. Regarding the impact of MLG institutions on Covid-19 measures, and within the previously outlined theoretical and methodological framework focusing on MLG, WP6 examined vertical coordination in France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, and the United Kingdom—that is, the coordination between regional governments and the central government. Within this framework, WP6 investigated how coordination affected the accountability, efficacy, and effectiveness of economic and social crisis responses during the pandemic. In contrast to the first expectation, according to which a *higher level of intergovernmental coordination is associated with lower accountability of crisis measures*, WP 6 found that measures that were not coordinated and those that were strongly coordinated tend to be associated with a similar degree of accountability. Moreover, while weakly coordinated measures were associated with a lower degree

<sup>4</sup> Frateur, J., Coroado, S., Bursens, P. & Popelier, P. (2024). POLTRUST in MLG and CRISIS (version v1) [dataset]. Zenodo.

<sup>5</sup> Frateur, J. (2025). Trust on trial. Citizens political trust in a time of crisis governance [doctoral dissertation].

of accountability than uncoordinated measures, they also showed lower levels of accountability than strongly coordinated measures. Consequently, our findings indicate that coordination does not necessarily undermine political accountability, as long as measures are jointly adopted beyond mere consultations. Our data also suggest that most measures that central governments adopted without coordination were not extensively debated in parliaments. In contrast to the assumption that legislatures are marginalised when executives coordinate their actions, most coordinated measures were extensively debated in parliament, and all strongly coordinated measures were either directly or indirectly voted on. At the same time, strongly coordinated measures tended to be less thoroughly evaluated than weakly and, in particular, uncoordinated measures. The research only partially confirms the second expectation that *a higher level of intergovernmental coordination is associated with a higher efficacy of policy measures*. Strongly coordinated measures demonstrated slightly higher levels of efficacy than uncoordinated and significantly higher levels of efficacy than weakly coordinated measures. However, the efficacy of weakly coordinated measures was lower than that of uncoordinated measures. In many cases, intergovernmental consultations and information exchange did not guarantee a timely implementation and smooth access and did not help prevent error and fraud. The coordination of policy-making to clarify responsibilities for the delivery of a measure and to pool administrative capacities and financial resources seems to foster efficacy. This may matter especially when the implementation of the measure involved the regional governments, as in Spain, where the Spanish government took measures that enabled the Autonomous Communities to adopt their own support schemes. That the majority of uncoordinated measures was not associated with less efficacy than strongly coordinated measures may be explained by the fact that in our sample those measures were largely implemented by the central government, without involvement of the regional governments. This resulted in fewer delays, access restrictions, errors and frauds, and even greater territorial consistency than it was the case for weakly coordinated measures. WP6 also only found partial support of the third expectation that *a higher level of intergovernmental coordination is associated with a higher effectiveness of crisis measures*. All goals of the strongly coordinated measures were attained beyond the duration of the measure and territorially consistent. This also applies to uncoordinated measures, though the goal attainment of a small share of uncoordinated measures was not territorially consistent and/or not sustainable. Partial coordination tends to be associated with lower efficacy than no coordination, which may suggest that efficacy is lower when countries did not jointly adopt a measure even though its implementation was decentralised. Cases in point are the UK's business support schemes and the Italian self-employment and income support measures. Our findings thus suggest that measures that are not fully coordinated were not as well tailored to the conditions of all territories as strongly coordinated or uncoordinated measures. During the COVID-19 pandemic, social and economic measures were mostly adopted by central governments, either in coordination with regional governments or independently. The analysis shows that for the political legitimacy of crisis measures it does not really matter whether they are strongly coordinated or not coordinated. Because of the small differences between no coordination and strong coordination and because weak/partial coordination is associated with lower levels of throughput and output legitimacy than no coordination, WP6 cannot conclude either that higher levels of coordination are generally associated with a higher degree of throughput and output legitimacy. Consequently, coordination per se may not enhance the political legitimacy of crisis management. However, the substance of coordination matters, especially when it comes to measures that are implemented by regional governments. It makes a difference whether measures are strongly or weakly/partially coordinated, in which case there are lower levels of accountability, efficacy, and effectiveness; at least when it comes to social and economic crisis responses. In countries without a robust intergovernmental architecture such as Italy and the UK, coordination was mostly limited to information exchange or consultation. Italy had the most measures with a low degree of accountability, efficacy and effectiveness, accountability and effectiveness was comparatively low in the UK. Moreover, the goal attainment for Italy's business and income support measures and the UK's businesses support schemes was not territorially consistent. This suggests that coordination may only contribute to high political legitimacy when its remit is clearly defined and structured. In Germany, France, Poland, and the UK, intergovernmental coordination reflected how these multilevel systems also operate in non-crisis times; although with some adjustments to the pandemic, including video conferences and emergency meetings. At least in France, Germany, and Poland the reliance on tried (though adjusted) modus operandi led to high levels of legitimacy and suggests that our findings may also apply to non-crisis times and other types of crises. In the UK, Italy and Spain, our findings are less clear, which can be explained by the fact that due to the extraordinary circumstances coordination in Italy and Spain was overall less pronounced compared to normal times. In the UK, coordination

varied strongly in time and across policy areas. While it was unusually strong in relation to public health measure at the beginning of the pandemic, it subsequently ceased and was always at best weak for economic and social measures. While the analysis on the influence of coordination on the political legitimacy of social and economic crisis measures offers important insights, the causality is not straightforward, as coordination is only one of many factors – including administrative capacities, competence of governments, and socio-economic conditions – that are likely to influence the political legitimacy of crisis management in multilevel systems. Because of the urgency of a crisis, many countries relied on executive leadership that marginalised legislatures. In Spain and Italy, for instance, at the beginning of the pandemic, the nation-wide State of Alarm temporarily restricted the activities of parliaments. Considering that WP6 only examined six countries, only the most important economic and social measures in each country, and only one crisis, studies on a larger sample and different crises could offer further insights on the interplay of intergovernmental coordination and the political legitimacy of crisis management. Regarding the impact of Covid-19 measures on MLG governance, WP6 analysed the legitimacy of European crisis governance. The findings show the while EU crisis governance has reinforced the strong role of Commission and Member State governments at the cost of direct and subnational input legitimacy, produced outputs that at least national governments could subscribe to, yet suffered from throughout deficits, it had not only a temporary effect. Similar to previous cases of European crisis governance, key actors introduced profound changes that altered the EU MLG governance in lasting way and seem difficult to reverse. For the majority subnational governments, the crisis governance meant a return to top-down rather than bottom-up governance. Though the Commission has sought to subsequently strengthen the role of subnational governments again, the exceptionalism of EU crisis governance seemed to have normalised the marginalisation of subnational governments. Yet, without regional and local ownership of socio-economic policies the EU falls behind previous agendas that sought to utilise the knowledge and expertise to strengthen its output and throughput legitimacy as well as to foster proximity to the people. Moreover, WP 6 found that there is an inverse relationship between decentralization -measured as the share of subnational expenditure and the Regional Authority Index- and public governments' interventions to fight the pandemic. More decentralized countries deployed larger assistance programs for households in need. On the contrary, although the level of tax decentralization does not seem to have influenced on the size of those interventions, subnational borrowing powers are positively associated with the intensity of those assistance measures: countries in which subnational governments have large borrowing powers implemented more generous cushioning programs.

### **Objective 3: Improve the governance of future crises by interactively developing a toolbox on legitimate crisis governance and several learning tools to apply it.**

The overall objective of **Work Package 7 (WP7)** – From Project to Practice – was to translate the research findings of LEGITIMULT (WPs 2–6) into practical, replicable tools and participatory formats that connect academic knowledge with real-world governance practice. WP7 aimed to co-create, test, and refine activities that foster legitimacy, transparency, and inclusiveness in crisis management through direct stakeholder engagement.

Specific objectives and progress:

1. **Develop and implement an interactive e-learning course on legitimate crisis governance for policymakers, civil servants, and organized civil society.**  
*Achieved.* The course was fully developed and launched on Eurac's e-learning platform in six languages (English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, and Croatian). It includes six modules addressing key themes such as rule of law, trust, non-discrimination, and the role of experts in crisis management. The course consists of texts and contains also interactive elements (videos and quiz). It has been disseminated across Europe.
2. **Design and conduct four Citizens' Juries (CJs) to integrate citizen perspectives into policy recommendations.**  
*Achieved.* Four CJs were organized and held in Bolzano/Bozen (IT), Izola/Isola (SL), Huldernberg (BE), and Bergen (NO), involving approximately 50 citizens in total. Each jury deliberated on a specific theme derived from the project's research and produced a local position paper, later consolidated into a comparative analysis for the final report. The events were organized by EURAC together with partners.
3. **Organize four Media Workshops (MWs) to engage journalists and communication experts in reflecting on the role of media in crisis governance.**

*Achieved.* The Media workshops were organized and successfully implemented in Italy, Belgium, Sweden and Slovenia. They provided a space for dialogue between researchers, journalists, and institutional communication officers, resulting in a set of practical recommendations on how media can contribute to legitimate crisis management.

4. **Ensure practitioner involvement and exchange through a dedicated seminar or equivalent engagement activities.**

*Partially adapted and achieved.* Due to contextual and logistical constraints, the originally planned two-week seminar in Fribourg was restructured into a series of 5 thematic webinars and one in-person session, ensuring broader and interdisciplinary participation. These events facilitated direct dialogue with policymakers and practitioners, gathering feedback that informed the final policy recommendations.

5. **Produce a multilingual toolbox and Research-to-Practice Guide to support the replication of WP7 activities in other contexts.**

*Achieved.* The Toolbox integrates the Final Report, the Research-to-Practice Guide, a booklet containing a simple version of the research results, and the final policy recommendations. The Research-to-Practice guide in particular provides a replicable model for transferring research into practice and is available in two languages.

All WP7 objectives were achieved or adapted successfully. Despite minor challenge (such as lower participation in some pilot areas activities or adjustments to event format) the WP met its intended goals. It effectively bridged research and practice, engaging a wide range of stakeholders and producing tangible, reusable outputs that enhance the project's long-term impact on legitimate crisis governance.

## 1.2 Explanation of the work carried out per WP

Include a table or description of how the project has achieved each objective of the period.

### 1.2.1 Work Package 1

Explain the work carried out in WP1 during the reporting period giving details of the work carried out by each beneficiary/affiliated entity involved.

In the first-year report, UiB, leading Work Package 1 (WP1), dedicated the initial six months to extensive data collection and archiving for 31 European countries, encompassing primary and secondary sources, Corona-specific laws, and literature on subnational government and intergovernmental relations before and during the pandemic. The WP leader drafted seven country profiles (which are still in progress) to serve as the foundation for quantitative coding. UiB navigated three datasets to quantify the strictness of Covid-19 regulations from Binghamton University, Oxford University, and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. IDEA, contributing to data collection, trained on the COVID-19 Global Monitor and States of Emergency dataset, and prepared data files for LEGITIMULT. Data cleaning and reformatting were completed for Europe by March 2023, with other regions added in April and May. The shared datasets cover states of emergency, event counts, and detailed event descriptions, sources, and severity indicators. UiB expanded its efforts to draft 15 country profiles, initiating a coding scheme for ex-ante competence allocation and pandemic measures. IDEA focused on cleaning and updating entries for all world regions, developing a Legislative Corpus for Sweden, and organizing the inaugural LEGITIMULT Webinar. The datasets provided comprehensive global COVID-19 measures for WP1, notably 7,909 entries for Europe alone, including diverse aspects such as school closures, mask mandates, and vaccination efforts, crucial for understanding crisis management and informing the theoretical framework outlined in their manuscript on intergovernmental relations during crises. Work on the dataset continues, in particular on the finalisation of data collection and discussions on the coding scheme, which involve UiB and IDEA, amongst others.

Work package 1 has built an archive of Covid-19 relevant primary (e.g. constitutions, constitutional laws, laws) and secondary (e.g. decrees, decisions, orders) legislation for 31 European countries from January 1 2020 until December 31, 2022. The legislative production during the Covid-19 crisis is enormous: the *European Covid-19 legislation database* includes more than 20,000 legislative documents. This legislation database forms the basis for the *Subnational Government Epidemic Authority Index (SGEAI)* which includes four innovative indicators that tap decentralization and

multilevel governance during the Covid-19 crisis which were developed by work package 1 during the project.

1. *Self-rule* measures the extent to which subnational governments were able to adopt and/or modify national restrictive measures.
2. *Shared rule* taps the extent to which subnational and national governments regularly met to decide on national restrictive measures.
3. *Territorial differentiation* assesses whether restrictions laid down in national legislative documents were differently specified across subnational jurisdictions.
4. *RTV-differentiation* indicates whether restrictions laid down in national legislative documents were differently specified for persons who were recovered (R), who had a negative test result (T), or who were vaccinated (V).

The self-rule and shared rule indicators are grounded in the conceptual framework of the Regional Authority Index (RAI; Hooghe et al. 2016; Shair-Rosenfield et al. 2021) but the operationalization of the indicators had to be adjusted to the highly specific nature of decentralization during the Covid-19 crisis. The RAI and the Local Autonomy Index (LAI; Ladner et al. 2019) trace no changes in decentralization during the Covid-19 crisis because constitutions and local and regional government laws, which specify subnational authority, were not amended or revised. All 31 European countries adopted Covid-19 crisis specific legislation that either introduced a new legislative framework to deal with epidemics and public health crisis or that significantly revised pre-crisis epidemic or public health laws.

Hence, work package 1 developed a new, innovative, and unique set of self-rule and shared rule indicators for measuring decentralization and multilevel governance during the Covid-19 crisis. During the research it became apparent that most variation in decentralization and multilevel governance was taking place in the realm of self-rule rather than shared rule (see deliverable 1.4, draft book chapter). Subnational governments that had shared rule before the Covid-19 crisis either met very few times with their national governments (e.g. the United Kingdom and Switzerland) or they frequently met with national ministers through intergovernmental meetings, but they did not decide on Covid-19 measures except in few cases (e.g. Germany and Spain). Furthermore, shared rule was not practiced or developed during the Covid-19 crisis in 24 out of 31 European countries that did not have shared rule before the onset of the crisis. Another main result of the research is that self-rule changed drastically for restrictive measures during the Covid-19 crisis, but subnational authority hardly changed for preventive measures (e.g. contact tracing, testing, and vaccination). This finding can be attributed to the regulatory versus distributive nature of respectively restrictive and preventive measures (see deliverable 1.4, draft book chapter).

Work package 1 therefore *developed a comprehensive, detailed, and specified coding scheme for tapping self-rule during the Covid-19 crisis which consists of twelve indicators* categorized by whether subnational government could adopt or modify restrictions in relation to the freedom of movement of persons (Type A restrictions), regarding the freedom of assembly (Type B restrictions), or concerning the freedom to conduct commercial activities and to provide services (Type C restrictions). This set of twelve self-rule indicators are crucial to assess whether decentralization during the Covid-19 crisis has contributed to the effectiveness or public acceptance of restrictive measures and to evaluate whether this impact varies across the types of restrictions. A stay-at-home-order with few exemptions for allowed travel outside the private home (restriction type A1) is more likely to have an impact on a (decline in) infection rates and public acceptance than the closure of several non-essential businesses and service providers such as gambling and betting facilities, museums, libraries, concert halls, fitness studios, and swimming pools (restriction type C2). More detail on the coding scheme is provided in deliverables 1.1 (final working paper), 1.2 and 1.3 (codebook and dataset).

Self-rule and shared rule in relation to epidemic authority is traced for 73 subnational governments in 31 European countries during three different time periods during the Covid-19 crisis, i.e. the pre-crisis, containment, and mitigation periods. The differentiation between these time periods is critical for observing whether and when (de)centralization took place, and for understanding why some countries adopted a centralized governance approach whereas other countries implemented a decentralized governance method (e.g. because subnational authority was specified in a pre-crisis epidemic or public health law; see deliverable 1.4, draft book chapter). Importantly, *the SGEAI also*

*includes the indicator actor* which traces the specific decision-maker of the subnational government that could adopt or modify restrictions. This indicator is vital to assess the impact of decentralization during the Covid-19 crisis on the public legitimacy of the restrictive measures because this may vary according to whether subnational actors adopting or modifying restrictions are (in)directly elected or not. In many European countries epidemic authority was delegated to centrally appointed governors (e.g. French prefects or Polish voivodes) or deconcentrated central government administrations (e.g. regional public health authorities in the Czech Republic and Slovak Republic or regional state administrative agencies in Finland). The SGEAI offers a subnational government dataset that includes more than 80,000 daily observations for 73 subnational governments and a country dataset that includes almost 34,000 daily observations for 31 countries starting on January 1, 2020 and ending on December 31, 2022.

During the research, it also became clear that national governments used two alternative governance methods in an effort to reap the benefits that are often associated with decentralization. One important advantage of decentralization is an increase in the effectiveness of policy because subnational governments are more proximate to local conditions and are better equipped to adjust policy towards local conditions such as local infection rates or public health care capacities. Another important advantage of decentralization is increased legitimacy for governmental decisions because local and regional governments tend to enjoy higher levels of trust than national governments.

*The first alternative governance method consists of territorial differentiation whereby a national restriction is differently specified for one or more subnational territories.* For example, outdoor group gatherings (restriction type B1) can have up to 100 participants in region A but can only have up to 10 participants in region B. An additional key argument for tracing territorial differentiation is that it often impacted subnational authority. For example, municipalities in areas classified as a 'yellow zone' could close specific non-essential businesses or service providers but municipalities in areas classified as a 'red zone' could not exercise this competence because non-essential businesses and service providers were already ordered by the national government to suspend their operations.

*The second alternative governance method is RTV-differentiation which consists of differentiating restrictive measures according to the health status of people, i.e. whether a person can present proof of recovery (R), a negative test result (T), or vaccination (V).* For example, an operator of a restaurant could maximally host two persons per ten square meters (restriction type C3), but this restriction did not apply when the operator checked the RTV-status of the consumers (through, for example, the EU digital Covid-19 passport) before entering the premises.

Hence, work package 1 decided to trace territorial differentiation and RTV-differentiation in relation to each of the twelve types of restrictions for which self-rule is traced. It appears that territorial differentiation has been implemented in 26 out of 31 European countries and RTV-differentiation has been applied in 30 out of 31 European countries. Hence, these two indicators are very important to assess the conditions under which the hypothesized benefits of decentralization in relation to democratic legitimacy of the Covid-19 restrictive measures materialize or not, and whether decentralization is the only or the most important governance method to increase the effectiveness and/or public acceptance of restrictive measures.

In addition to two datasets and a codebook, the SGEAI includes 31 country profiles that provide extraordinary detail on the developments in self-rule, shared rule, territorial differentiation and RTV-differentiation before and during the Covid-19 crisis. The average length of a country profile is 42 pages (more than 1,300 pages in total) which cite an average of 650 legislative documents (more than 20,000 legislative documents in total). In addition to providing a sound, comprehensive, valid, and reliable justification of the coding, an essential added value of the country profiles is the identification of the 'legislative framework' adopted during the Covid-19 crisis which is summarized in dedicated tables. All country profiles underwent several rounds of revisions because of the developments, extensions, and refinements of the coding scheme during the project. Throughout the whole project period, the other project partners provided expert input on the content and coding of the 31 country profiles, they helped with collecting and retrieving specific legislative documents, and they answered specific questions. In addition, the other project partners regularly provided feedback, in particular during the project meetings, on the main findings and subsequent choices to be made in relation to the further developments, extensions, and refinements of the coding scheme. All country profiles except two were finalized within the project's duration (end date: September 30,

2025), and the country profiles for Bulgaria and Greece have been finished in November 2025. The writing of the country profiles for Bulgaria and Greece was confronted with challenges in relation to language. The use of the Cyrillic and Greek alphabets severely complicated tracing and retrieving the necessary primary and secondary legislation for the coding and made accessing and understanding the contents of these legislative documents extraordinarily complex.

### 1.2.2 Work Package 2

Explain the work carried out in WP2 during the reporting period giving details of the work carried out by each beneficiary/affiliated entity involved.

In WP2, ULEI contributed by producing a conceptual paper on legitimate crisis governance. ULEI also conducted a systematic literature review of multilevel governance effects, which utilized case studies and protest analysis to better understand the impact of MLG in crisis management. ULEI's contributions to LEGITIMULT demonstrate their expertise in crisis management and MLG and highlight the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in addressing complex social and political issues. UNED and Eurac performed the review of the literature review and methodology papers.

A conceptual paper on Legitimate Crisis Governance has been released, as well as a systematic literature review on Multilevel Governance effects. Research methods have been explored and defined. Deliverable 2.1, the literature review, has been submitted to a journal (now published). A conceptual paper has been drafted and was presented during an ECPR conference panel in Prague in September 2023.

Building on this foundation, WP2 finalized several major outputs during the period:

- A peer-reviewed article summarizing the state of research on multilevel governance and pandemic responses, identifying methodological patterns and proposing a new research agenda.
- A comparative case study covering Belgium, France, Germany, and the Netherlands, analyzing sense-making, decision-making, and meaning-making across federal and unitary systems.
- A large-scale survey experiment in Germany and the Netherlands assessing public perceptions of legitimacy under different governance configurations.
- A policy report containing recommendations for enhancing legitimate crisis governance in multilevel systems, developed as Deliverable 2.5.

Each of these outputs directly contributes to the project's objectives: the review synthesizes existing evidence; the comparative analysis reveals how different MLG arrangements perform under stress; the experiment identifies key drivers of perceived legitimacy; and the recommendations translate the lessons learned into practical design principles for policy and governance reform.

ULEI led the conceptual, comparative, and experimental components of WP2. UNED and Eurac supported methodological review, provided feedback on design, and contributed to synthesis activities across deliverables.

During this reporting period, WP2 also produced a major conceptual contribution in the form of a handbook chapter titled "*Legitimate Crisis Governance in Multi-Level Governance Systems*." This chapter synthesizes insights from the empirical findings of WP2 and connects them to a broader theoretical discussion of legitimacy and crisis governance.

The chapter conceptualizes legitimate crisis governance as a multidimensional process that combines the operational demands of crisis management with the democratic expectations of legitimacy within multilevel systems. It explores how authority is distributed across local, regional, national, and supranational levels, and how this dispersion generates tensions between effectiveness, accountability, and public acceptance. Drawing on examples such as the COVID-19 pandemic, it illustrates how intergovernmental coordination, scientific expertise, and public communication interact to sustain or undermine legitimacy during crises.

The text distinguishes between normative and descriptive understandings of legitimacy, emphasizing that perceived legitimacy—citizens’ belief that governmental actions are appropriate and justified—is decisive for compliance during emergencies. It identifies three mechanisms that particularly challenge legitimacy in crisis contexts:

1. **Temporal compression**, where the urgency of crisis decision-making constrains democratic deliberation and shifts legitimacy from procedural input to demonstrable output.
2. **Information asymmetry**, where reliance on expert advice and uncertain knowledge heightens the distance between decision-makers and the public.
3. **Performance pressure**, where governments must continuously demonstrate competence to maintain public support once initial “rally-round-the-flag” effects fade.

The chapter argues that in multilevel governance systems these pressures multiply, as legitimacy must be constructed and maintained simultaneously at several interdependent levels of authority. It examines how local and regional actors may challenge or reinforce national decisions, how blame and credit shift between tiers of government, and how citizens’ trust can depend on the clarity of responsibility across those levels.

By integrating these conceptual insights with the empirical results of WP2—on sense-making, coordination, communication, and public perceptions—the handbook contribution establishes a comprehensive theoretical framework for future research on legitimate crisis governance. It demonstrates how democratic legitimacy, administrative capacity, and multilevel coordination jointly determine the resilience of public governance under crisis conditions.

Output / Activity	What WP2 did	Contribution to Objective 1	Contribution to Objective 2
<b>Systematic literature review on MLG and Covid-19</b>	Published peer-reviewed article summarizing 114 studies; identified biases in methods, time scope, and case coverage.	Clarifies the theoretical and empirical state of knowledge on MLG and democratic governance during the pandemic.	Shows how federalism and decentralization shaped policy timing and stringency; sets research agenda for MLG legitimacy.
<b>Comparative case study: Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands</b>	Traced <i>sense-making, decision-making, and meaning-making</i> from 2020–2022, mapping institutions and communication flows.	Explains how state architecture shaped crisis legitimacy, transparency, and adaptability.	Demonstrates how coordination platforms (e.g., MPK, Safety Council) balanced autonomy and coherence.
<b>Survey experiment on legitimacy of regional measures</b>	Pre-registered, cross-national experiment (N = 2,252) tested legitimacy perceptions of region-specific lockdowns.	Provides direct behavioral evidence of citizens’ legitimacy judgments.	Indicates limited impact of the deciding level on legitimacy; supports principle of subsidiarity with communication consistency.
<b>Policy recommendations (D 2.5)</b>	Eight design principles integrating comparative and experimental results.	Translates findings into actionable guidance for democratic and legitimate crisis management.	Offers institutional blueprints for future MLG crisis coordination and legitimacy protection.

### 1.2.3 Work Package 3

Explain the work carried out in WP3 during the reporting period giving details of the work carried out by each beneficiary/affiliated entity involved.

First, WP3 conducted a comprehensive literature review on the democratic quality of Covid-19 crisis governance. The review examined the state of the art through four key principles: legality; democratic participation; transparency and accountability; and the protection of fundamental freedoms and rights. In addition, it analysed existing empirical research and mapped available datasets and indicators used to assess the democratic quality of Covid-19 crisis governance. This work also contributed to developing a methodological, terminological, and conceptual framework for the work package. The literature review was carried out by UNIFR, the WP leader, and was internally reviewed by ULEI and Eurac.

Second, building on the dataset developed by International IDEA on the declaration of states of emergency during the Covid-19 crisis, UNIFR expanded the analysis by collecting additional data at the regional level. This included systematically gathering information on the date, duration, and type of state of emergency declared in each region, as well as identifying the actors responsible for declaring, extending, or authorizing a state of emergency ex post. This extended dataset provides a more granular understanding of how emergency powers were activated across different layers of governance and strengthens the comparative foundation for analysing multilevel crisis governance.

Third, given the absence of comparative research on the role of regional parliaments in Covid-19 crisis governance, UNIFR examined the extent to which regional legislatures were constrained in performing their core functions during the pandemic. This entailed assessing restrictions on opportunities for political deliberation and on their representative, policy-making, and ex-post oversight functions. To further evaluate parliaments' capacity to adapt to crisis dynamics and counterbalance the expansion of executive power, UNIFR analysed whether 31 national and relevant regional parliaments, as well as the European Parliament, established ad hoc committees related to Covid-19 and, if so, for what purposes. These committees were examined with respect to their mandates, composition, effectiveness, transparency, and outputs, offering insights into the robustness of institutional checks and balances under emergency conditions. Complementing this broad comparative assessment, UNIFR conducted a focused analysis of five regional legislatures with particularly high institutional powers, Bavaria, the Flemish Community, Vienna, Zurich, and Madrid. This analysis revealed that while their representative and policy-making functions were generally limited during the pandemic, the extent of these constraints varied substantially. Notably, the regional parliaments of Bavaria, the Flemish Community, and Madrid stood out for engaging in extensive ex-post oversight during the first two years of the pandemic, actively scrutinising executive actions and crisis measures. These findings challenge the widespread assumption that parliaments were uniformly sidelined during Covid-19 crisis governance. Instead, they reinforce emerging scholarship highlighting significant cross-territorial variation in parliamentary activity and underscore the important role that regional legislatures can play in ensuring democratic accountability in multilevel governance systems during emergencies.

Fourth, Eurac contributed to WP3 providing an analysis of the role of courts in crisis governance during Covid-19 in decentralized countries. Relying on a comparative analysis of Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Spain, the work first assessed executive lawmaking and the powers of the courts to review it in these five countries. Then it investigated how courts have countered this trend and stood up to the executive branch. Finally, it assessed the impact of the MLG dimension of a court system on the judiciary's role vis-à-vis the executive, offers comparative conclusions on the judicial review of crisis measures and briefly outlines an agenda for further research on the legal and political factors that determine the role of courts.

Fifth, UNIFR investigated the organization and institutionalization of expert advice relevant to Covid-19 crisis governance in decentralized and federal European countries. Recognizing that expert input shapes not only the effectiveness but also the democratic legitimacy of crisis policymaking, UNIFR examined how expert advisory bodies operated during the pandemic and how political decision-makers engaged with their recommendations. Drawing on a comparative study of mandatory Covid-19 vaccination, the research analysed the role of expert advisory bodies in three regionalized and federal contexts: Austria, Belgium, and the United Kingdom. The study explored whether and how these bodies were institutionally organized, the extent to which they were included in the debates and decision-making processes surrounding vaccination mandates, and the degree to which their advice was ultimately followed. The findings reveal that expert advice was structured differently across the three countries, was incorporated selectively, and was not always heeded by political authorities.

Furthermore, the limited inclusion of institutionalized, multidisciplinary expertise contributed to the shortcomings or failure of certain vaccination-mandate policies.

Building on these insights, UNIFR contributed to the formulation of policy recommendations aimed at strengthening expert advisory systems in decentralized and federal settings. These recommendations highlight the importance of transparent institutionalization, the integration of multidisciplinary expertise, and clearer mechanisms for incorporating expert assessments into political decision-making during future crises

#### **1.2.4 Work Package 4**

Explain the work carried out in WP4 during the reporting period giving details of the work carried out by each beneficiary/affiliated entity involved.

WP4 aims at examining the impact of the Covid-19 governance on the views of legitimacy within minority communities. Under the lead of IES, FPZG, Eurac and UNIFR were all involved in the following main tasks:

- Conducting a thorough literature review on the topic and developing a methodological, terminological and conceptual framework for the work package. This was done by IES, the WP leader, with the collaboration of FPZG and the support of UNIFR and Eurac.
- Developing the core questions for the interviews that are planned for the following periods. This was done by IES, with the participation of FPZG, and the interview protocol was confirmed by the IES research ethic body.
- Selecting the initial case studies and interviewees among the leaders and members of minority communities and institutions in Croatia and other countries. This was done by IES and FPZG, using the snow-ball method and establishing initial contacts with potential interviewees.
- Carrying out the initial open-ended in-depth interviews and other related activities, such as informal conversations, panels, and direct and indirect observation. This was done by IES and FPZG, and the field research will continue throughout the duration of the project.
- Completing Deliverable 4.1 to 4. This was done by IES and FPZG, with the comments of UNIFR and Eurac.

#### **1.2.5 Work Package 5**

Explain the work carried out in WP5 during the reporting period giving details of the work carried out by each beneficiary/affiliated entity involved.

WP5 aims to analyze the impact of COVID-19 governance on citizens' trust in governments.

The work carried out in WP5 during the reporting period can be summarized as follows:

- UAnt, the WP leader, conducted research mainly for WP5, which involved reading and drafting the literature review, writing the methodological note, and developing a research design for the survey experiment that was carried out in June 2023. The survey experiment tested the effects of different types of Covid-19 measures (restrictive or supportive) on the trust in public institutions and the social cohesion among citizens. The data from the survey experiment constitutes the main data for the analyses in WP5. Furthermore, TsQCA was used to study trust evolutions over time at a country level. For that analysis, WP5 relied on existing data.
  - UAnt concluded the literature review and presented the results in the project meeting and two academic conferences. The literature review provided a theoretical and empirical overview of the concept of trust, and how they are affected by COVID-19 governance and MLG. The literature review was published.
  - UAnt concluded the methodological note, which explains the rationale and the procedure of the survey experiment and the QCA method. The QCA method is a comparative analysis technique that aims to find necessary and sufficient conditions for trust.

- UAnt drafted four research papers based on the survey data, and one paper based on the QCA. These papers were presented at (at least) five conferences, two project meetings and six seminars, while insights from the papers were also used in teaching activities. Two of the papers are already published, while three are currently under review. The survey data were also used for a blogpost.<sup>6</sup>
- UAnt published the survey data.
- ULEI and IDEA performed a review of the literature review and methodology papers, and provided feedback and suggestions to UAnt. This helped the publication of the literature review
- IDEA shared its COVID-19 on Democracy and Human Rights monitor with WP5, which is a dataset that tracks the emergency measures implemented by governments during the pandemic. IDEA also provided a description of its classification of the measures and participated in the discussions and reflections on the definition of the variables for the QCA method.
- IDEA also planned, prepared and organized the first LEGITIMULT Webinar “LEGITIMULT: Legitimate crisis management for the future”, which was a public event to introduce the project and its work packages to the audience. The webinar included the participation of representatives from WP1, WP3, WP4, WP5, WP6 and WP9.

### 1.2.6 Work Package 6

Explain the work carried out in WP6 during the reporting period giving details of the work carried out by each beneficiary/affiliated entity involved.

UNED coordinated and drafted the literature review and methodology paper on Economic sustainability and Legitimate crisis governance in collaboration with FUBe and EURAC. The findings of your literature review of the impact of economic and fiscal measures on the legitimacy of crisis governance are outlined in Objective 1. UAnt and ForFed performed a review of the literature review and methodology papers. The literature review has since been published in the Year Book of Federalism 2023.

UNED in collaboration with FUB carried out an intensive quantitative and qualitative data collection of economic and social measures. The qualitative data collection concentrated on France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom, which are the largest countries in Europe by population. While all six countries are multilevel systems, they represent different types of multilevel system, including federal (Germany), quasi-federal (Italy, Spain), and unitary with varying degrees of decentralization countries (UK, France, Poland), which is reflected on their coordination traditions and mechanisms. Drawing on a preliminary review of the IMF Policy Tracker , the Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker (OxCGRT), the Bertelsmann Stiftung Analysis of Sustainable Governance in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic , and the European Systemic Risk Board (ESRB) COVID-19 Policy Measures database , WP6 systematically identified the most extensive economic and social measures in each country in terms of public spending (share of GDP or total public expenditure) and scope (measures that apply broadly across the population and that were not oriented towards a specific economic sector). Our analysis builds on extensive empirical data on the adoption, implementation and results of 23 policy measures. Due to the significant data collection required, WP6 only examined a small number of cases. While this does not allow for strong generalisations about causal relationships and the establishment of systematic explanatory claims, it allows us to identify patterns that can be expanded in future studies. Our assessment was based on the expertise of scholars specialised in the respective case studies. WP6 collected and triangulated evidence from government announcements and documentation, official agreements, meeting communiqués, parliamentary records, audit and research reports, external evaluations (e.g., by the European Commission, IMF, central banks, research institutions), statistical resources (e.g., national statistic agencies, Eurostat), and media reports. To ensure consistency across all cases, information on the scope and objective, decision-making and intergovernmental coordination, and each indicator (accountability, efficacy, and effectiveness) regarding each measure was gathered in a standardised template. While similar kind of data on parliamentary procedures, business populations, unemployment rates, and people at risk of poverty, for instance, were

---

<sup>6</sup> Frateur, J. (2025). Trust in the European Union in times of crisis: insights from the COVID-19 pandemic [blogpost]. *Eureka!*.

available for all cases, for certain indicators, such as timely implementation, accessibility, and error and fraud, it was not possible to gather the same kind of data for each measure and country. Thus, WP6 relied on contextual interpretations of existing official data and evaluation reports from national and international governmental and non-governmental organisations, and media reports. Detailed descriptions of each measure and sources that informed our analysis are available [here](#).<sup>7</sup>

The quantitative data collection done by UNED used the Regional Authority Index to inform our independent variable. For our dependent variables, WP6 used data provided by the Oxford Covid-19 Government Response Tracker, as well as IMF and Eurostat databases. As control variables, WP6 included a vector of socio-economic, financial, institutional and health indicators that could potentially explain the intensity of anti-COVID public policies:

- Economic: unemployment, per capita GDP, weight of self-employed within total active population, share of tourism in national GDP. (Eurostat)
- Financial: public debt as a share of national GDP. (Eurostat, IMF database)
- Institutional: ideology of national government and severity of the lockdown Oxford Covid-19 Government Response Tracker, IMF, OECD).
- Health: number of deceased due to Covid-19 and number of confirmed cases (Oxford Covid-19 Government Response Tracker).

WP 6 created an unbalanced panel data set that includes 15 periods (quarterly data, when available, from January 2020 to September 2022 and 31 European countries).

UNED additionally contributed in collaboration with FUB to the preparation of case selection and data collection in collaboration with WP1. To do so, online meetings with collaborators from other partner institutions on WP6 were held.

UNED reviewed deliverables of WP2, WP3 and WP4 and made suggestions to help improve the deliverables. WP6 provided information for the project website, and helped with FUB the translation to German and Spanish of LEGITIMULT Leaflet.

UNED additionally contributed in collaboration with FUB to the elaboration and translation to German and Spanish of the e-learning course coordinated by WP7.

### 1.2.7 Work Package 7

Explain the work carried out in WP7 during the reporting period giving details of the work carried out by each beneficiary/affiliated entity involved.

During the reporting period, WP7 translated the scientific results of LEGITIMULT into practical, participatory, and policy-relevant outputs. Its overarching aim was to test the project's findings in real-life contexts and make them accessible to the diverse actors involved and interested in crisis governance and future crisis management. The work combined dissemination, engagement, and participatory activities implemented across four European pilot regions (North, South, Central, and East Europe), representing distinct institutional and cultural settings.

EURAC Research, as WP leader, coordinated all WP7 activities, developed the common methodological guidelines for the *activities*, and ensured coherence across formats and countries. Partner institutions were responsible for implementation and adaptation in their national contexts. Concretely, all partners were involved in the elaboration of the E-learning course. The WP leaders provided the content, other partners were responsible for the translations. In addition, IDEA and Fribourg co-coordinated with Eurac the visual and technical implementation of the online course. With regard to the Citizen Juries and Media Workshops, several partners were involved in the planning and implementation and collaborated closely with EURAC to prepare and organize the events in the pilot areas (IES for CJ and MW in Slovenia; UAnt for CJ and MW in Belgium; UiB for CJ in Norway, IDEA for MW in Sweden). As to the practitioners engagement, EURAC *collaborated* closely with IDEA, FoF and other partners for the organization of the webinars.

The work carried out can be *summarized* as follows:

---

<sup>7</sup> The dataset will be made available in Zenodo.

- E-learning Course on Legitimate Crisis Governance:

EURAC coordinated the design and development of a multilingual online course structured in six thematic modules derived from the research findings of WPs 1–6. Experts of the partner institutions recorded video lectures complemented by text summaries, case studies, and interactive quizzes. The course was translated into six languages (EN, DE, FR, IT, ES, HR) and launched on the EURAC e-learning platform in Spring 2025. Partner institutions supported translation, outreach, and feedback collection. This ensured accessibility and long-term usability as a professional learning tool for public officials and civil society.

- Citizens' Juries (CJs):

Four one-day deliberative assemblies were organised in Bolzano (Italy), Izola (Slovenia), Huldenberg (Belgium), and Bergen (Norway). Each CJ gathered 5 to 20 citizens, selected mainly by sortition or open call, to deliberate on legitimate crisis governance. EURAC provided a shared methodology, ethical forms, and common formats for position papers. EURAC elaborated a common framework, the actual design was then contextualized and elaborated together with local partners. In addition, local partners handled recruitment, facilitation, and reporting. EUThe balance between a common framework and flexibility was central. It ensured that each Citizen Jury was locally meaningful while still contributing to the project outputs. Each jury produced a position paper containing citizen recommendations, later synthesized for the final WP7 report.

- Media Workshops (MWs):

Conducted in Bolzano, Ljubljana, Antwerp, and Stockholm, the workshops brought together journalists, communication officers, and media experts to discuss the role of media during crises. EURAC drafted a common concept note and reporting template. Partners implemented the workshops locally, integrating expert talks, project findings, and common discussions. The outcomes included recommendations for transparent communication and responsible use of media technologies (including AI) in crisis contexts. Cooperation with national journalist associations helped ensure outreach and impact.

- Practitioners' Engagement Series:

Initially conceived as a residential seminar, this activity evolved into a flexible sequence of online and an in-person thematic session co-organised with external partners such as NALAS and MEIRSS. The series connected researchers with policymakers, civil servants, and intergovernmental actors, creating two-way exchanges on topics such as intergovernmental coordination, trust, and socio-economic responses to crises.

Through implementation, WP7 prioritised gender balance and inclusivity in participant recruitment, expert selection, and visual representation. Risks such as low participation rates or logistical delays were mitigated through adaptive measures, local collaboration, and hybrid formats.

By the end of the period, WP7 successfully achieved its objectives: transforming academic insights into accessible tools, fostering dialogue between science and society, and ensuring that the concept of legitimate crisis governance was not only studied but also experienced and co-created by citizens, media experts, and practitioners.

### **1.2.8 Work Package 8**

Explain the work carried out in WP8 during the reporting period giving details of the work carried out by each beneficiary/affiliated entity involved.

- UNIFR also developed a detailed communication and dissemination strategy for LEGITIMULT.
- UNIFR, as the lead for Work Package 8 (WP8), played a pivotal role in designing, writing, and finalizing the LEGITIMULT website, making it ready for updates and serving as a platform to connect partners, people, and research results.

- The WP leader at UNIFR also focused on designing and preparing a graphic identity for the project, covering aspects such as color schemes, logos, fonts, report templates, and deliverables.
- For broader communication, UNIFR initiated a newsletter, set up three social media accounts (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter), prepared dissemination tools (flyer, social media posts outline), and issued the first press release with articles in newspapers and a local radio interview.
- A Stakeholder mapping exercise was conducted, establishing initial contacts to work as "multipliers" for wider project dissemination. This task is ongoing with the aim to extend our multipliers as the project progresses.
- Eurac collaborated closely with UNIFR, providing feedback on drafts and reviewing outputs. Eurac promoted the project through social media channels, created a dedicated project page on the Eurac Research website, conducted an interview with project leaders, and translated the LEGITIMULT leaflet into Italian.
- IDEA's contributions included translating the leaflet into Swedish, drafting and publishing news articles on LEGITIMULT's website, creating social media posts, and integrating LEGITIMULT's portal on International IDEA's website.
- EURAC, UNED and FPZG assisted by translating the leaflet into Italian, Spanish and Croatian, respectively, while ForFed amplified LEGITIMULT through its social media channels.
- In the second half of the year, UNIFR focused on updating the website with events and deliverables, tracking researchers' presentations at conferences, and expanding social media presence.
- The social media channels saw significant growth, reaching 181 followers on Twitter, 96 on Facebook, and 121 on LinkedIn. The first deliverables were widely shared, and a second newsletter reached 85 readers.
- A collaboration between UNIFR and International IDEA resulted in an online webinar with around 70 participants. "LEGITIMULT: Legitimate crisis management for the future" including the participation of representatives from WP1, WP3, WP4, WP5, WP6 and WP9. This included the preparation of the webinar, its concept note, identification and selection of speakers, content coordination and its promotion. Livestream was prepared by Uni Fribourg. The webinar also allowed for the registration of attendees and others interested in LEGITIMULT and its activities (list of webinar registrations), which contributed to the development of a list of relevant actors and stakeholders for the project.
- IDEA also secured LEGITIMULT's spot at IDLO's 2023 SDG16 Conference, where the LEGITIMULT project was represented via a presentation given by Eurac.
- Preparations for a LEGITIMULT podcast began.
- IDEA maintained a consistent social media presence, posting information on LEGITIMULT and its various work packages every two weeks from October 2022 to September 2023.
- UNIFR and International IDEA worked on the layout and production of the final Tool Box for the LEGITIMULT project.
- UNIFR wrote, scripted, and edited the project teaser available on the website and social media. The project's concluding video was produced in partnership with International IDEA.
- UNIFR ensured that the LEGITIMULT project was well represented in the communications of the partner institutions (e.g., on a project's dedicated page).

### **1.2.9 Work Package 9**

Explain the work carried out in WP9 during the reporting period giving details of the work carried out by each beneficiary/affiliated entity involved.

Project Supervision and Coordination:

- Eurac played the crucial role of supervising and coordinating all project activities, maintaining continuous communication with Work Package (WP) leaders and project partners.
- This coordination role has been supported by UNIFR, in quality of Scientific Coordinator.
- Bilateral virtual meetings between Eurac and UNIFR occurred every two weeks throughout the whole project implementation period, focusing on project status and updates.

#### Meetings and Collaboration:

- Eurac organized two virtual meetings for WP leaders and four General Assemblies (27 September 2023, 26 February 2024, 18 October 2024 and 6 March 2025) meetings to discuss the overall project status with all partners and organize project activities.
- Eurac and UNIFR continued to maintain a collaboration with representatives from two other Horizon projects, REGROUP and ROBUST, who took part in LEGITIMULT Final Conference
- The three projects, including LEGITIMULT, issued a joint webinar in May 2024
- Eurac collaborated with IES for the organization of the project meeting in Ljubljana, Slovenia, held in April 17-18, 2024. and co-organized, together with UNIFR, the LEGITIMULT Final Conference, that was held in Brussels on September 3-4, 2025
- .

#### Ethics and Data Management:

- UNIFR updated the ethics plan, while Eurac took responsibility for the data management plan update, with all partners actively contributing and providing comments.
- All partners participated in the LEGITIMULT General Assembly, contributed to the Cooperation Partners Table, and reviewed ethics information, noting its inapplicability to IDEA.

#### Project Documentation and Organization:

- All project documentation has been stored in a dedicated Teams folder. Moreover, all outputs are available in the LEGITIMULT Zenodo community, reachable through the project website.

#\$WRK-PLA-WP\$# #@\$IMP-ACT-IA@#

### 1.3 Impact

Please describe the progress of the project so far towards delivering scientific impact, based on its objectives and towards delivering impact in any of the following fields (if applicable): scientific, economic, societal or industrial production or processes. Report on changes to the expected impacts presented in your DoA (if any) and the effects on the project/need for adaptations.

Where necessary, provide further details of your monitoring and evaluation strategy, including: references to baselines, benchmarks, assumptions used (with justification) as well as calculations performed to quantify the impacts. If necessary, provide this information in a separate deliverable / a dedicated section of a deliverable.

LEGITIMULT's strategy is to focus on the continuous and active engagement with stakeholders (such as policy-makers) at the subnational, national, EU and international level, and ordinary citizens and the scientific community throughout and beyond the project lifetime. In the following, we summarize the dissemination activities on the ongoing research and outputs of the work packages. These dissemination activities provide the foundation of an effective impact of LEGITIMULT.

WP1 has developed a comprehensive dataset that assess how Covid-19 measures taken by 31 European countries impacted multilevel governance institutions and intergovernmental relations. Relying on this dataset, the work packages have analyzed the impact of multilevel governance on democracy during the Covid-19 pandemic. This is an open-source and accessible dataset to the wider public that can be consulted on Zenodo. WP2-6 have published their open access literature reviews and methodological outlines as deliverables as well as their research deliverables. These

have been uploaded to Zenodo, which is used as the database for all of LEGITIMULT's open access publications. These outputs provide conceptual and analytical contributions to the scientific debate on a legitimate crisis management.

Members of the work packages have attended several scientific conferences in Europe and beyond, introducing LEGITIMULT and its objectives to an academic audience and setting the bases for a successful future dissemination of the findings. WP8 facilitated and promoted the presentation of LEGITIMULT's research at numerous international conferences and workshops, including:

- The ECPR General Conferences in Prague (2023) and Dublin (2024)
- The International Scholarly Conferences "National Minorities, Migration, and Security" (Brioni Island, 2023–2025)
- The IPSA World Congress of Political Science (Seoul, 2025)
- The Euroasian Peace Science Conference (Zagreb, 2025)
- The Croatian Political Science Talks (Zagreb, 2025)

These events provided platforms for LEGITIMULT partners to share findings, engage with the academic community, and receive feedback that further refined the project's outputs.

Through social media contributions (Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn) and a regularly updated project website, all relevant information on the individual work packages (work package descriptions including research questions, methodological approaches, datasets, analyses, initial findings and deliverables) is available online, in line with the relevant open science regulations. A newsletter has been set up and fourth editions have been sent the project lifecycle, keeping readers updated on the most recent developments. Multiple workshops and webinars have been organized in collaboration with organizations such as MEIRSS, NALAS and the Forum of Federations. These events have allowed the project to reach key stakeholders such as executive leaders, civil servants, decision- and policymakers in emergency situations – which is part of the project's governance impact. The ultimate social impact has been achieved by WP7 activities (citizens' juries, media workshops etc.), and it is a toolkit on legitimate crisis governance available to policy makers, officials as well as the wider public. WP7 was specifically designed to impactful transform research findings into concrete tools. All WP7 outputs, available in the Toolkit on the project website, have been designed and built in view of being disseminated and used by relevant stakeholders.

Specific dissemination activities have targeted a wide array of relevant stakeholders throughout the project. Media posts and communication via the different partners through their press offices ensured that both academic and non-academic audiences were informed about LEGITIMULT. Each partner has since begun some discussions with policymakers and shared the project's events to increase visibility and engagement with practitioners. LEGITIMULT has also aimed to engage with the other two Horizon Europe projects of the same call and other similar research projects to enhance its visibility and impact participating in their events and organizing a round table with representatives of the two consortia during LEGITIMULT's final conference.

Indicators were set to guide the activities of our dissemination and communication strategy. WP8 has kept track of these indicators and adapted the strategy accordingly. WP8 successfully established multiple channels and tools for outreach, ensuring visibility and engagement across diverse audiences. Among its achievements were:

- Development of a coherent communication and dissemination framework that complied with EU and SERI requirements for visibility, open access, and ethical standards.
- Effective use of a multiplier approach, leveraging consortium partners' networks with practitioners, politicians, and institutions to maximize outreach
- Creation of a durable online platform functioning both as a public showcase for results and as a transparent repository for research outputs

- Wide-ranging dissemination through publications (working papers, policy recommendations, peer-reviewed articles, blog articles), conferences, podcasts, e-learning tools, and citizen juries
- Strong online and social media presence, especially via LinkedIn and institutional networks, which amplified visibility and facilitated engagement with policy-makers and academics
- Production of supporting materials, including project booklets, videos, templates, and branded outputs, ensuring consistent visibility and professional identity
- Engagement indicators showing that dissemination activities were continuously monitored and adapted, resulting in sustained and targeted impact.

Together, these activities not only disseminated findings but also created spaces for a two-way dialogue with stakeholders, thereby strengthening the project's practical relevance and long-term influence.

#### 1.4 Update of the plan for exploitation and dissemination of results (if applicable)

Include in this section any updates to the plan for exploitation and dissemination of results and give details.

The dissemination strategy was conceived as a dynamic process, evolving in line with the project's progress. An initial plan set out the envisaged goals and research design, which was followed by an updated plan incorporating preliminary findings, and finally a comprehensive plan focused on maximizing the exploitation of results. At each stage, the strategy and its implementation plan were refined to ensure accuracy and relevance, including specific activities such as the detailed mapping of target audiences by countries. To maintain consistency, the table of activities and key indicators was reviewed and updated every 6 to 8 months, while the overall strategy was formally revised twice during the lifetime of the project. This progressive monitoring allowed LEGITIMULT to keep the strategy precise and responsive.

#§IMP-ACT-IA§#

#§PRO-GRE-PG§# #@FOL-UP-FU@#

## 2. FOLLOW-UP OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS FROM PREVIOUS REVIEW(S) (IF APPLICABLE)

Please include a table explaining if and how each recommendation from previous reviews and/or Project Officer assessment has been addressed.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS REPORT	Follow-Up
Research Speed: Urgent acceleration of research efforts is advised, building upon the existing foundations of the project.	The Consortium succeeded in accelerating and reaching all project objectives, meeting all milestones and submitting all the planned deliverables.
Methodological Framework: Establish a common and overarching methodological framework to tie together the various research strings systematically. Currently, multiply methodologies are presented, but there is a need for coherence.	The Scientific Coordinator supervised the application of a more coherent methodology that applied to all WPs. Further cooperation and collaboration between WPs was encouraged by the coordinators, including the joint drafting of publications.
Common Dataset: Aim to provide a common dataset that unites diverse research strings into a common analysis, emphasizing the importance of a shared basis and framework.	All WPs were encouraged to build part of their research on the SGEAI dataset. This especially took traction in the drafting of the book chapters for the final publication in which all contributors

	were asked to engage with the data and preliminary findings of the dataset.
Comparative Research Designs: Prioritize exploring genuinely comparative research designs as a main goal of the project. Presently, research strings run in parallel without an overall coherent methodology.	The Scientific Coordinator ensured that all WPs exchanged methodology and results. Several efforts were put by the coordinating team to strengthen collaboration as evidenced by common publications and paper presentations at several conferences.
Systematic Quantification: The next deliverables should focus on the systematic quantification of research through coding schemes. Ensure clarity on whether all data can be codified within a singular structure.	The SGEAI dataset was further develop from version 0.1 to version 1.0 giving a systematic and clear scoring for 12 types of restrictions on a daily basis. The dataset and the scoring has been updated on a rolling basis until the end of the project and will be further refined after the project with a 2.0 version scheduled for September 2026.
Literature Review: Ensure consistency in the selection of literature for review across research papers and clarify how separate methodologies will be integrated into a common dataset.	The coordinators gave several suggestions in this regard to WP2 in order to further develop the scope of the literature review including articles from different disciplines. In the same vein, different country experts from the consortium gave feedback to WP1 in order to further refine the country reports of the SGEAI dataset.
Ambitious Targets: Acknowledge the ambitious nature of targets set for the next months.	All milestones were reached on time. Those deliverables that were identified as too ambitious were reworked in order to finalize them by the end of the project. Some activities that could not take place due to force majeure were promptly replaced by other activities, reaching the promised goals. Targets acknowledged and reached at the best of Consortium possibilities.
Concentrate on tasks, finalize work package allocations, and prioritize research and productivity to meet expectations.	The coordinators met with all WPs to clarify tasks and urge them to focus on research and achieving the project's objectives. Those WPs that had to rework some of their deliverables did so in close cooperation and supervision with the coordinators. Productivity significantly increased in the last phase of the project as exemplified by the number of high ranking scientific publications that has exceeded those included in the proposal.
Quality Control: Emphasize the need for a quality control process for project outputs, considering the outcomes are currently behind expectations.	A stricter and more intense cross-WP, peer to peer, review was implemented. Partners exchanged comments and suggestions about deliverables coming from WPs they were not involved in and this resulted in more complete outputs.
Multi-Level Governance Analysis: Take the analysis of multi-level governance seriously, with a specific focus on exploring the international and EU levels, which are currently mentioned but not thoroughly analyzed in the existing deliverables.	Multilevel governance has been the red thread of the project since its beginning. The edited volume has put a particular emphasis on this, urging all contributors to focus on the multilevel dimension as explained in the introduction of the volume. This can be seen in different chapters such as those focusing on courts, trust or rule of law. The EU dimension has been explored in one of the chapters which constitutes a paradigmatic example of cross WP cooperation putting together the different results from the research carried out during the project.

### **3. EXPLOITATION PRIMARILY IN NON-ASSOCIATED THIRD COUNTRIES (IF APPLICABLE)**

Please provide a justification how this exploitation is still in the interest of the EU.

Not applicable

### **4. OPEN SCIENCE**

Describe the Open Science practices related to early and open sharing of research (e.g. through pre-registration, registered reports, pre-prints or crowd-sourcing of solutions to a specific problem).

Describe the concrete measures that ensure the reproducibility of the results obtained during the action i.e., measures to ensure that the *same results* can be obtained by using the *same data and/or methods*, etc..

LEGITIMULT is fully committed to open science practices and has so far published all of its deliverables on the Zenodo database and via the LEGITIMULT website to ensure easy access for interest partners. The existing data management plan is fully compliant with the EU's requirements and has been approved by all partners. Ongoing publication projects are foreseen as open access with clear links to the project as required. Publications and deliverables are shared widely via social media and email forums to ensure their exposure to a wider readership. As numerous work packages currently collect data or have recently finished data collection, they are now in the process of looking at these and making them accessible and available open access.

All publications related to the LEGITIMULT project are available online. In addition, all deliverables are accessible on Zenodo, which is an open-source platform.

Some articles were not immediately available in open access. In those cases, we published the pre-print versions on the website.

Furthermore, whenever available, we requested the PowerPoint presentations given at conferences by the consortium's researchers so they could be uploaded to the LEGITIMULT website. The website served as a reference point to centralise the different publications. We will continue updating it as new publications linked to the project funding appear, systematically requesting pre-print versions of articles that are not immediately open access.

### **5. DEVIATIONS FROM ANNEX 1 AND ANNEX 2 (IF APPLICABLE)**

Explain the reasons for deviations from the DoA, the consequences and the proposed corrective actions.

#### **5.1 Tasks/objectives**

Include explanations for tasks not fully implemented, critical objectives not fully achieved and/or not being on schedule. Explain also the impact on other tasks on the available resources and the planning. Explain also the impact on other tasks and provide and provide details to allow assessing whether the project is on track.

**WP1 D.1.2:** The University of Bergen reported that the previously identified risk of not completing the revised coding for two of the 31 countries has materialized, meaning that by the project deadline of 30 September 2025 it expects to deliver 29 revised country profiles and corresponding subnational and country-score datasets covering 29 countries, while the draft book chapter (Deliverable 1.4) draws on profiles and scores for 27 countries and earlier outputs (D1.2 and D1.3) were released as provisional version 0.1. It explained that a major overhaul of the coding scheme undertaken between September and December 2024 required rewriting all country profiles, generating substantial additional workload but, in its view, producing more valid and reliable results; **the PI therefore commits to submitting the remaining two country profiles and scores as soon as possible after the deadline.** The delay is described as the cumulative outcome of setbacks over roughly 24 months, including the late start of the first postdoctoral researcher, time

spent in external and in-house training, extensive needs for guidance in English writing, a period of limited work delivery between October 2024 and February 2025, and additional obligations linked to organizing a citizen jury in Bergen. It further notes that the coding proved more time-consuming than anticipated because many COVID-19 measures were issued through numerous lower-tier legal instruments and policy documents outside standard legal databases, requiring extensive collection and verification; to improve feasibility, the scope was narrowed (e.g., excluding socio-economic responses and subnational-tier responses), management measures were implemented (increased supervision and the PI's commitment rising to full-time since early February 2024), and additional research capacity was appointed, while attempts to secure substantive support from other partners did not yield concrete assistance beyond support for the citizen jury, although project management agreed to allow submission of the final dataset and coding scheme close to the end of the project.

**WP4 D4.3 and 4.4:** These deliverables were drafted by the WP4 team in time. But before the submission as official deliverables of the project, the Scientific Coordinator requested a revision, in line with the comments raised by the evaluators during the First Period review and suggesting a more accurate work in adhering to what was promised in the Application Form. Thus, in accordance with the Project Officer, those 2 deliverables were submitted in a revised version later than the foreseen deadline, but improved in quality. No other deliverables or tasks have been affected by this delay.

## 5.2 Use of resources *(n/a for MSCA and Lump Sums)*

Include explanations on deviations of the use of resources between actual and planned use of resources in Annex 1, especially related to person-months per work package.

Include explanations on transfer of costs categories (if applicable).

Include explanations on adjustments to previous financial statements (if applicable).

UNED and FUB teams work on the WP6 and requested to shift workload from UNED to FUB. UNED will reduce and FUB increased its workload in the following WPs:

2 p-m in WP1 - METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK (Dataset and Quantitative Analysis)

3 p-m in WP6 - THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION OF LEGITIMATE CRISIS MANAGEMENT

2 p-m in WP7 - SHAPING THE FUTURE – FROM PROJECT TO PRACTICE

2 p-m in WP8 - Communication and Dissemination

The change of activities means that FUB takes a greater role than under the current distribution of tasks. This relates to the following activities:

- Development of a coding scheme on MLG Intergovernmental Relations (T1.1)
- Collecting and coding qualitative data to analyse the social, economic and fiscal measures as part of our case studies. (T6.1)
- Analysing and interpreting the qualitative data to identify the factors explaining the legitimacy of social, economic and fiscal measures. (T6.2)
- Comparing similarities and differences of these measures and their impact on democratic governance at a country and at regional and local levels across our case studies. (T6.2)
- Developing policy recommendations to assess the importance and practices of economic sustainability in crisis governance and its impact on legitimate crisis governance. (T6.3)
- Development and implementation of an interactive e-learning course for public authorities, civil servants and organised civil society (T7.1)
- Print and online publishing activities of the consortium partners plus other communication instruments (T8.2)

For this purpose, the 2 partners requested re-allocation of €50.000 from UNED to FUB. The coordinator accepted it.

Due to an error in reporting costs for covering travel expenses of the Scientific Advisory board members that were originally included in Other Goods, then shifted to Travels without being deleted from the first location, EURAC requested an Adjustment to RP1 expenses, consisting of:

TOTAL ELIGIBLE COSTS							
Personnel (A)	Subcontracting (B)	Travel (C1)	Equipment (C2)	Other goods, works and services (C3)	Total Direct Costs A+B+C (1,2,3) (G)	Overheads 25% (E)	Total Eligible costs G+E (I)
		€ 9.32		-€ 1,871.78	-€ 1,862.46	-€ 465.62	-€ 2,328.08

*Update after a request of clarification for some budget issues on RP2 as per Suspension of payment letter sent on February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026:*

*On average personnel costs:*

- FPZG: Raises of salaries are visible in 10/2023, 03/2024, 02/2025, 09/2025 for FPZG project team members and they are based on government decisions (2024) and renewed social contracts in Croatia (2023-2025).  
After the first reporting period, in 03/2024, the Croatian government decided to raise the average salaries in the public sector in Croatia (including higher education/science sector) for >20% (depending the position and seniority), some salaries raised up to 30%. (REF: [https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2024\\_02\\_22\\_354.html](https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2024_02_22_354.html), Official Gazette of the Republic of Croatia).  
Also, based on the renewed social contract between the Unions and Croatian government, we had a raise of salaries in 10/2023 (3%), 02/2025 (3%) and 09/2025 (3%) ([https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2024\\_12\\_155\\_2564.html](https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2024_12_155_2564.html), Official Gazette of the Republic of Croatia).
- For Beneficiary 4 – IES, the average personnel costs per month in the current reporting period amount to **EUR 5,542.52**, compared to **EUR 4,400.00** initially foreseen in Annex 1, representing a deviation of **+25.97%**.  
The increase results from the implementation of the **new Slovenian public sector salary system** (<https://www.gov.si teme/placni-sistem/>), which entered into force on the **1st of January 2025**. IES, as a public research institution and budgetary user, is legally bound to apply this salary system.  
The reform was adopted at national level following negotiations between the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and representative public sector trade unions. It introduced revised salary scales and adjustments of salary grades, resulting in an increase of gross salaries across the public sector, including research personnel.  
Personnel costs declared in the project are calculated on the basis of **actual gross salaries paid**, in full compliance with:
  - applicable Slovenian national legislation,
  - the institution's standard accounting practices, and
  - Horizon Europe eligibility rules (actual costs, usual remuneration, non-profit principle).
  - The reported deviation therefore reflects a **mandatory structural change in national salary legislation** and does not stem from changes in staffing levels, task allocation, or project implementation.
- UiB: When the partner submitted the financial statement for RP1, they wrongly used the H2020 method for calculating the personnel costs instead of the Horizon method. RP1 financial report was amended using the correct method, and the adjustment to RP1 is to correct the difference between the methods.

- FU Berlin confirms that the travel and subsistence costs in this financial report fall inside the duration of this reporting period, as certified by the dates on the receipts and supporting financial documents available at partners recording premises.
- ULEI: CFS / EX02-> The auditor has confirmed by email that exception (EX02) in the CFS has not been corrected in the financial statements.

**5.2.1 Unforeseen subcontracting (if applicable) (n/a for MSCA)**

Not applicable

**5.2.2 Unforeseen use of in kind contributions (n/a for MSCA and Lump Sums)**

Not applicable

#§WRK-PLA-WP§#

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	15.12.2021	Initial version (new MFF).
1.1	01.05.2023	Minor updates in Part A. Added section 1.4 on updates to the plan for exploitation and dissemination of results.
1.2	01.12.2025	Final version after project's completion