



Research protocols

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Grant agreement no. 101061388

Deliverable: D2.2

Due date: 02/2023



Funded by
the European Union

Document control sheet

Project Number:	101061388
Project Acronym:	WeLaR
Work-Package:	WP2
Last Version:	[18/01/2023]
Issue Date:	[18/01/2023]

Classification

Draft	
Final	X
Confidential	
Restricted	
Public	X

Legal notice

This project, WeLaR, has received funding under the Horizon Europe programme. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Table of contents

1. Introduction	5
2. Appointment of a Data Protection Officer	6
3. General principles guiding our research	7
4. Quantitative research.....	8
4.1. Secondary data sources.....	8
4.2. Primary data sources	8
4.2.1. Recruitment and selection procedures.....	8
4.2.2. Informed consent	10
4.2.3. Templates.....	11
5. Qualitative research	16
5.1. Introduction.....	16
5.2. Interviews	17
5.2.1. Recruitment and selection procedures.....	17
5.2.2. Informed consent	18
5.2.3. Templates.....	19
5.3. Stakeholder engagement (including Delphi study)	24
5.3.1. Recruitment and selection procedures.....	24
5.3.2. Informed consent	25
5.3.3. Templates.....	26

Executive summary

This document presents Deliverable 2.2 of the WeLaR project. It presents key supporting documents and protocols for the qualitative and quantitative research to be conducted within the project. The deliverable describes the research strategy and tools that will be used at different stages in the project implementation. Its aim is to help ensure the consistency in the methodological approaches used across the WeLaR project's activities and work packages. More specifically, these research protocols detail the objectives, target groups, procedures, data, quality control and related topics. This deliverable is part of a series of deliverables in the WeLaR project that focus on ethics, privacy and related issues.

1. Introduction

WeLaR, which stands for '*Welfare systems and labour market policies for economic and social resilience in Europe*', is a research project that focuses on how four key megatrends - technological transformations, globalisation, climate warming and demographic changes - are reshaping labour markets and posing new challenges to welfare states in Europe. The project aims to fill knowledge gaps about these processes by pursuing two main goals. First, WeLaR aims to provide a comprehensive and comparative diagnosis of the effects of these megatrends on labour market risks and challenges for welfare states. Second, WeLaR sets out to develop policy recommendations to adapt welfare states. In measuring effects, the project accounts for interactions between the megatrends and disentangles their impacts on labour demand, labour supply and labour market allocations. In developing policy proposals, these insights are combined with lessons from simulations on recent welfare state interventions and social innovation experiments. To this end, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods is used.

More specifically, as the project explores how various types of data can be used to support evidence-based, inclusive policymaking, it relies on existing quantitative data sources and on quantitative and qualitative data that are collected in or generated by the project. This requires a harmonised approach to the research, which is outlined in this document. Deliverable 2.2 presents key supporting documents and protocols for the qualitative and quantitative research. It describes the research strategy and the tools that will be used at different stages in the project, in order to ensure the consistency in the methodological approaches used across the project's activities and work packages.

This deliverable is part of a series of deliverables in the WeLaR project that focus on ethics, privacy and related issues. Other core documents in this regard are the Data Management Plan (Deliverable 1.1) and the ethics documents for check (Deliverable 1.2). In all these deliverables, special attention is paid to ethics, privacy and the GDPR.

2. Appointment of a Data Protection Officer

A first important element relating to the research protocols is the appointment of a Data Protection Officer (DPO) at the partner institutes involved in the WeLaR project. As explained by the European Data Protection Supervisor, the primary role of a DPO is to ensure that their organisation processes the personal data of its staff, customers, providers or any other individuals (referred to as data subjects) in compliance with the applicable data protection rules. Data Protection Officers must (i) inform and advise the controller or processor, and their employees, of their obligations under data protection law, (ii) monitor compliance of the organisation with all legislation concerning data protection, including in audits, awareness-raising activities as well as training, (iii) provide advice where a data protection impact assessment has been carried out and monitor its performance, (iv) act as a contact point for requests from individuals regarding the processing of their personal data and the exercise of their rights, and (v) cooperate with data processing authorities and acts as a contact point for such authorities on issues relating to processing. In light of the importance of this work, all WeLaR partners that were required to assign a DPO, did so at the start of the project (see Deliverable 1.2 for further details). The contact details of DPOs are made available to all data subjects involved in the research. This includes the following partners: KU Leuven, LISER, IBS, wiiw, ZSI, UNIPG, ZEW and OSE. For those host institutions not required to appoint a DPO under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) a detailed data protection policy for the project is kept on file. Aldgate is the communication and dissemination partner involved in the project. Aldgate is not required to appoint a DPO under the GDPR and keeps a detailed data protection policy for the project on file. Research partner EOKF is not based in an EU Member State and has not appointed a DPO but will keep a detailed data protection policy for the project on file.

3. General principles guiding our research

In general, the WeLaR project will adhere to the principles of the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity as well as the principles for investigating research malpractice. The Code of Conduct stipulates eight principles that are observed and promoted in the project: (i) honesty in communication, (ii) reliability in performing research, (iii) objectivity, (iv) impartiality and independence, (v) openness and accessibility, (vi) duty of care, (vii) fairness in providing references and giving credit, and (viii) responsibility for the scientists and researchers of the future. Adherence to these principles is carefully monitored by the project coordination team and the Executive Board, with the support of the Social and Societal Ethics Committee (SMEC) of KU Leuven and related bodies at the different partner institutes.

4. Quantitative research

4.1. Secondary data sources

WeLaR uses a range of existing, commonly used data sources that are governed by national and EU laws on data protection and privacy standards. These data sources mostly relate to data from European and/or national surveys or datasets obtained from national administrative archives. Examples include, but are not limited to, EU-LFS, EU-SES, EU-SILC, PIAAC, EWCS, ORBIS, EU-KLEMS, OECD's EPL, etc. (Deliverable 1.1 and its updates present further details on the selected data sources). These data providers are legally entitled to collect and manage data and to distribute them for research purposes. Access to these datasets involving personal data is strongly restricted by the providers and data are only available in anonymised form, by remote access or in onsite facilities of the statistical office. In such cases, the challenges or dangers in ethics violations are relatively low. Clear data access rules are required by the data providers, and strictly adhered to by the data users. All data cleaning, processing and analyses will be done according to the rules and standards specified by the data providers. Anonymised personal data will be stored on secure servers at the respective partner institutes, and access will only be granted to those officially entitled to it. Details on the datasets and how these will be handled in the WeLaR project is provided in the Data Management Plan (Deliverable 1.1), which is updated regularly over the course of the project.

4.2. Primary data sources

Besides using these existing data sources, quantitative data will be gathered in the WeLaR project by means of online surveys (discrete choice experiments). One survey will focus on the preferences of individuals towards the pan-European pension product (Task 6.1), while the second one is dedicated to the preferences for safety nets among platform workers (Task 7.3). In both cases, information is provided by individuals (respondents) to the research team. The research team will work with informed consent forms and privacy statements. The questionnaires for these online surveys will be developed later on in the project, but will be submitted for an ethics check by the institutes involved in these activities.

4.2.1. Recruitment and selection procedures

Task 6.1 centres on pan-European pension plans as a way to cope with the risks of ageing, automation and new forms of work. The rise of non-standard work and the increasing mobility of workers across countries challenge the future old age security of workers. This task will study a recent policy (March 2022) designed to facilitate personal and fully portable pension savings in Europe, regardless of country of residence: the

pan-European personal pension product (PEPP). PEPP will provide private pension plans, not linked to labour conditions, to all residents in the EU. We will gauge the potential demand for this policy and map which sectors, occupations and countries could benefit more from PEPP. We will also apply discrete choice experiments through an online survey fielded in at least three countries (Belgium, Luxembourg, and Serbia) to study the individual willingness to participate in and the attitudes towards the PEPP among standard and atypical workers.

More specifically, the online surveys will be fielded by external survey companies (or by a single survey company operating in all selected countries) on their panel of subjects for each of the involved countries. Distributions of demographics in the sample should be close to national distributions of key covariates requested by the research team (e.g. gender and age groups), and may include oversampling of individuals in non-standard occupations. LISER owns a panel of subjects residing in Luxemburg, however it is currently unclear whether there is a meaningful number of participants (high levels of relocation of workers). Thus, external survey companies may field the survey in all cases. Each institution of the concerned country will contact their local ethical committee to request ethical clearance for all procedures concerning data collection and data protection. The research teams will only access to pseudo-anonymised data provided by the survey companies.

Task 7.3 focuses on new forms of work and workers' demand of security and stability. Digital technologies contribute to the growth of new forms of work such as platform jobs and gig economy, which are often performed by workers who lack safety nets that cover traditional jobs. In the WeLaR project we will study which welfare state provisions and which facets of social security are most valued by these workers. To this aim, we will conduct stated-preference (willingness-to-pay) field experiments in four countries with different institutional settings – Poland, Italy, Germany, Belgium – to understand which provisions are the most valued but not available currently.

This survey will be conducted in cooperation with an external, international survey company that operates in all countries taking part in the survey. The survey company will be responsible for the recruitment of participants and data collection in each country. Respondents will be recruited from the survey panels in each country. Some criteria/targets will be provided to the survey company as to ensure sufficient coverage of some groups of platform workers, for example, women. The research team will also ensure that the survey company follows international standards on data protection and privacy (e.g. ESOMAR guidelines). While conducting the survey, we will follow the 'Belmont Principles', which include ethical

guidelines to be followed by researchers conducting behavioural research. No sensitive data will be collected or processed within the survey. Personal data of the participants (e.g. email address) will be anonymised by the survey company before transferring them to the research team. All data analyses carried out by the research team will be performed on the anonymised data. The design of the experiment will be consulted with and approved by ethics committees relevant for the partners involved in the experiment. The study will be preregistered in the American Economic Association's registry for randomised controlled trials.

4.2.2. Informed consent

All participants in the online surveys will receive an invitation e-mail, which explains the aim of the task, briefly situates it in the larger project, and clarifies what is asked of the respondent and why, how any input that will be provided by the respondent will be processed, analysed and published, as well as how the respondent was selected for participation. The invitation will contain a link to the survey, or instructions on how to access it. Respondents will also receive a project leaflet, a privacy statement (e.g. detailing that participation is voluntary, highlighting the possibility to withdraw, discussing the approach to anonymity and confidentiality) and an informed consent form. The informed consent form covers the respondent's understanding of the information received as well as the provisions taken by the project, and their agreement to participate. All this information is either attached to the invitation to participate, or provided in the survey software (or another tool) to the participation prior to the survey start. The contact data of the research team involved in the task and the project coordinator are provided, should any issues or complaints arise.

Data will be stored on secure servers with the following security measures: automatic backup, firewall, anti-malware, role-based restricted access, and password protection. Access to the research institute's internal network will be possible only using an encrypted VPN tunnel and personal password. Pseudo-anonymised data will only be shared with researchers from within each institute or from other partner institutes involved in the task. Solely the researchers who are members of the project, or that are hired to work in the project, will process the pseudo-anonymised data. Data will be held no longer than is necessary for the purpose of the study.

4.2.3. Templates

This section presents several templates that will be used for the quantitative research. These templates are prepared in English, but will be translated into the national languages as necessary.

Template for the privacy statement

Dear participant,

The research team of (*research institute*) would like to invite you to take part in the research of the Horizon Europe project WeLaR. Your participation in this research is voluntary. In what follows, we want to brief you about the purpose of this research, what will be expected of participants, and what the possible risks and benefits of the research are. Please take the time to read this information carefully. You can raise any questions or concerns with: (*name and contact information of responsible researcher*).

What is the goal of the WeLaR research project?

What is WeLaR? WeLaR is an interdisciplinary project that investigates the impact of demographic changes, globalisation, digitalisation and climate change on labour markets and welfare states in Europe in order to: (i) improve our understanding of the individual and combined effects of these four megatrends on labour markets and welfare states in Europe, and (ii) identify policy measures that foster socio-economic resilience and inclusive, sustainable growth, and propose ways to adapt welfare systems so that they can address the challenges posed by these megatrends and new forms of work.

Why do we study this? Demographic shifts, globalisation, digitalisation and climate change are all transforming existing jobs and giving rise to new forms of work. These megatrends have an impact on welfare states. European welfare states offer some of the world's best social protection, standards of living and working conditions, and these efforts represent a significant share of government spending. Yet, the four megatrends are putting pressure on the labour market and welfare states, creating winners and losers and contributing to the rise of inequalities within and between countries. For example, new forms of work may provide opportunities for vulnerable workers, but these jobs may be of poor quality and only partially covered by the welfare state. Such employment structures may also contribute less to the funding of welfare state, potentially undermining its sustainability in the longer run. Already shaken by the financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, welfare states now find themselves facing even greater challenges.

What will the project deliver? The project will produce 24 research papers, 4 policy briefs and 1 foresight report and organise 2 conferences, 6 workshops, 6 roundtables, 4 open virtual café sessions.

Where can I find more information? Please check our website: <https://projectwelar.eu/>

What is the goal of this survey?

We want to gain a deeper insight into individuals' preferences for different types of pension plans. These plans can vary in terms of attributes, such as the contribution rate, retirement age, withdrawals and other features. Participants will be asked to select between competing offers, which will allow the estimation of their preferences ('willingness to pay') towards particular pension amenities, in particular towards welfare state provisions. This research is linked to a recent policy - the pan-European personal pension product (or PEPP) - which is designed to facilitate personal and fully portable pension savings in Europe, regardless of one's country of residence. PEPP will provide private pension plans, not linked to labour conditions, to all residents in the EU. With the study, we aim to gauge the potential demand for this policy and to map which sectors, occupations and countries could benefit more from PEPP.

We want to gain a deeper insight into platform workers' preferences for different types of jobs, which can vary in terms of attributes, such as the type of contract, access to social security benefits, working time flexibility, wages and other features. Participants will be asked to select between competing offers, which will allow the estimation of their preferences ('willingness to pay') towards particular pension job, in particular towards welfare state provisions. By shedding light on the welfare state provisions and facets of social security that are most valued by platform workers, we hope to provide guidance to policymakers.

(text to be adapted based on the survey)

How is this survey conducted?

If you agree to participate, you can open the survey using the link in the invitation. We expect that completing the survey takes about 30 minutes. Before starting, you will be asked to give your consent by ticking the appropriate box. An email address of the research team is provided that you can contact in case of any questions or concerns regarding the survey. *(text to be adapted based on the survey)*

Are there any risks or discomforts involved in participation?

We do not anticipate any risk or discomfort from participating in this survey. If you feel uncomfortable or do not want to answer specific questions, you will be able to skip them or select the option 'don't know/don't wish to answer'.

What happens if I do not want to participate or continue?

In that case, you do not have to open the link to start the survey. There are no negative consequences for you. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you can withdraw it at any time during the survey. You do not have to give a reason.

What happens after the survey?

The research team will bring together all the data that was collected through the survey, and make sure that all personal data or references that may identify you are removed. For example, the email address to which the invitation to participate was sent, will be deleted from this dataset. All respondents will instead receive an identifier (a unique, random number). A document linking this number to your identity will be stored separately within the encrypted, password-protected network storage of the research institute that is only accessible to the principal investigator. This document will never be shared with others and your identity will not be revealed in publications or other representations of the research results. Access to the dataset will be limited to the research team directly involved in this task and those colleagues who carry out the data analysis. In general, the focus of any publications following from this research will be based on the entire dataset, not on individual surveys.

Will my participation in the project's activities remain confidential?

The dataset that the research team will analyse will not include any information that could be used to identify you. The contact data that we have used to get in touch with you will be kept separately from this dataset within the encrypted, password-protected network storage of the research institute that is only accessible to the principal investigator. When the data are no longer needed or the project ends, the data will be deleted.

Who is responsible for this project?

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101061388. The project is coordinated by dr. Karolien Lenaerts and

dr. Mikkel Barslund of KU Leuven. The study in which you will be involved will be conducted by the research team of (*research institute*), under the leadership of (*contact person*).

Whom should I contact for further questions?

If you have any questions after reading this statement, please contact the research team at (*the research facility*), or the project coordinator (karolien.lenaerts@kuleuven.be). For any complaints or other concerns regarding ethical aspects of the project you can also contact the Ethics Committee of KU Leuven, which is not actively participating in the project: smec@kuleuven.be.

Depending on the survey, this statement will also contain information on compensation and incentives.

[Template for the informed consent form](#)

Informed consent

Title of the research

Welfare systems and labour market policies for economic and social resilience in Europe (WeLaR)

Contact details of project coordinator and involved researcher(s)

Project coordinator: dr. Karolien Lenaerts (karolien.lenaerts@kuleuven.be)

Researcher(s): (*to be adapted depending on the task*)

Goal and methodology of the research

WeLaR is a research project that investigates the impact of technological transformations, demographic change, globalisation, and climate change on labour markets and welfare states in Europe. By doing so, the project aims to improve our understanding of the individual and combined effects of these trends and to identify policy measures that foster socio-economic resilience and inclusive, sustainable growth.

More information on the project can be found on the website: <https://projectwelar.eu/>

Duration of the survey

30 minutes (*to be adapted depending on the task*)

- I understand what is expected of me during this research.
- I know that I will participate in an online survey.

- My participation offers a contribution to the scientific research. I know that I will not receive any further reward or compensation for my participation. *(to be adapted depending on the task)*
- I understand that my participation to this study is voluntary. I have the right to stop participating at any time. I do not have to give a reason for this, and I know that it will not have any negative repercussions for me.
- In the context of the GDPR the collected data will be processed under public interest as the legal basis. When I end my participation, the data that were already collected can still legally be included in the research and do not need to be deleted by the research team.
- The results of this study can be used for scientific goals and may be published. My name will not be published. The confidentiality of the data will be protected in all stages of the research.
- In the context of transparency in scientific research the data of this study may be shared with others, such as researchers from different universities. In that case only non-identifiable data will be shared. It will not be possible for others to know that I have participated in this study or to know which data belong to me.
- For questions and for the execution of my rights (access to my data, rectification of the data, ...) after my participation I know that I can contact: *(contact details (email) of the responsible researcher)*

I have read and understood the information in this document, and I have received an answer to all my questions regarding this research. I give my consent to participate. *(In the context of an online survey or an online registration form, the participant gives consent by ticking a box. In case this box is not ticked, the survey is not started.)*

5. Qualitative research

5.1. Introduction

With regard to the qualitative research, three types of activities are conducted in the WeLaR project: semi-structured interviews, consultation based on the Delphi technique, and stakeholder engagement. Semi-structured interviews are used in Task 7.4 on (re)assessing social innovations in social policy. In this task, follow-up case studies of documented local or regional social innovations on labour market integration or reintegration and social entrepreneurship, social security for atypical and precarious forms of work, and/or interest representation and participation of vulnerable and marginalised groups are carried out. The cases are selected as to cover different welfare state regimes (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Poland, Serbia), and conducted through desk research, interviews with 4-6 innovators and stakeholders, and presentations of these initiatives in WeLaR events. Depending on the case, the interviewees may include social partners, industry associations, sector experts, academic experts, policymakers and labour market actors, and others. The Delphi technique is used to involve WeLaR's stakeholder community in the design of measures aimed at shaping forward looking inclusive societies and economies. This approach involves a series of sequential questionnaires, interspersed by controlled feedback, to attain the most reliable consensus of opinion of experts. Stakeholders are asked to validate the impacts of the trends (derived from the results of WPs 3-7) as well as the proposed policy measures to ensure these are in line with their experiences and expectations, but also to suggest alternative angles on policy implications. As the Delphi study is part of a foresight exercise (based on two workshops, see Task 7.5) and the project's overall stakeholder engagement efforts, in what follows these two topics are addressed together.

WeLaR's stakeholder engagement approach aims to bring research evidence to the project's stakeholder groups and gathering further insights from them. This approach is inspired by social innovation research, which centres on the active participation of stakeholders. In WeLaR, stakeholder involvement is organised through participation in workshops, webinars and open virtual café sessions. These channels use open and participatory methodologies such as a participatory mapping of issues, conceptual modelling, storytelling and visualised facilitation. In this way, we leverage the expertise and experience from various fields, refine research questions, validate recommendations and results, and translate them into accessible and applicable outputs. In this respect, the stakeholder engagement techniques also have a research component as stakeholder inputs are taken into account in WeLaR research and the uptake of the inputs is monitored.

In the WeLaR project, research participants in the qualitative research activities thus generally fall into two categories: interviewees (consulted in the case studies) and stakeholder representatives (participating

in the Delphi study and/or in other stakeholder engagement activities). In order to invite these participants to an interview or another activity, personal data must inevitably be collected and used (e.g. organising workshops, maintaining lists of participants, sending out invitations). Some personal data are also needed to ensure the representation of diverse groups in interviews and stakeholder engagement. Where these need to be stored, they will be kept separate from interview data and other data generated in the research.

All data used in the project will be stored on password-protected servers of the respective institutes using these data. Furthermore, there will be physical access control as well as data access control and up-to-date firewalls and virus scanners. Data access control ensures that data can only be accessed by the institutes' data managers and by those researchers who are directly involved with the respective task and have signed individual confidentiality agreements as necessary.

Representation and inclusion of diverse groups of society is also specifically addressed in the project. This means, selecting and recruiting participants in ways that ensure that women and men, diverse age groups, people with diverse ethnic and migration backgrounds, and diverse levels of education and skill are included in the research, and that stakeholders representing diverse interests and viewpoints engage with the project. This also applies to project events, news and other types of activities.

5.2. Interviews

5.2.1. Recruitment and selection procedures

In the WeLaR project, desk research and interviews will be conducted as part of the case studies in Task 7.4, aiming to explore and evaluate existing experiences of past and current social innovation experiments. In total, six case studies are conducted; one each in Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Poland and Serbia. For each case study, 4-6 interviews with innovators and stakeholders will be done (this will amount to 24-36 interviews in total). Interviewees will also be invited to participate to relevant project workshops, open virtual cafés, etc. in order to directly engage with the economic and political insights of the project from a social innovation angle. Similar to the interviews, their participation in such events is fully voluntary.

It is important to highlight here that the selection and recruitment of interview participants is fully based on their involvement in the social innovation experiment under review in the case study. This means that it is based on their function in the organisation they represent and their expertise. It is not based on their personal characteristics (e.g. age, gender), situation or views. The case studies will thus entail an initial

process of identifying the best and available interviewees, sometimes asking for further recommendations. In the latter case, however, the research team will take a cautious approach when potential interviewees would be recommended or recruited by authority figures or persons in a hierarchically higher position or when a relationship based on trust or dependency exists between the participant and the person recruiting or recommending them. This is an important point, for example, when the funding organisation refers the researcher to a person responsible for the social innovation experiment or initiative, as the latter may feel compelled to take a certain position vis-à-vis the funding organisation. The research team will aim to involve different types of innovators and stakeholders (e.g. representatives of government, social partners, civil society, etc.). Although some personal and potentially sensitive data (e.g. trade union membership) will inevitably be recorded during interviews. All data gathered during the interviews, however, will be pseudonymised immediately after data collection and only the anonymised interview transcripts will be analysed. Interview transcripts and records (also including filenames) will be coded to avoid that information collected can be linked to specific individuals. A unique, random number (identifier) will be allotted to each interview during the transcription. Reporting on the case studies will be done according to a reporting guideline, that is prepared by the task leader ZSI. Individual case reports will be used by the task leader to draw up a comparative report. The interview guideline that will be used will be developed later on in the project.

5.2.2. Informed consent

All interview participants will receive an invitation email, which explains the aim and scope of the task, briefly situates it in the larger project, and clarifies what is asked of the respondent and why, how input that will be provided by the respondent will be processed, analysed and published, as well as the reasons why the respondent was selected for participation. All interviewees will also receive a project leaflet, an invitation letter (containing similar information to the privacy statement used in the surveys, e.g. detailing that participation is voluntary, highlighting the possibility to withdraw, discussing approach to anonymity and confidentiality) and an informed consent form. The informed consent form covers the respondent's understanding of the information received as well as the provisions taken by the project, and their agreement to participate. In this case, participants can sign the informed consent form either by printing it out and signing with a pen, or using their digital signature. Respondents will be asked to send back the signed consent form prior to the interview or to sign it at the start of the interview in case this did not yet happen. Each interview will also start with a short summary about the project, the case study and the purpose of

the interview, after which the interviewee's consent again is checked (verbally). Interviewees will also be asked if the interview can be recorded (audio and/or video). Before starting, interviewees will be encouraged to ask the researcher any questions that they might still have or any further information that they require. The contact data of the research team involved in the task and the project coordinator are provided, should any issues or complaints arise.

5.2.3. Templates

This section presents several templates that will be used for the qualitative research. These templates are prepared in English, but will be translated into the national languages as necessary.

Template for the information letter

Dear participant,

The research team of (*research institute*) would like to invite you to take part in the research of the Horizon Europe project WeLaR. Your participation in this research is voluntary. In what follows, we want to brief you about the purpose of this research, what will be expected of participants, and what the possible risks and benefits of the research are. Please take the time to read this information carefully. You can raise any questions or concerns with: (*name and contact information of responsible researcher*).

What is the goal of the WeLaR research project?

What is WeLaR? WeLaR is an interdisciplinary project that investigates the impact of demographic changes, globalisation, digitalisation and climate change on labour markets and welfare states in Europe in order to: (i) improve our understanding of the individual and combined effects of these four megatrends on labour markets and welfare states in Europe, and (ii) identify policy measures that foster socio-economic resilience and inclusive, sustainable growth, and propose ways to adapt welfare systems so that they can address the challenges posed by these megatrends and new forms of work.

Why do we study this? Demographic shifts, globalisation, digitalisation and climate change are all transforming existing jobs and giving rise to new forms of work. These megatrends have an impact on welfare states. European welfare states offer some of the world's best social protection, standards of living and working conditions, and these efforts represent a significant share of government spending. Yet, the four megatrends are putting pressure on the labour market and welfare states, creating winners and losers and contributing to the rise of inequalities within and between countries. For example, new forms of work

may provide opportunities for vulnerable workers, but these jobs may be of poor quality and only partially covered by the welfare state. Such employment structures may also contribute less to the funding of welfare state, potentially undermining its sustainability in the longer run. Already shaken by the financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, welfare states now find themselves facing even greater challenges.

What will the project deliver? The project will produce 24 research papers, 4 policy briefs and 1 foresight report and organise 2 conferences, 6 workshops, 6 roundtables, 4 open virtual café sessions.

Where can I find more information? Please check our website: <https://projectwelar.eu/>

What is the goal of this interview?

We want to gain a deeper insight into local or regional social innovation experiments or initiatives on (i) labour market (re-)integration and social entrepreneurship, (ii) social security for atypical and precarious forms of work, (iii) interest representation and participation of vulnerable and marginalised groups. To this end, we are conducting a case study on the experiment or initiative you were involved in (*clarification to be added here based on the specific case*). We have already consulted publicly available documents on this experiment or initiative and would like to ask you, based on your professional role and expertise, a few follow-up questions to broaden and deepen our understanding. In addition to this interview, we are consulting a number of other experts and stakeholders that were involved in this experiment or initiative. This will allow us to get a complete view, taking into account different perspectives. All interviews will be processed and are reported on jointly. No reporting will be based on a single interview. All case studies will then be brought together and are discussed within the wide research team, focussing on what we can learn from them by comparing them with similar or different cases in other countries.

(text to be adapted based on the interview and the specific case)

How is this interview conducted?

If you agree to participate, one of the researchers from our team will set up an appointment with you and then conduct the interview with you. The interview can take place in person, via telephone or online (e.g. via videoconferencing software), depending on what is most convenient for you and how you would feel most comfortable. We expect that the interview will take between 30 and 60 minutes. Before starting, you will be asked to give your consent by signing and sending back the consent form attached to the invitation to the researcher. At the start of the interview, the researcher will again verify whether you agree to do the interview. You will also have the opportunity to ask questions and discuss any further concerns with

the interviewer before you agree. The interview will be recorded if you agree, and a transcript produced by the researcher; in case you do not agree to a recording, the researcher will take notes and transcribe these for data analysis. In the invitation, an email address of the research team is provided that you can contact in case of any questions or concerns. *(text to be adapted based on the interview)*

Are there any risks or discomforts involved in participation?

We do not anticipate any risk or discomfort from participating in this interview. If you feel uncomfortable or do not want to answer specific questions, just say so, and the interviewer will skip them.

What happens if I do not want to participate or continue?

In that case, we will not do the interview and will delete your contact information. There are no negative consequences for you. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you can withdraw it at any time during the interview or at any time up to one month after the interview. You do not have to give a reason. If you wish to withdraw from the research, please contact *(researcher's name and email address)*.

What happens after the interview?

The transcript of the interview will be analysed by the research team. Before this is done, the interviewer will have removed all personal data and references that may identify you in their transcript and assigned a pseudonym to you and the organisation you work in (based on a unique, random number). A document linking this number to your identity will be stored separately within the encrypted, password-protected network storage of the research institute that is only accessible to the principal investigator. This document will never be shared with others and your identity will not be revealed in publications or other representations of the research results. Access to the anonymous interview transcript will be limited to the interviewer and colleagues who carry out the data analysis. Any summary content or direct quotations from the interview that are published are anonymised so that you cannot be identified, and we shall take care to ensure that other information in the interview that could identify you is not revealed. In general, the focus of any publications following from this research will be based on desk research and all combined interviews, not on individual interviews.

Will my participation in the project's activities remain confidential?

The dataset that the research team will analyse will not include any information that could be used to identify you. The contact data that we have used to get in touch with you will be kept separately from this

dataset within the encrypted, password-protected network storage of the research institute that is only accessible to the principal investigator. When the data are no longer needed or the project ends, the data will be deleted.

Who is responsible for this project?

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101061388. The project is coordinated by dr. Karolien Lenaerts and dr. Mikkel Barslund of KU Leuven. The study in which you will be involved will be conducted by the research team of (*research institute*), under the leadership of (*contact person*).

Whom should I contact for further questions?

If you have any questions after reading this statement, please contact the research team at (*the research facility*), or the project coordinator (karolien.lenaerts@kuleuven.be). For any complaints or other concerns regarding ethical aspects of the project you can also contact the Ethics Committee of KU Leuven, which is not actively participating in the project: smec@kuleuven.be.

(Depending on the interview, this statement will also contain information on compensation and incentives.)

[Template for the informed consent form](#)

Informed consent

Title of the research

Welfare systems and labour market policies for economic and social resilience in Europe (WeLaR)

Contact details of project coordinator and involved researcher(s)

Project coordinator: dr. Karolien Lenaerts (karolien.lenaerts@kuleuven.be)

Researcher(s): *(to be adapted depending on the case study)*

Goal and methodology of the research

WeLaR is a research project that investigates the impact of technological transformations, demographic change, globalisation, and climate change on labour markets and welfare states in Europe. By doing so, the project aims to improve our understanding of the individual and combined effects of these trends

and to identify policy measures that foster socio-economic resilience and inclusive, sustainable growth.

More information on the project can be found on the website: <https://projectwelar.eu/>

Duration of the interview

30-60 minutes

- I understand what is expected of me during this research.
- I know that I will participate in an interview. The research team will set up an appointment with me and will conduct the interview in person, via telephone or online, depending on my preferences.
- My participation offers a contribution to the scientific research. I know that I will not receive any further reward or compensation for my participation. *(to be adapted depending on the case study)*
- I understand that my participation to this study is voluntary. I can stop the interview or skip questions that I do not want to answer at any time. I do not have to give a reason for this, and I know that it will not have any negative repercussions for me.
- I agree that this interview is recorded, and a transcript will be produced. The actual recording will be destroyed upon transcription. **OR** I agree that notes will be taken and summarised *(please circle the correct answer)*.
- In the context of the GDPR the collected data will be processed under public interest as the legal basis. When I end my participation, the data that were already collected can still legally be included in the research and do not need to be deleted by the research team.
- The results of this study can be used for scientific goals and may be published. My name will not be published. The confidentiality of the data will be protected in all stages of the research.
- In the context of transparency in scientific research the data of this study may be shared with others, such as researchers from different universities. In that case only non-identifiable data will be shared. It will not be possible for others to know that I have participated in this study or to know which data belong to me.
- For questions and for the execution of my rights (access to my data, rectification of the data, ...) after my participation I know that I can contact: *(contact details (email) of the responsible researcher)*.

By signing this document, you agree to participate in an interview with a researcher from *(research institute)* involved in the WeLaR project. You will receive a copy of this document for your records. The *(research institute)* will keep a signed copy for project documentation purpose. Please make sure that we

have answered any questions you may have and that you understand what we are asking you to do. You can always contact the researcher you talked to or the project coordinator if have questions later on.

I have read and understood the information in this document, and I have received an answer to all my questions regarding this research. I give my consent to participate.

Name of participant

Date, Signature

Name of researcher

Date, Signature

5.3. Stakeholder engagement (including Delphi study)

As was indicated above, stakeholder engagement is an important activity in the WeLaR project, since this is critical for the validation and take-up of the project findings, conclusions and recommendations and for the overall impact that the project will have. With this in mind, stakeholders will be identified early on, and are invited to participate in project workshops, webinars and open virtual café sessions.

5.3.1. Recruitment and selection procedures

Our strategy for engaging stakeholders for WeLaR is targeted and event-driven. This means that, with the support of the Advisory Board, the project partners will invite stakeholders to specific WeLaR events that are of interest to those stakeholders. Partners can therefore assess who will be the right stakeholder on a case-to-case basis. When targeting stakeholder representatives, we aim to achieve a balanced composition according to gender and age within the stakeholder community, also by bringing in representatives of new/specialised organisations or initiatives outside the established fields of social partnership, business or academia, such as social entrepreneurs. The addressees will include potential stakeholders that partners are already in touch with or that have been identified by desk research or referrals.

The first one of these events, which will kick-off the stakeholder engagement activities, will be the introductory webinar (also see Deliverable 8.1, Stakeholder introduction package: webinar). Partners will send out invitations along with the WeLaR leaflet information about future stakeholder engagement activities. Potential stakeholders can register for the webinar and/or for receiving more information about WeLaR events and activities. The registration sheet will therefore also include the core information of the informed consent forms to make sure that potential stakeholders have all relevant information about the

stakeholder engagement activities and their role. Stakeholders will be informed that their participation in stakeholder activities is voluntary and not linked to any kind of condition, remuneration or advantage. During the webinar, ZSI, the project partner in charge of the stakeholder engagement, will explain which further activities are planned for stakeholders and how to participate in them. After the webinar, ZSI will send out a feedback questionnaire to collect more information about the interest of the stakeholders and provide them with a written information about the stakeholder engagement activities.

If stakeholders indicate that they wish to participate in further events, their information will be stored in the WeLaR stakeholder database. While the database will contain contact personal information (e.g. name, contact details) as well as some information on the position and organisation of the stakeholder, their interests and expertise, this information will only be used to invite stakeholders to project events and/or to participate in research activities. It will be removed after project completion and will not be used for any other purposes. Similar information is collected from participants to the events, but deleted as soon as it is no longer needed (e.g. if the event is over and all practical issues have been dealt with, for participants who do not sign up for the stakeholder database).

Throughout non-public workshops and other events Chatham House Rules¹ are applied (and explained at the start of the event) unless the participants or the purpose of the workshop require a different procedure. For dedicated statements by participants intended for publication, e.g. video interviews of participants, the purpose is made clear, and consent obtained prior to the recording and publication. For photographs of meetings and workshops, a possibility to opt out is provided.

5.3.2. Informed consent

As explained in the previous section, stakeholder representatives are nominated and first contacted by consortium partners prior to the events or stakeholder activities they are invited to join. For information, they receive the WeLaR leaflet and an invitation email explaining the aim of the project and the purposes of the stakeholder engagement activities, as well as the reasons for inviting this person. Brief information on the varied activities and expected contributions of the stakeholders will also be provided. As the aim is

¹ When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.

to join stakeholders from different countries at our events, we assume that stakeholders can be informed and communicate in English. Hence, no translation into national languages will be required. However, if necessary or desirable, events or consultations can be conducted in other languages and documents used and adapted accordingly. The contact data of the research team involved in the task and the project coordinator are provided, should any issues or complaints arise.

5.3.3. Templates

[Template for the information letter \(general letter\)](#)

Invitation to join the WeLaR stakeholder activities

Dear Madam, Dear Sir,

We would like to introduce you to the new European research project WeLaR. We cordially invite you to participate in its activities and become part of the community of stakeholders and practitioners who conduct an ongoing dialogue with the project's research. The project is funded under the European Union's Horizon Europe Research Programme under grant agreement No 101061388. The WeLaR project runs from September 2022 to August 2025. In what follows, we introduce the purpose of the research and explain how we plan to involve our community of stakeholders in the project. Before deciding on your involvement, we kindly ask you to read this information carefully. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

What is the goal of the WeLaR research project?

What is WeLaR? WeLaR is an interdisciplinary project that investigates the impact of demographic changes, globalisation, digitalisation and climate change on labour markets and welfare states in Europe in order to: (i) improve our understanding of the individual and combined effects of these four megatrends on labour markets and welfare states in Europe, and (ii) identify policy measures that foster socio-economic resilience and inclusive, sustainable growth, and propose ways to adapt welfare systems so that they can address the challenges posed by these megatrends and new forms of work.

Why do we study this? Demographic shifts, globalisation, digitalisation and climate change are all transforming existing jobs and giving rise to new forms of work. These megatrends have an impact on welfare states. European welfare states offer some of the world's best social protection, standards of living and working conditions, and these efforts represent a significant share of government spending. Yet, the four megatrends are putting pressure on the labour market and welfare states, creating winners and losers and

contributing to the rise of inequalities within and between countries. For example, new forms of work may provide opportunities for vulnerable workers, but these jobs may be of poor quality and only partially covered by the welfare state. Such employment structures may also contribute less to the funding of welfare state, potentially undermining its sustainability in the longer run. Already shaken by the financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, welfare states now find themselves facing even greater challenges.

What will the project deliver? The project will produce 24 research papers, 4 policy briefs and 1 foresight report and organise 2 conferences, 6 workshops, 6 roundtables, 4 open virtual café sessions.

Where can I find more information? Please check our website: <https://projectwelar.eu/>

Why is exchange and discourse with stakeholders important to us?

We are looking for stakeholders from research, policy (European, national, regional, local), international organisations, social partners, civil society, labour market actors, social innovators and promoters of key initiatives or experiments, and other organisations to have a fruitful exchange on the topics of the WeLaR project. We strive to achieve a balanced representation of collective interests, societal spheres, and academic disciplines, and a balanced age and gender distribution in this community.

We cordially invite you to attend live and virtual events and share your views and perspective. The WeLaR activities on offer involve the following:

1. *A series of expert workshops and webinars with inputs from the WeLaR project research itself and from related European and national projects. For now, the schedule is as follows:*

- An introductory webinar on the project at large is scheduled for 16 February 2023;
- Workshop ‘Labour market supply: what policies to encourage labour market participation and ensure that no one is left behind?’ (October 2023, LISER - The Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research, Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg);
- Workshop ‘Labour market demand: economic and social risks’ (February 2024, IBS - The Institute for Structural Research, Warsaw, Poland);
- Workshop ‘Matching labour supply and demand: the role of regulations, unions and income support policies’ (June 2024, UNIPG - Università degli Studi di Perugia, Department of Economics, Perugia, Italy);
- Workshop ‘Adapting welfare states to new challenges while ensuring their long-run financial sustainability’ (August 2024, ZEW – Leibniz Centre for European Economic Research, Mannheim, Germany);

- ‘Foresight workshop’ (Event 1: November 2024, KU Leuven, Leuven, Belgium; Event 2: March 2025, ZSI – Centre for Social Innovation, Vienna, Austria), as part of the foresight workshops, a Delphi study will be held in which we may ask you to provide written inputs by means of a survey;
 - Besides the introductory webinar, five webinars will be held over the course of the project.
2. *an ‘open virtual expert café’ (four sessions in total) with two researchers from the project and an opportunity to ask questions, require information or advice, briefly present an initiative, or brainstorm on an issue of interest;*
 3. *a mid-term and final conference, which will be held in Leuven or Brussels.*

Does joining the stakeholder activities entail any obligations?

Your participation in all WeLaR activities is entirely voluntary. At each event or research activity (e.g. an interview) in which you take part, you will be asked to sign a more specific consent form. By signing this form (or clicking on the respective ‘agree’ button in case of an online version), you are giving us permission to document your comments and input them for the purposes of the project. In the case of photo or video documentation, you may disallow us to use your pictures or recordings. You may also withdraw your consent at any time, and you do not need to provide a reason for doing so.

What are the possible disadvantages of your participation?

There are no anticipated disadvantages to participating; we are doing our best to make it worthwhile.

How public is your participation in the project’s activities going to be?

Your personal contact data are only used to organise and administer events. These data will be stored on secure servers and will at no time be made accessible to staff who are not directly participating in the project. For non-public events such as the project workshops, we generally suggest the Chatham House Rule: participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.

Who is responsible for this project?

This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101061388. The project is coordinated by dr. Karolien Lenaerts and dr. Mikkel Barslund of KU Leuven. The study in which you will be involved will be conducted by the research team of (*research institute*), under the leadership of (*contact person*).

Whom should I contact for further questions?

If you have any questions after reading this statement, please contact the research team at (*the research facility*), or the project coordinator (karolien.lenaerts@kuleuven.be). For any complaints or other concerns regarding ethical aspects of the project you can also contact the Ethics Committee of KU Leuven, which is not actively participating in the project: smec@kuleuven.be.

We hope this finds your interest and look forward to your contributions and hopefully, to meeting you in person during a WeLaR event.

dr. Karolien Lenaerts

Project coordinator, KU Leuven

karolien.lenaerts@kuleuven.be

dr. habil. Ursula Holtgrewe

Leader of Work Package 8

holtgrewe@zsi.at

[Template for the informed consent form \(all stakeholder activities\)](#)

Informed consent

Title of the research

Welfare systems and labour market policies for economic and social resilience in Europe (WeLaR)

Contact details of project coordinator and involved researcher(s)

Project coordinator: dr. Karolien Lenaerts (karolien.lenaerts@kuleuven.be)

Researcher(s): (*to be adapted depending on the event or activity*)

Goal and methodology of the research

WeLaR is a research project that investigates the impact of technological transformations, demographic change, globalisation, and climate change on labour markets and welfare states in Europe. By doing so, the project aims to improve our understanding of the individual and combined effects of these trends and to identify policy measures that foster socio-economic resilience and inclusive, sustainable growth.

More information on the project can be found on the website: <https://projectwelar.eu/>

- I understand what is expected of me during this research. I understand the project's activities and my possibilities of involvement.
- My participation offers a contribution to the scientific research. I know that I will not receive any further reward or compensation for my participation.

- I understand that my participation to this study is voluntary. I have the right to discontinue my participation at any time. I do not have to give a reason for this, and I know that it will not have any negative repercussions for me.
 - In the context of the GDPR the collected data will be processed under public interest as the legal basis. When I end my participation, the data that were already collected can still legally be included in the research and do not need to be deleted by the research team.
 - The results of this study can be used for scientific goals and may be published. My name will not be published. The confidentiality of the data will be protected in all stages of the research.
 - In the context of transparency in scientific research the data of this study may be shared with others, such as researchers from different universities. In that case only non-identifiable data will be shared. It will not be possible for others to know that I have participated in this study or to know which data belong to me.
 - For questions and for the execution of my rights (access to my data, rectification of the data, ...), I know that I can contact: *(contact details (email) of the responsible researcher)*.
- I would like to receive an invitation to future WeLaR activities. For that purpose my contact details will be stored. I can ask to delete this information at any given time.

By signing this document, you agree to sign up to the WeLaR stakeholder community and to be informed on project output, news, activities and events. You can always contact us in case of questions or concerns.

I have read and understood the information in this document, and I have received an answer to all my questions regarding this research. I give my consent to participate.

Name of participant

Date, Signature

Name of researcher

Date, Signature

Template for the informed consent form specifically for events

Informed consent

Title of the event

(to be adapted accordingly)

Title of the research

Welfare systems and labour market policies for economic and social resilience in Europe (WeLaR)

Contact details of project coordinator and involved researcher(s)

Project coordinator: dr. Karolien Lenaerts (karolien.lenaerts@kuleuven.be)

Researcher(s): *(to be adapted depending on the task)*

Goal and methodology of the research

WeLaR is a research project that investigates the impact of technological transformations, demographic change, globalisation, and climate change on labour markets and welfare states in Europe. By doing so, the project aims to improve our understanding of the individual and combined effects of these trends and to identify policy measures that foster socio-economic resilience and inclusive, sustainable growth. More information on the project can be found on the website: <https://projectwelar.eu/>

- I know that I will participate in an event on *(to be adapted)*.
- My participation offers a contribution to the scientific research. I know that I will not receive any further reward or compensation for my participation. *(to be adapted depending on the task)*
- I understand that my participation in this event is voluntary. I have the right to stop participating at any time. I do not have to give a reason for this, and I know that it will not have any negative repercussions for me.
- In the context of the GDPR the collected data will be processed under public interest as the legal basis. When I end my participation, the data that were already collected can still legally be included in the research and do not need to be deleted by the research team.
- The results of the discussions held during the event can be used for scientific goals and may be published. My name will not be published. The confidentiality of the data will be protected in all stages of the research.

- In the context of transparency in scientific research the outcomes of the event may be shared with others, such as researchers from different universities. In that case only non-identifiable data will be shared. It will not be possible for others to know that I have participated in this study or to know which data belong to me.
 - For questions and for the execution of my rights (access to my data, rectification of the data, ...) after my participation I know that I can contact: *(contact details (e-mail) of the responsible researcher)*
- I would like to receive an invitation to future WeLaR activities. For that purpose my contact details will be stored. I can ask to delete this information at any given time.

I have read and understood the information in this document, and I have received an answer to all my questions regarding this event. I give my consent to participate. *(In the context of an online survey, the participant gives consent by ticking a box. In case this box is not ticked, the survey is not started.)*

WeLaR is Horizon Europe research project examining the impact of digitalisation, globalisation, climate change and demographic shifts on labour markets and welfare states in Europe. It aims to improve the understanding of the individual and combined effects of these trends and to develop policy proposals fostering economic growth that is distributed fairly across society and generates opportunities for all.



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