

Foreword

The world is facing unprecedented social, environmental and economic challenges that will require policymakers, business, scientists and citizens to open up to one another and find new ways of collaborating. In our digital age, we are reinventing the way knowledge is produced, distributed and acted upon. And an approach based on citizen science will be part of this new relationship between science and society.

The current increase in citizen science shows clearly the societal desire to participate more actively in knowledge production, knowledge assessment and decision-making. At the same time, scientists, research organisations and research funders are discovering the benefits of opening research to society by actively collaborating with citizens. There has been a significant rise in public participation in research in recent times, with citizens becoming engaged in the process of knowledge co-creation. This is not just a passive role, but actively setting the agenda, crowdsourcing via web platforms, and collecting and analysing a broad spectrum of scientific data. To invent new innovative ways to tackle societal challenges we need to involve those most affected – the citizens themselves.

I very much welcome these developments. The Commission is supporting them through its Open Science Agenda as well as through actions funded under the EU's Horizon 2020 framework programme. The recent 'Lab – Fab – App' report on maximising the impact of EU research and innovation recommended greater mobilisation and involvement of citizens in future EU research and innovation programmes through stimulating co-design and co-creation.

This book brings together some of the key insights into citizen science, highlighting what is already happening and exploring its potential to create new forms of knowledge generation, transfer and use and to

foster the civic engagement of science. As a part of the open science agenda, citizen science contributes to the idea of a more innovative, inclusive, future-oriented and democratic Europe.

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