

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide-Scenario

Before the FGD begins, it is important to welcome the participants as they arrive. This includes greeting participants personally and individually, introducing oneself (moderator), indicating where they may sit, and inviting them to help themselves to some refreshments. Once everyone has arrived and settled in, the FGD session may commence. Adjusted, the same applies for online FGDs.

Good day/evening to everyone!

My name is [*name of moderator*] and I represent the HEUREC Project which is a research team based at the Technical University of Darmstadt, Germany [*optional: also add other affiliation/where you work otherwise (before/after the project, 'home university', etc.)*]. We are currently conducting a study on how people in several EU member states think about the European Union (EU) and in particular what they expect from the EU and other member states. As part of the study, we have invited you to participate in a discussion about these issues. I would like to thank you for taking the time today to participate in this discussion and contributing to our research. We believe that it is very important to know more about the experiences, understandings, and opinions of ordinary citizens. Thus, your thoughts and observations are very important to us. **Please keep in mind that there are no wrong answers.** You all come with own and different ideas, and this is what we are interested to hear about. Also, please feel welcome to share your thoughts, even when you disagree with what other participants say.

At the same time, there are a few rules we should follow. Please do not interrupt each other. It is very important that each of you have the opportunity to speak. Please also respect each other's opinions, including when there is disagreement. We would like the discussion environment to be comfortable for everyone, so everyone feels free to express their thoughts.

If you are interested, you can visit the HEUREC website anytime to watch for updates or publications; we are also happy to make our research results available to you directly.

Before we begin, I would like to briefly outline how this discussion will go on. As your moderator, I will be asking questions, as well as making sure that each of you has the opportunity to speak and that we complete our discussion within our set time frame. [*Name of a moderator assistant*] will be assisting me by taking notes, and checking on the recording equipment. As you can see, we have several audio recorders with us. This is necessary in order to record our discussion as accurately as possible [*adjusted, the same applied for online FGDs*].

For the discussion, you are free to choose a codename/alias instead of your real first name. Your names will be replaced by codes later when we transcribe the discussions. Stating your chosen name will make it easier for us to identify the speakers. Thus, **please always remember to say your name before you speak for the audio recording.**

The audio recordings will be used only by the research team and only for this study. The audio recordings will be stored and inaccessible to any other persons outside the project team, and will be deleted after the transcription has been completed. You have all received the Data Protection Notice and the Consent Form in advance. If you have not turned them in already, please submit them to me now. If you have any remaining questions or concerns, I am happy to address them. [*The moderator checks that everyone has given their consent / had time to ask data- and confidentiality-related questions, if necessary.*]

The discussion will take about 90 minutes. We've distributed name cards to everyone, so you can address each other by name. Before we begin, please feel free to help yourself to refreshments. Also, it would be helpful if you turn your mobile phones off or put them on silent mode for the duration of the discussion. [*Adjusted, the same applied for online FGDs.*]

Now we will start the audio recording.

Does anyone have any questions before we start the discussion?

<See: FGD questions in the table below>

FGD Guide-Scenario

Stage of FGD	Steps of FGD	Respective FG discussion question(s)/notes	Estimated time
PRE-RECORDING	Meeting & greeting participants		Context-dependent
	Receiving informed consent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information about the project and informed consent forms have to be sent to participants in advance - Confirmation in advance required 	
	Introduction of the project	<i>See the text above</i>	
	Explanation of FGD process and rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear expectations towards participants (e.g., we ask for personal opinions and not general; there is no correct answer; we allow/expect agreement and disagreement; no need for specific/extensive knowledge about the EU; respectful interactions) <p><i>See the text above</i></p>	
	Name tags	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each participant can choose their real name or an alias/codename - We ask each participant to tell their chosen name before each comment, if possible 	
RECORDING	Participants' Q&A about the project/FGDs	<p><i><We inform that we will start the recording now></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We would like to ask you to speak a little louder so that the recording is clear. - Do you have any questions about the discussion? 	Up to 5 min.
	Participant introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each participant tells their name/codename/alias 	

		<p><i><We distribute small pieces of paper to participants in advance and ask them to write down [for online FGDs, we ask them in advance to have a piece of paper with them]></i></p> <p>You have a piece of paper. Please, write on it:</p> <p>- What are the first 3 thoughts that come to your mind when you hear the “European Union” or the “EU”? <i><if someone only has one or two, it is ok; based on the answers, we continue clarifying what they mean; we build upon the thoughts/terms/ideas that participants present – if they mention concepts that we are interested in, we ask to shortly elaborate></i></p>	<p>10 min.</p> <p><i>Back-up question: Does being an EU citizen have any particular meaning(s) for you?</i></p>
	<p><i>Opening questions</i></p>	<p>- How would you describe your overall position, attitude or “feeling” towards the EU? Please, elaborate.</p> <p>- If one argued that EU membership was beneficial for your country, what benefits/advantages would you list? Please, elaborate.</p> <p>- If one argued that EU membership was non-beneficial for your country, what disadvantages would you list? Please, elaborate.</p>	<p>10 min.</p>
	<p><i>Discussion questions</i></p>	<p><Scenario I> Imagine there is a major natural disaster like an earthquake, flood or forest fire in one of the EU countries.</p> <p>How should the EU react? <i>What do you think is needed for that? Who should give it/take care of it?</i></p> <p>How should other EU countries react? <i>What do you think is needed for that? Who should give it/take care of it?</i></p>	<p>20 min.</p> <p><i>Back up question: Should some EU countries do a little more than others?</i></p>

	<p>How should your country react? <i>What do you think is needed for that? Who should give it/take care of it?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If there was a need to send a crisis management team (e.g. firefighters and doctors) to the country, do you think your country should do it – and who should cover the costs for this support? - Do you feel that you have a responsibility to help personally? <p><Scenario II> If an economic crisis like the Euro crisis <<i>contextualise the crisis name for each country</i>> happens again and some countries are adversely/negatively affected or hit harder than others, how should your country react?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If your country is adversely/negatively affected, how should the other EU countries react? <p><<i>We then can discuss even more specifically if people would differentiate among countries; elaborate based on the answers</i>></p> <p><Scenario III> Consider that here are inequalities between countries and between people within a country. Should the EU have a common programme/fund to decrease societal inequalities (i.e. given the increasing income gap in societies)? And why (not)?</p> <p>[<i>We give unemployment as an example:</i>]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Should the EU have a European-wide scheme to deal with unemployment in all countries, funded by all EU member states? 	<p>20 min.</p> <p><i>Back up question:</i> Would it somehow differ depending on a country?</p> <p><i>Back up question:</i> If your country received financial support from other countries should it obey to certain restrictions or rules coming with it?</p> <p>20 min.</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If there is a high unemployment in some country should the EU try to reduce it? - Should your country contribute to reducing unemployment in another EU country, even if this would imply additional costs to your country? Please, elaborate. 	
	Wrap up questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Today we discussed about the EU, touching upon different areas like social disparities or economics. Are there any other areas that you would say are relevant when talking about the relations and mutual support within the EU? - How would you say the discussed topics <i><we can specify depending on the actual content of the discussion and responses to the previous question></i> are linked with your country's future in the EU? Please, elaborate. - What would be the final remark by each of you on this topic? <i><we ask each participant to say their final remark></i> - Is there anything else that you might have had on your mind during the discussion but we haven't asked/that you would still like to add? 	<p>10 min.</p> <p><i>Overall estimate: 95 min. of recorded time</i></p>
POST-RECORDING	Organisational matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collecting tickets, etc., if needed - Goodbye 	

A suggested list of prompting questions that may be used during FGDs:

- What do you mean by that? Could you please elaborate?
- You mentioned X. Could you please elaborate?
- What do you think is needed for that? Who should give it/take care of it? *<e.g. if someone says "Distribution of resources is not fair in the EU", we can find out more about what the participant means by "fair" and also what the participant thinks is needed to make it "fairer">*

FGD Protocol**Protocol**

Date of FGD _____

Place of FGD _____

Number of FGD participants: planned _____ arrived _____

Start of FGD (h : min) _____

End of FGD (h : min) _____

Moderator name _____

Moderator assistant name _____

Recording technique _____

Outlay of FGD participant seating [*for face-to face FGDs*]
<*drawing*>

Registry of FGD participant profiles

FG_ID of participants	Profile	Notes
FG1_P1	Age Gender [<i>code for P</i>] Employment status by FGD profile & sector < <i>based on recruitment information</i> >	
FG1_P2		
FG1_P3		
FG1_P4		
...		