**Participant Information Sheet**

**Study Title**: Political Participation Among EU Migrants: A Comparative Analysis of Four English Local Authorities

**Researcher**: Michele Zadra

**ERGO number:** 56438

You are being invited to take part in the above research study. To help you decide whether you would like to take part or not, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the information below carefully and ask questions if anything is not clear or you would like more information before you decide to take part in this research. You may like to discuss it with others but it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.

**What is the research about?**

This is a PhD project study to obtain a doctoral degree in Web Science. Michele, the researcher, is a doctoral student in Web Science based in the department of Politics and International Relations. Michele is interested in investigating to what extent and why people from EU countries living in England do/don’t participate in local politics through online channels put in place by local authorities.

The outcomes of this project will help local authorities to achieve a better inclusion of EU migrants in the democratic life of their polity.

The research is funded by an iPhD scholarship the Centre for Doctoral Training in Web Science of the University of Southampton, with funding from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC).

**Why have I been asked to participate?**

You are being asked to participate to this study as you are either an elected member of the Council, a Council’s officer or someone who was born in an EU country, and might, or not, have a direct experience with local democracy and participatory democracy mechanisms managed by the Council.

**What will happen to me if I take part?**

There will be a face-to-face interview in a venue of your preference, or online if we are asked to keep with social distancing rules. The interview will be conducted by the researcher, who will ask you open-ended questions about your experience and views about political participation and participatory democracy. The interview is expected to last about one hour.

To ensure an accurate, fair and transparent use of your words, consenting to the audio-recording of the interview is required for participation. The recording will be transcribed verbatim by the researcher and may be used for content analysis and indirect or direct quotations in the thesis. A copy of the interview’s recording will be made available by the researcher upon request. The researcher might also take notes.

The interview will be done only once, according to your available date and time. Occasionally, follow-up questions and clarifications might be asked by email or over the phone.

Although you will be requested to take part in only one interview, you will remain a participant in this study until the research project will end on the 23th December 2022. Because of this status you can require the researcher at any time to view the transcript of the interview. You will also be able to request an electronic copy of the doctoral thesis after submission and will be informed about all scientific publications that will use data from your interview.

**Are there any benefits in my taking part?**

Some participants may get an Amazon Voucher worth £20. However, the recommendations provided to local governments as a result of this project might help building a more representative and more inclusive democratic environment at local level, which in turn might indirectly benefit some participants.

**Are there any risks involved?**

There is no risk involved in this study. If necessary, all the health and safety precautions required by law and by the University policies with regards of the Covid-19 crisis will be duly implemented.

**What data will be collected?**

The researcher will collect your personal contact details, such as, your name, e-mail address and telephone number for the purpose of communications during the development of this study.

The answers you’ll give during the interview might be used, as transcribed, for content analysis and will be related to your experience with online political participation at local level. These data are needed to detect possible correlations between cultural, social, political and economic factors and the use of the Internet in England as a mean of political participation of EU migrants.

**Will my participation be confidential?**

Your participation and the information we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential.

Aside for myself and my supervisors, only responsible members of the University of Southampton may be given access to data about you for monitoring purposes and/or to carry out an audit of the study to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations. Individuals from regulatory authorities (people who check that we are carrying out the study correctly) may require access to your data. All of these people have a duty to keep your information, as a research participant, strictly confidential.

The data, including audio recording and consent forms, will be stored safely, anonymised and kept

electronically in the investigator’s laptop, on the hard drive. The data will be both encrypted and password-protected. Personal data and consent forms will be kept separate from non-identifiable data. If interviewed, your real name and other personal identifiable information will not be displayed in any published project document. Your responses will have a coded name, not your real name. For instance, you may be identified only as Participant 1 during the data analysis and in the thesis.

All data, including transcriptions and audio recordings will be destroyed after the publication of the PhD thesis because there will be no further need for using them.

**Do I have to take part?**

No, it is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide you want to take part, you will need to sign a consent form to show you have agreed to take part. If you have been asked an interview, you can inform the researcher that you are interested in taking part in this study by replying to his email.

If you are being interviewed, you are entitled to opt-out from the research at any moment before, during and after the interview without penalty or justification.

**What happens if I change my mind?**

You have the right to change your mind and withdraw at any time up to 1 month after the interview, without giving a reason and without your participant rights being affected by your decisions. You can withdraw before or after the scheduled interview by informing the researcher by e-mail, or orally during the interview.

If you withdraw from the study after 1 month from the interview day, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained for the purposes of achieving the objectives of the study only.

**What will happen to the results of the research?**

Your personal details will remain strictly confidential. Research findings made available in any reports or publications will not include information that can directly identify you.

The results of the research will be written up in the PhD thesis for the purposes of achieving the doctoral degree, and, potentially, in other scientific publications such as conference papers or journal articles. Participants can request an electronic copy of the results.

**Where can I get more information?**

For more information or any questions about the research or your participation to it please contact at any time the researcher, Michele Zadra, using the following email:

m.f.zadra@soton.ac.uk

**What happens if there is a problem?**

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should speak to the researcher (see email address above) who will do their best to answer your questions.

If you remain unhappy or have a complaint about any aspect of this study, please contact the University of Southampton Research Integrity and Governance Manager (023 8059 5058, [rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk](mailto:rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk)).

**Data Protection Privacy Notice**

The University of Southampton conducts research to the highest standards of research integrity. As a publicly-funded organisation, the University has to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information about people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, we will use information about you in the ways needed, and for the purposes specified, to conduct and complete the research project. Under data protection law, ‘Personal data’ means any information that relates to and is capable of identifying a living individual. The University’s data protection policy governing the use of personal data by the University can be found on its website (<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page>).

This Participant Information Sheet tells you what data will be collected for this project and whether this includes any personal data. Please ask the research team if you have any questions or are unclear what data is being collected about you.

Our privacy notice for research participants provides more information on how the University of Southampton collects and uses your personal data when you take part in one of our research projects and can be found at <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/sharepoint/intranet/ls/Public/Research%20and%20Integrity%20Privacy%20Notice/Privacy%20Notice%20for%20Research%20Participants.pdf>

Any personal data we collect in this study will be used only for the purposes of carrying out our research and will be handled according to the University’s policies in line with data protection law. If any personal data is used from which you can be identified directly, it will not be disclosed to anyone else without your consent unless the University of Southampton is required by law to disclose it.

Data protection law requires us to have a valid legal reason (‘lawful basis’) to process and use your Personal data. The lawful basis for processing personal information in this research study is for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. Personal data collected for research will not be used for any other purpose.

For the purposes of data protection law, the University of Southampton is the ‘Data Controller’ for this study, which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. The University of Southampton will keep identifiable information about you for 10 years after the study has finished after which time any link between you and your information will be removed.

To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personal data necessary to achieve our research study objectives. Your data protection rights – such as to access, change, or transfer such information - may be limited, however, in order for the research output to be reliable and accurate. The University will not do anything with your personal data that you would not reasonably expect.

If you have any questions about how your personal data is used, or wish to exercise any of your rights, please consult the University’s data protection webpage (https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page) where you can make a request using our online form. If you need further assistance, please contact the University’s Data Protection Officer ([data.protection@soton.ac.uk](mailto:data.protection@soton.ac.uk)).

**Thank you for taking the time to read the information sheet and considering taking part in the research.**