The aim of this contribution is to address European craft guilds as deliberative spaces through some case studies from Early Modern Catalonia. My main goal is to define some basic guidelines to analyse guilds as deliberative spaces, since they have barely been studied as such. Thus, the contribution will be structured in two main parts:

Firstly, I’ll define a general framework in which guilds can be understood and analysed as deliberative spaces. The purpose here will be to see how deliberation was practiced in guilds. To do so, I’ll work on three major topics:

1. The understanding of the public / private nature of a guild. The relationship between a guild and public powers is essential in order to define the conditions under which deliberation could take place, and what could be decided (or not).
2. The ways in which deliberation was practiced in guilds. Different kinds of councils and meetings will be analysed as the most usual deliberation practices in early modern guilds.
3. The elective systems practiced by guilds, their relationship with a guild’s internal hierarchy, and their evolution over time, particularly regarding the consolidation of European public powers and the power balance within a guild.

Secondly, I’ll focus on what was deliberated on, as opposed to how deliberation was practiced. Through the analysis of different examples, I intend to showcase how deliberation conditioned the life of guild members and which topics were discussed. The goal will be to assess how deliberation inside the guild affected the life of its members, from their day-to-day work to spirituality as well as communitarian defense in a war scenario.