

EC-NET

Toolkit

A COLLECTION OF TESTED METHODOLOGIES

The European Citizenship Network of Towns



Co-funded by the
Europe for Citizens Programme
of the European Union





THE EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP NETWORK OF TOWNS

Project number:

621885-CITIZ-1-2020-1-IT-CITIZ-NT



<https://europeforcitizensse.wixsite.com/ecnet>



<https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanCitizenshipNET>

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The images in this publication provide a general illustration of the project activities implemented between 02/11/2020 - 01/11/2022



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ABOUT EUROPE FOR CITIZENS

Europe for Citizens is the EU's programme for funding projects that: help the public understand the EU's history, values, and diversity. encourage citizens to participate and engage in democracy at the EU level.

For the 2014-2020 programming period, Europe for Citizens had a total budget of €187,718,000.

Europe for Citizens is the EU's programme for funding projects that:

- help the public understand the EU's history, values, and diversity
- encourage citizens to participate and engage in democracy at the EU level.

European remembrance

The programme supports initiatives that:

- discuss why and how the totalitarian regimes that blighted Europe's modern history came into power
- look at the EU's other defining moments and reference points
- consider different historical perspectives

Democratic engagement & civic participation

Town twinning

Projects bring together citizens from twinned towns to debate issues on the European political agenda. They develop opportunities for people to engage with each other and to volunteer at the EU level.

Networks of towns

Towns are encouraged to cooperate with each other in the long term to explore particular topics or themes, share resources and/or interests, increase their influence, and/or face common challenges.

Civil society projects

These projects give citizens an opportunity to participate concretely in the EU policy-making process. They stimulate debates to propose practical solutions to issues through cooperation at the European level.

The Europe for Citizens programmes existed from 2014-2020. The new programmes is called "*The Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV)*".

ABOUT EC-NET

The European Citizenship Network of Towns (EC-NET) was a “network of Networks” built on the experience of key partners of 15 successful Networks of Towns from years 2009-2020, which stretched over two rounds of Europe for Citizens (2007-2013 and 2014-2020). The objective of putting these experienced municipalities, civil society groups, and their citizens together again was to evaluate the long-term impact of the projects implemented as NTs over 10 years with regard to fostering European citizenship and encouraging democratic and civic participation. The core activities of the EC-NET consisted of 6 international events, accompanied by participatory research and interviews, local working groups, and project communication activities. The participants (policymakers, public officers, activists, citizens) shared their practice and experience in order to:

- 1/ Evaluate the long-term impact of the projects implemented as NT over 10 years on: citizens, direct participants, and participating institutions;
- 2/ Enhance the understanding of the programme priorities over the years - EUROSCEPTICISM, SOLIDARITY, ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP, INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE;
- 3/ Draw recommendations for the new decade of the Networks of Towns and Europe for Citizens programme (or its successor);
- 4/ Have an opportunity to work together with strong partners across Europe, even after the project's completion, thanks to the establishment of the EC-NET ENGO.

The most significant tangible results in this project are: this TOOLKIT, as a collection of tested methodologies, and the EC-NET RECOMMENDATIONS with suggestions and ideas for the Future of the Programme and policies for enhancing citizens' active participation)

<https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/europe-for-citizens/projects/efc-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/3515d1ae-d832-4a22-82f9-996ddb9f8c01>



EC-NET ✦ PARTNERS EXPERIENCE ✦

The publication "EC-NET Toolkit" aims to enhance the understanding of Europe for Citizens programme priorities over the years which is an updated approach that will contribute to the new decade of Networks of Towns under the successor of the Europe for Citizens programme. This section presents the Network of Towns implemented under Europe for Citizens, in which the EC-NET partnership was involved, either as a partner or as a leader.



PUNCH

*Participation of Underrepresented Citizens in the
Valorization of Cultural Heritage*



AIM

"Giving underrepresented citizens the tools to help build EU policies and create intercultural initiatives for the enhancement of European cultural heritage, as a tool for inclusion and cohesion for small communities in rural and peripheral areas"

PERIOD

2018-2021



PARTNERSHIP

15 partners from 12 countries

TOOLS

Facebook, online platforms, zoom, PowerPoint, videos (VR)

METHODOLOGY

Study Visit/Local workshops/sharing good practice/focus groups

IMPACT AND RESULTS

The target involved in the project were representatives of local sustainable enterprises/organizations working in the field of community /sustainable tourism or willing to be entrepreneurs in tourism. They have learned from discovering other realities and they have been empowered on understanding the importance of the tourism sector for preserving identity/heritage etc. Moreover, the project allowed the structuring of a dialogue with local authorities



www.punchtwinning.com

Municipality of Dabrowa - Lead Partner

Fattoria Pugliese Diffusa APS - Beneficiary

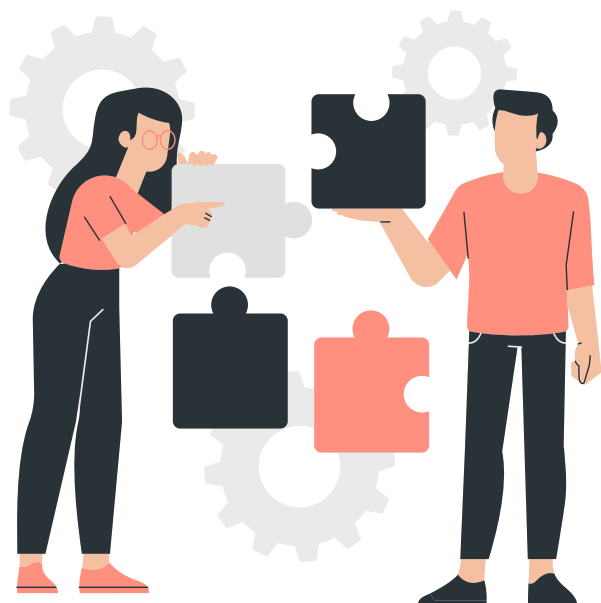
D'Antilles & D'Ailleur - Beneficiary

EU-IN

European Inclusion through Intercultural Dialogue

PERIOD 2019-2022

● **AIM** worked for the inclusion of disadvantaged citizens, especially refugees, asylum seekers, Roma, and other migrants. Intercultural dialogue can help in combatting the stigmatization of migrants and minority groups and, at the same time, can contribute to the creation of a more inclusive EU community.



11 organizations
from 8 countries

EU Participatory
Democracy instruments

PARTNERSHIP

TOOLS

street debates, study visits, gamification,
training, workshops, field experimentations

METHODOLOGY

IMPACT AND RESULTS

1/ 5 International Events, 2 Online meetings, and 40 local activities that involved 600 direct and 35.000 indirect participants

2/ professionals working with migrants and minorities (teachers, public officers, youth workers, social workers, etc...) increased the skills

2/ The "EU-IN Toolkit", available on the official website

www.europeforcitizense.wixsite.com/euin



Municipality of Suhindol- Lead Partner

Fattoria Pugliese Diffusa APS - Beneficiary

Check-IN Association - Beneficiary

FUTHURE

Fostering Unity, Tolerance and HUMAN Rights in Europe

PERIOD

2020-2023

AIM

FUTHURE aims to create a Network for actively involving citizens in raising awareness of common values and in the debating on the future of Europe and its fundamental rights.

PARTNERSHIP

9 organizations from 7 countries

TOOLS

online survey, consultations and feedbacks, active participatory tools



METHODOLOGY

a mix of formal and non-formal approaches such as Training courses (based on cooperative learning), consultations and feedback, local debates, presentations, exchange of good practices, and case studies.

IMPACT AND RESULTS

- 1/ more than 600 direct PARTICIPANTS will be involved in the International meetings, where they'll be asked to share practices, experiences, and ideas for the future.
- 2/ 24 Local Debates activities where participants will have an active role
- 3/ "Guidelines for FUTHURE"



www.europeforcitizense.wixsite.com/future

Fattoria Pugliese Diffusa APS - Beneficiary

CORE

Citizens Occupy Rural Europe

PERIOD

2018-2022

PARTNERSHIP

5 organizations from 5 countries

TOOLS

websites, social networks, newsletters, radio, and newspapers

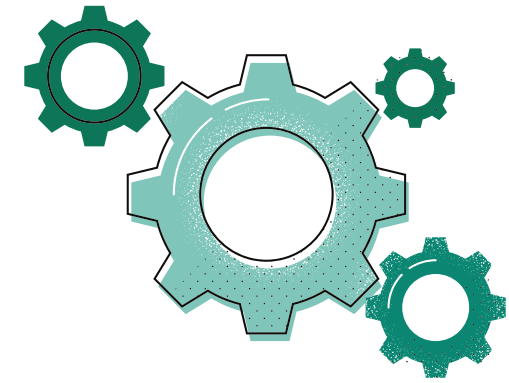


IMPACT AND RESULTS

Creating strong relationships between the citizens in the rural areas and building a strong link between them and the organizations.

AIM

CORE aimed to empower the citizens, with a bigger focus on the ones in rural areas, tackling the importance of the European Union, and their own culture and promoting their active participation as European citizens.



METHODOLOGY

a mix of non-formal and formal methodologies such as debates, open discussions, workshops, etc.



Check-IN Association - Lead Partner

Fattoria Pugliese Diffusa APS - Beneficiary

ECHOES

European Cultural Heritage: Opportunities for Citizens' Engagement and Social Inclusion

PARTNERSHIP

1 association of municipalities, 7 municipalities, 8 CSOs, 1 LAG and 1 Chamber of Commerce

PERIOD

2019-2022

started from the belief that the creation of a Community Cultural System (CCS) can assure fruitful and stable cooperation between Local Authorities and CSOs from the Cultural and Social Sectors, working together for the social inclusion of migrants, Roma, mentally or physically disabled people, Neets, and vulnerable groups in general, through the valorization of the Cultural Heritage

AIM

METHODOLOGY

debates, study visits, consultations, conference, good practices, storytelling

TOOLS

websites, social networks, ZOOM

IMPACT AND RESULTS



Two tangible outputs "European Cultural Heritage- tell your story" and Europe, Heritage, Start, Up!" available on the official website.



www.echoestwinning.eu

Association of Albanian Municipalities- Beneficiary
Fattoria Pugliese Diffusa APS - Beneficiary
LAG Paluki NGO- Beneficiary

TIPS4EU

Tools for a more Inclusive, Participative and Sustainable European Union

PERIOD

2017-2019

PARTNERSHIP

12 partners

- 1/ To contribute to citizens' understanding of the Union, its history, and diversity.
- 2/ To foster European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level.

AIM

Debates on Europe, consultations, and tools for citizens to express their opinions directly at the EU level and work to change living conditions.

TOOLS



formal and non-formal education methods, debates, consultations

METHODOLOGY

IMPACT AND RESULTS

The results of the local campaigns – 30 citizens were introduced to the right tools to promote youth participation in the democratic decision-making process.



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/633630200180236/?mibextid=6NoCDW>

Municipality of Suhindol- Lead Partner
Fattoria Pugliese Diffusa APS - Beneficiary

ENSURE

European Network for the Cohesion and Solidarity in Rural Areas

PERIOD

2017-2019

PARTNERSHIP

14 partners

TOOLS

presentations and
citizens' debates
focus on rural
areas

AIM

ENSURE served to increase the relevance of local and European policymakers as actors developing initiatives that addressed the needs of rural citizens in the context of EU policies, European citizenship, and democracy tools.

METHODOLOGY

workshops, study
visits, panels,
discussions

IMPACT AND RESULTS

The project involved 513 citizens from 14 countries that deepened their understanding of participatory democracy in local development strategies, learned about bottlenecks of the EU citizenship and EU democratic tools, and the role of local administration, exchanged tools for solidarity locally and in the EU in a multilevel approach, got better understanding of Agricultural Policy (CAP) as a policy linked to EU identity and of rural citizens' approach to the EU integration process as well as learned about the needs, characteristics and commonalities of rural areas across Europe which were represented by partners in the project.



<https://lag-sredisnjaistra.hr/en/projekti/provedeni/ensure-europska-mreza-za-koheziju-i-solidarnost-u-ruralnim-podrucjima/>

Development Information Center Slovenska Bistrica- Lead Partner
LAG Paluki NGO - Beneficiary
Federacion de Municipios de Madrid- Beneficiary

LAGS4EU

PERIOD

2015-2017

PARTNERSHIP

18 partners

TOOLS

presentations, videos

METHODOLOGY

workshops, study
visits, panels,
discussions, best
practice guidebook,
video reports

AIM

Main project aim was to enhance citizens' participation in development and implementing actions in their local communities organized by LAGs, local governments and other related development organizations. The problem was tackled through increasing the knowledge and skills of representatives of the local governments, LAGs and development organizations in implementing development actions at the grassroots level and enhancing the exchange of know-how between organizations regarding the stakeholder engagement in local development actions. On the other hand, the citizens had the chance to take part of the project activities and this way learn about the many ways in which they themselves can actively participate and take an important role in the advancement of their communities

 <https://lag-sredisnjaistra.hr/en/projekti/provedeni/lags4eu-2/>

LAG Paluki NGO- Lead Partner

LAGS4EU

IMPACT AND RESULTS

The project involved 480 citizens from 9 countries and had multiple effects on its target groups- citizens, representatives of local communities, CSOs and Local action groups. It has enhanced citizens' participation in LAGs activities and decision-making processes. Project made LAG more visible to wider audience highlighting the LEADER/bottom up approach as a model for inclusive and transparent development of the local communities. It showed LAGs potentials for disseminating new knowledges and skills and connecting various social subjects in dialogue for overall wellbeing of the communities, and consequently the whole EU. In addition, it presented the possibilities for connections and collaborations of citizens on wider transnational levels on various interest fields that relevant for their local communities. It has strengthened the capacities of LAG members and employees for successful implementation of EU project and other development activities. The participants had opportunity to adopt various kinds of new skills and knowledges through workshops, site visit, best practice exchange, presentations and discussions on the various themes which will help them with their future work in local communities. Through promotion of LEADER/bottom up approach the participants also gained understanding on how EU policies contribute to improving quality of life and balanced local development. The project has influenced general attitude on EU integrations and programs in local communities. It demonstrated how EU programs and projects improve quality of life on local levels, especially in the field of citizens' engagement in local and regional development activities and decision-making processes. Project is itself good practice example on how to foster citizens' engagement in activities that are relevant for their local communities. Participating in the events has allowed various subjects to deepen the knowledge of other European realities, but also to deepen the relationships and friendship among them.

SOLID

Local Solidarity - Global Solidarity Network



PERIOD

2018-2020

TOOLS

presentations, videos,
conferences, citizens'
dialogue, meetings with
high-level EU politicians

AIM

SOLID aimed to implement new political tools that enable local communities to have an impact on global and European Solidarity in times of institutional and humanitarian crisis that different EU countries are currently facing.

PARTNERSHIP

13 partners

METHODOLOGY

workshops, study
visits, panels, open
discussions



IMPACT AND RESULTS

Manual of Solidarity
2020'

**BETTER
TOGETHER**

Bulgarian Centre for Lifelong Learning - Beneficiary
Municipality of Dabrowa - Beneficiary
Fattoria Pugliese Diffusa APS - Beneficiary

EAN

European Academy Network

PARTNERSHIP

14 partners from
13 countries

TOOLS

in-vivo and online
presentations, videos,
jamboard conferences

METHODOLOGY

simulation activities
of the EU institutions
(EP, CoR), workshops,
open discussions,
training

PERIOD

2020-2022

AIM

EAN aimed to provide European local and regional policy makers and citizens with knowledge and tools that support active citizenship and democratic Union.

IMPACT AND RESULTS



With the intention to broadly support European civic education and engagement in shaping the EU agenda, a POLICY TOOLKIT was published and disseminated as a tool with pan-European relevance containing reviewed methods and worked-out approaches of how to deliver Simulation Activities of the EU institutions.

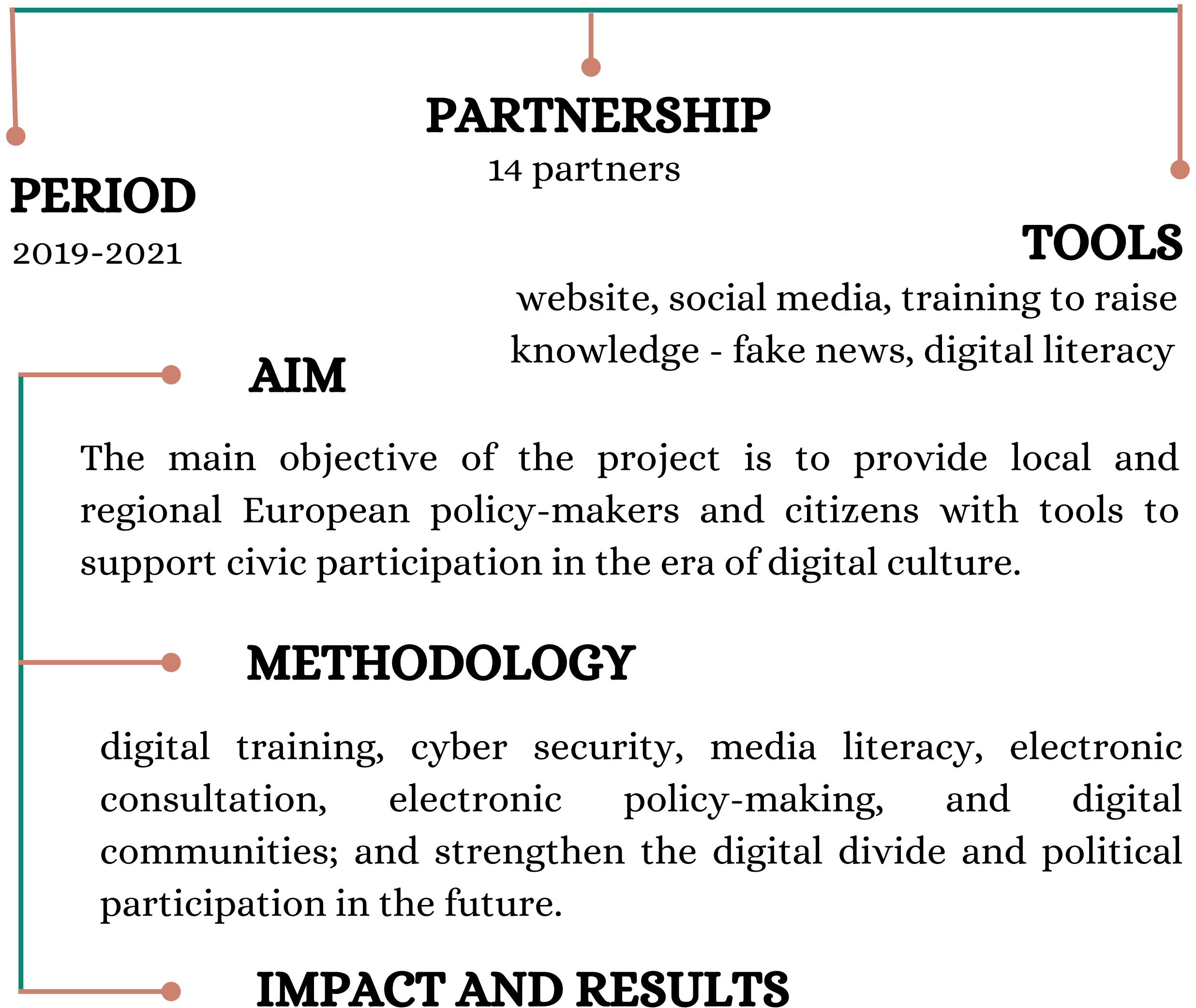


www.europeanacademynet.wixsite.com/home/archive

Bulgarian Centre for Lifelong Learning - Beneficiary

DIGITAL DEMOCRACY

*European Network of Support for the Democratic Union and Active
Citizenship in the Digital Era*



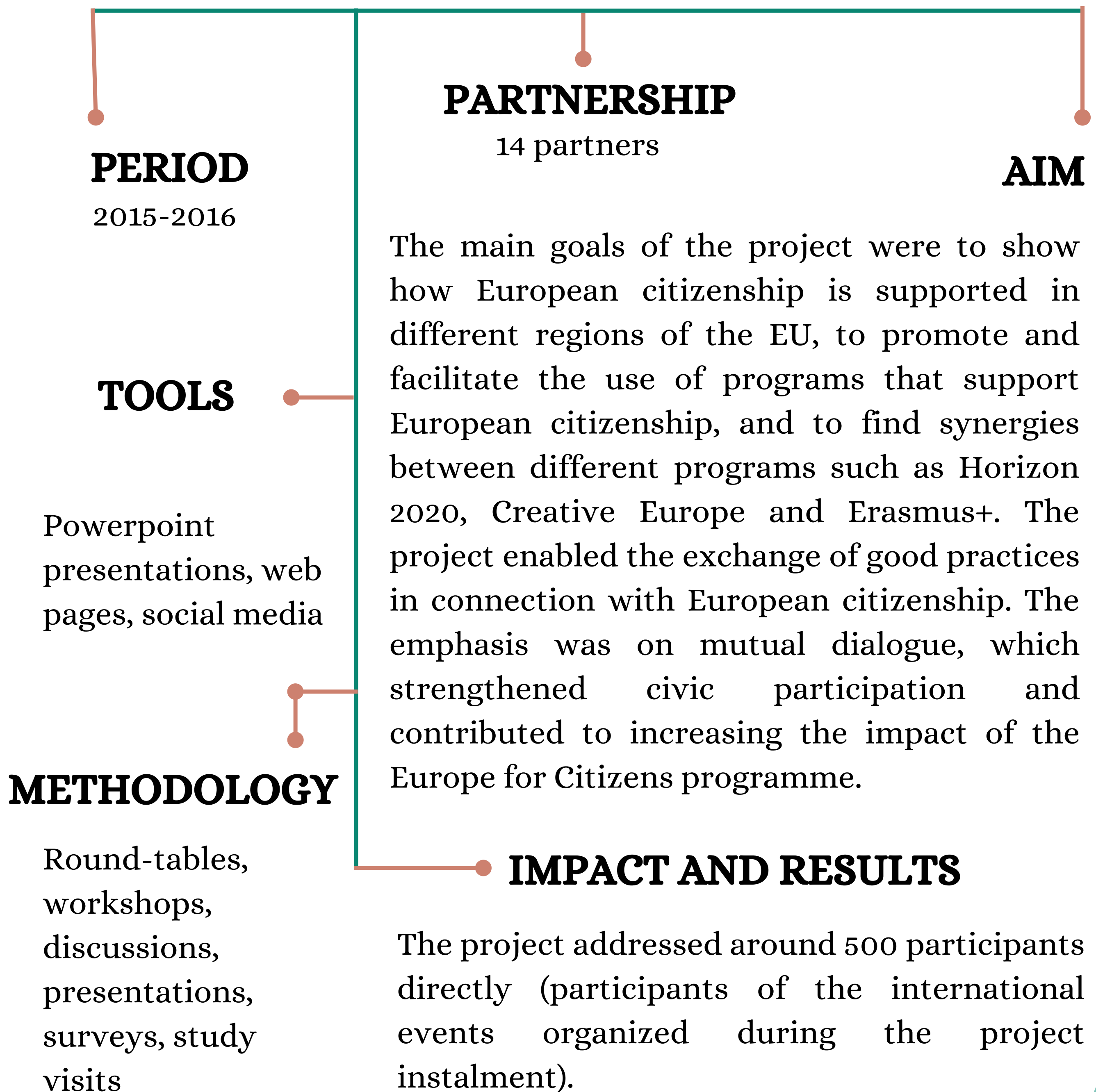
The result of the project activities is an association capable of designing and disseminating guidelines on digital policy design, a puzzle that is missing in the concept of European citizenship.

 <https://www.digitaldemocracy-network.com/>

Federacion de Municipios de Madrid- Beneficiary

ERDEC

European regions developing European citizenship



 <https://www.facebook.com/ERDECproject>

RIC Slovenksa Bistrica- Beneficiary



✦ Successful Stories ✦

Direct testimonies from the participants



Successful stories



Fattoria Pugliese Diffusa APS, Italy

PUNCH: Participation of Underrepresented Citizens for the valorization of the European Cultural Heritage - The strength can be found in the deep reflection the partnership was involved in, with the non-formal methodologies adopted. The Network reflected on the necessity that the EU should grant projects that provide maximum accessibility of the European cultural heritage, be it tangible, intangible, natural and/or digital. And It is referred not only to the accessibility of physical sites (monuments, archeological sites,...), which must always be guaranteed but also to the accessibility of websites and web portals. Most official EU websites are not accessible to people with mild or serious disabilities. Two cases in point, among all: the official website of the “2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage” and the “European Heritage Days” website. Both of them are not accessible to the blind when It would have been enough to insert a "screen reader". More generally, they do not respect the basic rules set in the DIRECTIVE (EU) 2016/2102 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 26 October 2016 on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies. How can we talk about the enhancement of European cultural heritage if the official instruments adopted by the EU itself are discriminatory? How can we ask to disadvantaged people to participate and contribute if we don't guarantee them equal access to fundamental sources of information (one of the founding values of the EU). As a project output, the Network produced recommendations in this sense, which were also shared during the ICOMOS International Council on Monuments and Sites - online experts hearings in 2020.

Successful stories



Municipality of Dabrowa, Poland

The appearance of the Covid-19 virus was certainly a big problem during the project. The online meetings do not fully reflect the possibilities of study visits in a given place. But the PUNCH's strength consisted in building a strong network of new partners.



D'Antilles et D'Ailleurs, France

We only had one project together with some of the partners from the EC-NET project. PUNCH for Martinique was meaningful on the topics addressed and gave the possibility to responsible entrepreneurs and representatives of the public sector to attend mobilities, peer to peers training, and discover new realities considering above all, the limited possibilities of living on an island far away from other realities.



Association of Albanian Municipalities Albania

EC-NET and ECHOES because we took a more active role in both projects. At ECHOES, we had the chance to welcome in Tirana our partners, while also in EC-NET all the project meetings were successful and reached the objectives.

Successful stories



Municipality of Suhindol, Bulgaria

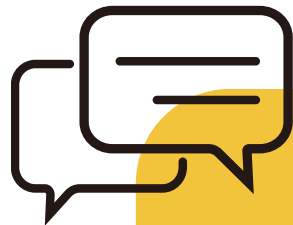
It was really interesting to take part in these projects. The meetings and debates created new partnerships. Were shared initiatives and practices between the partners. The results of both projects encouraged democratic and civic participation by promoting societal and intercultural engagement and volunteering, and integrated minority groups.



LAG, Poland

Both projects (LAGS4EU and ENSURE) were successful because partnerships between organizations have been made, as well as new initiatives and friendships among citizens. With that in mind, the events were organized with plenty of time for formal and informal communication to foster communication and collaboration and to form closer ties among participants. Through presentations, workshops, and site visits partners had the opportunity to introduce themselves and their peculiarities as well as their regions. As a result of the LAGS4EU project, including participants and regions formed a base for partnership and foundations for future joint actions in favor of the development of their own communities, which they confirmed by signing the Cooperation Agreement. 12 out of 18 partners from nine countries included in the project, have signed the Agreement and have committed to continue working together on realization of project's overall and specific aims and promotion of its values and endeavor to make cooperation more permanent.

Successful stories



BCLL, Bulgaria

The Networks of Towns we took part in provided the right context to consider the fundamental question of who is a European citizen and give a good basis to discuss European citizenship as originally understood: an evolving status and aspiration.

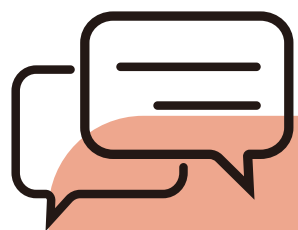


RIC Slovenska Bistrica, Slovenia

The project addressed issues where they are the most burning – in rural and peripheral areas. This is why its topics focused on heritage, Common Agricultural Policy, and food security. The EU Common Agricultural Policy is supposed to serve as one of the factors in favor of Euroidentity on the local level. On the other hand, this policy causes tensions between citizens, farmers, and local and national governments, and it brings up questions of equal treatment and solidarity in Europe. The project deepened reflection on this kind of paradox, by attracting citizens to work on rural-specific aspects as factors that are predictive of a strong support/opposition to European integration.



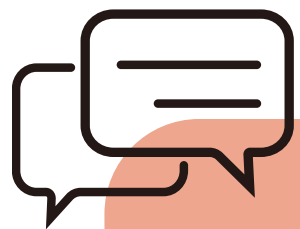
Successful stories



FMM, Spain

DIGITAL DEMOCRACY PROJECT - The most important achievement of the project was that it managed to create a collective space for policymakers and citizens from 15 European countries to: - learn about the implications for democracy of recent technological developments. - allow the participants to gain a better understanding of the EU, as well as the motivation to be more active at the Union level. - produce policy papers on digital transformation. The key topic of "digital democracy" in the EU was thoroughly addressed. In the project, "digital democracy" was understood as the deployment of digital technologies in different sectors of society, but also in reference to digital inclusion, literacy, solidarity, and digital cohesion. According to the evaluation survey we launched among our partners in January 2022, the project's strongest asset was enabling us to really experience what digitalization means. Indeed due to COVID-19, we had to adapt ourselves and therefore learn by doing how to use digital tools. The achievement of the project was to manage to host all planned international and local dissemination events on the topics as planned, with change being: scheduled and working methods. The respondents of the survey underlined that the theme of the project was a strong positive point, as well as the diversity of the partners in terms of country and age of the partners directly involved. These differences gave added value to the project and showed that everyone can (and should) address digitalization. Other strengths of the project, mentioned by the partners, were: the quality of the experts, methodologies for sharing work remotely, and very current content with insights that has a European added value.

Successful stories



FMM, Spain

One of the challenges of the project was the fact that the initial level of knowledge on digitalization was very different from one to another partner. Therefore, we didn't have the same definition of what digitalization means for different local authorities and CSOs in the EU and we had to create build a common understanding of this term. CONTRIBUTION TO POLICY INITIATIVE: During the international meetings, partners shared best practices and the latest developments in European digital policy and with a systematic introduction to the basics of the EU agenda in this regard - strategies, policies, and tools offered by the EU institutions addressing digital developments that are shaping the future of Europe. As the project worked on the priority of understanding and counteracting Euroscepticism, this phenomenon was addressed with a focus on the digital sphere, with all potential challenges digitalization brings such as fake news, disinformation, manipulative content, and using the fact that the older generation of citizens may be lacking digital literacy. As our Italian partner stated: The project had a positive impact on my colleagues in the Municipality of Penne in terms of knowledge of European topics and policies, good practices from other European countries, and ideas for the future. Moreover, the project had a positive impact also among the stakeholders during the local event (journalists, entrepreneurs in the technological field, managers of business accelerators, university professors, and managers of chambers of commerce...) thanks to the results that emerged from the discussion during the event.

Taurisano, Italy 2022

This Toolkit has been realized in the frame of the project
"EC-NET: The European Citizenship Network of Towns"

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