



Europe  
for Citizens

# GOOD PRACTICE FOR GOOD CITIZENSHIP

PROJECTS COORDINATED BY THE BALTIC SEA STATES





*Photo: Karolina Szezur*

## DEAR READER

The European Union is made of its citizens and for its citizens!

For the coming years the union faces a challenging agenda, with serious issues at stake for each member state and its citizens. With issues ranging from economic growth, immigration, security and Europe's role in the world, it is now more important than ever for citizens to take an active part in these discussions and shape the policies of the Union.

The Europe for Citizens programme is dedicated to engage the more than 500 million citizens of the EU to play a greater role in the development of the Union. It is our belief that active involvement in local communities can create a sense of owner-

ship, which will only grow stronger and wider when people share their experiences and work together on a European level.

In this brochure you will find examples of excellent projects with beneficiaries and partners under the Europe for Citizens programme, mainly from the Baltic Sea region. International cooperation is always an enriching experience, and working side by side with your neighbours is a great way of resolving common issues and gain a better understanding of one another.

A prosperous, secure and democratic Europe starts at your own doorstep – be sure to join in!



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

This brochure is issued in co-operation between the Europe for Citizens Contact points of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden.



## WHAT IS THE EUROPE FOR CITIZENS PROGRAMME?

The Europe for Citizens programme encourages citizens to play a stronger role in the development of the EU. Citizens can participate and make their voice heard through a multitude of projects and activities building bridges from the local to the international level. These projects raise awareness of remembrance, common history, the values of the EU and encourages civic participation by developing people's understanding of and involvement in the policy making-process of the EU.

The aims of the Europe for Citizens programme are to:

- Contribute to citizen's understanding of the EU, its history and its diversity; and
- Foster European citizenship and improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at the EU level.



## WHO CAN APPLY?

Non-profit/civil society organizations, local and regional municipalities, educational, cultural, research, survivors' and youth organizations are all welcome to participate.

## WHO DOES WHAT?

Europe for Citizens is implemented by the Executive Agency for Education, Audiovisual and Culture (EACEA) based in Brussels, Belgium.

The European Commission supervises the EACEA's work and is responsible for all tasks implying political choices – notably defining strategies and priorities for action. The Commission shares good practices and results.

Information and consultation is offered by the national Europe for Citizens contacts points in the participating countries.

## WHAT DOES IT SUPPORT?

Arising from the aims of the programme, Europe for Citizens is implemented through action granted in two strands and also through operating grants.

*Photo: Alain Schroeder, EC - Audiovisual Service*

## ACTION GRANTS

STRAND 1: European Remembrance  
– the EU as a Peace project

### 1.1. EUROPEAN REMEMBRANCE

This strand supports initiatives which reflect on the root cause of the totalitarian regimes that blighted Europe's modern history, look at its other defining moments and reference points and consider different historical perspectives.

- Project duration: up to 18 months
- Grant amount: max. 100 000 EUR

STRAND 2: Democratic Engagement and Civic Participation – Getting Citizens Involved

### 2.1. TOWN TWINNING

Projects will bring citizens from twinned towns and municipalities together to debate issues on the European political agenda. They will develop opportunities for societal engagement and volunteering at the EU level. Both existing and new partnerships are encouraged.

- Project duration: up to 21 days
- Grant amount: max. 25 000 EUR

### 2.2. NETWORKS OF TOWNS

Towns and municipalities are encouraged to cooperate with others on a long-term basis to explore particular topics or themes, share resources or interests, gain influence or face common challenges.

- Project duration: up to 24 months
- Grant amount: max. 150 000 EUR

### 2.3. CIVIL SOCIETY PROJECTS

These projects give citizens the opportunity to actually participate in the EU's policy-making process. They stimulate debate to propose practical solutions through cooperation at the European level.

- Projects duration: up to 18 months
- Grant amount: max. 150 000 EUR

## DEADLINES FOR APPLICATIONS

- 1st of February for measures 1.1 and 2.1
- 1st of March for measures 2.2
- 1st of September for measures 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3

## DENMARK

Photo: Rollespilsfabrikken

<b>Measure</b>	1.1 European Remembrance
<b>Project title</b>	Sparks of History
<b>Applicant</b>	Rollespilsfabrikken
<b>Duration</b>	15.09.2017 - 31.12.2018
<b>Partners from Europe for Citizens grant</b>	Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Poland
	100 000 EUR

## LIVE ACTION ROLEPLAYS - ACTIVE LESSONS OF HISTORY

### UNDERSTANDING WORLD WAR I THROUGH IMMERSION AND INTERACTION WITH HISTORY

Sparks of History aims to bring to life the period of World War I in the mind of the participant, through immersion and interaction with history. The partner organizations all have extensive experience in working with larp (Live Action Roleplay), and so this is the main method of the project. Hundreds of young adult participants will engage in grand immersive historical larps, and thousands of primary school students will gain a deeper understanding of Europe at the time of

the First World War. In the process, the participants are involved with the organizers from the partner organizations, in creating a personalized experience that put emphasis on the specific themes they want to explore, while still being part of the larger narrative. The edu-larps are created by experts in the area, from all the involved countries, and through workshops they are play tested with the target group, to make sure they meet the demands and expectations.

## IMPACT

First of all, we produce educational larps, aiming at primary school students. These edu-larps will support the more conventional educational methods and will enable the students to “be part of” this part of European history. When learning through edu-larps, students get high motivation for participation and a deepened understanding of the motivations and causes that lead to the war, and what happened afterwards. Both the major turning points and the consequences for the everyday lives of the populace.

Secondly, we produce two grand immersive larps, where young adults from many different countries participate in the history, life and outlook of Europeans of all classes, ages and genders in the time of WWI. For the duration of these narrative events, each participant

will portray a member of society in the years of the First World War, living and interacting with the political and social changes of that period. After the event they will receive a small token of memorabilia to focus their story and from which they can retell it to friends, colleagues and family.

The actual “playing the larp” is just the visible tip of the iceberg, as participants use many hours to research historical matter and discussing their findings with fellow participants. The goal is to understand the time period as best as possible and transform this knowledge into outlooks, motivations and actions of the characters they are going to portray during the larp.




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## FEEDBACK

*Jesper Kristiansen, project manager*

For us, the program presents an opportunity to work with talented and inspiring organizations in transnational projects that we wouldn't otherwise be able to. It's simultaneously about the concrete events and products in the project, as well as the inspiration and network on a broader scale. It is my assessment that by enabling the organizations to work transnationally, the program fosters growth and evolution of the individual partner organizations, and of course future transnational projects. For a young and evolving cultural movement (such as larp), this is a really important thing! If I were to give advice and recommendations

to future applicants, the first one would be: Do it! The application process of Europe for Citizens is really simple, compared to other EU-programs. If your organization is new to making EU-projects, it is really advisable to start with a project in one of the Europe for Citizens-strands.

Also, consciously design your projects and partnerships in such a way that they last and evolve after the project ends. The learnings and network gained from a transnational project as these are too valuable to not use again.

## GERMANY

Photo: Action Reconciliation Service for Peace

<b>Measure</b>	1.1 European Remembrance
<b>Project title</b>	Oppression and Opposition – Opportunities of civic movements in Europe’s past and presence
<b>Applicant</b>	Action Reconciliation Service for Peace
<b>Duration</b>	01.01.2017 - 30.06.2018
<b>Partners from Europe for Citizens grant</b>	Lithuania, Greece, Italy, Hungary, Netherlands, Belgium, Poland, Great Britain, Czech Republic
	100 000 EUR

## **CIVIC COMMITMENT AGAINST REPRESSIVE REGIMES**

### DEMOCRATIC EFFORTS IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMON EUROPEAN HISTORY

The project addresses opposition and resistance against repressive regimes in the past and present. By considering biographies of people in opposition/resistance movements, similarities and differences of European experiences become apparent and it becomes possible to get to know democratic movements and civic commitment in different countries of Europe. The thematic spectrum contains the time of German NS-occupation as well as forms of protest of liberation move-

ments, e.g. in Hungary 1956. The leading question is the one of how historic movements of resistance/opposition impact on the present and which part they play in remembrance work. Project aims to strengthen the participants’ and local communities’ intercultural competence as well as a transfer of knowledge about different historical narratives through transnational collaboration between the participants. The project addresses the issue of mechanisms that threaten de-



mocracy and participation today as well as motivation to strengthen individual commitment in the civil society.

## IMPACT

In total, 570 citizens directly took part in this project. Participants worked on and shared their perspectives on topics including European integration, EU institutions and the ways European policies affect their lives. They also explored ways of participation in European civic society and EU decision making. Methods of informal education were combined with methods encouraging exchange and discussion, like world café, fish bowl and focused conversations in small group environments.

The methods encouraged interest in the diversity of EU countries and facilitate understanding of citizens' participation in politics and a respectful approach to European values. At the kick-off and closing events several civic society organizations took part in an open discussion

and exchange of ideas and best practices concerning their work, mainly addressing and countering right-wing populism and nationalist/Anti-European sentiment. During the summer camps participants used the opportunity to engage with policy makers from national and European levels. For example in Hungary the group met the former EU parliamentarian and Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Balázs as well as a representative of new Hungarian political party Momentum, recently formed by young people to make an impact in the country's policy making. During the summer camps it became evident that, after an initial informational input on the history and structure of the EU and the history of the host country and utilizing methods to begin engaging the topics, participants were very eager to continue and learn more about these histories and different perspectives and backgrounds of themselves and the other participants. For many it was the first time to have a deeper discussion on what Europe means to them.

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## FEEDBACK

*Adriana Koch, project manager*

The project created many emotional and rewarding engagements. The group of the Hungarian summer camp had the privilege to hear two Holocaust survivors from Budapest talk about their personal stories for the first time, opening up more than 70 years after the deportation and murder of the Hungarian Jews. The son of Greek Holocaust

survivors talked about his family and his own youth in post-war Greece to pupils from several Berlin high school classes. We are glad that this project became a platform for networking and developing future projects and facilitating collaboration between the partner organizations.

## ESTONIA

Photo: Kevin Schmid

<b>Measure</b>	2.1 Town Twinning
<b>Project title</b>	Raising awareness of remembrance, common history and values through long term international cooperation
<b>Applicant</b>	Valga Town Municipality
<b>Duration</b>	26.06.2017 - 30.06.2017
<b>Partners from Europe for Citizens grant</b>	Poland, Belgium, Finland, Latvia
	7 500 EUR

## SHARING COMMON HISTORY FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

### HOW REVOLUTIONS SHAPE EUROPE'S POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL LANDSCAPE

The aim of this international meeting of 7 twin towns from 6 member states of EU was to strengthen ties between the EU members through debates, exchanging views, opinions and experiences on the subject of economy and history.

The topic of the meeting was the social and political revolutions of 1917, the fall of the empires and their impact on Europe's political and historical landscape. Both young and adult participants

from each twinning town took active part in the meeting by presenting prepared presentations concerning EU history and economy.

The presentations encouraged common, European, cooperation actions. Young people by their presentations described their view on mentioned topics and ideas how to go further. Adults' presentations discussed about practical experiences – economic situation before being EU

member and now being in EU.

First and last days of 5-day visit were traveling days. The seminar was held on the second and third day covering various topics: the social and political revolutions of 1917, the fall of empires and their impact on Europe's political and historical landscape; 1957 the treaty of Rome and the beginning of European economic Community; Estonian Republic 100th Anniversary.

On the fourth day the participants attended on 6th Military Festival, where European military history on the last 100 years was introduced and how it had influenced European history and the present.

## IMPACT

Youngsters got the possibility to get introduced to others countries culture, new people and various thematic topics at the seminar. All youngsters were first time in Valga and most of them also in Estonia. They had many new positive emotions regarding the visit.

Before the visit many of the participants were thinking that Valga and Estonia is not so economically and technically developed country, but being in Valga they understood that this is not a case. Brand new county vocational center and free Wi-Fi everywhere gave even stronger chance of mind for them.



## FEEDBACK

*Marika Post, project manager*

This was a good opportunity to investigate and discuss the possibilities to have more EU-funded youth and officials exchanges between our cities in order to learn more

from each other. Such common actions based on experience of EU members will deepen the feeling of partnership and cooperation between participating countries.



*Photo: Valga Town Municipality*



## POLAND



Photo: Niedziela

<b>Measure</b>	2.1 Town Twinning
<b>Project title</b>	European Lublin – Cooperation for Culture
<b>Applicant</b>	City of Lublin
<b>Duration</b>	12.08.2017 - 17.08.2017
<b>Partners from Europe for Citizens grant</b>	France, Germany, Lithuania, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia
	12 000 EUR

## INSPIRATION FROM 700 YEAR LONG HERITAGE LUBLIN 700. THE GRAND JUBILEE

In 2017 Lublin celebrated the Grand Jubilee of 700th anniversary of being granted a charter. The anniversary was an opportunity to redefine city's identity, show its heritage, set new directions, priorities, tasks - also in the context of international cooperation. Lublin's ambition is to link and boost transnational cooperation of Eastern and Western Europe in the fields of social development, education, business and culture – thanks to twin-town partnerships and Centre

for Eastern Competences – a think-tank established by the City of Lublin and the Government of Lubelskie Voivodship to inspire and stimulate efficient and sustainable cross-border cooperation.

The Grand Jubilee was a perfect opportunity to invite partners from Lublin twin towns to celebrate the anniversary and to deepen cooperation in the field of culture. Project promoters took part in series of meetings and discussions on Lublin's flagship cultural projects aimed at



promoting intercultural dialogue and cultural volunteering. Moreover, they took part in workshops on traditional arts of the countries participating in the project and Poland neighboring countries, such as craft, dance, music and how to make it attractive to 21st Century audience; paid visits to Lublin cultural institutions such as Center for the Meeting of Cultures, local theatres, museums to learn about their work.

## IMPACT

The project created space to share good practices and experience in the field of culture, intercultural dialogue and cultural volunteering. Participating twin-towns worked out recommendations and action plan, and set new directions for international cooperation, e.g. through common theatrical and performance projects, music, cultural education, city festivals, preserving cultural heritage and involving local communities in voluntary activities in the field of culture.

## FEEDBACK

*Ewelina Graban, project coordinator*

The project showed we share the same problems, challenges and goals. Despite being of various origins and cultures, we are all citizens of Europe, we share common history and similar experience. Genuine twin town cooperation arises when its citizens meet face to face and get to know each other, discuss issues that matter to them, what they are proud of, what they can share. The project gathered people working in the field of culture. This was important for us as we had not cooperated in this field before the meeting. We managed to define common

needs and areas for cooperation in a long-term perspective.

Thanks to the project we have become not only 'ordinary' representatives of our cultural institutions which entered into official cooperation, but also friends and acquaintances. We are open towards each other and we know we can trust each other – which is a basis of good cooperation. We have gained knowledge and skills we use in everyday work for the benefit of our communities and in further projects. We look forward to continuing the cooperation and we invite you to cooperate with our cities.



## FINLAND

Photo: Karolina Szczer

<b>Measure</b>	2.2 Network of Towns
<b>Project title</b>	Welcome to Europe – 3i: Inclusion, Integration & Internationalisation
<b>Applicant</b>	Kalajoki Municipality
<b>Duration</b>	01.08.2016 - 31.10.2018
<b>Partners from Europe for Citizens grant</b>	Italy, Montenegro, Sweden, Lithuania, Finland
	137 000 EUR

## INCLUSION, INTEGRATION & INTERNATIONALISATION

### LEARNING HOW TO WELCOME NEW MEMBERS INTO DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

The project constitutes the collaboration of 6 partners from 5 different countries spread throughout the European Union, who share a common goal and that is to learn more about how to welcome new members into our diverse range of communities. From this simple premise the project was started. We wished that the project was not to be about immigrants or refugees or asylum seekers by name but to observe the simple reality that we are all part of our communities and our

strength is in how we deal with accepting new members into this community.

The project aimed to share experiences related to the current state of immigration in Europe, whether that be related to long term inclusion of minorities, integration of international workforce or the internationalisation of education systems, the common goal of how we can learn from each other experience and transfer that knowledge was the key.

The results of the project are intended to be used by those organisations and frontline staff who are dealing with the introduction of new members of our communities. From sharing experiences over the 5 seminars we hope that this manual will provide some new information, knowledge and best practices that can be implemented in our regions.

In order to achieve this the project was formed around the 5 main project seminars, with each seminar dealing with a topic that was relevant to that partner but from which other partners could learn from and share experiences. Through sharing our experience we hope to develop our communities to become stronger, open, more prepared and tolerant in the acceptance and establishment of new members into our communities.

## IMPACT

Small changes can make big impacts and this has been the case with the knowledge and information that we have learned through this project. When dealing with welcoming new members into our communities there are many obstacles that a community must overcome related to, housing, health, education just to name a few.

In addition how to prepare the community to be ready for this influx of new members, front line staff, teachers, nurses all need to be made aware of the demands from both sides. The impact will be felt in the interactions of those frontline workers and their attitudes to these demands, sometimes it's as simple as creating awareness of another person's well-being or understanding the difficulties of finding good and relevant information. We need to make changes in our communities and through this project we have found ways and means to do so.

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## FEEDBACK

*William O' Gorman, project manager*

As the lead partner we were unaccustomed to working on such an expansive project and in dealing with such delicate topics but through European cooperation we found a sense of belonging with our partners and we were able to share experiences and practical information to help our community evolve. The greatest knowledge that we have exists within our experiences and through this project we have been able to share and learn new methods and tools to help make our communities more open and tolerant. The lessons that we have learned from our partners can be transferred

to any community whether they are dealing with refugees, asylum seekers or just new members of their communities.

The Europe for Citizens programme has provided us with a great platform for our project and a created a productive atmosphere to help us share our experiences and knowledge. I can't recommend the programme enough and I hope that more communities will apply and take part and create their own projects and initiatives to better their communities and Europe as a whole.





LATVIA

Photo: Han-Peter Clausen

<b>Measure</b>	2.2 Network of Towns
<b>Project title</b>	Gaining experience in the European Union's refugee migration problem issues, case studies and integration tools development
<b>Applicant</b>	Balcansflower Association
<b>Duration</b>	18.07.2016 - 09.05.2017
<b>Partners from Europe for Citizens grant</b>	Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Croatia, Germany Republic
	140 000 EUR

## UNITED FOR INTEGRATION

### LEARNING ABOUT COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND POLITICAL DECISIONS THAT AFFECT REFUGEES

The project was influenced by the current and possible future situation of refugee flows from the Middle East and African countries to Europe countries. The refugee flow, which started unexpectedly with the Syrian war, was unpredictable and massive.

Countries across Europe are currently struggling to integrate people to local cultures. In other words, they were not ready for such changes and historical turns in such a short time. We didn't

want to make the same mistakes and with the help of this project we will be ready for future challenges.

The aim of the project was to learn about the integration of refugees in different countries, also learn about community involvement and political decisions that affect the various issues related to refugees.

In each country involved we visited the refugee centres, organized discussions and conferences involving local politi-



cians, local authorities, NGOs and other stakeholders, while during the Croatian events we also visited Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is composed of approximately equal parts of Muslims, Catholics and Orthodox.

We learned how the representatives of various religious communities cohabit in Sarajevo and Mostar. Balkan Wars were repeatedly mentioned in various events. A representative from Bosnia and Herzegovina, who, as a child, had to flee from Sarajevo when the war began, shared his experience as a refugee.

## IMPACT

The importance of this project should not be underestimated, as it was created and implemented at the right time and it affected respective issues not only in Latvia, but in the whole European Union. The conference in Riga (autumn 2016)

was particularly important, when, for the first time in Latvia, there were organized public discussion on seriousness of the situation, the experience of other countries and the subsequent events.

Very important – this project involved fighting stereotypes and raising public awareness, also educational work and involvement of society. In many of conferences and debates there were discussions on social stereotypes such as: muslim refugee - a potential terrorist; refugees arrive in Europe for a better life in order to live with benefits; reception of refugees is a huge burden for the local economy and it would be better to channel these resources in order to solve any social issues etc.

Almost all of the project partners continue to work on (both local and international) projects related to integration issues.

## FEEDBACK

*Astra Ozola, project manager*

Although the refugee crisis in Europe has diminished and many issues have been resolved and improved, however the obtained experience is very valuable and applicable to other issues related to migration and immigrants. The German experience was especially valuable. The migration process is still ongoing both inside EU, and from third

countries and there is no reason to suppose that this process will stop, therefore we have to continue what we have achieved and we must continue to study these issues, as well as other countries' experience and good practice should be introduced into real life. We definitely look forward to new projects that will help us to stay on track and pave the way for new, positive and innovative ideas.



## LITHUANIA

Photo: MAMN



<b>Measure</b>	2.3 Civil Society Projects
<b>Project title</b>	The Road of the Citizen in the Mirror of History
<b>Applicant</b>	Menu ir mokymo namai (House of Arts and Education)
<b>Duration</b>	01.08.2016 – 29.12.2017
<b>Partners from Europe for Citizens grant</b>	Portugal, Montenegro, Lithuania, Hungary
	117 750 EUR

## A DIALOGUE BETWEEN GENERATIONS RAISING AWARENESS OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS GUARANTEED BY THE EU

The aim of the project was to start a dialogue between generations and to reveal the importance of rights and freedoms guaranteed by the EU, also to compare life in the EU and in former repressive systems, to encourage citizens to be aware of these rights, to spread them and to be ready to defend them.

In the beginning of the project partners met in Vilnius and selected statements from the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union to work with.

In all countries partners interviewed different groups of people: elder people who shared their experience of violation of Human Rights in former repressive regimes, specialists who commented on how these rights are now granted and defended by the EU and young people who shared what it would mean to lose the rights they have. Later project partners learned the method of Forum theatre, which is designed to search for solutions of social problems on stage, together with

the audience. After that public events in all the participating countries were organized. During these events the audience got acquainted with the film, listened to the presentations of specialists talking about the EU and Human Rights and participated in the performance of Forum theatre, which gave the possibility to discuss what should be done when we see violations of the Human Rights. This method also gave opportunity to suggest different solutions to the problem seen in the performance and even to become an actor and to try how this solution would work in practice.

### IMPACT

This project helped to pay attention to the fact that we tend to take our rights for granted and don't even remember how recently we gained them and how easy it is to lose them again.

People also came to public events where they not only saw the film and could find out about the EU and its functions in protecting Human Rights, but also to see the performance of Forum theatre about difficult social situations and various violations of rights. This was the part which was the most emotionally involving for the participants. They discussed what they saw on stage, what problems they recognized, how did they experience them in their own lives. They also gave various suggestions what should be done differently and had opportunity to play this on stage and see how it goes. The main impact was that from passive observers they became active participants of social life. Forum theatre is described as the repetition for the real life, so it is to be expected that this experience also helped participants to become more active and more willing to defend Human Rights in their lives.



### FEEDBACK

*Rimanta Vaičekonytė, project manager*

During and after the project we gathered impressions from all the project participants. In the beginning they were quite scared – they did not know that they will have to be so active and so brave, to get on stage, etc. But the process was rewarding. With each public event the team became more and more like a family and the themes presented and discussed in these events became deeper and more complex all the time. It was easy to work with the Programme, we are very glad that we could always expect understanding, help, cooperation in solving

various questions, both from representatives in Brussels and in Vilnius. The team of our project was also proud to receive the European Award for Citizenship, Security and Defence for this project (organized by the association “Civisme Défense Armées Nation” (CiDAN) together with the European Interparliamentary Security and Defence Association and with the support of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The prize was awarded during the Berlin Security Conference, 2017.



## SWEDEN



Photo: Riksorganisationen Hela Sverige ska leva

<b>Measure</b>	2.3 Civil Society Projects
<b>Project title</b>	Strengthening Participation Among Rural Citizens in Europe (SPARCE)
<b>Applicant</b>	Riksorganisationen Hela Sverige ska leva
<b>Duration</b>	01.08.2016 - 31.01.2018
<b>Partners from</b>	United Kingdom, Poland, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Sweden, Belgium, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, Cyprus, Denmark, Slovenia, United Kingdom, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania
<b>Europe for Citizens grant</b>	150 000 EUR

## UNITED FOR INTEGRATION LEARNING ABOUT COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND POLITICAL DECISIONS THAT AFFECT REFUGEES

The project's aim is to strengthen the participation of rural citizens in the European Union in shaping policies and taking actions for the well-being of rural economies and communities. The project has five elements: Advocacy, at national and European level, of the policy-related elements in the European Rural Manifesto. This includes urging governments and the European Commission to operate in the spirit of partnership between people and governments, with open consultation

to encourage rural citizens to participate. Action to strengthen the European networks behind this application and the national partners to the project; and to widen the outreach of these organisations to rural citizens.

A series of six workshops, each led by partners and each focused on a major theme. Taken together, these themes are at the heart of the action needed to reverse the decline of rural communities



and economies in many rural regions of Europe. Each workshop did assemble rural citizens from many countries for virtual exchanges and then a meeting to resolve how citizens can participate in shaping policy and taking action on such themes as communal action to sustain rural services, enabling young people to find a good life in the countryside, welcoming immigrants and refugees into rural areas, strengthening rural economies etc.

A concluding pan-European event to draw conclusions on how to promote, strengthen, and further extend the participation of rural citizens in shaping policy, and taking action, for the well-being of rural people, both nationally and EU.

### IMPACT

The ERP has grown and consolidated its position as a unique platform and network, linking civil society organisations in 40 European countries, all with extensive membership and reach into rural communities.

The connection and trust that has been built through this work is substantial. Our shared understanding of the rural areas and people of Europe, their issues and needs, is significant. Our work to establish productive relationships and information flow between the European institutions and rural civil society has grown steadily, and the ERP is now very much on the map in the EC.

The vast majority of this work is voluntary, both at the local, national and European levels. That we have been able to develop and sustain such involvement and activity is testimony to the perceived importance of our work by rural people. In recent advocacy meetings with the EC, it was made clear that the ERP network is seen as a unique and very important platform for connecting the EU to rural populations. At national level, most national partners have close relations with their governments, and the impact of the European networking is supporting others to develop such partnership and understanding of the important role of civil society.

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### FEEDBACK

*Lena Husén, project manager*

The Europe for Citizens funding has given the project partners possibility to gain thorough knowledge and give proposals for joint action in some high-priority rural issues (themes) on European level, such as poverty, migration, integrated rural development and also to develop deeper cooperation between

each other. All activities, including the final Pan-European gathering, the 3rd European Rural Parliament, gave the opportunity to strengthen the participation among the rural citizens in partner countries. We are glad to be recognized as not a normal lobbying organisation, but as a voluntary network of rural people.

*Hela Sverige  
ska leva!*

## FIND YOUR NATIONAL CONTACT POINT

For more information about the Europe for Citizens programme, please contact your national Europe for Citizens contact point.

### **LITHUANIA**

Europe for Citizens Contact Point Lithuania  
Lithuanian Culture Institute (LCI)  
Tel. (+370) 61 112 487  
[www.pilieciams.eu](http://www.pilieciams.eu)

### **LATVIA**

Europe for Citizens Contact Point Latvia  
Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia  
Tel. (+371) 67 330 228  
[www.km.gov.lv](http://www.km.gov.lv)

### **ESTONIA**

Europe for Citizens Contact Point Estonia  
National Foundation of Civil Society  
Tel. (+372) 51 33 656  
[www.kysk.ee](http://www.kysk.ee)

### **FINLAND**

Europe for Citizens Contact Point Finland  
Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI)  
Tel. (+358) 29 533 1000  
[www.oph.fi](http://www.oph.fi)

### **SWEDEN**

Europe for Citizens Contact Point Sweden  
Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society  
Tel. (+46) 8 566 219 32  
[www.mucl.se/europa-medborgarna](http://www.mucl.se/europa-medborgarna)

### **DENMARK**

Europe for Citizens Contact Point Denmark  
Agency for Culture and Palaces  
Tel. (+45) 33 74 45 33  
[www.slks.dk](http://www.slks.dk)

### **GERMANY**

Europe for Citizens Contact Point Germany  
Kulturpolitische Gesellschaft e.V.  
Tel. (+49) 22 820 167 29  
[www.kontaktstelle-efbb.de](http://www.kontaktstelle-efbb.de)

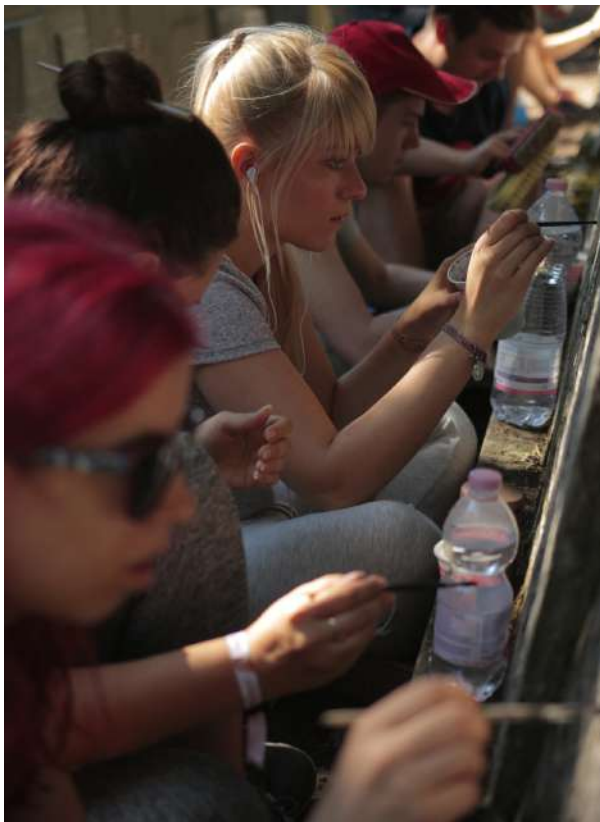
### **POLAND**

Europe for Citizens Contact Point Poland  
Adam Mickiewicz Institute (AMI)  
Tel. (+48) 22 447 61 16  
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