



PROJECT ALL.4.EU: CITIZENS FOR EUROPE!



'Europe for Citizens' Programme

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INTRODUCTION

The need to build the future Europe with the full contribution of its citizens, by promoting their involvement from the local level, has become one of the main priorities of the European Union.

It is a common belief that Europe should promote the participative democracy as one of its characterizing values and should offer to its citizens and to civil society instruments to exchange ideas on the future of the European Union. So, the promotion of trans-national projects, trainings and meetings can undoubtedly contribute to get Europe closer to its citizens.

ALL.4.EU is a project consisting in the setting-up of citizens' panels (groups of ordinary citizens, not spontaneously involved in European issues) in 6 different places and countries in Europe. This specific methodology is used to give the opportunity to people to be involved and play an active role in the construction of Europe and to contribute to bridge the gap between citizens and the European Union.

This challenge of the EU today represents a key priority for all the stakeholders acting both at the local and at the international level, both in the EU Member States and in the pre-accession countries which need to promote the “European Project” among their citizens to develop, from the very beginning, a sense of European identity and of ownership of the European Union.

This is thus a major challenge also for the Region of Istria, which ideally represents a bridge between Europe and pre-accession countries. Through this project, the Region of Istria, lead partner, sought to develop – on the basis of the achievements of the pilot project entitled “Eur-action” implemented by ALDA whose network the Region of Istria belongs to – and to further promote the use of the “citizens’ panels” to assure interaction between citizens and decision makers at all levels, fostering at the same time their active participation in the life of their communities and in Europe.

In partnership with 8 other organisations, namely Balkan Assist Association (Bulgaria), the Centrum Komunitneho Organizovania – CKO and Central and Eastern European Citizen Network (Slovak Republic), the Municipality of Vejle (Denmark), the Association of the Local Democracy Agencies (France), the Local Councils’ Association (Malta), the Consortium for Development of Polesine – CONSVIPO (Italy) and the Foundation for partnership and civil society development, the Region of Istria implemented the project throughout Europe, in old and new EU member states and one pre-accession country. A whole series of events (trainings, workshops, international conferences) took place between March 2009 and November 2010.

This publication aims at presenting the main results achieved by the project, the implemented activities and the partners.



THE PROJECT ALL.4.EU: CITIZENS FOR EUROPE!

Aims and objectives

The project aimed at:

- giving citizens the opportunity to interact and participate in constructing an ever closer Europe, which is democratic and world-oriented, united in and enriched through its cultural diversity, thus developing citizenship of the European Union;
- developing a sense of European identity, based on common values, history and culture;
- fostering a sense of ownership of the European Union among its citizens;
- enhancing mutual understanding between European citizens respecting and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity, while contributing to intercultural dialogue.

The project was supported by the “Europe for Citizens” Programme since it fits with its objectives and priorities. Indeed,

- it gave citizens the opportunity to interact and participate in the construction of an ever closer Europe, by making people from different countries meet to debate on the future Europe, focusing on how to bridge the gaps between Europe and citizens;
- it sought to develop a sense of European identity by giving citizens the opportunity to meet to debate what European identity means, exchanging their history, culture and values in order to foster the understanding of the European project/process they jointly belong to;
- it aimed at strengthening the sense of ownership of the European Union, by promoting local and international activities where the issue of citizens’ participation is tackled at all levels: the present proposal also aimed at promoting an important reflection on the role of citizens and civil society in Europe, focusing on how Europe can get closer to its citizens, and fostering thus their sense of ownership of the European Union;
- it contributed to the intercultural dialogue and aimed at enhancing mutual understanding, by promoting numerous international events where people from many different countries in Europe (including a pre-accession country) - from east to west, from north to south - met to debate and discuss common issues for the future Europe.

The project collected the opinion of European citizens on some key European challenges for the future and consolidated a method for stimulating active interaction and discussion between citizens on certain EU policy areas that affects their daily

life. Moreover, it created mechanisms that enable European citizens to develop civic competences, to formulate their views and opinions on the European integration process in the form of recommendations for policy makers at European level and encourage the dialogue between citizens and the European institutions.

Finally, the project sought, starting from the pilot project “Eur-action” - promoted by ALDA, project partner - to consolidate (thanks to the relevant experience gained) the innovative active methodology of “citizens’ panels” to promote the full involvement of all European citizens in the decision making processes. It aimed indeed at widening the number of citizens’ panels, trying to involve as many countries as possible and offering to citizens the opportunity to gain new information, knowledge, skills and competencies to formulate and submit to local, regional and European decision makers their opinion in the form of recommendations, to be drafted both at the level of local citizens’ panels and at the European level (through the international meeting of citizens’ panels).

Partnership

The partnership of the present proposal has been built involving organizations that are already working on participation issues and have, therefore, a significant background about the topics addressed.

Furthermore, partnerships have been defined according to a geographical criteria, trying to involve partners and participants from Member States which joined the EU before 1 May 2004 – Denmark, France, Italy, Spain – and those which acceded from that date - Bulgaria, Malta, Slovak Republic - including also Croatia as a pre-accession country, “crossing” thus the whole Europe from the west (Spain) to the east (Bulgaria), from the north (Denmark) to the south (Malta).

Finally, in the partnership building process we have also aimed at involving different types of organizations, therefore contributing to “cross-fertilization” between the different stakeholders and promoting a rich and profitable exchange between partners of different nature.

The partners of the present project proposal are:

1. Region of Istria
www.istra-istria.hr
2. ALDA - Association of Local Democracy Agencies
http://alda-europe.eu/alda/front_content.php?idart=1
3. CONSVIPO - Consorzio per lo sviluppo del Polesine, Italy
<http://www.consvipo.it/www1/pagine/index.php>
4. BAA – Balkan Assist Association, Bulgaria
www.balkanassist.bg

5. Vejle Municipality, Denmark
<http://www.consviso.it/www1/pagine/index.php>
6. Foundation for partnership and civil society development, Croatia –
<http://www.civilnodrustvo-istra.hr/index.php?id=68>
7. Local Councils' Association, Malta
<http://www.lca.org.mt/pages/iseMain.asp>
8. Central and Eastern European Citizens Network
www.ceecn.net
9. Center for Community Organizing
<http://cko.sk/index.php?lang=en>

Target groups

The main target group was represented by citizens, especially those who would not have spontaneously participated in projects of a European nature. Local authorities and Civil Society groups were also targeted by the project.

Young people represented a specific and direct target group, and the indirect ones were the whole network of ALDA, involved to promote the creation of “citizens panels” in other countries, local communities in Europe belonging to networks or platforms which partners belong to and National and Regional Governments.

In the different activities (citizens’ panels at local level, international events, final conference, etc.) were directly involved about 1820 persons from more than 8 different countries. Moreover, 5.000 people were involved as indirect beneficiaries of the action.

Qualitative and quantitative impact

Qualitative impact

Considering this as a second step of the previous project entitled “Eur-action”, promoted by ALDA (project partner), the aims of the present proposal were two-fold:

- to consolidate and further develop the methodology of citizens’ panels;
- to widen the area, working in 6 different countries, where to promote the creation of the citizens’ panels as a relevant “tool” in the field of citizens’ participation.

Through achieving these aims, the project contributed to the development of the European policy in the field of citizens’ participation, especially through the recommendations that are submitted to the European decision makers by the citizens’ panels.

More specifically, this project had an impact on the following “items”:

- *Impact on the contribution to the development of the European Policy*: the main impact of the project was related to the development of the European Policy in

the field of active citizenship; citizens' panels were asked, both at local and at the international level (offering thus both a national and a European perspective) to draft recommendations which will support the European decision makers in their legislative and operational action in the specific field addressed (see annex 3).

- *Impact on the target groups:* through this project 18 persons from 6 different countries were trained, acquiring new information, knowledge and skills in the field of active citizenship and contributing, thanks to their “new” role, to develop citizens' panels at the local level: they thus granted a high contribution to the implementation of local policies in the field of citizens' participation, supporting both local authorities and civil society groups involved in the specific field.

The project also had a relevant impact on those who were only indirectly reached: especially through the publication, structured as a methodological tool, a wide number of citizens and civil society organizations will acquire new skills to better participate in the life of the community and to interact within the Institutions of the EU.

- *Impact on the local communities:* the communities involved in the project gained new relevant “resources” to promote and develop citizens' participation. The trained citizens' panels activators, acting at a very local level, gave a significant contribution to civil society organizations and local authorities to develop new and innovative initiatives at the local level and to raise citizens' awareness on active citizenship issues. A particular effort was given to the communication with media in order to promote the citizens' panel methodology.
- *Impact on development/strengthening of networks of cooperation:* this project strengthened the cooperation between partners, belonging to the network of ALDA. Furthermore, the activities fostered the cooperation between civil society organizations and local authorities at the local and regional level, which may lead to the promotion of multiplying actions in the field of active citizenship.

Quantitative impact

The estimated number of individuals and organizations involved in the project are the following:

- Number of individuals participating in the whole project: 1820 (directly involved);
- Number of organizations/institutions involved in the project: 9 directly and about 60 indirectly involved;
- Number of additional people reached by the project (by web pages, final publication and e-tools): 5.000;
- Number of countries involved: 7;
- Number of countries where citizens' panels are established: 6;
- Number of participants involved in the citizens' panels: 1670;

It is important to highlight that the project, both its activities and its main

achievements, was also disseminated through the networks the partners belong to. In particular two main networks were exploited: ALDA and CEECN networks. This granted the possibility to reach a wide number of citizens, civil society organizations and local authorities in more than 20 countries.

Methodology: citizens' panels

Definition and objectives

The ALL.4.EU project was based on a participatory method that aimed at involving citizens in all the different steps of the project. ALL.4.EU citizens' panels were understood as groups of active ordinary citizens, not spontaneously involved in European issues.

The employed methodology was characterized by an active interaction between all the actors involved (citizens, local authorities, EU Institutions, etc.) in order to encourage and support the active participation of citizens and to promote the dialogue between them and the European Institutions. This could be reached through the utilization of the methodology of citizens' panels, to encourage and facilitate interaction and participation: indeed, through the creation of 6 citizens' panels in 6 different countries, the present project aimed at promoting a two-way process between EU Institutions and citizens, encouraging a bottom up approach to allow citizens to express their views and collecting the opinion of citizens on the relevant topic of active European citizenship and citizens' participation.

Understanding of citizens' panel

Each citizens' panel was led by the so called "activators", which had the role of information providers, facilitators, motivators, guide and communicators, building bridges between local authorities, European institutions and involved citizens. They were also resources people, because they used their network to widen the civil participation (see below).

An initial 4 days training for activators of citizens' panels was implemented, and they also attended the international workshop on "Best practices for citizens participation" held in Strasbourg. The last two days of this training were focused on sharing a common understanding of "citizens' panel", defining its characteristics and functioning in order to adopt the same "methodology" in all the communities involved. The partners, thus, with a real bottom-up approach and involving some "leading citizens" defined themselves the understanding of citizens' panels to be created within this proposal at the beginning of the project. An ALL.4.EU Charter of citizens' panels was thus elaborated (see below).

The number of participants in each local citizen panel was between 20 and 80 people, including a wide range of profiles and focusing on the whole spectrum of

society: volunteers, teachers, NGOs representatives, representatives of the sport sector, disadvantaged people, etc., with a special attention to involve young people.

Selection of participants

The participants of the different citizens' panels were selected in two different phases:

1. Selection of "leading citizens"

At the beginning of the project an international training for citizens panels activators was promoted to train reliable, credible and capable activators who are able to set-up citizens panels. The activators were "leading citizens" selected by partners among civil society and local authorities representatives who are already active at the local level, from different walks of life, paying attention to involve leading citizens of different demographic, social and professional background.

Each partner selected 3 "leading citizens" to be trained as activators, with different walks of life, paying attention to grant a gender-balanced representation.

2. Selection of participants of the citizens' panels

Participants of the citizens' panels were selected on voluntary basis; their selection followed two different strategies in order to involve the highest number of citizens with different walks of life:

- through the "activators", who were asked to involve 10 persons each, for a total number of 30 persons for each establishing panel (the participants involved through the activators were mainly local authorities and civil society representatives who had not spontaneously participated in projects of a European nature);
- through an "open call", publishing the event on an extensive basis at the local level, trying to involve at least 40 "ordinary" citizens (the participants involved through the open call were expected to represent "ordinary citizens", with different walks of life, who would not have spontaneously participated in projects of a European nature).

Politicians were involved in the process and in citizens' panels meetings as resource people.

EU institutions representatives were informed and invited to participate both in local and trans-national activities, in order to allow citizens to directly interact with them.

Providing information

Participants received information on the selected theme in different steps and through different strategies.

First of all, during the training, and especially through the international workshop on Best practices for participation, participants got information, employing an interactive approach, on the core issues related to active European citizenship.

Secondly, the present project sought to directly involve the citizens' panels, encouraging a real bottom-up approach, in the selection and collection of relevant, balanced, exhaustive information on the selected theme, especially regarding the selection of the sources of information: a research activity at the local level, aiming at collecting information from below, was thus launched during the event establishing the local citizens' panels. The information collected by the citizens' panels was then shared and discussed both during their international meeting and also during the info-days at the local level (information sharing and providing).

Furthermore, both during the international meeting and the info-days, partners also had a pro-active role – through experts and exchange of practices and experiences – in providing relevant information to participants, paying attention to grant that the different sensitiveness regarding the addressed issue were present.

Opinion building

Through the international meeting of citizens' panels and the info-days at the local level, the project aimed at explaining the methods for guiding the process of building individual and collective opinions and recommendations to be submitted to the European institutions.

Citizens' panels directly promoted and organised the info-days at the local level, involving citizens of the local community on an extensive basis. During this stage, trainers and experts focused on the methods of building individual and collective opinions and on the way to address them to the decisions makers at all levels, especially focusing on the Institutions of the EU. Different methods such as working groups, focus groups and lectures were employed.

The recommendations to be submitted to the European Commission was drafted and finalized, both at the local level and at the international level, during the 7th step, "Production phase", in order to prepare a collective hand-book of recommendations to be presented during the international final workshop.

ALL.4.EU Charter of citizens' panels

1. Definition

ALL.4.EU citizens' panels are understood as group of active ordinary citizens, not spontaneously involved in European issues.

2. Aims

Through a real bottom-up approach and an innovative methodology, ALL.4.EU citizens' panels main objective is to tackle one of the major challenges of the European Union today, i.e. to bridge the gap between the European citizens and the European institutions.

They aim at encouraging citizens' active participation at European level and stimulate dialogue between European citizens and institutions. More specifically, they aim at :

- providing information on key EU issues and challenges to citizens;
- collecting opinions of citizens on those issues;
- exploring new methodologies capable of promoting active interaction;
- creating new mechanisms that allow European citizens to develop civic competences, to formulate their views and opinions on the European integration process in the form of recommendations.

The ultimate aim of the ALL.4.EU citizens' panels is to submit recommendations on the selected theme to EU institutions.

3. Methodology

ALL.4.EU citizens' panels are based on a participatory method which aims at involving citizens in all the different steps of the process. The employed methodology will be characterized by an active interaction between all the actors involved (citizens, local authorities, EU Institutions...), in order to encourage and support the active participation of citizens and to promote the dialogue between them and the Institutions of the EU.

Regular meetings will be organized, with very interactive approaches.

IT methods and Tools, especially the free ones (blogs, facebook, etc) will be also promoted to encourage and facilitate interaction and participation. Media should also be involved.

4. Theme

A thematic approach is needed to better use the potentials of these activities and to assure interaction with decision-makers. The main theme of ALL.4.EU citizens' panels is « citizens' participation », with a special focus on new EU institutional developments (Lisbon treaty, European parliament elections, European policies, etc.)

5. Composition of ALL.4.EU citizens' panels

The expected number of participants involved in each local citizen panel is 40 persons.

The panels should include a wide range of profiles and focus on the whole spectrum of society: volunteers, teachers, NGOs representatives, representatives of the sport sector, disadvantaged people, etc.

Special attention should be paid to involve young people.

6. Selection of participants

Participants of the ALL.4.EU citizens' panels will be selected in two different phases:

a) Selection of « citizens' panels activators »

Citizens panels activators are “leading citizens” selected by partners among civil society and local authorities representatives who are already active at the local level, from different walks of life, paying attention to involve leading citizens of different demographic, social and professional background.

b) Selection of participants of the citizens' panels

Participants of the citizens' panels are selected on voluntary basis; their selection follows two different strategies in order to involve the highest number of citizens with different walks of life:

- through the “activators”, who are asked to involve 10 persons each, for a total number of 30 persons for each establishing panel;
- through an “open call”, publishing the event on an extensive basis at the local level, trying to involve at least 40 “ordinary” citizens.

7. Role of citizens' panels activators

Citizens' panels activators have a key role to play. There are: information providers, facilitators, motivators, bridges between local authorities, European institutions and citizens, guide, communicators, resources people (use their network).

8. Role of partners

Partners of the ALL.4.EU project have a fundamental role to play to support and facilitate the setting-up and the work of the citizens' panels (logistics, advice, etc).

9. Citizens' panels and Politicians

Politicians and elected representatives may be involved in the process and in citizens' panels meetings as resource people. The framework and aims of their interventions and contributions should be clearly defined.

10. Citizens' panels and EU institutions

Representatives from EU institutions shall be informed and invited to participate both in local and transnational activities, in order to allow citizens to directly interact with them.

11. Functioning of the citizens' panels

A neutral place should be found for the meeting: municipalities may provide their meeting rooms for the meeting, educational institutions, NGOs sites. Meetings should preferably take place during the week-ends or in the evening (Tuesday-Thursday) to reach the highest number of people.

12. Transnational activities

Transnational activities are of special importance for the ALL.4.EU citizens' meetings. They represent both an incentive to take part in local activities and an opportunity to exchange views and opinions with other citizens' panels from other countries. It grants a real European dimension to the work of the panels and will allow the drafting of common recommendations to EU institutions.

Structure of the project

The project's action was structured in different steps, having an impact both at the local and at the European level. Following the partnership building phase and the selection of the theme by partners, the process was planned as follows:

1. First Steering Committee

The Steering Committee of the ALL.4.EU project was held in Pula on the 18th March 2009. This was an opportunity for all the partners (from Slovakia, Denmark, Bulgaria, Croatia, Malta, Italy and France) to meet and discuss the methodology and the planned activities.

As the project ALL.4.EU was designed to contribute addressing how to bridge the gap between citizens and the European Union, the partners challenge was to develop - on the basis of the achievements of the pilot project entitled "Eur-action" implemented by ALDA - and to further promote the use of the "citizens' panels" to assure interaction between citizens and decision makers at all levels, fostering at the same time their active participation in the life of their communities and in Europe.



Project partners at the Steering Committee in Pula, Croatia

2. Swot analysis at the local level

March 2009

At the beginning of the project each partner run a SWOT analysis at the local level to assess the situation of citizens' participation in each community involved. This first phase was implemented by partners, in cooperation with local authorities and civil society organizations of each community involved. The main aim of the analysis was to identify, at the local level, the existing practices, tools, models in the field of citizens' participation in order to "profit" of the best practices and to promote synergies between the project and the on-going experiences.

The analysis was run by the representatives of each partner with the technical support of experts of the Association of the Local Democracy Agencies, project partner.

See on page 22 a summary of the SWOT analyses.

3. Training for "citizens panels activators"

Strasbourg, France and Kehl, Germany, 20-24 April 2009

The project partners from 6 different countries were in charge of the supervision of the local activities. To support them, 3 activators for each citizen panel were selected by each partner.

At the beginning of the project an international training for them was promoted to train reliable, credible and capable activators who would be able to set-up citizens' panels. The activators were "leading citizens" selected by partners among civil society and local authorities' representatives who were already active at the local level, from different walks of life, paying attention to involve leading citizens of different demographic, social and professional background.

The training aimed at providing participants the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and competencies concerning:

- knowledge of the concept of "active citizenship" and "active European citizenship";
- knowledge of different tools in the field of active citizenship (including the Europe for citizens Programme);
- understanding of the concept of non-formal education;
- intercultural competences;
- skills to motivate others;
- skills to gather, select and give information;
- skills to present the specific relevant information, ideas and opinions to others, including to the local, regional and European decision makers;
- skills to discover, analyse and adequately address needs;
- skills to draft recommendations and position papers to be addressed to decision makers at all levels.

During the training, the selected theme – “New institutional developments: a new momentum for active European citizenship” – was also presented in details to the participants.



Participants during a visit in Kehl

The training was split in 3 different phases:

1. Phase A: the first two days was focused on training and providing to participants the necessary and adequate information, knowledge, skills and competencies to act as “citizens panels activators” at the local level.
2. Phase B: the third day the programme foresaw the “International workshop: best practices for citizens participation” (see step 2/B).
3. Phase C: the last two days were focused on sharing a common understanding of citizens panel, defining its characteristics and functioning in order to adopt the same “methodology” in all the communities involved; the partners, thus, with a real bottom-up approach and involving some “leading citizens” defined themselves the understanding of citizen panels at the beginning of the project.

4. International workshop: “Best practices in citizens’ participation” Strasbourg, France at the Council of Europe, 22nd April 2009

In the 3rd day of the training for the activators of the citizens’ panels, an International workshop was realised in order to present and exchange the different models and the best practices (i.e. citizens panels, civic forums, civic committees, etc.) in the field of citizens’ participation. The main aim of the workshop was to provide to participants of the training (in the middle of the training) – and to the other external participants – the

opportunity to get acquainted with the existing models of direct and indirect citizens' participation at European level, and to know the best experiences and practices, in order to help them to define the characteristics and the functioning of their new citizens' panels (task foresaw in the last two days of the training):

The international workshop also aimed at:

- presenting the whole proposal to the general public and to the main stakeholders, especially focusing on the innovative participatory methods proposed;
- promoting the action, especially through media on an extensive basis, involving local, national and international "channels".



Partners in front of the Council of Europe

There were about 50 participants (representatives of the different partners; experienced citizens' panels representatives involved in the previous pilot project "Eur-action" promoted by ALDA; participants of the training, selected by partners at the first stage among the already active civil society groups and local authorities at the local level; local authorities representatives; journalists and media; experts from the Council of Europe).

5. Set-up of local citizens' panels

May-June 2009

At the local level, each partner promoted a one day event, focusing on the selected theme, with the aims to present the project and its methodology in order to select the participants of the new citizens' panels to be established.

The main aims of the event were:

- to encourage the participation at the local level;

- to raise awareness about the importance of actively participating in the construction of Europe;
- to provide first relevant information on the topic to be addressed;
- to launch the citizens panels building process, presenting their mission to be carried out both at the local and at the European level;
- to present the “tasks” of citizens’ panels, focusing in particular on the research to be developed at the local level.

The events were run by experts who used an interactive approach and IT methods and tools and they were promoted by the “citizens panels activators” trained at the beginning of the project, in strict cooperation with all project partners. There were from 30 to 80 participants to each event.

6. International meeting of citizens’ panels

Sofia, Bulgaria, 7th and 8th July 2009

On the 7th and 8th July 2009, representatives from the different citizens’ panels and Bulgarian participants met in Sofia in order to present the first results of the panels’ work and to elaborate common opinions and recommendations through the constitution of a trans-national citizens’ panel. This International meeting granted the European level, a fundamental characteristic of the project.

The meeting was held in the middle of the implementation of the action considering that:

- at the local level, citizens’ panels had already been set up and had already experienced some activities (i.e. the research on the selected theme);
- until the end of the project there was still time to “transfer” to the local level the achievements and the outcomes (ideas and best practices) of the international meeting of citizens’ panels.

The meeting aimed at:

- exchanging the information collected through the research carried out at the local level; exchanging ideas, practices and experiences related to the citizens’ panels; setting up a trans-national citizens’ panel;
- developing partnerships among citizens’ panels; drafting common “position papers” to be submitted to European decision makers; coordinating common activities-outputs among partners (i.e. websites, communication issues, etc.).

There were about 30 participants. During the international meeting 3 working groups were created about different topics related to citizens’ participation: Participation of youth, Mechanisms – how to be an active EU citizen and How to communicate the EU and the following conclusions were brought:



International meeting in Sofia at the Delegation of the European Commission to Bulgaria

Participation of youth

The target group would be the group from 15 to 18 years of age. This group is the obvious choice in an active participation. Considering the target's age, the group concluded that the main way to get a message through to them, is by using following media: Internet, sport activities and events, E-platforms like Facebook/Twitter, games, music, 'in school' activities.

In order to develop citizens' participation among youth the following possibilities were suggested:

- a. Setting up a permanent group of All.4.EU youth activators;
- b. Obligatory involvement of young people/youth activators in all EU projects as a qualifier for acceptance of a project;
- c. Lower the rate of co-financing and open for more funding possibilities in projects that promote the youth's active participation in their society on a local, national and European level.

Mechanisms – how to be an active EU citizen

- a. Citizens of EU should be able to vote for new treaties in EU at transnational referendums where the population is asked. The majority of the given votes in the whole of EU are decisive for the result. Citizens vote for specific changes in the treaty. There is to be no quorum.
- b. Citizen's initiatives – a 1.000.000 signatures from EU citizens can suggest a new law/policy/decision to the commission – The Citizen's Initiative should be introduced now - not wait for the Lisbon Treaty. Signatures from all member states – a minimum percentage of signatures from each country.

- c. The EU-ombudsman is a very important institution in EU and it should be developed. Information concerning the ombudsman should be increased. Create a better network and synergy between the national ombudsman and the EU-ombudsman to insure the rights of each citizen at each level.
- d. Avoid that the citizens lose the connection with their member of the European Parliament. Oblige the EP-members to go back to their own country once a year and give a report of their activities and results – give the citizens a possibility to ask questions in a face-face meeting (open meeting) with their member of parliament. The MP must also publish their report, budget and working calendar on their webpage.
- e. Permanent Citizen's Panel – There should be established a permanent transnational citizen's panel that meets every ½ year. The subject of the meetings should be different themes (i.e. climate, sport, youth, health, Senior Policy). For each meeting there should be participants from the different EU-countries. This will ensure continuous transnational activity and continuity.

Working Group on Communication/Information

Awareness:

- a. Raise more awareness about the different EU-projects and campaigns through TV, Radio ads. Making people more aware of the many different projects that EU supports. This method will make people more aware of the work that the EU-commission is involved in.
- b. Develop spot-activities such as – EU-quiz arrangements, EU-information on buses, trains etc. EU-info clips in cinemas/MTV etc.

These different sorts of activities will in the same way as the first one, able the European citizens to get a better understanding of the more practical work that EU does and they will thereby see what they economic contribution are being used for.

- a. Raise more awareness about the different cultural programs through a more intense and focused campaign towards different education institutions. This will able both the education institutions and the younger people to get a better understanding of the European institutions and the other cultures in EU.

Communication:

- a. Develop better communication through electronic means – facebook, internet, especially towards young people. By using the new electronic communication tools there are available now, the EU-commission will have better chance to get access to the younger segment.
- b. Few countries wanted more regular local meetings between the population and the elected MPs. This will give the citizens the possibility to get closer to their elected MP.
- c. An assessment of the different EU-webpage – so they can become more easily

to access for people. The current structure of the different EU-webpage can, for many, be difficult to navigate. It's therefore important that they are made easier for people.

- d. Permanent EU-corners in libraries, cities, different public houses or tourist centres. These will allow the public to get information, if they have any question about EU. It can also come inform of an EU-info stand in large retail shops where there can be handed out info-material.
- e. Transmission of the EU-parliaments sessions on national TV channel. This idea will give the public the possibility to see the parliament at work. And thereby bring them closer to the people.

7. Info-days at the local level

Partners' countries, September - October 2009

At the local level, each citizens' panel, in strict cooperation with the local partner, promoted a 3-days workshop structured as follows:

1. Day 1: presenting the results of the local research and of the outcomes of the international meeting (information sharing) and providing information through experts and meetings with relevant stakeholders (information providing).
2. Day 2: production and drafting of recommendations on the topic addressed to be submitted to decision makers at the European level (opinion building)
3. Day 3: open public event, addressed to the whole community, fostering the participation of local authorities and civil society representatives to communicate the results to local and regional decision makers (interaction with local and regional decision makers)

The main aim of the local workshops were to share and provide information to the citizens, to provide them new knowledge, skills and competencies to better interact with local and regional decision makers, with the European Institutions as "ordinary" citizens, and thus to better play the role of active European citizens.

During the workshops, trainers and experts focused on the methods of building individual and collective opinions and on the way to address them to the decisions makers at all levels, especially focusing on the Institutions of the EU.

8. International final conference

Pula, Croatia, 4th November 2009

At the end of the project, an International final conference ("Development of European active citizenship through the citizens' panels methodology") was held in Pula, Croatia, on the 4th of November 2009 in order to:

- submit a set of recommendations on the topic addressed by the project, drafted by citizens' panels, to the European Commission (see annex 1);
- present the final results of the project and promote its outcomes;

- present to relevant international stakeholders (including local and regional authorities and representatives of EU Institutions) the citizens' panels as relevant "actors" in the field of European citizenship;
- increase the visibility of the action;
- draft a follow-up of the action, directly involving partners, citizens' panels and main stakeholders;
- strengthen the trans-national cooperation among citizens' panels.

The final conference, which was promoted and organized with the direct involvement of citizens' panels – in cooperation with project partners - in all its phases, mainly focused on the submission of the recommendations to European decision makers.



Partners at the final conference

There were about 50 participants: project partners, representatives of citizens' panels, "ordinary" citizens, local authorities, civil society groups, local and regional decision makers, journalists and media, experts.

As conclusion of the final conference in Pula, an evaluation meeting, final Steering Committee was also organised in order to evaluate the whole proposal and to draft the follow-up of the action.

The project and its working materials are presented on two web pages:

http://alda-europe.eu/alda/front_content.php?idcat=231

<http://www.ceecn.net/otheractivities/216-all4eu-citizens-for-europe.html>

THE SWOT ANALYSIS ABOUT CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION IN THE PARTNERS' COUNTRIES

At the beginning of the project each partner run a SWOT analysis at the local level to assess the situation of citizens' participation in each community involved. The main aim of this analysis was to identify existing practices, tools and models in the field of citizens' participation in order to profit of the best practices, to spread them and to promote synergies between the project and the on-going experiences.

These are the common characteristics noticed comparing the six countries' SWOT analysis.

Strengths

- A lot of Civil Society Associations and NGOs, which develop numerous social activities, are composed by citizens and supported by local administrations;
- Many tools on relevant EU topics are developed toward citizens to make the EU closer to them, to know the activities of the administrations and to give them some sustainable democratic competences (newsletters, radio, T.V., projects' database, ...);
- There was the presence of numerous stakeholders from social and political world.

Weaknesses

- Limited capacity to actively involve the citizens in the ordinary and political local life;
- Lack of adequate skills and competences in structuring and addressing citizens opinions and ideas to decision makers at all levels;
- Insufficient confidence of citizens in the institutions;
- Scant knowledge and limited interest of the citizens of the structure, the system, the management, the policies and the available opportunities to participate in the social life at local and European level;
- High fragmentation of the civil society associations and insufficient attention by the citizens toward their activities;
- Difficulty to find the required funds for the setting-up of local activities.

Opportunities

- Show to the citizens the administrative management of the administration both at local and at European level;

- Increase in the citizens the responsibility and the interest toward the active citizenship, the institutions and their policies for a further democratic development of the world-oriented European Union;
- European and Administrative elections (where there were);
- Enhance communication and cooperation between citizens, local stakeholders and local and European institutions.

Threats

- The world financial crisis that menaces further the local institutions and the principal stakeholders that work in the different territory and finance the activities, as such as the citizens, who might not be interested and active in civil society and voluntary work associations;
- The growth of the progressive distance among citizens and local institutions;
- The rising of the distance between citizens and active citizenship and participation in local associations, European bodies and civil society organizations.

THE RESULTS OF THE CITIZEN'S PANELS

The Croatian citizens' panel:

“Youth activism in Istria on the way to the EU”

CROATIA	EVENT	DATE
	Set up of the Croatian citizens' panel: Youth activism in Istria on the way to the EU	3. 5. 2009
	1 st Croatian Info day	18.9.2009
	2 nd Croatian Info day	13.10.2009

For the citizens' panel in Croatia a circle planned open discussion methodology was adopted to present the Europe for Citizens Programme and raise the awareness about the importance of citizens' active participation in local, national and European decision building process. The theme of Youth Activism in Istria on the way to the EU was discussed local and regional authorities' representatives, civil society and NGOs representatives, Youth Council and Youth associations' representatives, students and common citizens.

The panel discussion had several conclusion points:

- There aren't enough established strategic local/regional self-government communication channels where citizens could express their wishes, suggestions and opinions, so therefore it is not surprising to have such an expressed scepticism, particularly of young people towards EU, when they are left alone by themselves on all levels, not trying to actively being engaged in processes of decision-making;
- Apart a general lack of an effective and interactive institutional communication network with citizens and the lack of culture of listening and respect the voice of youth, in those rare communities and civil cases where initiatives are not marginalized, often happens that young people don't know how to present their own goals on a public debate level, so it is most important to teach the young population in order to represent their ideas and arguments to the local authorities and compete to other political initiatives;
- Recently the Croatian law prescribed the establishment of Youth Councils in all municipalities and cities in Croatia, what is actually very good. But the bad thing is that for those units which did not establish it until the deadline (which was the beginning of 2009, so already expired), the law doesn't provide any forms of sanctions, and are therefore only few Istrian towns and municipalities that met this legal obligation. It is considered that introducing specific financial sanctions for the delay of the Youth Council establishment would be an effective measure for those local units that don't respect the issue and the citizens' interest;
- When speaking about the existing, already created Youth Councils, it should be said that not all are equally active in their work. Some were originally established and that later not longer met, in part because young members don't know their roles and tasks in these tips, and because their local government has not explained them what should they do. It is necessary to enable young people to act in local communities;
- Surely the young people should get familiar with the structure of local, regional, national and European government, because they often get the impression that these great government machines facilities and jobs are reserved only for few selected citizens, what is wrong and in itself a bad influence on the general desire of young people to get involved in civic initiatives. We should work on the role of governments as potential partners rather than opponents.

After the open panel discussion meeting in Pazin, activators wanted to continue the discussion in a written way, by opening an e-mail address (panel.rasprava@gmail.com) so that everyone, those who subscribed the presence list in Pazin and also those who could not be there, could write transparently their opinion, experience and suggestions to the others using the "reply to all" button. This written method was applied with the aim to get more active participants, tips and conclusions for the

International meeting in Sofia, but despite the made efforts and urges for feedbacks nobody replied.

The Info Day 1 was held with the purpose to gather people who daily work with the young population in different ways, as for example high school teachers, youth organizations leaders and local self-government bodies and institutions representatives; to put together their best practices and define an applicable methodology for approaching the youngest and help them to communicate their interests, opinions and points of view. At first, all present speakers agreed to review the social, political and economic context in which young people in Istria live. In Croatia, as a transition country, there's a process of a clear social stratification, where the starting positions of young people are significantly unequal in terms of wider social and family socialization, educational achievement, occupational status, life style and aspiration, political orientation and behavioural patterns. It is a population of age 15 to 30, which differ in the degree of maturity as well as in formal rights that the society recognizes them. Although the law recognizes by being of age all the civil rights, the socio-political parallel is going on self-inertia and repression of young people from decision-making. The later taking of permanent social roles and the exclusion or lack of involvement of youth in economic, political and social processes has resulted in poor social integration of the young generation. On the social marginalization young people react in different ways: from the unproblematic and self-adjusting resignation to the given society, through the distancing from the „older dominated“ society in a kind of enclosure with sub cultural forms of life, to the questioning of actual existing social values and open rebellion or by developing delinquent behaviour. Young people are considered as a resource and a kind of social capital “whose time is yet to come” and for which we must ensure the conditions for development, while simultaneously there are encouraging programs of “fight against youth” problems such as drug addiction, vandalism, violence, promiscuity ...

Starting from the fact that Croatia has a youth policy which is very close to the EU youth policy, but it isn't enforced in practice, the most important is that the adopted youth policies and strategies are going to be actually applied, mainly through programs that include youth participation. It was already stressed out at the citizens' panel in Pazin and also at the Info Days that through creating a new variety of programs for young people the European Union should continue to encourage the development of youth activism in non-members states like Croatia.

The lack of tradition of citizen participation in building a democratic society is reflected on youth social and political involvement. The current status is marked as follows:

- political indifference of young people and their reluctance to work in the sphere of civil society and public policy. Young people don't believe that participation is important and that their own actions can affect decision-making, and therefore

are not included in discussions of social interest and do not participate in making these important decisions. Youth organizations are often passive and not familiar with the law proscribed possibilities of involvement in democratic decision-making processes. And when they engage, their work is often sporadic and limited to short-term campaigns with less-developed strategies and therefore with no significant impact. All mentioned results in bad positioning of youth organizations and the marginalization of their work.

- mutual distrust, as from youngs to the political system and government institutions, same from political institutions and society to young people. As a reason for the low presence of young people on leading positions there's the fact that the older don't want to leave their seats. The employment process emphasizes the principle of seniority and party merits. Young people get opportunities to work only on less power positions.
- lack of an effective two-way communication between young people and decision makers on local and county level, and their marginalization in the creation of the youth policy. Due to the lack of democratic culture in citizen participation, a structured dialogue is not being implemented to ensure the effective contribution of young people in policy formation. Young people miss the opportunity to become agents of political decision making, which leads to loss of initiative and creativity, to their alienation from politics and reduced interest in participating in the community.

From the above mentioned, the Region of Istria and the Foundation for the promotion of partnerships and the development of civil society, both have a big challenge ahead in the insistence on changing public awareness on the importance of active youth participation and on opening the social and political space for their efforts.

The Bulgarian citizens' panel: "Europe for citizens: Promotion of Active European Citizenship"

BULGARIA	EVENT	DATE
	Set up of the Bulgarian Citizens' Panel: The forthcoming EU elections - possibilities and perspectives for the Bulgarians in the EU Policy Making Processes	14. 5. 2009
	1st Bulgarian Info day	13. 10. 2009
	2nd Bulgarian Info day	15. 10. 2009
	3rd Bulgarian Info day	19. 10. 2009

The Bulgarian citizens' panel aimed to raise the awareness about the importance of active participation in the construction of Europe by getting know the concrete rights of being a EU citizen, by clarifying the way in which the big EU "machine" works, by suggesting ways of finding partners in EU and by giving ideas of where and how to search for funding for citizens' initiatives.

Two round tables were held, one in northern and the other in the southern part of Bulgaria, for especially those citizens who would not have spontaneously participated in projects of a European nature, for people of different demographic, social and professional backgrounds, also young people, local authorities and civil society. Despite the pre-election period in Bulgaria, when both the citizens' panels were held, the local authorities supported the initiative and the media were curious to here all key aspects of the European citizenship discussed. Cause a lack of long-lasting tradition in citizen participation and the presence of the general economic crisis, citizens were more interested in their incomes than in participation. Here are some of the comments:

- "Europe means money";
- "The European language is not understandable. What do agenda, cohesion or beneficiary mean?";
- "The government always says that 'Brussels' want us to do something. When shall we start insisting 'Brussels' to do something for us?".

One of the impacts at the local level is that authorities started to open themselves for citizens and a lot of registered NGOs have set citizen participation as their priority. Good practices and examples have been achieved both in the municipal centre (a big city) and in smaller communities in the surrounding villages. Community centres (the so called "chitalishta", which are unique public bodies in Bulgaria) have found their new role as places for public initiatives, especially in the villages, where there is no other form of organized citizen activities. Ethnic minorities as well as people with disabilities have their representatives in the local government bodies.



Bulgaria Citizens' panel

So on of this citizens panel, the participation at the local level was encouraged, good examples and positive experience have to be multiplied; local regulations and programs concerning citizen participation have to be implemented (or changed in order to be effective); authorities must be more active and transparent, in sense that they can continue initiating projects and campaigns but after careful surveys and/or definition of all interested parties; authorities should establish funds for supporting citizen participation activities and NGO projects; a formal register of local NGOs should be established in order that activities in NGO sector can be transparent and shared by many interested parties; business activities supporting citizen campaigns might be fiscally stimulated; as well media should be more involved as a partner of citizens' initiatives, both in the municipal centre and in the villages.

As a logical follow-up, participants from the citizens panels in Stara Zagora and Pleven were all invited to share their impressions from the panel at the 1st info day and meeting in Sofia. The 2nd info day, also in Sofia, was a discussion forum on the basis of the reflections from the two panel meetings and the 1st info day. Recommendations were discussed for fostering the interaction between local, national and European authorities, and the possibilities for improvement of national and transnational transparency and efficiency in policy-making. The 3rd info day was round table in Stara Zagora that gathered representatives from the local authority (mayors and regional governors) and national MPs, with the participation also of Mr. Zhivko Todorov, Head of the Standing Delegation of BG in PACE. Here were made recommendations for introducing education on citizen participation in schools; recommendations for amendments in the law for direct citizens' participation in state and local government. Two of the MPs took the obligation to enter into force the aforementioned amendments.

The Slovak citizens' panel: "Europe for us, we for Europe"

SLOVAKIA	EVENT	DATE
	Set up of the Slovak Citizens' Panel: Europe for us, we for Europe	26.5.2009
	Students Info days at local level	5.10.2009
	Info days at local level	9.-11.10.2009

The Slovakian citizens' panel "Europe for us, we for Europe" was held in Zvolen with the presentation of the All.4.EU project and the interactive model of the citizens' panel to citizens of different age groups and backgrounds, students and young people. Relevant information on the topic was provided empowering small groups of activators. The citizens panel aims were the development of tactics to gain citizens

opinion about EU and EU issues, to develop and inform citizens about EU issues of citizens' interest, to disseminate useful information in most appropriate ways, to identify good practices and tactics to communicate with citizens about EU and finding ways to influence the European policy. The panel aimed to increase the interest especially among young people who have the will to cooperate in future and participate on European Parliament elections. Despite the doubt at the beginning of preparation of the panel about the willingness of citizens to participate, organizers and activators had been positively surprised about the final number of participants and the quality of the discussion. Very positive was also the plan of activators for others events, like the info days and the quiz at secondary schools.

The Center for Community Organizing (CCO) established a "planning group" consisting from CCO staff, activators, and active citizens to plan the info days activities. For the first and second info day, they decided to involve students from local secondary schools and university. Students and active citizens were previously trained and informed about the main aims of the ALL.4.EU project. They trained their communication skills to talk with people on the street and help them get involved into the panel discussion. Students also decided to have special events (presentations and discussions) with students at secondary schools and university. Students themselves, with the support of the CCO and the Civic Initiative of Zvolen, organized the Student Info day. Participating students (age of 17-19) took the "EU quiz" with questions about the EU, EU institutions and local government. The best 2-3 students from each school met the Governor of the Banská Bystrica Self - Governing Region and other representatives.

The 1st info day was organized to help citizens gain an additional knowledge and understanding of European Union and have their feedback on it. Some of the discussed issues are:

- EU main institutions, role and responsibilities;
- National Parliament vs. European Parliament;
- Influence of EU on our daily life;
- Work and study opportunities in Europe.

The info day working group developed info leaflets with information related to the above mentioned topics and decided to disseminate them during the next info days. All collected information and outputs were used for preparing policy recommendations to be sent to Slovakian Members of the European Parliament.

The working group organized also the 3-days Info event focused to provide information about the All.4.EU project, but mainly to present results of the local project activities. Participants of the 1st info day were invited to take part of the 2nd two days lasting event. The first day activities have been designed for the purpose to attract most people. Activators prepared 4 round tables for discussion to discuss on above mentioned topics and then draft recommendations. Local politicians and

city representatives were also invited. The event was designed for all the family and organizers prepared sport and cultural activities for young children, teenagers and older family members. The activities of the second day had the form of a public meeting and discussion with local authorities, local and regional decision makers and civil society representatives to communicate them drafted recommendations.

The Danish citizen’s panels: “EU-citizens’ panel – ALL.4.EU”

DENMARK	EVENT	DATE
	Set up of the Danish Citizens’ Panel - 1 st meeting	28.5.2009
	Set up of the Danish Citizens’ Panel - 2 nd meeting	11.6.2009
	1 st Danish Info day	30.9.2009
	2 nd Danish Info day	7.10.2009
	3 rd Danish Info day	21.10.2009

The Danish citizens’ event aimed to reach as many people as possible and from as different target groups as possible in order to make the citizens’ panel representative of the population in Vejle. The citizens’ debate was marked by diversity, it gathered different groups of population, with their different opinions and walks of life, to discuss on various topics.

Through the use of the Open Space Methodology and an Asset Based Approach to the participants, the goal was to make participants the “owners” of the citizens’ panel as quickly as possible, to let the citizens’ understand that ALL.4.EU was their project, and that Vejle Municipality function mostly was only to facilitate the process. The outcome of the first meeting was that the participants agreed on a number of topics that they wanted to discuss on a second meeting. A discussion was started already on the first evening.

At the second meeting there were fewer participants coming than to the first meeting. The debates in Denmark in general were characterized by lack of interest in the EU after the elections. Participants were engaged and they had a very good discussion. The meeting was held in a conference facility at Vejle Business College and a participant from the citizen panel was involved to present the result of the international citizens’ panel in Sofia.

Here are some of the suggested activities from both Danish citizens’ panels:

- All activities using a common denominator (i.e. ALL.4.EU) - to give a solid branding
- EU Course of study:
 - A 6 months study to secure knowledge about EU
 - Involvement of ‘professional’ EU persons

- A certifying course
- At the end of the course (and included in the study plan) a visit to Brussels
- Permanent 'EU-corner' in libraries
- EU - booth in larger retail shops - presentation materials handed out
- EU - program on local TV channel
- "Open house" arrangement by the EU parliament
- Continuous transnational activities:
 - Different themes chosen every ½ year on transnational meetings
 - Themes could be sports, transnational panel meetings etc.
 - Educational activities using already existing EU bodies (Comenius etc.)
 - Local panel persons join according to interest
- Spot activities such as:
 - Quiz arrangements (reward visit to EU)
 - EU information on buses, trains
 - EU video clips in cinemas/MTV
 - Provocative campaigns on "make your point on EU"
- Obligatory EU projects in secondary school
- "Granny/Grandpa for EU"

The project has showed that there is a great interest among many of Vejle Municipality's different education institutions and organisations to participate in projects where the goal is to get people more involved in the public debate about the EU and local democracy. But at the same time, the result has showed that many "ordinary" citizens in Vejle, still have no real interest in participating in a project like ALL.4.EU, and that is why one of the main target groups were the younger people. This was also reflected in the debate and in the results from the citizens' panels two meetings. Many of the discussed subjects were about how to encourage people to participate, especially through teaching and information.

As follow-up actions, the organizers will get in touch with different educational institutions in Vejle Municipality involved in a higher degree. It is their hope that since they are now past the EU-election more EU-experts and EU-politicians will be able to attend the next meetings. In the long run Vejle Municipality wishes to continue the work with the All.4.EU citizens' panel by expanding the number of participants in the citizens' panel, focusing especially on recruiting young people and seniors. The intention is not only to bridge the gap between the citizens and EU and its institutions/decision-makers, but also between the young and older generations. Vejle Municipality has already established contact with several educational institutions in the city in order to involve their students and teachers in the activities. It already started contacting the different senior organisations and societies and invites their members to participate.

The implementation of the ALL.4.EU's citizens' panel in Vejle has so far resulted in the creation of a valuable network. They have reached a number of people who would not normally engage by themselves in EU-related debates, and they have succeeded in drawing the media's attention to the citizen's panel.

The info days activities in the Municipality of Vejle consisted mainly of a mix of power-point presentations by the partners in the project or by citizens, and on workshops based on a mix of brainstorming and the Open Space Methodology (OSM). Through the brainstorming method and OSM the participants were able to be active and discuss in both larger and smaller groups and to reach a result there can be finalized.

The aim of the Info days activities was to present the results from the intentional meeting in Sofia for the general public and the relevant stakeholders, and elaborate on, to discuss and add to these results.

For the first two info-days they invited three different experts to talk about democracy, active citizenship on a local, national and European level, and on Danish and European values and identities.

Christel Schaldemose (Member of the European Parliament) talked on the first meeting about the importance of an active citizenship, and on how citizens can get more influence on the decision making-processes in the EU. She also focused on explaining in which ways the EU and the decisions made in the EU is relevant for every Danish citizen in their every-day lives, and on how the Lisbon treaty is opening for new and better opportunities for citizens to get more influence in the EU.

Rami Panduro Zouzou (from the Democracy office under the Ministry of Integration) talked at both meetings of why it is so important to be an active citizen, to take an active part in our society and in the democratic processes and foras.

Finally, Tino Boubaris from the VNB (Verein Niedersächsischer Bildungsinitiativen) spoke on the second meeting about what are the European values and what are European identities seen both from a Danish and an European perspective. Tino Boubaris was able to give a more academic insight into the different aspects of an active European citizenship and the different European values, whereas Rami Panduro Zouzou could give a more "hands-on" presentation of why it is so important to get involved in the society. Christel Schaldemose has a unique insight into the EU-system, which enabled her to make the European institutions and the decision-making processes in the EU more concrete to the participants. The purpose with the three expert's presentation was to give the participants the opportunity to get a better understanding of the concept of active citizenship and democratic values on a local and European level.

The first info day meeting was held in a public building in Vejle and has had about 20 participants. Goals, aims and results of the ALL.4.EU project were presented with the presentations of ALDA, of the EU-Commission and of the Region Istria,

together with an introduction of other partners. Participants were informed about the results from the international meeting in Sofia. A workshop was structured, based on the Open Space Methodology, where the participants were given the general discussion-theme of the meeting and a “write-together” of the results from the international meeting in Sofia, as the inspiration/basis for their own discussion. After the discussion they summarized together in plenum what had been discussed in the working-groups.

The second info day meeting was held at Balle Musik-& Idrætsefterskole. There were about 10 participants. A four hours introduction to the history of the EU, the member-states, the ideas and values of the EU, the European institutions and the work of the EU was given to the students and their teachers one week before the 2nd info day meeting. This proved to be a very good idea, as it quickly turned that both, students and teachers in general, had a very low understanding of the EU and its institutions. After the presentation of the project and its aims two experts were invited to talk and inspire the participants. They also took part in the workshop afterwards. The idea of having the speakers was to inspire the participants and give them the tools and skills to contribute to a qualified debate about democracy, identity and values on a European and national level, active citizenship etc... The result that came out of the workshop showed that many of the topics and ideas discussed in Sofia were very relevant for the participants in Vejle, and the participants also contributed with new ideas and valuable inputs.

The third day presentation included a presentation of the project; what is the purpose of the project. There was evaluated how the project was implemented in Vejle and what was its success for local participants. Participants were called to come up with ideas on how project’s results could be used in Vejle, and how to maintain and strengthen the good energy, the network and the collaboration between the different participants.

The Maltese citizens’ panel

MALTA	EVENT	DATE
	Set up of the Maltese citizens’ panel	30. 5. 2009
	1 st Maltese Info day	5. 9. 2009
	2 nd Maltese Info day	9. 9. 2009
	3 rd Maltese Info day	19. 9. 2009

The Maltese citizens’ panel aimed to introduce the ALL.4.EU project and to disseminate information regarding EU funding programmes, such as Youth

Programme and Europe for Citizens Programme. The citizens' panel was designed for local councils and civil society representatives, youth clubs and associations, students and housewives.

The discussed themes were the following:

- Easier access to information;
- Cut-off of unnecessary paperwork and bureaucracy;
- The role of the media;
- The use of renewable energies;
- EU Ombudsman: how to contact him?

During the panel meeting participants questioned on:

- How can NGO's participate in an EU funded project?
- How can schools and students get involved?
- How can a citizen complain about an environmental issue within the EU institutions?
- Air pollution. What is the EU doing about it?
- Are there projects for people over the age of 30 years old?
- What about the pensioners? Can they participate in an EU project?

Panel activators addressed the participants on a number of the questions raised. They also gave useful information regarding the Youth in Action Program and the Europe for Citizenship Program. All the participants said that they felt the need of such a project as they felt that they were given an opportunity to express their concerns and doubts regarding the European Union in general.

As a follow-up the Local Councils' Association conducted a research activity at a local level in order to prepare itself for the international meeting held in Sofia. The research activity focused mainly on the issues rose during the open panel discussion. Panel results were presented during the Open Days.

The info days were held in Bugibba, Balzan and Luqa.

The 1st, Bugibba info day had about 150 participants among local councils and civil society representatives, youth clubs, associations and students, who discussed about:

- The issue of identity. We feel Maltese, European or Mediterranean?
- Illegal immigration. What is the EU doing to help?
- Equality: Are we treated the same as any other EU member?
- How can we change the mentality of people towards the EU?
- How can the Local Council's help to change such mentality?
- What are the opportunities for Local Councils?
- How can the "ordinary people" participate in the EU?
- EU Parliament election: Why so low a turnout across Europe?
- The issue of the diversity in between how young and old people see the EU

- Culture and Heritage
- The need of trained people to manage the EU programmes, both on a local and national level
- Less bureaucracy
- The issue of Climate Change
- Environment
- What can we give rather than take from the EU?



1st Info day in Bugibba, Malta

At the 2nd, Balzan info day the ALL.4.EU project was presented to the media at the press conference.

About 200 participants of the 3rd info day in Luqa attended several experts' presentations on active citizenship:

- Presentation by Mr Mauro Pace Parascandolo, National Co-ordinator European Union Programmes Agency (EUPA);
- Presentation by Mrs Maria Schembri, Head Funding Unit, Malta – EU Steering & Action Committee (MEUSAC)M;
- Presentation by Mrs Anna Grech, Youth Worker;
- Speech by Labour MP Hon. Stefan Buontempo, Shadow Minister for the Local Government;
- Speech by Hon. Chris Said, Permanent Secretary for Public Dialogue and Information.

The Italian citizens' panel: "Citizens for Europe: To promote an active citizenship"

ITALY	EVENT	DATE
	Set up of the Italian Citizens' Panel: Citizens for Europe: How to promote an active citizenship	11.6.2009
	Meeting: Research activity at local level and preparation of the international meeting	25.6.2009
	1st Italian Info day Info day - Citizens' for Europe	25.9.2009
	2nd Italian Info day Info day - Citizens' for Europe	2.10.2009
	3rd Italian Info day Info day - Citizens' for Europe	8.10.2009
	Conference: Citizens' for Europe - Promote an active citizenship and local democracy	16.10.2009

The Italian citizens' panel was tasked to show the overall ALL.4.EU project objectives and activities; to present to the local population three trained citizens' panels activators with their future activities; to develop the sense of active citizenship by involving common citizens into the project, creating a citizens' panel in the province of Rovigo as the basis for future activities. The panel target group consists of common citizens of the province of Rovigo, schools, institutions, civil society organizations and young people.

To define the local activities and the setting-up of the citizens' panel and info days, there have been five meetings among CONSVIPO and panel activators, also a questionnaire has been developed by three activators and CONSVIPO. The aim of the questionnaire was to gather knowledge, information and interest that the citizens have about European Institutions and European Policies. Questionnaires have been distributed in three municipalities where the three activators live, as follows: Municipality of Rovigo: front office of the municipality; youth policies office; senior citizens office; volunteer centre; library; front office of the Province of Rovigo; loans office of the Province of Rovigo; secondary schools; Municipality of Polesella, Municipality of Taglio di Po, and the municipalities of Arquà Polesine, Ceregnano and Bosaro.

The three activators have also distributed and collected more questionnaires in

some secondary schools too.

A total of 621 questionnaires have been collected, 59 of them with errors. The sample investigation was represented by 562 questionnaires.

The common citizens and the young people that have attended the citizens' panel have been involved by the network "Informagiovani", the network among CONSVIPO, municipalities and institutions, the network of civil society organizations and the schools of the province.

The citizens' panel event has been promoted through press conferences, articles, web-site dissemination, flyers, open call and posters. During the meeting, authorities and many experts have intervened in the discussion and the activators realized three working groups with the main questionnaires voted topics:

1. Culture, education and learning by Laura Frigeri
2. Economy and work, Youth policies by Mattia Braghin
3. Security and immigration by Leonardo Raito

Each group has given a definition of participation and active citizenship, has defined possible tools to increase it and stimulate relationships among citizens and institutions. The citizens not interested in working groups' activities have participated to a laboratory when through a questionnaire they have understood which "kind of Europe" they prefer. After the panel meeting the results and implemented activities have been promoted and disseminated by newspapers and internet.

The main outcome produced is the analysis developed by the questionnaire. Thanks to this analysis the organizers could understand what citizens of the province of Rovigo think and know about the European Union, of its institutions and politics. Another important output is the results of the panels' working groups coordinated by the three activators. Thanks to the citizens' panel, citizens, institutions and associations of civil society got familiar with the ALL.4.EU project and all the purposed activities.

The principal follow-up of the citizens' panel was the meeting "The active citizens", developed by CONSVIPO at "Museo dei Grandi Fiumi" Rovigo.

CONSVIPO has organized three different info-days events in three different schools in the City of Rovigo. During these events students, teachers and common citizens interacted with the local decision makers that took part by presenting their proposals and understandings about the functioning of the public administrations. Common citizens asked the decision makers to define laws more closer to people needs.



Set up of the Italian Citizens' panel

The first info day, organized at the secondary school I.I.S. "E. De Amicis", had around 100 people between common citizens, students and teachers. The second info day, organized at the secondary school I.T.G. "A. Bernini", had around 80 people; and the third info day, at the secondary school IPSIA, had around 50 people. All the participants received a folder with information about the project, the EU and the CONSVIPO.

The info days were organized as conferences in which participants could have a direct dialogue with the speakers. During the debate they proposed and promoted initiatives for the territory and for their schools. Local politicians, members of CONSVIPO, experts of the municipalities involved, others experts in the field of the European Programming (Youth European Parliament), students and teachers involved in EU projects, were all together participating the info days meetings. In their interventions they spoke about the importance of the European Union for the growth of the single member countries and the importance of the EU Program for the development of an active European citizenship and for the creation of a common sense of Europe. On the meetings experts of CONSVIPO and the three citizens' activators stressed the ALL.4.EU project to the participants. The activators shared their own experience as active members of the project, their difficulties and the importance of knowledge of foreign languages for travelling, working and living in Europe.

GENERAL COMMENTS AND CONCLUSION

To bridge the gap between citizens and EU institutions and to increase citizens' participation in the EU of the 21st century it is fundamental to spread the awareness on what EU actually is and on what EU actually do or can do for and with its citizens. It is important to communicate through more "easy" examples of how the EU is something of great relevance for every European citizen in its everyday-life, and that the EU is not only something that is happening in Brussels and Strasbourg between statesmen and bureaucrats.

Trans-national meetings, European projects and mobility through education and work, students and staff exchanges are key factors to build European identity and to encourage EU citizenship to being aware of their position and straightness.

To constantly and duly inform the citizenship and communicate the ongoing projects and opportunities, the availability of information can be reached through:

- Permanent "EU-corner" in libraries, public houses, tourist centres, etc.
- EU-info stands in larger retail-shops/handing out of info-material
- A "Make Up Your Mind" campaign – Not persuasion, but information
- Spot-activities (EU-Quiz arrangements where the reward is a visit to an EU-institution, EU-info on buses, trains etc., EU-info in cinemas, movies, television (MTV))

The quality of information provision has also to be improved and granted, because there is still a gap between the information required by citizens and the ones provided by the EU institutions. That is why it is necessary to raise the visibility of responsibilities of information provisions and enhancing the role of local authorities as intermediary between EU institutions and citizens as well as the role of the media (local and national) in dealing with EU information.

To gain this goal and to better approach citizens to the EU institutions, these tools can be utilized:

- Courses on EU for beginners – "EU for Dummies" – given at libraries, Open University, Evening Schools involving lectures, historians, civil servants, EU-experts, politicians and ordinary citizens who have experienced the influence of the EU on their own lives
- Visits to the EU-institutions (Strasbourg, Brussels, Copenhagen)
- Regular meetings with the EU-parliamentarians, between officials and ordinary citizens
- "Open doors" initiatives
- Participation of EU officials at local and trans-national meetings organized within projects such as ALL.4.EU

In particular, for the younger people:

- Emphasis on obligatory EU-projects in the Secondary Schools
- More information and activities in the already existing EU-programs (Comenius, Erasmus, Nordplus, Grundvig etc.)
- Include the EU in curricula
- Develop languages courses (English but not only)
- Develop informal learning in schools
- Schools programme about active citizenships
- Face to Face meetings – meet the young people where they are
- Interactive education with focus on the EU
- Games about the EU (role-play, games for PS2/PS3)
- Target and educate the teachers (multipliers)

In conclusion, citizens' and NGOs' initiatives have to be fostered and bolstered, according to the Lisbon Treaty, so improving their capacity building and developing links between them and European network.

The aims achieved by the present project are indeed developing and consolidating - on the basis of the pilot project implemented by ALDA in 2006 and 2007 – the “tool” and the methodology of the citizens panels, adding some steps which may grant a stronger impact and better results. Citizens' panels, actually, give a more flexible structure to the communication between citizens and EU institutions, also giving an important role of mediator to local authorities, which provide space and forum for debates, conferences, public presentations and discussions.

Secondly, the project sought to widen the number of partners and the number of countries where to establish “citizens' panels” in order to create the basis for a relevant and significant European platform of citizens' panels.

Finally, taking into consideration the new institutional developments at the European level and the difficulties the European Union is facing nowadays in the relation with its citizens, the present project adopted a thematic approach focused to generate discussion and deliver citizens reflection on citizens' participation and active European citizenship.

Annex I

Final recommendations on

How to bridge the gap between citizens and EU institutions and to increase citizens' participation in the EU of the 21st century

1. Make the EU relevant.

- To bridge the distance between the citizens of the EU and the EU's institutions and decision-makers, communicate, through more "easy" examples of how the EU is something of great relevance for every citizen in the EU in their everyday-lives, and that the EU is not only something that is happening in Brussels and Strasbourg between statesmen and bureaucrats.

2. Importance of transnational meetings, European projects and mobility to build European identity

- build up a bridge between EU institutions and citizens, « old » and « new » EU member countries through European projects
- encourage EU citizenship through education and work, students and staff exchanges
- simplify procedures for projects and to facilitate mobility (cut off paper work)

3. EU-information and communication

Availability of information

- Permanent "EU-corner" in libraires, public houses, tourist centres etc.
- EU-info stands in larger retail-shops/handing out of info-material
- A "Make Up Your Mind" campaign – Not persuasion, but information.
- Spot-activities (EU-Quiz arrangements where the reward is a visit to an EU-institution, EU-info on buses, trains etc., EU-info in cinemas, movies, television (MTV))

Quality of information provision

- suitability or appropriateness of information provided: there is a gap between information required by citizens and information provided by the EU institutions
Sometimes it is not a problem of quantity of information but appropriateness/matching citizens' demand
- visibility of responsibilities of information provision
- role of the local authorities as intermediary between EU institutions and citizens

- role of the medias (local, national) in dealing with EU information

4. EU-courses and arrangements

- Courses on EU for beginners – “EU for Dummies” – given at libraries, Open University, Evening Schools involving lectures, historians, civil servants, EU-experts, politicians and ordinary citizens who have experienced the influence of the EU on their own lives.
- Include visits to the EU-institutions (Strasbourg, Brussels, Copenhagen)
- Regular meetings with the EU-parliamentarians, between officials and ordinary citizens
- “Open doors” initiatives
- participation of EU officials at local and transnational meetings organized within projects such as ALL.4.EU

5. Target the Young and the educational system

- Emphasis on obligatory EU-projects in the Secondary Schools
- More information and activities in the already existing EU-programs (Comenius, Erasmus, Nordplus, Grundvig etc.)
- Include the EU in curricula
- Develop languages courses (English but not only)
- develop informal learning in schools
- Schools programme about active citizenships
- Face to Face meetings – meet the young people where they are
- Interactive education with focus on the EU
- Games about the EU (role-play, games for PS2/PS3)
- Target and educate the teachers (multipliers)

6. Target the Seniors – Seniors EUnited

- Permanent forum (Senior Citizen’s Panel) for seniors in the EU. Regularly, transnational meetings on different themes.
- Promote understanding, learning and tolerance as the seniors are an important, but often overseen target group. If we can accomplish to engage the seniors to in an active citizenship in the EU, their engagement will have a spillover effect on the younger generations

7. The functioning of the “EU-system”

- Not national, but transnational voting on important matters (e.g. treaties and climate) - makes it possible to have a choice of the best solution, not a national solution.
- Give the citizens a direct responsibility – empower the citizens
- Transform the EU from a politician’s project to a civil project
- Electronic voting – make it easier to vote

8. Spread information about the role of the Ombudsman (local, national, European ombudsmen)

9. Citizens’ initiative (Lisbon Treaty)

- Enable citizens and NGOs to launch and conduct citizens’ initiatives so that it is not just an additional tool
- Capacity building for/ structuring of the NGO sector, develop links between local NGOs and European network
- Register of good-working NGOs

10. Citizens’ panels

- Give a more flexible structure
- Role of local authorities to provide space/ forum for debate

This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of the Region of Istria and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

“The European Union is made up of 27 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms.

The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders”.

