

## EUROPEAN ACADEMY NETWORK

ENCOURAGING DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION AT EU LEVEL

**A set of practical tools and recommendations  
from a network of towns  
from 13 European countries.**



## Content:

Introduction .....	3
European Academy Network	
Europe for Citizens Programme	
Chapter 1 .....	5
Participatory methods used in EAN's international events	
Chapter 2 .....	24
Good practices from partners and testimonials	

## INTRODUCTION

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### European Academy Network and Europe for Citizens

#### PROJECT AIMS

The “European Academy Network. Encouraging democratic participation at EU level” (in short: EAN) was a project implemented in the years 2020-2022 thanks to the funding and support from the Europe for Citizens Programme. The project aimed to provide European local and regional policy makers, associations and citizens with tools that will support their informed civic and political participation at EU level.

EAN connected 14 towns and organisations from 13 countries across Europe who were willing to participate in a series of international events where they took part in various **policy training modules** (simulation games, workshops, discussions) which allowed them to better understand procedures and standards that constitute the European Union and the fundamentals of active European citizenship. The Network also collected good practices on how local policy makers and citizens can “approach Europe” and participate in its making. In the final evaluation conducted in May 2022, over 93% participants said that the project has impacted their understanding of the EU, its diversity and values to a good or a very good extent. The project created opportunities for mutual understanding, intercultural learning, solidarity, societal engagement and volunteering at Union level in partner municipalities and at the EU level.

As a result of our work, the partners created this publication titled “**European Academy Network Toolkit - Encouraging democratic participation at EU level**”, which contains a set of practical tools and recommendations from the EAN as a network of towns representing 13 European countries. You as a reader of this Toolkit and an activist, public officer or a policy maker in your local community, have a chance to get inspired by the variety of these methods. EAN partners would like to share their work and thoughts with a wider public, hoping to support the next initiatives and policies in the EU.

## PROJECT PARTNERS

The success of EAN as a network of towns lay in the variety of its partners who together represented 14 entities from 13 European countries, 8 of them were local public bodies, and 6 Civil Society Organisations. The European Academy Network engaged representatives, volunteers, policy makers and experts, which makes this partnership interesting, diverse and enriching.

### **Credits for this Toolkit and all project results go to:**

The Municipality of Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria - the project coordinator  
Bulgarian Centre for LL, Bulgaria  
ECIT Foundation, Belgium  
Institute of the Regions of Europe, Austria  
Agencija za ruralni razvoj Zadarske županije, Croatia  
Szodliget Municipality, Hungary  
La Palma del Condado Municipality, Spain  
Občina Benedikt, Slovenia  
Soveria Mannelli, Italy  
Local Action Group „Dolina rzeki Grabi“, Poland  
Social Innovation Centre, Latvia  
Luqa City Council, Malta  
Municipality of Torres Novas, Portugal  
Municipality of Kolasin, Montenegro

## EUROPE FOR CITIZENS

The project would not have been possible without the funding and support of the Europe for Citizens Programme (EfC), which was implemented with a total budget of €187,718,000 for 2014-20. The general aim of the Programme was to contribute to citizens' understanding of the EU, its history and diversity and to encourage the democratic participation of citizens at EU level.

Networks of Towns belong to the second theme of the Programme. Networks of Towns encourage local and regional authorities, supported by NGOs to cooperate with each other on a long term basis in order to explore particular topics or themes, share resources or interests, gain influence or face common challenges.

General objectives of the Europe for Citizens Programme targeted by EAN:

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

To this regard, EAN united diverse people across cultures through cooperation and exchange.

Specific aims of the Programme targeted by the EAN:

- Encourage democratic and civic participation of citizens at Union level, by developing citizens' understanding of the Union policy making-process and promoting opportunities for societal and intercultural engagement and volunteering at Union level.

To this regard, EAN as a grassroots project, brought citizens closer to the EU.

The priority of the Programme targeted by the project: debating the future of Europe and challenging Euroscepticism.

[Read more about Europe for Citizens:](#)

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/justice-and-consumers/justice-and-consumers-funding-tenders/funding-programmes/previous-programmes-2014-2020/europe-citizens-efc\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/justice-and-consumers/justice-and-consumers-funding-tenders/funding-programmes/previous-programmes-2014-2020/europe-citizens-efc_en)

[Read more about the successor of the EfC Programme - the new Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme:](#)

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/programmes/cerv>

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/justice-and-consumers/justice-and-consumers-funding-tenders\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/justice-and-consumers/justice-and-consumers-funding-tenders_en)

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## CHAPTER 1

### Participatory methods used in EAN's international events

All in all, there were five international events organized within the project in years 2020-2022, in situ and hybrid (ie. combining in situ and online). Each of the events gathered representatives of all the 14 partners as well as local and international public: delegates of municipalities and regions, NGOs, universities and schools, social and cultural centers, students, youths and adults. The international events are followed by local dissemination activities: simulation games, debates, lectures, workshops in most of the countries involved in the project. We would like to briefly present the international events in order to show how the facilitation of active European citizenship was tackled by the project. Each event is followed by a description of reviewed methods and approaches applied by EAN which facilitate European civic education and engagement in shaping the EU bottom-up.

#### EVENT 1

##### Veliko Tarnovo, September 2020

##### **"European democracy and its impact on you, your town and your country"**

Participation: The event involved 78 citizens.

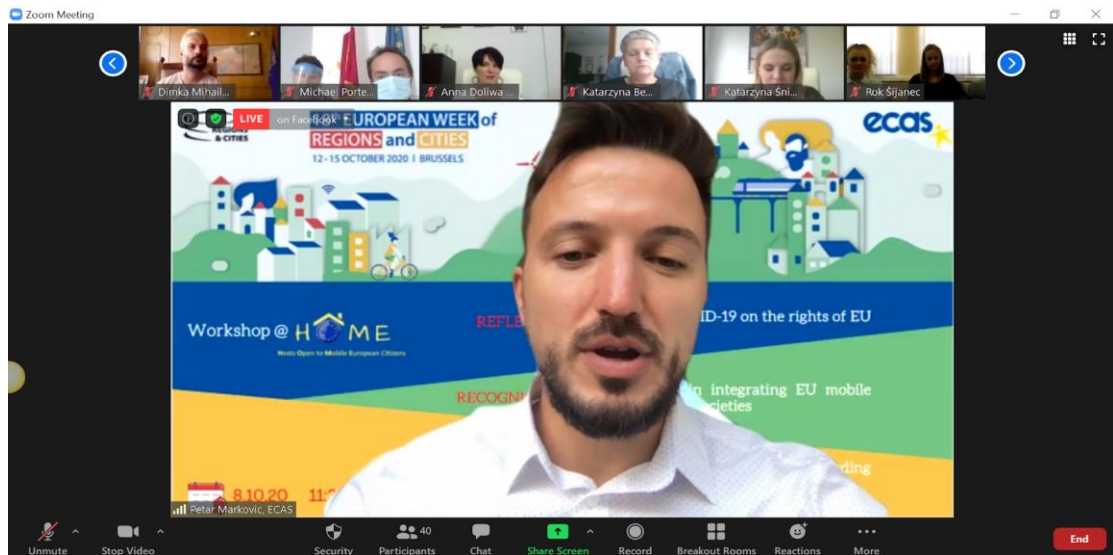
Location and dates: The event took place in Veliko Tarnovo (Bulgaria) and online from 28/09/2020 to 30/09/2020.

Host: Municipality of Veliko Tarnovo.

Short description: The aim of the event was to kick off the project, and to build a better understanding of the relationship between the European democracy framework and culture, society and politics in a personal, local and national dimension. The event was enriched by a simulation of the proceedings of the European Parliament, which will be described in detail.



Hosts of the first international project event in Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria in September 2020.



One of the speakers of the event - Dr. Petar Markovic, EU Citizens' Rights Training Coordinator, European Citizens Action Service.

## Simulation games in civic education

Simulation games are a very suitable tool in civic education projects, because they:

- are interactive, thus put all participants into an active role and help to bring a group together
- mean a very intense experience due to active and emotional involvement
- are usually remembered for a long time as a joint memory and thus transmits insights in a very sustainable way

In the context of teaching and reflecting democracy, they address all three relevant aspects:

- knowledge (about democratic procedures and institutions)
- democratic skills (such as listening, assessing information, showing empathy to others, assessing situations, identifying conflicting and aligned interest, developing political strategies, speaking, negotiating, convincing others)
- democratic attitude (fairness, respect for other positions and for procedures)

Part of each simulation is a reflection on the following three aspects:

- Roles – who did what for which reasons? How were developments driven by different personalities, different interests or different perceptions? How was it to act on behalf of somebody else?
- Procedures – how were things done and why? Which periods shaped results, the big formal sessions or informal meetings? How do the procedures used affect the chances of everybody involved, how do they insure an outcome, under which conditions are they considered fair?
- Result – what was actually decided? Was that outcome predictable or surprising? Could it be implemented? Would “real politicians” probably take a similar decision? If so, why? If not, why not? Would the participants acting according to own convictions achieve a similar result?

Ideally, simulations take place physically. Only then participants experience stress, disagreements, controversies but also mutual understanding and common success



with all their senses. However, simulations can also be done digitally via video conferencing. Here we limit the number of participants, the duration and the information to be assessed in order to keep up concentration and transmit the essential.

### **Simulation of the European Parliament**

(conducted for the European Academy Network in autumn 2020 in cooperation with Polyspektiv)

#### **Preparations of a simulation session in a hybrid format**

- It is important that every participant has a computer or a tablet with camera and microphone (we don't recommend mobile phones as the screen is so small that it is hard to see everybody in the simulated Parliament).
- There should be at least 12 participants. There should be a minimum of 2, better 3 people in each team (each political group). The conservatives should be the biggest, if there is enough possibility to differentiate the socialists should be the 2nd biggest group, to reflect the actual distribution of seats in the EP.
- The participants should receive the role papers in advance so that they can read the text and find a piece of clothes / an object in the color corresponding with their political group.

#### **Structural Information**

- Duration: 2-3 hours
  - Opening and explanations
  - Preparations in political groups
  - First Plenary Debate
  - Committee sessions
  - Informal negotiations
  - Second Plenary Debate (with voting)
  - Evaluation

## Aims

- to contribution to the conference programme, which gives participants an opportunity to collaborate and interact
- to provide insight in the procedures of European Parliament as a core institution of the European Union

## Topic

In general we need for such an exercise, we need a topic which

- belongs into the scope and responsibility of the European Parliament in the institutional system of the EU
- allows for controversial debates
- enables easy and quick identification with different points of view.

The idea of a simulation game is to make politics tangible and to enable people to realistically

experience political debates from the perspective of a decision-maker. The goal is not to discuss the participants' personal opinions, but to take a role – in this case – of a member of the European Parliament. Our online simulation game reproduces on a small scale the legislative process of the European Parliament.

The participants receive instructions which introduce the framework:

1. We assume that there are four groups present in the European Parliament:
  - **ECP - European Conservative Party**
  - **ELP - European Liberal Party**
  - **EEP - European Ecological Party**
  - **ESP - European Social Party.**
2. A brief explanation of views, values and basic ideas on how the EU should solve problems which characterize each political group.

For this particular EAN event, the partners have chosen an environmental topic, which is highly relevant all over the continent and allows people to easily take a point of view. Other topics of interest are certainly possible, as long as they are within the responsibility of the EU institutions.

## Scenario

The European Commission proposes that a fee of 30ct for disposable cups for hot drinks to go should be charged in every member state. Coffee to go is part of the daily life of many people. The cups are mostly composed of cardboard with a plastic coating. They are an important cause of pollution in every-day-life. The European Commission aims to reduce the number of disposable cups with the draft proposal that will today be debated in the Parliament. The result will afterwards be sent to the Council of Ministers.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCE:** if you are interested to organise a similar activity, you can reach out to Polyspektiv (contract details below). Alternatively, you can follow a full scenario offered in the publication: “Educational simulation game. European Parliament” composed in 2015 by Civitta Estonia (CPD) and commissioned by The European Parliament Information Office: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/15IOmyMBKGSXphDqxxDBHgW\\_6s3qwwpCX/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/15IOmyMBKGSXphDqxxDBHgW_6s3qwwpCX/view?usp=sharing) The publication provides you with step-by-step instructions and all materials necessary to implement the activity.

## EVENT 2

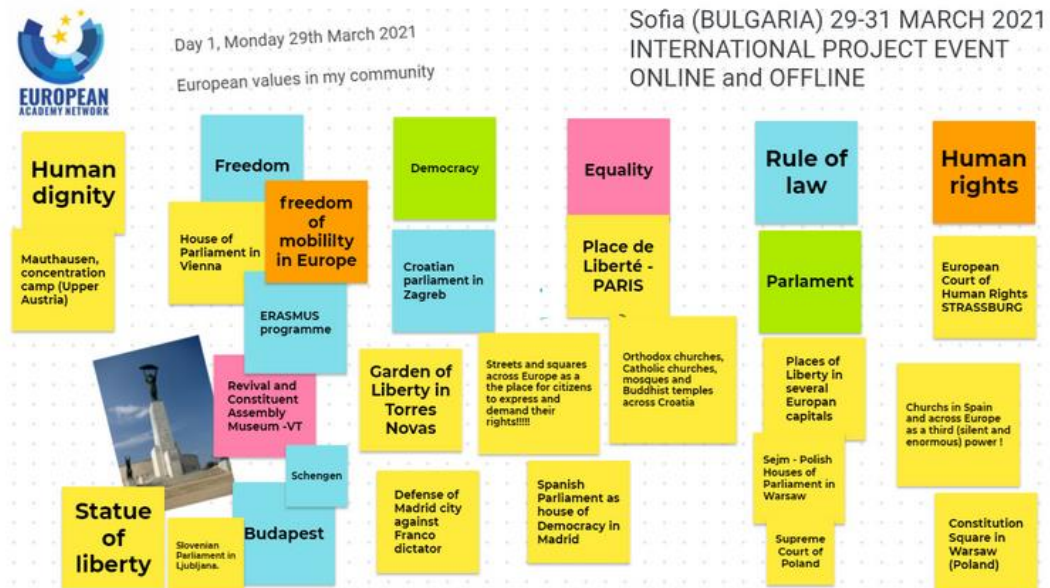
**Sofia, March 2021**

### “European values and their impact on you, your town and your country”

Participation: The event involved 105 citizens.

Location and dates: The event took place in Sofia (Bulgaria) and online from 29/03/2021 to 31/03//2021.

Short description: The aim of the event was to discuss what active citizenship means: rights, participation, belonging. The event was enriched by a simulation activity of the proceedings of the Council of Ministers of the European Union, which will be described in detail.



**Simulation of the Council of Ministers** (conducted for the European Academy Network in spring 2021 in cooperation with Polyspektiv)

### Structural Information

- Duration: 2-3 hours
  - Opening and explanations
  - Preparations in national delegations
  - Public presentation of positions
  - Informal negotiations
  - Public debate and voting
  - Evaluation
- Up to 42 participants (7 national delegations of 6 people max.); in order to keep the plenaries interactive, we limited the right to speak during form sessions to the 14 national ministers.

### Aims

- to contribution to the conference programme, which gives participants an opportunity to collaborate and interact
- to provide insight in the procedures of the Council of the European Union as a core institution of the European Union

## **Topic**

In accordance with the conference topics (euroscepticism and European values), we addressed a concrete case which:

- belongs into the scope and responsibility of this Council
- allows for controversial debates
- enables easy and quick identification with different points of view

Specifically, the simulation was conducted with regard to the Regulation of the European Union with regard to an Enforced European Values Mechanism (EUVM) to be applied in the Programme Europe for Citizens.

1) Projects which

a. promote Euroscepticism

b. antagonize equal treatment of genders, nationalities, ethnicities, religions or sexual

orientations are in no case eligible for project funding. The Education, Audiovisual, and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) will reject respective project applications.

2) In case projects have violated European Values in the way specified in Article 1 a. or b. according to the project report or project documentations, the EACEA will cancel the last installment.

The parliament has agreed to this regulation by a narrow majority, now it is up to the Council of Ministers for Justice and Home affairs, to take a decision. They could either

- pass the regulation,

- stop the regulation, or

- suggest changes (and send the regulation back to the European Parliament for a second reading).

Other topics of interest are certainly possible, as long as they are within the responsibility of the EU's institutions.

## **Scenario**

A proposal to change the funding rules for projects in the EU has been put forward by the European Commission and passed the European Parliament. It is now on the desk of the minister for Justice and Home affairs, who debate whether

- a) this measure helps to effectively promote European Values in the European Union and to counter Euroscepticism (Minister of Justice)
- b) the change of the rules will lead to a system which is fair and respects the right of the member states to set their own political agenda (Minister of Home Affairs)

The Ministers receive support from 4 advisors (on the needs of municipalities, on the needs of NGOs, on the promotion of European values, on EU project funding). In the end the Council either supports the position of the parliament or takes a different standpoint, which then will be sent back to the parliament for debating.

Polispektiv is a Berlin-based agency designing and implementing education projects and experiences since 2007. We work for state institutions on local, regional, national and European level, for schools, universities, and academies, for political foundations and for international development agencies.

**polyspektiv**

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### EVENT 3

**Brussels, June & October 2021**

#### **“Europe in the making - exercising forms of engagement at local and EU level”**

Participation: The event involved 105 citizens.

Location and dates: The event took place in Brussels (Belgium) and online in two parts: from 29/06/2021 to 30/06/2021 and from 13/10/2021 to 15/10/2021.

Short description: The aim of the event was to experience practical examples of civic engagement. The event was enriched by a visit to Parliamentarium in Brussels, and with a collaboration with the initiators of the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) called: Voters Without Borders which demands full political rights for EU citizens.



Delegates of the third international event in Brussels, Belgium in October 2020.

## **Interactive Presentation on EU Funding**

(Conducted for the European Academy Network in spring 2021)

### **Structural Information**

- Duration: 1-2 hours
  - Opening and Explanations included providing suggestions,
  - Discussion,
  - FAQ
- Up to 20 participants.

### **Aims**

- To provide guidance, tips and tricks on how to apply for EU funding programmes

### **Topic**

Each section of the presentation thought of different types of funding programmes. This was important as the participants and organisations vary in different scales.

### **Scenario**

Philippe Ternes (GENERA social innovations) and Amy McAuley (ECIT Foundation) spoke about tips for applying for grants and how to structure a proposal for EU

funding. Both gave interactive presentations on how to get started when applying for EU funding programmes. These provided tips and tricks. They advised the participants to develop a strong network of partners in the various EU Member States and to fully understand the target audience and adopt the proposal accordingly. Philippe Ternes then continued with Amy McAuley's presentation from a viewpoint of CERV EU funding programme as Phillippe is a contact point for the CERV programme. After the presentations, the participants were able to ask questions on how to improve their chances of applying for funding programmes. Overall, despite the challenges of an online event, the participants learnt plenty of new information as well as being able to ask for advice when applying for EU funds.

Hybrid event with presentations from civil societies and universities, and interactive workshop on organizing Citizens' Assemblies.

### **Interactive Workshop on Organizing Citizens' Assemblies**

(Conducted for the European Academy Network in autumn 2021 in cooperation with Citizens Take Over Europe and Voters Without Borders)

#### **Structural Information**

- Duration: 1-2 hours
  - Opening and Explanations included providing suggestions
  - Brainstorming and Strategising
  - Presenting ideas
  - Discussing and debating ideas presented
- Up to 40 participants (20 participants online, 20 partners present in person). Participants were asked to discuss with their colleagues from their local representative.

#### **Aims**

- to provide insight and the tools to organize citizens' assemblies from a local representative context
- to discuss and exchange ideas to organize a successful citizens' assembly



## **Topic**

In order to organize a citizens' assembly, participants needed to think of the following issues

- defining a target audience,
- describing the strategy to reach out to participants,
- outlining strong and lacking skills in the organization of the assembly,
- describing ways to mobilize the local community and organizations
- developing a checklist including all logistics arrangements,
- sharing the results

## **Scenario**

After having time to discuss and form ideas for their citizens' assemblies, participants were asked to come and present their ideas. One group focused on the focus of the activity was the youth. Their target group was not only the youth but several professionals active around the issues facing youth in societies.

A communication plan was briefly presented, and the logistics were discussed, as well as a specific To-Do list. The presentation was supported by a graphic diagram of the brainstorming carried out within the group.

The speaker for the second group presented the outline of a public hearing on a divisive environmental issue for communities, such as burning organic waste. The hearing was designed as a hybrid meeting involving experts on the field, in order to reach a conclusion to be published locally. Citizens could then provide comments and input on the publicly available results. The workshop was successful with the participants satisfied with the new knowledge about citizens assemblies.

This workshop was organized by Ophélie Masson (Citizens Take Over Europe & European Alternatives).

The event ended with a call to action to sign, support and promote the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) called: Voters Without Borders which demands full political rights for EU citizens.

## EVENT 4

### Portugal, March-April 2022

#### “Europe in the making – exercising forms of engagement at the EU level”

Participation: The event involved 102 citizens.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Torres Novas (Portugal) and online from 28/03/2022 to 2/04/2022.

Short description: The aim of the event was to exchange on experiences of bottom up movements, grass-root organizations and non-organized citizens that decided to operate at EU level. The event was enriched by a simulation activity of the proceedings of the Committee of the Regions as well as a structured talk with two Portuguese Members of the European Parliament.





EAN participants during the simulation of the proceedings of the Committee of the Regions, Torres Novas, Portugal in March 2022.

### **Committee of the Regions simulation activity**

(conducted for the European Academy Network in spring 2022 in cooperation with Mypolis)

#### **Structural Information**

- Duration: 2 - 2.5 hours
  - Opening and explanations
  - Commissions work (opinions)
  - Plenary Session (discuss and vote)



- testimonial (member of the Committee of Regions)
- Up to 43 participants (20 participants online, 23 partners present in person).

### **Aims**

- to provide knowledge about how the Committee of the Regions works, especially how the members of different commissions provide opinions and how the members of the Committee discuss and decide for the opinion approval in a plenary session.

### **Topic**

The activity was organized in three parts:

1. Analysis of documents, deepening and writing of an opinion, by the commissions;
2. Discussion of the opinions in a plenary session and voting for its approval;
3. Testimonial from a member of the Committee of the Regions.

### **Scenario**

In the first part of the activity, the room was arranged in small "islands", each "island" would correspond to a commission. The commissions chosen for the simulation were:

- 1) Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget (COTER);
- 2) Commission for Economic Policy (ECON);
- 3) Commission for Environment, Climate change and Energy (ENVE).

There was also a group of participants assigned for the plenary table as chairs and spokespersons.

At check-in, each participant received an identification card with the real identity of a member of the Committee of the Regions. The participants were then distributed among the three commissions (or plenary table), integrating the one to which their character really belongs. We tried to keep it as realistic as possible, with 3 Commissions (ENVE, COTER and CIVEX) and all political families involved in the discussions and voting. The online participants were part of an online

commission (ENVE) accompanied by a MyPolis facilitator assigned for this purpose. Each commission received a summary of an official document, on which they had to issue an opinion. The commissions had about 1 hour to discuss and write their opinion on the matter at hand. After a short break, the participants returned to the room, which was already organized as a hemicycle, for the simulation of the plenary session. In plenary, each commission shared its opinion and answered questions raised by the other members of the Committee. At the end of the presentations and clarifications, the opinions were voted, with arms in the air, for their approval or disapproval.

After the simulation, participants had the opportunity to hear the testimonial of a real member of the Committee: Isilda Gomes, the president of the Portuguese delegation, shared her experience and answered some questions raised by the participants.



Examples of cards provided to participants of the simulation activity, indicating political affiliations of each member.

## MyPolis

MyPolis - Politics made easy

+351 919062689

<https://mypolis.eu>

## EVENT 5

Poland, May 2022

### “Debating the future of Europe: contributing to a roadmap for a more united Union”

Participation: The event involved 118 citizens (90 partners in person, 28 online participants).

Location / Dates: The event took place in Łask and Łódź (Poland) and online from 9/05/2022 to 12/05/2022.

Short description: The aim of the event was to get participants engaged in discussing the future of Union and European citizenship taking into account the current performance of EU institutions, regional and national governments. The event was enriched by study visits to citizens groups which benefited from the EU funding in recent years.



International EAN participants during the fifth international event, Łask, Poland in May 2022.

### International hybrid conference (offline and online)

#### Structural Information

- Duration: 5 hours
  - Opening and Explanations
  - Opening and discussing the program

- Open session for a discussion with the participation of a member of the European Parliament (vice-chairman of the Committee on Regional Development, vice-chairman of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection) and a member of the European Committee of the Regions, National Ambassador of the Covenant of Mayors and Ambassador of the European Climate Pact.

### **Aims**

- Debating the future of Europe: contributing to a roadmap for a more united Union.

### **Topic**

The conference was divided into three parts:

1. Future of the European Union - the union of values or political interests?
2. Bringing Europe closer to people: Democracy and the future of the EU.
3. Roadmaps for a more united Union - EU programmes, initiatives and events.

### **Scenario**

The aim of the conference was to present the topics related to the future of the European Union, and to ask what are the binding elements: values or political interests? As an opening of the panels, the Mayor of Łask, Gabriel Szkudlarek, presented the largest investments implemented with EU funds in the Łask Municipality. Then Piotr Nowacki, the president of the Lodz LAGs Federation, presented the achievements of local action groups in the Lodzkie Voivodeship and its impact on the development of local communities. The first part of the conference was concluded by Krzysztof Hetman - a Polish Member of the European Parliament, vice-chairman of the Committee on Regional Development, vice-chairman of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, who discussed issues related to regional development at the local, regional and EU level.

The second part of the conference was devoted to the question of bringing Europe closer to people: democracy and the future of the EU. Jacek Michałowski, psychologist and psychotherapist, lecturer at Collegium Civitas and activist of the

30th Year of Freedom, together with Krzysztof Margol, the president of the Nidzica Development Foundation "NIDA" and LAG "Brama Mazurskiej Krainy", introduced us to this subject in an amazing way. Showing examples of how important were and still are such values as: Freedom, Self-government, Solidarity, Democracy, Security and Development.

The third part of the conference, which focused on cohesion as a fundamental value of the EU's territorial policy, was opened by Hanna Zdanowska, Mayor of Łódź, member of the European Committee of the Regions, National Ambassador of the Covenant of Mayors, Ambassador of the European Climate Pact, which, in reference to previous presentations, discussed the topic of resilient, sustainable and cohesive communities - our core value and issues related to the European Green Deal.

The summary of the conference and an invitation to discussion were the speeches of Lena Strehmann - a representative of the Conference on the Future of Europe who spoke about the future and opportunities for Europe, and an intervention by Małgorzata Wochowska - the project manager of EAN, who introduced the activities carried out as part of the EU 2022 Week of Regions in Brussels. To end with, the new EU programme was addressed - CERV, which is an opportunity for local authorities and civil society organizations across Europe to facilitate active citizenship. The hybrid form of the conference was an excellent field for meetings and discussions.



EAN participants during the fifth international event, Łask, Poland in May 2022.



## CHAPTER 2

### Good practices from partners and testimonials

Around 300 EU citizens took part in local dissemination and follow activities which took place in almost each partner country of the project between 1 June 2021 and April 2022. Local Activities took place face-to-face, online and in a hybrid way. The aim of this activity was to engage a community of citizens in partner countries in the topics of the project and disseminate the results of the project (EU policy making, EU agenda, active citizenship) and to master methods of supporting European civic education and engagement in shaping the EU agenda bottom-up. We would like to focus on three examples from Italy, Portugal and Bulgaria.

#### 1.

#### **EAN local activity organised by Comune di Soveria Mannelli, Italy in September 2021**

“Europe Calling: European Parliament simulation / Europe Calling: Simulazione dei lavori del Parlamento Europeo”





As one of the organizers said: “We created a welcome kit, in which there was a document folder, a brochure with information on the European Academy Network and the entire programme, a sticker and a bookmark. The format that we used is a Simulation of the European Parliament, a discussion on a bill with economic and immigration topics. The students participated in an active and serious way”.

**The photobook of the event:**

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1emo9k05-P-jiHryla8M6Wq8MJZwUCM6i?usp=sharing>

2.

## EAN local activity organised by Municipality of Torres Novas, Portugal in February 2022

“The simulations of the Committee of the Regions”



Torres Novas 2022 (Portugal), students taking part in the simulation of the European Parliaments' proceeding.



### 3.

As another good example, we would like to share with the readers of this Toolkit how they can easily structure the collection of feedback from participants when they organize an event online or in a hybrid format.. Jamboard, slido and Google surveys were commonly used in the EAN project team.

**EUROPEAN ACADEMY NETWORK**

Day 3, Wednesday 31st March 2021  
16.00 - 16.00 - Reflection. Final remarks and closing

**GROUP 3**

1. How do you like the format of the event - time frame (schedule), type of sessions (discussions, simulations, presentation), topics covered, and interactions between participants?

2. Which parts did you like the most?

3. What would you suggest to change in the future?

Feedback comments:

- the format is ok, but its complicated to get people to interact.
- I like the Jamboard working part very much
- The simulation was a good experience
- All three days were very interesting. A face-to-face meeting is missing
- We hope for personal meetings very soon - the digital format is not the same...
- the three days were well prepared, good communication and structure. Maybe next time we can get the schedule a bit earlier to keep the days and time slots free of any other duties.
- People from Brussels to be involved as participants to share personal opinion from the perspective of decision-makers in our future events
- event was lack of information about necessity for preparation of presentations, so it wasn't clear if each partner must prepare smth or it's already agreed with some about presenting. I believe this event was
- issues. There was lack of information about need to prepare the presentations, it was not clear if this was for everyone or it's already agreed with some partners who will present. So I wasn't ready. What comes to format -
- Q&A: 2. Simulation on 30.03. was usefully amazing

Participants: Joachim, Anita, Mariella, Jorge, Anna

A slide from an evaluation session conducted in the second international event in Sofia, Bulgaria and online in March 2021 with the use of Jamboard.

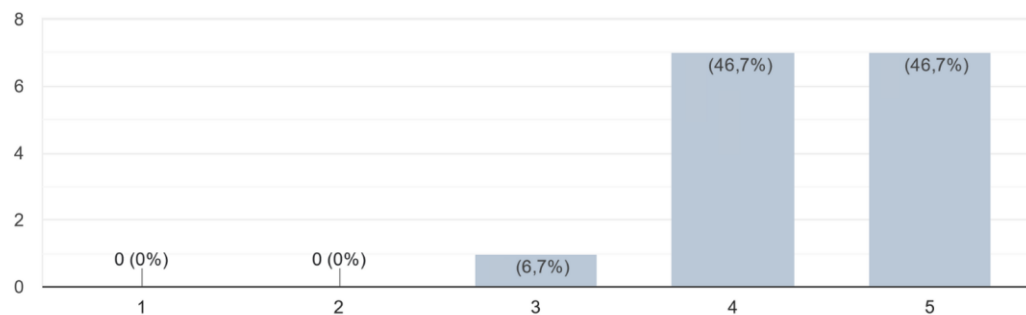
#### 4.

"EU citizenship is underpinned by common values, encompassing the respect for democracy, rule of law, equality and fundamental rights"  
(EU Citizenship Report 2020 Empowering citizens and protecting their rights)

The European Academy Network aimed at raising the understanding of the European Union.

Among project participants, **over 93%** say that the project had impacted their understanding of the EU, its diversity and values to a good or a very good extent.

3.1 ...understand the European Union and its diversity? (values)



"EU citizenship is underpinned by common values, encompassing the respect for democracy, rule of law, equality and fundamental rights"  
(EU Citizenship Report 2020 Empowering citizens and protecting their rights)

The European Academy Network aimed at raising the understanding of the European Union.

**One of the participants said:** "The project helped to understand the values that constitute Europe through a variety of methods.

It helped to get more knowledge about human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, and human rights. It also helped to understand how European institutions such as the European Council, European Commission or European Parliament work".

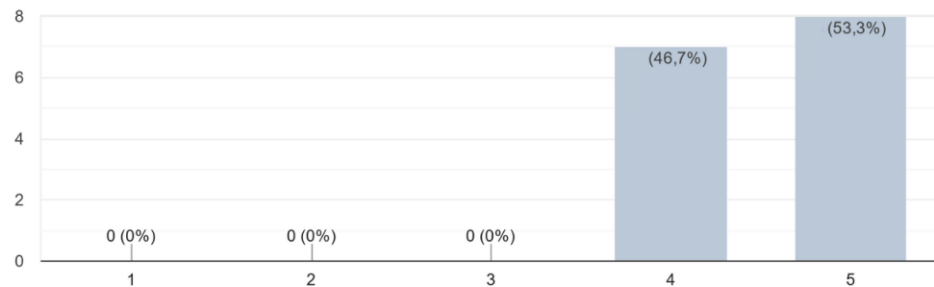


"Alongside peace, EU citizenship is one of the most significant achievements of the European project and is unique in the world. EU citizenship rights, including free movement, political and democratic rights and the right for EU citizens to benefit from consular protection by other Member States, have had a transformative impact on Europe"  
(EU Citizenship Report 2020 Empowering citizens and protecting their rights).

The European Academy Network aimed at raising the understanding of European citizenship.

.Among project participants, **100% say that the project had very positively impacted their understanding** of European citizenship and the EU, its diversity and and conditions for civic and democratic participation, such as procedures, programmes, practical solutions.

3.2 ...understand European citizenship and conditions for civic and democratic participation?  
(procedures, programmes, practical solutions)



"Alongside peace, EU citizenship is one of the most significant achievements of the European project and is unique in the world. EU citizenship rights, including free movement, political and democratic rights and the right for EU citizens to benefit from consular protection by other Member States, have had a transformative impact on Europe"  
(EU Citizenship Report 2020 Empowering citizens and protecting their rights).

The European Academy Network aimed at raising the understanding of European citizenship.

**One of the participants said:** "Europe plays a fundamental role in the international context. Europe contains a lot of diversity, but at the same time, it is characterized by common goals. Europeans (and in particular we who participated in the project) must commit ourselves in order to transmit the values that characterize Europe and we must commit ourselves to making citizens aware of the functioning of Europe".

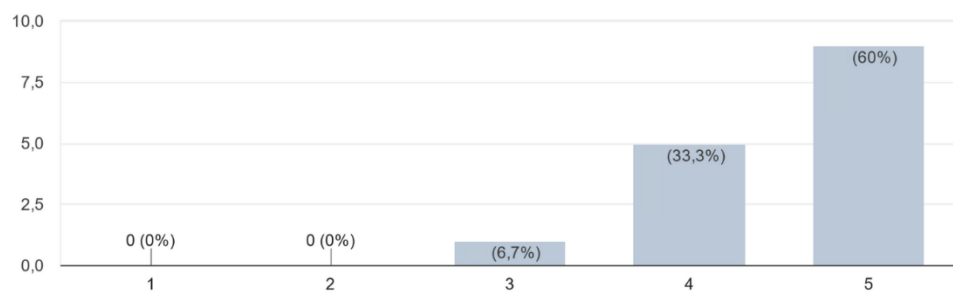




The European Academy Network aimed at raising the understanding of how European institutions work, what they do and how citizens can get engaged in EU matters.

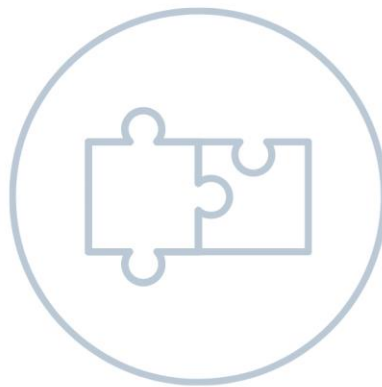
To this regard, **over 93% of participants confirmed that the project had impacted them to a very high extent.**

3.3 ... understand how European institutions work, what they do, how citizens can get engaged in EU matters?



The European Academy Network aimed at raising the understanding of how European institutions work, what they do and how citizens can get engaged in EU matters.

**One of the project participants said:** "After completing the project, I am more aware of how the European Union and its institutions work. What is more, the project gave me an idea of how the issues related to the European Union are perceived by the project partners from different countries".



## TESTIMONIALS

EUROPEAN ACADEMY NETWORK  
ENCOURAGING DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION AT EU LEVEL  
@EuropeanAcademyNetwork



**Jorge Salgado Simões,**  
**Head of Education, Culture and Sports**  
**Department,**  
**Municipality of Torres Novas, Portugal**

We in Portugal sometimes feel that we are far away from decisions taken about our common future in Europe. With the European Academy Network project, we really get to know better the function of the institutions and how they influence our daily life at a local scale. Collaborating with organizations from different member states is also a plus concerning Europe as a stronger space of solidarity and cooperation.

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



**Elvira Sequeira,**  
**Town Councillor,**  
**Municipality of Torres Novas, Portugal**

A community is made of people and people have built Europe as we know it, under values we all believe that supports peace and the defence of human rights inside our borders. And we are all committed to make this work, with actions and presence in projects like EAN, where we can discuss and verify what can bring us close together.



**Dr Mark Causon,**  
**Consultant on European Affairs,**  
**Malta**

Coming from the smallest member country of the EU, we believe that through participation in transnational cooperation projects we are providing our local authorities and citizens the opportunity of learning and sharing knowledge about other cultures and society. Considering that it is important that insular societies get an overview of intercultural societies to further assist in integration of all the community.



**Antonio,**  
Italy

Europe is no longer a bureaucratic state, it is a common feeling of democracy, human dignity and solidarity of the people who every day share the same dream of an evolved, modern society, free from the dull dictatorship that has marked its history. Feel the freedom, feel the democracy, feel the Europe.



**Catriona Mair,**  
Head of Advocacy & Events,  
ECIT Foundation,  
Belgium

ECIT Foundation is working on European Citizenship in the heart of Europe. The European Academy Network was an opportunity to see and meet Europeans from across Europe. It taught us that we share more in common than differences. Our cultures are nearly identical and more importantly, we believe and share the same common values: democracy, freedom, equality, and respect. The future of Europe is meeting and engaging with citizens from across Europe! It was an amazing opportunity to meet new Europeans.



**Anna Doliwa,**  
President of the Local Action Group “The  
Grabia River Valley”,  
Poland

The implementation of the EAN project has had a huge impact on me, my colleagues and the organisation I manage - the LAG “The Grabia River Valley”. Participation in the project gave us the opportunity to learn about the functioning and cooperation of other non-governmental organizations as well as local and regional governments in European countries. How they use EU funds, but above all, how important are values such as the rule of law, freedom, solidarity and democracy to them in their daily activities for the benefit of local communities. The project also contributed to providing our local and regional politicians, associations and citizens with the necessary tools to support their informed civic and political participation at the EU level. Which is extremely important considering the current situation in the world, in the context of the war in Ukraine, but also in our everyday life.



**Marta,**  
Zadar County Rural Development Agency -  
AGRRA,  
Croatia

Why are you engaged in promoting European values (why is it important to promote and educate about European values, such as human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities)? The European Union represents democracy which means that all people who live in the EU must enjoy the same human rights, no matter what language they speak, what their religion is, what their political opinions are, what country they come from or who their family is. Every man deserves the right to his own freedom and dignity, because freedom gives people wind in their backs, encourages them to think well critically, as well as encourages them to learn and act.





## **Szódliget Municipality Hungary**

Hungary's official policy seems to be steering away from the core values of the European Union, but the majority of Hungarian people are still supporting EU membership. For us it is very important to represent these values in our small local community! Attending events is inspiring, motivating, a great source of ideas and a perfect opportunity for networking.

## **CONTACTS**

For questions regarding any aspect of the EAN project, the Europe for Citizens or CERV Programmes or active citizenship as a democratic practice, please do not hesitate to contact us via Facebook:

**[www.facebook.com/EuropeanAcademyNetwork](https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanAcademyNetwork)**

We will be happy to support the visibility and outreach of your initiatives for active citizenship, and to build transnational synergies.

**#EUfunding #Euproject #europeforcitizens #Networks**