

## EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.



Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).)

| PROJECT                   |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Project name and acronym: | <b>From the GroundUp: Fostering Rural Youth Participation in the EU Agenda</b> |
| Participant:              | LAG Pirkan Helmi, Finland  |
| PIC number:               | 939566542  |

| EVENT DESCRIPTION            |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Event number:                | 6  |
| Event name:                  | Study visit: Results of the Conference on the Future of Europe (citizens' recommendations) in the context of the EU citizenship rights - more power to citizens. Transfer of consultations from the youth to EU policy makers. |
| Type:                        | study visit, round table, World Cafe, Oxford Debate, Citizens Dialogue   |
| In situ/online:              | in situ  |
| Location:                    | Main part: Brussels, Belgium<br><br>Preparatory local activities: Rychnov (Czechia), Irschen (Austria), Torres novas (Portugal), Prealpi e Dolomiti (Italy), Bulgaria,   |
| Date(s):                     | Main activity: 7-9.04.2025 in Brussels<br><br>January-April 2025: Local activities preparing to the event in Brussels  |
| Website(s) (if any):         | <a href="#">From the GroundUp: Fostering Rural Youth - Sdružení SPLAV, Z.S.</a>  |
| Participants (CLLD Halland): |  |
| Female:                      | 75   |
| Male:                        | 53   |
| Non-binary:                  | 0  |

|                                  |     |                                    |
|----------------------------------|-----|------------------------------------|
| From country 1 [Czech Republic]: | 23  |                                    |
| From country 2 [Finland]         | 5   |                                    |
| From country 3 [Austria]:        | 18  |                                    |
| From country 4 [Poland]:         | 3   |                                    |
| From country 5 [Portugal]:       | 18  |                                    |
| From country 6 [Italy]           | 22  |                                    |
| From country 7 [Bulgaria]        | 17  |                                    |
| From country 8 [Sweden]:         | 2   |                                    |
| From country 9 [Germany]         | 1   |                                    |
| From country 10 [Spain]          | 3   |                                    |
| From country 11 [Slovakia]       | 2   |                                    |
| From country 12 [Ireland]        | 4   |                                    |
| From country 13 [Holland]        | 2   |                                    |
| From country 14 [Belgium]        | 7   |                                    |
| From country 15 [Romania]        | 1   |                                    |
| Total number of participants:    | 128 | From total number of countries: 15 |

**Description**

*Provide a short description of the event and its activities.*

**- Target groups:**

Project partners, policy makers, civil society organizations, youth, local actors, European Parliamentarians and other high policy makers.

**- Description of the event and its activities/ context:**

Study Visit Report: “Results of the Conference on the Future of Europe in the Context of EU Citizenship Rights”, Brussels, 7–9 April 2025

As part of the GroundUp: Fostering Rural Youth Participation in the EU Agenda project under the CERV programme, a three-day study visit was held in Brussels, bringing together 45 participants from 14 countries. The event aimed to deepen young people’s and local stakeholders’ engagement with EU policymaking by reflecting on the outcomes of the Conference on the Future of Europe and exploring the role of European Citizens’ Initiatives (ECI). Participants had the opportunity to exchange views with policymakers, civil society representatives, and EU officials during structured visits to key institutions such as the European Parliament, the European Commission, and regional representation offices.

The programme offered interactive and insightful sessions, notably with MEP Merja Kyllönen and the ECIT Foundation, who shared valuable perspectives on youth engagement, EU decision-making,

and combating misinformation. The visit to the Łódzkie Regional Office and the European Commission provided practical insight into regional advocacy and funding mechanisms under CERV. Throughout the study visit, participants expressed a strong interest in contributing to EU policy processes, with several initiatives for local follow-up discussed. The event was both a capacity-building opportunity and a platform for reinforcing civic dialogue between EU institutions and rural youth actors.

Certainly. Below is a formal and well-structured description of how local activities were organised by project partners as part of the Work Package, including the thematic instructions provided to guide the discussions, and a summary of the implementation and outcomes.

### Implementation of preparatory Local Activities within the Work Package

As part of the Work Package aiming to foster youth engagement and enable the transfer of grassroots consultations to EU-level policymaking, a series of local activities were organised by most GroundUp project partners across various EU regions between July 2024 and April 2025. These local actions were tailored to encourage young people's active participation in discussions on key socio-political topics and to gather their perspectives for further debate at the European level. Below we selected the activities which took place between January and April 2025, within this WP.

Each participating partner was instructed to organise interactive local events focused on at least one of the following thematic areas:

#### 1. Digital Transformation and Youth Engagement

The discussions focused on how digital tools (e.g. social media) can empower young people in civic and political life, addressing topics such as combating misinformation and promoting digital literacy.

#### 2. Tackling Youth Unemployment and Depopulation in Rural Areas

Participants explored how local and EU-level initiatives can create sustainable opportunities for young people in rural areas, aiming to make these regions more attractive and viable.

#### 3. Climate Action and Environmental Sustainability

This topic encouraged youth to reflect on their role in environmental advocacy, particularly through local actions and EU-supported youth-led initiatives.

Additionally, all events were asked to address **horizontal questions** related to youth involvement in local decision-making processes:

- Do young people feel empowered to influence local policies?
- Are they active in youth councils or parliaments?
- Do they know peers who are engaged in such activities?

**Overview of local activities that took place between January and April 2025 by location:**

- **Rychnov (Czechia)**  
Theme: Digital Transformation and Youth Engagement  
Format: *World Café*  
This session focused on the use of digital platforms to strengthen youth civic participation and counter disinformation.
- **Irschen (Austria)**  
Themes: Digital Transformation, Youth Employment in Rural Areas, and Climate Sustainability  
Format: *World Café*  
A comprehensive event capturing multifaceted perspectives from rural youth.  
Conclusion:  
"The World Café session provided valuable insights into the challenges and aspirations of rural youth regarding the future of farming and the EU. Participants emphasized financial support, education, and technology as crucial for rural sustainability. Generational cooperation and EU initiatives were identified as key enablers."
- **Torres Novas (Portugal)**  
Theme: Digital Transformation and Youth Engagement  
Format: *Oxford Debate*  
This structured debate allowed youth to critically evaluate digital engagement tools and their role in modern civic life.
- **Prealpi e Dolomiti (Italy)**  
Theme: Tackling Youth Unemployment and Depopulation in Rural Areas  
Format: *World Café*  
Discussions centered on making rural areas attractive through education, entrepreneurship, and EU opportunities such as Erasmus and mobility programs.
- **Bulgaria**  
Theme: Climate Action and Environmental Sustainability  
Format: *Citizens' Dialogue*  
Conclusion:  
"We liked best the interactive nature of the event, the keen interest in the topic by the students, and the enthusiasm shown by the Bulgarian participants who attended international events under the GroundUp project. The feedback was highly positive."

These decentralised local events enabled young people across various EU regions to voice their concerns and share innovative ideas on critical policy topics. The interactive formats—ranging from World Cafés and Oxford Debates to Citizens' Dialogues—encouraged open dialogue and deeper reflection. The feedback and findings collected will inform transnational discussions among project partners and ultimately contribute to shaping youth-inclusive EU policies.

Read more on partners' websites:

[FROM THE GROUND UP: UN PATRIMONIO DI IDEE PER UN TERRITORIO DI VALORE - GAL Prealpi e Dolomiti](#)

<https://cm-torresnovas.pt/index.php/participar/parcerias-europeias#atividade-local-o-impacto-das-ferramentas-digitais-no-envolvimento-c%C3%ADvico-dos-joven>

<https://www.facebook.com/sdruzeniSPLAV/posts/pfbid0PicwgSgZkry2DzAbnYUR4PSwzBuWftsMkGtZ8TwL1LwcUbjGSMU6CjzADuK1qWgpl>

#### - Agenda of the event in Brussels:

[WP 6 - Face-to-face - Belgium - Google Drive](#)

# GROUNDUP



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## Agenda

**Monday, 7/4/2025**

Afternoon

**Arrival in Brussels, hotels check-in**

16:00 – 18:00

**Visit to the House of European History (not obligatory - optional activity)**

Rue Belliard 135, 1000 Brussels

More info: [historia.europa.eu](http://historia.europa.eu)

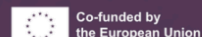
19:30 – 21:00

**Welcome dinner (courtesy of the host)**

La Rose Blanche Restaurant, Grand Place 11, Brussels

### Menu

- Soup of the day
- Main Course: Homemade meatloaf with stomp OR 1/4 Chicken with stomp & fries (vegetarian/vegan options available)
- Dessert: Vanilla ice cream with chantilly cream
- Drinks: Tap water + 1 drink of choice
- Special dietary requirements accommodated



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**Tuesday, 8/4/2025**

**09:30 – 11:00**

### **Study visit: Civil society in EU policy-making**

Salon for European Civic Organisations

Rue de la Loi 26, 1000 Brussels

Host: Brussels-based think tank ECIT Foundation, supported by representatives of ALDA, Ukraine office and ECI Forum

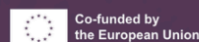
#### **Topics for discussion with ECIT:**

- The role of civil society in EU policymaking
- The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI)
- The results and follow up of the Conference on the Future of Europe
- An introduction to ECIT, its initiatives, and, in particular, its work on the ECI; the pros and cons of ECIs in general before we present our specific initiative
- The role of civil society organizations and think tanks in shaping EU policies

ECIT stands for European Citizens' Rights, Involvement, and Trust. It is a foundation based in Brussels that focuses on strengthening European citizenship by promoting citizens' rights, participation, and engagement in EU policymaking. ECIT works on initiatives such as the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI), research on EU citizenship rights, and fostering civic engagement at the European level. More info: [Homepage](#)

The European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA) is a non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting good governance, citizen participation, and local democracy in Europe and beyond. ALDA supports local authorities and civil society organizations through projects, capacity-building initiatives, and advocacy efforts, particularly in EU neighborhood countries, including Ukraine.

The ECI Forum (European Citizens' Initiative Forum) is an online platform provided by the European Commission to support organizers of European Citizens' Initiatives (ECIs). It offers guidance, legal and technical advice, and networking opportunities to help citizens effectively launch and manage ECIs. The forum also facilitates discussions on the strengths and challenges of the ECI mechanism.



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11:30 – 13:30

## Meeting at the European Parliament with MEP Merja Kyllönen (Finland, GUE/NGL)

### Merja Kyllönen – Short Bio:

- Born: 25 January 1977, Suomussalmi, Eastern Finland (rural area)
- Member of the Finnish Parliament: 2007–2014, 2019–2024
- Minister of Transport, Finland: 2011–2014
- Member of the European Parliament: 2014–2019, 2024–present



### Current Roles in the European Parliament:

- Chair of the Delegation for Relations with the Pan-African Parliament

### Member of:

- Conference of Delegation Chairs
- Committee on Security and Defence
- Delegation for Relations with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly
- Committee on Transport and Tourism

### Items for discussion (open list):

- Political influence and work in the European Parliament – how has the EP changed since the last elections?
- The impact of misinformation and fake news on parliamentary work.
- Strategies to build trust in EU institutions.
- The role of youth in EU policymaking – how can young people influence the work of the EP and other institutions?
- What types of activities are most effective for local and regional actors in the EU to strengthen their role in the European decision-making process?

14:00 – 14:30

## Sandwich lunch (courtesy of the host)





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15:00 – 16:30

## Visit to Łódzkie House – A Regional Office in Brussels

Square Marie Louise 2, 1000 Brussels

### Discussion topics:

- The activities of RBWŁ in supporting local action groups, municipalities, and other local government units – an overview of the role of regional offices within the EU institutional system to help participants better understand their function.
- How the CERV program supports local entities in Poland and across Europe – a presentation on funding opportunities and examples of best practices.
- Discussion with visit participants – an exchange of views on what kind of support in Brussels would be most relevant for their territory, both from the perspective of young people and those working in local action groups.

17:00 – 18:30

## Visit to Parlamentarium – optional activity

Esplanade Solidarność 1980, 1000 Brussels, Belgium

19:30

## Dinner (courtesy of the host)

Chez Léon, Rue des Bouchers 18, Brussels

### Menu

- Starter: Traditional cervelat sausage with mustard & mayo
- Main: Grilled turkey fillet with butter Maître d'hôtel, mixed salad & fries
- Dessert: Homemade cream caramel
- Drinks: 1 draught beer (25cl) OR 1 soft drink OR 1 glass of wine





- Main takeaways/ findings from the event

3. Your main take-aways from the event: what have you learned? What was useful to learn/ experience for you?

"Value of networking and strong relationships, not only between the partners but also with European organizations based in Brussels. The event was very helpful. I think that my main take-away from the event is the understanding of how sharing ideas and working all together as a team can lead to real improvements in our community. The speakers and activities made me see how many opportunities there are to improve the inclusion of rural areas"

"I learned a lot of new things about the EU and its different institutions (EP, EC) and on a deeper level than in schools. Learning about the different civil organisations(?) like CERV and ECIT, of which I didn't know anything nor did I know they existed. Meeting people from different countries and customs was also a nice experience. I also found the things about different possible jobs in the EU interesting and might apply for some of them in the future."

"Something that truly surprised me was realizing just how essential the field of energy is within the European Union. As a student of energy engineering, this insight opened my eyes to the possibility that I would genuinely enjoy working in this sector at the European level".

"All the discussions we took part in were incredibly informative and naturally encouraged open dialogue, where everyone felt free to ask any questions they had. I must say, the program was thoughtfully and carefully designed, and I am extremely grateful for such an opportunity".

"I believe that educational trips like this are immensely valuable for young people, as they help broaden perspectives and encourage us to think in new and different ways.

I learned how the policy making process works and what politicians do besides parliament sessions".


"I have learned how politics works at the European level and some good practices carried out in different organizations".

"I learned a lot more about how the Commission and Parliament works. I also got more knowledge about the EU and how I can take part in it".

"I feel much closer to the EU and have a better understanding of decision making. It was also very impressive to be inside the Parliament and imagine that decisions that are made there have an impact all the way down to rural areas in Sweden (and of course all other EU-countries). But that really gave perspective to the complexity of the process but also the great possibilities of working together across countries. I felt a bit proud to be part of the EU, especially in times of these"

"This experience has impacted me both personally and professionally. It made me reflect on how diversity and inclusivity can shape not only communities, but also workplaces and innovation. I genuinely believe Belgium is a perfect place for organizing multicultural events or international collaborations—the energy and vibe are simply contagious"..

**- Selected photos of the event**




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# GroundUP Study Visit *is* UP

Let's discover together the institutions of the European Union and the people who shape its politics.

**7-9/4/2025**  
**Brussels, Belgium**



**LEADER**

**Pirkan Helmi**



- Feedback from participants:

Feedback from the participants:

**- Website and/or FB page of the event.**

Links where the beneficiaries (project partners) published this report: [GroundUp - links where the beneficiaries published the deliverable 6.docx - Google Docs](#)

| HISTORY OF CHANGES |                  |                            |
|--------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| VERSION            | PUBLICATION DATE | CHANGE                     |
| 1.0                | 01.04.2022       | Initial version (new MFF). |
|                    |                  |                            |
|                    |                  |                            |