



EUROPE LABYRINTH TOUR

EU4MYREGION

Meet the Citizen:

My way through the Europe Labyrinth project

A 5-country initiative of the European House Budapest on cohesion policy

2019-2020



Co-funded by
the European Union



The success of the cohesion policy is key to implement EU's political priorities. From a public perspective it is an area where the EU's impact on the daily life of millions of citizens can be manifested and measured.

The Meet the Citizen: My way through the Europe labyrinth information project is a 5-country initiative of the European House Budapest to raise awareness and understanding on the achievements of the EU's cohesion policy influencing citizens' daily life using concrete examples.

The project involved the Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia, massive beneficiary EU member states of cohesion policy.

But do we know how this money is spent? Can we believe that we, citizens have a say when deciding about the next Multiannual Financial Framework? On what would YOU spend the money? These are only some of the randomly selected questions raised and debated with citizens from the five regions visited.

During the project the Europe Labyrinth was set up in Kecskemét (HU), Kosice (SK), Osijek (HR), Olomouc (CZ) and Timisoara (RO). But this is not all! After the Labyrinth Tour we returned to the five towns to have agoras with the participation of students to discuss the future of Europe and the cohesion policy.

This publication gives you an overview of the project events and our conclusions.



WHAT IS THE COHESION FUND?

The European Union Cohesion Fund supports those Member States whose per capita gross national income (GNI) is less than 90% of the European Union average. Its aim is to **reduce economic and social disparities** and **promote sustainable development**. For the period 2014-2020, the Cohesion Fund targets the following countries: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Croatia, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

For our communication project the Commission's 7th Report on economic, social and territorial cohesion "My region, My Europe, Our future" adopted in October 2017 served as our main reference and background document.

Our project aimed to

- achieve a better knowledge, understanding and awareness of citizens in five massive beneficiary EU member states (Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia) on the achievements of cohesion policy influencing their daily life using concrete examples;
- increase the visibility of the EU cohesion policy in its entirety: economic, social and territorial cohesion aspects and promote the development of ownership feeling of citizens towards them;
- bring the European idea through concrete cases of cohesion policy to places which are less in the spotlight;
- contribute with its added-value character to the elaboration of citizens' proposals (bottom-up approach!) to the next, post-2020 phase of EU cohesion policy;
- promote participation of citizens (active citizenship) and make them believe that „Brussels is us” and not a far away decision-maker;
- use the potential of the target group: general public with special emphasis on youth in the five project countries, all participating in the EU Danube Region Strategy (EUSDR) and create an organic link, synergy between the EU macro-regional approach and the cohesion policy aspect;
- build on the potential of the White Paper of the Commission (Juncker's Plan) on the future of Europe and beyond and counterbalance the prevailing negative, anti-EU tendencies and promote the European project;
- promote participation of citizens with a positive attitude towards the EU during the May 2019 EP elections.



WHAT AND HOW MUCH DOES THE COHESION FUND COVERS?

The EU has set itself five specific objectives: to achieve progress in 2020 in the areas of employment, innovation, education, social inclusion, climate and energy policy. In each of these areas, each Member State has set national targets, taking into account local specificities. To achieve these goals, **€ 351.8 billion has been earmarked** for the period 2014-2020 - almost one third of the total EU budget. The main project elements

1. EUROPE LABYRINTH TOUR

The Europe Labyrinth is a mobile, 100 sqm (10*10 m) exhibition in an innovative format to attract citizens, "people of the street" to discuss "heavy" topics in an "easy-to-digest" way. Entering the installation - forming a real labyrinth - interested participants are faced with interesting facts/figures and questions about EU cohesion policy and issues related to the future of Europe. They all receive a passport with questions to be filled out based on the information panels of the labyrinth.

The labyrinth has a high visibility potential serving the purpose of (a) demonstrating in a citizens' friendly manner the contemporary reality of cohesion policy achievements; (b) promoting shared European values, tolerance and understanding through personalised dialogue and people-to-people contacts.

2. REGIONAL AGORAS

Regional agoras entitled "A day without the EU" were organised in the five towns with the participation of local university students. In each town first we had a "plenary" session where three topics were voted to have group discussions out of the following seven:

1. A day without the EU
2. Climate change
3. Consumer protections
4. Employment
5. Migration and solidarity
6. Studying, travelling
7. The future of EU money

Participants were free to join any of the three groups.

TIMETABLE OF MAIN PUBLIC EVENTS

	Europe Labyrinth Tour	Regional agora
Kecskemét (HU)	5 July	2 December
Kosice (SK)	30 August	5 December
Osijek (HR)	5 September	6 November
Olomouc (CZ)	19 September	16 October
Timisoara (RO)	6 October	3 December

Brussels, 7-10 October
Presentation of the Europe Labyrinth Tour at the 2019 European Week of Regions and Cities

Budapest, 12-13 December
Project concluding event



WHAT AREAS DOES THE COHESION FUND SUPPORT?

The Member States of the European Union have agreed to develop cohesion policy in **11 areas** between 2014 and 2020:

-  Strengthening research, technological development and innovation
-  Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, information and communication technologies
-  Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs
-  Supporting the shift towards a lowcarbon economy
-  Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management
-  Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency
-  Promoting sustainable transport and improving network infrastructures
-  Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility
-  Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination
-  Investing in education, training and lifelong learning
-  Improving the efficiency of public administration

KECSKEMÉT



EUROPE LABYRINTH TOUR
5 July 2019



FACTSHEET - HUNGARY

Size 93,024 km²
Population 9,772,756
Capital city Budapest
GDP per capita €13,180

DID YOU KNOW?

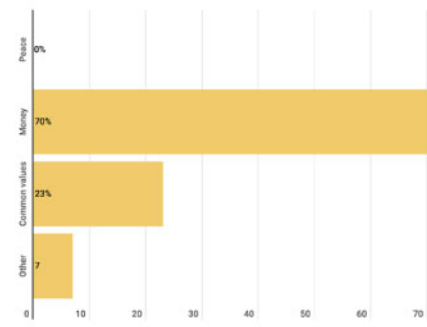
Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967), composer, ethnomusicologist, creator of the internationally well-known Kodály Method was born in Kecskemét.



REGIONAL AGORA
2 December 2019



If you have to characterise the EU with ONE word which one would you choose?
KECSKEMÉT



OLOMOUČ



EUROPE LABYRINTH TOUR
19 September 2019



FACTSHEET - CZECH REPUBLIC

Size 78,867 km²
Population 10,649,800
Capital city Prague
GDP per capita €18,000

DID YOU KNOW?

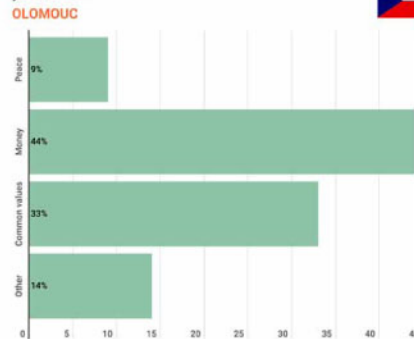
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart the brilliant Austrian composer and pianist stayed in the Hauenschild's Palace and aged 11 composed his Symphony No. 6 in F major in Olomouc.



REGIONAL AGORA
6 November 2019



If you have to characterise the EU with ONE word which one would you choose?
OLOMOUC



Olomouc



KOSICE



EUROPE LABYRINTH TOUR
30 August 2019



REGIONAL AGORA
5 December 2019



FACTSHEET - SLOVAKIA

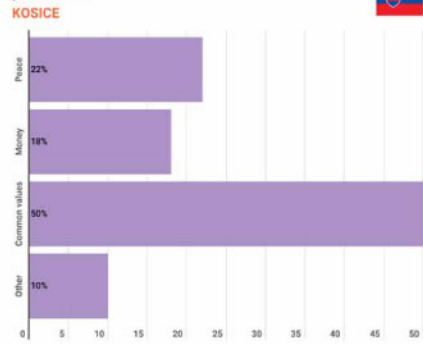
Size 49,035 km²
Population 5,450,421
Capital city Bratislava
GDP per capita €15,890

DID YOU KNOW?

The oldest marathon in Europe is the Kosice Peace Marathon held on the first Sunday of October since 1924.

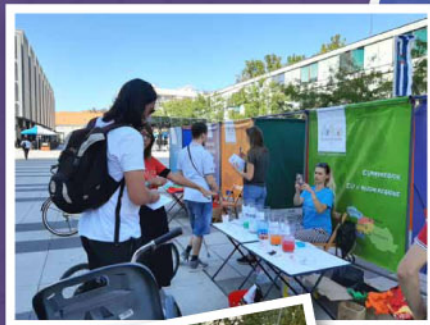


If you have to characterise the EU with ONE word which one would you choose?
KOSICE





EUROPE LABYRINTH TOUR
5 September 2019



FACTSHEET - CROATIA

Size 56,594 km²
Population 4,076,240
Capital city Zagreb
GDP per capita €11,990

DID YOU KNOW?

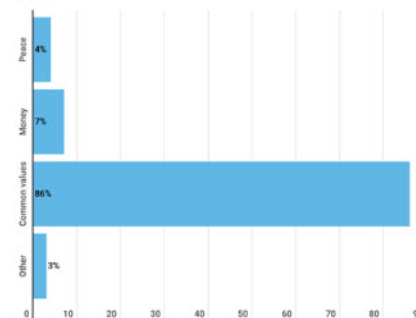
Matija Petar Katančić (1750-1825) writer, lexicographer and translator of the Bible into Croatian is from Osijek.

REGIONAL AGORA
6 November 2019



If you have to characterise the EU with ONE word which one would you choose?

OSIJEK



TIMISOARA



EUROPE LABYRINTH TOUR 6 October 2019



FACTSHEET - ROMANIA

Size 238,390 km²
Population 19,414,458
Capital city Bucharest
GDP per capita €9,130

DID YOU KNOW?

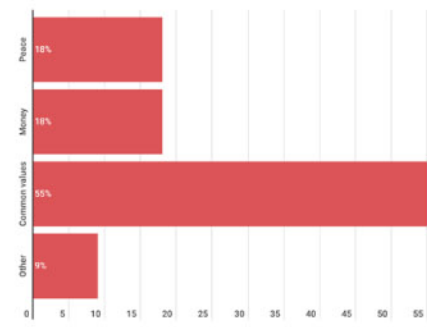
Johnny Weissmüller, Olympic gold medalist swimmer and actor portraying Tarzan with the distinctive Tarzan yell is from Timisoara.



REGIONAL AGORA 3 December 2019



If you have to characterise the EU with ONE word which one would you choose?
TIMISOARA



SOME OF OUR OTHER PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Participation at the 8th EUSDR
Annual Forum
Bucharest, 27-28 June 2019



Presentation of the Europe Labyrinth Tour results
at the European Week of Regions and Cities
Brussels, 7-10 October 2019



Collection of questionnaires
at the annual „Szabihíd” programme
Budapest, 27 July 2019

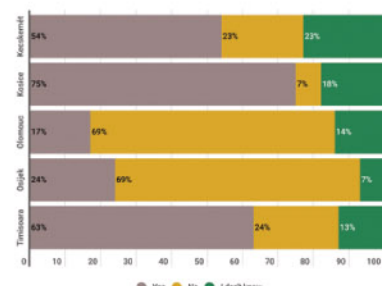
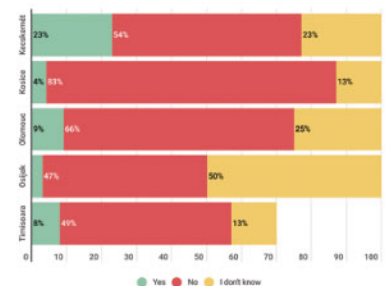
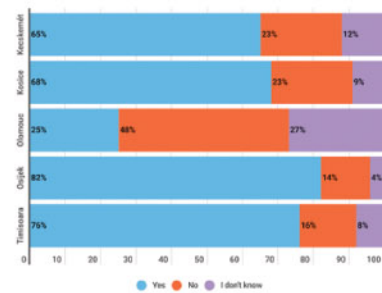
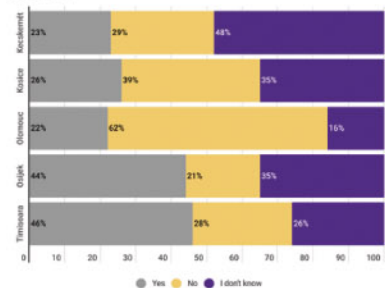


Project closing event
Budapest, 12-13 December 2019



SOME RESULTS FROM OUR QUESTIONNAIRE

A photograph showing three stacks of gold coins of increasing height from left to right. Each stack has a small green plant with two leaves growing out of the top. The scene is set against a blurred green background, suggesting an outdoor environment. A large, dark, curved shape is overlaid on the left side of the image.



OUR EXPERIENCE

Even if there were noticeable differences in public attitudes towards our unusual public appearance (somewhat reserved in Olomouc and more open and active in Timisoara) the following common elements of our experience are:

- public knowledge of EU cohesion policy even if it takes the form of concrete local projects and achievements is very limited;
- public interest and involvement even in local issues is seriously lagging behind the expected and necessary level;
- forget the top-down approach: if you talk to a citizen in the street as an attentive partner who is interested in his/her situation, attitude and opinion conditions are immediately created for a meaningful discussion. In this regard we only had positive experience; a few Eurosceptic remarks we received were coupled with concrete cases of improper local use of the Cohesion Fund;
- interest can and should be raised how to promote public debates on possible future local projects supported by the new generation of Cohesion Fund from 2021;
- concerted efforts are needed to point out the close linkage between a successful local cohesion policy project and its European dimension.

What would you spend more EU money on in YOUR REGION?

anti-corruption
environment tourism
communication
education
infrastructure^{sport}
health care
job creation culture
public transport
financial transparency

© European House, 2020

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted for commercial purposes in any form or by any means without the permission of the publisher. Parts of this publication may be reproduced for non-commercial purposes so long as the author and publisher are duly acknowledged.

This booklet is published in the frame of the
“Meet the Citizen: My way through the Europe Labyrinth” project.

www.eu4myregion.eu

The project is supported by the European Commission.

The contents of the publication do not necessarily reflect the opinion or position of the European Commission.

Designed and printed in Hungary

February 2020

OLOMOUČ

OSTRŮV

TRMŠOVÁ

KOŠICE

KECSELMÉT