



EU4MYREGION

Meet the Citizen 2.0

2020-2021



Co-funded by
the European Union



Meet the Citizen 2.0 is a 5-country communication project initiated and implemented by European House Budapest. The project aims to inform local citizens about the nature and achievements of EU cohesion policy in their region and builds on the results of the 'Meet the Citizen: My way through the Europe Labyrinth' project implemented in 2019.

All five project countries and the selected cities and their surroundings, Kecskemet in Hungary, Kosice in Slovakia, Osijek in Croatia, Olomouc in the Czech Republic and Timisoara in Romania are massive beneficiaries of EU cohesion policy.

The main project elements were:

- meeting local citizens at a railway station and on a train or other public places;
- youth meetings (agoral) in the 5 regions;
- a photo competition for young people on local achievements of cohesion policy using the eu4myregion app;
- participation at the European Week of Regions and Cities 2021 and at the EU Macro-Regional Strategies Week 2021
- 'Meet the contributors!' – study visit to Berlin and Stockholm;
- project result presentation to the EU institutions in Brussels.

These activities increase citizens' understanding of EU cohesion policy and how it influences their daily life using concrete examples. The whole programme was based on active and creative youth involvement. The project also aimed to contribute to the debate on Europe initiated by the Conference on the future of Europe.

WHAT IS THE EU COHESION POLICY?

EU Cohesion Policy contributes to strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion in the European Union. It aims to correct imbalances between countries and regions. It delivers on the Union's political priorities, especially the green and digital transition.

PRIORITIES FOR 2021-2027

In 2021-2027 EU cohesion policy has set a shorter, modern menu of **5 policy objectives** supporting growth for the period 2021-2027.

1. a more **competitive** and **smarter** Europe
2. a **greener**, low carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy
3. a more **connected** Europe by enhancing mobility
4. a more **social** and **inclusive** Europe
5. Europe closer to **citizens** by fostering the sustainable and integrated development of all types of territories

WHY 2021-2027?

The European Union 'budget' is planned for a period of seven years. It is called the **Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)**. It is laid down in a unanimously adopted Council Regulation with the consent of the European Parliament. The financial framework sets the maximum amount of spendings in the EU budget each year for broad policy areas ("headings") and fixes an overall annual ceiling on payment and commitments types of territories.

TIMETABLE OF MAIN PUBLIC EVENTS

From	To	Regional agora
Timisoara (RO)	Lugoj	10 September
Kosice (SK)	Celovec	20 September
Osijek (HR)	Djakovo	30 September
Olomouc (CZ)	Prerov	6 October
Kecskemet (HU)	Kiskunfelegyhaza	8 October
Berlin (DE)	24-26 October	
Stockholm (SE)	26-28 October	
Brussels (BE)	28-31 October	



TIMISOARA

LOGO



RESEARCH AREA
10 September 2021



THE PANDEMIC HAS CHANGED OUR LIFE. IN YOUR OPINION WHO WOULD BE THE BEST TO TAKE MEASURES AGAINST SUCH COMMON CHALLENGES?



ROMANIA

Timisoara

KOSICE  CELOVCE



REGIONAL AGORA
20 September 2021



THE PANDEMIC HAS CHANGED OUR LIFE. IN YOUR OPINION WHO WOULD BE THE BEST TO TAKE MEASURES AGAINST SUCH COMMON CHALLENGES?



OLOMOUČ

PREROV

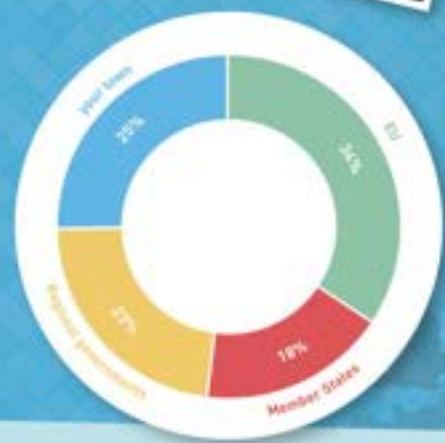


České dráhy GY401 0005
 1154 1073-903 09009 UPK020582
 06.10.21 13:54 Olomouc hl.n.
 Skupinová 2000 4 Trída 2
 jednosměrná Km. 22
 Z: Přerov
 Do: Olomouc hl.n.
 Prázdn. Gyppor

Platí od: 06.10.21
 07.10.21 06:00

Jízda mimo nastupení: 1 den platit
 Sleva: 2x

QR kód
 Jízdní lístek 100
 Číslo: 14301/22005
 Cena: Kč 129,-
 Platnost:



THE PANDEMIC HAS CHANGED OUR LIFE. IN YOUR OPINION WHO WOULD BE THE BEST TO TAKE MEASURES AGAINST SUCH COMMON CHALLENGES?



CZECH REPUBLIC

REGIONAL AGENDA
2021-2027

11 AVENUES. 11 PROPOSALS

PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY. THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS. CITIZENS' INVOLVEMENT. TRUST-BUILDING

With the adoption of the EU Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027 accompanied by a unique Recovery Plan conditions have been created to develop a more just, resilient and sustainable Europe. A robust and new cohesion policy is one of the cornerstones of this ambitious endeavour.

The 'Meet the Citizen 2.0' project of the European House covers 5 countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CZ, HU, HR, RO and SK); all of them are massive beneficiaries of the EU Cohesion Fund. Our 11 working papers indicate possible avenues how to use effectively these financial instruments in remote, less developed areas of these countries highlighting not only the importance of EU assistance in daily life of citizens but simultaneously contributing to reducing the still significant gap between the citizens and the EU institutions.

Each paper of ours offers not only a brief analyses of an important aspect of cohesion policy in Central and Eastern Europe but proposes also practical solutions for the involvement of citizens, their organisations and other stakeholders in practising partnership for making cohesion policy a success.

Discussion Paper 1



EU-funded by
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- Green, carbon-free Europe; climate change. The Paris Agreement
- Education – The Link between Digital Transformation and Lifelong Learning
- Social Europe
- Connectivity, transportation (waterways, trains, flights, bicycle tracks). The human dimension
- Communication, Europe closer to citizens. Social media. Vox humana
- Circular economy
- Tourism, cultural heritage
- Urbanisation
- Cross-border cooperation, European Cross-Border Mechanism
- Participatory democracy. The role of civil society organisations. Citizens' involvement. Trust-building
- European identity and European citizenship vis-à-vis regionalism/locality Complementarity



THE MAIN PROJECT ELEMENTS

- youth meetings lagoral in the 5 regions;
- participation at the European Week of Regions and Cities 2021 and at the EU Macro Regional Strategies Week 2021
- 'Meet me at the train station' - meeting local citizens at a railway station and on a train or other public places
- a photo competition for young people on local achievements of cohesion policy using the eu4myregion app;
- 'Meet the contributors!' - study visit to Berlin and Stockholm;
- project result presentation to the EU institutions in Brussels.

BERLIN



Study visit
24-26 October 2021



GERMANY



STOCKHOLM



Study visit
23-25 October 2021



SVERIGES 
RIKSDAG 
BESÖKARE
Lucia GONDÓVA
2021-10-27
Besöksmottagare:
Azadeh Rohan Gustafsson



SWEDEN

BRUSSELS



STUDY VISIT
29-31 October 2021



 Visiteur / Visitor / Besucher

Darius Constantin Medeleian

BU-5 29/10/2021

00096 29/10/2021 ASSOCIATIONS



BELGIUM



Regional Citizens' Cooperation on Conference on the future of Europe

The Conference on the future of Europe opens new opportunities for deepening the already existing cooperation between citizens and their organisations in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The Conference project has created a framework with fixed topics in order to deal with initiatives of any kind. This means that civil society organisations can make a relevant, feasible contribution to the future of Europe only if their initiatives are connected to the following 10 issue areas fixed by the European Union: 1. Climate change and environment; 2. Health; 3. A stronger economy, social justice and jobs; 4. EU in the world; 5. Values and rights, rule of law, security; 6. Digital transformation; 7. European democracy; 8. Migration; 9. Education, culture, youth and sport; 9. Other ideas.

Proposals remain on starting civil cooperation in CEE on the Conference project.

Need for specialisation, professionalisation

It has remained a big problem for civil actors that to joining large-scale, transboundary European projects they deal with a broad range of issues, are not specialized in concrete fields, e.g., education, employment, health and they lack expertise and capacities in those fields. (See opinions of the Commission regarding civil participation in Interreg and Erasmus+ programs). In order to avoid these difficulties in the present situation, civil actors in CEE should select one or two fields from the above mentioned 10 issue-areas of the Conference project.

Topics to select

Civil proposals on the future of Europe will be taken seriously only if they are connected to fields belonging to the EU common policies. Therefore, proposals of civil actors in CEE should cover the following fields: a.) Climate change and environment; b.) Job creation and c.) Digital transformation. Job creation and digitalization have been gaining greater public attention in the Covid crisis. This aspect can help a better communication of cooperation among civil actors in CEE on the Conference project.

Involving more professionals, more cooperation among civil actors in CEE

Specialisation and selection of topics make it necessary to involve more professional organisations. These actors can come from the civil but also from the business sector. Their participation in civil cooperation can foster innovative partnerships.

Identifying civil and social needs for contributing to the selected fields

What are tasks of civil actors in CEE, why and how should they contribute to the three fields recommended above? What will the consequences be if they are not involved in the work of shaping these European policy fields? These four questions will be discussed by setting up cooperation among civil actors in the CEE.

A macro-regional bottom-up approach

Civil collaboration in CEE on the Conference project should be guided by a bottom-up approach of NGOs working at macro-regional level. Civil participation in cooperation among different regions in the CEE can provide a unique macro-regional approach to social needs for contributing to climate change and environment, job creation and digital transformation.

Summary

The European House is ready to launch a new cooperation mechanism with its civil society partner organisations in the CEE aimed at contributing to the Conference project. In order to be efficient, this cooperation should focus on climate change and environment, job creation or digital transformation. The cooperation should at the same time involve more professional NGOs or actors in the business sector who are dealing with the fields listed above. The cooperation should involve NGOs having experience in working together at macro-regional level. It will be an additional innovative character of the cooperation if it is linked to the Interreg Cross Border Mechanism aimed at abolishing barriers among countries and regions and thus to bring Europe closer to its citizens.

Send us a picture!



Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary and Romania receive significant amount of money from the European Union's cohesion funds to reduce the gap between the regions of Europe.

The eu4myregion initiative coordinated by European House Budapest is a 5-country information project covering the regions of Kecskemet (HU), Osijek (HR), Olomouc (CZ), Kosice (SK) and Timisoara (RO) targeting young people.

What was the money spent on? What are the concrete examples of this support? Do you have a favourite project?



All you have to do is to participate in our competition and upload your selfies taken at one of the EU-funded sites. The best entries will be rewarded.

What should I do if I want to participate?

Step 1

Download the eu4myregion app from our website:
<https://www.eu4myregion.eu>

Step 2

Select at least one location/project what was funded by the EU

Step 3

Take a selfie in front of the site and do not forget to include the standard display panel with the text "This project is co-funded by the European Union".

Step 4

Upload the selfie into the app with a brief description/personal note.



You can upload multiple selfies from multiple locations.
Deadline of submission: Sunday, 31 October 2021

Prizes

- 1st prize: €500 (1 person)
- 2nd prize: €250 (1 person)
- 3rd prize: €100 (3 persons)

www.eu4myregion.eu

It is expected that at least 100 photos/region will be submitted. A person can upload more than one photo using the eu4myregion app.

The selfie competition is part of the Meet the citizen 2.0 project coordinated by European House Budapest and co-funded by the European Union.



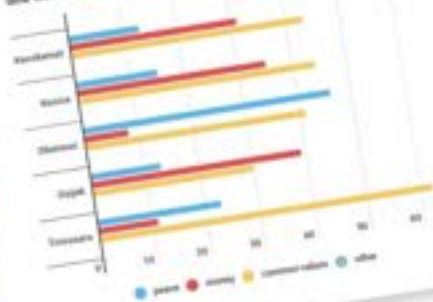
Co-funded by the European Union



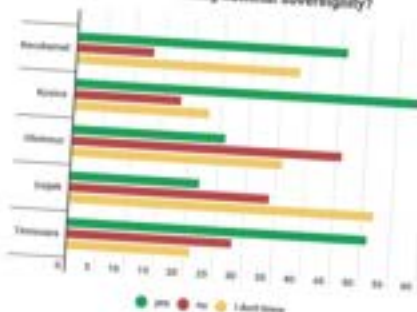


SELECTION OF ANSWERS TO OUR QUESTIONNAIRE

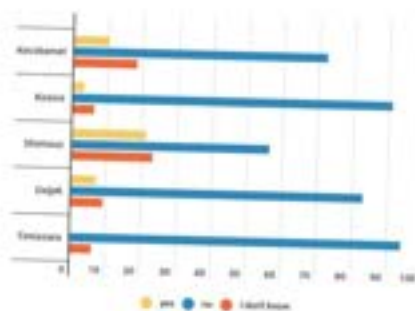
If you have to characterize the EU with ONE word which one would you choose? Please choose only ONE!



Would you support the increase of EU decision-making power even if it results in shrinking national sovereignty?



Would you support a national referendum on leaving the EU?



THE PANDEMIC CHANGED
OUR WORKING METHODS AS WELL

CONCLUSIONS AND FOLLOW-UP

- Our point of departure is that the public awareness understanding in the five massive cohesion funds recipient project countries (CZ, HR, HU, RO, SK) on the EU cohesion policy is still below of the EU average of 40% even if we noticed significant differences between regional centres and small settlements.
- The still on-going pandemic posed a special challenge to the implementation of the original project concept: meeting ordinary citizens in their local everyday environment. In that respect one of the most successful project programmes was the "Meet me at the train station" and travelling on local trains with citizens. Online events are important but they cannot replace personal contacts and discourse.
- The youth agoras showed us that young people can be involved and they have an opinion if conditions are created and they feel that their voice counts. Without this the successful implementation of the European Year of Youth 2022 cannot be achieved.
- A new and successful programme element was the "Meet the contributors!" study visit to Berlin, Stockholm and Brussels where meetings - whether with local citizens or decision-makers - created an atmosphere of trust, better understanding and the realisation of European interconnectedness. We all have a European identity and citizenship as well.
- One of the main discovery of the project participants is the hidden potential of macro-regions and the interdependence in our region. These are useful tools to counterbalance the still existing selfish, inward-looking and nationalistic tendencies.
- Special attention should be paid to the fact that the general practice in communication is that if a project is successful it is the merit of the Member State and its local stakeholders, if something does not work or goes wrong, the blame is put on the EU.
- The project was a very good example of channeling citizens voices from small villages to EU-level policy-makers during the European Week of Regions and Cities 2021 and the EU Macro-Regional Strategies Week 2021 against the backdrop of the Third Report on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies (2020).
- All these are important in the context of the ongoing Conference on the future of Europe with its multinational citizens panels but it cannot replace the not so visible and sometimes very tiring visits to neglected local villages or discussions on a local train.



AVAILABLE BUDGET OF COHESION POLICY 2021-2027

In 2021-2027 EU funds allocated to Cohesion Policy amount to EUR 292 billion. With the national co-financing, about half a trillion euro will be available to finance the programmes in the EU regions and countries.

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www.eu4myregion.eu

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