



The project “Joint Citizens’ Forces – Common European Future” was co-funded by the European Union under the “Europe for Citizens” Programme

**Applicable to the Strand 2 – Measure 2.2 “Networks of Towns”
Measure 2.3 “Civil Society Projects”
Strand 1 – “European Remembrance”**

5 events were carried out within this project:

Event 1

Participation: The event involved 109 citizens, including 64 participants from Slovenia, 7 from Italy, 5 from Austria, 4 from Montenegro, 4 from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 3 from Portugal, 3 from Croatia, 2 from Belgium, 2 from Denmark, 2 from Hungary, 2 from Czech Republic, 1 from Georgia, 1 from the Netherlands, 1 from Germany, 1 from Switzerland, 1 from Sweden, 1 from the United States of America, 1 from San Marino, 1 from Bulgaria, 1 from Serbia, 1 from France, and 1 from the United Kingdom.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Ljubljana (Slovenia), from 01/12/2017 to 03/12/2017.

Short description: The aim of the event was to discuss the state of the EU and the outlook for its future development. In five sessions the discussions offered exchanges of different views on the concept of European citizenship, the relationship between EU institutions and member states, European institutional reform, translating EU policies to the national level, and the future of the European Union. Participants agreed that the EU lacks strong leadership, a clear vision for development, and political unity. In order to decrease the democratic deficit, a European institutional reform is necessary, and member states should respect one of the core European principles—subsidiarity. Citizens should be encouraged to get involved in EU discussions and the policy-making process, which is the best cure for the raise of Euroscepticism and populisms.

Event 2

Participation: The event involved 68 citizens, including 50 participants from Italy, 2 from the Netherlands, 2 from Russia, 2 from Spain, 10 from Slovenia, 1 from Austria, and 1 from the United States of America.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Florence (Italy), from 07/05/2018 to 08/05/2018.

Short description: The aim of the event was to discuss the rise and dangers of Euroscepticism in the EU, the role of the media in addressing this phenomenon and in the European integration process, as well as the perspectives of other global players about the EU. Guest speakers agreed that the media play a major role in citizens’ perception of the EU. The EU should strive to promote more its good practices and success stories rather than negative political background games. European political disunity serves perfectly into the interests of global players, which would like to see Europe rather weak. A clear message

was drawn that the EU should merge its innovative, research and development potentials to better cope with global challenges.

Event 3

Participation: The event involved 80 citizens, including 37 from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 13 from Slovenia, 9 from Croatia, 7 from Germany, 3 from Hungary, 3 from Montenegro, 3 from Austria, 3 from Macedonia, 1 from France, and 1 from the United States of America.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Orašje (Bosnia and Herzegovina), from 25/05/2018 to 27/05/2018.

Short description: The aim of the event was to discuss the three key challenges facing Southeast Europe: the EU's messages to the countries of Southeast Europe regarding their European perspective, the role and contribution of multiculturalism in Southeast Europe to multiculturalism in Europe, and cross-border cooperation as an instrument of European integration. One of the conference conclusions was that Euroscepticism has not yet cut in the countries of the Western Balkans, but if the EU does not give them a clear enlargement signal, citizens' support for the EU might be at risk. The attendance at the conference featured esteemed representatives of universities, research institutions and NGOs, as well as politicians and members of the diplomatic corps.

Event 4

Participation: The event involved 53 citizens, including 23 participants from Hungary, 17 from Slovenia, 2 from Italy, 2 from Czech Republic, 2 from France, 2 from Austria, 1 from Spain, 1 from Denmark, 1 from Belgium, 1 from Slovakia, and 1 from the United States of America.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Szentendre (Hungary), from 26/10/2018 to 27/10/2018.

Short description: The aim of the event was to shed light on the challenges brought about by Euroscepticism and different forms of populism for the present and especially the future set-up of the European Union. The EU is under increasing pressure from different forces that doubt the efficiency and even the rationality of European integration, so they resort to populist rhetoric, as well as nationalism, and mostly blame European institutions for domestic political problems. The speakers agreed that political populism and Euroscepticism feed mostly on poor knowledge about the historical value of the European project—and European policies in particular—which is why communication between citizens and European institutions needs to be improved. The event featured 4 panel discussions, opening addresses, a keynote speech and an active moderated discussion of participants.

Event 5

Participation: The event involved 301 citizens, including 160 from Austria, 34 from Ukraine, 22 from Germany, 19 from Hungary, 19 from Slovenia, 5 from Spain, 5 from France, 5 from Italy, 4 from Kosovo, 4 from Croatia, 4 from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 4 from Montenegro, 3 from Slovakia, 3 from Czech Republic, 1 from Latvia, 1 from Switzerland, 1 from Denmark, 1 from Belgium, 1 from Luxemburg, 1 from Poland, 1 from San Marino, 1 from Greece, 1 from Finland, and 1 from Georgia.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Vienna (Austria), from 15/02/2019 to 17/02/2019.

Short description: The aim of the event was to discuss the future of the European Union and the challenges ahead, with a particular focus on how to make EU member states more united in policy-making processes. As citizens pointed out, they are highly interested in the coming European elections, but they would like to get impartial information from the media on how EU policies affect their daily lives. One major emphasis was on how to limit the rise of populisms and Euroscepticism, which are considered a life threat for the EU. Politicians agreed that their communication strategies should change and return to the path of evidence-based discussions, not being dragged down to the level of social media show games. This was also considered the path to raising trust in EU politics and thus the future of the EU.