

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	
Participant:	1 - Town Klanjec (Klanjec)
PIC number:	938892392
Project name and acronym:	Time of Crisis – A Chance for European unity - Crisis in EU

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	1
Event name:	Crisis in EU
Type:	Citizens' meeting
In situ/online:	in-situ
Location:	Klanjec / Zagreb (Croatia)
Date(s):	27.-30.04.2023.
Website(s) (if any):	n/a
Participants	
Female:	205
Male:	168
Non-binary:	0
From country 1 Croatia:	130
From country 2 Poland:	33
From country 3 Austria:	32
From country 4 Czech Republic:	14
From country 5 Hungary:	16
From country 6 Slovakia:	14
From country 7 Spain:	8
From country 8 Romania:	12

From country 9 Slovenia:	48	
From country 10 Malta	8	
From country 11 Bosnia and Herzegovina	27	
From country 12 Serbia	31	
Total number of participants:	373	From total number of countries: 12

Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

The 4-day event Crisis in EU consisted of 15 different activities (workshops, debates, presentations and seminars) and informal gatherings that enabled participants to take part in discussions and exchanges of opinion on the current issues that the EU is facing.

The first day, 27/04/2023 was dedicated to the arrival of participants, their accommodation, and then project activities starting with the Opening conference, institutional greetings, presentation about the timetable of activities, and welcome dinner. We also held the project team meeting with coordinators from partner organizations.

On the second day, 28/04/2023 planned project activities started - workshops, presentations, seminars, debates, and discussions. Given the large number of direct participants in the activities, the participation of citizens in certain activities was agreed upon with the coordinators, in accordance with the expressed interests in certain topics, through ZOOM preparatory meeting held before the event. Part of the participants traveled to Zagreb and visited Croatian Parliament where the discussion "Differences between EU member states that compromise solidarity within the Union" and the seminar and discussion "EU level asylum - yes or no?" was held with the participation of Croatian parliamentarians, along with the official reception of the participants by the President of the Domestic Policy and National Security Committee. Participants also briefly attended the plenary session of the Croatian Parliament and got acquainted with its work. It was a platform for participants to express their opinions and thoughts about civil participation in decision-making processes on the EU level. Discussions showed there is not enough interaction and dialogue between citizens and elected representatives in EU Parliament. The common attitude of the participants expressed during these activities is that without solidarity there is no EU because the basis of its existence is lost. Insisting on solidarity, especially towards the most sensitive groups of citizens, but also towards those who are not part of the EU (Ukraine) is the best way to fight Euroscepticism.

The European House in Zagreb hosted the discussion "Human rights protection and fight against racism", the workshop "EU is a project of peace - will we give up?" and the seminar "EU Cohesion Policy - decreasing unequally in health care of EU citizens". A short presentation presented the EU institutions and their work, as well as the ways in which EU citizens can participate in decision-making processes. Some of the participants shared their personal experiences in public online discussions about the future of the EU. This encouraged others to start thinking about how there are channels through which they can convey their ideas, solutions, and criticism.

Some of the younger participants started with the experts from the House Collective a three-day workshop "Making short videos on equality - We different outside, but the same inside" with the seminar "Equal rights of rural areas to access digital technologies. The association "House Collective", which operates in a rural area, shared its positive experiences in the active involvement of the residents, especially the elderly, in education and projects involving digital technology. During the workshop, the participants were continuously educated about the increase and the need to prevent racist and hateful posts on social media.

On the third day of the event (29/04/2023), in cooperation with the Regional Energy Agency, the presentation "Community energy for energy solidarity" and the workshop "Accelerator of citizens energy" were organized. REGEA shared very interesting examples of good practices that it is intensively working on, some of which are already in use, and citizens were given the opportunity to give their comments and ideas related to solutions for EU energy independence. This actual topic aroused great interest from the participants who showed great interest in the solutions offered by community energy. They also expressed the point of view that without the direct involvement of each individual and changes in our habits, the European Green Deal will not produce the results we all want.

During the "New European Bauhaus" workshop, participants shared ideas from their communities that they believe fit into this EU policy, and further exchange of ideas and cooperation between representatives of cities and municipalities on possible joint projects was agreed upon. At the presentation "My personal story is not abstract figure - listen to me and try to understand", a refugee from Ukraine Olha Nekhrysheva shared the experience of her family's war suffering in Kherson, the refugee journey and creating a new life in Croatia. The participants had a very emotional experience of her story and gave a big round of applause to the Red Cross volunteers who take care of the refugees. The debate, which was very proactive afterward, revealed different approaches to migrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Romania, Malta, and Spain. The participants expressed their opinion on the need for a harmonized EU migrant policy, without exceptions for individual members, the need for humane relations,

and the protection of the human rights of migrants, especially women and children. The participants from Slovenia once again expressed their position on the wrong policy of their country, which placed razor wire on the border with Croatia that destroyed flora and fauna and had no impact on the movement of migrants. During the meeting, two evening cultural and artistic programs were held and the cultural diversity of the participants was presented, and once again it was shown that the multicultural EU values should be nurtured and developed. Short videos from the joint workshop on equality, anti-racism, and EU fundamental values were also shown.

On the fourth day, in cooperation with the Center for Peace Studies, a debate on the impact of COVID-19 and isolation on the increase in family violence and violence against women was organized. The discussion showed that all participants support zero tolerance on violence, the women especially emphasized the need for every citizen to personally react if they find out about the violence in their environment and that institutional assistance to victims of violence should be continuously improved, and that only the community can encourage them and that positive attitudes and enthusiasm of EU citizens can contribute to a stable future of the EU.

At the final conference where agreements were signed on future cooperation in Town Twinning and Network of Towns projects and joint action on the promotion of EU values, the desire was clearly expressed that in the future the EU becomes more of a Union of citizens, and that in order to achieve this, we must insist on achieving the fundamental values on which the EU is founded and on the greater participation of citizens in the democratic life of the EU.

Key conclusions that participants named are:

- 1) Migrant crisis, changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the energy crisis, inflation show how only if we are united, we can more easily resist in times of crisis and that the only safe way for the survival and further development of the EU in the future is to return to and insist on fundamental values on which the Union is founded upon;
- 2) Security is very important to citizens; they are worried about current geopolitical events and expect better and much clearer concept of defense and in advance planned clearer EU policy for crisis situations;
- 3) Given that a large number of participants come from countries with less developed economies, they hope that the European Green Deal and NextGeneration EU will really succeed and that the differences in the regional development of the EU will be reduced in this way. They agreed that this is exactly how Europe is envisioned, as a Union in which they would like to live in the future;
- 4) Pluralism of opinions expressed during the meeting, balanced participation of citizens of different gender, age, national and religious affiliation, geographical distribution of partner organizations, participation of partners from non-member countries, representatives of national minorities, local public bodies, civil society organizations, volunteers, experts for certain EU policies, intercultural exchange during the meeting, were evaluated by the participants as a very useful experience and an important incentive for their participation in the new CERV programs, which they will recommend to other citizens and organizations;
- 5) The participants concluded that this CERV program also showed that it is possible to reach common conclusions through a constructive exchange of opinions, reasoned discussion, respect for diversity and tolerance, and that this is exactly the way decisions should be made at the EU level with as much citizen participation as possible.

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