

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:	Be positive – the future of Europe is in your hands – Be positive

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	1
Event name:	Be positive
Type:	Citizen's meeting
In situ/online:	in-situ
Location:	Croatia (Klanjec / Zagreb)
Date(s):	03.-06.10.2024.
Website(s) (if any):	www.klanjec.hr
Participants	
Female:	197
Male:	174
Non-binary:	0
From country 1 Croatia:	148
From country 2 Poland:	27
From country 3 Greece:	8
From country 4 Austria:	12
From country 5 Czech Republic:	16
From country 6 Hungary:	18
From country 7 Slovakia:	22
From country 8 Spain:	8
From country 9 Romania:	8

From country 10 Slovenia:	38		
From country 11 Malta:	10		
From country 12 Bosnia and Herzegovina:	27		
From country 13 Serbia:	29		
Total number of participants:	371	From total number of countries:	13

Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

The project *Be Positive - The Future of Europe is in Your Hands* project as part of the Town Twinning Program, was organized by the Town Klanjec as the lead partner from October 3rd to October 6th, 2024. This four-day gathering of citizens included 11 different activities (workshops, debates, presentations, and seminars) and a two-day evening cultural and music program with informal participant gatherings. These activities allowed participants to engage proactively in discussions, exchange opinions on current EU policies, and voice critical perspectives as well as propose solutions to existing issues.

The diversity of opinions expressed, balanced participation of citizens of different genders, ages, nationalities, and religious affiliations, the geographical distribution of partner organizations, and the inclusion of partners from non-EU countries, representatives of national minorities, local public bodies, civil society organizations, volunteers, and EU policy experts contributed to the success of the seventh Town Twinning Program held in Klanjec in achieving its goals.

On the first day, October 3rd, 2024, participants arrived and were accommodated. Project activities started with a project team meeting with coordinators from partner organizations, followed by an introductory conference where the meeting agenda, main goals, and the overall CERV program were presented. Due to the high number of participants, citizen involvement in specific activities was arranged with coordinators based on prior interest in particular topics. A welcome dinner was hosted by the mayor of Klanjec.

On the second day, October 4th, 2024, planned activities such as workshops, presentations, discussions, and panels began at four different locations. Moderators from LAG Zagorje - Sutla organized the seminar *It's Time for Your Voice to Be Heard!* with a detailed analysis of citizen turnout in the 2024 EU parliamentary elections, especially focusing on youth turnout. The seminar sparked an engaging discussion in which young participants shared their reasons for voting or not voting in elections, both for the EU parliament and at national and local levels, and discussed ways to increase youth political engagement.

The discussion *The Possibilities for Youth in Rural Areas – The Question of Emigration* enabled participants to talk with the member of European Parliament Marko Vešligaj about the challenges young people face in rural areas, sharing personal experiences and noting the differences in challenges faced by participants from EU member countries versus those from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Participants observed that less developed areas experience a more pronounced departure of young residents due to limited services in rural regions. The discussion highlighted a lack of interaction between citizens and EU parliament representatives, with a shared view that a true future for the EU requires solidarity-based policies across all member states.

Workshops like *Elderly Europeans versus Young Europeans – Can We Collaborate?* were moderated by David M. Schembri, the mayor of Qrendi, Malta, who brought energy and a genuine interest in the EU's future despite being over 70. Inspired by his workshop, young participants showed enthusiasm for future involvement in similar projects, which was seen as a valuable outcome.

Some participants attended *Our Participation in Projects That Promote EU Values*, led by Andrea Neira Ferrero from Spain's Federation of Youth Associations for European Mobility, where EU programs available to young Europeans were presented. Future collaboration and potential joint projects within the CERV and Erasmus+ programs were agreed upon.

The discussion *Independence of Media and Freedom of Speech*, led by Hungarian partners, encouraged participants to address current issues like fake news and media independence under political pressures, as well as challenges like hate speech, racism, and intolerance on social media.

In the late afternoon, a workshop titled *Walk, Run, Think, Talk!* was held, engaging participants in light-hearted tasks promoting core EU values, such as environmental protection and respect for

cultural and linguistic diversity. Participants formed groups by language area, with tasks designed to encourage interaction and connection.

On the third day, October 5th, 2024, digital platforms and tools available to EU citizens for influencing EU-level decision-making were presented, including the youth portal youth.europa.eu. Discussions opened on Euroscepticism and human rights protection, particularly for migrants, minorities, and vulnerable groups. Representatives from the city of Wilamowice shared successful EU-funded projects that transformed their city, sparking debate on whether European solidarity and balanced development could reduce Euroscepticism.

The workshop *European Green Deal in the Focus of the Youth* concluded with a decision to focus the next Klanjec citizens' meeting on EU green policies and their implementation in partner communities.

Key conclusions drawn by participants included:

1. The importance of promoting participatory democracy at the EU level and encouraging citizens to make their voices heard.
2. A need for cohesion policies based on solidarity, providing uniform quality of life and economic stability across EU member states.
3. The essential role of digital connectivity, transportation infrastructure, and social life quality in retaining youth in rural areas.
4. Clearer EU stances on potential expansion for non-member states.
5. Respect for differing views, including Euroscepticism, and the value of open dialogue, exchanging ideas and experiences among diverse citizens.

It was concluded that the next meeting, potentially with new partners, would focus on EU green policies and local-level activities within the European Green Deal.

HISTORY OF CHANGES

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