

alda*



European Association
for Local Democracy

Deliverable D2.1

**“Analyses of the impact of
Europe for Citizens at the
local level”**



Citizens, Equality, Rights
and Values programme



Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
ABSTRACTS	3
1. FOREWORD	4
ALDA's commitment to the "Europe for Citizens" priorities	4
Methodology	6
2. EUROPE FOR CITIZENS PROGRAMME 2014-2020	8
Strand 1. European remembrance — the EU as a peace project	12
Strand 2. Democratic engagement & civic participation — getting citizens involved	13
3. ANALYSIS OF FUNDED PROJECTS	14
A. Programme strands and priorities	16
B. Activities and Methodologies within the projects	19
C. Beneficiaries	24
D. Partners involved	28
E. Resources	31
4. CASE STUDIES AND GOOD PRACTICES	34
ACHIEVE - the project at a glance	35
ACHIEVE – GOOD PRACTICES	39
STAR - the project at a glance	42
STAR – GOOD PRACTICES	46
RECOV - the project at a glance	49
RECOV – GOOD PRACTICES	51
5. LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS	53
I. Activities	53
II. Beneficiaries	54
III. Partnership	55
IV. Resources	55
V. Follow-up and Sustainability	56



Abstracts

This paper examines the impact of Europe for Citizens at the local level by showing the analyses of the projects funded by the Multiannual Programme (2014-2020), where ALDA was beneficiary.

The Lisbon Treaty led to a number of changes towards bringing the Union closer to its citizens and fostering greater cross-border debate, by introducing a whole new dimension of **participatory democracy**. Considering citizenship as a relevant element in strengthening the process of European integration, the Europe for Citizens Programme is a crucial instrument aimed at getting the European people more aware and active for assuming a shared history and values, and a greater sense of belonging.

For the analyses of the impact of this Programme, we collected and organised data from 24 closed projects based on **key criteria** linked to the programme priorities, the typologies of activities realised, the involvement of beneficiaries and partners, and the related economic resources.

Lessons learned and **main findings** are highlighted to describe qualitative results of the projects at the local level, based on the kind of methodologies implemented. Innovative approach of the activities may attract and involve citizens actively in a more stimulating way, even if this requires more energy in the planning and implementation phase. The effectiveness and impact of projects, especially for local actions, can be greatly influenced by the citizen mobilisation, organisational capacity and technical ability of each partner. Therefore our main recommendations are linked to the composition of the partnership. It turns out to be fundamental in terms of thematic contribution partners can make to the thematic priority on which the project wants to affect, in terms of geographical balance and management skills in the implementation at local and transnational level.

Some useful tips and more strategic **recommendations** are described with respect to these points and other considerations. However, we consider this work and its methodology providing a good basis to analyse the next steps of the Programme, in light of the new Multiannual framework and ALDA's continuous commitment to promoting European values and wider citizens participation.



1. Foreword

This document was developed by ALDA staff within the project “ALDA Work Program 2022 Local Democracy: shaping the future together” funded by Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV) - Operating Grant.

The purpose of the document is to highlight the impacts of the Programme through funded projects between 2014-2020. ALDA has been one of the beneficiaries of Programme funding for many years, thanks to its commitment to the promotion of European values, democratic engagement and civic participation.

According to its mission, ALDA intends to enhance and give voice to what is moving from the partnerships of civil society organisations and local authorities to contribute to the current challenges for a more inclusive and sustainable European society. The points of reflection on which we want to contribute with this document therefore start from the grounding of our actions that directly involve citizens and civil society in the projects’ implementation.

ALDA's commitment to the “Europe for Citizens” priorities

ALDA - The European Association for Local Democracy promotes good governance and active citizen participation at the local level by focusing on activities that facilitate cooperation between local authorities and civil society.

When we speak about civil society the scope is very wide and includes diverse kind of organisations, change-makers, every organisation and every person that could drive change and provoke positive impact in the societies.

ALDA, established in 1999 at the initiative of the Council of Europe to coordinate and support the network of Local Democracy Agencies, self-sustainable, locally registered NGOs. ALDA is a membership-based organisation with more than 300 members (including local authorities, associations of local authorities, and civil society organisations).

Its members, local and regional authorities, associations of local authorities, civil society organizations, individuals, organization and authorities with experience, knowledge, skills and heart to make participative democracy possible and create stable, diverse and dynamic societies with responsible, responsive and Democratic Governance.

Since its establishment in 1999, the European Association of Local Democracy has operated in a rapidly changing contexts of decentralization, increased attention for good local governance and active citizens participation which influenced the work of ALDA in the first 10 years to respond to those changes and evolving issues.

ALDA's values are deeply rooted in all ALDA's projects, no matter if ALDA is a project partner or project leader/coordinator. In each ALDA's initiative the value of partnership and exchange of knowledge and experience and respect for basic principles of "living together":

“The value of links and exchanges between countries at the local level by promoting the sharing of the knowledge and best practices and committing to the fact that the activities and the programs are developed and implemented in the respect of those founding principles



which are the basis and the reason for being of ALDA. The value of Europe as a peaceful and constructive space of cooperation among citizens respecting their diversities” are strongly present and create an open space for dialogue, support and development.

ALDA’s political trends and mission are extremely in line with the priorities of the Europe for Citizens Programme, which is why the Organisation's commitment has been implemented through numerous projects funded within it, and will continue to be an important combination in the future. After +20 years of consistent growth and recognition among stakeholders and beneficiaries, ALDA continues its mission to support and build capacities of authorities and civil society aiming to provide citizens with knowledge and skills needed for building and living in a society based on participative democracy.

Working with and for local resilient communities is necessary to address the future challenges from a democratic, environmental, social and economic point of view. Democracy and citizens’ engagement are and will be a key factor for unlocking positive and constructive proposals for the future and ALDA, together with its members and partners, should be at the centre of concrete proposals and activators of positive changes, based on the main political trends as follows:

- **DEMOCRACY** in all of its dimensions by supporting and creating the needed conditions for developing fruitful outputs for the whole society; with free and fair elections; implementation of the rule of law; fair and effective institutions; and, in particular at the local level, informed, prepared and engaged citizens.
- **DECENTRALISATION** and **SUBSIDIARITY** in governance empowering local and regional authorities.
- **PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE** engaging elected representatives and civil servants and citizens; strong and free civil society in a multi-stakeholder approach.
- The role of a **DEEP AND STRONG EUROPE**, contributing to shaping the **FUTURE OF EUROPE**, by increasing inputs and making it a project for all local communities and EU citizens, fostering economic and social cohesion and being an actor of peace and fair development in the World.
- The **RESILIENCE OF INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES** towards the crisis, respectful of human rights and minorities, promoting and “activating” **SOLIDARITY** in all its forms.
- The actions tackling the **BIG CHALLENGES OF THE WORLD**: minimising the environmental impact of our actions and combating climate change, fostering **INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE** and mutual understanding, addressing the issues of restructured economic model, bearing in mind the challenges to democracy and migration of population all over the world as well as the demographic ones.
- Synergy and action between **DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT** on the local level.
- Going towards a **FULL ACCESSION OF THE WESTERN BALKAN** countries to the EU.



- An even stronger and deeper value-based association with the countries of the EASTERN AND SOUTHERN NEIGHBOURHOODS of the EU.

Methodology

The structure of this document presents the results of the various work phases.

Chapter 2 - Europe for Citizens Programme 2014-2020 introduces the framework of the Programme in terms of directions, priorities and resources. It also presents a brief summary of the Strands and Sub-activities that characterised the Programme's operation.

Chapter 3 - Analysis of funded projects presents the results of the project analysis. In order to deepen the programme's impact, it was decided to analyse a selection of projects implemented by ALDA and financed under "Europe for Citizens" in the 2014 - 2020.

The findings presented in this document are based on the information collected from the key documents available including online resources (websites, media coverage, etc.), developed directly by ALDA or in cooperation with other partners within the projects' consortia.

The process included:

- ☐ Internal meeting to frame the process, assure the elements of the database/matrix; to assure availability of information, identify key documents to support the process.
- ☐ Preparation of the matrix projects database, which set the elements to evaluate and to organize the information, analyse and provide insight.
- ☐ Data collection, transformation, standardizing of data format. Collection of data related to:

- Projects linked to the Programme strands
- Kind and number of Actions and methodology within the projects
- Partners involved in (Local Authorities and Civil Society Organisations)
- Countries of implementation
- Beneficiaries
- Resources, in terms of budget, co-funding and allocation to ALDA.

The results presented in this document are based on desk research and, above all, the analysis of the databased projects in the period from 2014 until 2020, corresponding to the multi-annual framework of the Europe for Citizens Programme.

Annex I presents the list of the analysed projects.

Chapter 4 - Good practices intends to show some particularly relevant experiences of recently concluded projects. This part allows a more qualitative reflection on certain types of activities and their impact on the communities and beneficiaries involved.



Chapter 5 - Lessons learned and recommendations seeks to systematise and capitalise on the experiences of ALDA during 2014-2020 with respect to the Programme, highlighting points for reflection and lessons learned.



Citizens, Equality, Rights
and Values programme



2. Europe for Citizens Programme 2014-2020

Multiannual Financial Framework

The Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), or the EU's long-term budget, lays down how much the European Union can invest over 7 years – on projects and programmes that strengthen Europe's future. The MFF ensures a stable and predictable inflow of resources for the Union's long-term priorities. The fifth MFF covering the period 2014-2020 was adopted on 2 December 2013. It applies from 1 January 2014 and it sets the limits for the EU's expenditure, both as a whole and for key areas.

The concept of a multiannual financial perspective was developed in the 80s as an attempt to reduce conflict, strengthen budgetary rules and improve planning between European institutions. Later on the Treaty of Lisbon transformed the MFF from an interinstitutional agreement into a Council regulation subject to the consent of the European Parliament. Nowadays, The Multiannual Financial Framework is an expression of the political priorities set in a certain period at the EU level. The 2014-2020 MFF was the first to be adopted under the new provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon, according to which the Council, acting in accordance with a special legislative procedure, must unanimously adopt the MFF Regulation after having obtained the consent of Parliament.¹

The MFF for 2014-2020 enabled the European Union to spend up to €959.51 billion in commitments and €908.40 billion in payments over the course of its duration. The EU's expenditure for 2014-2020 was divided into six branches, called "headings".

1a. Competitiveness for growth and jobs (€142 billion)

aiming at strengthening the labour market and regional economies.

1b. Economic, social and territorial cohesion (€371 billion)

Aiming at strengthening the economic, social and territorial cohesion of the European Union in the interests of promoting sustainable development.

2. Sustainable growth: natural resources (€372.93 billion)

- Common agricultural policy (CAP)
- Common fisheries policy
- Environmental action

3. Security and citizenship (€15.67 billion)

- Asylum and migration
- External borders and internal security
- Democracy and Citizens Engagement

¹ Fact Sheets on the European Union - 2022. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/ftu/pdf/en/FTU_1.4.3.pdf



4. Global Europe (€58.70 billion)

EU's action at international level, including humanitarian aid and development assistance.

5. Administration (€61.63 billion)

This amount has been cut by €2.5 billion compared to the previous MFF as a result of the EU's effort to consolidate public finances.

6. Compensation (€27 million). The amount was made available in 2014 to ensure that Croatia didn't contribute to the EU budget more than it benefited from it during the first year following its accession to the European Union.

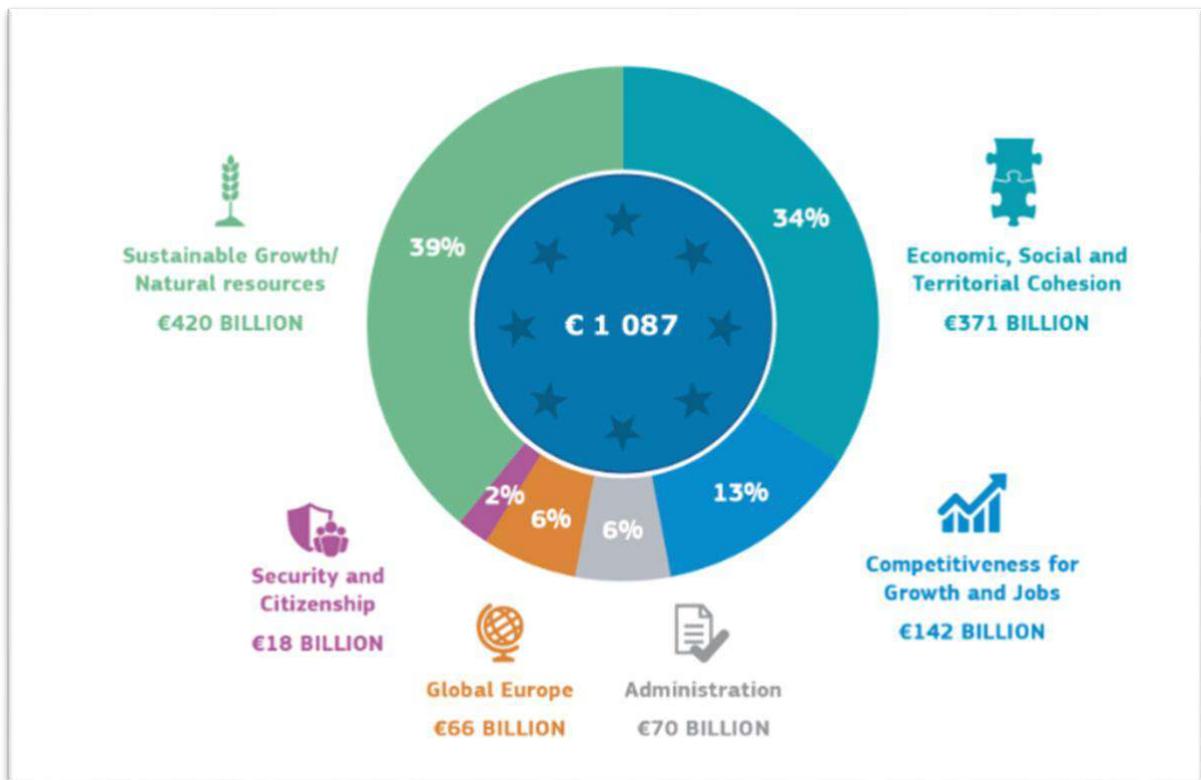


Figure 1

Source: [European Commission, EU funding programmes 2014-2020](#)

Europe for Citizens

With reference to the above-mentioned MFF objectives, priorities and funding mechanisms, the Europe for Citizens programme is established under the third heading (Security and citizenship) of the 2014-2020 MFF.

Within the framework of the Treaty establishing the European Community and especially Article 151, claiming that *“The Community shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same*

*time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore*², the Europe for Citizens (EFC) Programme was established for the first time for the period 2007-2013.

Among other things, the Programme was aimed at *“giving citizens the opportunity to interact and participate in constructing an ever closer Europe, which is democratic and world-oriented, united in and enriched through its cultural diversity, thus developing citizenship of the European Union”*.³ Consistent with the main scope of the programme, its general objectives encompassed: *developing a sense of European identity; fostering a sense of ownership of the European Union among its citizens; enhancing tolerance and mutual understanding between European citizens*.⁴

The 2007-2013 EFC provided financial support to citizens and civil society organisations (CSOs) from all Member States through three mechanisms, namely project grants, Operating Grants, and service contracts. The projects that could be funded were articulated in four different action strands:

- **Action 1:** Active citizens for Europe
- **Action 2:** Active civil society in Europe
- **Action 3:** Together for Europe
- **Action 4:** Active European remembrance.

Its total budget was EUR 215 million which went on 6 500 projects which reached 7 million people during the 2011-2013 period.⁵ Considering the success of the first programming period and the potential for improvements that resulted from its monitoring and external evaluations, a second programming period was envisioned and a renewed Europe for Citizens programme was established.

The Commission intended to maximise the impact of the EFC programme, enhancing its scope and actions. Nevertheless the programme budget was not increased and amounted to EUR 187 718 000 for the 2014-2020 programme period⁶, consistent with the reduction in the overall MMF resulting from the significant pressure on member states' budgets after the financial crisis of the previous years.

Within this framework, the renewed general objective of the programme were the following:

- to contribute to citizens' understanding of the Union, its history and diversity;
- to foster European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level.⁷

² Treaty establishing the European Community (Nice consolidated version). Official Journal C 325 , 24/12/2002.

³ DECISION No 1904/2006/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 12 December 2006 establishing for the period 2007 to 2013 the programme 'Europe for Citizens' to promote active European citizenship.

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ Mid-term evaluation of the Europe for Citizens Programme 2014-2020. Final Report. September 2017.

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 of 14 April 2014 establishing the 'Europe for Citizens' programme for the period 2014-2020.



Throughout 2014-2020, 1215 projects were funded under the programme, with reaching out around 7 million citizens and CSOs as direct or indirect beneficiaries.⁸

Funding Streams

The EFC programme 2014-2020 was articulated in two strands, namely:

1. European remembrance;
2. Democratic engagement and civic participation.

Beside the two main strands, an “Horizontal Action” was foreseen as a complementary pillar dedicated to the analysis, dissemination and use of the programme results.

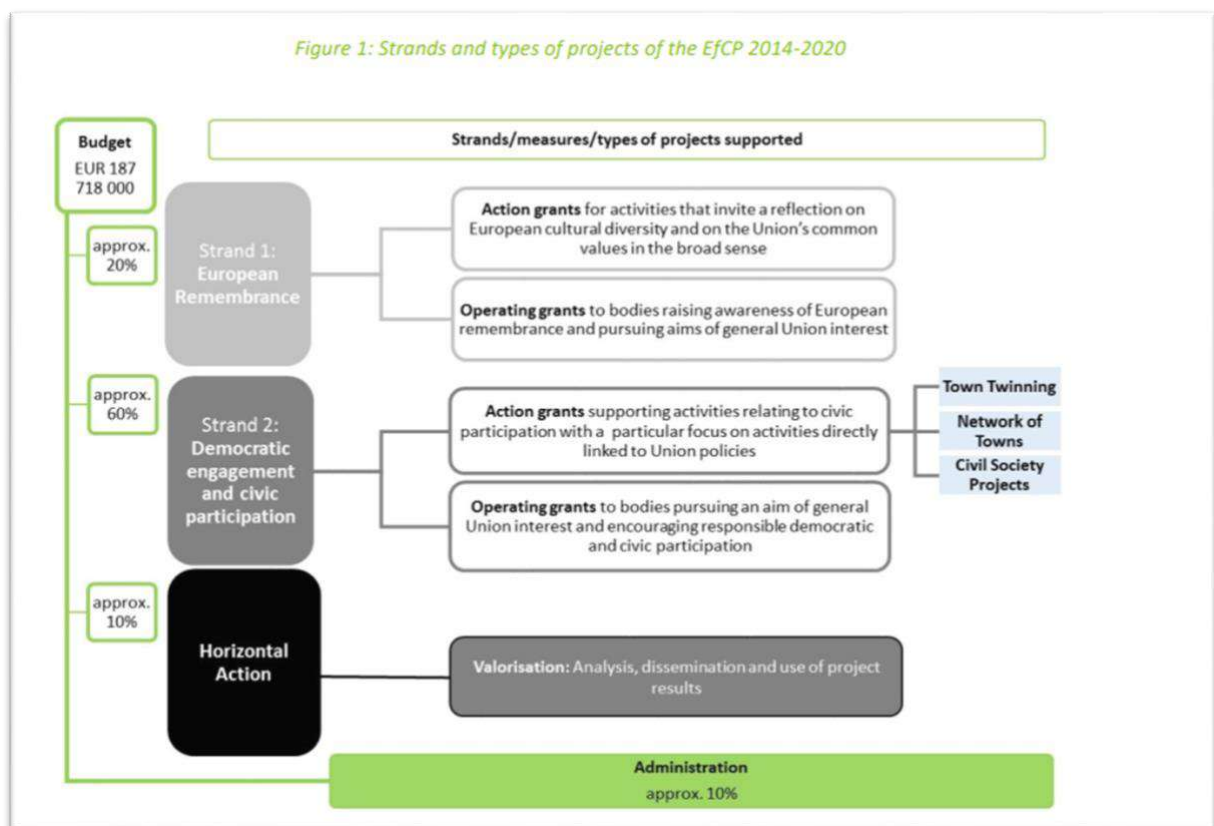


Figure 2

Source: Study Team, based on The EFCP Regulation⁹

Moreover, the funding mechanisms were changed and simplified compared to the previous programming period, resulting in Action Grants and Operating Grants only for each strand. Action grants funded specific actions intended to help achieve one or more programme priorities. On the other hand, the operating grants funded operating costs of organisations that are regularly pursuing one or more objectives consistent with the programme priorities.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Mid-term evaluation of the Europe for Citizens Programme 2014-2020. Final Report. September 2017.

Strand 1. European remembrance — the EU as a peace project

The programme supports initiatives that:

- discuss why and how the totalitarian regimes that blighted Europe's modern history came into power
- look at the EU's other defining moments and reference points
- consider different historical perspectives



Throughout the entire programming period annual or biannual work programmes were published, setting core priorities and objectives on a regular basis and listing the eligible historical events that could be commemorated through project proposals.

For examples, priorities for 2019 and 2020 encompassed:

- commemorations of major historical turning points in recent European history
- civil society and civic participation under totalitarian regimes
- antisemitism, anti-gypsyism, xenophobia, homophobia and other forms of intolerance: drawing the lessons for today
- democratic transition and accession to the European Union.

Strand 2. Democratic engagement & civic participation — getting citizens involved

This strand is further articulated in different possible actions:

- **Town twinning**
Projects bringing together citizens from twinned towns to debate issues on the European political agenda. The aim is to create opportunities for people to engage with each other and to volunteer at EU level.
- **Networks of towns**
Towns are encouraged to cooperate with each other in the long term to explore particular topics or themes, share resources and/or interests, increase their influence and/or face common challenges.
- **Civil society projects**
These projects give citizens an opportunity to participate concretely in the EU policy-making process. They stimulate debates to propose practical solutions to issues through cooperation at European level.

As for the first strand, specific priorities are set on an annual or biannual basis.



3. Analysis of funded projects

The analysis was based on five key elements that usually characterise project implementation:

- Programme strands and priorities
- Activities and Methodologies within the projects
- Beneficiaries
- Partners involved
- Resources

The analysis focused on the review of projects implemented from 2014 to 2020 as the period corresponding to the Programme's multi-annual framework, for a total of 24 projects in this timeframe (following tables).

<i>Year</i>	<i>Nr. of projects</i>
2014	3
2015	3
2016	3
2017	3
2018	5
2019	6
2020	1



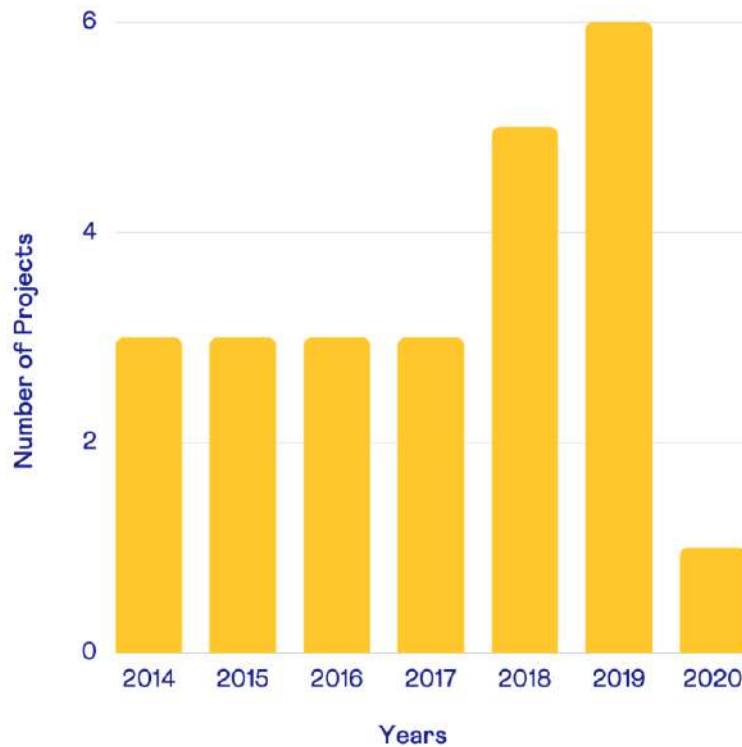


Figure 3 Number of projects per year

We developed a matrix of projects and carried out a documentary analysis to develop data and insights. With this research, the organisation aims to create a framework of the efforts done under the umbrella of this European Programme, to contribute to the democracy and citizens engagement.

The first level of analysis was based on the following elements:

- ❖ Reference number
- ❖ Project title
- ❖ ALDA (Leader/Partner)
- ❖ Name of Lead partner
- ❖ Project start dd/mm/yyyy
- ❖ Project end dd/mm/yyyy
- ❖ Programme Strands
- ❖ Sub-Activity programme
- ❖ Activities implemented
- ❖ Nr. Direct beneficiaries
- ❖ Countries of implementation
- ❖ Nr. Partner LAs
- ❖ Nr. Partner CSOs



- ❖ Total Budget
- ❖ Total funding
- ❖ Cofunding
- ❖ % Project Cofunding
- ❖ Budget allocated to ALDA
- ❖ Project duration (years)

The second level of analysis, which is more directed at the type and number of methodologies and activities, included the following points (better described in the specific section B):

- ❖
- ❖ Reference number
- ❖ Project title
- ❖ Activities
- ❖ Communication material & Visibility
- ❖ Conference (public presentation\raising awareness event at local and international level)
- ❖ Coordination meeting
- ❖ Creation of participatory structure/action
- ❖ Exchange of practices
- ❖ Publication/Advocacy/Awareness
- ❖ Service provision/Consultancy
- ❖ Training and capacity building
- ❖ Workshops
- ❖ Other Activities per project

A. Programme strands and priorities

The following table shows the division of the analysed projects between the two strands of the Programme "European Remembrance" (Strand 1) and "Democratic engagement and civic participation" (Strand 2).0



% of the Projects

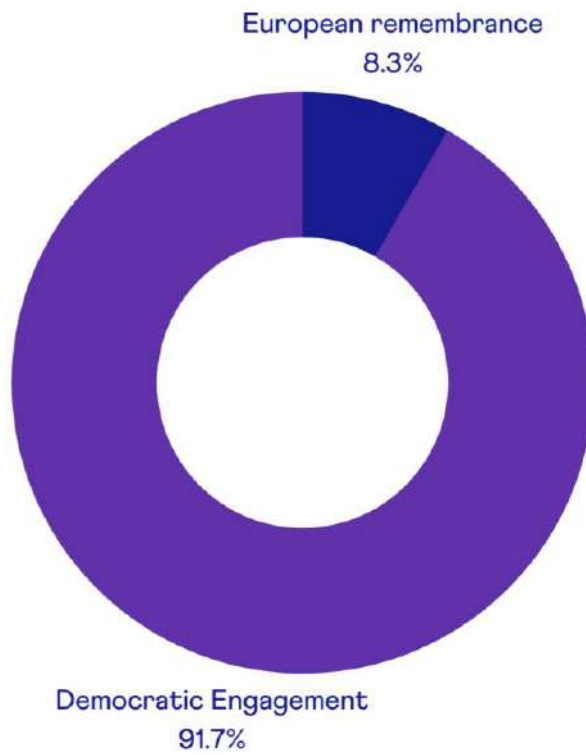


Figure 4

To go deeper, the analysis considers also the following division on Sub-Activity Programme as above explained:

Strand 1	Operating Grant
	EU Remembrance
Strand 2	Operating Grant
	Town twinning
	Civil society projects
	Networks of towns



European for Citizens funded projects

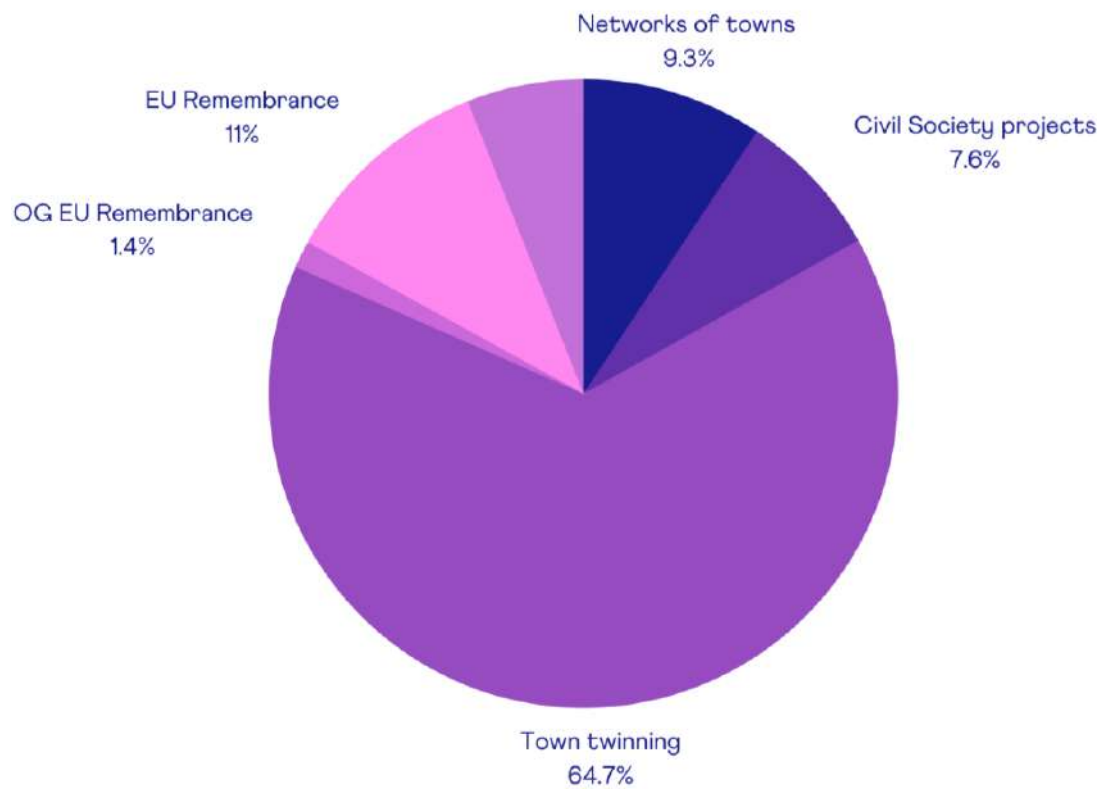


Figure 5

The following graph shows the incidence of the selected projects in relation to the different funding actions of the programme. This serves to show that the analysed projects are a representative sample of each Sub-activity of the Programme.



Total Efc funded projects and Projects implemented by ALDA

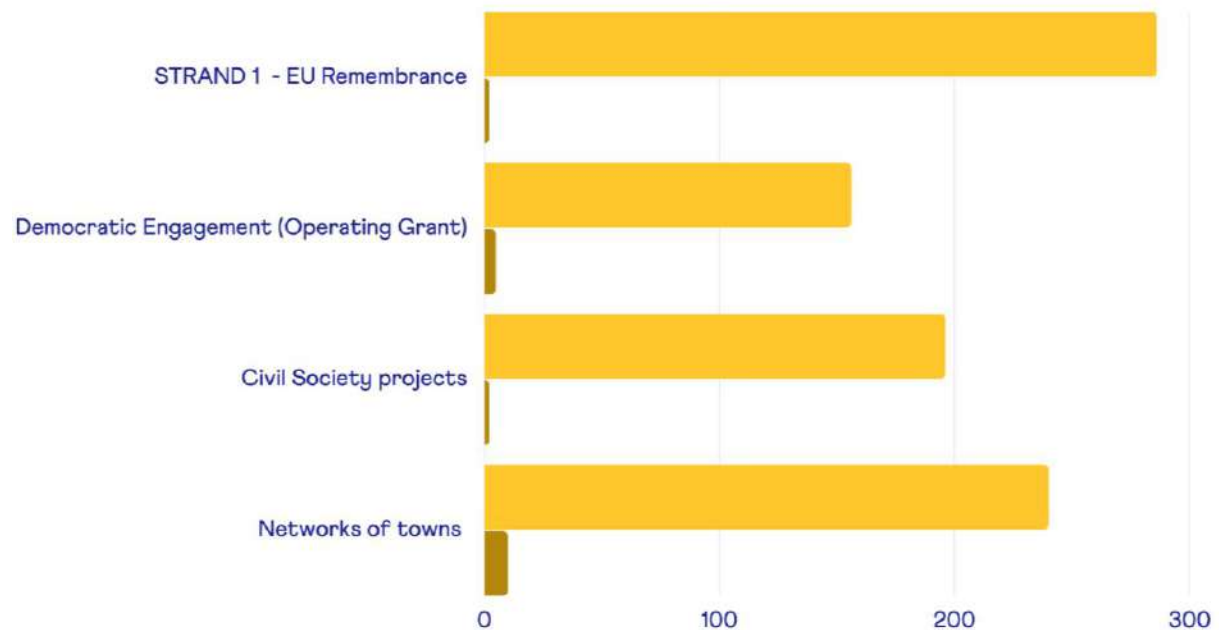


Figure 6

B. Activities and Methodologies within the projects

For this analysis, ALDA grouped projects in different kind of methodologies and activities as follows (list in alphabetical order):

- Communication material/Visibility
- Conference
- Coordination meeting Exchange of practices
- Publication/Advocacy/Awareness
- Service provision/Consultancy
- Training and capacity building
- Workshops & Participatory activities
- Other

In the scope of each of its methodology or activity ALDA used various types of activities that are mainly listed below:



Communication material/Visibility	Promotional material (Leaflets, Newsletters, Brochure; Logo / corporate image, etc.); Website; Infographics; Social media; Annual report; Media campaign; Contacts with journalists; Comm. platform; Street actions; Video presentations; Promotion campaign; On-line promotion, etc.
Conference	Debates; Forum; Panels; Local and International events; Kick-of event; Round table.
Coordination meeting	Networking meeting; Coordination meeting; Kick-off meeting; Steering committee; Online meetings; Online support; Advisory Group meeting; Working group meeting.
Exchange of practices	Study visit; Institutional visits; Youth exchanges; Fact-finding missions.
Publication/Advocacy/Awareness	Policy documents; Policy Papers/Publications; Research publications; Survey/analysis; Advocacy Toolkits; Multi-Actor Platforms, Documentary Films; Short Animated films; Fairs; Photography exhibitions; Film Festivals; Public campaign/Aw. Raising Campaign; Exposition; Artistic/Theatre performance; Online activities/campaign; Online publication; Podcast/Interviews; Consultations; Multi-stakeholders dialogue; Multi-Actor Platforms; Toolkit for citizens; Statements, analyses, position papers
Service provision/Consultancy	Needs assessment; Scanning of opportunities for fundraising; Training; Support in partnership building; partner network creation and coordination and communication with the potential donor; Event Organization; Coordination of activities. Online support and Coaching; Organization of events.
Training and capacity building	Training; Seminars; Summer/Winter Universities; Webinar; Sport courses; Strategy development; Support in partnership building; Creation of mobile app. strategy; Monitoring visits; Job shadowing; Coaching; Consultations; Training manual; Mapping; Intranet; Online support; Curriculum for training facilitators; Creation of MOOC; Sharing of best practices; Info sessions; Mini school.
Workshop & Participatory activities	Working Meetings; Focus Groups; Local small-scale events; Local activities; Methods for citizens involvement; Youth Centre; Info Point; Media Centre; Consultation; Community forum; Online WS; Consultations/Open public debates; Community labs; presentation of the local cultural heritage, field visits and meetings with local tourist workers and representatives of museums
Other	Slogan competitions; Contests; Interviews; Creation of mosaic; Theatres; Prizes for winners of the competition; Library database;



Digital mapping; Painting a mural; Commemoration; Concerts; Cleaning of historical sites. Street art; Social Lunches. Caravan tour creation and organisation; Creation and layout of peace garden; Construction of a commemorative space.

The following graph shows which types of activities were implemented in the projects examined, that is how many projects included those types of activities:

Activity in number of projects



Figure 7

From this graph, it emerges that *Conference* activities (as public events on a local and international scale) and *Coordination* activities (as activities necessary for the functioning of each partnership) were practically implemented in every project.

With respect to this categorisation, the following table shows the number of activities carried out with respect to those kinds of activities.

Activity in number of projects

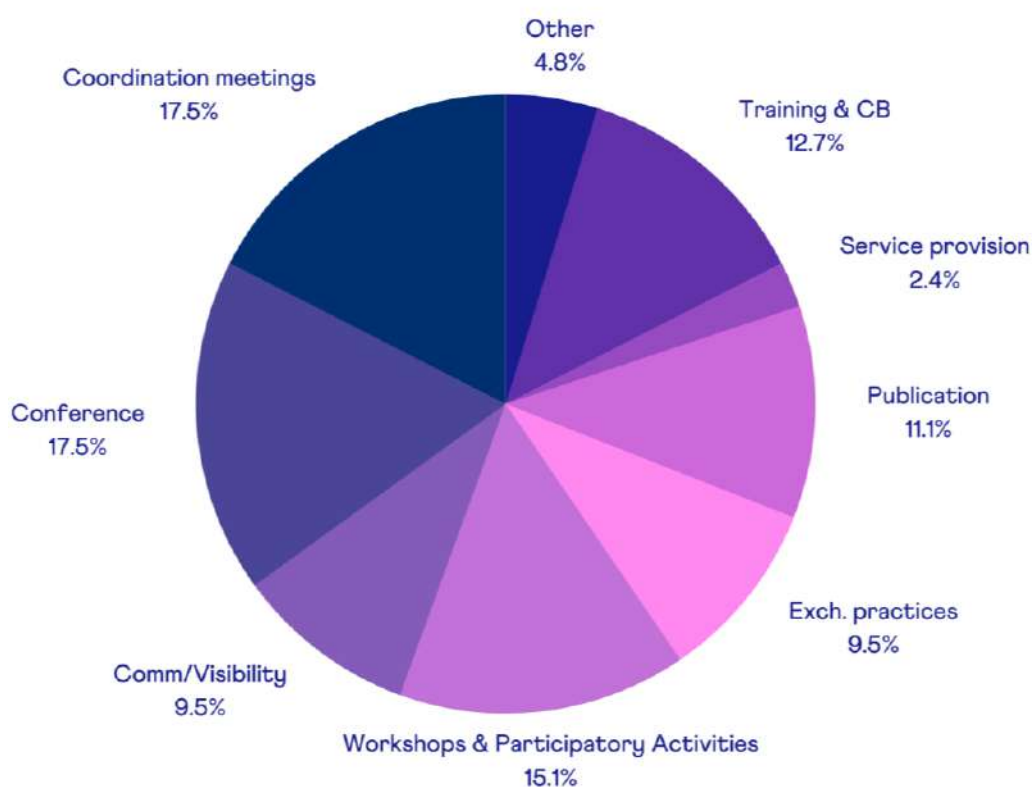


Figure 8

By interpreting these data, we can recognise that the core activities aimed to involve directly beneficiaries (including: conference, training, workshops, exchange of practices) accounts for about 60%.

Transversal activities including Communication and Visibility, Publication and production of material for information, awareness-raising, represent about 22%.

Lastly, support activities strictly functional to the implementation of activities (Coordination meetings; Services) account for about 18%.

The table below details in quantitative terms the activities implemented within the projects, based on the categorisation used.

In order to facilitate understanding, we specify that "Activity in n. of projects" refers to the number in which that type of activity was implemented in the projects analysed.

The second criterion "N. of activities realised" presents the actual number of activities implemented per type in the totality of projects under review.



Activities	COMM & Visibility	Conference	Coordination	Exchange of practices	Publication & Advocacy	Service	Training & CB	Workshops & Participatory Activity	Other	Activities per project
Activity in nr of projects	12	22	20	12	14	3	16	19	6	124
N. of activities realised	207	282	482	60	218	14	207	239	84	1793

The following graph facilitates the visualisation of these data, with particular reference to the orange column. The impact by type of activity can be clearly seen, with particular emphasis on firstly conferences and then workshop & participatory activities.

Activity in number of projects & number of activities implemented

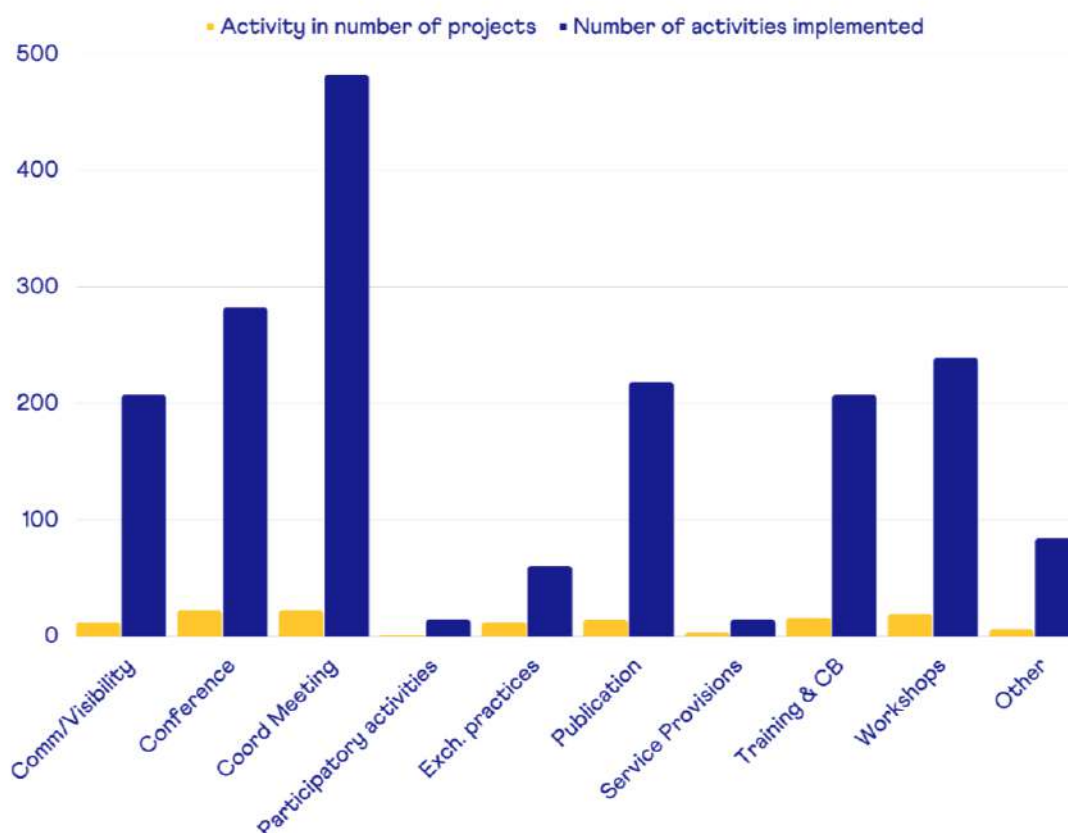


Figure 9



C. Beneficiaries

According to the guidelines, the Programme should be accessible to all European citizens without any form of discrimination on grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation. In our projects' implementation, we paid attention to the necessity of promoting equal opportunities for all and non-discrimination, in particular linked to the participation of citizens and civil society from all Member States into transnational projects and activities taking into account the multilingual character of the Union and the need to include underrepresented groups.

The total number of beneficiaries reached by the projects is more than 700.000 people, considering the division between the Strands of the Programme and its Sub-activities, that is:

Strand 1 - European Remembrance	Operating Grant: NA in the analyses
	EU Remembrance
Strand 2 - Democratic engagement & civic participation	Operating Grant
	Town twinning
	Civil society projects
	Networks of towns

First of all, the following graph shows the impact of the Operating grants of the Strand 2 - Democratic engagement & civic participation (of which ALDA was beneficiary in the analysed period) in terms of the number of people reached by the activities.



Operating Grant - Democratic Engagement & Total Projects

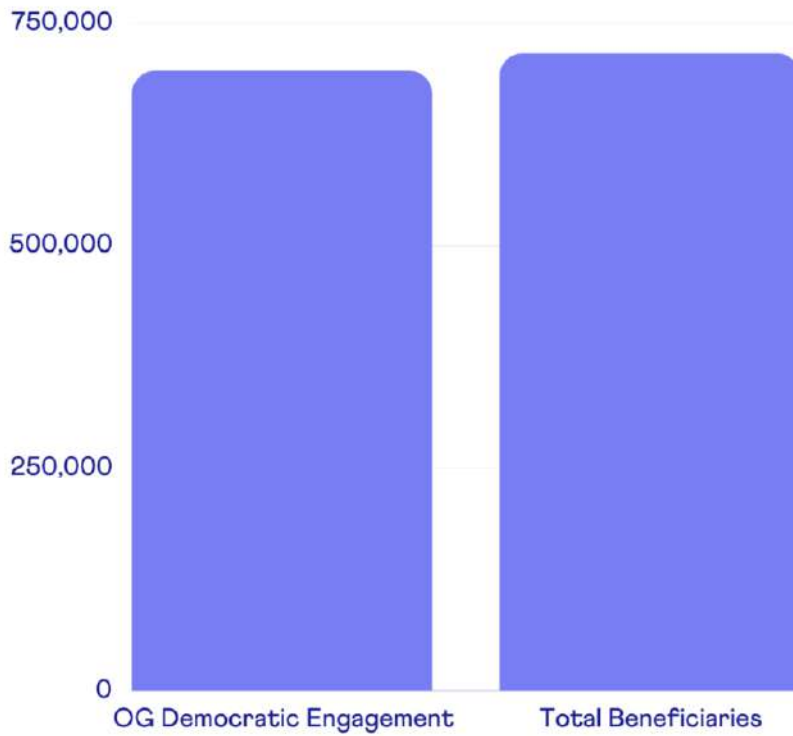


Figure 10

The following table instead shows the percentage of people reached by the projects funded within the three Sub-activities of the programme, that is Town twinning, Civil society projects, Network of towns.



Percentage of Beneficiaries: Projects/ Sub-Activity Programme

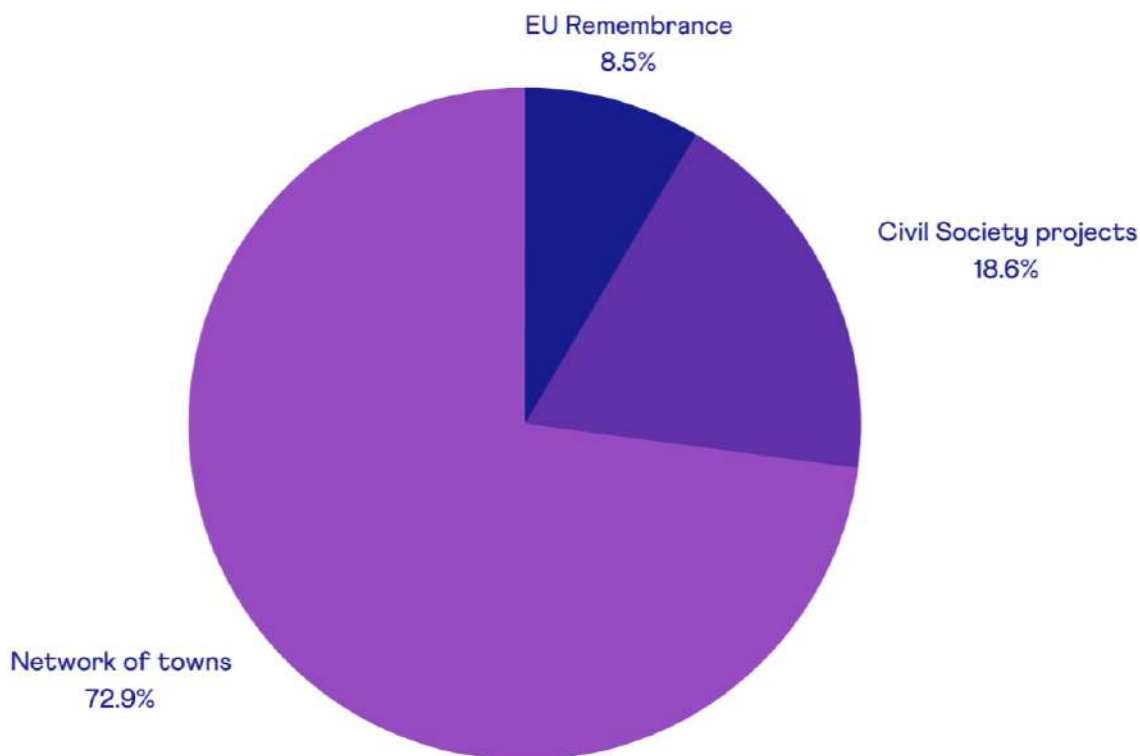


Figure 11

Transnationality is an important feature of the Programme, which can be expressed in different ways, based on the specific requirements and indications of the programme. This transnational dimension should be accompanied by a strong local dimension. In order to help bridging the gap between them and the European Union, it is particularly important that projects or activities supported by this Programme reach citizens in their everyday life, on issues that are of relevance to them.

Considering these relevant considerations, the following graph shows the intervention areas of the projects and the related number of the projects that took action in each country.



Countries of project implementation

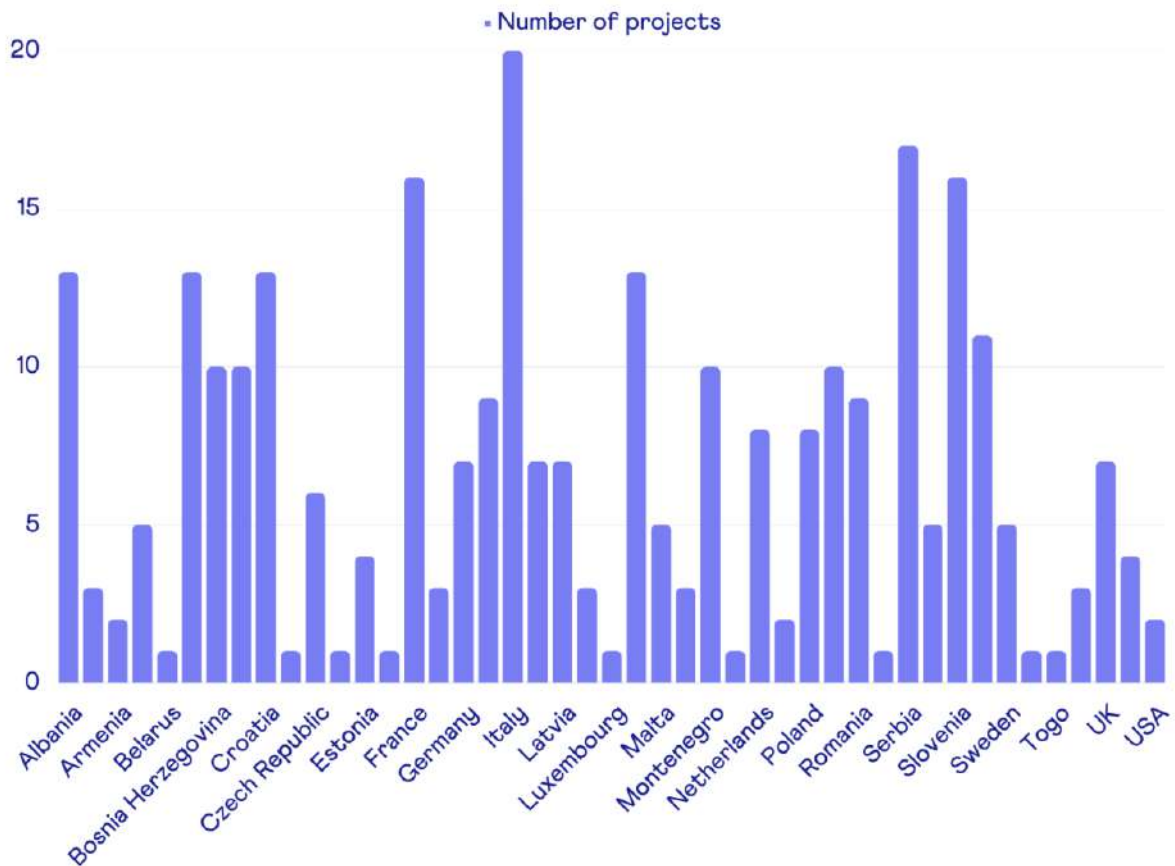


Figure 12

Through the implemented projects, ALDA wants to contribute to promoting intercultural dialogue, by bringing European citizens of different nationalities together and by giving them the opportunity to participate in common activities.

The following table shows the geographical impact of the involved countries by improving the European dimension and transnational purpose of the implemented projects. The strongest colour intensity represents the highest number (20) of the country where projects took place, to the lightest green representing the value of 1.



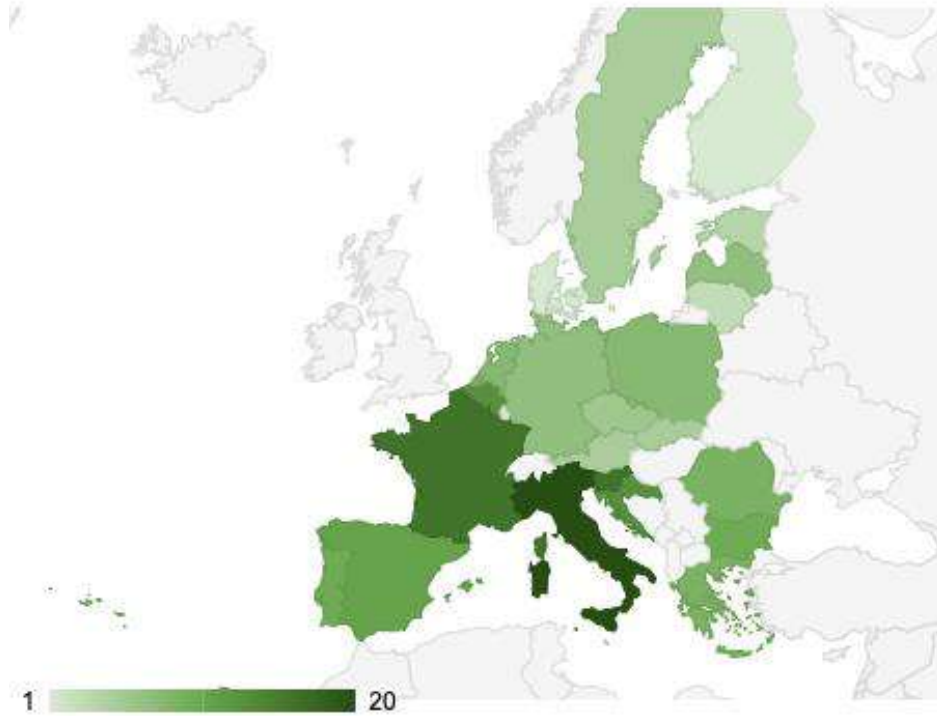


Figure 13

D. Partners involved

A first broader consideration it's about the percentage of the partners involvement, considering i) public local/regional authorities (LAs); and ii) Non-profit organisations (NGOs) including CSOs, and cultural, youth, educational, research organisations.



Nr. Partners NGOs & Nr. Partners LAs

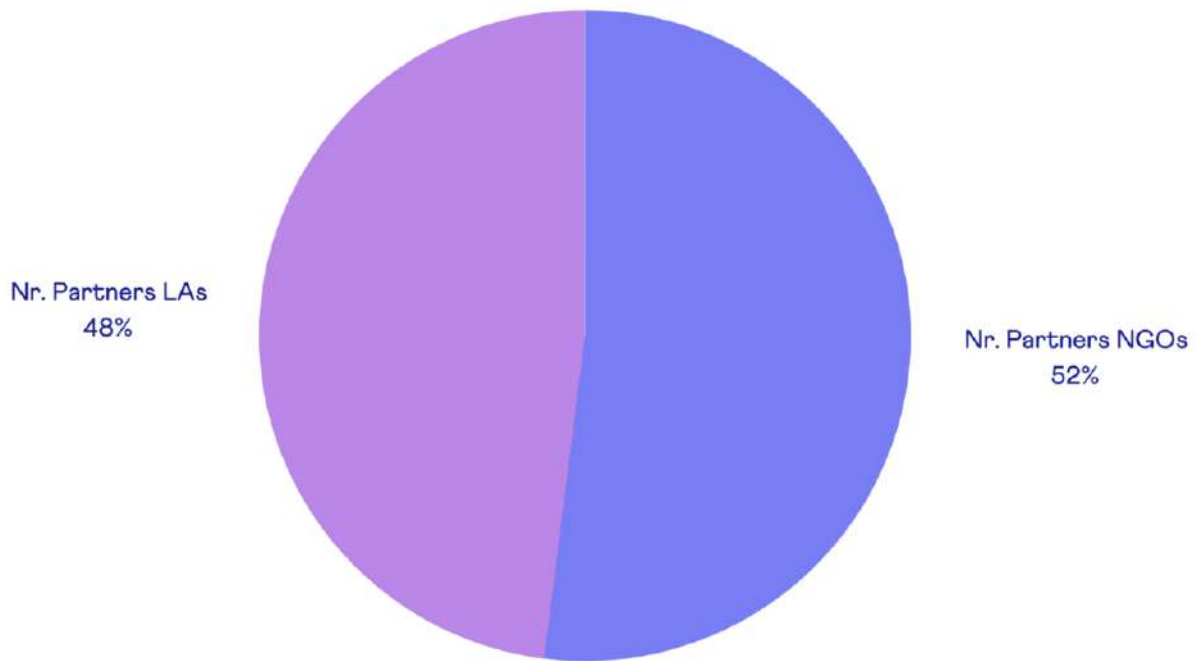


Figure 14

Considering the purpose of the programme and the subdivision of the sub-activities, it is essential to report the eligibility criteria about the composition of the partnership:



Eligibility Criteria	STRAND 1 – EUROPEAN REMEMBRANCE	STRAND 2 – DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT & CIVIC PARTICIPATION		
		2.1 Town Twinning	2.2 Networks of Towns	2.3 Civil Society Projects
PUBLIC BODIES or NON PROFIT ORGANISATION WITH LEGAL PERSONALITY	APPLICANTS/PARTNERS: - Public local/regional authorities - Non-profit organisations including CSOs Survivor's associations Cultural/youth/educational/research organisations	APPLICANTS/PARTNERS: - Towns/Municipalities - Other levels of local authorities Twinning committees representing local authorities - Non-profit organisations representing local authorities	- Towns/municipalities - Twinning committees or networks - Other levels of local/regional authorities; - Federations/associations of local authorities. - Non-profit organisations representing local authorities. The other organisations involved in the project can also be non-profit Civil Society Organisations;	- Non-profit organisations, including Civil society organisations Educational, cultural or research institutions - Other organisations involved in the project can also be public local/regional authorities.

With respect to this, it is also worth mentioning that among the award criteria, “Projects gather different types of organisations (local authorities, civil society organisations, research institutes, etc.)” was one of the criteria for the evaluation of the “Quality of the activity plan of the project”.

In this framework, the following graph highlights the composition of the consortiums of the analysed projects linked to the Sub-activity and related Strands.



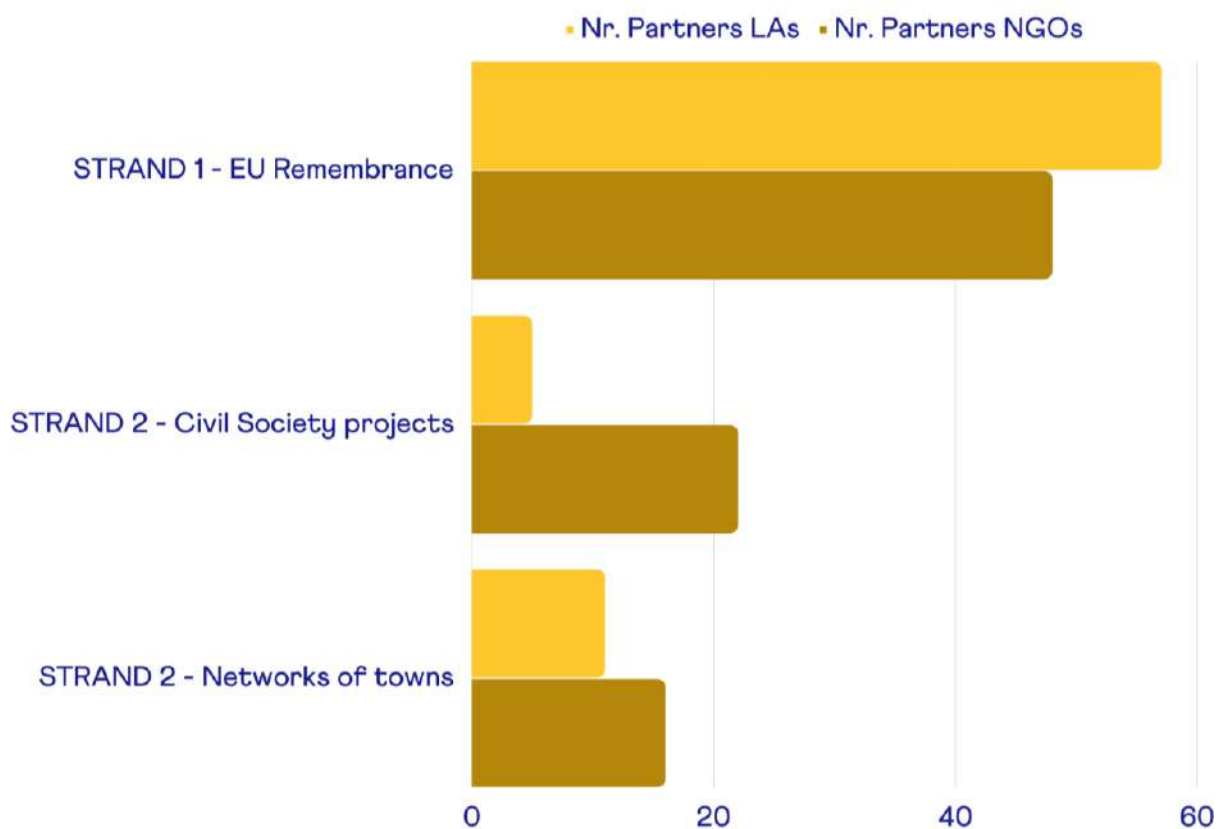


Figure 15

E. Resources

As an indication in the “Europe for Citizens – Programme Guide”, the Regulation establishing the Programme provided that the overall breakdown between the different actions for the whole Programme period 2014 - 2020 should be as follows:

- Strand 1 – European remembrance: approximately 20%
- Strand 2 – Democratic engagement and civic participation: approximately 60%
- Horizontal Action – Valorisation: approximately 10%

Considering the division between the Strands of the Programme and its Sub-activities, that is:

Strand 1 - European Remembrance	Operating Grant: NA in the analyses
	EU Remembrance
Strand 2 - Democratic engagement & civic participation	Operating Grant
	Town twinning
	Civil society projects
	Networks of towns



The following chart shows the distribution of funding (%) between two main blocks a) Strand 2 - Operating grants, b) other projects where ALDA was partners in the 2 strands.

Other Projects & Operating Grant 2014 - 2019

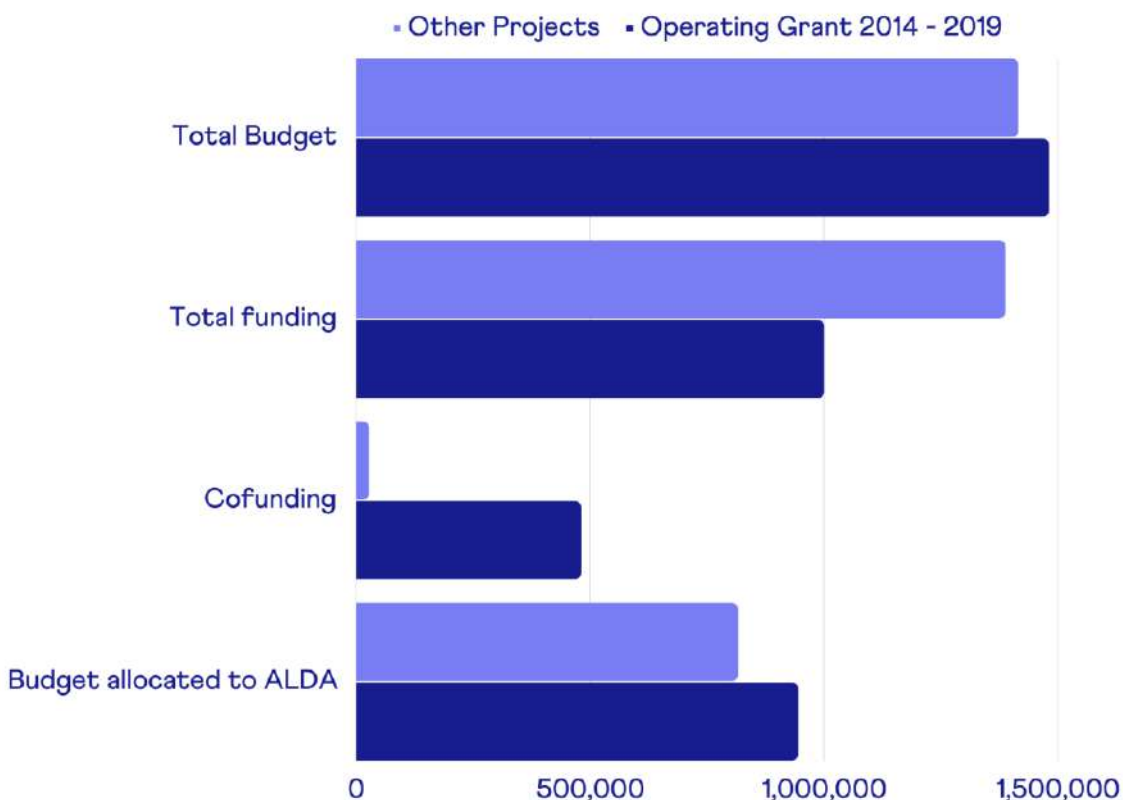


Figure 16

In view of the relevant amounts, the following diagram shows the percentage breakdown between projects pertaining only to the Action grants, including: Strand 1-EU Remembrance; Strand 2 - Democratic engagement & civic participation: Civil society projects and Networks of towns.

Total Projects Budgets and Budget allocated to ALDA

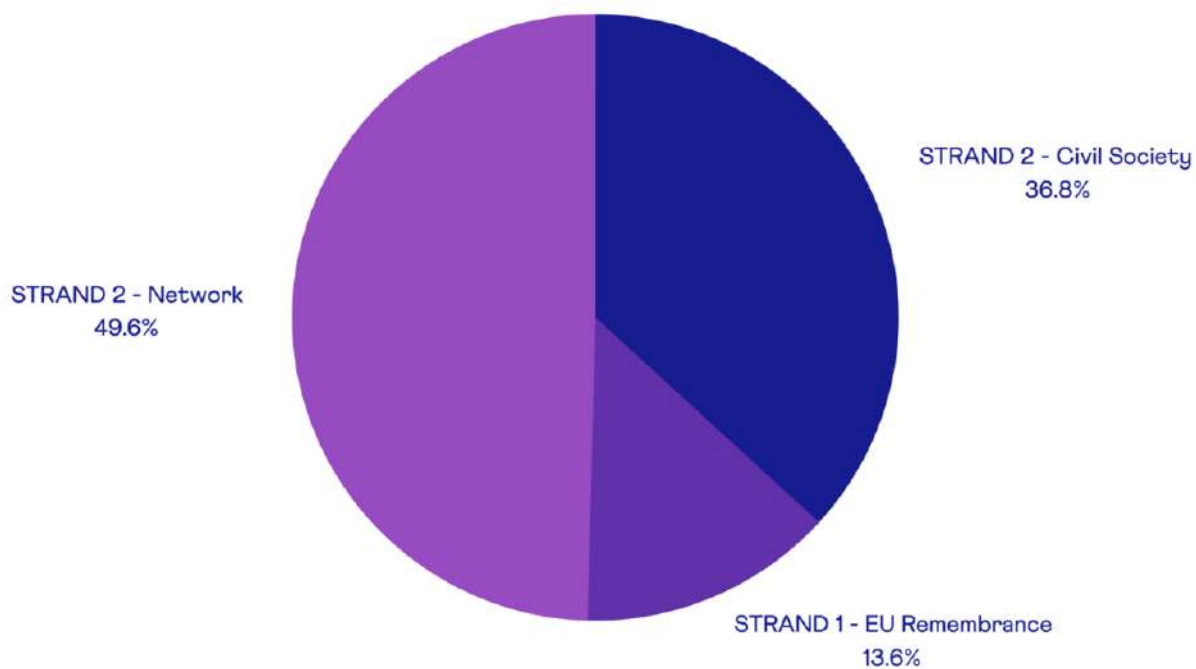


Figure 17



4. Case studies and good practices

This part of the document aims to present qualitative features of three selected projects for sharing good experiences and practices within these case studies.

The first part offers a brief overview of the main information of the project, including:

- ❖ Title of project
- ❖ Sub - Programme
- ❖ Action
- ❖ Country/region of project
- ❖ Partners
- ❖ SDGs targeted
- ❖ General topic of the project
- ❖ Description of the project
- ❖ Aims of the project

The second part is focused to describe the key elements in terms of good practices of the selected projects, identified as follows:

- ❖ Purpose
- ❖ Activities
- ❖ Beneficiaries
- ❖ Focus
- ❖ Key messages of citizens involved in the project



ACHIEVE - the project at a glance

Title of project	ACHIEVE - Awareness of Common History for Identifying and Extending the Values of Europe
Sub - Programme	Democratic engagement and civic participation
Action	Network of Towns
Country/region of project	Montenegro, Kosovo, Republic of North Macedonia, Slovakia, Croatia, Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Serbia, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Romania, Italy, France.
Partners	<p>Comune di Breganze (Leader)</p> <p>ALDA - European Association for Local Democracy</p> <p>Istituto Rezzara</p> <p>Peje Municipality</p> <p>Zavidovici Municipality</p> <p>Herceg Novi Municipality</p> <p>Central and Eastern European Citizens Network</p> <p>Čajetina Municipality</p> <p>Mioveni Municipality</p> <p>Erdut Municipality</p> <p>House of National Minorities</p> <p>Regional Association of Municipalities Central Stara Planina</p> <p>Centre for European Policy Studies on Regional and Local Development - CRLDS</p>
SDGs targeted	16
General topic of the project	Development of the European identity starting from a reflection on the common history, art, and religions, among cities from Central and South-Eastern Europe, as a tool to fight growing Euroscepticism.
Description of the project	<p>ACHIEVE raised awareness about European identity, the common challenges shared by the different countries involved, each one unique for its own heritage and history, but united under the same values. The local community benefited from new knowledge and tools to be active European citizens. In the implementation of the local activities, young people were brought close to the EU and its values. In addition to the highly complementary partner network, which within the staff involved had the expertise and willingness to make the project a success, the interactivity, chronological and transversal way the project was conceived was very fruitful and growing, starting with the local and national identity, to continue with the European identity and then culminates with the global citizenship. The treatment of the problem was done at its core. The priorities of the program were addressed in an inclusive, multidisciplinary manner and using several types of activities, in order to include a sample of representatives of the population in our</p>



	<p>country, using and developing diverse activities by type and above all qualitative.</p> <p>Initially the main challenge was how to engage the local community on the project topic, and to have people actively discussing EU, European identity, euroscepticism. Although the partners were forced to operate intermittently due to the health restrictions, it provided the local community with a space and opportunities for the people to debate, learn more and understand the reasons behind some of the main challenges the EU is facing. The success of the activities and the larger engagement is proved by the high number of participants. Some partners managed to involve the participants in the debates through continuous promotion of topics and invitation of certain interest groups. Furthermore, through quizzes, associations, opinions of peers from EU countries, and then awards for acquired knowledge, they wanted to know more, which they did through debates.</p> <p>The Network established between the partners and by each partner at the local level contributes to the long-term dissemination of the project results. The participating cities and towns had the important role of publicizing among their citizens the project, its aims, results and values. A description of the project was published in Municipalities and associations' websites. Some specific tools for the dissemination were developed during the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -a series of SHORT VIDEOS shot by the participants; -a Global Citizenship Map
<p>Aims of the project</p>	<p>ACHIEVE project aimed at encouraging civic and democratic participation of citizens at the EU level by developing their knowledge on the process of political elaboration of EU and promoting opportunities of civic, volunteer, or intercultural engagement at the EU level.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) promoting knowledge about one's own territory and on the other countries involved; 2) fostering discussion on the concepts of identity and Euroscepticism; 3) sharing tools and methods to create a counter narrative against euroscepticism





Figure 18 - Event in Peja, Kosovo



Figure 19 - Event in Erdut, Croatia.



Citizens, Equality, Rights
and Values programme





Figure 20 - LEAR - Herceg Novi. Workshop with students.



Figure 21 - CRLDS. Albania - Workshop first local chapter.



ACHIEVE – GOOD PRACTICES

Purpose	<p>1) Enhancement of citizens' engagement and interest in European values through international and local events.</p> <p>Creation of an interactive map to showcase the project's achievement and citizens best practices on European values</p>
Activities	<p>Four international events were held in Erdut (Croatia), Prague, Peja (Kosovo) and Vicenza to define a common strategy to fight Euroscepticism focusing on enhancing European identity and citizenship, and Four local paths were organized in each country of the project.</p> <p><u>1) International event:</u> KICK OFF MEETING, 25-26 June 2019 in Erdut Municipality.</p> <p>The aim of the event was to meet the partners and present their organizations, to present the Europe for Citizens program, the project, its goals and activities, and for each partner to present the current situation of Euroscepticism in their country, sharing the results of the first local path; Focusing on Identity and European citizenship; and presenting methods to engage citizens in local paths (ALDA).</p> <p><u>Local path 1:</u> DISCOVER YOUR IDENTITY, Since August 2019 to January 2020,</p> <p>the partners organized meetings, workshops, activities to raise inhabitants' awareness on their art, history, religion to introduce the Europe for Citizens project/ program, and the project objectives. Some addressed the topic of misusing traditions and folklore in extremism, anti systemic, antidemocratic and anti-european narratives in our society. Others deepened youth understanding of diversity and identity within the local context.</p> <p><u>2)International event:</u> WHAT IT MEANS TO BE EUROPEAN, 19 – 21 February 2020, House of national minorities, Czech Republic.</p> <p>During this meeting, partners shared their findings about the causes for Euroscepticism, which are the common problems and which are the country-specific processes that lead to Euroscepticism.</p> <p><u>Local path 2:</u> DISCOVER YOUR EUROPEAN IDENTITY, Since March 2020 to September 2020, focused on common EU identity to detect the causes of Euroscepticism through informal education methods by informing the participants about the common European identity and discussing the task and responsibility of local democracies in the fight against extremism</p>



	<p><u>3) International event: EUROSCEPTICISM: WHICH COUNTER NARRATIVES?</u>, 5-7 December 2021, Peje Municipality, Kosovo. Focused on sharing and identifying the causes of Euroscepticism, defining a common strategy to fight Euroscepticism. “What is European identity?” “What characterise each of us identity?” Those questions were at the basis of the first interactive workshop. Similarly, a journalist and researcher, shared an interesting point of view on the different ways with which, also from an academic perspective, it is possible to tackle the topic of “Euroscepticism” its causes and counter narratives, while focusing on the Balkan stand point as well. In addition, the meeting allowed participants to find out more about local habits, culture and historical heritage. Talks and dialogues are essential when it comes to find a common ground, and build common initiatives working for the same goals.</p> <p><u>Local path 3: LET’S CREATE THE “GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP MAP”</u>, Since October 2021 to May 2022, the partners worked on the creation and gathering of material on EU identity (pictures, stories, videos, etc.) through several workshops, panel discussions, short seminars, round tables, video making and collecting stories to create the Global European Map.</p> <p><u>International event: BORED OF BORDERS</u>, 4-5 April 2022, Vicenza, Italy. Presented of the last Local Paths done by each organization, together with the results achieved and the future objectives. A workshop, entitled “Movement of people. Borders crossing in light of the recent crisis”. focused on migration and Euroscepticism and it was a considerable opportunity to confront and exchange ideas and perspectives on the current Russian attack in Ukraine. It was especially meaningful given the fact that the participants belonged to different countries, some members of Europe and some neighbors.</p> <p><u>Local path 4: EU CONNECTIONS - SHARING THE EXPERIENCE WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES</u>, from April to May 2022, to present the results of the project with the local community.</p> <p>The Global Citizenship Map was created with material collected by the participants through events, activities, interviews to show “Fantastic Europeans And Where To Find Them” countering the growing distrust and disaffection for Europe. The platform is a useful educational instrument at partners’ disposal for activities beyond the project carried out with schools, associations and the local communities.</p>
Beneficiaries	<p>Citizens, students and children. The project involved 3777 direct and around 25000 indirect participants between all partners.</p>



	<p>About 57 people participated in the 1st International event in Erdut, on the 2nd International event Prague around 40, on the 3rd International event Peja 37 participants and the 4th event 47 participants. During the four local chapters each partner registered a different number of participants. On the First the number of participants was 501. During the second local chapter 2086 people participated. The third local chapter 502 participants were registered and during the fourth local chapter there were 473.</p>
Focus	European identity, Euroscepticism, Citizens participation.
Key messages of citizens involved in project	<p>Participants from CEE CN said: “We can be proud of both of our identities – national and European.” Key messages from participants of the House of National minorities were: Problems can be solved through debate, We can be proud of Europe, Even if it is not perfect, Europe is a place where we are home. Participants from Sega stated: “Europe should mean Equality, Peace and Love.”; “We are all equal”.</p> <p>Three groups from an event of Istituto Rezzara were quite a lot concerned about the role of Europe in world politics, mainly after the Ukraine invasion by the Russians. They complained about “the lack of unity of European politics: each country seems to go its own way instead of acting together. Europe still doesn’t have a Ministry of defense, a Ministry of environment, a foreign Ministry, a Ministry of health, culture and so on. So each country seems to follow its own interest instead of building a group and trying to play an important role towards the big countries like the USA and Russia. This has been the destiny of Europe since the end of the second world war, with one part of Europe belonging to the NATO (world trade organisation) and the other half of the continent to the Warsaw pact. Europe finds itself in a very critical position and the necessity of acting together, as we have said, is particularly urgent.”</p> <p>Citizens from Mioveni Municipality were from start to finish interested in the project, even though most of them had at least the slightest of Eurosceptic mindsets, yet Mioveni Municipality managed to gain their attention and give them something to think about. Two participants from RAM Central Staro Plana said: “I think that’s what we should focus on - being a part of something [the European Union] that unites us rather than letting our different opinions and points of view separate us.”; “I believe that if Europe can find the strength, wisdom and rationality to help bring the military [in Ukraine] to an end, that will result in people having more faith in the EU and believing in it as well as respecting it.” Zavidovici Municipality wants to build on a sense of togetherness including non-EU countries. One participant said: „We should first visit our landmarks, which we have, and then go further to explore [and] move to other countries“. Herceg Novi Municipality affirmed that raising awareness of common culture, history and values of the EU and Europe, as well as the promotion of goals that the EU stands for, such as peace and prosperity, population and international cooperation are important.</p>



STAR - the project at a glance

Title of project	STreet ART as a tool for social and urban regeneration
Sub - Programme	Democratic engagement and civic participation
Action	Network of Towns
Country/region of project	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Portugal, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Germany, The Netherlands.
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Italy: Comune di Arcugnano • Portugal: Junta Freguesia Beato • Kosovo *UN resolution: Directorate for Culture, Youth and Sport, Peje - • Netherlands: SAMA - Stichting Street Art Museum Amsterdam • Slovenia: OBCINA TREBNJE • Latvia: Pargaujas novada pasvaldiba • Albania: Bashkia Vlorë • Romania: ORASUL MIOVENI • Czech Republic: AGENTURA PRO EVROPSKE PROJEKTY&MANAGEMENT SDRUZENI - EPMA • Poland: City of Jawor • Bosnia and Herzegovina: Grad Mostar • Germany: Kitev - Kultur im Turm • Serbia: City of Zajecar <p>Italy: COMUNE DI REGGIO EMILIA</p>
SDGs targeted	10, 11
General topic of the project	Creation of participatory structure
Description of the project	<p>Through a bottom-up approach promoting local citizens' participation, the project aimed at: 1) tackling intolerance and isolation of groups of people, in marginalised areas of European cities, by using the power of community street art in order to raise awareness about the importance of solidarity and coexistence of plural attitudes and cultures; 2) building a strong network of towns, committed to exchange positive results of using the street art as a way to involve communities and regenerate public spaces, by creating a multiplier impact. These objectives have been reached through the implementation of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 international events held in Italy, Portugal, Kosovo and Netherlands) - local path including activities and workshops where citizens co-created murals in critical areas with the help of street art artists.



The main achievements:

- 14 murals in 14 EU cities
- 4 international best practices exchange events
- 1 network of EU cities that use community street art to maximise active citizenship and social inclusion is promoted;
- experience and knowledge sharing is promoted and boosted among the partners for promoting active citizenship, social inclusion and urban regeneration
- cohabitation and solidarity between citizens is improved;
- youth engagement in local and social issues is increased;
- volunteers opportunity and mobility at EU level is increased;
- citizens' awareness of European values has increased.

STAR was carried out in collaboration with citizens, artists, immigrants, schools and local organisations, involving different stakeholders. Participants were actively involved in all project activities, through participation in international and local events and dissemination. Partners shared best practices promoting social inclusion and active citizenship, and multi-stakeholder dialogue was promoted (involving partners, ESC members, CSO representatives, LAs and artists).



Figure 22 - Kick of meeting in Arcugnano, Vicenza.



Figure 23 - Workshop on art and social inclusion in Jihlava (Czech Republic).





Figure 24 - Workshop on art and social inclusion in Arcugnano (Vicenza).



Citizens, Equality, Rights
and Values programme



STAR – GOOD PRACTICES

Purpose	<p>1) Tackling intolerance and isolation of groups of people, in marginalised areas of European cities, by using the power of community street art in order to raise awareness about the importance of solidarity and coexistence of plural attitudes and cultures</p> <p>2) Building a strong network of towns, committed to exchanging positive results of using the street art as a way to involve communities and regenerate public spaces, by creating a multiplier impact.</p>
Activities	<p>This project has led to the realisation of 1 European network of 14 cities and 14 murals in 14 different European countries with the participation of European citizens. It has been a whole process from the identification of the place, the identification of the subjects and the realisation of the murals together with citizens of various ages, students, migrants, promoting the inclusion of citizens living in possible situations of marginalisation.</p> <p>Having as a priority citizen engagement, citizen participation, destigmatisation of migrants and marginalised groups, an art form like street art which in itself has a popular connotation, is born from below, promotes occasions of cultural encounters thus creating opportunities for integration, social inclusion and participation of citizens in social issues.</p> <p>The participatory process followed three steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) In each project partner municipality , it was carried out a participative investigation involving citizens to understand which areas of their towns are considered the least attractive by their citizens, thus selecting the place where to realise the mural. Opinions of the inhabitants were mainly collected by online surveys due to covid-19 - related restrictions, forums, interviews, workshops etc. 1) In collaboration with local actors (schools) and volunteers to organise 1 awareness-raising workshop for youth on social inclusion and the power of art (including street art) for promoting it. Through drawings and paintings, young citizens reflected on social inclusion values at the base of the EU culture, sharing with the artist inspiration for mural ideas . 2) Finally, 1 local workshop led by a street artist was organized, and resulted in the creation of the mural inspired by youth in the public space identified by citizens in the local path 1. This



contributed to promoting active citizenship and the sense of local identity.

At the local level, social inclusion and urban regeneration workshops were implemented aiming at reducing social exclusion and marginalisation, raising awareness on public policies for community interaction and promoting citizens' participation and solidarity. At the same time, public awareness-raising activities were carried out to prevent discrimination and intolerant practice

In addition, during the project's timespan 4 international events took place:

- 1) Arcugnano (Italy): the event started with a public presentation of the project and consortium to the local community. Following, a public conference with experts from the art and urban planning sector, to discuss the challenge of street art in urban regeneration. Then, a tour of the local street art works was organised.
- 2) Lisbon (Portugal): the aim of the event was to focus on the overall efforts and reflections of project STAR about engaging citizens in recovering degraded areas through urban art, developed further the importance this artistic expression has in local and community development processes. Aside from partnership meetings to share the work being done in each of the countries involved in the project, the program had three sessions designed to show examples of local development in Lisbon.
- 3) Peja (Kosovo): a workshop by an art expert was held, who introduced them to street art techniques and discussed the change of abandoned urban language in various works of art. The meeting continued with the project partners with the construction of the country murals and talked about their local initiatives around street art. After the meeting, they also visited the ANIBAR Organisation and visited some murals in the city of Peja.
- 4) Amsterdam (Netherlands): it consisted in a workshop associated with the mural production. The aim of the event was to share the Project results presentation, whereby each partner will show the local process and mural done with the project and tell more about the 2 years program in their city. In addition we took the participants on a tour of Amsterdam City in the context of the Street Art & Democracy exhibition.



	Through the international events, all the European cities and organizations involved in the projects that have created the murals have had a way of getting to know each other, exchanging knowledge and best practices and debating the possible strategies and initiatives to reduce social exclusion through art. This led to the creation of a strong European network encompassing municipality, cso, cultural organisations, working on street art and social inclusion, and is very sensitive to the themes of participation.
Beneficiaries	The project involved 1893 direct and 600 000 indirect participants in 14 countries, among which: general public, youth, policy makers, urban planners, cultural and art operators.
Focus	Participation, social inclusion, art and culture, urban area
Key messages of citizens involved in the project	<p>1) Cultural educator: “STAR allowed a group of teenagers to get to know with organisations of volunteers working in the neighbourhood and get more aware and involved in local social issues and initiatives .</p> <p>2)Citizen: “The project bonded various generations together and helped them create a colourful, fun place that everybody can use in their own way. For instance in Trebnje, the younger generations were delighted to be able to imagine, design, and participate in the creation of painting. The older participants are delighted that one grey area of the town is now brighter and more user-friendly”</p> <p>3) District developer: “Street Art is a very good way to take the conversation in a neighbourhood to another level. If there is art in the public space, the press often wants to write about it. It also encourages people to talk about something other than the usual.”</p> <p>4) Graffiti expert and curator: “Street Art is an accessible way of bringing art to the people. Especially in the neighbourhoods where there is a big distance between residents and cultural institutions. “</p> <p>5) Art historian: “for SAMA it’s important to document the works of art in its social and local context. The majority of the collection has been created in a participative way, which makes the collection a valuable source of information about the community in the Nieuw-West district of Amsterdam, about which little has been documented at heritage institutions. The collection is also part of the local city development story, whilst demolished houses make way for new buildings, and new residents, changing the look and population of the area. The artworks not only hold reflections or interpretations of Nieuw-West, but many also address political and social issues that play a role on a global level, such as human rights, online privacy, capitalism and ecological justice. In a rapidly changing society, street art tells stories that should not be forgotten.”</p>



RECOV - the project at a glance

Title of project	REthinking COLlaborative Values for public services RECOV
Sub - Programme	Democratic engagement and civic participation
Action	Network of Towns
Country/region of project	Albania, Italy, Latvia, North Macedonia, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● North Macedonia: Centar Municipality ● France: ALDA ● Latvia: Raunas Novada Dome ● Serbia: Uzice Municipality ● Portugal: Clube Intercultural Europeu ● Romania: Rural Women National Association ● Italy: Union of Municipalities Montiferru Sinis ● Albania: Albanian Association of Municipalities ● Slovenia: Grosuplje Municipality ● Italy: Santorso Municipality
SDGs targeted	11, 17
General topic of the project	The idea of the project RECOV originates from the awareness and recognition that nowadays in European societies, local authorities are the developers and implementers of sustainable and inclusive local development policies. Therefore, the project targets local authorities, citizens and communities for creating local networks capable of working together on the improvement of local governance through dialogue and participation, contributing to more inclusive and democratic society.
Description of the project	The RECOV project was developed by 10 partners across Europe, recognizing the importance to jointly address recently emerging challenges and to take an advantage of opportunities arising out of this cooperation. It aims at creating a network of towns eager to work together on exchanging common problems, joint brainstorming and introducing concrete measures in regard to project specific objectives. First of all, the project deals with the problem of lacking communication and dialogue between governments and citizens fueling mistrust and passiveness of civil society. To address this challenge, the project suggests the usage of recent ICT instruments to “opening” up the work of governments through participatory policy- making and evaluation of policies and programs, while enhancing transparency and accountability. Second, the project fostered discussion among local governments on existing financial instruments, EU policies and possible EU support to local problems as well



	as alternative fundraising. Third, the project acknowledges the failure of unilateral approaches to problem solving. Therefore, the project suggested collaborative approaches that bring together local stakeholders from various fields of expertise and putting in synergy their knowledge and competences for public good.
Aims of the project	The main goal was to create local networks capable of working together on the improvement of local governance through dialogue and participation, contributing to more inclusive and democratic society.



RECOV – GOOD PRACTICES

Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering the exchange of best practices of local cooperation as well as to share solutions contributing to the establishment of learning networks on European level. • Capacity building activities, discussions on EU contribution to local policies and initiatives as well as ways and tools for their improvement contribute to fostering European citizenship and improving conditions and democratic participation at Union level. • Launching platforms for local dialogue between LAs, citizens and stakeholder. • Raising awareness on EU policies in relation to those societal challenges as well as on mechanisms for addressing them both at local and European level. • Creating opportunities for learning and sharing new solutions: particularly ICT technologies can be employed providing new tools for citizen participation and initiative.
Activities	<p>This project consisted of the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation activities, including online preparation activities and local preparation activities; • 4 international events focused on ICT tools for open government; collaborative public services; innovative and sustainable financial instruments for local governments; participation and collaborative values as a way to innovation and local development; • Local activities on the topic implemented in all partner countries. <p>International conferences</p> <p>1st international event “Open-government: principles, methods and ICT open source tools” 26 - 28 June 2018 in Skopje, the Republic of North Macedonia.</p> <p>2nd international conference “Collaborative public services: building and managing of public co-working spaces and co-housing” 16 -18 January 2019, Santorso, Italy</p> <p>3rd international event “Innovative and sustainable financial instruments for local governments” 21 – 23 October 2019, Lisbon, Portugal</p> <p>Final international event “Participation and Collaborative values as a way to innovation and local development” 19 – 21 February 2020, Brussels, Belgium</p> <p>Experience of the Local paths</p>



	<p>The International events within the RECOV project were followed by local activities ensuring continuity and the transferability to the local level. The methodologies used for organizing the local activities was the participatory approach including analysis, discussions and working groups. The local events provided inputs for joint international events, encourage debates, and stimulate actions and new ideas based on lessons learnt from European partners for implementation of interventions and pilot actions at local level.</p> <p>The 3 local paths are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st local path: “How ICT could enforce Open-government?” • 2nd local path: “Collaborative public services: doing it together” • 3rd local path: “Local innovative financial instruments: doing it together” <p>Each local path is implemented by all project partners in their local community in order to raise awareness on the corresponding topic and support the role of grassroots organisations and local authorities for development. The development dimension of each thematic path targets different local stakeholders such as institutions, schools, private sector and citizens.</p> <p>The participants in each local path had the opportunity to learn, discuss, exchange views and present best practices. The local activities also represented an opportunity for citizens and local authorities to reflect on the examples of best practices and recommendations for the future of the community.</p>
Beneficiaries	The project involved 504 direct and around 10000 indirect participants in 9 countries, among which: general public, elected people, municipal employees, activists, youth
Focus	Public services and ICT technologies providing new tools for citizen participation and initiative.
Key messages of citizens involved in the project	<p>” Project activities in RECOV strive for goals that are important to society, connect different local communities and support intergenerational cooperation. Through interesting various workshops, project partners engage different participants, therefore we get a wider audience for cooperation and implementation of the results.” – participant from Slovenia</p> <p>“I encourage the schools to become more involved in the such of projects. There is a need to educate the young people not only to practical work but also in democratic thinking.” - participant from Rauna, Latvia</p>



5. Lessons learned and recommendations

In this chapter key findings of this analysis are systematised in order to offer useful tips and some recommendations. A specific section for the main analysed elements will be declined by reflecting the structure of the document.

I. Activities

Based on the activities analysed in the dedicated section, we would first like to highlight some elements learned and useful tips from our experiences.

Workshop & participatory activities are certainly the activities that can have a direct impact on the active involvement of citizens. It should be noted, however, that in order to be effective, these types of activities rely on the involvement of a limited number of participants, a high level of preparation of the organisers/experts, and are therefore properly a methodology of greater engagement, qualitatively more incisive but of lesser quantity in quantitative terms.

Conferences allow to reach a large number of citizens, when you can be attractive in terms of subject matter and innovative approach. The success of the “classic” format of the event with various speakers are very much dependent on the relevance and notoriety of the speakers, otherwise there are unfortunately limits to effectiveness and in terms of participation.

Exchange practices: is a 'win-win' type of activity that makes it possible to enhance the experiences and capacities of the partners and foster a real impact of the project in terms of transnationality.

Local path: is a key activity for citizen and local community awareness and involvement. It can be very much influenced (in positive or negative terms) by the actual capacities of the partner working for that geographical/country context, the capacity of action, influence on other local stakeholders, citizen mobilisation and organisational capacity. Opportunities for exchange between partners with respect to the local dimension could be enhanced so as to strengthen “weaker” partners and more “structured” partners for this type of activity.

A more general reflection on the activity is related to the way budgets are structured, a central feature of the programme compared to other European funding channels. Reference is made to the way in which the number of participants is counted when defining costs. Certainly this represents a facilitation both in terms of planning and reporting with respect to the events, while it might make the evaluation of the effectiveness of the individual activity more critical.



Some cross-activity recommendations could be:

Training/capacity-building sessions could be envisaged, also in terms of exchange between partners in the initial phase of the project to enable everyone to have an adequate level with respect to implementation needs.

More qualitative and thematic additional requirements could be envisaged already at the project proposal writing stage to favour the organisation and valorisation of exchange events and activities

A better **balance of online/offline activities** and the type of impact. Until before the covi we would not have imagined we would even have to think about this, but the impact of digital participation can be an important facilitator. The Europe for Citizens Programme was perhaps one of those which found it more difficult to adapt to a remodulation between the organisation of events in presence and online/streaming, the: reasoning about possible adjustments of the budget for mobility/participation to calibrate on online participation while still providing financial coverage (the organisation of the event must be done anyway!) and is more sustainable and effective in some aspects (ease of participation without transport, to reach for example rural or more isolated communities, motor disabilities, ...)

- **Follow up actions** can be designed and defined jointly within the consortium already in the second half of the project (and not at the end), since it envisages actions that favour a sustainability of the network.

II. Beneficiaries

Considering the broad audience of citizens, defining the type of **target group** to be reached with activities and events may help to be more effective and attractive in mobilising citizens.

The key **messages of the citizens involved** are a central element that should be valorised, also benefiting from the potential of technology and envisaging, for example, additional tools to collect testimonies that can be shared more easily (videos, recordings, ...).

Structuring additional part of the Programme in order to support also innovative formats of event, considering interactive approach based on online/digital platform for public participation. It may facilitate the an inclusive approach for involving **vulnerable and disadvantaged people**.

Elaborating the **project's content** in a relevant and appropriate way with respect to the country/area of project implementation, defining the contribution each can bring in synergy with the socio-cultural peculiarities.

The combination of several partners for a country in a **multi-stakeholder approach** (Local/Regional Authorities, Civil Society organisations, grassroots associations,..) can help to involve citizens from the beginning in a more active way. A better definition of the target



group as mentioned above can also facilitate the involvement of stakeholders more committed to the mobilisation/animation of these targets.

III. Partnership

There are strong limitations to capitalise on the partnership network, because there are no opportunities for concrete exchange on the local path and beyond international events. More **structured exchange between partners** in order to promote a constructive planning of the local activities, to valorize the mutual exchange and circulation of innovative ideas within the consortium.

The **scale of the consortium** can be substantial, with an important impact on the monitoring and implementation of activities. This aspect must also be weighed very carefully with respect to the **scale of the partner organisation**, considering the type of partner, experience, size of organisation, management skills and reliability. Another aspect to be considered but that is difficult to monitor or predict is the staff turnover, it is endemic in many organisations, and can severely impact especially in small-scale organisations.

IV. Resources

Providing for **additional typologies** of budget line: it would be useful to be able to add supplementary activities at local level that are not strictly tied to the number of participants, and so allow for the organisation of more attractive and interactive activities to ensure greater citizens participation and engagement.

Possibility of adding economic **coverage of online events**, considering actual costs of translations, LIS and overcoming digital barriers, ... to encourage digital participation in addition to physical participation, as a criterion for greater inclusiveness.



V. Follow-up and Sustainability

Some key elements could be outlined in order to be effective in terms of follow-up and sustainability of the action:

To transfer the knowledge acquired by the network among the project **interest** groups (i.e., target groups, main stakeholders, key decision - makers and general public).

To implement joint and individual actions that give continuity to the project, ensuring its sustainability by articulating **agreements** among the project partners in order to identify potential project actions in the future.

To reach high impact at local level, by identifying and implementing action lines from other potential initiatives in each project country targeting **innovative and mainstream approaches**.

To promote synergies through the identification, involvement and formalisation of **new collaborations** with other municipalities and/or key organisations for sharing practices and common experiences on key topics on Eu values and principles.



2014 - 2020



Citizens, Equality, Rights
and Values programme

