

Good Practice for Good Citizenship

EUROPE FOR CITIZENS PROGRAMME PROJECTS COORDINATED BY THE BALTIC SEA STATES

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Dear reader,

As recently as 25 years ago the Baltic Sea stood as a symbol of division between its opposing shores: a free world on one side and a confined one on the other. It's been a turbulent time since, and what used to divide us now finally connects us. As citizens of the European Union, we share today the same values of peace, diversity and welfare.

The Europe for Citizens Programme is designed to get the EU's 500 million inhabitants to play a greater role in the development of the union. Active involvement in local communities creates a sense of ownership, which only grows stronger and wider when sharing experiences and working together at the EU level.

In this brochure you'll find examples of excellent projects with beneficiaries and partners mainly from the Baltic Sea region. International cooperation is always an enriching experience, and working side by side with your neighbours is a great way of resolving common issues and getting to know one another better. A secure and democratic Europe starts at your doorstep – be sure to join in!



Kadri Sikk

Europe for Citizens Coordinator, Estonia



This brochure is issued in cooperation between the Europe for Citizens Contact Points in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland and Sweden



What is the Europe for Citizens programme?

The Europe for Citizens programme encourages citizens to play a stronger role in the development of the EU. Citizens can participate and make their voice heard through a multitude of projects and activities building bridges from the local to the international level. These projects raise awareness of remembrance, common history and the values of the EU and encourage civic participation by developing people's understanding of and involvement in the EU's policy making-process.

The aims of the Europe for Citizens programme are to:

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

What does it support?

Arising from the aims of the programme, Europe for Citizens is implemented through action grants in two strands and also through operating grants.

Action grants

STRAND 1

European Remembrance

- the EU as a Peace Project

1.1 European Remembrance

This strand supports initiatives which reflect on the root causes of the totalitarian regimes that blighted Europe's modern history, look at its other defining moments and reference points and consider different historical perspectives.

• Project duration: up to 18 months

• Grant amount: max. €100 000

STRAND 2

Democratic Engagement and Civic Participation – Getting Citizens Involved

2.1 Town twinning

Projects will bring citizens from twinned towns and municipalities together to debate issues on the European political agenda. They will develop opportunities for societal engagement and volunteering at the EU level. Both existing and new partnerships are encouraged.

Project duration: up to 21 days
Grant amount: max. €25 000

2.2 Networks of towns

Towns and municipalities are encouraged to cooperate with others on a long-term basis to explore particular topics or themes, share resources or interests, gain influence or face common challenges.

• Project duration: up to 24 months

• Grant amount: max. €150 000

2.3 Civil society projects

These projects give citizens the opportunity to actually participate in the EU's policy-making process. They stimulate debate to propose practical solutions through cooperation at the European level.

• Project duration: up to 18 months

• Grant amount: max. €150 000

Operating grants

In addition, the European Commission supports European public-policy research organisations (think tanks) and civil society organisations with a European outreach.

Who does what?

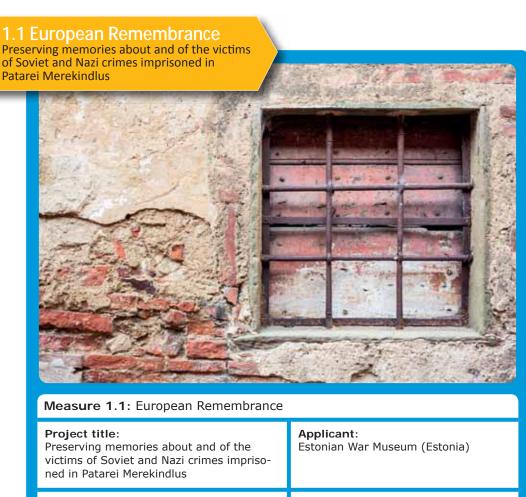
Europe for Citizens is implemented by the Executive Agency for Education, Audiovisual and Culture (EACEA) based in Brussels, Belgium.

The European Commission supervises the EACEA's work and is responsible for all tasks implying political choices – notably defining strategies and priorities for action. The Commission shares good practices and results.

Information and consultation is offered by the national Europe for Citizens contact points in the participating countries.

Who can apply?

Non-profit/civil society organizations, towns, local or regional municipalities, educational, cultural, research, survivors' and youth organizations are all welcome to participate.



Duration:

1/9/2014 - 29/02/2016

Partners from:

Estonia, Finland and Denmark

Europe for Citizens grant: 77 750€

Patarei Prison - The Berlin Wall of the East

A unique landmark in European history, where both Nazi and Soviet history meet

The Berlin Wall stands as a strong symbol of European division into the free West and the confined East. Located on the seashore from where the West could almost be glimpsed, Patarei prison, with its barbed-wire fences, was a similar symbol of grim totalitarian power in the East, and until the 1990s a horrid reality for prisoners of both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, from two-time prime minister and state elder Jaan Tõnisson to Nobel prize nominee Jaan Kross.

The prison – a magnificent 19th-century classical building, the largest intact classical complex anywhere in the Baltics and Scandinavia and a building of remarkable architectural value in itself – is a place to be commemorated and developed into a museum and centre of remembrance. It serves as a perfect example of where Nazi and Soviet history come together, bringing into focus both Nazi crimes, to which a just stance has been

taken, and Soviet atrocities, which have gone relatively unnoticed.

The story of Patarei prison comes to life through the memories of survivors: former prisoners who served their terms in different eras. A documentary describes its history and connections to Estonia regaining its independence in the wider context of the democratization process in Central and Eastern Europe. Nationwide seminars and an international conference at which experts and other involved parties will express their opinions on how Patarei should be best preserved to serve as a historic landmark contribute as input for updating Patarei's strategic action plan towards becoming a museum and centre for remembrance.

Impact

A freely downloadable documentary and collected materials will be produced in Estonian, English, German and Russian to ensure a wide audience, reaching up to 3-4 million people. Historians, school teachers, students and policy makers can actively partake in seminars and an international conference designed to initiate wider discussion about the threats of totalitarian and/or authoritarian regimes, underlining the need for peace and stability and reinforcing the values of the European Union. An exceptional landmark, Patarei prison prevails as a symbol of remembrance and perseverance.



Patrick Rang

Project Consultant, Estonian War Museum



International cooperation is always enriching and takes you further than you can get on your own. Though there are a few simple tips to bear in mind when starting out. My recommendations are:

- Think it through!
International cooperation is not necessary simply for cooperation's sake.
It should be clear how the project benefits your organization and why you need partners from other countries. Maybe they have know-how and experience you need; maybe you want to widen your network. Whatever the case, make sure you understand your own

motivations and reasons behind choosing exactly those partners.

- Don't jump into it headfirst! Research your partners' background to be certain that they can deliver what's promised. If you want the project to go smoothly, pick partners who are capable of ensuring it will.

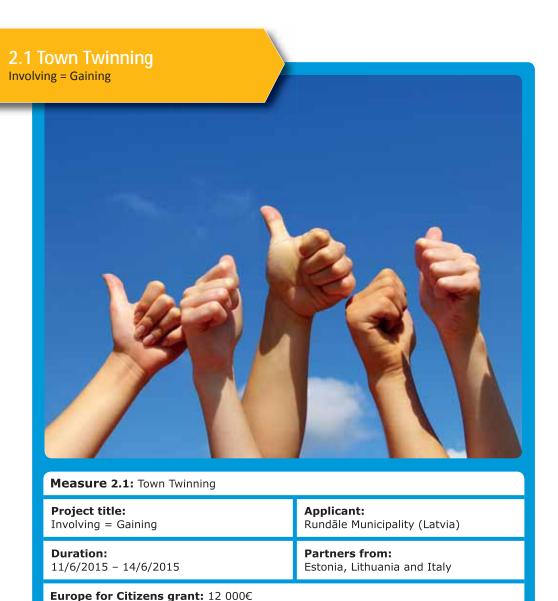
- Be specific! Go to your potential partners with a clear proposal: what is the problem you want to resolve? What are the goals of the project? What kind of outcomes do you expect? What activities are needed to get there?

 Plan some extra time. And then some more. And a little bit more. In reality, when implementing an international project, quite a lot of time is spent on bureaucracy and communicating, and cultural differences can rear their heads at unexpected moments. You have a deadline for a report on Monday but it turns out that's a public holiday in your partner's country? Not a problem - if you've planned some buffer time. And one last tip: don't

forget to enjoy your ex-

citing and unique expe-

rience!



21st Century Governance: Immersed in Culture, United in Diversity

Improving citizens' participation in decision-making processes

Participatory practices are all the rage in 21st-century governance, but in practice are often a cause of scepticism, confusion and suspicion for public administration. There is no better way to overcome these obstacles and involve citizens than to get together,

listen and learn from one another. We have, after all, quite similar problems to tackle, no matter where we live in Europe, and so much cultural diversity and know-how to offer.

The project 'Involving = Gaining' served exactly this purpose. Voluntary participants,

among them citizens, NGO representatives, representatives of municipalities and amateur culture collectives covering different age groups got together for a four-day event to share best practice in citizens' involvement in local decision-making processes, to get to know one another and through cultural exchange to discover what a European identity truly means. Meetings, discussions, creative workshops, a national culture evening, the opening of a virtual photo and art exhibition and much more, culminating in a visit to the Rundāle Festival, truly immersed the participants in diversity. The gain? Mutual and lasting cooperation between citizens and authorities, cross-border communities and European people.

Impact

The partnering municipalities signed a cooperation contract to continue sharing experiences and knowledge. Direct participation of citizens ensured that the project met one of the main goals of the Europe for Citizens programme: fostering European citizenship and improving conditions for civic and democratic participation at the EU level. This is exactly what town twinning is all about!



New contacts, new inter-

cultural connections, new

acquaintances and new

friendships always have added value – new know-

can be useful in future.

This Town Twinning project was certainly inspira-

tional for the participants, the citizens and the public

servants. It was heart-

warming to get feedback

from one of them - the

from Estonia - who said

leader of a brass band

that the event really

ledge and experience that

Laura Ārente

Project Specialist, Rundāle Local Municipality Council



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ration, as they (a group of men aged 75+) had never had such an experience before.

The participants admitted that such a positive experience from being involved in common activities, meeting citizens from different countries and cultures fosters confidence about each citizen's role in the development of the community. It's hard to underestimate the value of such an experience: positive emotions and memories are an investment in the fu-

ture and more willing and active participation in democratic decision-making processes at different levels.

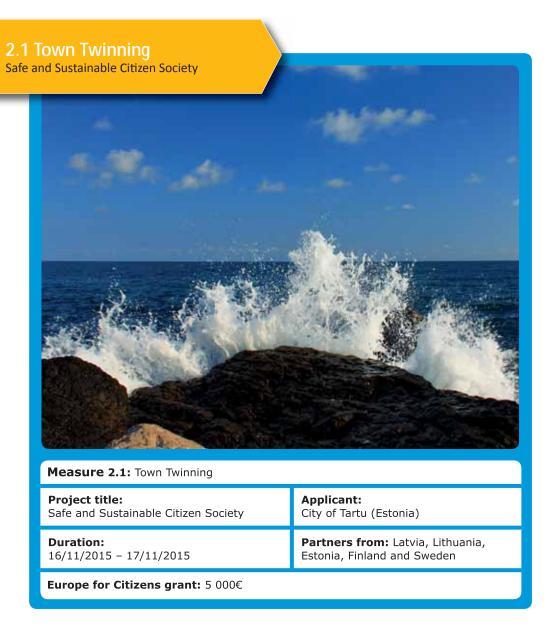
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As for the municipalities, the representatives of the partners discussed existing ties and laid down a plan for further cooperation. All in all, a great experience and an interesting project!

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and gave them new inspi-

made the orchestra happy



Together for a Safer Baltic Sea Region and EU

Raising citizens' awareness about consumer products in neighbourly cooperation

Chemicals are all around us, from natural chemicals in food to industrially produced ones found in the working environment and consumer products. They may make our everyday lives easier, but at the same time can cause allergies, impact on the reproductive system or show carcinogenic and

toxic effects. Therefore risk management of chemicals is a high priority on the European and international agenda. Aware and active citizens are the actors of change who, step by step, will move the EU closer to a safer and more sustainable future.

The Nordics have reached a good level of knowledge and consumer awareness about chemicals in products and their effects on human health and nature. The institutions tasked with dealing with these issues have sound experience in distributing relevant information. Exchanging knowledge and best practice with the Baltics will increase the activity of citizens in the region and strengthen civil society all around the Baltic Sea, boosting international cooperation and influencing policies at both the national and EU levels.

Impact

Through non-formal education, exchange of experience via seminars, lectures and discussions, and disseminating project results as a handbook, consumers in the Baltic countries learn from the experience of their Nordic counterparts about hazardous chemicals in consumer products. The participants, of whom 40–50% are volunteers, will become trainers and teachers with the task of disseminating knowledge and skills to a wider group of consumers. Cross-border cooperation is the key to a safer Baltic Sea region!



Siim Espenberg

Chief Specialist in Business Development, City of Tartu



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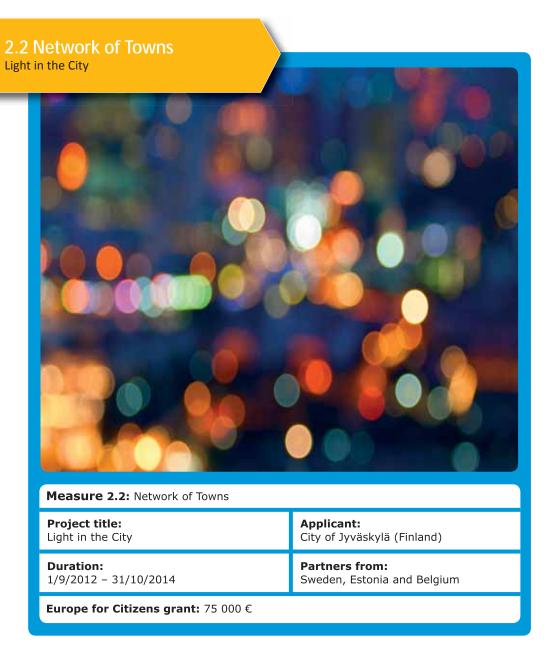
When it comes to consumers, the most important aspect in getting people involved is to offer clear, specific information and guidance that will help them live more healthily and provide better conditions for their children. Since we are interested in improving the life and living conditions in our countries and in the EU as a whole, we need to act at the local level all over the EU. Working together gets you further than

trying to solve all of your problems on your own.

Luckily our neighbours in the Nordics have experience in many areas that we can learn from, thus giving us the chance to be more efficient and achieve good results. Even though at first it might seem like a one-way exchange of knowledge, such cooperation is actually mutually beneficial. Our previous experience has clearly shown that it is possible to learn from everybody

involved. For example, it is evident that the Baltic States have launched several initiatives and conducted studies that have produced very interesting (and sometimes alarming) results that are also useful to our Nordic partners.

By joining forces we can help each other overcome difficulties, share solutions that have worked well and learn from failure.



Together for a Safer Baltic Sea Region and EU

City Lighting Project with an Emphasis on Energy-Efficiency

Sustainability is a key feature of a plethora of European Union policies, among them the Ecodesign Directive, which requires energy-using products to be more ecological. This has urged European municipalities and cities to rethink their lighting strategies from the inside out and to seek cooperation in developing city lighting that has aesthetic value,

enhances security, takes environmental effects into consideration and brings savings in terms of energy and maintenance.

Led by the City of Jyväskylä, a series of Light in the City events organized in participating countries brought together city officials, municipal engineers, lighting designers, architects, politicians, lighting artists and ordinary citizens to share their experiences and join forces in constructing a quality urban environment where lighting in times of darkness is not only energy-efficient, but also pleasant and makes you feel safe. Hence the objectives of the project: to raise awareness, to develop city-specific lighting projects and to encourage partner cities to devise a lighting master plan on how to become more energy-efficient.

At a kick-off conference, the City of Jyväskylä presented its experience acquired over the years in how to design and construct city lighting. With learning tips in hand, customized Light in the City events were organized in partnering cities, though always including a seminar, educational workshops and a Guerrilla Lighting event. As a result, European citizens from 15 different countries and 73 different cities took part in this illuminating project, which is truly an example of best practice.

Impact

The Light in the City project strengthened the friendship and twinning relations of not only the cities involved, but also those beyond. European city networks were well represented at the events, including participants from the Eurotowns network, Lighting Urban Community International, the Professional Lighting Designers' Association, the Union of the Baltic Cities and twin towns of the host cities. A wide network of local and international stakeholders are still working to make lighting in cities in Europe sustainable and pleasant for citizens. Keep your eyes open – you may just find yourself at the next city lighting event!



Annukka Larsen

City of Light Coordinator, City of Jyväskylä

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Jyväskylä is the City of Light in Finland. We have a lot of aesthetic lighting and a very broad field of interests in the area of light: visually comfortable street lighting, a sustainable urban lighting system, new methods of purchasing only light, light events, light as a physical phenomenon and the psychological effect of light on humans. When sharing our vision we got a lot of valuable

feedback and new ideas. We also think we brought our partner cities not only light, but also joy with our event!

We have learned that international projects require more time and patience. Working on them is slower than working on national projects. There are a lot of emails and phone calls. Due to different working methods and cultural differences it was sometimes difficult to be



sure that everything was being organized the way you were used to. Communication is a challenge when all of the members of the team are using a foreign language. But our team's persistent work was highly appreciated by the participants and the feedback from them was overwhelmingly warm and kind. So it will be rewarded in the end!

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Project title: Social capital development as a tool of youth civic participation in Eastern Europe countries

Duration:

1/1/2015 - 31/05/2016

Applicant:

Social Innovation Centre (Latvia)

Partners from:

Poland, Romania, Lithuania and Estonia

Europe for Citizens grant: 147 750€

Connecting Youth

Creating social capital among Eastern European youth for better civic participation

The Europe for Citizens programme sets as a goal fostering European citizenship and improving conditions for civic and democratic participation at the EU level. This is by no means easily achievable, as numerous studies have shown differences in civic participation between Western and Eastern European countries. Young people in new democracies have lower levels of expected future participation, raising questions about what the current level of engagement actually is and who or what helps to engage

youth more. When people connect, social capital is created. This is one of the first steps in building trust and leading to wider EUrelated civic engagement activities. European values, citizen rights and opportunities all arise from shared social capital. Therefore the purpose of the project is to focus on the youth in new democracies and promote the accumulation of social capital leading to the greater democratic participation of citizens.

International conferences, roundtable discussions, workshops and training events will bring together young people from project countries, giving them an opportunity to talk about existing and new forms of civic engagement tools. A questionnaire on social capital knowledge and civic participation in the youth sector will provide a comprehensive understanding of the current situation. Youngsters themselves will be the main drivers and participants in the creation, testing and distribution of the questionnaire, the collection of results and analysis. A social capital development guide (the online platform www.civicyouth.eu) will allow young people to share events in their lives and engage in creative ways. Dissemination of study results will give the governing bodies a better understanding about the current status of the civic engagement of youth.

Impact

Seizing active leadership roles, being active and challenging others to do the same are the driving forces behind social innovation and the creation of social capital. Mirroring activities, meaning that project activities happen simultaneously in partnering countries, and international meetings engage youth at the European level. A questionnaire and a guide for social capital development will be available as a tool for active use, which will be shared through a network of over 50 European organizations. Big changes always start with individual steps!



Renāte Lukjanska

Project Coordinator and Chairman of the Board, Social Innovation Centre

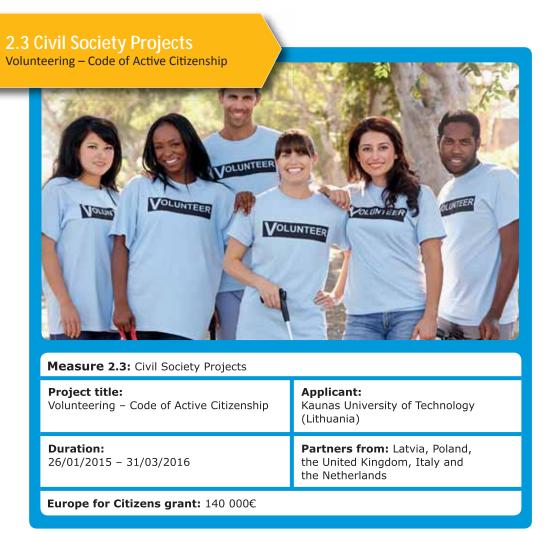
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It's an old truth that the youth are our future. Europe today is so different from what it was just a few decades ago. Eastern and Central European countries had to endure a political regime that did not allow participation in societal processes. Involvement doesn't happen overnight, which research shows quite well: young people in newer democracies in Europe are not as engaged in forming political and economic processes as their counterparts in western parts of Europe.

We wanted to bring about a change in the current situation. To educate youth about civic engagement, social capital and trust-building is to invest in a socially responsible and involved society in the future. Building up a higher level of engagement helps Europe to be more coherent and people to understand one another better.

After drafting the idea about our possible project, Europe for Citizens seemed to be the programme with which our idea fitted best. I was

surprised about the project application process and approach because it is different from other programmes in a positive way. It is much simpler, and I also want to stress how huge the support has been from the National Contact Point in drafting and preparing the application. Definitely a programme to turn to with a project such as this.



Active Volunteer – True European

When citizens become actively engaged on voluntary basis, they realize their true potential

Volunteering is the highest level of active citizenship, to which the recent European Year of Volunteering 2011 bore witness. At the same time, Eurostat statistics show great differences in levels of voluntary engagement across the EU. While the older EU countries boast a long tradition of volunteering, those that have joined since 2004 still need to build up a proper culture around it.

During the project development and partnership creation process a clear effort was made to involve partners from different regions of the EU, representing countries and institutions with long volunteering traditions as well as countries with less experience. The project brings together practitioners, researchers, trainers, experts and institutions which want to implement volunteering activities or pass on their experience. In partnership, best practice is shared, civic participation across Europe gains new impetus and citizens of the EU get to realize their true potential in societal engagement.

A joint issue for all participants is volunteering management. Ideas are often born without leading to successful projects because of a lack of practical management skills among volunteers. A key component in volunteering processes is enthusiasm, maintaining which requires particular skills of project managers. Through a range of activities including debates, workshops, civic engagement fairs, volunteering initiatives and a conference, project participants are encouraged to actively contribute to their communities and democratic life of the EU through volunteering and active citizenship, learning from one another's best practice and finding new ways to work together.

Impact

Great emphasis is placed on dissemination and valorization activities, which will be held at the local, national and international levels and built up continuously in the project processes. A network of support partners is created for greater impact in spreading project results about active citizenship and volunteering initiatives for EU citizens. Project activities and results will be disseminated through different channels: newspaper articles, posters, video conferences, newsletters, mailing, radio, national and international partner networks, websites and social media channels. Final conclusions and the results achieved with the project will be presented as recommendations to the members of the European Parliament of each project partner country.



Jolanta Vaičiūnienė

Director of the Municipal Training Centre, Kaunas University of Technology

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We believe that volunteering is an extraordinary expression of active EU citizenship - by giving one's time for the benefit of others, volunteers serve their community and play an active role in our democratic society. It is an especially powerful way of developing citizens' commitment to and support for the society they live in. Besides, volunteering offers an opportunity for non-formal learning, for accumulating experience and knowledge and developing one's abilities and skills. Fundamentally, volunteers are agents who promote European values and objectives.

In terms of international cooperation, intercultural dialogue is very important. For example, in this project we have six European countries participating with different contextual backgrounds in volunteering which is strongly influenced by history, culture and political processes. Cooperation is a great opportunity for project partners to not only promote volunteerism but also to share their best practice in volunteering and active citizenship. As our Italian partners remarked at the beginning of the project, knowing the reality in other countries gives a new impulse and ideas



about how to improve volunteerism and encourage people to actively participate in the project countries and Europe as a whole.

The Europe for Citizens programme has a special focus on volunteering and it was well-matched to our goal to enable citizens to participate in their community activities and to gain a greater sense of social responsibility. Volunteering starts in the community, but it's only a small step away from intercultural engagement and civic participation at the EU level. Thanks to international collaboration, we are able to achieve a greater impact.



Europe: By the People, for the People

The European Rural Parliament gives a voice to the rural areas of Europe

In November 2013 the first European Rural Parliament was held in Brussels, attended by 150 people representing rural interests in 30 countries. The parliament enables the voices of rural people in Europe to be heard at the European level, and ensures that the interests of rural communities are reflected in national and European policies. Networking, collaboration and coordinated activities at the

European level promote solidarity, exchange of good practice and cooperation among rural communities throughout Europe.

Two years later, in 2015, it is time to hold the event again. The rural areas of Europe are evidently diverse in their level of organization, ranging from informal face-to-face contacts in local communities via the 5000 village action groups which comprise the

Swedish network Hela Sverige Ska Leva to the biennial National Rural Parliaments in countries such as Estonia, Latvia and Slovenia.

For the second European Rural Parliament, a simultaneous set of national campaigns — one in each partner country — will be held in order to generate an 'upward cascade of ideas' which express the concerns and hopes of rural people. In each country, this 'cascade' will start at the local level, be gathered at the regional level, be synthesised at the national and then at the European level into the European Rural Manifesto to be debated and agreed upon at the European Rural Parliament 2015. It will be used in advocacy on behalf of rural communities throughout Europe and as a stimulus for action by rural communities to further their own well-being.

Impact

The European Rural Parliament 2015 will be attended by rural citizens from all EU Member States and from some Candidate or Neighbour countries, plus invited representatives of the European Parliament and Commission. The adopted Manifesto will be translated into key European languages and widely distributed. It will be formally presented to European institutions (including the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission) and national and regional governments, with the purpose of focusing the attention of decision-makers upon the needs and aspirations of rural communities. The European Rural Parliament will remain the voice of rural dwellers of Europe throughout the current EU programme period of 2014-2020.



Lena Husén

Beneficiary Coordinator at Hela Sverige ska leva

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There might be differences in rural communities across Europe, but the similarities are much more important. For instance, it is equally important everywhere to strengthen local development and identity, to create a dialogue with national representatives and to exchange knowledge and experience effectively. Strong local involvement in democratic processes makes it possible to influence policy-making at the national and European levels.

The parliament itself is a method, not an organization. The goal is to create a meeting place for grassroots movements and decision-makers, men and women, young and old, so they can discuss on equal terms what really matters to rural associations. The event nurtures democratic processes and has its own 'soul', achieved thanks to a real bottom-up approach. Its uniqueness must be preserved and developed.

A key factor in facilitating such a method



is cooperation with and between established European rural networks such as Prepare (the Partnership for Rural Europe), ERCA (the European Rural Community Alliance) and ELARD (the European LEADER association for Rural Development). Their contact with rural movements throughout Europe is a precondition for being able to implement a project of this scope. Success definitely lies in good cooperation.

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Find your National Contact Point

For more information about the Europe for Citizens programme, please contact your national Europe for Citizens contact point.

Estonia

Europe for Citizens Point Estonia National Foundation of Civil Society www.kysk.ee

Sweden

Europe for Citizens Point Sweden Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society www.mucf.se

Finland

Europe for Citizens Point Finland Centre for International Mobility www.cimo.fi

Latvia

Europe for Citizens Point Latvia
Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia
www.km.gov.lv

Lithuania

Europe for Citizens Point Lithuania Lithuanian Culture Institute www.pilieciams.eu

Please find your local Europe for Citizens point on the website of EACEA: www.eacea.ec.europa.eu



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