

The project « EUROPEAN DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION CONFERENCE OF TWINNED TOWNS » was funded with the support of the European Union under the Programme "Europe for Citizens"

Applicable to the Strand 2 – Measure 2.1 "Town-Twinning"

The project **EUROPEAN DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION CONFERENCE OF TWINNED TOWNS-EURODEM** involved 214 citizens, notably 87 participants from the city of Vaterstetten (Germany), 39 participants from the city of Budapest – Ujbuda (Hungary), 23 participants from the city of Prague (Czech Republic), and 65 participants from the city of Trogir (Croatia).

In line with annual priorities of the "Europe for citizens" Programme, and with the support of the "Europe for Citizens" programme of the European Union City of Trogir has organized a conference from 3 - 8 of September 2015. The conference has put specific attention to the promotion of democratic engagement and civic participation and presentation of that area as an essential element in building active European citizenship. Through the promotion of democratic engagement at this EURODEM conference has been created the platform for future exchange of experiences and intercultural cooperation among project partners and European citizens in large with the specific goals to enable environment for the promotion of civic participation in the EU, this conference has empowered organizations in that area and raised awareness of the importance of that activities. EURODEM has been focused on exchanging best practices and experience related to promotion of democratic participation at Union level, the need to raise public awareness about importance of democratic engagement and civic participation at Union level. EURODEM conference has included about 214 participants in total. EURODEM conference consisted of different interactive activities such as presentations, sessions, panels, discussions, and workshops.

Through this EURODEM conference partner towns City of Trogir, City of Vaterstetten, City of Prague and City of Budapest-Ujbuda have presented examples of best practices and shared their experiences (both positive cases and challenges) with other partners in area of democratic engagement and civic participation, and have made connections for future common cooperation. Through sessions and panels which included lectures of experts participants were learning about active citizenship. The representatives of national authorities and EU institutions Ms. Marta Rajević - Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs and Mr. Martin Mayer - European Commission Representation in Croatia were speaking and highlighted national and European strategies and policies. Through lectures of experts participants were also learning about: Innovative tools, projects and solutions for a smarter, more sustainable and inclusive European Union; about civic participation in global issues and about possibilities of their active involvement in decision – making processes; about importance and challenges of democratic engagement and civic participation at different levels; about concrete possibilities and solutions for future events and future cooperation between partner towns in area of democratic engagement and civic participation; Through best practice examples and presentations of experts about democratic engagement, civic participation and volunteering associations from different countries participants were learning about benefits of active civic participation and democratic engagement. Through very active discussions and interactive dialogue participants were talking about different problems and possible solutions more specifically related to each partner town related to effective citizens animation and promotion in field of democratic engagement and civic participation. Through workshops participants were together considering and developing possible activities about democratic engagement and civic participation in these towns. During the interactive project activities participants were considering and adopted constructive conclusions in the different fields of democratic engagement and civic participation as follows:

CONFERENCE CONCLUSIONS:

1.ENHANCEMENT OF DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT AND CIVIL PARTICIPATION THROUGH FUTURE EU PROJECTS: The frame of discussion were key ideas of the program: equal access, transnationality and local dimension, intercultural dialogue and volunteering as an expression of active European citizenship, bases for future EU projects are: enhancement of intergenerational cooperation in the context of democratic education with goals: to teach responsibility through experience, to identify common moral values, to reach mutual respect, and increase transparency on three levels: institutional level: improvement of the legislative system and implementation of positive practices, organizational level: capacity development of all group actors, individual level: education, personal engagement.

2.FUTURE COOPERATION BETWEEN PARTNER TOWNS IN AREA OF DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION: There are several key elements for enhancement future cooperation: supporting projects bringing together citizens from twinned towns. By mobilising citizens at local and EU levels to debate on concrete issues from the European political agenda, providing funding to municipalities and associations working together on a common theme in a long term perspective, and wishing to develop networks of towns to make their cooperation more sustainable, supporting projects gathering citizens in activities directly linked to EU policies, providing an opportunity for direct participation in the policy making process. Funded activities may include: promotion of societal engagement and solidarity, gathering of opinions, volunteering.

3.IMPORTANCE AND CHALLENGES OF DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION: Key important are: To form visions of possibilities, priorities, minorities, immigrants; Put decision making closer to citizens; Togetherness and the main challenges are: Understanding immigrant flows, causes, results; Time and civil courage;

4.MANAGEMENT OF DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION IN PARTNER TOWNS: The inclusion of citizens from the beginning of the policy process can increase the sense of their responsibility and understanding of complex issues; can be an important mechanism for clarifying the values, needs and preferences of citizens; can help decision makers to make better decisions; allow politicians to share responsibility for the controversial decision; and increase the legitimacy of public decision-making.

5.DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION AS PLATFORM OF DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP: Key elements for development of European citizenship are: democratic engagement and civic participation, dealing with common issues and topics, including direct forms of cooperation between citizens-like twin towns cooperation.

6. ANIMATION OF CITIZENS AND ACTIVITIES IN AREA OF DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION: Main elements are: opening of municipal "meetings" for publics, On line watching media – dissemination of information – call to action, counter balance to municipal newsletters, Cross generational project, Project with people with less opportunities, Outdoor activities, Courses

7. PROMOTION OF DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION: Measures for improvement are: Involving the youth, project development assistants, organizational reforms of local government; More civic forums, motivation of individuals, volunteering; More discussion.

Location/ Dates: The events took place in city of Trogir (Croatia), from 3 of September to 8 of September, 2015.

Short description:

3 of September 2015: Arrival and accommodation of delegates, Welcome with cocktail-dinner

4 of September 2015: Opening and welcome: Mr. Ivo Grga and Mayor of City of Trogir Mr. Ante Stipčić . Introduction to democratic engagement and civic participation: Mr. Martin Mayer - European Commission Representation in Croatia, Ms. Marta Rajević - Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs, National Contact Point for the Programme Europe for Citizens, „European Citizenship and Croatian Civil Society“ - European Citizenship and Croatian Civil Society, Mr. Ranko Milić - CEDRA, „ Citizen Participation 2020: Innovative Tools, Projects and Solutions for a Smarter, More Sustainable and Inclusive Europe „ , Mr. Ivo Grga, European movement - Civic participation in global issues. Partner's presentations about their activities: City of Trogir, City of Prague 5, City of Budapest-Ujbuda, City of Vaterstetten. Panel discussion, Sightseeing of Trogir with a tourist guides,

5 of September 2015: Workshops, Presentation of best practice Examples: Ms. Neda Milišić Buklijaš, Cenzura Plus, City of Vaterstetten - Ms. Viktorija Smlatic and Ms. Alicia Baier, Ms. Aleksandra Makrić – TOMS, Presentation of workshop conclusions: Ms. Marija Kezele,

6 of September 2015: Session devoted to Future events: Ms. Ana Jakić and Ms. Snježana Lisičić, Panel devoted to future cooperation: Ms. Diana Magdic and Ms. Danka Radić, Discussion – questions and comments: Moderated by Mr. Ivo Grga, Cultural activities.

7 of September 2015: Session – fostering European citizenship: Lectures of experts – Darko Čop – Info zone „Role of Youth organization in decision making processes „ , City of Vaterstetten – presentation – Sascha Nigro, Conclusions of conference- closing remarks and statements, Cultural activities: Concert of Vaterstetten and Trogir Music-schools.

8 of September 2015: Signature of memorandum of understanding, Press Conference, Farewellspeech by Mayor of Trogir