

# **Manual on Fostering Culture of Active Citizenship**





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**IT'S YOUR TURN FOR SOCIAL CHANGES** (Erasmus +, Key Action 3: Structural Dialogue)

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# INTRODUCTION

*"No one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included from birth. A society that cuts off from its youth severs its lifeline."*

*-- Kofi Annan*



We are all part of the European family, regardless of the size of our country and community. An active EU citizen is something that we all must strive to be, exercise each day and be happy to develop and to grow up. Alongside with the European elections and the putting into real practice and implementation of the European citizens' initiative after the Lisbon Treaty, the encouragement of active youth participation in social life has come to new wider dimensions. The European Union continues the communication with young people by providing numerous activities and initiatives for them.

Building an active civil society is important for the EU, that's why 2013 had been announced as the European year of citizenship. In order to complete this mission, the EU is **Educating towards Citizenship**. It aims at training young people to become critical citizens, willing and capable of thinking and acting positively in democratic states, as is currently usual inside the international community.

But, what does *active citizenship* mean?

By definition, an active citizen is „a citizen who takes an active role in the community“. But the European perspective on active citizenship always refers to **democracy and human rights** as founding elements.

Active citizenship:

- Is a response to the changes in modern society and the associated challenges;
- Is a key to the vision of a future society which is cohesive, inclusive, participative and democratic;
- Is an antidote to the challenges of democratic deficit;
- Requires crucial role of lifelong education and learning in formation of active citizens.

*"Active citizenship is not "just" about values concerned with human and civil rights, democracy and political participation. A high proportion of projects placed specific focus on a wider set of values that included socio-cultural and economic themes such as integration and multiculturalism." (GHK, 2007, 82)*

**‘Indicators’** to measure citizenship education in terms of: 1) knowledge transfer (i.e., background, factual and functional knowledge), 2) attitudes (i.e., political effectiveness, trust and interest), 3) values (i.e., tolerance, non-violence, acknowledging the rule of law and human rights), and 4) skills (i.e., critical reading and listening, writing, debating as well as empathic and social skills). 5) education culture (i.e., classroom climate, teaching and assessment methods, opportunities to participate in and have an influence on school as well as to participate in the community through school) (Regionplan, 2007, III). Each of these indicators is considered both an input and an output of educational interventions.

Citizenship enhances civic participation and so contributes to the added value newcomers bring, which in turn cements social cohesion. Active participation by all residents in the life of the local community contributes to its prosperity, and enhances integration. (Council of Europe, 2008, 29)

# HISTORY OF CITIZENSHIP

In the political and social history of the European continent , the category „European citizen“ took a statue and appeared in 1992 with the signing of the Maastricht Treaty. Everyone, who is citizen of a member-state, is considered to be a citizen of the Union. In addition to the rights and duties, defined by the Founding Treaty of the EU, the citizenship of the Union gives four more special rights:

- Freedom of movement and living in the Union;
- Right to vote and to be elected in local authorities and in the European Parliament elections in the country of residence;
- Diplomatic and consulate protection from the authorities of each member-state (Art.20 of the Contract of the European Communities);
- Right of Ombudsman protection.

After Amsterdam Treaty (1999), the statue of "European citizen" includes also the following rights:

- Right of request and questioning towards European institutions on each of the official languages and receiving of a written language at the same language;
- Right of access to the documents of the European Parliament, Council of Commission, after fulfillement of certail conditions (Art. 255 of the Treaty of the European Communities);
- Age, sexual orientation or disability. Right of non-discrimination between the citizens of the EU based on their nationality (Art. 12 Of the Treaty of the EC) as well as guarantee of non-discrimination based on sex, race, religion, age, sexual orientation or disability;
- Equal access to the job possitions at the institutions of the Community.

Introducing the term citizenship of the EU doesn't replace the national citizenship: it is supplementary to it. It gives the citizens deeper and stronger affiliation to the Union<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Toward the European citizen study folder, 2011, p. 28.

From historic point of view the European citizenship is a public culture field, which tries to help people to solve their personal problems and to increase their wellbeing by providing them concrete rights and freedoms.

From psychological point of view the European citizenship and education for it has to serve for the social changes, through which the personal and the public life of development goes through. Also psychologically talking, the transition and the accession process towards the EU is itself a transition, a change that each person, citizen and community had to be adapted to. The term „education for European and democratic citizenship“ includes the process of rethinking and understading the personal situation through a focused self-studying, broadening the limits of self-knowledge and acceptance of the others. The education for democratic citizenship demonstrates the origin and the deepness of the acceptance and support towards the European integration processes, in both ways – understanding and accepting yourself as well as carrying out characteristics of the interpersonal relations<sup>2</sup>.

From political science view, the education for active citizenship might be represented as a social support towards the person – citizen and as a social support related to understanding his/her role in the European integration processes. As such it includes:

- ✓ Possible scenario from the European integration process and social and political experiencing the term „European citizen“;
- ✓ Acts as a mediator of the social adaptation processes and integration of the young people, that might be in crisis in their efforts to reach their goals and solving the tasks connected to their European identity.

According to the International Federation of the EC (Maahstricht, 2000), the European citizneship is based on two fundaments – the Charter on Human Rights and the Philosophy of social justice and equality.

The education for active citizenship has few special definitions. On the one hand it is marked by humanity as it is to serve to the Community by forming

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<sup>2</sup> Кочюнас, Р., Основы психологического консультирования, М., 1999 г., с. 45-98

functional competences that support the professional and personal development within the European identity. On the other hand, the education for active citizenship serves as a social mechanism for guaranteeing the protection of human rights and citizens' freedoms. In many theories<sup>3</sup>, the education for active citizenship is presented as a mechanism to compensate social deficits and for broadening the role history of the citizen, in the aspect that the citizen has to constructively understand the integration policies and to implement a successful career within the EU territories. In the theoretical writings of Pfanenberg<sup>4</sup> the idea that education for active European citizenship is a kind of psycho-social mediation, that includes individual adaptation, development and realization. Schwartz<sup>5</sup> stated that education for active citizenship is a mediator for reaching harmonization between the individual and the public by meeting the needs and realization within the EU.

As a social experience the education for active citizenship, being both politically related and pedagogically implemented activity, includes some characteristics such as:

- ✓ Usually it is related to young people;
- ✓ It develops, increases and gains their individual, group and community resources;
- ✓ It is implemented in cooperation and partnership;
- ✓ It accepts the right of choice of each individual and his/her dignity;
- ✓ It is a right and protects everybody's rights.

In the process of education for active citizenship basic circumstances for social change are: the motivation and characteristics of the behavior, the stereotypes, the ethno identity and the lifestyle, the relations between the people and the communities, the personal characteristics, the level of community life, etc.

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<sup>3</sup> Ертелт, Бернд-Йоахим Уилям Е. Шулиц, Наръчник за консултантска компетентност, 2002 г.

<sup>4</sup> A. Gregorzewski, W. Pfaffenberger, W. Schulz, Beitrag der KWK zu Ressourcenschonung und Umweltschutz, in: EUROHEAT & POWER - Fernwärme international, Spezial September 2001, с. 128 -154

<sup>5</sup> Schwartz, W. Rosatie, Social work with groups, 1977

In short, since 1997 the European agenda on citizenship and education has been noticeably consistent and has moved in three directions: 1) the recognition of legal rights to all EU nationals; 2) the scaffolding of a European education model that has citizenship as a foundation, social and civic competences as a key competence, and democratic citizenship as a tool to facilitate intercultural learning; and 3) the collection of data and information to possibly measure countries' progress in terms of civic competences and active citizenship.

In 2008 designated by the EU as the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, the Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers issued the White paper on Intercultural Dialogue "Living together as equals in dignity" (Council of Europe, 2008) which indicates "Democratic citizenship and participation" as one of the five policy approaches to the promotion of intercultural dialogue across Europe and democratic citizenship as one of the key competence areas for teaching and learning intercultural competences. In this document education policies and practices play a key role in promoting active citizenship and widening participation.

# FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION



*Formal education* corresponds to a systematic, organized education model, structured and administered according to a given set of laws and norms, presenting a rather rigid curriculum as regards objectives, content and methodology. It is characterized by a contiguous education process named. Formal education has a well-defined set of features.

It is a “presential education”, which necessarily involves the teacher, the students and the institution. It corresponds to the education process normally adopted by our schools and universities. Formal education institutions are administratively, physically and curricularly organized and require from students a minimum classroom

attendance. There is a program that teachers and students alike must observe, involving intermediate and final assessments in order to advance students to the next learning stage. It confers degrees and diplomas pursuant to a quite strict set of regulations.

Thus, generally, formal education cannot disguise its aloofness from the real needs of the students and of the community.

*Non-formal education* characteristics are found when the adopted strategy does not require student attendance, decreasing the contacts between teacher and student and most activities take place outside the institution - as for instance, home reading and paperwork. It has flexible curricula and methodology, capable of adapting to the needs and interests of students, for which time is not a pre-established factor but is contingent upon the student's work pace, certainly do not correspond to those comprised by formal education, but fit into the so-called non-formal education.

The existing non-formal systems reveal the constant presence of two features: (a) - centralization of the process on the student, as to his previously identified needs and possibilities; and, (b) - the immediate usefulness of the education for the student's personal and professional growth. Non-formal education seems better to meet the individual needs of students.

Non-formal label encompasses a wide variety of educational systems endowed with features that either lead them towards or away from the established formal systems. Thus, we might infer the existence of a certain degree of continuity linking the formal and the non-formal education. It is an extremely objective and practical one in the search for alternative solutions to educational problems. Given its scope, non-formal education is comprised of an ample diversity of educational situations "correspondence learning", "distance learning" and "open systems"

*Correspondence Learning* is organized in structured correspondence schools. Nowadays, there is a large number of correspondence schools all over the World, encompassing studies that range from basic education to university studies, including a wide variety of subjects in the professional area. Correspondence learning is a planned and systematized activity, based on the preparation of printed educational materials which are forwarded to students who are physically separated from the teachers who can give but a limited assistance to them. Correspondence learning is an

individualized learning system that allows students to proceed at their own pace, according to their interests.

“*Distance learning*” to the courses prepared on a high technical level, by a multidisciplinary team, administered by a relatively large institution, comprising a wide variety of educational materials. A degree may or may not be obtained and there is no pressure - the student’s motivation is the basic factor for the program’s success. Distance study is learning supported by those teaching methods in which is conducted through print, mechanical or electronic devices.” Distance learning is based on non-contiguous communication.

# INFORMAL EDUCATION

It does not correspond to an organized and systematic view of education; informal education does not necessarily include the objectives and subjects usually encompassed by the traditional curricula. It is aimed at students as much as at the public at large and imposes no obligations whatever their nature. There generally being no control over the performed activities, informal education does not of necessity regard the providing of degrees or diplomas; it merely supplements both formal and non-formal education. Informal education for instance comprises the following activities:

- (a) - visits to museums or to scientific and other fairs and exhibits, etc.;
- (b) - listening to radio broadcasting or watching TV programmes on educational or scientific themes;
- (c) - reading texts on sciences, education, technology, etc. in journals and magazines;
- (d) - participating in scientific contests, etc.;
- (e) attending lectures and conferences.

The conceptual orientation of the education for European citizenship could be best summarized as a development of functional competences (a complexity of knowledge, skills and behaviour), which guarantee personal realization, including employment in the EU.

*The functional competence is the ability to gain positive results in social deeds and self-realization of the personality.*

- External behavior (the observable steps for the result), corresponding to the aims that were set and also to the social situation;

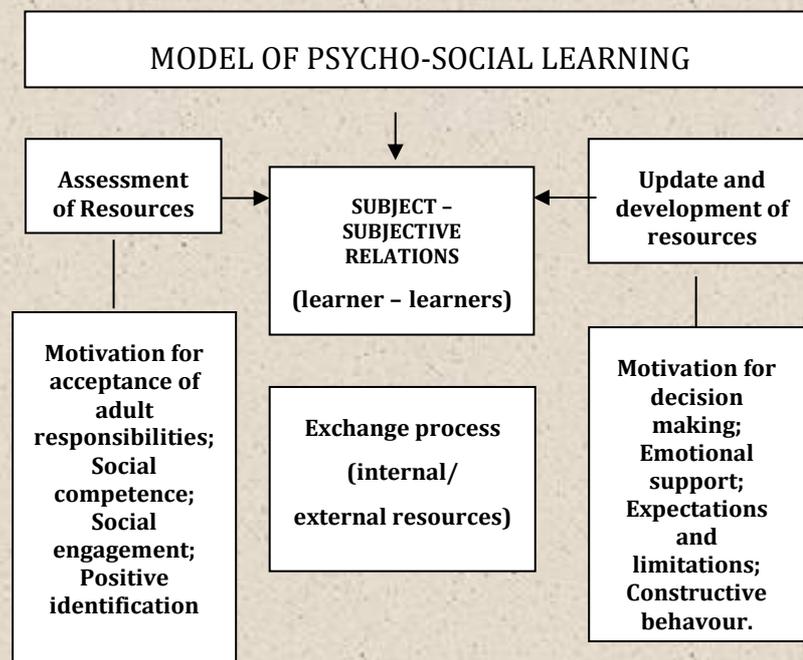
- Internal processes (conscious and unconscious mental processes, representations and convictions), corresponding to the approved EU values and orientations;

- Internal conditions (emotions, feelings and attitudes, which help achieve this result), reflecting the individual motivation for self-realization in regard to the opportunities and citizens' right in the European Community.

Summarized like this the conceptual framework of European citizenship education reveals the vision of MODEL OF ORGANISATION OF PSYCHO-SOCIAL LEARNING, during which students engage in the process of change by (Scheme 1):

- confronting their own social stereotypes and prejudice;
- actively participating in the learning and training of skills/competences, leading to successful integration of social benchmarks of the EU;

*Scheme 1.*



Where:

- THE INTERNAL RESOURCE MEANS: motivation for acceptance of responsibilities of an adult, social competence, social engagement and positive identification.
- THE EXTERNAL RESOURCE MEANS: emotional support, psychological interpretation, encouragement for decision making, analysis of the expectations and limitations.

According to G.S. Abramova<sup>6</sup> the development during school age is aimed at building a culture-productive personality, which doubtlessly directs towards working for the integration of functional competencies for European citizenship. Her basic quality characteristics reveal as practical abilities for:

- multi aspect analysis of each social situation;
- a feeling of perspective;
- development of various and flexible behavioral strategies;
- conscious action;
- autonomy and authenticity in decision-making.

In this sense a main task for the European citizenship education as a methodological system for students to learn the meaning of the EU membership is the opportunity to explore the possible methods and actions, which prerequisite their effective adaptation in correlation to the socio-cultural requirements, realities and conditions.

We may comment the following key characteristics of the young people, involved in education for active citizenship:

1. The person who teaches “European citizenship” is familiar with the history, the current situation, the legislation and the policies of the EU;
2. The person who teaches “European citizenship” works according to the students’ needs for knowledge, skills and behavioral models;
3. The person who teaches “European citizenship” analyses the situation of the students through special knowledge and develops adequate working strategy;
4. The person who teaches “European citizenship” identifies, updates and encourages the use of resources of the students towards active inclusion and encouragement of active citizenship.

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<sup>6</sup> Абрамова, Г., С., Введение в практическую психологию, Брест, 1993 г., с. 26

Theoretical research on the content framework of European citizenship education reveals a tendency in its implementation in a universal applied system. Many researchers accept a similar idea, because of the fact that the European citizenship education is always a process of seeking solutions in accordance with the concrete life situation of the student.<sup>7</sup>

Currently, when working with students on European citizenship education, one pays special attention to the following aspects:

- rights and obligations in the EU;
- international EU institutions, which regulate the equality and the social justice;
- attitude towards studying and education;
- characteristics of personal motivation for achievements, level of pretentions, time-management;
- culture-based restrictions in bi-cultural communities;
- language problems and formation of communication habits;
- skills for overcoming discrimination and intolerance;
- psycho-social skills for adequate self-assessment;
- psycho-social obstacles within a changed family structure or within a marginalized family environment;
- negative experiences in consequence of culture shock;
- endangerment of one's own identity and occurrence of poli identical conflicts.

Despite the considerably short history, the practice of European citizenship education reveals that most of the trainers/teahcers share the opinion that the individual/ the trained bears the responsibility of their own behavior. The individual is therefore a basic factor for achieving success with their own life situation. This fact imposes the requirement that the inclusion of learners in educational programmes for EU citizenship means making efforts on their own, i.e. encouraging the learners to be psycho-socially active.

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<sup>7</sup> Бернд, Е., У., Шулиц, Консултиране в образованието и професията, С., 2002 г., с. 54

The realization of European citizenship education has a clear logical direction, focusing on:

- firstly - European citizenship education peruses the opening of new opportunities for the learners;
- secondly - European citizenship education operationalizes in: setting aims; planning expected results; analyzing and defining means for achieving the goal.
- third - European citizenship education is being built upon subject-subjective relations (trainer - trained), i.e. the trained are interactively included and are partners in the implementation of learning activities.
- fourth - European citizenship education gives opportunities for self-realization of the learners, as the process of learning means studying the effective behavioral model, with the aim to apply it in current and future life situations;
- fifth - European citizenship education implements real preventive functions for inadequate, anti-social behavior of the future EU citizens.

# METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS AND ORGANISATION OF EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

The education for active citizenship has as a final result the forming of functional competences (complex of knowledge, skills and behavior) that guarantee active civil behavior and realization and involvement within the EU territory.

The offered methodological and organizational educational approach for European citizenship education is constructed on the idea that through informing and understanding one can achieve a mental and behavioral change and each learner can operationalize (on individual level) mechanisms (skills and attitudes) for social integration and professional realization, according to the European traditions and legal living standards.

Methodologically the European citizenship education should be structured in two main parts: theoretical and practical. This way the learning process combines the two factors, which lead to successful education: *information* and *experience*.

The theoretical part should be a synthesis of the following didactic levels: introduction to the topic; definition of its key terms; discussion about the factors of the problem's condition and identification of the needs to overcome the problem.

The practical part should distribute conditions for the implementation of interactive education technology, aimed at formation of functional competencies of European citizenship among the learners and at the setting up of self-defining behavior and tolerance towards the community.

The practical part ensures the re-rationalization of theoretical constructs /key terms and ratiocinations on the set topic/ in the form of simulations, role plays, discussions and co-operative studying.

Structured like this, the educational approach for European citizenship education accounts for a tool for action and aims at forming/ widening the specter of social competences among the learners for adaptation to the European realities or effectiveness of the European integration process. By working on the different

modules the learners are motivated to improve their understanding of life (existence), of their relatives and friends and of the community as a whole.

Giving specific knowledge about one's own personality – virtues, values, ways of communication; the family – family norms, roles and responsibilities of the family members; the school – norms and rules, conflict solving; the institutions – governmental and non-governmental sector; the rights and obligations – of EU citizens; ensures the process of attitudes formation: for self-awareness; for the significance of one's own personality and for the value of human existence; for the human rights and social justice; for active attitude towards life; for active inclusion and civil behavior; for tolerance and understanding of difference.

Practically measurable indicators, identifying the effectiveness from the learning process (from the point of view of the teacher/trainer of European citizenship education) might be as follows:

1. Attributing the following knowledge about European citizenship education:

- Knowing the European history;
- Knowing of the institutional framework and the policies of the EU;
- Knowing the terms about civil society - concepts of democracy, citizenship and European international relations;
- Knowing the concepts of multiculturalism.

2. Construction and use of the following skills in the process of implementing the educational approach:

- Skills for practicing the rights of the personality;
- Skills for recognition of discrimination;
- Skills for protection against discrimination and implementation of anti-discrimination practices;
- Skills for active inclusion in the social activities of the community;
- Skills for applying different teaching methods for effective communication of values and ideas set in the European citizenship;
- Skills for constructive behavior in multicultural environment and within working in a multicultural team;
- Skills for co-operation with people from different countries and of different origin;

- Skills for exchange of information, materials and educational technologies with colleagues from European countries;
- Skills for using information communication technologies;
- Skills for planning, having meetings, conducting correspondence and presenting in front of an audience.

At the same time the learners should be developing skills such as:

- Self-assessment of practicing their own rights;
- Ability to positively accept their own culture as part of knowing the foreign culture;
- Critical consciousness about their own behavior towards the institution “citizen of Europe”;
- Tolerant attitude towards the values of other cultures;
- Active participation in debates and discussions /the significance of sharing their opinion, point of view, position/;
- Positive opinion about social and cultural changes /but always with critical consciousness/ towards Euro integration processes.

The European citizenship education is based on the training forms of informal education.

Informal education provides opportunities for the learners to widen their behavioral repertoire and to achieve success in different social situations through the following organizational work strategies:

- Analysis of group needs for information about the chosen modular topics from the educational approach for European citizenship education;
- Identification of main group resources and formation of educational aims for each modular topic;
- Evaluation of individual qualities or deficits in the abilities for perception, processing and sending of information;
- Discussion about the desired form of behavior and transformation of the behavioral model in specific, concrete, accessible steps;
- Distribution of clear instructions and reminders about the desired behavior /repetition when necessary/;

- Providing assistance when reviewing the short- and long-term aims of the individual in a certain situation and defining forms of behavior to achieve these aims;
- Demonstration of more successful behavioral models in accordance with the culture of European citizenship;
- Giving positive feedback and ideas for improvement to achieve gradual formation of better ways for communication;
- Using the force of the group of coevals to form change of attitudes and new behavioral repertoire;
- Diversification of opinions and “correction mechanism” – the group leader introduces the desired standard for this behavior.

These strategies are based on the main principles of informal education, namely:

- Positive expectations are formed by correcting the wrong perceptions and negative statements, aimed at one’s self;
- The change of behavior happens through combinations of didactical presentation of the material; through training from observation of role models; through suggesting specific forms of behavior and positive feedback for consequent approaches towards the desired behavioral aims;
- The transfer or generalization of the acquired skills programmes in real life through homework tasks;
- The unsuitable/ non-adaptive behavioral forms are ceased or reduced by ignoring or by teaching alternative skills, incompatible with them.

# CONCLUSIONS

Being a part of the European family, regardless of the size of our country and community, the young people all over Europe are active EU citizens. They strive to be such, exercise the active citizenship each day and be happy to develop and to grow up with the norms, rights and the obligations of the active citizenship. Thanks to the active and effective EC policy for deepening and broadening the possibilities for active involvement in public life and policies of the European Union, young people are participating in transfer knowledge programs, Erasmus +, in mobility and exchange, in pilot projects. All these make them not only study the basics of the European citizenship, but also to active implement and exercise it in their everyday life activities. These processes make Europe stronger! These processes make the Union more democratic! These processes make the European future brighter!

# PROJECT INTRO: IT'S YOUR TURN FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

PROGRAMME: Erasmus+

Key Action 3 (KA3) – Support for Policy Reform

ACTION: Stakeholder dialogue and policy promotion

ACTION TYPE: Dialogue between young people and policy makers

PROJECT DURATION: from 1st February 2015 until 1st March 2016

PARTNERS:

- Europe House Slavonski Brod, Croatia
- European Information Centre Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria
- Konya Metropolitan Municipality Kilicarslan Youth Center, Turkey
- MHD UMKA Skopje, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

**It's Your Turn for Social Changes** is project developed by four partner organizations – MHD UMKA Skopje (Macedonia), European Information Centre Veliko Trnovo (Bulgaria), Konya Metropolitan Municipality Kilicarslan Youth Center (Turkey), and Europe House Slavonski Brod (Croatia). Total of 32 (8 participants per country) took part in the two main activities. Each organization ensured gender balance within the group of participants, as well as that the age of the participants is in accordance with the rules of the Erasmus + programme.

European institutions are aware of certain democratic deficit across Europe, especially among young people and are aware of the importance in overcoming it. Therefore, the aim of this project is to deepen the youth's understanding of Active European Citizenship, to raise awareness about the importance of positive social change, to increase the level of youth's competence and level of their active participation.

Previous experiences showed that young people in all four countries participating in the project lack competencies needed to identify the problems in their local communities, as well as competencies needed to enter into a dialogue with policy-makers on all levels and resolve the issues they encounter, thus becoming active

citizens. Experience also shows that young people often do not understand the mechanisms existing in the policy-making process, which is a big obstacle in their active participation. Furthermore, the project includes young people from areas of Croatia, Bulgaria, Macedonia and Turkey that are economically, geographically and/or socially excluded. These young people often face greater challenges and obstacles when it comes to active participation because of the political situation on local and regional level in all four countries.

Overall, project aims, on the one hand, to conduct a comparative analysis of Youth Policies in different European countries and of the relationship of the young people in Europe with the democratic processes, especially in view of European elections held, and, on the other hand, to promote the recognition of Youth Work, emphasizing its importance for supporting young people, and especially young people with fewer opportunities, and its contribution to the personal as well as professional development of the young people.

# PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

## *EUROPE HOUSE SLAVONSKI BROD*



## EUROPSKI DOM SLAVONSKI BROD

**Europe House Slavonski Brod** is the NGO founded in September 1998 with goal to promote European and global integration process and the cultural, political and economic integration of Croatia in Europe. One of the main reasons for establishing the Europe house is to promote and develop understanding of the importance of European interdependence and cooperation, human rights protection, environmental protection, natural and cultural heritage. Moreover, to that we should add the intention of creating a culture of understanding, tolerance and dialogue.

Europe House Slavonski Brod is working with primary and secondary schools, university students, young employed people and all others who are interested in contributing to the spread of knowledge and the European dimension in education, creating a feeling of personal responsibility for peace, human rights, and environmental protection, natural and cultural heritage.

EHSB during its existence has implemented and conducted many local, national and European projects. Also, EHSB hosts Europe Direct Information Centre in Slavonski Brod which informs citizens on all relevant issues and policies of the European Union and the Youth Information Centre of Brod Posavina County.

## *EUROPEN INFORMATION CENTRE VELIKO TURNOVO*



The **EUROPEAN INFORMATION CENTRE** began activities on *24th of October 1997*, when the Council of Europe uncovered the first out-of-capital Regional information center in Veliko Turnovo. On **27th of December 2000** The European information center carried out registration in the court as NGO. The

organization has been hosting the European Documentation center of the European Union since *4th of January 2001*. The organization has been hosting the EUROPE DIRECT Relay for the Region of Veliko Turnovo since the beginning of *January 2007*. The aims as stated in its founding act, of the **EUROPEAN INFORMATION CENTRE are**: to popularize values of a United Europe within the country; to assist authorities, institutions, organizations, citizens in the process of European integration; to support the development of the civil society and media; to educate and train, to assist and do research, to provide consultations on the problems of the European integration, European integration in the country and contribute to the accession and development of the Republic of Bulgaria into United Europe; to educate and train teachers, youth leaders and educators to teach topics on basic European values using new methods and methodologies; to train, implement and multiply through the national institutions the knowledge gain on new educational methods, technologies and techniques; to support the development of the local and regional governments, institutions and civil society in their transition to United Europe, supporting development of the initiatives of the civil society, in EU program implementations; to be a partner with local, regional, national and international bodies for easier accession of the Republic of Bulgaria to the United Europe.

**The EUROPEAN INFORMATION CENTRE** has put into practice over 100 successful projects some of them corresponding to the organization's aims and objectives on regional, national and international level.

**YMCA Skopje** is NGO established in 1999 and part of international YMCA family. YMCA Skopje is a community-based organization that delivers programs and services to help build strong and healthy young people, strong families and strong communities across Macedonia. YMCA Skopje works in partnership with government, municipalities,



schools, social centers, non-profit groups and other partners to provide programs and services to hundreds of young Macedonians every month. The mission is to unite diversity, creativity, work, fun and faith of young people to build a common future for all.

#### Priority group: YOUTH

We see youth as our main target group, human resource and development potential. Equality of possibilities for children, youth, marginalized groups and elders. The programme and the project work of YMCA Skopje involves: sports, culture, ecology, camps, trainings and seminars, initiatives and campaigns, international exchange and volunteering, YMCA scouting and outdoor activities. Special points of interest are possibilities for healthy and holistic development, awareness for the cultural differences, atmosphere of belonging to a community, active citizenship and youth cooperation in the region and worldwide.

The programme for Training and Intercultural Learning, introduces the principles of the non-formal education for young people who cannot afford or find that particular training issues at the relevant educational institution. This programme is still a part of the Civic Society and Inclusion programme group, but aiming to develop as a special sector within the YCS YMCA, because of its constant and rapid growth. Trainers from the YCS YMCA – Macedonia hold training courses in different areas, such as Project Management, Human Rights, History of Art, Cultural Management, Citizenship, Opportunities of the Programme YOUTH as well as language clubs for learning English, Spanish and French

YCS YMCA Macedonia – Skopje was born as an idea in 1999, in times of big crises in the Balkans and new challenges and insecurity for the citizens of Macedonia, and officially established in the year 2000, at the dawn of the new Millennium. At the present, we can count the different challenges, expectations, successes, friendship and shared joy. The continuous support from our friendly YMCAs, other partners and supporters, contributions from various agencies, foundations and companies and the trust given from many institutions and many young people enabled YCS YMCA Macedonia to stabilize, strengthen its capacities and expand its working fields. These goals are deep-rooted in our mission and they are the main power for our operation. That is why, YCS YMCA Macedonia works with great enthusiasm to reach and help young people, wherever they are – in schools, companies, clubs, youth centers, or on the streets. We will be there with the children and young people of Macedonia and with their families and communities to face the problems together, to give stability and dare to experiment taking alternative paths, and most of all, YCS YMCA Macedonia will always be here to give hope, love and support.

## *KONYA METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY*

### *Kılıçarslan Youth Center*



The mission of the Center is to provide benefit to the humanity combining all of their capacity of production on track of the participatory democracy, being based on the principal volunteers and the transparency. And to get into act in the national and international area for contributing. The vision of the Center is to provide the the today's youth, which is the future's public director, the participatory to the individual, social, cultural, scientific, artistic and sport activities and the opportunity for being able to speak knowledgeably or authoritatively about everything.

Konya Metropolitan Municipality Kılıçarslan Youth Center became Eurodesk Touch Point in September 2011 and the Center gives information about EU Youth Project courses for free.

# BEST PRACTICES

## CROATIA

### PROJECT “IN THE HEART OF EUROPE”



The project “*In the heart of Europe - IPA INFO 2012*” was conducted by the Europe House Slavonski Brod in cooperation with partners. The aim of this project was informing and educating citizens about the strategies, policies, programs , funds and civil rights in the European Union.

### PROJECT “BUILDING CHILD – FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES”

The project "Building child – friendly communities" was conducted by the Europe House Slavonski Brod in cooperation with partners. This project ensured support and promoted initiatives in the Brod Posavina county that strengthened the local community and stimulate work with different social groups. Project was supported by local authorities who coordinated existing resources to the benefit of children.



## THE EUROPEAN WEEK



Europe House hosted five events during the *European week*, which was held from 4<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> May. It organized European quiz, Youth Debate with title “The EU offers various opportunities to young people” that was held in our local youth center, Bike tour from Slavonski Brod to Oprisavci, EPSO lecture for students and celebrated the 9<sup>th</sup> May, Europe day

## INTERNATIONAL DANCE DAY

EHSB celebrated International dance day on 29<sup>th</sup> April in Slavonski Brod. It gathered kindergarten children as well as high school students, local people and professional dancers.



## **ANTI-CORRUPTION DAY**

This event was held on 10<sup>th</sup> June in Antun Mihanović Elementary School in Slavonski Brod. Schoolchildren learned what is corruption, how to deal with it and how to exclude themselves from it.



## **MEETING WITH EUROPE HOUSE VUKOVAR**



Europe House Slavonski Brod and Europe house Vukovar arranged a meeting of their members and volunteers that was held on 9<sup>th</sup> July in Slavonski Brod. Young people shared their experiences and some projects that were implemented by them.

## **BULGARIA**

### ***CLUB “EUROPE”***

Founded in 2012 Club “Europe” was a pilot initiative of the European Information Centre, which later on became part of the leadership programme of the Organisation. The aim of this club is to gather young people from Veliko Turnovo and to encourage them to be



active through participation in different activities. The Club consists mainly of university students from different majors. The students have the opportunity to define their own annual work programme and to initiate their own campaigns.

### ***EUROPEAN YOUTH ANTENNAE NETWORK – “EUROPE 2020”***



The main objective of the European Youth Antennae Network – “Europe 2020” project is to prepare, train, develop and create a sustainable network of youth antennae in five regional cities in North-West Bulgaria /Veliko Turnovo, Razgrad, Targovishte, Shumen, Silistra/ which will

allow the young people to obtain and sustain up-to-date knowledge and information that is directly related to discovering new European horizons, opportunities for education and work in the EU, self-development and self-recognition. The main methodology of the project is the non-formal educational method for multilateral data exchange, in addition to the interactive educational module for distant education and carrier development “Europe 2020”.

The project aims to create a sustainable network of youth clubs and groups, who will be able to communicate, participate in joint youth initiatives and act as “conductors” of the European perspective and opportunities in their regions.

## **WE, YOUNG, UNITED**

### **Partnering organizations:**

- European Information Centre, Veliko Turnovo
- Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance “Amalipe“
- Youth Leadership Academy GLOW
- Association Chitalishta /partner/;
- Association of the Mayors from Veliko Turnovo District

### **Aims:**

Increasing youth Roma participation in the electoral process at the European Parliament Elections /25 May, 2014/ by raising awareness on the EU Parliamentarians’ functions, rights and duties of the MEPs;

Improving citizens’ trust in the EU Institutions by providing information on how they work and the ways that people can intervene in the process of European policies creation.

### **Objectives:**

Raising awareness on the importance of voting in the Elections and the role of the everyday decisions made at the European Parliament as a provocation for a more active involvement of the Roma population in Veliko Turnovo district in the Elections;

Forming an active group of youth Roma leaders who will implement peer-to-peer trainings in the Roma communities and will act as a long term factor for change;

Provoking reaction from the European policy makers on local and international level by providing information from the citizens on topics that concern them.

### **Activities:**

- Three-day leadership seminar for empowering Roma voters through the peer-to-peer education method /February, 2014/

- Eight community meetings – European “sedyanka” – presenting information about how the EU works, rights and obligations of the Members of the EP, European support for the Roma communities, education and social inclusion
- Four social campaigns, providing forum for discussions, debates, mobile stands for expressing the citizens’ recommendations for Europe.
- Regional youth forum “My youth recommendations to Europe”



*This project is implemented with the financial support of the “Open society” Foundation, Roma initiatives programme, Budapest and is in the framework of priority area “Empowering Roma voters in European elections 2014”*

## MACEDONIA

In the last period YMCA Skopje was focused on several international projects as well as usual activities on local and national level. YMCA Skopje also hosted **YMCA European volleyball championship**. This was event organized by our sport department and our volleyball teams took participation in the event. Beside volleyball, YMCA Skopje has it indoor football team that is active during the year and organize traditional **FARE** action week with football tournament with several teams. Last not the least in the sport activities are our traditional hiking tour that take place one per month in cooperation with YMCA Bitola.

In 2015, YMCA Skopje for the needs of YMCA network prepared and realized a big survey Youth voices.

In addition, several trainings for our members and volunteers were organized: Fund raising training, intercultural learning training, project management...

Several lectures were organized with high school students on the subject of Sustainable development and prevention of drug abusing.

In addition, on national level, YMCA Macedonia organized two camps and members and volunteers participated on both of them. Camps took place in Kicevo area.



## TURKEY

### DEAR NATURE HELP ME



#### **Macedonia-Romania-Italy-Bulgarian-Turkey**

The project was implemented by 5 partner countries with 40 participants between 7-14 August 2015 in Konya, Beyşehir. The project's aims are to show nature's importance to people. The participants believe that people have to understand the nature furthermore. Because of this reason we will camping near the Beyşehir Lake. So we will give a different learning process to the participants.

### TRADITIONAL CUISINE IN THE HEART OF TOLERANCE



**Partner countries:** Lithuania -Romania-Spain-Italy-Turkey

**Date and place:** Konya / 2012

The aim of the project is to introduce the Turkish culture and Konya's traditional cuisine to participants from Romania, Lithuania, Italy and Spain.

## *OH MY GOD SİLLE!*



**Partner countries:** Greece-Turkey

Subject of project: 20 young people from Turkey and Greece went to the village of Turkey of Konya called 'Sille'. Sille is a ancient village. The people came from Greece, when they went there they became a Chirisitan pilgrim. In there there is a church served more 800 years for the local people. Because of that, we an organisation wanted to link the country of Turkey and Greece using this religional bond.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS FROM PHOTO FRAME**



**Partner Countries:** Lithuania, Estonia, Romania, Italy, Croatia, Turkey

This project involved 6 partner countries and 40 participants. The aim of the project was to encourage consciousness about the global warming. One of the main activities was to reflect the situation by photos.

## *IS(UP)PORT*



**Partner Countries:** Latvia-Italy-Romania-Malta-Greece-Turkey

The most important problem of our age is unbalanced nourished and being inactive. Because of this reason our project's aim is showing the participant how can we live as healthy and active. We showed the participants sport is not impossible during the day or all of our life. In addition to sport politics were studied with workshops. And alternative solutions were found.

Project was ended flashmob activity and bike tour, and Selçuk University's students were join this bike tour too.

# GLOSSARY

## *CIVIL DIALOGUE*

This means consulting civil society when the European Commission is drawing up its policies and proposals for legislation. It is a broader concept than 'social dialogue'.

## *CIVIL SOCIETY*

Collective name for all kinds of organizations and associations that are not part of government but that represent professions, interest groups or sections of society. It includes (for example) trade unions, employers' associations, environmental lobbies and groups representing women, farmers, people with disabilities and so on. Since these organizations have a lot of expertise in particular areas and are involved in implementing and monitoring European Union policies, the EU regularly consults civil society and wants it to become more involved in European policymaking.

## *SOCIAL DIALOGUE*

This means discussion, negotiation and joint action between the European social partners (see below) and discussions between these social partners and the EU institutions.

## *WHITE PAPER*

White Papers are Commission-published documents, which contain proposals of Community actions in a certain domain. They sometimes prolong the Green Papers, which aim to launch a consulting process at the European level.

“Formal education” means the structured education and training system that runs from pre-primary and primary through secondary school and on to university. It takes place, as a rule, at general or vocational educational institutions and leads to certification.

“Non-formal education” means any planned programme of education designed to improve a range of skills and competences, outside the formal educational setting.

“Informal education” means the lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from the educational influences and resources in his or her own environment and from daily experience (family, peer group, neighbours, encounters, library, mass media, work, play, etc.).

# PARTICIPANTS DEFINITIONS

## **An “active citizen” is:**

Volunteer, responsibility, sociable, action, change, sensible, creative, participation, sharing, caring, sensitive, involvement, motivation, flexible, helpful, productive, proactive, patriotism, awareness, open mind.

## **An “active citizen” has qualities such as:**

Cooperative, devoted, ambitious, with good self-esteem, brave, caring, hardworking, active, responsible, compassionate, passionate, energetic, creative.

## **Give an example of something you have done as an active citizen:**

- I have participated in cleaning the environment.
- I have volunteered in youth centers.
- I vote on elections.
- I have participated in a STD seminar.
- Each of us is changing our friend's lives by showing them what an active citizen means. It's our duty.
- I have organized a tournament.
- I am donating time, money, energy, life, youth to the community every day!
- I have implemented a project in my local community.
- I am a volunteer in our municipality.
- I have worked on making a street library.
- I have been sharing and learning knowhow.
- I have been volunteering.
- I have been taking part in youth projects.
- I have applied for jobs.