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CONCELLO
DA LARACHA



STRENGTHENING A EUROPE OF SOLIDARITY
IN TIMES OF MIGRATIONS

EUROPE FOR CITIZENS "PROGRAMME 2014-2020"



STRAND 2: DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION
2.2 NETWORK OF TOWNS

HANDBOOK – SUMMARY

NOVEMBER 2019 – JANUARY 2022

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1. SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

“Strengthening a Europe of solidarity in times of migration” is the title of project funded by the European Commission through the Europe for Citizens Programme. The idea of the project is to tackle the reality of migrations from different perspectives. A total of 20 partners participating from 19 European countries were involved in order to develop a program of activities that went from November 2019 to January 2022.



- The project was able to involve a total of 20 partners whose main objective:
- The search for understanding, integration and the creation of new points of view through dialogue and reflection of European citizens,
- Helping to improve understanding of the European Union, as well as its history and diversity of citizens,
- Promoting European citizenship, increasing citizen and democratic participation
- Understanding the current situation of the EU in relation to migration policies and, in search

of alternatives and new challenges to overcome the crisis of confidence that is lived

To achieve the objectives, in line with the priorities of Europe for Citizens program, the project will create a strong and long term network based on the reinforcement of active participation in European society. Round tables, interactive workshops, conferences, case studies, cultural and study visits will be part of a very hands on methodology. Therefore, participants will be encouraged to exchange opinions and best practices with the aim to formulate new ideas and concrete future proposals.

2. GREETINGS



With great pleasure I start to write these words to thank all the participants that have taken place in this beautiful and necessary project.

I am specially satisfied because we reached the main objective, giving the word to real citizens, not only technicians and policy makers to freely speak about an important problem for the European Union: the integration of migrants and the solidarity of our citizens.

The European Union is built on solidarity: solidarity between its citizens, solidarity across borders between its Member States, and solidarity through support actions inside and outside the Union. Solidarity is a shared value which creates cohesion and responds to societal challenges such as the recent refugee and migration crisis.

The notion of solidarity is intrinsically linked to the concept of generosity, but also to those of reciprocity and responsibility. But what does solidarity mean within the European Union, especially in times of crisis? What are the legal, political, economic and even ethical limits of European solidarity? The unprecedented arrivals of migrants and refugees in recent years in particular have put Europe's solidarity to the test.

A new instrument set up in this context is the European Solidarity Corps. It creates opportunities for young people to volunteer or work in projects in their own country or abroad that benefit communities and people across Europe. Participants aged between 18 and 30 can get active in a project either for volunteering or for a traineeship or a job. Young people can get involved in a broad range of topics including education, citizenship and democratic participation, social integration, as well as reception and integration of third-country nationals.

After all these months of contact, I fearlessly say that I have a new European family made by participants from 19 European countries that share only one objective: keep building a stronger European Union where human rights are the basis

Long live to the European Union, long live to our friendship and long live to solidarity between people that belief in democracy!

José Manuel López Varela

Mayor of A Laracha (Spain)



3. EVENTS

3.1. MEETING I KICK OFF – TOWN TWINNING CEREMONY

The event was held from 5-8 of November 2019 in the auditorium of the local council of A Laracha. The program of activities combined round tables along with technical lectures given by professors from the University of A Coruña. Including the different classes from the Secondary School invited, more than 250 people could benefit and listen to the reality of migrations and the integration of migrants in our local territory. Regional politicians such as Diego Calvo: Vicepresident of the Galician Parliament of Galicia or the Ministry of Social Welfare were present during the activities. NGOs, volunteering organizations, as well as entities like Red Cross had an important role in the program.

The program of activities ended with a symbolic town twinning ceremony after listening to the European Anthem.



Picture taken during the opening lecture

3.2. KAUNAS (LITHUANIA) – BALTIC SITUATION

Nobody could suspect that after this event, the project would be suspended for 19 months. The Meeting II took place in the Secondary School of Auris, partner in the project, more than 150 local people attended the two sessions organized in the auditorium of the gymnasium in Kaunas. A full dose of positivism by listening to the testimony of migrants perfectly integrated into the society as well as technical lectures comparing the good practices and measures implemented in the Baltic countries. The meeting took place from 5-8 February 2020.

The vicemayor of Kaunas and its team from social services did not want to miss the opportunity to greet the European delegations and give us the opportunity to visit a refugee center in the neighbourhood of Kaunas.



Picture at the Secondary School of Auris



3.3. QRENDI (MALTA) – MEDITERRANEAN SEA

It would not be an exaggeration if this meeting was described as the cruelty of human being and the cruelty of the Mediterranean Sea. On this very hands-on program, the participants had a tour around the island, witnessing the difficulties of helping the thousands of people arriving to the shore of Malta every day. The Mayor of Qrendi showed us different detention centres and described the everyday life of the people escaping from their home to find a better life in Europe.

The program included the meeting with the Ministry of Social Policies, technicians from NGO's working hand to hand to refugees and migrants and a complete lecture of the possible solutions to increase the quality of life. We could also observe how Mafias take advantage of migrants, describing a horrible situation.



Picture with the Ministry of Malta, Owen Bonnici

3.4. ZAGREB (CROATIA) – BALCANIC INTEGRATION

The last European country admitted in the European Union offered a new perspective different than the Baltic problem and the Mediterranean reality. We discovered the Balcanic integration of migrants and a rising problem, the extinction of Croatians who abandon their country, especially young labor force that move to Germany, Switzerland and other countries in Europe with better laboral perspectives.

In this event, very touched by Covid was finally implemented from 29 of November to 2 December 2021, we had the opportunity to visit the European House in Croatia, the office of the European Commission in the country as well as the City Town of Zagreb, where the deputy mayor and all his team detailed the strategy to integrate migrants coming to Zagreb. We could count on students from the Secondary School of the city Gornja Rijeka, partner of the project that actively participated in the debates and prepared workshops for the participants



Picture at the Assembly of the city of Zagreb



3.5. VENETO (ITALY) – LABORAL MARKET AND MIGRANTS

Taken place in an unusual dessertic Venice, the Vocational School Marco Polo, partner in the project organized for the European delegations and its students a remarkable conference on human rights from 11-14 January. Just when the most severe restrictions were implemented by the regional government of Veneto.

However, this did not stop the organizers and 40 international participants travelled to discover a new reality



4. ACHIEVEMENTS



- An integral knowledge of the actors involved in the migrant situation. Studying good and bad practices when working with migrants, in terms of integration but also in terms of human rights.

- An agreement between the partners to create a network of know-how to promote the participation of migrant in European programs such as youth exchanges, student exchanges or volunteering.



- A new vision on the importance of the integration of migrants, as individuals and not as a collective. This means involving sport, arts, culture as an important tool to be accepted into a new society.



5. PARTNERSHIP AND GOOD PRACTICES

5.1. AUSTRIA – The Better Making Organization

NAME OF THE GOOD PRACTICE	A “new and comprehensive migration strategy”
DESCRIPTION	“Chancellor Sebastian Kurz' (ÖVP) and vice chancellor Heinz-Christian Strache's (FPÖ) new government announced a recodification of the migration law. Immigration to Austria should be strictly need-oriented and in line with requirements of Austria's economy. The visa regime should be modified accordingly, EU border controls reinforced and deportations accelerated”
MORE INFO	https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/austria-integration-measures-new-government-programme_en

5.2. BULGARIA – Municipality of Mezdra

NAME OF THE GOOD PRACTICE	“Livelihoods and Integration Support in Bulgaria”
DESCRIPTION	<p>Bulgaria provides vocational and language trainings that enable asylum seekers /refugees/migrants to achieve self-reliance and be successfully integrated</p> <p>Caritas Sofia is helping 500 children, adolescents and adult refugees and asylum seekers to receive education and learn the Bulgarian language, as well as to receive skills training and social services in order to have a foundation to begin their new lives with safety, dignity and stability</p>
MORE INFO	https://globalcompactrefugees.org/article/livelihoods-and-integration-support-bulgaria

5.3. CROATIA - Municipality of Gornja Rijeka

NAME OF THE GOOD PRACTICE	Protection of Migrants and Refugees under the European Convention on Human Rights in Croatia
DESCRIPTION	“On 8-9 JUNE 2021 an expert discussion on the Protection of Migrants and Refugees under the European Convention on Human Rights in Croatia was held online, organised in co-operation with the Office of the Agent of the Republic of Croatia before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and the Justice Academy of Croatia. It brought together Croatian administrative judges, legal advisors, academics as well as their peers from the ECtHR with an aim to initiate a discussion and share knowledge, views and experiences, including good practices related to outstanding challenges existing in Croatia in respect of protection of migrants and refugees. The representative of the Office of the Secretary General's Special Representative on Migration and Refugees also addressed the event”
MORE INFO	https://www.coe.int/en/web/special-representative-secretary-general-migration-refugees/newsletter-june-2021/-/asset_publisher/UnDw8aJsgizX/content/protection-of-migrants-and-refugees-under-the-european-convention-on-human-rights-in-croatia/pop up? 101 INSTANCE UnDw8aJsgizX viewMode=print & 101 INSTANCE UnDw8aJsgizX languageId=en GB

5.4. DENMARK – Koge Handelsskole

NAME OF THE GOOD PRACTICE	Language classes for All in Denmark
DESCRIPTION	Local authorities (kommune) in Denmark are required by law to offer Danish language and culture courses to all resident non-nationals. The local language schools offer courses at all levels for new migrants and refugees. The courses usually consist of 18 lessons a week, although some schools offer more intensive courses or weekend courses. Migrants might be charged a nominal fee for some of the courses. It is possible to enrol in the courses several times a year. Mandatory examinations are held twice a year. Source: The Official Website of Denmark, “Starting Danish Lessons
MORE INFO	http://denmark.dk/en/meet-the-danes/language/starting-danish-lessons



5.5. FRANCE – Education Innovante

NAME OF THE GOOD PRACTICE	Good practice towards disabled children
DESCRIPTION	France provides asylum for people seeking assistance for their children. Country carries out medical assistance for disabled children as well as going to school. Moreover, families are provided with monthly payment in order to sustain themselves.
MORE INFO	

5.6. GREECE - KEDITH

NAME OF THE GOOD PRACTICE	Ergossimo-New method of payment and retention of insurance contributions
DESCRIPTION	“The introduction of new method of payment and retention of insurance contributions (“ergossimo”), aiming at combating undeclared work, can be considered as an example of best practice for the Greek case. The “ergossimo” is a kind of a special pay check which concerns workers exercising non-fixed or casual work with one or more employers. The “ergossimo” does not focus on businesses or individual employers, but on workers. Consequently, it combats undeclared work, and in particular tax evasion and it is as such that it has been classified in the Greek legal order. A large proportion of recipients who were targeted by this measure were immigrants, both domestic and farm workers.”
MORE INFO	https://www.sirius-project.eu/greece-good-practices

5.7. HUNGARY – Municipality of Holloko

NAME OF THE GOOD PRACTICE	Access to territory and treatment of asylum-seekers at points of entry
DESCRIPTION	The cooperation between Hungary and UNHCR began in 2006. According to this agreement, it is a must to monitor external EU borders and enable access to territory for persons seeking international protection.
MORE INFO	

5.8. ITALY – Innova Europe

NAME OF THE GOOD PRACTICE	Italian villages adopted by immigrants
DESCRIPTION	Many Italian abandoned villages have welcomed immigrants and refugees from different parts of the world. By giving them an opportunity to live there , Italian villages are on the way to be reborn again. The immigrants have been offered language classes, working places , which made a very good impact on the economical situation of the villages. Immigrants have been given a chance to actively participate in communal life, which makes their integration into Italian culture and society very easy.
MORE INFO	https://www.bbc.com/news/in-pictures-37289713n



5.9. POLAND – Municipality of Andrichow

NAME OF THE GOOD PRACTICE	Polish migration forum and Polish teachers union “Conflict Kitchen” serves international dishes in Poland
DESCRIPTION	<p>Poland starts training school teachers to be ready for international pupils. Providing a pencil is not enough. Therefore, they must have a “Folklorist” approach to other cultures but show them similarities between young people’s interests and challenges they face.</p> <p>This project in Warsaw is an initiative to employ refugees and migrants with the aim of giving them an opportunity to cook their favorite dishes. The result is a restaurant open five days a week serving food from all over the world. They have recently opened a catering service. The aim is to provide refugees and migrants with employment and a vehicle to integrate.</p>
MORE INFO	-

5.10. LATVIA – Municipality of Tukums

NAME OF THE GOOD PRACTICE	Immigration in Latvia
DESCRIPTION	<p>“Latvia also becomes an increasingly attractive target country for immigrants – since 2004 the number of requests for residence permits has increased three times, almost in every group of immigrants. There is an increase in number of the nationals from the European Union and other countries who live in Latvia both with temporary and permanent residence permits”</p> <p>Source:</p>
MORE INFO	https://www.integration.lv/uploads/files/informativie-materiali/2012/kopsavilkums_imigracija_latvija_en.pdf

5.11.LITHUANIA – Auris Secondary School of Kaunas

NAME OF THE GOOD PRACTICE	MIPAS PROJECT
DESCRIPTION	<p>It is an governmental platform for migration, information and cooperation that collect, systemize and publish information on migration, asylum, integration and return matter for third-country nationals.</p> <p>It disseminates information on events, parties, courses and job opportunities for foreigners living in Lithuania.</p> <p>It also states the different NGO's participating in this project that provides first aid to those migrants aiming to integrate into the society</p>
MORE INFO	https://mipas.lt/en/about-the-mipas-project/

5.12.SLOVAKIA – Municipality of Kalonda

NAME OF THE GOOD PRACTICE	Slovakia: Integration Forum 2022
DESCRIPTION	<p>“Slovakia's Integration Forum, organized by the Human Rights League, offers the occasion for interesting and inspiring guests, experts in the field of migration and integration, non-governmental organizations, academia, the public sector and migrant communities - i.e. all actors involved and interested in the topic of migration and integration - to annually meet. This 2022 forum is dedicated to displaced people from Ukraine, challenges in their integration and issues of hate speech”</p>
MORE INFO	https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/event/slovakia-integration-forum-2022_en



5.13.SPAIN – Concello de Laracha

NAME OF THE GOOD PRACTICE	LARACHA HOSTS
DESCRIPTION	<p>The project Laracha hosts is promoted by the Municipality of Laracha and cofunded by Fundación La Caixa. It aims to promote social and cultural inclusion for migrants, specially women.</p> <p>It has two programs. On one hand there is a two-day a week course of Spanish and Galician, trying to empower their linguistic skills and their autonomy in the municipality. On the other hand, there is a forum where the participants gather to express themselves through art and at the same time get to know our habits, our routines, our values and traditions.</p> <p>It is being very successful and migrants are quite involved in it</p>
MORE INFO	https://www.lavozdeg Galicia.es/noticia/carballo/a-laracha/2022/04/03/mujeres-migrantes-aprenden-idioma-socializan-laracha/0003_202204C3C3994.htm

5.14.SWEDEN – Musa Association

NAME OF THE GOOD PRACTICE	Programme for the professional integration of refugee teachers
DESCRIPTION	<p>This scheme means that newly arrived migrants who used to work as teachers in their home countries can apply to a unique two year university programme which includes practical training. The aim is to prepare them to work as teachers in the Swedish pedagogical and social context.</p>
MORE INFO	

5.15.ROMANIA – Municipality of Poienarii de Arges

NAME OF THE GOOD PRACTICE	AVRR FOR FOREIGNERS LIVING IN ROMANIA
DESCRIPTION	<p>Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) is an indispensable part of a comprehensive approach to migration management aiming at orderly and humane return and reintegration of migrants who are unable or unwilling to remain in the host countries and thus wish to voluntarily return to their countries of origin.</p> <p>The International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Office in Romania, in partnership with the Refugee Jesuit Service (JRS), implements the Program for voluntary humanitarian return and reintegration (AVRR), funded under the National Program – Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, AMIF/20.01.02 through the General Inspectorate for Immigration.</p>
MORE INFO	https://romania.iom.int/assisted-voluntary-return-and-reintegration

5.16.CZECH REPUBLIC – Municipality of Ceska Trevoba

NAME OF THE GOOD PRACTICE	The “Next Door Family”
DESCRIPTION	<p>The “Next Door Family” project aims to address the insufficient communication between migrants and majority communities. The project was first launched in the Czech Republic by the non-governmental organization Word 21, and brought Czech families together with migrant families for a casual lunch in order to encourage (informal) communication and personal friendship ties between native and non-native citizens, and to promote intercultural dialogue. With time, the idea spread to many other countries. By 2012, the project had spread to Belgium, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Slovakia and Spain.</p>
MORE INFO	Source: European Commission, “The Next Door Family Project”, < https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/intpract/next-door-family-project-eu >.



5.17. PORTUGAL – Câmara Municipal de Pinhel

NAME OF THE GOOD PRACTICE	Portuguese for all
DESCRIPTION	<p>“In Portugal, migrants wishing to be naturalized are required to present a certificate demonstrating their knowledge of the Portuguese language at the A2 level. The PPT (Portuguese for All) programme offers Portuguese language courses at the A2 and B2 levels, as well as courses in technical Portuguese targeted at the migrant population. Courses are offered to all documented migrants residing in Portugal who require language training.”</p> <p>Source: Portugal’s High Commissioner for Migration</p>
MORE INFO	http://www.acm.gov.pt/-/como-posso-frequentar-um-curso-de-lingua-portuguesa-para-estrangeiros

5.18. THE NETHERLANDS – Diggout Association

NAME OF THE GOOD PRACTICE	WOMEN OF ALMERE
DESCRIPTION	<p>It is unique and extraordinary that this small nation below sea level called the Netherlands is home to hundreds of nationalities and ethnic groups from all over the world and at the same time has managed to have a society that generally lives in harmony and respect.</p> <p>Women of Almere 101" (One on One) is a project that aims to highlight, through a photo-report with stories, the multiculturalism, and tolerance of a young and modern city called Almere. We talk about the importance of the immigrant women who make up this multi-ethnic and multicultural society in which each one has her own story about how she came to this country and also about the experiences lived in this new city.</p>
MORE INFO	https://womenofalmere.101studio.nl/en/intro

5.19.MALTA – Municipality of Qrendi

NAME OF THE GOOD PRACTICE	Integration strategy for immigrants into Maltese society
DESCRIPTION	Immigrants and refugees will be given help to integrate more into Maltese society. They can learn the Maltese language, which will help them to understand values, traditions , rules and laws in order to become a part of the society. Also, there are training and courses about Maltese culture and social history, democracy and environment, The Constitution and democracy. All of these will help the immigrants and refugees to gain an opportunity to enter labour market and be part of Maltese society.
MORE INFO	https://tvmnews.mt/en/news/immigration-integration-strategy-has-been-launched/

5.20.ITALY – Il Polo Tecnico e Professionale di Venezia IIS Vendramin Corner

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