

**ELRFE**



**European Local  
Regeneration Forums  
Exchange**

**FINAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT**



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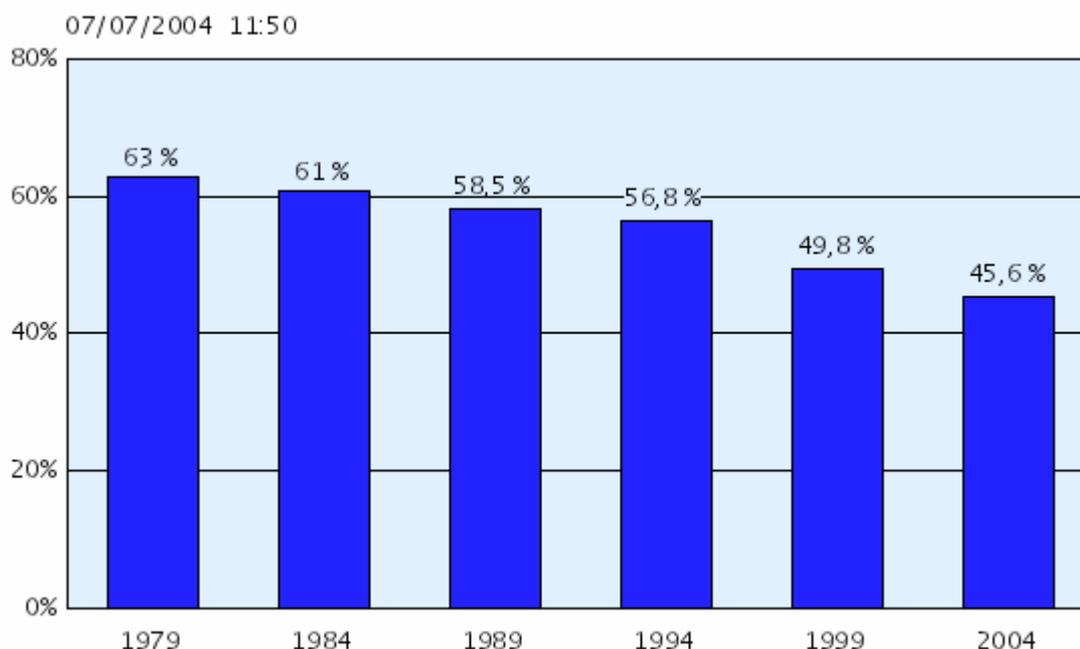
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The European Local Regeneration Forums Exchange project is funded by the European Commission Programme “Europe for citizens”, Action 2: Active Civil Society in Europe. This project builds on the experience acquired through a pilot initiative under the same programme Action 1: Active citizens for Europe. The aim was to initialize a series of pilot projects with the objective of exploring original and innovative ideas of citizen’s participation.

This final implementation report presents an overall assessment of the results of the project as compared to the initial objectives, as well as a description of the main activities undertaken throughout the life of the project. In doing so the report will start presenting a general policy context where the programme “Europe for citizens” has born (section 2), followed by an introduction to the project partners (section 3) & project aims and objectives (section 4). In section 5 there is a description of the overarching methodology used to attain the project objectives. In section 6 all the outcomes of the project are presented. The first and main element presented is the online platform. The website platform has evolved in regard to the pilot project implemented one year ago, and these changes will also be described. The second important outcome are the thematic dossiers. In section 7 there will be a briefing of all the dissemination events where the project results have been presented, in this way, some project participants have also interacted with other policy areas and programmes at European level, which further build their capacity to participate in policy-making in the European Union. Once the objectives of the project has been presented and all the activities, events undertaken have been described, in section 8 we will explain what was the evaluation procedure undertaken in the project, which is one internal and on a continuous basis. We will finish this report drawing up some conclusions from the experience and we will attach some annexes to which we make reference throughout the report.

## 2. POLICY CONTEXT



The citizen disaffection for European politics is a reality acknowledged by European Institutions and national governments. As we experienced in the past elections to the European Parliament and on the various referenda on the Constitutional Treaty, there is an enlarging gap between citizens and the institutions that represent them.

Representative democracy, model upon which we have built our community, is based on the delegation of citizens' powers towards their representatives, delegation that is renewed periodically. This means that the only decision-making capacity on the public sphere left for citizens is voting. The enormous amount of information needed to be committed with European institutions, has no parallel with the power of influence at the public area that citizens may have, and this, evidently, discourages participation.

The citizen demand for more participation spaces is a clear proof of social maturity but it is hard to incorporate with the rigid structures of representative democracy. Although there is a trend to think that there is no other option, -as direct democracy is not feasible due to the large population- participatory democracy offers a number of interesting tools to open up spaces for citizen participation. These spaces for citizen participation are not mere information and consultation processes, but real spaces for decision making, devolving citizens some of the powers that they have previously delegated to their representatives.

Participation also needs of training. Citizens and decision makers often ignore that there are

mechanisms that allow citizen inclusion in the decision making process regardless of their previous education or knowledge, and both are not aware of the important benefits of their involvement.

There is a strong political commitment from the Member States of the European Union to integrate the basic principles of an integrated approach for sustainable urban development, in their national, regional and local strategies. These policy priorities set out at the EU level were agreed at the Ministerial Conference in Leipzig last 24<sup>th</sup> May 2007 by Ministers responsible for Urban Development. The **Leipzig Charter**<sup>1</sup>, which builds on the Lille Action Programme, the Rotterdam Urban Acquis and the Bristol Accord, supports the broad **EU Sustainable Development Strategy**. One of the main issues highlighted in the Charter was the essential need to promote the involvement of citizens in the development of sustainable urban policies, giving them an active role in shaping their immediate environment, making cities better places to live and work. Although this is not the first time that attention has been drawn towards the need of effective citizen participation, in the **Bristol Accord**<sup>2</sup> it was stated that:

“Sustainable communities enjoy:

- representative, accountable governance systems which both facilitate strategic, visionary leadership and enable inclusive, active and effective participation by individuals and organisations
- effective engagement with the community at neighbourhood level, including capacity building to develop the community's skills, knowledge and confidence
- strong, informed and effective partnerships that lead by example (e.g. government, business, community)
- strong, inclusive, community and voluntary sector
- sense of civic values, responsibility and pride”.

Furthermore the post evaluation of the **Urban programme 1994-1999** highlighted that the key factors affecting the success of implementation and management, in descending order of importance, were:

- Participation of the local community in aspects of project selection, management and implementation.
- Integrated and straightforward approaches to programme management and implementation.

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<sup>1</sup> LEIPZIG CHARTER on Sustainable European Cities, 24<sup>th</sup> May 2007 ([www.EU2007.de](http://www.EU2007.de))

<sup>2</sup> The ‘Bristol Accord’ was endorsed by Ministers responsible for Urban Development in the Informal Ministerial Meeting in Bristol, 6-7 December 2005



- Strong partnerships and cooperation.
- Leadership in the day to day management and overall implementation of the programme.
- Capacity and experience

However, alongside such positive recognition of citizen participation, the European Union is currently facing a paradox: despite the successes and achievements of the European Union since its creation, European citizens seem to have developed a certain distance towards the European institutions and to have difficulties in identifying themselves within the process of European integration. The low level of participation in the last elections for the European Parliament is a recent illustration.

The European Commission has identified three different types of responses to this problem, which are to be implemented by different initiatives. First, there is a need for better information of citizens about European institutions and better communication on European issues in general. Second, citizens need to be fully aware, and make full use, of their rights as citizens of the European Union, as described in Article 17 of the EC Treaty, and of their fundamental rights under the Charter on Fundamental rights. Third, citizens should also be aware of their duties as citizen and become actively involved in the process of European integration, developing a sense of belonging and a European identity.

This awareness about the importance of the creation of an active European citizenship brought on 26 January 2004, the Council Decision establishing a Community programme to promote **active European citizenship** (civic participation). The decision provided a legal basis for the promotion of active European citizenship, for a period of three years (2004–2006). The **Commission Communication "Building our common Future: Policy challenges and Budgetary means of the Enlarged Union 2007-2013"** proposed developing European citizenship as a main priority for EU action. This included the need to make citizenship a reality by fostering European values, culture and identity, covering areas directly involving European citizens in the construction of the European Union. In the light of the above and of the results of the public consultation held at the end of 2004 and the beginning of 2005, the Commission presented on 6 April 2005 a proposal for the future programme "**Europe for Citizens**", for the period 2007-2013.

The main objectives of the new programme are:

- bringing together people from local communities across Europe to share and exchange experiences, opinions and values, to learn from history and to build for the future;



- fostering action, debate and reflection related to European citizenship and democracy, shared values, common history and culture through cooperation within civil society organisations at European level;
- bringing Europe closer to its citizens by promoting Europe's values and achievements, while preserving the memory of its past;
- encouraging interaction between citizens and civil society organisations from all participating countries, contributing to intercultural dialogue and bringing to the fore both Europe's diversity and unity, with particular attention to activities aimed at developing closer ties between citizens from Member States of the European Union as constituted on 30 April 2004 and those from Member States which have acceded since that date.

In addition, at the European level it has been recognised the important role that ICTs could play in enhancing public participation and involvement in the legislative and decision-making processes, giving citizens the opportunity to interact and participate in the construction of their cities, and thus, the European Union, developing a European identity and a sense of European citizenship. In fact, the European Commission has supported a number of Information Society Technologies research projects on eParticipation during the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programmes for Research, and it was as early as 2001, when the Council of the European Union, under the Belgian Presidency, organised the first high-level Ministerial Conference on e-Government applications, which have been repeated under the Italian (2003) and British (2005) Presidencies. In Manchester in 2005 the eGovernment Conference resulted in a strong impetus to bring forward the eGovernment agenda towards 2010, and later in April 2006 the European Commission Communication "**i2010 eGovernment Action Plan: Accelerating eGovernment in Europe for the Benefit of All**" was published.

One of the objectives set out in the i2010 eGovernment Action Plan by the European Commission is to strengthen citizen participation and democratic decision-making in Europe, which means overcoming several major political challenges facing the European project nowadays: the perceived democratic deficit; the need to reconnect citizens with politics and policy making & the complexity of decision-making and implementing legislation in a 27-member EU.

« **eParticipation** » is a Preparatory Action that was first launched in 2006 and which aims to harness the benefits of ICTs to improve legislation and legislative processes at all levels of government decision-making and to enhance public participation in such processes.

The objective for 2007 is to demonstrate concrete cases where, with the help of modern ICT tools and applications, the legislative process and the resulting legislation can be improved and the participation



of the public (citizens, businesses, civil society, NGOs, socio-economic and political groups, etc) in the decision-making process can be enhanced, for example, through improved interaction with decision-makers.

The theoretical framework that has inspired the creation of the electronic platform is that of e-democracy. E-democracy is considered as *a process and not a product*. This process involves *harnessing the democratising potential of information and communication technologies (ICT) by bringing decision-making closer to the citizen*. Yet, the electronic platform was not intended to be biased towards any one specific conception of democracy, e.g. *representative, participatory or deliberative* models of democracy. Instead, the interactive platform that was implemented tried to incorporate elements of these three basic models of democracy. Each of these models tends to influence the strategies or the aspects of democracy we wish to promote. This obviously also applies to the introduction of ICTs into the democratic realm. Thus ICTs can be designed towards the promotion of distinct goals. Below some of the normative strategies of the three models are outlined:

1) *Representative Democracy (Edmund Burke, Joseph Schumpeter, etc)*: Democracy strengthened by increasing the competitive nature of the political process whereby different parties compete for the citizen's vote: normative strategy is to make the political process more **transparent**.

2) *Participatory Democracy (Jean Jacques Rousseau, Benjamin Barber, etc)*: Democracy strengthened by increasing the citizen's scope to **participate and be directly involved** in the decision-making process, e.g. through the use of direct democratic procedures.

3) *Deliberative Democracy (Jurgen Habermas, James Fishkin, etc)*: Democracy strengthened by enhancing the public sphere, e.g. providing new opportunities for stimulating **deliberation** among the citizens *for improving the quality of opinion formation by opening new spaces of information and deliberation*.

We can also add a fourth 'transversal' component to the three basic models:

4) *Civic dimension*: Democracy strengthened by enhancing the civic dimension, e.g. by providing new opportunities for enhancing the **civic education** of citizens.

The point is that ICT's can be designed to promote distinct aspects of the political process (e.g. transparency, participation, deliberation and civic education). Below this is represented in the form of a matrix (Table 1).

Table 1: Matrix presenting five modules of the Interactive Platform and the particular aspects of democracy promoted through the ICTs.



	<b>ASPECTS OF DEMOCRACY PROMOTED</b>			
		<b>Increasing transparency</b>	<b>Increasing participation</b>	<b>Increasing deliberation</b>
<b>ICT'S (E-TECHNIQUES)</b>	<b>e-access</b>	X		
	<b>e-consultation</b>		X	
	<b>e-petition</b>		X	
	<b>e-voting</b>		X	
	<b>e-forums</b>			X

That said the use of ICTs in democratic realm with particular emphasis on the issue of citizens' participation has led to the creation of the electronic platform. The platform intends to incorporate the promotion of all democratic principles (transparency, participation and deliberation) through its design, as it will be presented in more detail below.

The dynamic web environment of the platform offers an internet hub for all issues concerning an ongoing democratic dialogue at a local level in a highly user friendly environment intended to appeal to all levels of computer and internet literacy. Moreover, the platform responded to a list of preconditions that were pointed out by theorists as important for the platform's use. These are:

- Simplicity (*Pratchett et al. 2005*)
- Security (*Pratchett et al. 2005*)
- Plurality of Information (*Kies & Kriesi 2005*)
- Interactivity (*Kies & Kriesi 2005*)
- Heuristic and systematic paths of opinion formation (*Kies & Kriesi 2005*)

In relation to the debate around the need to support and develop more effective participation in urban regeneration policies, the European Parliament has established an Intergroup on Urban Policy and Housing, whose President is Jean-Marie Beaupuy, MEP from the ALDE Group. The Intergroup has held a number of sessions and several of these have focused on the need to improve connection and



communication with locally based actors. QeC-ERAN has actively participated in joint workshops with the Intergroup, and it is within this context where the pilot project was set up under the “Europe for citizens” programme and the European Local Regeneration Forums Exchange has developed. QeC-ERAN has a strong focus on linking bottom-up and top-down approaches, therefore the issue of citizen participation remains very important in supporting area-based regeneration, and eventually promoting a participatory role of citizens in policy-making at EU level.

### 3. PROJECT PARTNERS

The partners that participated in the project all come from the previous partnership that was set up for the pilot initiative. They come from different organisational structures, such as local authorities, universities & citizen platforms. 5 partners from 4 different Member States compose the group that has involved citizens, professionals, and local politicians at the local level in several activities and events promoting an active participation of different stakeholders in area-based urban regeneration.

The following profiles provide with an overview of the nature of the 5 partners.



**PARTNER 1: BELFAST**



**Name of Organisation:** Belfast Health & Social Care Trust  
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**Short presentation of the organisation:**

Belfast Health & Social Care Trust is an amalgamation of 6 separate Trusts. The new Trust has been in place since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 and is busy consolidating the work of the legacy Trusts and continuing to deliver quality health and social care to the population of Belfast. It works in collaboration with a number of statutory organisations and the local community to participate in European projects.

**Description of on-going projects relevant to the current project partnership:**

- Each partner organisation is involved in different elements of urban regeneration, usually with an integrated approach and resident participation.
- Examples are: the neighbourhood renewal projects
- Task Force for job creation in Shankill and West Belfast
- Health Action Zone
- EQUAL: Employability Access Project

**Other Areas of interest:**

- Belfast remains committed to developing networks and contacts which will add value to the work undertaken in Belfast and give an opportunity to showcase innovative work from Belfast in other settings.

## **PARTNER 2: CHARLOIS**



**Name of Organisation:** Sub Municipality of Charlois, Rotterdam  
**Representative:** J.W.E. van de Poel  
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### **Short presentation of the organisation:**

The sub-municipality of Charlois has an area of over 1,000 hectares and almost 65,000 residents. The Charlois sub-municipality is made up of the Zuidwijk, Pendrecht, Wielewaal, Oud Charlois, Carnisse, Tarwewijk, Zuidplein en Heijplaat neighbourhoods. Charlois is one of the eleven sub-municipalities of the city of Rotterdam. Charlois has been a sub-municipality since 1973. The sub-municipalities were set up with the aim of bringing local government and decision making closer to the citizens. The sub-municipal council in the same way that a municipality is governed by a municipal council so in a sub-municipality there is a sub-municipal council. Both are directly elected. The number of members for both a municipal and sub-municipal council depends upon the number of inhabitants. The Charlois sub-municipal council has 25 members. On taking office the new sub-municipal council appoints the members of an executive committee. This consists of two members and a chairman. The chairman of the executive committee is also the chairman of the council. The executive committee is responsible for day to day matters, the preparation of plans and the execution of decisions. The council delegates authority to the executive committee to deal with a number of matters, such as the issue of permits. What does the council do? The sub-municipal council makes decisions which directly affect life and living in the sub-municipality. Matters that are important to the residents. Such as those concerned with housing and the surroundings: public gardens, neighbourhood maintenance, parking facilities, children's play areas, etc. The sub-municipality also subsidises welfare facilities, such as club and neighbourhood centres, district halls, sports facilities, social facilities, youth work, social work, residents organisations and suchlike. Decision making Initially the sub-municipal council decides the policy lines to be followed in Charlois for a particular area. The executive committee - with the support of officials - develops this policy to a number of concrete proposals. About 90 local government officials work at the Secretariat. Civil affairs Applications can be made at the civil affairs department for, amongst others, certified extracts from the register of population, passports and driving licences. It is also possible to register births and deaths and make appointments for publication of notice of intention to marry and marriage ceremonies.

### **Description of on-going projects relevant to the current project partnership:**

- Turkish Regeneration Areas Network, Quartiers en Crise
- European Regeneration Managers Network, Quartiers en Crise

### **Other Areas of interest:**

- International cooperation on regeneration subjects



### **PARTNER 3: TORINO**



**Name of Organisation:** TURIN CITY COUNCIL  
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#### **Short presentation of the organisation:**

Turin City Council is a Local Authority composed by 10 Administrative Districts called Circonscrizioni. Being a city of nearly 1 million inhabitants the structure of the City Council is articulated into numerous Departments depending on different Deputy Mayors. The Department dealing with the topics of the project is thus the "Coordination of Integration and Urban Regeneration Policies" a group of units whose main activities are: integration of migrants, citizens' empowerment and involvement in urban regeneration projects and initiatives. Related activities are social and economic development in the most marginalised areas of the city, cultural mediation and support addressed to ethnic minorities, social support in the creation of local groups in 15 different areas of the city, governance support and local development activities.

#### **Description of on-going projects relevant to the current project partnership:**

- Promotion and implementation of numerous social boards aiming at involving and empowering local residents and stakeholders in the decision making process in urban regeneration projects and activities:
- Implementation of the following European Projects:
- URB-HEALTH as lead partner. An Urbact thematic network focused on quality of life and urban policies involving other 8 partners from 6 Member States
- Closure as a project partners of other 3 Urbact thematic networks: [Citiz@move](#) on citizens' participation; Regenera on integrated approach in urban regeneration; Udiex- Udiex ALEP on migrants and integration policies.
- MILE project (Managing Migration and Integration at local level) a fast track project within the framework of Regions for Economic Development launched by DG Regio and led by the City of Venice
- Member of Quartiers en Crise – ERAN network with the role of co-ordinator for the City Council. The Deputy Mayor on Integration and Urban Regeneration Policies is also the President of the above mentioned European Association.

#### **Other Areas of interest:**

- Being the Department a co-ordination service the establishment and maintenance of various partnerships at local, regional, national and European level are priorities. Other topics are: culture as a tool for combating social exclusion. Private and Third Sector partnerships. Meanwhile other projects have already been submitted such us: Preventing radicalisation of youth; Home care Services in the social informal economies



## **PARTNER 4: ROMA**



**Name of Organisation:** DIPSU Dipartimento di Studi Urbani Roma3  
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### **Short presentation of the organisation:**

DIPSU (Department of Urban Studies Università degli Studi Roma Tre) Main interests of the DipSU - Department of Urban Studies, are spatial, economic, social and cultural planning policies and programs. It has a recognized reputation in interactive community planning,, sustainable development planning and approaches are also among its fields of activity. During its annual international conferences devoted to planning issues, mostly on a comparative basis, it has developed a number of contacts and exchanges with outstanding institutions of the Central Eastern European Countries, Latin America, Asia, and the rest of Europe . The Department of Urban Studies members are also actively involved in networks such as the European Council of Town Planners, International Council of Monuments and Sites, International Society of Country and Regional Planners, among others. The Department is widely known for its research and plans for old industrial sites, historic centers, pilot projects on a national and international level for local communities and regional governments, as European Programmes of Planning or the United Nations consultancies.

### **Description of on-going projects relevant to the current project partnership:**

Inside the DipSU the TIPUS (ICT for a Sustainable Urban Design) laboratory and master PISM (Interactive Sustainable Design and Multimedia), work with Participation and Community Planning. It is a member of the PROMETEA association (Projects and Methods for the Territory and Environment), takes part in many national and international competitions, and carries out many studies in the field of EIA (Environment Impact Assessment).

From 1996 is involved in some activities of community planning and design. In particular collaborate with the Council of Rome to the establishment of the Neighborhood Municipal Laboratories. The Laboratories are places where the inhabitants and the local authorities meet to improve the communication between citizens and administration, and where the inhabitants participate to the working out of projects respectful of the principles of the sustainable development.

From 2001 has been working with social local networks of urban regeneration at the Historic Centre of Rome, with the project "University in the City", from 2006 to 2007 takes part of the Steering Group of the Project "European Residents in Urban Regeneration", Co-financed project in the Action 2 European Active Citizenship, DG Education and Culture, QEC-ERAN Network.

DipSu is also working with schools in the design of gardens and common areas, making participatory planning with children and teachers.

### **Other Areas of interest:**

- Cultural community development and planning ; Strategic environment planning for urban areas; Assessment and education activities of participatory planning for local governments



## **PARTNER 5: QEC-ERAN (lead partner)**



**Name of Organisation:** QeC-European Regeneration Areas  
Network

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### **Short presentation of the organisation:**

Qec-ERAN is a network of towns promoting the integrated approach to the revitalisation of disadvantaged areas, with the involvement of politicians, technicians and local residents in that process. It is one of the longest established networks in relation to the theme of urban regeneration. and remains committed to being at the leading edge in relation to the changing realities experienced by regeneration areas.

Qec-ERAN was established in 1989 in order to represent the interests of towns/cities which face a number of multiple challenges whilst also offering new opportunities in terms of urban regeneration. Since then it has played a strategic role in the development of programmes linked to structural and cohesion funds and is one of the key players in the URBACT programme, which seeks to capitalise the good practice, which the URBAN programme has generated.

Qec-ERAN has a number of key objectives:

- Developing programmes/projects which facilitate the exchange of experience and practice between such areas.
- Supporting initiatives based on greater participation of targeted groups.
- Promoting joint up working and thinking between local authorities and other key agencies, and in particular local NGOs.
- Undertaking research and evaluation in order to impact on existing and future Urban regeneration policies/programmes.
- Representing the views and needs of such localities within EU and EC groupings and networks.
- Creating a network which constitutes an European "think tank" regarding the issues of diversity, integration, social and economic exclusion and urban regeneration

### **Description of on-going projects relevant to the current project partnership:**

Qec-ERAN is involved in a number of initiatives that relate to the issue gender equality:

- Gender Equality: Within the EU Gender Equality Framework the network has developed a project that focuses on the identification and development of good practice of the social and economic needs of women in area's of high need.
- Youth Development: Within the Ecos-Ouverture programme the network has developed and co-ordinated a project focussing on the issue of youth unemployment and in particular the transition from school to work for young people with low or no qualifications.
- Social Exclusion: Within the Urbact programme Qec- ERAN has developed and now provides the technical and professional input in relation to the Urban Diversity and Inclusion Exchange (UDIEX)
- Regeneration: Within the Interreg IIC programme Qec-ERAN has developed with other partners a project called IMAGE . This focuses on an exchange of experience in relation to local strategies which aim to "turn around" areas that are clusters of "negativity" in terms of human, social and environmental capital

### **Other Areas of interest:**

- social inclusion ; urban regeneration ; gender equality ; employment issues



#### 4. PROJECT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This project proposal has emerged directly from the development of a pilot project within the Call for proposals DG EAC/18/06 within the “Europe for citizens” programme. The project’s main aim has been to establish 5 Local Regeneration Forums (LRFs) and facilitate a horizontal and vertical exchange amongst them, and between them and the EU institutions with the idea of promoting participation in the issue of urban development.

One of the key issues that the LRFs highlighted in the pilot project was what has been referred to as “a representation crisis of democratic institutions”. This is an issue that is not just specific to the LRFs, this is in fact a crisis being experienced by the representative bodies of most countries of Europe, a crisis which seems to have as its decisive symptom a slump in election turnouts, expressing both, growing dissatisfaction with the inadequacies of the representative system (which distributes decision-taking power to experts, very much on a technocratic basis), and attachment to the fundamental values of democracy (through the emphasis placed on the need to participate).

Given this context, the 5 LRFs were established. They identified a shared need to learn from (and engage with) EU experience in relation to urban regeneration as well as from each other. In doing so, the following objectives were proposed:

- Establishment of 5 Local Regeneration Forums: the composition of the local forums presents a cross-section of actors in terms of gender, age and cultural backgrounds. The local forums were composed by residents/citizens; local decision-makers and community-based organisations representatives. The forums undertook a local consultation regarding key priorities for urban regeneration in their areas, identifying the more important problems facing their neighbourhoods/cities
- Create online capacity-building resources/ materials to empower members of Local Regeneration forums to connect to EU policies and programmes.
- Delivery of a capacity-building and exchange programme for LRFs’ participants
- Creation of Video-profiles at the local level. These video-profiles could be of 3 different natures: people profiles, profiles of places or profiles of issues relevant at the local level.
- Development of a pilot online facilitated discussion forum between members of the different LRFs .



## 5. METHODOLOGY

The overarching methodology used in this project in order to reach the objectives established in the project proposal is one of action-learning, which incorporates discussion, reflection, deliberation and empowerment. More specifically, the methodology has incorporated a number of structured actions: in terms of facilitating the exchange and the intercultural dialogue among the members of the local forums, some online resources/materials have been created, such as Dossiers and Video-profiles. These elements facilitated the discussion and the interaction within the partnership. Secondly, to promote the learning and capacity-building dimension, the members of the forum have participated in one transnational workshop focused on the issue of Youth participation (Workshop in Brussels, May 2008).

- **Building Dossiers:** Once the Local Regeneration Forums (LRFs) were established at the local level, every partner undertook a local consultation involving as many as stakeholders as possible in order to identify the issues regarding urban regeneration that were more important/problematic in every location. All of the partners made a preference list and they were all put in common in order to create a common one for the partnership. This list would contain the 5 top issues identified by partners and that would afterwards be the base for the discussions and exchanges within the platform. The top 5 issues identified by the LRFs are as follows: a) citizen participation; b) Youth; c) Minorities integration; d) Housing: Affordability and Social Housing; e) Economic Development: focus on Education and Employment. Every LRF has built 2 thematic dossiers around 2 of the issues described above. All of them identified and agreed to work on one dossier about Youth and the second dossier would be different for each LRF. The Dossier is a document where they present the issue at the local level. It contains an introduction describing what is the current situation of the problem in their areas, in a second part they describe the policies that have already been implemented to solve the problem and what are the future policy perspectives. At the end, they also identify the challenges and shortcomings for the future of that problem.
- **Creating video-profiles:** In order to better promote intercultural dialogue and discussion within the forums, it was decided to create audiovisual resources/materials that would facilitate and attract participants to use the online platform and to better communicate with other participants from different LRFs. The video-profiles have different natures. In the first place some members created people profiles. In this kind of profile, participants introduce themselves, as a resident in the community, as a

politician or as a professional from the public or civil society sector, giving some basic information about their interests, education and backgrounds. The second type of video-profiles was those on places. The areas concerned were presented in the video, describing the basic characteristics in terms of population, cultural groups, main problems faced, potentials, main sources of development, etc. Lastly, the video-profiles around a concrete issue presented a problem relevant to a certain area, explaining the actors involved, policies implemented & alternative solutions. Every partner has created at least two long-duration video-profiles (several more short-duration videos) that have been placed into the website in order to provide with some information to the other partners, that may share the same problems/issues. These videos have facilitated the online discussion.

- **Transnational Exchanges:** The main aim of this project is to enhance citizen participation and to better connect the EU institutions with European citizens. In order to do so this project has organised 1 transnational exchange workshop that have promoted the learning and capacity-building dimension needed for citizen engagement at EU level. These activities have facilitated the exchange of experiences among members of the forums and also with EU officials, which helps bridge the gap between Europe and its citizens. The main objectives of the Transnational Exchanges were: a) to bring together from 2-4 participants from every LRF around a certain issue; b) to present and share information about the issue in all locations; c) to learn from the experiences of others in the same domain; d) to connect with EU institutions and officials around the policies and programmes provided at European level for the issue in question. The transnational event took place in Brussels, in May 2008 in relation to the issue of Youth Participation.

### ***Transnational Exchange in Brussels***

#### ***Capacity-building & Exchange Workshop on Youth Participation, May 2008***

On the 21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> May, a capacity-building and exchange workshop was held in Brussels. The aim of this event was to bring together 4 participants from each of the Local Forums, among which we could find people working on youth issues and also young citizens participating in the local forums. The partners of the project identified in the previous phases that the issue of young citizens' participation remains a very important challenge for European cities today.

The specific objectives of this Workshop were:



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- To bring together 4 participants from the LRFs working on youth policies in their areas.
- To present the different situations (challenges, problems, potentials) of young people in the 4 partner locations on the project: MONTI (Roma); CHARLOIS; BELFAST; TORINO.
- To provide with a European overview of Youth policies and programmes. This contribution was made from different perspectives in order to give a more complete view of how the issue is tackled at a European level.
- To present the result of the online platform created for the Local Forums, which is meant to hold discussions, debates and exchanges online among the different forums and also within one same forum.
- To prepare the development of a project with the same partnership within the “Europe for Citizens” programme.

The programme of the Workshop was developed in 3 days:

#### Day 1

Participants arrived on the 21<sup>st</sup> May and spent the first sessions of the workshop setting the context for the theme of “youth participation” . The coordinator, QeC-ERAN made a general presentation of the project, presenting the objectives, aims and background of the programme “Europe for citizens”. The partners then participated in a game called RICH PICTURE, which is about expressing with images the problems, issues, challenges of a certain issue, namely, “Youth participation” in their local areas. After the discussions took place in groups, a common session was held in order to give feedback and identify together what are the commonalities among our partners regarding young people’s involvement in public life.

#### Day 2

This day was dedicated to make the connections to the European dimension. Different contributions were made from different elements focused on “Youth issues”. The first presentation was made from the International Youth Office in Brussels. Thierry Dufour presented the trends and challenges at a European level as well as the main lines of activity of the organisation. the 4 partners of the project presented throughout the day their local experiences with young people. Roma presented an experience of participatory democracy in the neighbourhood of Monti where young people took a very active role. Charlois talked about a project developed in the district to tackle early school leaving and unemployment of the young population, as well as social inclusion of minority groups. Belfast has developed a project with excluded youngsters in a very disadvantaged neighbourhood. Finally, the city of Torino presented a project that has involved an online discussion platform of young citizens in one of



the neighbourhoods of the city. In addition to these 4 examples of good practice in the field of youth policies and participation, Mr. Pascal Debruyne presented a project that was developed within the Flemish Community in Belgium and was also about young residents' participation on urban development. From the European Commission, Ms. Veronika Remisova presented the "Youth in Action" Programme under DG EAC. This programme is aimed at promoting participation of young Europeans in order to foster the sense of European identity and the level of ownership among young citizens of the EU.

### Day 3

The online platform was presented by the representative of University of Zurich. All the elements dimension and instructions were given to partners in order for them to start registering in the website and providing information. The end of Day 3 and in general of the whole event, was the discussion around a future project tackling those issues raised and identified during the workshop. The project proposal will be presented under the "Europe for citizens" programme and will be around youth panels on Intercultural Dialogue.

## 6. OUTCOMES

- **Website Platform**

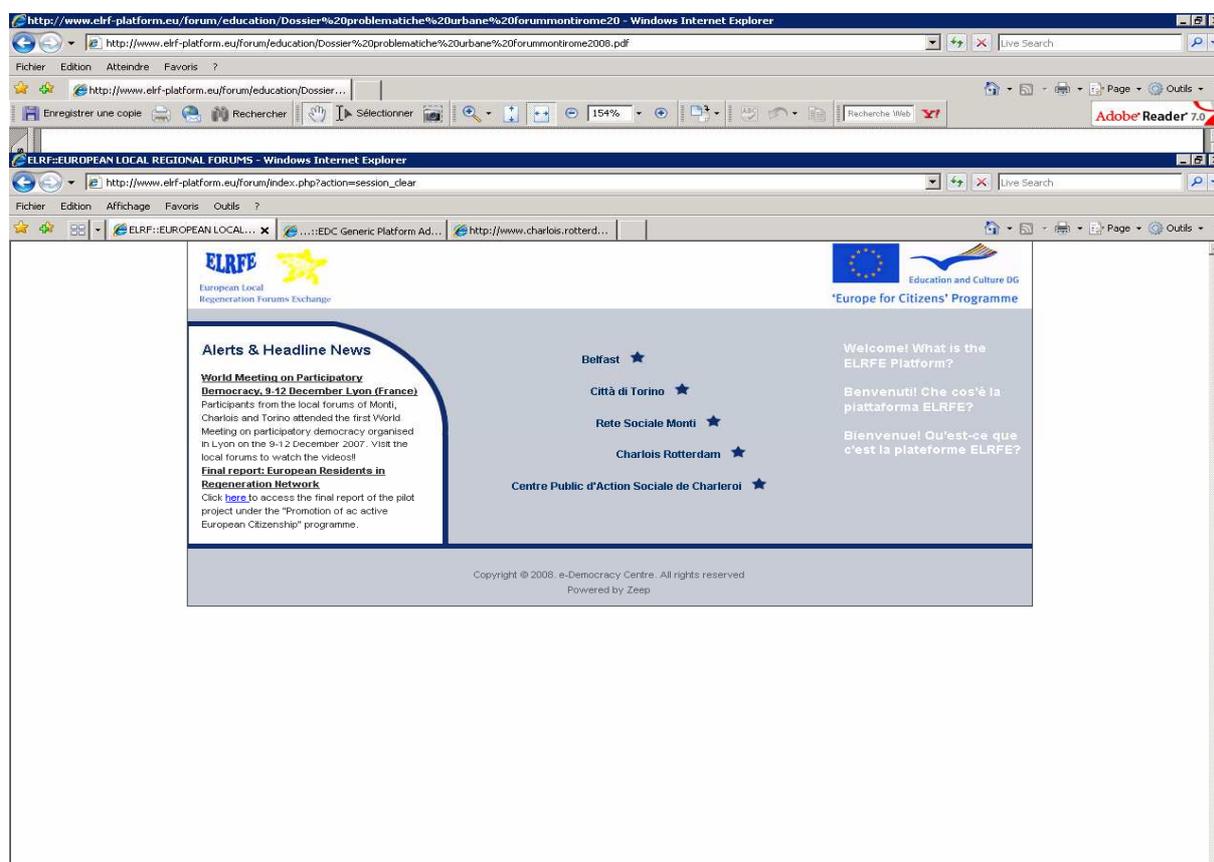
The website address is the following: <http://www.elf-platform.eu/forum/>. The website is run on adapted open-source technology. Much of this software exists to provide or relies upon the input of citizen-users as well as professional and local politicians. Every platform consists of the same four modules (see picture 2) and offers a graphical modular interface that is intended to make the users' experience as simple as possible and move away from the typical feel of a website. Each module or button on the front page of every platform leads to a separate feature. All the following modules are accompanied with functions such as "Information Centre" (this refers to some kind of archiving mechanism so that information is stored, and retrievable according to some predefined search criteria, again informed by political theory) and "Have your say" (this is a component that allows citizens to suggest an important topic and submit it for discussion so as to highlight dominant perceptions and preferences on relevant issues at a local or European level).

It should be noted that the platform has been reproduced and adapted mainly to the linguistic needs of every local forum. Thus, five different platforms were incorporated into a central portal from where the citizen-users could choose their platform by clicking on it (see Picture 1). Getting access to all the

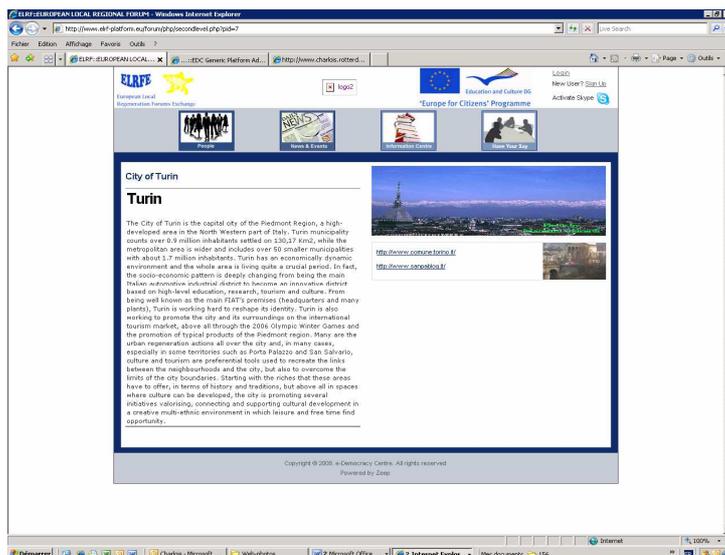


platforms through the use of the same web site, addresses the need for interaction between the different platforms and users. Every LRF platform has exactly the same design with the others. The element that changes is the different default language and the uploaded content. The different languages that were used are: Italian for the neighbourhoods of the LRFs of Roma and Torino, English for Belfast and the platform of Qec-ERAN, Dutch for Charlois and French for Charleroi .

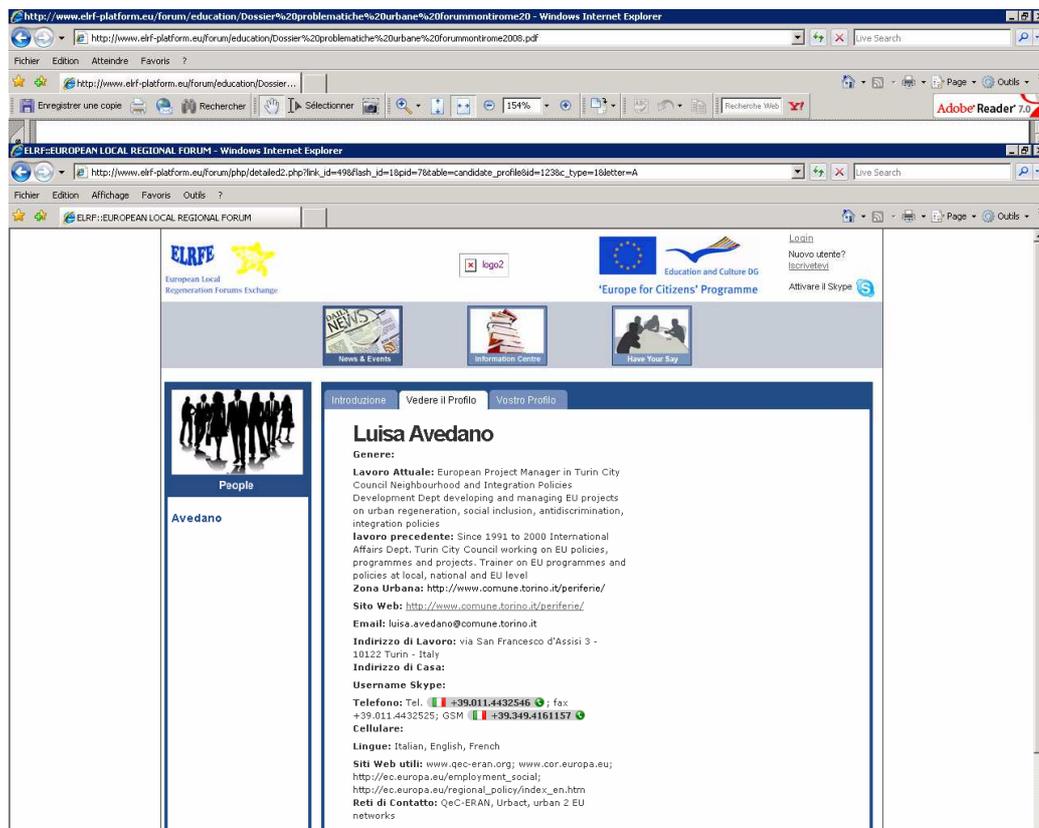
**Picture 1:** Screenshot of the homepage of the website platform, showing the composition of the partnership. At this stage, users can choose their Local Regeneration Forum (Belfast, Torino, Monti, Charlois and CPAS Charleroi)



**Picture 2:** The second level of the platform is the local space for each Forum. All 5 forums have the same 4-modules structure (People, News & Events, Information Centre and Have your say). Here you can read an introduction to the local area where the forums have been set up. This is an example of the city of Torino.

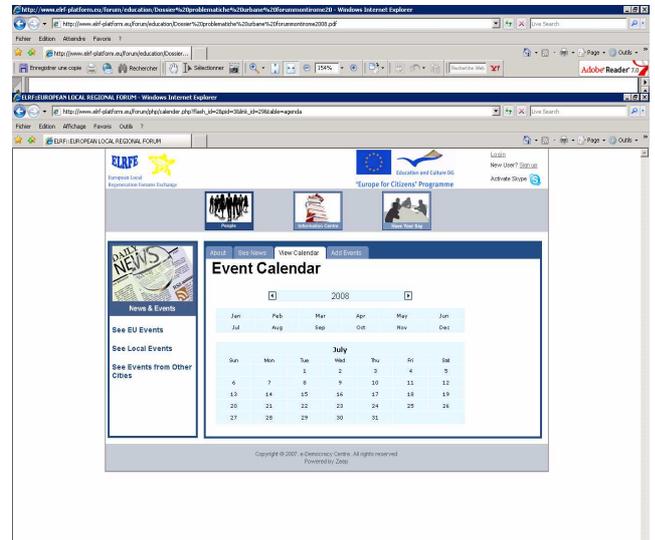
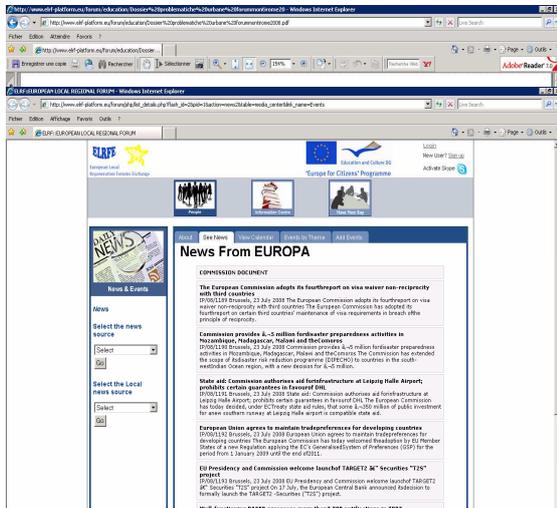


**Picture 3- MODULE 1- People :** Upon clicking this icon on the front page of every platform, users are transferred to a page where they can sign up as a member of that particular Forum, filling in a short form with basic information about education, interests, email, skype account, etc. Here you can find different types of profiles, as the forums are composed by residents/citizens; professionals and politicians.

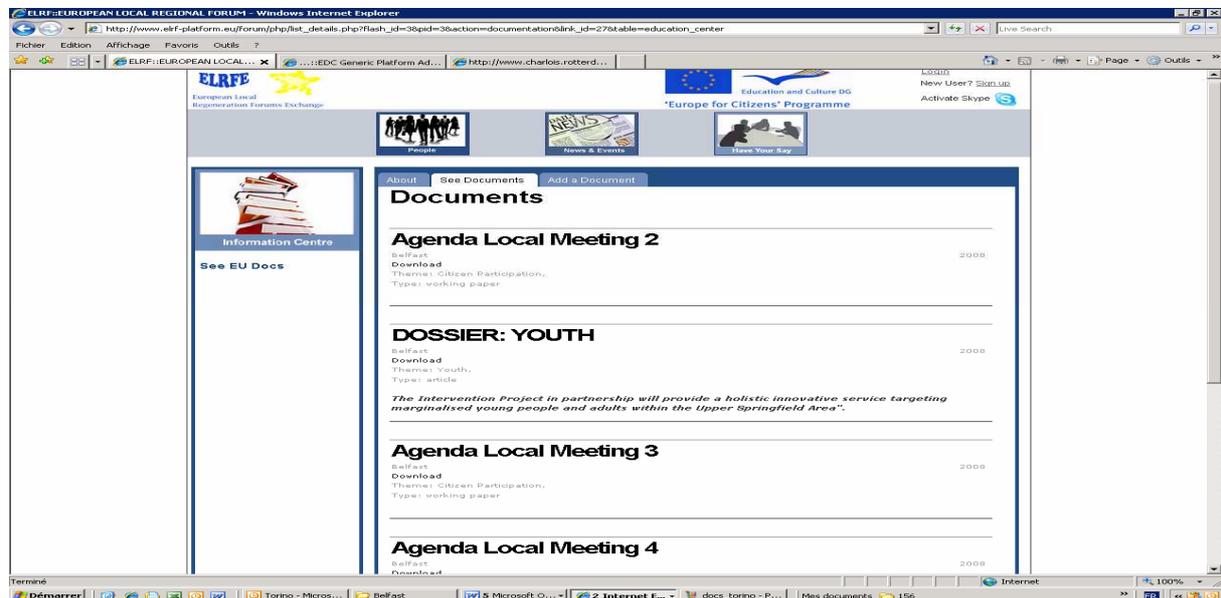


*This project has been co-financed by the European Commission (DG EAC)*

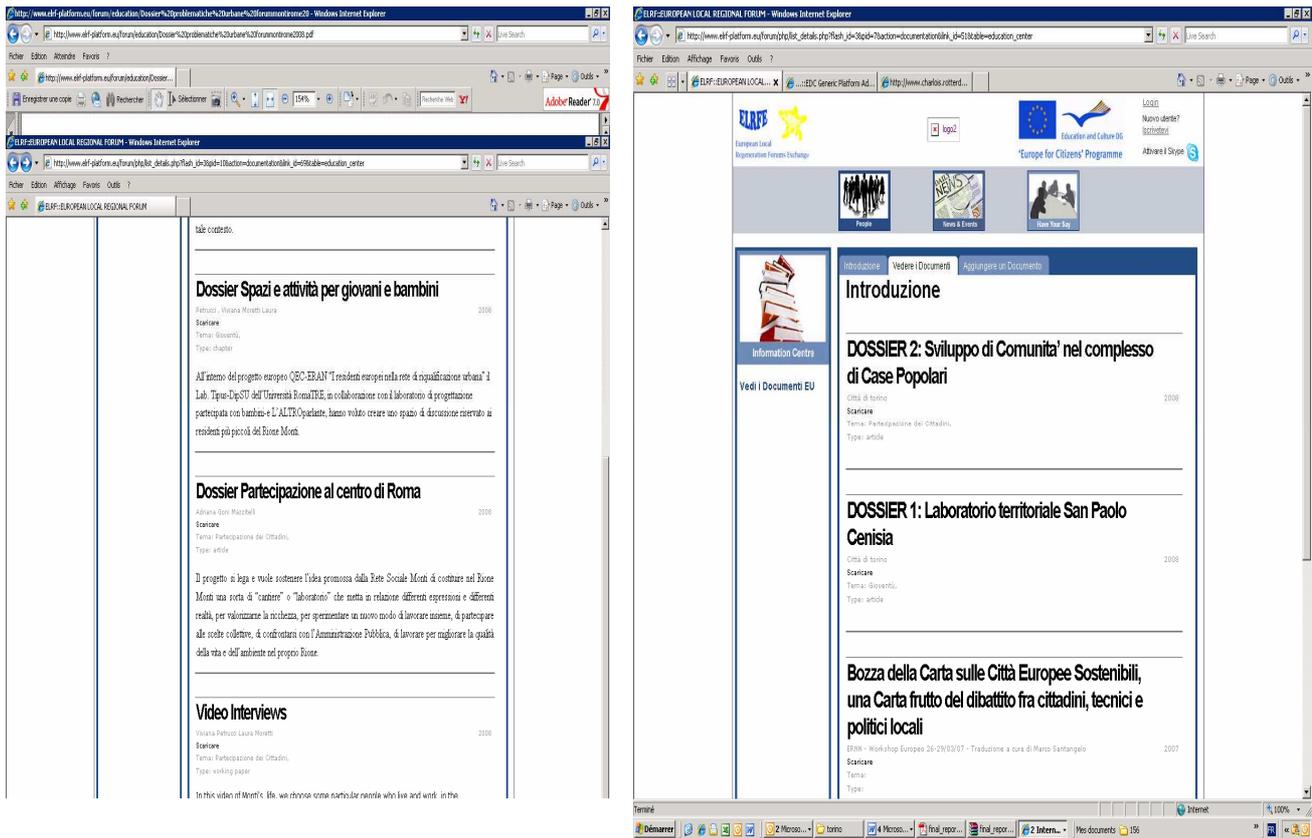
**Picture 4/5- MODULE 2 - News & Events:** Clicking on this icon, users are able to access an updated database of News automatically generated from different sources, such as EUROPA, The EU Observer & Google News. They can also have an overview of the events planned at EU level relating to the theme of urban regeneration.



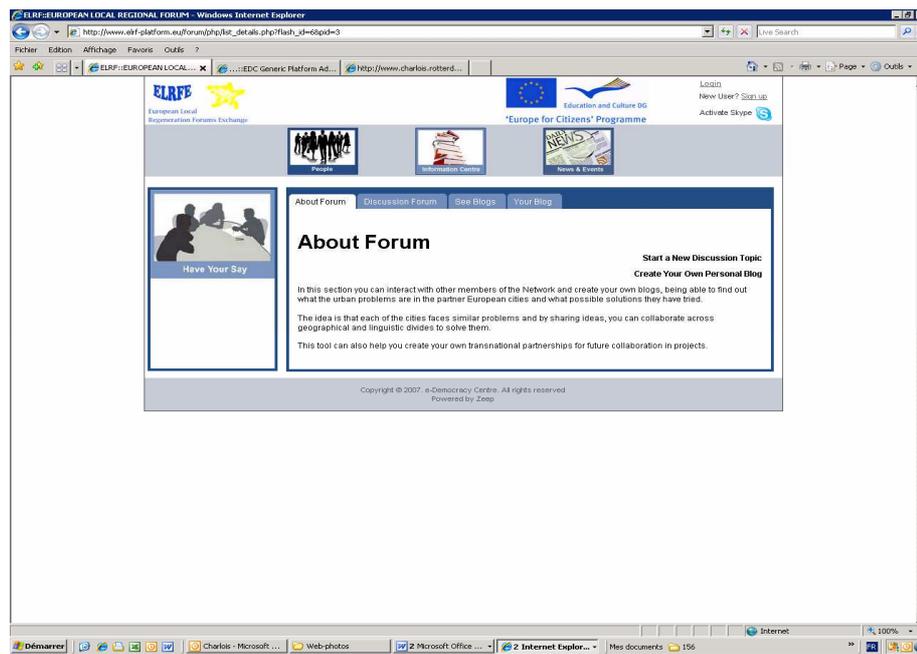
**Picture 6/7/8- MODULE 3- Information Centre:** This is the space where users can access documentation produced by the local forums or relevant to the issues they are working on. Every forum has uploaded here their thematic dossiers.



# European Local Regeneration Forums Exchange July 2008



**Picture 9- MODULE 4 – Have your say:** This module has been created for the discussion and interaction of members of the forums. This exchange can happen horizontally among members of the same forum, or vertically with participants in other European forums. This section offers the possibility of introducing a topic for discussion, or else, for members to star their own blogs. This feature of the platform will be further developed in future stages of the project.



*This project has been co-financed by the European Commission (DG EAC)*

- **Thematic Dossiers**

The thematic dossiers are an important outcome of this project, as they reflect the work that has been done at local level by every forum, and also they reflect those issues that are more relevant for the participants in terms of urban regeneration of their local areas/neighbourhoods. Every partner has produced at least two dossiers. All of them identified the issue of Youth participation as a priority at their local level, and the second dossier is different from one forum to another depending on their diverse priorities that were identified after local consultation processes took place.

- *Partner 1: Belfast*

Belfast has produced a Dossier on Youth Issues describing the Upper Springfield Whiterock Intervention project, which provided a holistic innovative service targeting marginalised young people and adults within the Upper Springfield Area. This project offers a two-tiered approach with services including Mental Health and Youth Provision.

For more information on the DOSSIER on Youth Issues you can visit the document on

<http://www.elf-platform.eu/forum/education/DOSSIER.doc>

- *Partner 2: Torino*

The work undertaken by the forum of Torino regarding participation of young people is also reflected in their Dossier about YOUTH. This dossier contains all the information related to the activities developed with young people in Torino, such as the creation of an urban blog in a particular neighbourhood or the provision of public spaces for young people to develop their activities.

For more information on the DOSSIER on Youth Issues you can visit the document on

<http://www.elf-platform.eu/forum/education/DOSSIER1GIOVANISPAOLO.doc>

The second Dossier that Torino has produced is about the issue of social housing and social inclusion. They present the experience of the city in regards to Community development through the so called "Case Popolari".

For more information on the DOSSIER on Community Development & social Housing you can visit the document on

<http://www.elf-platform.eu/forum/education/DOSSIER2SVILCOMCASEPOPOLARI.doc>



- Partner 3: Rete Sociale Monti

The local forum established in Rione Monti, in Rome, in collaboration with the Lab Tipus-DipSU dell'Università RomaTRE, and in collaboration with the laboratorio di progettazione partecipata con bambini-e L'ALTROparlante, has developed a very stable participatory structure. During the development of the project, the local forum has worked on several issues among which we can include some work aimed at young people and children, and also some activities in regard to the development of public urban spaces, the environment in the neighbourhood and the liveability of the Rione Monti.

For more information on the DOSSIERS produced by this local forum please visit:

DOSSIER on Youth and Children Activities

<http://www.elf-platform.eu/forum/education/DossierForum%20Monti%20giovani%20e%20bambini2008.pdf>

DOSSIER on Quality of Urban Spaces and Liveability in Rione Monti

<http://www.elf-platform.eu/forum/education/Dossier%20problematiche%20urbane%20forummontirome2008.pdf>

DOSSIER on Participation in the Centre of the city of Rome

[http://www.elf-platform.eu/forum/education/dossier\\_FORUM%20MONTI\\_cittadinanzaattiva2008.pdf](http://www.elf-platform.eu/forum/education/dossier_FORUM%20MONTI_cittadinanzaattiva2008.pdf)

- Partner 4: Charlois

The Charlois LRF has also been working on the issue of marginalised youth. They have presented in their dossier a project called TIP. The TIP is a service provided by the local government. It's main purpose is to direct all the youth-related institutions and services in the local field. A basic infrastructure has been built so there is no dependence on personal actions, temporary power, uprising needs, etc.

For more information on the DOSSIER on Youth you can visit

<http://www.elf-platform.eu/forum/education/YOUTH%20Introduction%20and%20Context%20TIP.pdf>



<http://www.elf-platform.eu/forum/education/YOUTH%20current%20policy%20and%20future%20developments%20TIP.pdf>

The second priority issue highlighted by the forum in Charlois was Art and Culture in the city. They have produced a dossier presenting what is the situation nowadays and what kind of policies and strategies the city has regarding this issue.

For more information on the DOSSIER on Art and Culture please visit

<http://www.elf-platform.eu/forum/education/Introduction%20Charlois%20Policy%20on%20Art%20&%20Culture.pdf>

<http://www.elf-platform.eu/forum/education/Objectives%20and%20Approach%20Charlois%20Policy%20on%20Art%20&%20Culture.pdf>

<http://www.elf-platform.eu/forum/education/Current%20Charlois%20Policy%20on%20Art%20&%20Culture.pdf>

- **Video-profiles: people, places & issues**

In order to better promote intercultural dialogue and discussion within the forums, it was decided to create audiovisual resources/materials that would facilitate and attract participants to use the online platform and to better communicate with other participants from different LRFs. More than 10 long-duration videos have been created (the amount of videos increases significantly if we divide them into 3-minutes short videos, at least 100 in total). The video-profiles have different natures. In the first place some members created **people** profiles. In this kind of profile, participants introduce themselves, as a resident in the community, as a politician or as a professional from the public or civil society sector, giving some basic information about their interests, education and backgrounds. The second type of video-profiles was those on **places**. The areas concerned were presented in the video, describing the basic characteristics in terms of population, cultural groups, main problems



faced, potentials, main sources of development, etc. Lastly, the video-profiles around a concrete **issue** presented a problem relevant to a certain area, explaining the actors involved, policies implemented & alternative solutions. Every partner has created at least two long-duration video-profiles (several more short-duration videos) that have been placed into the website in order to provide with some information to the other partners that may share the same problems/issues. These videos have facilitated the online discussion.

Some of the video-profiles can be visualised in the website:

<http://www.elf-platform.eu/forum/>

## 7. DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

A number of activities were undertaken to maximise dissemination and wider impact of the ELRFE project.

- Each Local Regeneration Forum developed a local dissemination plan, which included the celebration of at least 2 local meetings with local press coverage.
- The online platform itself has acted as a marketing tool for disseminating the results of the project and stimulating new LRFs to get involved.
- QeC-ERAN has an extensive network and its website is highly regarded.
- QeC-ERAN also presented the results of the project at 2 of its twice annual policy workshops which attracted a wide cross- section of actors.
- The connection with the EP Intergroup for Urban Policy and Housing also ensured the impact through EU media networks.

Apart from these general actions, some participants from the ERLFE project have participated in other project's meetings with the aim of getting as much dissemination as possible of the project results and the "Europe for citizens" programme, and also with the objective of promoting networking and learning from other projects. Here there is an overview of the events which our ELRFE members have attended:

### **"World Meeting on Participatory Democracy" Lyon, December 2007**

The Rhône-Alpes Regional Council organized the World Meeting on the theme "Participatory democracy from the local to the global level: for what sort of development?" on 10<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> of December 2007.



This initiative sets out to highlight the infinite variety of experiences in participatory democracy throughout the world and discuss development issues. Using the great diversity of experiences the world over, the idea is to start mapping out areas of convergence, a common meaning to all these experiences that are developing and taking root.

Since the event was organized jointly with citizens, associations and local authorities, its content will gradually evolve and be enriched. Participants from our Local Forums in Rome and Charlois (Rotterdam) attended this World Meeting in order to get the opportunity to network with people from all over the world and learn about their experiences, facilitating the transfer of know-how and good practices in dealing with citizen participation in urban development.

### **“Monitoring the Urban Dimension in EU Cohesion Policy: Spanish & Portuguese perspectives” Madrid, April 2008**

QeC-ERAN in partnership with CIREM organized a network workshop that took place at the European Parliament offices in Madrid, Spain on 2 and 3 April 2007.

With the mainstreaming of EU Cohesion Policy, the EC has sought to ensure that the best practice developed through the URBAN programme can be sustained through the Community Strategic Guidelines. Member States have now produced National Strategic Reference Frameworks and Operational Plans for the new programming period. This marks an appropriate time to see if the goals of mainstreaming are being translated into Local/regional Plans.

Several members from the Local Regeneration Forums in Torino, Charlois and Belfast attended this event in order to have the opportunity to engage in the discussion and also to transfer the results of it to the other members. The participation of ELRFE project partners in this event also facilitated the connection between the local and the EU level, as this event focused mainly on European trends and issues regarding Urban Policy. The results of the ELRFE project were disseminated among the participants that included a wide range of public authorities mainly from Spain and Portugal, as well as academia representatives and the NGO sector.

### **“How to foster civil dialogue in Europe” Brussels, May 2008**

The European Think Tank *Pour la Solidarité* organised in partnership with CEDAG, a European conference in order to take stock of European civil society and its means of expression through different experiences, testimonies and analyses collected in old, most recent and new member



states. The Conference aim was to present to a large audience, including notably civil society representatives, public authorities, civil servants, European experts and researchers, interested citizens- the European good practices and to generate a debate on the future of civil dialogue in Europe.

This event was organised within the framework of a European project aiming at reinforcing the influence of civil society organisations as mediator between citizens and their elected representatives, with public institutions at all levels, but also between citizens and the socio-economic actors, such as companies, across Europe.

The coordinator of QeC-ERAN took part in this conference having the opportunity to transfer the information of the event to the members of the ELRFE platform, making them aware of the developments of the debate at EU level about civil dialogue and the role of civil society organisations in bridging the gap between citizens and EU institutions and representatives.

#### **“Industrial Cities in Transition” Gdansk, June 2008**

QeC-ERAN in collaboration with the city of Starogard-Gdansk organised a workshop focusing on the issue of industrial cities and transition processes.

Piotr Lorens from the Gdansk Technical University and Head of Urban Development department gave an interesting presentation on the general trends as concerns urban development in Poland. Other examples of regeneration programmes of cities in transition included a presentation from the Local Forum in Belfast, which is a city that has been undergoing extensive regeneration work. Haroon Saad, Director of Qec ERAN provided a European dimension to the discussions and presented the “State of European Cities” report.

Members from the Local Regeneration Forums in Torino, Charlois and Belfast took part in this workshop and contributed to the dissemination of the results of the ERLFE activities to a wide audience including public authorities, academia, and EU-wide professionals.

## **8. EVALUATION**

The ELRFE project has not undergone an external evaluation process but an internal and continuous evaluation by the coordinator QeC-ERAN together with the partners, through bilateral and individual phone conferences, emailing, and also through an online steering group meeting that took place in order to discuss important changes to the programme and future steps forward within the project.



The main issue highlighted by the partners throughout the life of the project has been the issue of the impact of face-to-face workshops. Due to the requests coming from several partners, a transnational exchange workshop in Brussels was organised even if it was not programmed in the first budget submitted to the European Commission. A request for an amendment was sent to the Executive Agency of DG EAC in order to develop the transnational workshop and after approval from the EC, the event was organised for May 2008.

As mentioned above, coordinators from each of the Local Forums held a discussion online concerning several aspects of the project, among which we can mention the website, with all the new features that presents and all the changes that were agreed in the first SGM; profiles, dossiers, etc.

1. Discussion about the video profiles: The partners are working on the making of several videos about their neighbourhoods and members of the forum. These videos will be uploaded in the website. According to the initial Action Plan, 100% of the video profiles should be finalised and up in the website.
2. Discussion about the Dossiers: Each of the partners will create 2 dossiers. They can discuss and choose the theme at the local level. The material that these dossiers may contain is:  
Introduction of the issue & overview of the matter at the local level  
Documents regarding this issue  
Policies/programmes implemented  
News about the issue  
A video could be also part of the dossier if needed
3. Discussion about the “Transnational Workshop”  
The partners have discussed the idea to hold a face-to face Transnational workshop with the participants from all the 5 LRFs as well as the involvement from members of the EP Intergroup for Urban Policy and housing & from the European Commission. The theme that has been commonly identified as a priority for all is the issue of ‘marginalised youth’. There will be different dimensions discussed regarding this issue:
  - a) Youth unemployment and low skilled labour
  - b) Young people’s participation in public life
  - c) Health and young people

The challenges that young people are facing today are quite complex and diverse. On one hand they have more opportunities to learn and develop their potential; however, there aren’t enough pathways to do so.

4. Discussion about the second online consultation: The possibility to hold a second online forum was also discussed in the meeting. There were two options: either to organise a second online conference, or otherwise to launch a consultation through the website, which would be running during 1 month. Members of the LRFs are expected to register in the website and participate in the consultation during this period. At the end, a report on the results will be published. Due to time and economic constraints the second online discussion could not take place, and this element remains in the agenda of the partners for further development after securing more funding from the “Europe for citizens” programme or other EC programmes.

## 9. CONCLUSIONS

The European Union develops policies and programmes without effective consultation with the local level. This has created an increasing lack of ownership among European citizens that express their dissatisfaction towards European institutions and policies through different means, such as low voter turnouts in European elections or the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty and Treaty of Lisbon in the subsequent referenda processes.

It is clearly perceived that there is a favourable context for the development of more participative democratic processes. In fact, the Constitution project even made provision for the introduction of the concept of participatory democracy in its chapter on democratic life in the EU. Participatory democracy therefore seems to be present on all territorial levels: European, national, regional and local.

The ELRFE project has intended to introduce a methodology that would create a mechanism to give citizens a voice so that they take part, collaborate and get involved in matters which concern them in regards to the urban development of the areas where they live, engaging, at the same time, with EU policies and programmes around the same issue. This engagement will eventually create a link between the citizens and the European integration process, making them feel part of the European project, highlighting the common values they share with other EU citizens and building a common sense of identity. This methodology has incorporated discussion, reflection, deliberation and empowerment of citizens.

In terms of bringing together people from across Europe to share and exchange experiences, opinion and values, this project has created an online exchange between over 150 participants from 4 different Member States, with a view to providing a framework for the exchange of experience and good practice in relation to area based regeneration policies which are supported via EU funds and



programmes. The project has sought to empower participants at a local level to help them understand better EU policy and strategy, as well as key challenges facing social cohesion in European cities (demographic change; integration issues; global competition; institutional reform, etc). In terms of the European political context, the ELRFE project has been very timely in that the EU has decided to mainstream urban regeneration programmes for the new programming period 2007-2013. Community Strategic Guidelines have been agreed to assist the mainstreaming process. These incorporate the need to strengthen participation. This project has sought to ensure that there is a good understanding of this methodology and a local level, whilst also ensuring that the views of the LRFs are able to feed into the decision-making arrangements.

Although the objective of full involvement of citizens in public life is yet far from being reached, the ELRFE project has contributed to this objective by creating an effective mechanism to engage citizens at a local level engaging them at the same time with other EU citizens and EU policies and programmes. This has created greater awareness of the EU institutions and integration process, in particular, a better appreciation of needs and obstacles. The activities undertaken by the project have provided participants with a better knowledge of available institutional provisions. Key actors at a local level have seen their capacity increased in terms of working in partnership and also in acquiring new knowledge about EU developments on urban policy, These are the first steps towards a more stable participatory structure that will enable all European citizens to have a voice in Europe.



## 10. ANNEXES

### ANNEX 1

#### Program of the Exchange & Capacity-Building Workshop in Brussels, May 2008

- Agenda -

**ELRFE**  
**Capacity-building & Exchange Transnational Workshop**  
**21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2008 Brussels**

#### 21<sup>st</sup> May – First Day venue: Hotel Vendôme

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Arrival of participants in the morning of the 21<sup>st</sup>

- 16h00** Meetings starts. Welcome and introductions
- 16h30** General presentation of the project
- 17h 00** Setting the context: *Rich Picture*: presentation
- 17h 45** Feedback and Conclusions
- 18h 15** end of Day One

#### 22<sup>nd</sup> May – Second Day venue: Representation of Regione Piemonte

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- 9h 15** Registration of participants
- 9h 40** Welcome and introduction to the Workshops
- 9h 50** Youth in Europe: An overview of Youth participation: Trends, Issues & Good practice. Thierry Dufour. Bureau Internationale Jeunesse. Participatory Democracy.
- 10h 20** Charlois: Youth at risk approach
- 10h 50** Torino : Case study
- 11h 20** Tea/Coffee Break
- 11h 50** Youth in Action Programme. DG EAC Veronika Remisova
- 12h 20** Belfast : Case study
- 12h 50** Roma: Case study
- 13h 20** Lunch
- 14h 45** Youth participation: EU case studies. Pascal Debruyne. De Stoot van de Stad project. Belgium.



*This project has been co-financed by the European Commission (DG EAC)*

**15h 45** Discussion and Conclusions

**23<sup>rd</sup> May – Third Day venue: Hotel Vendôme**

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**9h 00** Feedback from the groups

**9h 30** Website presentation – Videos

**10h 30** Tea/ Coffee

**11h 00** Developing a proposal for the future:

- Identify 4 key problems
- Identify 4 possible solutions

Briefing on Europe for Citizens programme

**13h 00** Lunch + end of the conference

## **ANNEX 2**

### **Background Documentation for the Capacity-building Workshop: Action-Learning Handbook**

(see next page)

# Action Learning Handbook

## ELRFE

European Local Regeneration Forums Exchange

Exchange & Capacity-building transnational Workshop  
21<sup>st</sup> -23<sup>rd</sup> May- Brussels

“Europe for Citizens 2007-2013”



**ELRFE**



**European Local  
Regeneration Forums  
Exchange**

## General Project Information

**Programme:** "Europe for Citizens 2007-2013"

**Duration:** 1<sup>st</sup> July 2007- 30<sup>th</sup> June 2008

**Objective:** The main aim of this project is to establish 5 Local Regeneration Forums in 5 different cities. These local forums should be composed by citizens, professionals, politicians, in general, all the stakeholders involved in the urban regeneration process of the area. The objective is to promote citizen's participation in the urban development of their cities and also to create a transnational exchange and capacity-building programme in order to boost participation at the European level, therefore creating a sense of European citizenship.

**Tools:** In order to realise this overall goal the project has developed an online platform that will enable the interaction between the different local forums, but also with the European level. This platform will also create the online resources/materials necessary to empower members of Local Regeneration Forums (LRF) to connect to EU policies and programmes. A transnational exchange programme will also be organised in order to attain these objectives. The Action Learning Methodology will be developed in order to ensure a full involvement of the 5 partners and of all the stakeholders at the local level. This programme will include the participation of over 40 key actors from the partner cities, and it will be focusing on one priority identified by the local regeneration forums: "marginalised youth". The idea is to have an overview of the situation, problems, policies, etc, regarding young people in your cities, and at the same time, we will try to provide a European overview: what are the priorities at the EU level, which kind of policies and programmes are being implemented at the moment. In order to make sure that we create the connection between the local and the European level, the EU institutions will also be represented in the workshop, and they will present to the participants the European Agenda regarding Young People.

## Young people in Europe

Today's young Europeans are a generation living in a rapidly evolving social, demographic, economic and technological environment. This is a Europe where they can move around freely, work and learn more easily than ever before, however, the challenges that young people are facing today are quite complex and diverse. On one hand, they have more



*This project has been co-financed by the European Commission (DG EAC)*

opportunities to learn and develop their potential; but on the other, there aren't enough pathways to do so. Empowering young people and creating favourable conditions for them to develop their skills, to work and participate actively in society is essential for the economic and social development of European cities, particularly in the context of globalisation, knowledge-based economies and ageing societies.

A strong economy and low unemployment continue to mask the true cost of youth exclusion. More than 17% of young people across EU 25 are not in work, education or training, representing a significant loss to the individual and the economy. Moreover, the rate of unemployment among youth is typically two to three times the adult rate. This is mainly a consequence of difficulties surrounding the initial school-to-work transition, the relative insecurity and inexperience of new workers, and the frequent job changes undertaken in an attempt to find secure and satisfying employment.

Table: Youth non-employment rates in 1993 & 2003

	Youth (15-24) non-employment rate	
	1993 (a)	2003 (b)
Austria	41.9	49.3
Belgium	71.9	72.9
Czech Republic	53.1	68.6
Denmark	39.7	40.6
Finland	69.9	61.5
France	75.8	70.2
Germany	47.3	57.6
Greece	72.5	73.7
Hungary	68.5	73.3
Ireland	65.6	54.2
Italy	70.0	74.0
Luxembourg *	54.3	67.7
Netherlands	44.5	34.6
Poland	70.5	80.4
Portugal	56.9	61.6
Slovak Republic	65.6	72.4
Spain	70.5	63.2
Sweden	57.5	55.0
United Kingdom	41.1	40.2
OECD average	54.3	57.1

(a) Austria: 1995 and the Slovak Republic: 1994. (b) Luxembourg: 2002.

## Youth in the European Agenda

The European Union's youth policies aim to meet young people's changing expectations while encouraging them to contribute to society. This policy work is supported by concrete action in the form of a specific programme for young people called Youth in Action.

The inclusion of 'Youth' as a concept in European policy is a relatively recent phenomenon. The Treaty of Maastricht in 1993 extended the scope of EU policies to include the youth 'field', thanks to Article 149 § 2. This states that the EU should "...encourage the development of youth exchanges and of exchanges of socio-educational instructors..."

Before 2001, the activities of the European Institutions in the youth field mainly focussed on the consideration and implementation of specific programmes, like 'Youth for Europe', launched in 1988. However, a consensus remained that this action and cooperation needed to be built on further and that young people themselves needed to be more involved.

In order to widen and deepen the political debate and to go beyond the existing EU programmes, the European Commission considered the development of a genuine co-operation for future decades.

The focus of this was the White Paper on Youth which was adopted in **November 2001**. This contained a proposal to the EU's Member States to increase cooperation in four youth priority areas: participation, information, voluntary activities and a greater understanding and knowledge of youth. The White Paper also proposes to take the youth dimension more into account when making other relevant policies, such as education and training, employment and social inclusion, health and anti-discrimination. Among other things, this was a response to the apparent disaffection of young people with traditional forms of participation in public life, and called on young Europeans to become more active citizens.

On the basis of the White Paper, the Council of the European Union in June 2002 established a framework for European co-operation in the field of youth. Later, in November 2005, the framework was updated to take into account the European Youth Pact.

The framework is now made up of three main strands:



*This project has been co-financed by the European Commission (DG EAC)*

1. **Young people's active citizenship**. The member states have agreed on common objectives for each one of the four priorities of the White Paper. In order to reach these objectives, the Open Method of Coordination is applied. Other instruments to foster young people's active citizenship are the Youth in Action programme, the European Youth portal and the European Knowledge Center on Youth Policy. The structured dialogue aims at involving young people in policy shaping debates in relation to the European agenda.
2. **Social and occupational integration** of young people. The European Youth Pact aims at improving the education and training, the employability and social inclusion of young Europeans, while facilitating the reconciliation of work and family life.
3. Including a **youth dimension in other policies**. The European Commission actively works to take youth into account in a number of policies, of which anti-discrimination and health are the most prominent.

In addition to these three strands, the European Union also contributes to the development of the mobility of young people and recognition of their non-formal learning experiences.

## Action Learning Methodology

The project will develop an **Action Learning Methodology**. Action Learning is inherently based on ensuring that the personal and social capital that participants bring will form part of the exchange and learning process.

Action Learning Methodology is an organisational, problem-solving technique which encourages participants to learn with and from each other, in pursuit of the solutions to real-life, work-related problems.

This Action Learning methodology would bring together key actors in the business of 'doing' (elected representatives, practitioners, citizens, institutions, companies or community-based organisations) from the cities.

The methodology aims to achieve two key goals:

- **Maximise impact at a local level** and ensure that the eventual local project proposals have wide ownership.

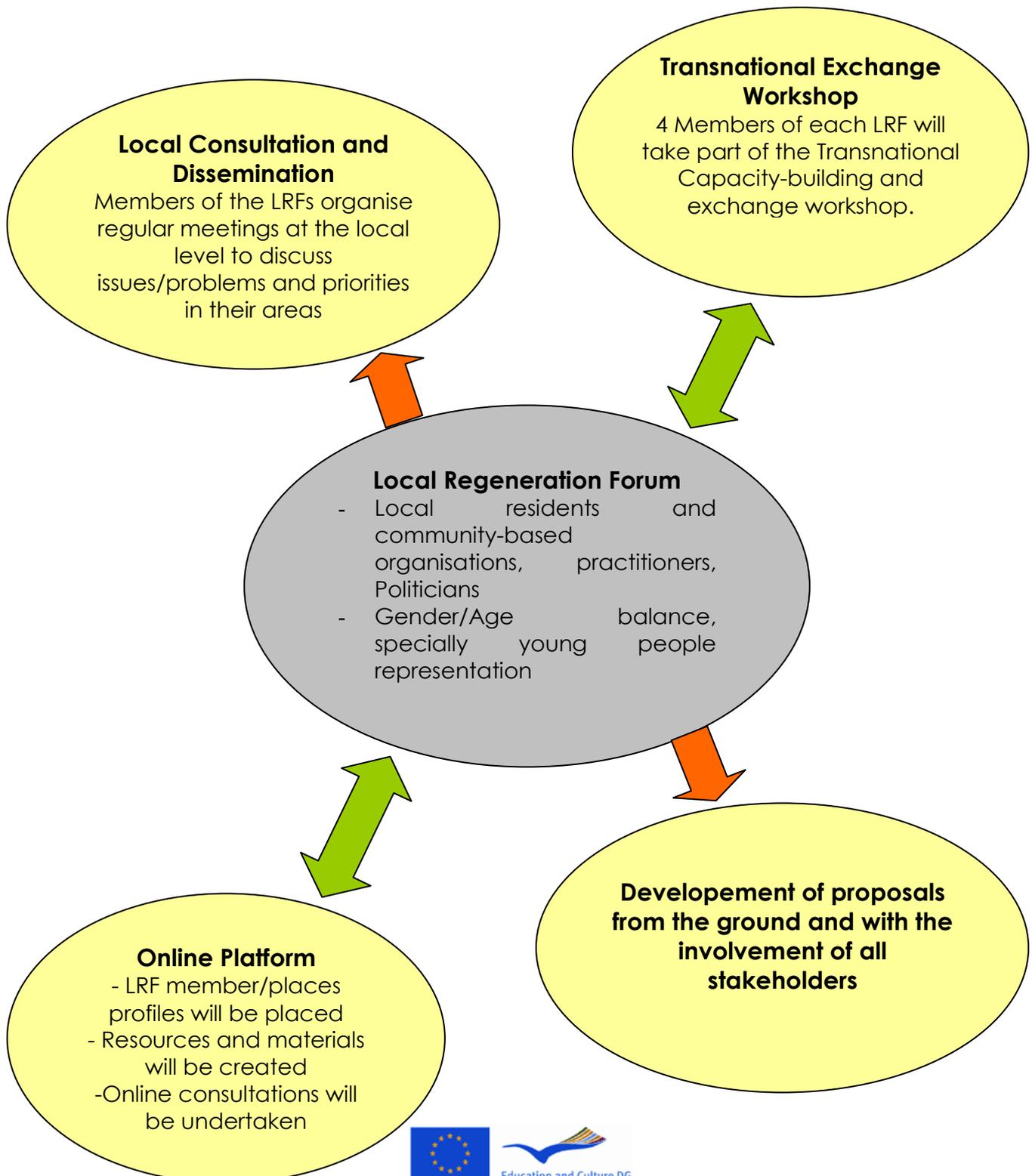
The key actors who will be responsible, with support, in maximising local impact will be the members of the Local Regeneration Forums established by each project partner.



• **Facilitate the effective transnational exchange of experience and learning.**

The key role here will be played by the Transnational Exchange Workshop and the Online Platform involving the members of all the Local Regeneration Forums focusing on the theme of Youth.

Maximising impact at a local level and facilitating effective transfer of experience at transnational level



## ANNEX 3

### Background documentation for the Workshop: Youth Policy in the European Union

## Youth policies

### Overview

*Today's young Europeans are a generation living in a rapidly evolving social, demographic economic and technological environment. The European Union's youth policies aim to meet young people's changing expectations while encouraging them to contribute to society. This policy work is supported by concrete action in the form of a specific programme for young people called Youth in Action.*

The current generation of young Europeans is the first to have grown up in a largely borderless and peaceful Europe. This is a Europe where they can move around freely, work and learn more easily than ever before - and it is very different to the one their grandparents, or even parents, grew up in.

### The development of Youth policies

The inclusion of 'Youth' as a concept in European policy is a relatively recent phenomenon. The Treaty of Maastricht in 1993 extended the scope of EU policies to include the youth 'field', thanks to Article 149 § 2. This states that the EU should "...encourage the development of youth exchanges and of exchanges of socio-educational instructors..."

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The framework is now made up of three main strands:



4. [Young people's active citizenship](#). The member states have agreed on common objectives for each one of the four priorities of the White Paper. In order to reach these objectives, the [Open Method of Coordination](#) is applied. Other instruments to foster young people's active citizenship are the [Youth in Action programme](#), the European Youth portal and the European Knowledge Center on Youth Policy. The [structured dialogue](#) aims at involving young people in policy shaping debates in relation to the European agenda.
5. [Social and occupational integration](#) of young people. The [European Youth Pact](#) aims at improving the education and training, the employability and social inclusion of young Europeans, while facilitating the reconciliation of work and family life.
6. Including a [youth dimension in other policies](#). The European Commission actively works to take youth into account in a number of policies, of which anti- discrimination and health are the most prominent.

In addition to these three strands, the European Union also contributes to the development of the mobility of young people and recognition of their [non-formal learning experiences](#).

## European Youth Portal

The European Youth Portal was developed as a direct result of the European Commission's 2001 [White Paper](#) 'A new impetus for European Youth'.

The Youth Portal is a means of giving access to information, specifically targeted at young people who are living, learning and working in Europe.

The portal is a gateway to European and national information on 31 countries in 24 languages. It allows young people to have their views heard - through online discussion forums, and their questions answered - through the [Eurodesk Network](#).

The ultimate aim of the portal is to enhance young people's participation in public life and to help contribute to their active citizenship.

## 1. Active citizenship of young people

*The EU encourages young people to participate actively in society (community life, civil society, political life), to shape their own future and to contribute to the development of the European Union.*

### The White Paper on Youth

The springboard for co-operation among Member States on youth issues was the [White Paper](#) on Youth (2001), which identified four priority areas for action: participation, information, voluntary activities and a greater understanding and knowledge of youth.



“Getting young people more involved in the life of the local, national and European communities, and fostering active citizenship thus represent one of the major challenges, not only for the present but also for the future of our societies,” the White Paper notes.

And this priority was voiced by young people themselves during the consultation phase of the White Paper: “The young people who were consulted see themselves as responsible citizens. They want to be more involved in community life. They want their views to be heard on a wide variety of subjects.”

## How does the EU contribute to the active citizenship of young Europeans?

Youth policy falls under the remit of the Member States. This means that there is no EU-wide legislation in the field of youth policies. However, in 2002, Member States decided to use the [Open Method of Coordination](#) (OMC) to co-operate in enhancing the four priority areas identified by the White Paper. An example of this co-operation is the sharing of best practice on how to increase young people's participation in electoral processes or on how to increase the participation in society of young people with fewer opportunities.

### The OMC in practice:

- The European Commission proposes common objectives for each priority. The Council of Youth Ministers then adopts common objectives for the priorities.
- Member States are responsible for the implementation of the common objectives. They report regularly on what they have done to implement them, and on the basis of these reports, the Commission prepares progress reports which are presented to the Council.
- Member States have recently agreed to define concrete national measures and set up mechanisms to monitor the implementation of the common objectives
- In order to take into account young people's views, the OMC states that Member States should consult young people (following their national practices) before sending their reports to the Commission. The Commission should consult the European Youth Forum.

## Dialogue with young people

It is essential for the EU to have a regular and genuine dialogue with young people in order to support their active citizenship and implement the priorities of the White Paper.

To actively involve young people in policy-shaping debates and dialogue, the relationship between the authorities and young people should be based on a commitment from both sides and not limited to ad hoc meetings. This is why the EU emphasises the importance of a structured dialogue with young people.

## Participation and information

*The White Paper on Youth recognised that young people need to be encouraged to play their full role in civic and democratic life. In order to get more involved, youth also need better information about the possibilities for participation. This means that providing them with relevant information is crucial. Through the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), the Commission facilitates the sharing of good practice between the Member States in the fields of participation and information.*

### Defining common objectives

The 2001 [White Paper on Youth](#) identified participation and information as two of the four main priorities for European co-operation in the youth field. It was decided that the [OMC](#) should be applied for these priorities.

The first step was to identify major challenges in the Member States, legislation, trends in current national policy and examples of good practice. To this end, questionnaires were sent to the Member States. Each country was also asked what it wanted to see happen at European level. The Member States were invited to consult young people in their countries before answering. On the basis of the answers, the Commission drafted common objectives for participation and information of young people. The [European Youth Forum](#) was consulted before the Commission made its proposals.

The Member States then agreed on the following common objectives to increase participation:

- Increase young people's participation in the civic life of their community
- increase young people's participation in the system of representative democracy
- provide greater support for various forms of learning to participate

The following objectives were agreed to enhance information:

- Improving young people's access to information services
- Increasing the provision of quality information
- Increasing young people's participation in youth information, for example in the preparation and dissemination of information

### Tools to enhance participation and information:

At European level, initiatives have been taken to further these objectives. The [Youth in Action programme](#) funds projects which are designed to encourage a sense of active European citizenship in young people and encourage young people to become more involved in the democratic process at regional, national and European level.

In order to improve access to information, the [European Youth Portal](#) – which was set up as a direct consequence of the White Paper – is designed to help young people who are living, learning and working in Europe. It provides European and national information on 31 countries in 24 languages and



allows young people to voice their opinions through on-line discussion forums, and to have their questions answered through the [Eurodesk network](#).

In November 2006, the Council of Youth Ministers adopted [a resolution](#) on participation and information. This document confirms the above-mentioned common objectives for the two priorities. The youth ministers invited the Commission and Member States to develop a continuous [structured dialogue](#) with young people, "aimed at ensuring a timely and effective contribution by young people and other relevant actors in the youth field towards the formulation of policies relevant to young people's lives". The resolution also invites the Commission to organise a regular [European Youth Week](#).

Through the same resolution, the Member States agreed to carry out a number of actions, such as defining concrete national measures, setting up mechanisms to monitor the implementation of common objectives and to promote these objectives among regional authorities and youth organisations.

## **Towards a transversal youth strategy**

The Communication on ['Promoting young people's full participation in education, employment and society'](#) of September 2007 is a reaction to demographic ageing in Europe and to the difficulties young people encounter on the labour market. It stresses the need for a cross-cutting approach to youth issues in order to enhance young people's active participation in education, employment and in society. To enhance young people's participation in society, the Commission proposes to reinforce the partnership between EU institutions and youth representatives and to prepare in future, every three years, an EU report on youth. Other concrete proposals include the launch of a consultation and an impact assessment on voluntary activities of young people, a pilot initiative "Your first job abroad", a charter on internships and a study on access of young people to culture. Two analytical documents – on youth volunteering and on youth unemployment – are annexed to the Communication

## **Volunteering**

*Volunteering is a way of participating in the life of society. The experience and skills gained can enhance young people's self-confidence, improve their integration in society and increase their employability. Volunteering is also a means of expressing solidarity.*

When the [White Paper](#) on Youth(2001) set forth ideas for a framework of European co-operation in the youth field, voluntary activities were included as one of the priorities to achieve and express active citizenship. Voluntary activities are a form of social participation, an educational experience and a factor for employability and social integration. Therefore, they correspond to the expectations both of young people and society.

## **Defining common goals**

The common objectives for voluntary activities were defined using the Open Method of Coordination ([OMC](#)). In a [Resolution](#) adopted in 2004 by the Council of Youth Ministers, the EU Member States set themselves four objectives to advance the voluntary activities of young people:



- Develop voluntary activities with the aim of enhancing the transparency of the existing possibilities, enlarging their scope and improving their quality
- Make it easier for young people to carry out voluntary activities by removing existing obstacles
- Promote voluntary activities with a view to reinforcing young people's solidarity and engagement as citizens
- Recognise the voluntary activities of young people with a view to acknowledging their personal skills and their engagement for society

## Coordination and co-operation

After agreeing on the common objectives on voluntary activities in 2004, the Member states individually developed and implemented their strategies to reach the objectives, and reported back to the Commission on the results in 2006. Based on an [analysis of the Member States' reports](#), the Commission has issued a set of [proposals](#) to the Member States on how to advance these priorities further.

Young people, youth organisations and other stakeholders are involved in this process.

## Volunteering in Europe

At European level, specific instruments have been developed to support the objectives. The [Youth in Action programme](#) offers several opportunities for volunteering. One of them is the 'European Voluntary Service', through which young people can be full-time volunteers for up to one year in another country. The Youth in Action programme also offers opportunities for volunteering on a local level. Additionally, a group volunteering option exists, which allows groups of young people to carry out voluntary service together.

## Recognition of experiences

Experiences acquired through voluntary activities can contribute to enhancing young people's social, personal and professional skills. Recognition of the non-formal learning which takes place through such activities can, thus, enhance the volunteer's employability.

To acknowledge the learning outcomes of the different activities of the Youth in Action programme, the European Commission launched [Youthpass](#) in July 2007. Participants in Youth in Action projects are entitled to receive Youthpass certificates describing the achievements of their activities.

[Europass](#), established in December 2004, is another EU-developed means of helping people to make their skills and qualifications clearly and easily understood throughout Europe. It consists of a Curriculum Vitae template, a Language Passport, a Certificate Supplement, a Diploma Supplement and Europass Mobility.

## Better knowledge of youth

*Acquiring a greater understanding and knowledge of young people and their concerns is one of the priorities of youth policies at EU level to which the Open Method of Coordination ([OMC](#)) is applied. The*



[White Paper on Youth \(2001\)](#) stressed that successful youth policies are to be based on a sound knowledge and understanding of young people's needs, concerns and challenges.

The following four common objectives were adopted within the youth OMC for this priority:

- Identify existing knowledge in priority areas of the youth field (participation, information and voluntary activities) and implement measures to collect, analyse and update this information and facilitate access to it
- Determine existing knowledge in further priority areas of interest to the youth field (e.g. discrimination, education and training, employment, social inclusion and health) and implement measures to collect, analyse and update this knowledge and facilitate access to it
- Ensure quality, comparability and relevance of knowledge in the youth field by using appropriate methods and tools
- Facilitate and promote exchange, dialogue and networks to ensure the visibility of knowledge in the youth field and to anticipate future needs

### Implementing mechanisms

When reporting on the three other priorities to which the youth OMC is applied (participation, information and voluntary activities), Member States agreed to include descriptions of the steps taken in order to increase knowledge and understanding of these areas.

Member States will report on the concrete achievements resulting from the implementation of common objectives for a better knowledge and understanding of youth by the end of 2008.

### EU's contribution to a better knowledge of youth

At European level, various instruments exist or have been developed in order to gain a better knowledge and understanding of youth.

*Research Directorate-General:*

The [Seventh Framework Programme for Research](#) presents possibilities to fund specific research on youth. Two calls for proposals for youth research were recently published: 'Youth and social exclusion' and 'Democratic ownership and participation'.

*Eurostat:*

[Eurostat](#), the EU's statistical office, provides data on youth, and efforts are currently being made to increase the scope and quality of youth-related statistics. Through the European statistical system, Eurostat co-operates with Member States to build up comparable and reliable statistics.

*Surveys:*

A recent [Eurobarometer](#) survey '[Young Europeans](#)' (June 2007), contains valuable knowledge of young Europeans' opinions and concerns.



*Studies:*

In the framework of the partnership agreement with the Council of Europe, a study on 'The socio-economic scope of youth work in Europe' was launched in 2006. Results from the ten countries examined are due out in the autumn of 2007.

*Networks:*

A [European Knowledge Centre on Youth policy](#) (EKCYP) has been developed jointly by the European Commission and the Council of Europe. The EKCYP is a knowledge management system that provides youth policy-makers and other interested stakeholders, such as youth workers, youth NGOs and youth researchers with a single entry point to retrieve accurate, up-to-date, research-based information on the realities of youth across Europe in a user-friendly manner. The main focus is placed on young people's active citizenship (participation, information, voluntary activities), but also on employment and social inclusion covered by the European Youth Pact.

In the framework of the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe, a **Network of Youth Researchers** has been holding regular annual meetings since 2003 to discuss and exchange opinions on current research issues.

**A European Network of Youth Knowledge (EuNYK)** was set up by the Commission in 2006 to exchange good practice on developing national youth knowledge networks between policy-makers, young people and researchers and thereby facilitate the implementation of the common objectives for a better knowledge and understanding of youth.

To foster better knowledge of youth, the Commission also set up the following working groups in 2007:

- **A working group on the development of assessment tools for participation by and information for young people** to monitor the development of the priority "Active citizenship for young people"

- **A working group on peer learning** activities to find out, through exchanges of experiences and practices, the best methods of ensuring the active citizenship of socially excluded young people. The theme of the peer learning will change in 2008.

[Youth in Action Programme:](#)

Action 4 of the Youth in Action programme encourages information activities and supports partnerships and networks that co-operate in research and share information.

Action 5.2 supports research activities for the identification of existing knowledge related to the priorities of youth policy coordination in the EU.



## 2. Social and occupational integration

*Inclusion of all is a fundamental value for the European Union. Poverty and prejudice have to be combated to ensure that all young people are fully integrated into society and have equal access to education and employment, as well as social welfare systems.*

Unemployment affects twice as many young people as adults in Europe, and is one of the main causes of poverty. Almost one-fifth of those aged between 16 and 24 in Europe suffer from the effects of deprivation. Other factors that put young people at risk are disabilities and issues related to sexual preference, geographical background and ethnic or religious identity. Due to these factors, or their combination, far too many young people are excluded from opportunities to participate fully in society and to enjoy the benefits of education, employment and social welfare.

### The European Youth Pact

As part of the revised [Lisbon Strategy](#), the [European Youth Pact](#) was adopted in March 2005 as one of the instruments for promoting growth and jobs. The Pact has three strands:

- Employment and social integration Education
- training and mobility
- Reconciling work and family life

Its aim is to improve education, training, mobility, employment and social inclusion of young people, while helping to achieve a work-life balance. Initiatives in these areas must be coherent and promote a sustained mobilisation on behalf of young people.

The Council of the European Union emphasised that the success of the Pact will depend on the active participation of all those involved, particularly youth organisations. The European Commission consults young people on the Pact through a [structured dialogue](#).

The Member States submit annual reports to the European Commission on their national reform programmes associated with the Lisbon reform process. Their achievements with regards to the Youth Pact are a part of these reports.

In the Communication '[Promoting young people's full participation in education, employment and society](#)' adopted by the Commission in September 2007, a new impulse is given to educational, employment and inclusion policies with a view to improving the implementation of the European Youth Pact. The review of the Lisbon process, scheduled for 2008, will be an occasion to make progress towards a complete implementation of the Pact by the Member States.

In keeping with the Youth Pact, social inclusion of all young people is one of the key priorities in the Youth in Action programme.

## Employment and social inclusion

*Employment is important not only for people's economic well-being, but also for their social integration. Employment and inclusion represent one of the three strands of the European Youth Pact.*



Promoting a high level of employment is an important objective of the EU. In March 2000, EU political leaders set themselves a new goal: to become, within a decade, "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion". The process of achieving this goal is known as the [Lisbon Strategy](#) for growth and jobs.

The [European Youth Pact](#) is an integral part of the Lisbon Strategy. It ensures that special attention is given to the employment and social inclusion of young people when the EU and the Member States develop their policies to reduce unemployment. When it adopted the Pact, the Council invited the Member States to draw upon the following lines of action in order to promote jobs and inclusion:

- Monitoring policies for integration of young people into the labour market
- Promoting youth employment
- Using the [Social Inclusion Strategy](#) to improve the situation of the most vulnerable young people
- Inviting employers to demonstrate social responsibility in the area of vocational integration of young people
- Encouraging young people to develop entrepreneurship skills

Member States are invited to take concrete action, such as building employment pathways, as well as developing personalised action plans with job search assistance, guidance and training.

Building a more inclusive European Union is an essential element in achieving the Union's ten-year strategic goal of sustained economic growth, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. The [Social Inclusion Strategy](#) is set up to foster these aims. The Open Method of Coordination ([OMC](#)) is applied to coordinate the Member State's policies for combating poverty and social exclusion. The Social Inclusion Strategy gives a high priority to improving the situation of the most vulnerable young people, to combating child poverty, and to taking initiatives that prevent educational failure. A [thematic study](#) on policy measures concerning disadvantaged youth was commissioned by the EU in 2005. It emphasizes the importance of including a youth dimension in other policies and of empowering young people.

The importance of improving conditions for young people with fewer opportunities is also stressed in a [Council Resolution](#) from 2007.

Member States have financial incentives through the [European Structural Funds](#) and the [European Social Fund](#) to create employment policies that aim to create more and better jobs.

### Young people's contribution

Although specific measures are needed in order to foster youth employment, the Pact also stresses the positive role young people can and must play in order to fulfil the Lisbon objectives: "Young people have a significant contribution to make to the Lisbon goals of boosting jobs and growth and to sustainable development, as they make up the future work force, and are the future source of much-needed research capabilities, innovation and entrepreneurship."



These goals can only be achieved if young people are properly equipped with knowledge, skills and competences through high-quality, relevant education and training. The European Commission has set up several programmes and other tools to equip young people with the qualifications they need to get – or even create – jobs.

## Commission tools

The European Commission has combined its educational and training initiatives under the [Lifelong Learning Programme](#), to support opportunities for learning, training and retraining at any point in life. The Commission and the Member States have also developed tools for the mutual recognition of qualifications through the [European Qualifications Framework](#). In addition, [Europass](#), a Europe-wide means of recording learning experiences, helps Europeans make their skills and qualifications easily understandable all over Europe. In this way, the mobility of young workers is assisted. Another initiative, [Youthpass](#), is an EU-wide recognition of [non-formal learning](#) experiences gained by young people under the Youth in Action programme.

## A new initiative for young people

On 5 September 2007, the Commission adopted a Communication on '[Promoting young people's full participation in education, employment and society](#)'.

In the context of ageing societies, every young person must be given opportunities to fulfill his or her potential. In the Communication, concrete recommendations are made for promoting the full participation of young people in education, employment and society, for tackling early school leaving and for creating links between educational institutions and the labour market. At European level, the Commission intends to increase the promotion of good practice, launch new initiatives such as "Your first job abroad", recommend a European quality charter on internships, and assess the impact of voluntary activities.

## Education and training

*Education and training are important for the self-development of young Europeans and remain key to fulfilling the goal of the Lisbon Strategy to make Europe a leading knowledge-based society. That is why they make up a crucial component of the European Youth Pact and of the Commission Communication of September 2007 on 'Promoting young people's full participation in education, employment and society'.*

Education and training is an important strand of the [Youth Pact](#) and of the new transversal strategy in youth policy, and builds on co-operation between policy-makers and stakeholders at European, national, regional and local levels. This is because "Young people have a significant contribution to make to the



Lisbon goals of boosting jobs and growth and to sustainable development, as they make up the future work force, and are the future source of much-needed research capabilities, innovation and entrepreneurship.”

Concrete actions to improve Europe’s education and training systems are necessary to prepare Europe’s young people for the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. An important aim is that the learning outcomes of the education and training systems should better match the demands of the labour market.

This involves avoiding early drop-out from school, enhancing literacy rates, and bolstering the number of science and technology graduates, particularly among women. Other measures include improving access to vocational education and training, as well as making qualifications more transparent and transferable across borders.

In addition, the [White Paper](#) on Youth noted specific recommendations about how to improve the education and training systems of Member States. A more learner-centred approach, stronger teacher-student relationships, new technologies, learner mobility, better recognition of non-formal learning and flexible educational institutions are required.

### Commission activities

Youth, like education and training, is a national policy area. Member States, however, learn from each other and exchange good practice through the [Open Method of Coordination](#).

Just like there is an EU-level funding programme for youth, there is also one for education and training. In fact, the European Commission has integrated its various educational and training initiatives under a single umbrella, the [Lifelong Learning Programme](#).

### Cross-border qualifications

For Europeans to be truly mobile, qualifications acquired in one country need to be valid in another. The Commission and the Member States have developed tools for the transfer and transparency of qualifications. One of these tools is the [European Qualifications Framework](#), which will relate different countries’ national qualification systems and frameworks together. In practice, it will function as a translation device making qualifications more readable. This will help learners and workers wishing to move between countries to have their qualifications recognised.

[Europass](#) is a voluntary Europe-wide means of recording a variety of learning experiences. It helps Europeans to ‘translate’ their skills and qualifications so that these are easily understood all over Europe. It is made up of five different documents: a [CV](#), a [Language passport](#), a [Certificate supplement](#), a [Diploma supplement](#) and a [Mobility record](#).

[Youthpass](#) is an EU-wide recognition of non-formal learning experiences gained by young people under the Youth in Action programme. This instrument has two main objectives: to create certificates for all the



actions under the programme and to develop supplementary self-assessment instruments for long-term projects which will complement the certificates.

## Reconciliation of work and family life

*The EU's Youth Pact recognises the importance of family life and encourages Member States to take measures that will allow citizens to achieve a better work-life balance.*

The [Youth Pact](#), adopted as part of the revised Lisbon Strategy in 2005, stresses the importance of a better balance between family and working life. "Reconciling family and work is considered to be one of the main challenges for the future," observed the [White Paper](#) on Youth in 2001.

In addition to the personal benefits of having a healthy domestic and professional life, the European Youth Pact highlights the socio-economic benefits of better work-family balances which can "help to tackle the problems associated with demographic ageing, and in particular the challenge of a low birth rate".

The Pact encourages Member States to promote the reconciliation of career and private life through such means as sharing responsibility between partners, provision of accessible and affordable childcare facilities and the development of innovative forms of work organisation. Family-friendly forms of working could include flexi-time, tele-working and possibilities for parental leave.

### Putting policy into practice

The Member States develop measures to implement the Pact within the National Lisbon Reform Programmes, for which they report to the EU every year. The EU has committed itself to a number of measures to enhance the Youth Pact, listed in the [Communication introducing the Pact](#).

## 3. Youth in other policy fields

*Developing dedicated youth policies is important, but it is also necessary to integrate a youth dimension in other policy fields affecting young people.*

The European Commission's [White Paper](#) on Youth proposed a two-pronged approach to youth: the first is the [Open Method of Coordination](#) and the second is "taking better account of the 'youth' dimension in other policy initiatives".

The White Paper described youth work as part of the overall package of lifelong learning, and demanded greater [recognition of non-formal learning](#) in youth activities and to complement formal education and training.



The importance of integrating a youth perspective in other policies is also stressed by the [European Youth Pact](#).

Taking into account the youth dimension in other policies is called the '[mainstreaming](#) of youth'. The two main policies areas concerned are:

- The fight against racism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination
- Health and well-being.

## Fight against racism, xenophobia and discrimination

*Developing understanding of the cultural diversity of Europe and its fundamental common values is a cause that stands at the very heart of European ideals.*

Racism, discrimination and inequality also affect young people. They may be both the victims and perpetrators of racism and violent acts, or observers of discrimination. But young people, above all, have a vital role to play in bringing about positive change.

### A declaration of intent

EU Youth Ministers issued [a Declaration on racism and intolerance](#) in which they set out an Action Plan to strengthen young people in their fight against racism, xenophobia, intolerance and all forms of discrimination. It called for concrete measures by the European Commission and Member States to give young people opportunities to play effective roles in this field by:

- Reinforcing co-operation at all levels and between all relevant actors
- Highlighting youth issues in the EU-wide awareness-raising campaign entitled '[For Diversity- Against Discrimination](#)'
- Taking concrete action on youth in programmes and activities related to these questions
- Developing internet platforms based on existing examples and experience
- Gaining a greater knowledge of the reasons that lead to these phenomena among youth and on successful strategies to combat them

### From policy to action

In Berlin, in 2005, the conference '[Youth in Action for Diversity and Tolerance](#)' made a commitment to undertake action against discrimination. All European Youth Weeks that have taken place so far also dealt with these issues.



The Commission's campaign, 'For Diversity-Against Discrimination' has included young people since 2005, while the Council of Europe's campaign 'All Different-All Equal' has the full support of the Commission. 2007 was the [European Year of Equal Opportunities](#) and in 2008 is dedicated to [Intercultural Dialogue](#).

## Health

*Good health is of great importance if young people are to fulfil their potentials and play an active part in society. Poor health can also reduce young people's social integration, harm their education and reduce their employment prospects.*

### Targeting the young in public health

In February 2007, a work plan for the [programme of public health](#) was adopted by the European Commission. Children and young people are identified as target groups, because habits that influence long-term lifestyles are formed when people are young. The intention is to identify risk factors and promote measures to encourage behaviour that contributes to healthy living.

### Healthy and included

Poor health often prevents social inclusion and reduces people's chances of being active citizens. Children and young people with fewer opportunities are particularly vulnerable, and the 2007 Resolution '[Creating equal opportunities for all young people – full participation in society](#)' underlines the necessity of cross-sectoral co-operation between youth policy and other relevant areas like health policy in order to promote the inclusion of all young people in society. The new Communication '[Promoting young people's full participation in education, employment and society](#)' adopted by the Commission on 5 September 2007 emphasises health as a requisite for the well-being and social inclusion of young people.

### Key areas for youth health

- Tobacco
- Alcohol
- Drugs
- Integrated approaches to lifestyles and sexual and reproductive health, including innovative strategies to promote safe sex
- Nutrition and physical activity – including good practice in school meals and nutritional education programmes, as well as good practice in building architecture and urban development to encourage physical activity and healthy lifestyles
- Mental health

### Targeting the young in other health fields



Children and young people also have a particularly high vulnerability as regards health issues related to environment and consumption, and have therefore been given special attention in the [European Environment and Health Strategy](#) and the [EU Consumer Policy Strategy](#).

[Young people's health in the work place](#) is also a great concern of the European Commission, since young people suffer 50% more injuries at work than other categories of workers.

## Structured dialogue

***The European Commission is committed to developing a structured dialogue with young people, as a substantial working relationship between authorities and young people at all levels.***

Structured dialogue means that governments and administrations, including EU institutions, discuss with young people, according to a prepared scheme, in order to have a substantial debate about important themes with results useful for policy-makers.

Structured dialogue is a direct follow-up to the [White Paper on Youth](#) and a logical consequence of the [European Youth Pact](#), which both highlight the importance of consulting young people on matters which concern them.

### Why is a structured dialogue needed?

The stalling of progress on the European Constitutional Treaty prompted the Commission to call for an in-depth debate on European policies. An initiative, known as Plan-D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate, has been proposed "to stimulate a wider debate between the European Union's democratic institutions and citizens".

And young people, whose active participation is vital if they are to feel that the European Union is meaningful for them, are a key constituency for the three Ds. To highlight the relevance of youth, the Council of Ministers adopted a [Resolution](#) in 2005, which invites both the Commission and the Member States to develop a structured dialogue with young people and their organisations, researchers in the youth field and policy-makers. The need for a structured dialogue was also supported by a [Council Resolution](#) in November 2006 and by the Communication on '[Promoting young people's full participation in education, employment and society](#)' adopted in September 2007.

### Dialogue at all levels

This structured dialogue follows a bottom-up approach and takes places at three levels:

- At local and regional level: through local and regional debates and seminars
- At national level: through national events
- At European level: through Presidency events and European Youth Weeks

The outcomes of the events at each level should be fed into the debates at the next level, with a possibility for participants to follow the subject from one level to another. Thus, the participants of the European events will bring with them the opinions and ideas of the participants of the other levels. Conclusions, submitted to ministers and institutions, are regularly evaluated, and the outcomes will have an impact on EU policy.

### Topics and timing

The idea is to structure the dialogue in line with the European youth political agenda. Hence, the following annual themes have been identified:



- 2007: Social inclusion and diversity
- 2008: Intercultural dialogue
- 2009: perspectives for future cooperation in the youth field

### Dialogue with all young people

Structured dialogue aims to address *all* young people, including those with fewer opportunities or not formally organised. This is being done, above all, through youth organisations at all levels. The main partner of the EU institutions is the European Youth Forum.

Measures will be taken to ensure that a large range of young people and a broad spectrum of youth organisations will be represented at European youth events. In the centralised event of the European Youth Week, a significant percentage of the participants are recruited through projects supported by the Youth in Action programme, which prioritises youth with fewer opportunities.

### Support for structured dialogue

[National agencies](#) of the [Youth in Action programme](#) have an important role to play in promoting structured dialogue in their respective countries. They can provide information and offer training sessions, including training for disadvantaged young people. National [Eurodesk](#) offices also provide information on and organise activities in the framework of structured dialogue.

The national agencies and Eurodesk offices are responsible for organising or facilitating local, regional and national events during European Youth Weeks.

Youth seminars organised in the framework of structured dialogue can be supported through the Youth in Action programme. Priority will be given to seminars reflecting the priority topics established in accordance with the European youth political agenda.

## Youth in Action programme

### Youth in Action

#### *Mobilising the potential of young Europeans*

On 15 November 2006, the European Parliament and the Council adopted [Decision No 1719/2006 /EC](#), which establishes the Youth in Action programme for the period 2007 to 2013. This document is the legal basis of the Programme for its entire duration.

Youth in Action is the EU Programme for young people aged 15-28 (in some cases 13-30). It aims to inspire a sense of active citizenship, solidarity and tolerance among young Europeans and to involve them in shaping the Union's future.

Youth in Action is a programme for all! It promotes mobility within and beyond the EU borders, non-formal learning and intercultural dialogue, and encourages the inclusion of all young people, regardless of their educational, social and cultural background.

Youth in Action is the successor of the [YOUTH Programme](#) (2000-2006). Building on the experience of the previous programmes for youth, Youth in Action is the result of a large consultation with the different



stakeholders in the youth field and aims to respond to the evolutions and needs of young people at European level.

With a total budget of 885 million euros for seven years (2007-2013), the Programme supports a large variety of activities for young people and youth workers through five [Actions](#).

#### **Youth in Action in figures**

- Duration: 2007-2013
- Budget: 885 million euros for seven years
- Geographic reach: EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Turkey, the EU neighbours (Eastern Europe and Caucasus, the Mediterranean region, South-East Europe) and other partner countries in the world
- Age brackets: 15-28 (in some cases 13-30)

## **Programme Actions**

The Youth in Action Programme aims to achieve the following general objectives:

- promote young people's active citizenship in general and their European citizenship in particular;
- develop solidarity and promote tolerance among young people, in particular in order to foster social cohesion in the European Union;
- foster mutual understanding between young people in different countries;
- contribute to developing the quality of support systems for youth activities and the capabilities of civil society organisations in the youth field;
- promote European cooperation in the youth field.

To this end, the Programme is structured around 5 Actions:

#### **Action 1 - [Youth for Europe](#)**

encourages young people's active citizenship, participation and creativity through youth exchanges, youth initiatives and youth democracy projects.

#### **Action 2 - [European Voluntary Service](#)**

helps young people to develop their sense of solidarity by participating, either individually or in group, in non-profit, unpaid voluntary activities abroad.

#### **Action 3 - [Youth in the World](#)**

promotes partnerships and exchanges among young people and youth organisations across the world.

#### **Action 4 - [Youth Support Systems](#)**



includes various measures to support youth workers and youth organisations and improve the quality of their activities.

### **Action 5 - [Support for European Co-operation in the Youth field](#)**

supports youth policy co-operation at European level, in particular by facilitating dialogue between young people and policy makers.

## Programme priorities

*The Youth in Action programme has four permanent priorities which potential projects will have to be aware of as they frame their bids for support:*

**European Citizenship**: A key goal of the programme is to raise awareness in young people that they are citizens of Europe, as well as citizens of their own countries. The aim is to get youth actively involved in shaping the future of the European Union. Projects will have to show a strong European dimension if they are to receive programme backing.

**Participation of young people**: Youth in Action promotes and supports young people's involvement in democratic life, spurring them on to be active citizens who care about their communities and understand the value of representative democracy.

**Cultural diversity**: Respect for people's cultural origins is at the heart of the Youth in Action programme, as is the desire to fight against racism and xenophobia – forces that undermine European values and people's solidarity.

**Inclusion**: The focus is on ensuring that young people with fewer opportunities get access to the Youth in Action programme, as well as on encouraging projects with a thematic focus on inclusion.

In addition to these permanent priorities, each year the focus is also placed on specific [annual priorities](#).

## How to participate

*Want to get involved?*

There are two main ways to get involved in the Programme:

### **1. You are ...**

... a young person aged between 13-30 or a youth worker...

... full of energy, creativity and ideas and would like to find a way to develop them...

... looking for opportunities to meet and exchange ideas and practices with other young people or youth workers from different countries...



... interested in volunteering in another country...

As an individual you can be a **participant** in one of the activities supported by the Programme.

If you would like to get involved, find out more about the opportunities offered by the Programme by browsing through the different sections of this website. You will get a general overview of what Youth in Action can offer you as well as some useful information on its Actions and features.

Want to know more?

Take a look at the **Youth in Action Programme guide** – it will give you a deeper insight into the Actions and types of activities that can be supported by the Programme.

Get in touch with your [National Agency](#) or [Eurodesk national office](#) for further information and advice.

## 2. You are ...

... a non-governmental youth organisation,

... an informal group of young people,

... a local or regional public body,

... a body active at European level in the field of youth ...

... willing to develop a project and submit an application for funding under the Youth in Action Programme...

Become a **promoter** of an activity to be supported by the Programme!

If you would like to get involved and submit a project application for funding, the first port of call for additional information after this website is the **Youth in Action Programme Guide**.

Read it carefully!

It will help you understand the Programme's objectives and criteria, and to identify the types of projects that can be supported by the Programme.

Think through your project idea and make sure it respects all the criteria and conditions described in the Guide...

Fill in the official [application form](#) for the Action you want to apply for.

Make sure you respect the deadlines!

## Remember!



Depending on the type of organisation, promoters may submit their application to their [National Agency](#) (national level) or to the [Executive Agency](#) (European level).

For projects submitted to a National Agency there are five application deadlines per year:

<b>Projects starting between</b>	<b>Application deadline</b>
<b>1 May and 30 September</b>	<b>1 February</b>
<b>1 July and 30 November</b>	<b>1 April</b>
<b>1 September and 31 January</b>	<b>1 June</b>
<b>1 December and 30 April</b>	<b>1 September</b>
<b>1 February and 31 July</b>	<b>1 November</b>

For projects submitted to the Executive Agency there are three application deadlines a year:

<b>Projects starting between</b>	<b>Application deadline</b>
<b>1 August and 31 December</b>	<b>1 February</b>
<b>1 December and 30 April</b>	<b>1 June</b>
<b>1 March and 31 July</b>	<b>1 September</b>

Once your application is submitted, it will go through a selection process to make sure that it fulfils all the Programme criteria. At the end of this process, your National Agency or the Executive Agency will inform you of the results. If your application is successful, you will have to sign a grant agreement before starting your activities.

### **Get support!**

At every stage of the process, whether you are looking for additional information or for advice on how to develop your project ideas, whether you need support in partner-finding or help to fill in your application form, during or after your project implementation, you can get assistance, training and advice from various support structures (your National Agency or the Executive Agency, the Eurodesk network, SALTO Youth Resource Centres). Do not hesitate to contact them at any stage! Click [here](#) for a full list with their contact details.