

ENGLISH VERSION

This project involves rural communities in 5 EU countries (HR, SI, IT, DE, HU), the partnership is represented by 5 municipalities and 2 non-profit organisations. All 7 partners faced major challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, and now, working together, they aim to improve citizen engagement in civil society actions and democratic processes, with a focus on rural communities. Promuovere la cittadinanza attiva e il volontariato in questi tempi di pandemia è stato complicato. The actions carried out by NGOs and public bodies have had to be constantly reinvented, which has made it more difficult for the most vulnerable groups (the elderly, people with disabilities and refugees) to access public services and participate in democratic processes. The project is organised in 7 3-day events (in HR, SI, IT, DE, HU). Each event includes the sharing of good practices showing how citizens can engage as volunteers in actions addressing local issues (civil protection, solidarity, environmental protection, social inclusion, education, culture and mental health). Activities are designed so that partners can collect citizens' opinions on the Europe they want. The project will provide evidence of how solidarity works and how Agenda 2021-27 supports rural areas in the post-COVID-19 phase (and in any new critical situations). Workshops, presentations, site visits, group work and demonstrations will encourage volunteering and improve understanding of how citizen engagement in local actions in the EU contributes to sustainable growth. The project is estimated to involve and inform a total of 350,000 citizens (as indirect participants, while 590 direct participants are expected.) on how they can contribute to voluntary activities in post-COVID local actions. A cooperation agreement between the partners will define priorities and long-term actions to be shared and implemented. The project will improve citizens' awareness of the functioning of EU policies and values and enable the consolidation of new cooperation between rural areas in the EU.Partnership

1. Project Coordinator:

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1. ZAVOD SOPOTNIKI, ZAVOD ZAMEDGENERACIJSKO SOLIDARNOST (Sopotniki), PIC 904286963, with headquarters at KRASKA ULICA 2, SEZANA 6210, Slovenia

2. OBCINA ORMOZ (Ormoz), PIC 911144087, with headquarters at PTUJSKA CESTA 6, ORMOZ 2270, Slovenia
3. COMUNE DI CAVRIAGO (Cavriago), PIC 898424477, with headquarters at PIAZZA DON G DOSSETTI 1, CAVRIAGO 42025, Italy
4. GEMEINDE HEININGEN (Heiningen), PIC 931880456, with registered office at HAUPTSTRASSE 30, HEININGEN 73092, Germany,
5. COMUNE DI USSEAUX (Usseaux), PIC 886937737, with headquarters at VIA CONTE EUGENIO BRUNETTA, 53, USSEAUX 10060, Italy
6. SASD ES TERSEGE TERULET- ES HUMANFEJLESZTESI NONPROFIT KORLATOLT FELELELOSSEGU TARSASAG (Sasd), PIC 935913328, with its head office at RAKOCZI FERENC UT 41, SASD 7370, Hungary,

Activities and expected outcomes Activities will be organised in 7 events (each event will last 2-3 days), one organised by each partner. Each event will be adapted to local and participant needs; however, each event will follow a similar format. Activities per event may possibly include

- Demonstration activities: These activities will be used to promote citizen participation in the activities. The type of demonstration may be, for example, a simulation exercise for cleaning affected areas;
- Workshops: Participants from partner regions will learn about EU policies and programmes in the fields of employment, culture, social inclusion, etc. and how the EU contributes to social inclusion and improved quality of life;
- Good practice presentations and discussions: at the beginning of the event, each organisation will present their projects, activities and objectives, discuss how they were achieved and how EU values (e.g. volunteering) helped to increase the effectiveness of their activities.
- Cultural events (concerts and fairs): cultural events will be jointly organised to help partners familiarise and collaborate on issues of interest, so that participants can see how rural resources can be used to build a community's identity and sense of belonging. Presentations are also planned to inform participants about the economic impact of these events (e.g. in terms of attracting tourists, increasing revenue for small businesses, raising environmental awareness, etc.).

- Study visits: during the events, participants will be shown some places and contexts where volunteering and active citizenship have influenced the quality of life.
- Project development meetings: partners will work together to develop projects that will be used to address community problems. Each meeting will focus on developing content in specific areas (e.g. culture, agriculture, education, social inclusion, etc.).