

**The project «Little big things in Europe and in our local communities»
was funded with the support of the European Union under the
Programme "Europe for Citizens"**

**Applicable to the Action 1 – Measure 1.2 "Networks of Twinned Towns"
Action 2 – Measure 2.3 "Support projects initiated by civil society organisations"
Action 4 – "Active European Remembrance"**

6 events have been carried out within this project:

Event 1

Participation: The event involved 101 citizens, including 69 participants from the city of Kastoria (**Greece**), 9 participants from Association of the Municipalities of the Locride Area (**Italy**), 5 participants from the city of Siderno (**Italy**), 6 participants from the city of Santa Venera (**Malta**), 6 participants from the city of Lousa (**Portugal**), 5 participants from the city of Viroinval (**Belgium**), etc.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Kastoria (**Greece**), from 04/04/2014 to 08/04/2014

Short description: The aim of the initial preparatory event was to promote a first exchange of ideas and plan in detail project tasks and responsibilities. Participants from different institutions, associations and organisations of the 6 European countries involved in the project got the chance to meet up, be acquainted with the Europe for Citizens Programme, and above all to officially launch the LBTinEU network. In a public council meeting the delegations of the partners presented the structures of their municipalities, described their competences and sectors of responsibilities and all together plant a tree symbolizing the commemoration of the project. A number of consultation exercises and interactive workshops helped the participants of the partners analyze and discuss the themes of the project, setting the challenging agenda for the next months and the main topics at stake. Apart from the introduction to the project, a variety of topics were discussed referring to the European policies of regional development and their impact on local level. Special emphasis was given to the presentation of concrete ongoing activities promoting social development which are subsidized by the European Union. Thus during the event study visits were made in structures and social centers supported from EU Funds for the Cohesion Policy giving the participants the chance to learn about opportunities which stem from the European citizenship, highlighting thus the contribution of EU to local social development. Namely visits were arranged in the DayCenter of Organization for the Protection of People with Autism and Development Disorders and the Support Center for Consulting Women Victims of Violence which operate via grants from European Social Fund as well as in the Model Municipal Nursery School in village Maniakous where the European project "Harmonization of family and professional life" is implemented subsidizing mothers for hosting their children in order to facilitate them finding a job. Moreover participants have visited the department of Technological Education Institute of Western Macedonia in Kastoria where they attended a conference concerning "EU-funding in local higher education" co-organised in association with the student association AEGEE Kastoria. The opening event in Kastoria was the kick-off meeting which incentivized the dialogue about the objectives that each partner municipality wanted to take forward in the upcoming activities.

Event 2

Participation: The event involved 88 citizens, including 7 participants from the city of Kastoria (**Greece**), 8 participants from Association of the Municipalities of the Locride Area (**Italy**), 4 participants from the city of Siderno (**Italy**), 59 participants from the city of Santa Venera (**Malta**), 5 participants from the city of Lousa (**Portugal**), 5 participants from the city of Bram (**France**), etc.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Santa Venera (**Malta**), from 17/01/2015 to 21/01/2015

Short description: The aim of the event was to build greater trust and solidarity between the partners of the newly established network. The event was considered stimulating after few months of inaction due to political changes that emerged in some of the partners while for the first time took part a delegation from the new French partner, Ville de Bram. Through the use of advanced methods of group work, performed during the workshops of the event by the qualified facilitators, participants had the opportunity to exchange their experiences and engage in working within a team via a non-formal education system, to discuss and act on the major challenges faced by the various communities. In special focused sessions into the topic of twinning each delegation presented the best

social practices developed in their local communities and concentrated their attention on obtaining knowledge of the local governments' agenda. One of the workshops was actually a visit to an important local Maltese industry which by the help of EU funding grew from a family-run traditional into a fully-fleshed business consisting a local best practice. Apart from the workshops which sought to pave the way for future cooperation and new initiatives between the different communities taking part in the project, the event included a mix of cultural-historical tours and institutional visits to distinguished guests. In fact on the occasion of the official ceremony that honored with their presences the Parliamentary Secretary for Local Government, Mr Stefan Buontempo and the Minister for Sustainable Development, Environment & Climate Change of Malta Mr Leo Brincat, a friendship pact was signed by the municipal representatives of all the partners. In order this beautiful experience to be memorable both for the international participants and local citizens, an indigenous tree was planted at one of the public gardens in Santa Venera. The same day the participating delegations were received by the President of the Republic of Malta, Her Excellency Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca in the official residence of San Anton Palace. There, the participants engaged in a brief discussion about matters pertaining their common realities in Europe and discussed ways of how European cooperation should improve the life of its citizens creating a better future not only in Europe but in the Mediterranean region.

Event 3

Participation: The event involved 88 citizens, including 7 participants from the city of Kastoria (**Greece**), 9 participants from Association of the Municipalities of the Locride Area (**Italy**), 3 participants from the city of Siderno (**Italy**), 7 participants from the city of Santa Venera (**Malta**), 3 participants from the city of Bram (**France**), 57 participants from the city of Lousa (**Portugal**) etc.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Lousa (**Portugal**), from 14/03/2015 to 18/03/2015

Short description: The aim of the event was to demonstrate european projects concerning social development successfully implemented locally so that an intense exchange of experiences in terms of social exclusion, integration and accessibility occurs. During the event delegations of five countries had the opportunity to come in contact with the richness and diversity of the Municipal Council, local people, cultural and social assets, among others. When idealizing the program the Council had in account the importance of having common issues to every partner's territory, namely education, social supports, financial and business development, new technologies and also territory promotion and its enhancement. In order to achieve better results in the meetings and improve the final experience of each delegation, several thematic moments were created and held, enabling a different but productive brainstorming on each topic in discussion. Thus various visits took place to relevant and diverse Institutions, which consist a true calling / visiting card not only to the Council itself, but also to the entire region due to the impact and implantation that they have in the social tissue. Among them study visits were arranged to Lousã New School where educational tools of new technology were presented as well to social centers like "ARCIL" which supports people with disabilities, "Microninho" which supports unemployed and "Misericórdia" which combines support for elderly and nursery care. In addition the official opening of a project concerning road and domestic security education of the youngest took place and "Schist Villages", a succesfully implemented project for the touristic renovation of a rural territory was displayed. The results of these encounters were, in the opinion of all the delegations as well as of locals, very positive and it allowed, through several moments of sharing, a personal and institutional enrichment and growth. It allowed not only the emulation of distinct projects from different countries, but also, via the input and reactions of all the participants contributed to the further development of those projects. Admittedly it was a constructive experience with a lot of benefits, exchange of knowledge and feedback from all the participants since the themes approached in the International Event were of strategic and transversal importance to every municipality involved.

Event 4

Participation: The event involved 89 citizens, including 7 participants from the city of Kastoria (**Greece**), 7 participants from Association of the Municipalities of the Locride Area (**Italy**), 4 participants from the city of Siderno (**Italy**), 6 participants from the city of Santa Venera (**Malta**), 59 participants from the city of Bram (**France**) and 6 participants from the city of Lousa (**Portugal**).

Location / Dates: The event took place in Bram (**France**), from 25/04/2015 to 29/04/2015

Short description: The aim of the event was to highlight the expertise that makes Bram a city to live and present practices linked with enhancing active involvement of city dwellers in local development. During the meeting the participants had the opportunity to discuss how EU policies and values, including active citizenship and intercultural dialogue; build cooperation and cultural understanding between communities and improve the quality of life locally. Non-formal education methods were used from the facilitators combined with presentations, group work and demonstration activities in a way which allowed an intensive exchange of know-how and views between the participants regarding European integration and the impact of EU policies. Setting in front the local heritage, the event started with cultural visits to the archaeological museum "Eburomagus", to a local potter who manufactures the traditional dish casserole in which "cassoulet" is cooked as well as the discovery of the cultural space "les Essarts" where an exhibition was displayed. Topics that were addressed the other days concerned mainly youth, education and citizenship within a future cooperation perspective. Namely visits were realized in

schools in order to create education links between the partners as well as in the leisure community center "RDV, where took place the presentation of an interactive application for children called "Lollipop" developed by a resident and there was acquaintance with elected members of the Municipal Youth Council in order to foster future exchanges. Special emphasis was given to intergenerational activities with the presentation of "Jules garden" a place where elderly learn to the youngest how to cultivate vegetables creating links between the two generations. In addition the local economy was accentuated by study visits in two important companies, a fish farm for fresh water and an organic oil refinery industry that export all over Europe. During the event there were also convivial moments with gastronomic discoveries of the local cuisine such as the typical bramese plate cassoulet and stew cooked by people engaged in "Jules garden". The project had a positive influence on partner relations contributing to a more intensive cooperation and the construction of new network relationships.

Event 5

Participation: The event involved 111 citizens, including 8 participants from the city of Kastoria (**Greece**), 45 participants from Association of the Municipalities of the Locride Area (**Italy**), 42 participants from the city of Siderno, 7 participants from the city of Santa Venera (**Malta**), 4 participants from the city of Lousa (**Portugal**), 5 participants from the city of Bram (**France**).

Location / Dates: The event took place in Locride district (**Italy**), from 24/06/2015 to 28/06/2015

Short description: The aim of the event was "Building Europe at the grassroots level" involving the general public and local nonprofit organisations in a number of seminars, public meetings and workshops. During the event that was organised by the Association of the Municipalities of Locride in association with the city of Siderno, activities were carried out in various localities around the area. Namely delegates were hosted in the city of Siderno; the friendship pact among partners was signed in the city of Locri; in Gerace, workshops on territorial marketing took place while seminars on the promotion of local products were held in the municipality of Mammola. At the welcome meeting, held in the boardroom of the City Hall in Siderno, the mayor underlined the importance of international cooperation at a grassroots level as a way to promote participation and a sense of identity within Europe. The associations of the city of Siderno also organised an open workshop on the promotion of new forms of social tourism. In the town of Mammola the municipal administration organised a seminar on the promotion of local excellence, with the aim of networking and advocating the successes of the area, in accordance with the objectives of the project. The theme of the promotion of local excellence was addressed further during seminars in the ancient village of Gerace, where participants shared their opinions on the theme of territorial marketing, as well as visiting some successful farms of the area. In the boardroom of the City Hall in Locri, a formal agreement of cooperation and friendship was signed by the representatives of the partner institutions. As the mayor of Locri underlined, the agreement represents the will of the Locri area to contribute to the process of the development of Europe. Following a message of appreciation sent by Gianni Pittella, President of the S&D Group of the European Parliament and former Vicar Vice-President of the Parliament, a remembrance was held for the mayor of the Belgian municipality of Viroinval, Bruno Buchet, whom recently passed away. Among the activities of greatest success was the closing event, held in the ancient town of Siderno Superiore and coordinated by local organisations, and the intercultural night, held in Locri. The event, which was widely appreciated by the participants and media, was supported by an international team of experts that facilitated the workshops using innovative team work techniques to reinforce interpersonal relations among participants in order to maintain links created during the project.

Event 6

Participation: The event involved 110 citizens, including 66 participants from the city of Kastoria (**Greece**), 10 participants from Association of the Municipalities of the Locride Area (**Italy**), 5 participants from the city of Siderno (**Italy**), 6 participants from the city of Santa Venera (**Malta**), 3 participants from the city of Lousa (**Portugal**), 8 participants from the city of Bram (**France**), etc.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Kastoria (**Greece**), from 19/07/2015 to 23/07/2015

Short description: The aim of the final event was to evaluate the project implementation, celebrate the success achieved and plan further steps for the future collaboration in terms of the topics addressed by the project. The methodology of the meeting was a combination of non-formal education, parallel thematic workshops, theoretical

input from guest experts not forgetting space for the participants to share and discuss the results of the project and the strategy for the future. Focusing in topics that attracted the interest of partners during the previous events the scheduled workshops were directed to exploring the possibilities for future cooperation in the context of concrete funding European programmes like HORIZON, etc. More specifically four workshops were organized concerning the next themes: 1) Education: Dissemination of best practices with emphasis on special education and intergenerational cooperation, 2) New Alternative Forms of Tourism: social tourism, people with disabilities, 3) Support of new entrepreneurship types- Promotion of local traditional products and 4) Environment, and Life Grants: Nature & Biodiversity, Environment and Resource Efficiency. In fact the fourth workshop about environment was led by the invited national expertise for Life Grants of the Greek Ministry of Reconstruction, Production, Environment and Energy who informed the participants for the specific EU's financial instrument that co-finances environmental projects with European added value. A great public Official Ceremony took place on 21st of July, in order to disseminate and make public the progress achieved and the Europe for Citizens programme. The event widely picked up by local media showed broad involvement of the local population as many local stakeholders were invited (local authorities, other civil society organisations, etc.) as well as prominent Greek Members of the European Parliament. After the welcome speech of the Mayor of Kastoria, a keynote address was delivered by the responsible for Europe for Citizens Contact Point in Greece from the Ministry of Interior of the Hellenic Republic who stressed the importance of this kind of initiatives and followed the contributions on behalf of the heads of delegations who expressed their commitment to continue the LBTinEU network. The project activities included also study-visits in the Wildlife Protection Center of Kastoria, in a local enterprise that produces wine and the specialist part was completed with folk performances, guided tours of monuments and sports activities including a special bicycling tour in the lakeside road. In the last day a special evaluation session was organized in which the participants made a recapitalization drawing the lessons of the events past, summarized the meetings and commented the jointly implemented project pointing out what worked and what needed improvement for the future. During the moments of farewell they assured each other of further cooperation and friendly support.