

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Participant:	Municipality of Santa Comba
PIC number:	946975596
Project name and acronym:	YOUth and democracy: empowering Europe's next generation – EU4YOUth

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	2 nd
Event name:	Why are elections important?
Type:	Conferences, lectures
In situ/online:	[in-situ]
Location:	Pavlikeni, Bulgaria
Date(s):	9-12th September 2024
Participants	
Female:	50
Male:	35
Non-binary:	0
From country 1 [Austria]:	1
From country 2 [Bulgaria]:	56
From country 3 [Croatia]:	2
From country 4 [Cyprus]:	1
From country 5 [Estonia]:	1
From country 6 [France]:	3
From country 7 [Greece]:	1
From country 8 [Hungary]:	1
From country 9 [Ireland]:	2
From country 10 [Italy]:	1
From country 11 [Latvia]:	1

From country 12 [Lithuania]:	2		
From country 13 [Malta]:	1		
From country 14 [Portugal]:	2		
From country 15 [Poland]:	2		
From country 16 [Romania]:	2		
From country 17 [Slovakia]:	1		
From country 18 [Spain]:	5		
Total number of participants:	85	From total number of countries:	18
Description			
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>			
<p>The second event of the "EU4YOUth" Network of Towns project, organized under the CERV Programme, was hosted in Pavlikeni, Bulgaria, from September 9 to 12, 2024. This initiative, led by the Municipality of Santa Comba, Spain, and supported by 19 partners from 18 EU countries, aimed to empower European youth and enhance citizen participation in democratic processes, particularly in light of the 2024 European Elections. Over 85 participants from across Europe, along with local citizens, policymakers, and experts, gathered to discuss pressing issues and share ideas for fostering democratic engagement and inclusion.</p> <p>The event's key objectives included raising awareness of the significance of democratic participation, particularly among young people, promoting collaboration among European towns, and addressing challenges such as voter apathy and digital inclusion. These discussions took place in a setting designed to inspire intercultural dialogue, knowledge exchange, and practical solutions for engaging citizens in the EU's democratic processes.</p> <p>A series of conferences and debates marked the event's intellectual core. Prominent speakers included Ivailo Zdravko, Regional President, who emphasized empowering young people to engage in local initiatives, and Daniel Panov, Mayor, who highlighted the critical role of education in fostering informed and active citizenship. Patricia Val, Vice Mayor of Santa Comba, delivered an address on digital technologies' role in increasing youth participation in politics. Together, these sessions explored themes such as the outcomes of the 2024 European Elections and strategies to strengthen youth involvement in shaping Europe's future.</p> <p>Workshops provided an interactive space for participants to explore participatory democracy, youth-led initiatives, and policy inclusivity. Highlights included a masterclass by Olga Stoyanova, a political science expert, who discussed fostering equality and inclusion, and an engaging session by Francisco Javier Ulloa, who presented best practices in participatory budgeting. These workshops were widely praised for their practical insights and opportunities for dialogue.</p> <p>Participants also immersed themselves in Bulgarian culture through guided tours of historical landmarks, such as the Fortress of Tsarevets and the Thracian Pottery Complex, as well as traditional Bulgarian music and dance performances. These cultural experiences enriched the event by fostering a deeper appreciation of the region's heritage and traditions, further enhancing intercultural understanding.</p> <p>Monday, September 9, 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Arrival of participants at Sofia Airport. ▪ Check-in at Hotel ▪ Bulgarian welcome dinner and introduction of participants. <p>Tuesday, September 10, 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presentation of the project to authorities, press, and civil society. ▪ Welcome speeches by local and international authorities, including discussions on the importance of the 2024 European Elections. ▪ Conference by Olga Stoyanova on equality, inclusion, and youth engagement in the EU. ▪ Lunch ▪ Debate on the European Elections' outcomes and their implications for member states. 			

- Guided tour of Veliko Turnovo, including visits to the Wax Museum, Bazar Samavodska, and Fortress of Tsarevets.
- Dinner

Wednesday, September 11, 2024

- Welcome speech by the Mayor of Pavlikeni, Emanuil Manolov.
- Presentation by Vencislav Georgiev, President of the Local Council of Pavlikeni, on how the EU can better connect with young people.
- Workshop on participatory democracy and youth-led initiatives by Francisco Javier Ulloa.
- Guided cultural visit to the Thracian Pottery Complex and archaeology highlights.
- Lunch with traditional music performances.
- Presentation of the next event in Malta and evaluation of the program.
- Farewell dinner.

Thursday, September 12, 2024

- Breakfast and check-out at the hotel.
- Departure of participants

Suggestions included offering more free time for participants to explore local attractions independently and incorporating additional informal networking opportunities.

The event's impact was amplified through press releases and local media coverage, social media updates and posts showcasing event highlights, materials collected during the event will be used to create an e-book, documenting insights and best practices for wider dissemination.

The next meeting, planned in Rabat, Malta, will build on the same achievements, continuing the project's mission to inspire and connect citizens across Europe.

HISTORY OF CHANGES

VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).